

Urban poverty as a challenge for ministry within the  
Malawian context

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**DECLARATION**

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

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation develops a theory for doing Malawian urban ministry called “Holistic hermeneutical practical theology.” The effects of urbanization: secularization, disorientation, poverty and pollution in Malawi’s urban centers make it difficult for the CCAP to implement successful ministry that deals with the shantytowns’ circumstances.

**Chapter one:** The first chapter describes the Malawian urban context. It defines the five components of the researcher’s topic of study: “Urban poverty as a challenge for ministry within the Malawian (African) context” and the three components of the methodology: “Holistic hermeneutical practical theology.” Four relational hypotheses are formulated to guide the study. Different research methods applied to gathering information for chapters of this dissertation are documented at the end of this chapter.

**Chapter two:** The second chapter examines the CCAP’s existing ministry practice and addresses the first hypothesis: “Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.” The missionaries introduced a comprehensive ministry approach to the early leaders of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. In the process of blending the missionary approach to ministry in the local Chewa context, a philosophy of ministry that emphasizes spiritual salvation (neglecting the physical needs) was developed in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. This approach poses a problem for the Church to adequately address the physical needs and realities of Malawians in the cities.

**Chapter three:** The third chapter discusses the poverty situations of Malawian and South African shantytowns and slums and is the result of research conducted in order to examine the validity of the four hypotheses.

The responses of the groups interviewed were helpful for an understanding of the current congregational challenges and ministry opportunities in urban areas. This

chapter addresses issues of this thesis positively: research objectives, the population growth data of urban inter-censal, a brief historical description of Malawian cities, the government efforts to address urban challenges and problems, the CCAP ministry approach to urban ministry, and a brief description of two South African poverty scenarios.

The research reveals that the church and the government work independently of each other. In this way the validity of the third hypothesis: "A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems," is confirmed.

**Chapter four:** This chapter describes the extent of poverty in Malawi, which is most disturbing. The recent studies on Malawian poverty indicate that the poverty scenario is a pervasive problem affecting approximately 60% of the population; urban poverty, in particular, is 65%.

Furthermore, chapter four discusses a number of issues, some of which are: a description and Christian views of the poor, an overview definition of urban poverty, the causes of poverty and the vocation of the urban church. The cities' informal economies can make a huge difference in the lives of the poor. All of the four hypotheses form the background to this chapter.

**Chapter five:** Chapter five examines four different approaches of the urban ministry in poverty areas. The purpose of this chapter is to understand the approaches of current work in poverty areas. Various approaches are discussed: community organization, effective congregationally based advocacy ministries, a liberation model, and a church in solidarity with the poor and oppressed. This chapter repeatedly confirms the first and the fourth hypotheses.

**Chapter six:** In this chapter the theory of a holistic, hermeneutical practical theology is applied to a number of activities called pillars, juxtapositioning it with the four hypotheses. This is presented as a model for doing urban ministry in Malawian (African) cities. In the process of describing or developing the model, the four

hypotheses - that have already been thoroughly proved and discussed - now serve as orientation markers pointing the CCAP towards its future role in urban ministry.

The model emphasizes a hermeneutic-communicative praxis, which makes it constantly concerned with understanding the Christian meaning produced in the past, and relating it to interaction with the present-day faith community. Thus, the church in urban Malawi will address the challenges presented by the effects of urbanization and industrialization. The model's ten pillars are discussed: i) ministry in a new era and context, ii) urban ministry among the poor requires community participation, iii) proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed, iv) Christian faith development, v) urban evangelism, vi) effective pastoral care, vii) the need to build faith communities, viii) the need to equip the urban mission, ix) moving towards ecumenical alliances in African cities, and x) the importance of congregational studies.

**Chapter seven** is a summary and conclusion of the dissertation. It discusses issues of this thesis positively: orientation of the study hypotheses, congregational study methods used in each chapter, the study's path and results, the contribution the study has made to the existing knowledge, and the conclusion of the whole dissertation. Urbanization is Africa's new missionary challenge for this century. The Christian task in Africa is the mission of the continent, which is in the process of rapid urbanization. If the church delays its adaptation to the urban context (the theories of which are changing constantly) it will forsake her strategic mission of being a foreign body in the world, where the old and new overlap in her, rendering her too early for heaven and too late for the earth.

## OPSOMMING

Hierdie proefskrif ontwikkel 'n teorie vir die Malawiese stadsbediening wat beskryf word as 'n "Holistiese hermeneutiese praktiese teologie." Die invloed van verstedeliking, sekularisasie, disoriëntasie, armoede en besoedeling in Malawi se stedelike sentra maak dit moeilik vir die CCAP om suksesvolle bediening, onder plakkersdorp-omstandighede, te implementeer.

**Hoofstuk een:** Die eerste hoofstuk beskryf die Malawiese stedelike konteks. Dit omskryf die vyf komponente van die navorser se studie-onderwerp, "Stedelike armoede as 'n uitdaging vir die bediening binne die Malawiese (Afrika) konteks" en die drie komponente van die metodologie, "Holistiese hermeneutiese praktiese teologie." Vier verwante hipoteses is geformuleer om as riglyn vir die studie te dien. Verskillende navorsingsmetodes, toegepas vir die inwin van inligting vir hierdie tesis se hoofstukke, word aan die einde van hierdie hoofstuk beskryf.

**Hoofstuk twee:** Die tweede hoofstuk ondersoek die CCAP se huidige bedieningspraktyk en is gerig tot die eerste hipotese: "Die CCAP se landelike agtergrond en teorie van bediening verhinder die kerk om 'n doeltreffende stedelike bediening te ontwikkel wat die armes se probleme toereikend kan aanspreek." Die sendelinge het 'n omvattende bedieningsbenadering vir die vroeë leiers van die CCAP Nkhoma Sinode ingestel. In die proses om dié sendingbenadering tot die bediening in die plaaslike Chewa konteks in te voer, is 'n filosofie van bediening wat die geestelike verlossing beklemtoon (terwyl fisieke behoeftes verwaarloos word) in die CCAP Nkhoma Sinode ontwikkel. Hierdie benadering veroorsaak 'n probleem vir die Kerk om die fisieke behoeftes en realiteite van stedelike Malawiërs toereikend aan te spreek.

**Hoofstuk drie:** Die derde hoofstuk bespreek die Malawiese en Suid-Afrikaanse plakkersdorpe en agterbuurtes se toestande van armoede. Dié hoofstuk is die produk van navorsing wat die geldigheid van die vier hipoteses ondersoek het.

Die reaksies van die groepe met wie onderhoude gevoer is, het bygedra tot 'n begrip van die huidige gemeentelike uitdagings en bedieningsgeleenthede in stedelike gebiede. Die proefskrif spreek die volgende kwessies in hierdie hoofstuk aan: navorsingsdoelstellings, die tussentydse data van die bevolkingsgroei van stedelike gebiede, 'n kort historiese beskrywing van Malawiese stede, die regering se pogings om stedelike uitdagings en probleme aan te spreek, die benadering van die CCAP tot stedelike bediening en 'n kort beskrywing van twee Suid-Afrikaanse armoede-tonele.

Die navorsing toon dat die kerk en die regering onafhanklik van mekaar werk. Dus, die geldigheid van die derde hipotesis: "n Holistiese benadering tot die stedelike bediening met gemeenskaplike forums vir ontwikkeling is nodig om stedelike armoedeprobleme aan te spreek" is hiermee bevestig.

**Hoofstuk vier:** Hierdie hoofstuk beskryf die ontstellende impak van armoede in Malawi. Die onlangse studies, met betrekking tot Malawiese armoede, toon dat die armoede-toneel 'n deurdringende probleem is wat ongeveer 60% van die bevolking raak; stedelike armoede, in die besonder, is 65%.

Hoofstuk vier bespreek 'n aantal kwessies, sommige hiervan is: 'n beskrywing en Christelike perspektief op armoede, 'n oorsigtelike definisie van stedelike armoede, die oorsake van armoede en die roeping van die stedelike kerk. Die stede se informele ekonomieë kan 'n baie groot verskil in die lewens van die armes maak. Al vier hipoteses vorm die agtergrond van hierdie hoofstuk.

**Hoofstuk vyf:** Hierdie hoofstuk ondersoek vier verskillende benaderinge tot stedelike bediening in areas van armoede. Die doel van hierdie hoofstuk is om dié benaderinge in arm dele te verstaan. Verskeie benaderinge word bespreek: gemeenskapsorganisasie, doeltreffende gemeentelik-gebaseerde voorspraakbedienings, 'n bevrydingsmodel en 'n kerk in solidariteit met die armes en verdruktes. Hierdie hoofstuk bevestig herhaaldelik die eerste en die vierde hipoteses.

**Hoofstuk ses:** In hierdie hoofstuk word die teorie van 'n holisties-hermeneutiese praktiese teologie toegepas op 'n aantal aktiwiteite, wat pillare genoem word, en stel

dit naas die vier hipoteses. Dit word voorgestel as 'n model vir stedelike bediening in Malawiese (Afrika) stede. In die proses om die model te beskryf of ontwikkel, dien die vier hipoteses (wat reeds deeglik bewys en bespreek is) nou as oriëntasie merkers wat die pad vir die CCAP vir sy toekomstige rol in die stedelike bediening aanwys.

Die model beklemtoon 'n hermeneuties-kommunikatiewe praktyk, wat gedurig in verband gebring word met die verstaan van die Christelike betekenis wat in die verlede teweeggebring is en wat dit, deur interaksie met die huidige geloofsgemeenskap, in verband bring. Dus, die kerk in stedelike Malawi sal die uitdagings wat deur die uitwerking van verstedeliking en industrialisasie gebied word, aanspreek. Die model se tien pillare word bespreek: i) bediening in 'n nuwe era en konteks, ii) stedelike bediening onder die armes benodig gemeenskapsdeelname, iii) die verkondiging van die Evangelie in woord en daad, iv) Christelike geloofsontwikkeling, v) stedelike evangelisasie, vi) doeltreffende pastorale sorg, vii) die behoefte vir die opbou van geloofsgemeenskappe, viii) die behoefte om die stedelike sending toe te rus, ix) die vorm van ekumeniese alliansies in die stede van Afrika, en x) die belangrikheid van gemeentelike studies.

**Hoofstuk sewe** is 'n opsomming en afsluiting van die proefskrif. Dit bespreek hierdie proefskrif se hoofpunte: die oriëntasie en die hipoteses van die studie, die navorsingsmetodes geïmplementeer in elke hoofstuk, die studie se ontwikkeling en resultate, die bydrae van die studie tot die bestaande kennis, en die afsluiting van die werk. Afrika se stede is die nuwe sendinguitdaging. Die Christelike taak in Afrika is die evangelisasie van die vasteland wat tans in die proses van snelle verstedeliking is. Indien die kerk in gebreke bly om in die stedelike konteks aan te pas, sal die kerk sy strategiese missie versaak om lig in die wêreld te wees.

**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my wife Derby, and the children: Rebecca, Gift, Yvonne, Sarah, Alinane, Mitalie and Mwai – for their love patience, endurance and prayer during the period of study.

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In the first place, I would like to bring glory and honour to God who, in His plan, allowed for this investigation to be undertaken: "For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future" (Jer. 29:11, NIV). The journey was hard and difficult, but the Lord accompanied me every step of the way. From the outset of this investigation, I was aware that God is not only concerned with the spiritual realities of His people, but also with their social, mental and physical needs. Thus, He sent His son to bring the Good News to the poor, proclaim freedom for prisoners, heal the sight of the blind, and release the oppressed ... (Lk. 4:18-19). Therefore, it is my prayer and hope that this dissertation will motivate and enable the church to reflect, evaluate, program, investigate and transform people and, with them, do exegesis of both the Word and the world to discern constantly how the Word should be proclaimed in the world.

I am also grateful to my parents who, in my youth, were responsible for nurturing me according to Christian norms and values by means of, for example, family devotions and Sunday school. This spiritual nurturing led to my theological studies that, in turn, led to my ministering to three CCAP Nkhoma Synod congregations (Mtuntha, Lumbadzi and Nsambe). This experience gave me the theological insights that formed the basis of my theory for doing theology, which contributed largely to the birth of this dissertation.

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# Chapter 1

## The Malawian urban context

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the Malawian urban context has been described. The chapter has ten subsections.

- Defining five components of the study topic
- Historical background and geographical position of Malawi
- Social position and contextuality of a researcher
- Urbanization in Malawi
- The challenges of the urban context
- A holistic hermeneutical practical theology
- Hypotheses guiding the study
- Ministry as a hermeneutical exegesis of Word and context
- Ministry as a servant of the kingdom of God
- Research methods used for the study

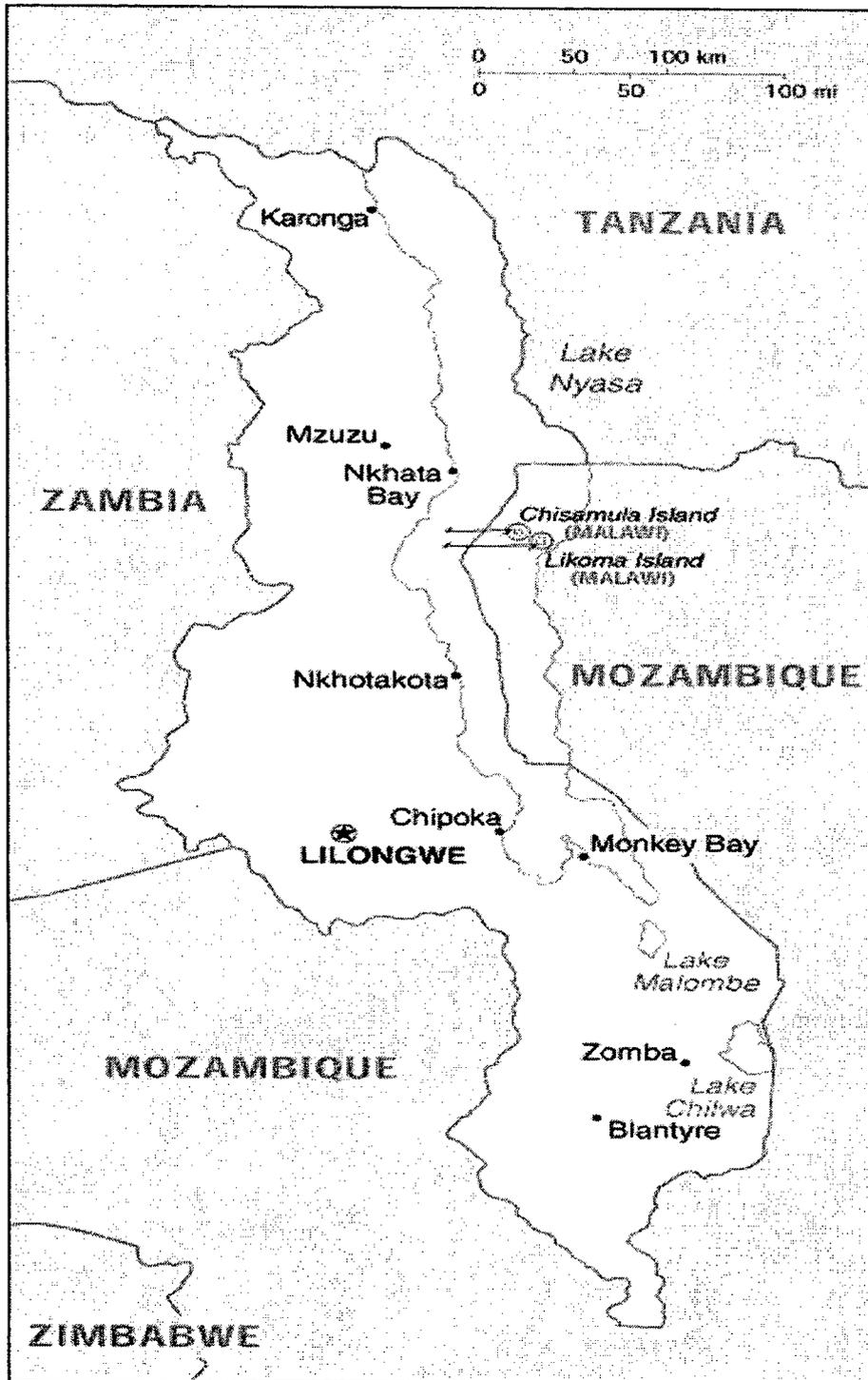
### 1.1 FIVE COMPONENTS OF THIS STUDY'S TOPIC

#### 1.1.1 THE COUNTRY OF MALAWI

The focus of this study is on Malawi's urban context. Malawi is a small landlocked country, a long, narrow strip of land (560 miles long) lying north to south and bounded by Tanzania to the north, Mozambique to the south and Zambia to the west. To the east lies Lake Malawi, which comprises nearly one fifth of the total area of the country. Malawi gained its independence in 1964 from British rule, became a republic in 1966 and has a population of 10 million (MPHCR 2000:xi).

In 1994, the country experienced democratic political change, which brought the end to the 30-year rule of President Kamuzu Banda, who was replaced by Bakili Muluzi. The new Malawi, although free from the political oppression of single party politics, is still captive to the oppression of poverty and inequality (Priggis 1998:14).

Figure I: The geographical position of Malawi



### 1.1.2 THE URBAN CONTEXT

One of the major challenges facing the developing world today, including Malawi, is the phenomenon of urban growth. Pauw (1980:3) comments "In 1966 the four largest centres were Blatyre, Zomba, Lilongwe and Mzuzu. With the establishing of the nation's new capital

at Lilongwe, its population increased tremendously. By 1975 it was estimated to be 102000 more than five times higher than in 1966 ...." Priggis (1998:23) echoes "The World Development Report (1997) shows Malawi with the seventh fastest urban growth rate of the 20 poorest countries. The urban population grows by 6% each year. In 1987, the urban population density was estimated at being 11%. The end of 1990s has projected the figure to 30%. Major centres of urbanization in Malawi are Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, and Zomba."

Unemployment in Malawi is very high; typically, people migrate to urban areas searching for work. Major townships on the outskirts of Blantyre, Ndirande and Nkolokoti, together accommodate more than 300,000 people. Most people living in these townships have no land on which to cultivate crops and work as unskilled casual labourers. Population density is also high, leading to a proliferation of communicable diseases, especially AIDS. Priggis (1998:23) notes "In 1993 ... 23% of the adult urban population were HIV positive compared to 8% in the rural areas."

### 1.1.3 MINISTRY - PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Section 1.6 takes and describes practical theology further. Practical theology views the context of people as a part of theology. Ammerman *et al* (1998:25) note

In recent years a new way of doing theology, called practical theology, has emerged .... it moves from life to faith and then back to life (practice to theory to practice). Practical theology begins, therefore, by describing the situation of the congregation and then correlates that situation with the faith and belief of the congregation.

Doing ministry as Ammerman defines it requires empowering local faith communities to grow spiritually in order for them to discern the will of God in their situations. Hendriks (1999:5) states "This way of doing theology emerged, prompted by the fact that the world is changing so fast that individual believers and their faith communities are continually confronted with new questions and challenges." This approach to the ministry requires the full participation of the people in evaluating the results when they apply their insights in action, returning to the Bible and Christian tradition to once again reshape and work on their answers. In chapter 6 of this study, a theory of doing theology in the cities of Malawi will be discussed.

#### 1.1.4 URBAN POVERTY

Chapter 4.1 discusses the issue of urban poverty in detail. Poverty is a universal reality of Malawi. This discussion is of urban poverty; rural poverty, of course, also exists in Malawi, but it is of a different sort. Rural Malawians, typically, have access to land to raise crops, which is not available to urban dwellers. There are, however, also similarities.

Poverty manifests itself in various ways and a conclusive definition of the term is elusive. Nevertheless, it is important to understand and articulate a view of poverty; the way we understand poverty strongly influences the way in which we develop approaches to address it.

In his book, *Walking with the poor*, Myers (1999:65-80) defines the nature of poverty to include poverty as a deficit, poverty as entanglement, poverty as a lack of access to social power, poverty as disempowerment and poverty as a lack of freedom to grow.

*Poverty as a deficit* includes hunger, lack of shelter and clean water, lack of knowledge and skills. An additional deficit for non-believers is a lack of knowledge about God and the good news of Jesus Christ (Myers 1999:66).

In describing *poverty as entanglement*, Myers (1999:66-67) quotes Chambers's description of poverty as the "traps" of material poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness, and spiritual poverty.

Myers quotes John Friedman who describes *poverty as a lack of access to social power*. Myers (1999:69) notes "Friedman begins with the household as the social unit of the poor and sees it embedded within four overlapping domains of social practice: state, political, community, civil society, and corporate economy."

In describing *poverty as disempowerment*, Myers (1999:72) quotes Jayakumar Christian and notes

The Christian sees the poor household embedded in a complex framework of interacting systems. These systems include a personal system, which includes psychology .... a spiritual/religions system, which is both personal and social, and a cultural system that includes the worldview.

Describing *poverty as a lack of freedom to grow*, Myers (1991:80) quotes Ravi Jayakaran and notes "Echoing Luke 2:52 Jayakaran pictures the poor wrapped in a series of restrictions and limited in four areas of life: physical, mental, social, and spiritual."

All these components assist us to understand the magnitude and many faces of poverty. Myers (1999:81) concludes

... poverty is a complicated social issue involving all areas of life – physical, personal, social, cultural, and spiritual .... I doubt there is or will be a unified theory of poverty. There is always more to see and more to learn. The corrective is to keep using a family of views to see all the things we need to see. We must work hard to be as holistic as we can be for the sake of the poor.

### 1.1.5 URBAN CONTEXT AS A CHALLENGE

Section 1.5 discusses the challenges of urban context in detail. The high rate of urbanization in African countries in general, and in Malawi in particular, poses a continued challenge to the church. The effects of urbanization - poverty, disorientation, secularization and pollution - make it difficult for the church to achieve its desired impact. Monsma (1979:87) states "The urban African is neither wholly African, nor is he wholly Western in his outlook. He is an amalgam, or blend, of both outlooks. Many urbanites are seeking a religion that reflects this blend .... Greater vision is needed for what the church can do in modern Africa." In its ministry and approach to the urban context and the needs of urbanized people, the church has to redefine its role and methods and adapt its ministry to a new and changing situation.

In addition to urbanization and its socio-economic effects, there is the impact of globalisation and secularisation, as well as a shift in religious inclination and orientation. The impact of secularization is a particular cause of concern to the church. Shorter (1991:142) warns "The church is less visible in towns than in the rural areas, and finds it harder to make headway against the materialism implied by modernization."

Ministry in Malawi originated in a rural setting with a rural ethos. In rural Malawi, people depend largely on farming. They do not need conventional employment and are generally able to produce their own food. In addition, they live a communal lifestyle; they share commodities with each other, and those who do not have food are cared for in the process.

The ministerial ethos that works for rural populations is totally inadequate to face the present realities of booming city life and its circumstances, which find people trying to survive in slum areas and shanty townships surrounding cities. Shorter (1991:147) observes

The missionary with rural experience quickly finds that rural methods and routines do not work in the urban situation .... African towns people do not wish to be treated like country folk; nor do they deserve to be. The urban pastor must therefore come to the African town with an open mind and, still more to the point, with open eyes and ears.

Because the rural context differs from its urban counterpart, tools for the ministry must also be different. Urbanization is accompanied by a number of negative implications, such as secularisation, disorientation, poverty, and pollution. People come from all over the country to urban concentrations and remain strangers. They live as individualists with little concern for neighbours. Survival in urban centres is dependent on employment, but unemployment is high. The church is therefore expected to address the physical as well as the spiritual needs of people.

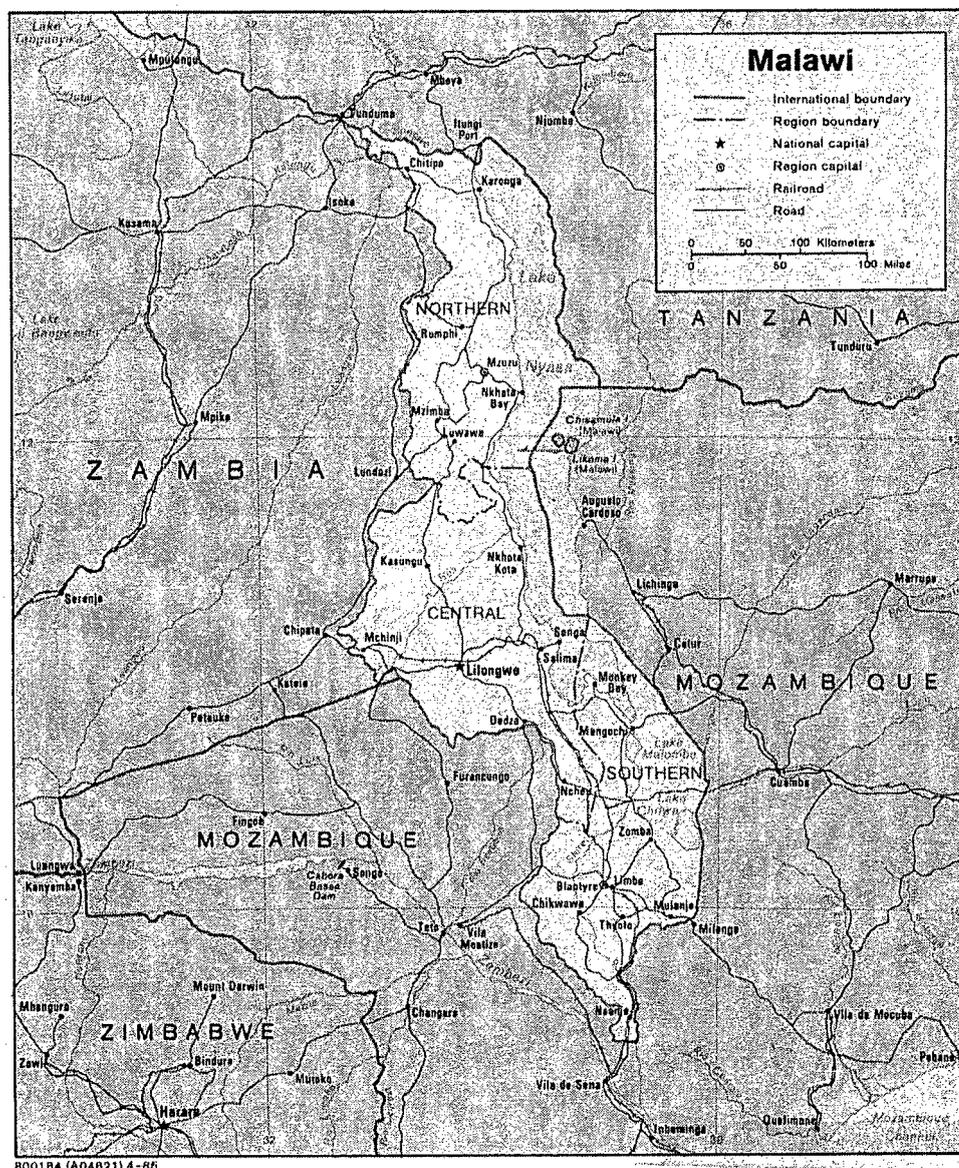
The current ministerial theory of the Nkhoma Synod was developed in rural Malawi taking into account rural circumstances. This theory, now, is inadequate to face modern urban challenges; in the cities of Malawi, a holistic hermeneutical practical theology is needed for ministry. This approach of ministry addresses the needs of both the Word and the world, and is able to confront the urban challenges that the Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP) faces. It also enables the CCAP to do holistic ministry, taking into consideration the spiritual and physical needs of people as an indivisible reality of life.

## **1.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION OF MALAWI**

Malawi is divided into three regions: Southern, Central and Northern. Interestingly, the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionaries who brought Reformed Christianity to Malawi operated within these specific regional boundaries. Missionaries from the Free Church of Scotland founded Livingstonia Mission in the Central Region at Cape Maclear in 1875 and later moved to Bandawe and later still to the present Livingstonia in the North; missionaries from the Church of Scotland founded Blantyre Mission in the South in 1876; and finally missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa founded the Nkhoma Mission in the Centre in 1889 (Pauw 1980:21-29).

Foreign missionaries founded no cities in Malawi and established their congregations in rural areas. They were dependent upon local chiefs for permission; thus their earliest preaching stations were in the vicinity of the chiefs' villages. Of the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries who brought Christianity to Nkhoma Synod in 1889, Cronje (1982:87) observes "The chief Chiwere received them in a friendly way and gave them permission for a mission station to be started near his village."

**Figure ii. Geographical and regional boundaries**



Most of the early missionaries adapted well to the rural missions. Shorter (1991:63) notes "The fundamental truth is that the early missionaries were farmers and that they felt at home practising agriculture in the rural areas .... (they) had to be self-supporting, so they needed to have green fingers."

This meant that they were able to integrate themselves in the rural areas without much difficulty. This approach, as we shall note later, is strategic in mission work as it emphasises a holistic propagation of salvation. The method later became known as the “Comprehensive Approach,” or “Multiple Approach,” containing elements of evangelism, education, medical, industrial and literary work (Cronje 1982:95). On the other hand, towns were perceived to be comfortable places reflecting the western way of life that these missionaries had renounced (Shorter 1991:64), and they probably felt guilty about living in them. Since the missionaries established the first congregations in rural areas, it was inevitable that the models of Christian ministry reflected the characteristics of the rural environment.

As there were no cities at the time, urban missions were of little concern. A rural theology evolved and became a major reason why the church still finds it difficult to work in the cities of Africa. Shorter (1991:59) comments “It is by no means a problem of the African, or missionary, church only. Christianity as a whole has inherited a predilection for the rural areas and a legacy of anti-urban attitudes and images.”

But, in many ways, the Bible is an urban book. The world of Moses, David, Daniel, Jesus, and Paul, for example, was an urban world, dominated by its cities. Jerusalem, Rome, Alexandria, Corinth, Susa, Babylon, Nineveh, and Ephesus feature prominently in Scripture, and the cities were the main centres for mission work (Linthicum 1991:21).

As Bosch (1991:130) notes “... metropolises [were] the main centres as far as communication, culture, commerce, politics, and religion are concerned.” Paul focused on the cities as part of a strategy to spread the Gospel to an entire region. From these strategic centres, Paul hoped that the Gospel would be carried easily into the surrounding countryside and towns. The church is therefore expected to have a holistic vision of ministry in order to focus on both rural and urban sectors.

### **1.3 THE SOCIAL POSITION AND CONTEXTUALITY OF A RESEARCHER**

In this section the social position and contextuality of the researcher are discussed. The researcher, having ministered in two rural and one semi-urban congregation, therefore has experience of both rural and urban ministry settings. For a period of nine years (1989-1998) the church seconded the researcher to an organization known as *World Vision International* where he had an opportunity to attend international forums dealing with urban issues. As a

result, such forums equipped the researcher with knowledge and experience on city dynamics and realities.

The researcher is an ordained minister in the Synod of Nkhoma CCAP. He was born in a small village called Jadiele, traditional authority Pemba, and Dedza district in the central region of Malawi. The central region is largely occupied by the Chewa and Ngoni people and is ministered to by ministers of Nkhoma Synod. Born to a Christian family, the researcher was nurtured according to Christian norms and values through Sunday school and family devotions in his youth. The congregations that the researcher ministered to (Mtuntha, Lumbadzi, and Nsambe) provided him with an opportunity to understand the theological insights, which formed the basis of theory for doing theology. Since the researcher is an ordained minister he has access to Nkhoma Synod documentary information for further research.

An opportunity to learn about the in-depth circumstances of squatter settlements occurred when the church seconded the researcher (1989 -1997) to an organization known as World Vision International - Malawi Office. The mission statement calls for the organization to glorify God through meeting the needs of the disadvantaged group. The origin of this organization dates back to 1950, during the Korean War. An American evangelist, Bob Pierce, had been to Korea and the war victims, of whom the children formed the most vulnerable group, broke his heart. He then responded with a compassionate heart to White Jade, who was one of the needy children victimized by war. In 1950, Bob soon identified other suffering children, especially in war-torn Korea. He appealed for funds in the United States in order to support the care of children in orphanages and other homes. Steward (1994:84) comments "World Vision was started as one person, evangelist Bob Pierce, responding with a compassionate heart to one needy child, White Jade."

Some of the tasks, which the researcher undertook in World Vision, included developing urban programmes for the two townships of Ndirande and Nkolokoti, on the outskirts of Blantyre. The programmes involved: group formation of disadvantaged persons in order to manage small businesses through revolving loan funds from World Vision; formation of interdenominational forums for pastors and church leaders to undertake joint planning and implementation of city evangelism. In addition, he enabled the people of the community to

persuade the city authorities to render the required municipal services, which were hard to come by.

While seconded to World Vision International, the researcher had the opportunity to be part of several forums on urban-related issues. For example, in Africa: in addition to cities of Malawi, he has studied the cities of Nairobi, Mombasa, Addis-Ababa, and Harare; in Asia: the cities of Bombay, Madras and Pune; in India: Chitagong in Bangladesh, and in Thailand: Bangkok. While in Britain the city of Newcastle and, latterly, the cities of Los Angeles and Chicago in USA were studied. He also undertook sponsored speaking engagements in the following New Zealand cities: Christchurch, Queenstown, Invercargill, Blenheim, Palmerston North, and New Plymouth.

As a result of this experience, the researcher developed a compassion for working in urban slums in order to promote the human-felt issues of the poor. At the same time, he has a passion for the Kingdom's norms and values as inseparable realities of life and development of the urban poor. In commenting on the importance of the church's vocation in promoting the relief of human problems in the squatter settlements surrounding cities, Linthicum (1991:144) states "The church is to be the people of action - those who call the city's structures and systems to accountability, who defend those oppressed and exploited by those systems, and minister to those who are deceived but who benefit from the city's principalities."

The social position and situation of the researcher was briefly discussed. The next section aims to discuss urbanization in Malawi.

#### **1.4 URBANIZATION IN MALAWI**

One of the major challenges facing the developing world today, including Malawi, is the phenomenon of urban growth. Malawians who live in the cities face the challenges of inadequate housing and a lack of employment to generate an income. As a result, most people depend on piece-work, working once or twice a week. As Priggis (1998:23) states "Employment needs are very high. Most people living there are unskilled casual labourers."

There are three regional capitals in Malawi. Blantyre situated in the south, is the largest commercial city with a population close to two million. Lilongwe, situated in the central region of the country, was made the capital, as it is more accessible to people from all the

regions. Pauw (1980:3) notes "The movement of the capital to Lilongwe has also given new stimulus for development in the central and northern regions with the provision of a better infra-structure." Mzuzu is the third regional capital city, situated in the northern region.

Zomba, in the southern region, although not regarded as a city, also has a large population of urban dwellers, due to the fact that it was the capital until 1975. This town is an academic and administrative centre, headquarters for the University of Malawi (and its Department of Theology), the national statistics offices, the joint theological college for all synods of the CCAP family, the Anglican Church, and other governmental and private sector offices are situated in this town.

To most Africans, the city is an unfamiliar phenomenon, and urban-dwelling Africans retain very strong ties with their traditional rural culture (Shorter 1991:40). Malawians living in the urban centres commute to their rural homes for marriages, to prepare fields for planting, to harvest, to build houses, to retire and to bury family members who die in the cities. With the cost of travelling, burying the deceased at their rural homes is very expensive. But, in spite of the cost, urban-dwellers make sure that the deceased are taken home, as cities are regarded as temporary places. Africans do not perceive cities as their "homes."

To illustrate the importance attached to a funeral, Shorter (1991:6) mentions the case of a prominent Nairobi lawyer who died a week before Christmas, 1986. He reports "Nearly five months later, in April 1987, his body was still lying at the mortuary while a complicated legal wrangle was taking place between blood relatives and in-laws over the right to burial."

The urban context is very different to the rural sector in which the church ministry originated, and it is most important that urban pastors take this difference into consideration. Shorter (1991:147) warns

The missionary with rural experience quickly finds that rural methods and routines do not work in the urban situation .... African towns people do not wish to be treated like country folk; nor do they deserve to be. The urban pastor must therefore come to the African town with an open mind and, still more to the point, with open eyes and ears.

The importance of the church's vocation is highlighted in promoting the relief of human problems in the squatter settlements surrounding cities. Linthicum (1991:144) states again "The church is to be the people of action - those who call the city's structures and systems to

accountability, who defend those oppressed and exploited by those systems, and minister to those who are deceived but do not benefit from the city's principalities."

## **1.5 CHALLENGES OF THE MALAWIAN URBAN CONTEXT**

This section takes and discusses urban context as documented in section 1.1.5. further.

Urbanization generates acute, diverse problems and challenges. The Malawian urban context may be discussed under four headings: the formation of Malawian cities; culture disorientation; a city's two faces; and cities as places for world religions.

### **1.5.1 FORMATION OF THE MALAWIAN CITIES AS A CHALLENGE TO THE MINISTRY**

One of the challenges that the ministry faces in the urban Malawian setting is how its cities came into being. The cities of Malawi, like other African cities, took root more by default than by design. Cities in Africa are the result of mushrooming towns. Most African cities came from slowly growing towns, well integrated with the surrounding rural areas. For example, Johannesburg, one of Africa's greatest cities, was originally a mining town; the mining compounds with their great mountains of excavated yellow sand still surround the city. Nairobi came into existence in 1899 as a transport depot for the construction of the Uganda Railway. Most other cities originated as commercial, administrative, colonial or religious centres (Shorter 1991:22-25). Blantyre, the largest Malawian city, came into being as a result of commerce. The city, formerly known as Kabula by the local people, was renamed Blantyre to honour Dr David Livingstone, born in Blantyre, Scotland.

Urban Malawians, like other urban Africans, are faced with challenges and dynamics unique to the cities. In addition to struggling between two cultures, people face the challenges of inadequate housing and lack of formal employment. As a result, most people depend on piecework, often working no more than once or twice a week. Even when they find such temporary jobs, they cannot negotiate their wages. Priggis (1998:23) notes

Employment needs are very high. Most people living there are unskilled casual labourers. The remuneration they get from such casual jobs is not even enough for a day's meal to feed their families. Urbanization, in itself, conflicts with Gospel values as it favours the growth of a secularism, which does not want to recognise God. The impact of secularisation is indeed a major cause of concern to the Church.

Shorter (1991:142) worries "The Church is less visible in towns than in the rural areas, and finds it harder to make headway against the materialism implied by modernization."

There are a number of other negative implications that accompany urbanization, secularisation, poverty, pollution, and disorientation among them. Secularisation results from disadvantaged people busy searching for survival strategies with little time, if any, for worship services. Secularization as a process leaves no part of urban life untouched; politics, economics, education, and communication feel its impact. Conn (1987:117) warns "The evil root of secularism as autonomy, independence from God, is emphasized in the Old Testament. It is worthy of note that the earliest evil after the fall, as presented in the book of Genesis, is not idolatry but primeval secularism."

In the rural areas, Sunday is the day of worship; people work the fields and generally have enough food. Secularisation is a virus carried by urbanization and brings religious indifference, a loss of the sense of God and of the sense of sin (Shorter 1991:143). Conn (1987:93) underlines the point as he quotes a graduate of the University of Tanzania "Where I come from, religion is a natural part of life. But here, in the urban areas, everything is a hodgepodge. Family and traditional ties are broken, and other influences take over."

Urban migration breeds poverty and the consequent social erosion, promoting the gap between rich and poor. Such a scenario favours human exploitation and unjust working conditions. In commenting about the exploitation of unskilled labour in the urban centres in Malawi, Priggis (1998:23) notes "An average wage among unskilled casual labourers is anything between K300-K600 per month," i.e. US\$7-US\$14 per month at 1999 exchange rates. Although the poor maintain the city by providing services for the city's wealthier population, they are not accorded equal rights with the city's rich. Shorter (1991:139) notes "The migrant becomes a non-person, a surplus individual, an illegal and unwanted intruder in the eyes of the affluent established urban dweller. A situation has developed in the cities and towns of Africa that, if it is not apartheid in a racist sense, is analogous to the apartheid."

Sadly, politicians often pay attention to the poor only when they need their votes. Refuse and garbage are seldom collected where the urban poor live and, as a result, these areas propagate diseases, epidemics and infections of all kinds (Shorter 1991:138).

### 1.5.2 CULTURAL DISORIENTATION AS A CHALLENGE TO MINISTRY

Disorientation is often a major problem for urban dwellers as, for the first time, they find themselves in a new situation away from home and relatives. Shorter (1991:40) confirms this: "Rural people carry their traditional values with them when they migrate to town. The same migrants bring back urban concepts and norms when they commute to their homeland." Migrants often feel free to do what they wish once away from the check of community life; bad habits are often learnt and practised. Moral disorientation accompanies cultural alienation. Family life suffers, and children are particularly vulnerable as families break up.

Malawians migrate from rural to urban areas to seek education, employment, and other social services (Chilimampunga 1996:16). Despite dwelling in the cities, they retain direct contact with their ethnic cultural traditions. Cultural disorientation is partly a result of the fact that Malawians are living in two semi-encapsulated worlds at the same time (Shorter 1991:40). They embrace foreign ideas and norms in the cities, while at home they remain true to their traditional ideas, values and worldviews. Urbanisation does not substitute a new modern culture for the old traditional one. Shorter (1991:141) notes "Urban migrants are ... both culturally and morally disoriented. Culture and morality are closely related facets of the human phenomenon because they both concern human identity and integrity." Kinnison (1978:66) echoes "An African male from a rural area is used to the traditional division of labour. In the city, he may be horrified to discover that, in his employer's eyes, all workers are equal. Thus, he may find himself working with, and performing the same as, a female employee."

Urban Malawians live between two cultural worldviews. The first is the city culture, a western lifestyle, individualistic, analytical, valuing freedom and abstract thought. The other is the African traditional culture, collective, more holistic in thinking, seeing all things as influencing and part of each other. People think and decide in community and in concrete terms, sometimes in a magical-mystical orientation (Meiring 1996:4). This situation creates a plural community in the cities, and if not properly confronted and addressed, it undermines the institutions of family, marriage and traditional community values. Waruta and Kinoti (2000:23) comment "Today the world of tribal and primitive is beginning to crumble under the impact of modern technology and social change. The African who moves into the city gradually loses his concern for ancestors ...."

### 1.5.3 THE TWO-CITY SCENARIOS AS A CHALLENGE TO THE MINISTRY

Tonna (1978:14-15) defines a city as:

Something more than a collection of masses in one physical location. As a 'mode of life in common,' the city must be considered as a 'life mechanism,' that is, an artificial ambit, the fruit of human genius and effort, where life is no longer a matter of reacting to nature and adapting oneself to it, as in smaller communes, but of imposing a measure to one's life and that of others – to nature itself. The city is the space that humans have created for humans, molding nature and subduing it to their own interest.

As people move from the country into the cities, they continue to practice a rural traditional life-style. They build rural houses, raise livestock without adequate grazing fields and brew traditional beer in their tiny dwelling places. They also continue to practise witch hunting and accusation of witchcraft. Shorter (1991:38) affirms this: "Many traditions of rural life appear to thrive in the African towns and traditional explanations find new fields of application there."

Malawian cities are surrounded by squatter settlements; collections of shacks made of recovered waste materials. Chilimampung (1996:35) observes

One striking thing about Ndirande and Nkolokoti townships is congestion of houses the majority of which are of poor quality. These townships are the largest squatter areas in Malawi. There is no overall plan and dwellings are built as and when space permits. Houses of poor quality and good quality are found side by side.

Ndirande and Nkolokoti are Blantyre's townships. Priggis (1998:23) notes "There are a huge number of unofficial small shacks put up to accommodate the growing numbers of migrating labourers ... these unofficial camps have no infrastructure." Commenting on the issue of slums and squatter settlements, Tonna (1978:79) affirms "There are slum areas in all the larger cities. They are collections of over-crowded, unsanitary, decrepit housing units in a sorry state of disrepair. Tenants in these buildings are generally craftspeople, small-business entrepreneurs, and manual labourers."

Urban dwellers continue a traditional lifestyle because it is part of their existence. This pattern of living confuses the youth as they find it difficult to integrate two different worldviews simultaneously. The urban poor are pushed into illegal activities to survive; short-term pleasures, such as alcohol, soothe the miseries of their daily lives; then violence and sexual malpractice are commonly associated with drunkenness. The squatter areas are also marketplaces for drugs and prostitution. Shorter (1991:51) comments "Prostitution of women and children is one of the commonest ways of making a living in the slums. The

preponderance of male migrants, the need for female economic independence, the phenomenon of street children and the reality of crowded living conditions all favour it.”

The erosion of family cohesiveness and the morally disorienting experience of the squatter settlements favour sexual promiscuity, which leads to a high incidence of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. “Banja La Mtsogolo,” a clinic in the Ndirande Township, provides medical services to people in the area, including treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. Of the clinic, Chilimampungu (1996:40) observes “Sexually transmitted diseases appear to afflict mostly young people in their teens and twenties. The patients are advised to come with their partners, rather than alone, for the treatment.”

The CCAP finds it difficult to promote Kingdom values within the different practical situations of living, yet all (the rich and the poor) were created in the image of God and both groups are heirs to the Kingdom. It is with the Kingdom in mind that CCAP should seek to deliver unbiased ministry, which takes into consideration both the spiritual and physical needs of people as an inseparable entity.

The last challenge of the urban context, namely that the cities harbour different faiths, beliefs and convictions, will now be attended to.

#### 1.5.4 CITIES ATTRACT VARIOUS WORLD RELIGIONS

The Nkhoma Synod faces another challenge in Malawi’s cities, i.e. the fact that they are convergence zones for different religions and beliefs. Cities are administrative and business centres that attract residents from other parts of the world who bring their faiths with them. These diverse beliefs and convictions are often in conflict with each other and the ministry requires a new ethos for doing theology in the cities.

The churches of rural Malawi have their own distinct areas as a result of the missionaries’ mutual agreements, each church being situated some distance from another denomination with a different tradition. Cronje (1982:87) recorded an instance of this phenomenon in his book, *Born to witness*: “An important decision had to be taken with regard to the specific part of Malawi for which the D.R.C.M. was to be responsible .... Dr. Laws and Rev. Murray therefore decided that a large and unoccupied mission field could be found in the central region of the country.” Similar arrangements were made among the Roman Catholic Church,

the Anglican, Seventh Day Adventists, and many other denominations. Whilst driving through the countryside one easily notices different church building styles denoting an area of a particular church tradition.

Not so in Malawian cities. New Christian churches are built randomly without consultation with other church leaders. Just as cities emerged by default, so too do churches. This lack of cooperation has resulted in isolation and competition: instances of "sheep stealing," abound, with a major negative impact on all Christian churches.

In addition to this local scenario amongst the Christian churches, cities are the convergence zones for representatives of the world's religions such as Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims, and others, including theologies such as liberation theology, black theology, feminist theology and ideologies mostly originating in western cities. Waruta and Kinoti (2000:15) affirm "In big cities ... the relevance of Christianity and even of Christ is being seriously questioned. This is the case more among the enlightened elements – students and the intelligentsia in general – than among others." In the past, exotic world religions were experienced only through the media, but today, for example the Eastern religions, are at our doorstep. The followers live among us and their children play with ours, and we are neighbours in every way.

Knitter (1995:3) notes "Increasingly, not only is our civilisation's destiny affected by their actions; but we drink coffee with them personally as well." Such religions, theologies and ideologies are not apparent in rural Malawi. Lately, however, rural Malawi is experiencing a proliferation of Moslem mosques. This comes about because the Malawi government is looking to the Moslem nations for financial assistance and, in return, the Moslem nations demand the construction of mosques in exchange for the aid.

#### **1.5.5 CONCLUSION: URBAN CONTEXT AS A CHALLENGE FOR THE MINISTRY**

People in the urban centres live in difficult circumstances and struggle for survival; desperate economic situations push people into crime and delinquency. As Shorter (1991:50) observes "In the squatter areas crime and delinquency are mostly prompted by economic motives." It was further noted that urbanization creates a cultural disorientation, partly a result of the fact that people live in two semi-encapsulated worlds at the same time. Another problem facing

the urban ministry is that cities attract migrants from all over the globe arriving with other world religions.

Shorter (1991:143), commenting on the impact of urbanization in Africa, states "From these facts and trends, it is clear that the church must draw the conclusion that urban ministry is an urgent pastoral priority in Africa." Indeed, this is the context that prompted the Synod of Nkhoma to support research into developing a theory of doing theology in urban Malawi. The church takes this decision while being aware of the fact that cities are the centres of massive human suffering that requires the church's immediate attention. Conn (1987:116) states "A biblical call to repentance and saving faith in Christ does not call us away from the city; it calls us to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ in all areas of the city." It is in this context that a holistic hermeneutical approach to ministry will be tested and implemented.

## 1.6 A HOLISTIC HERMENEUTICAL PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

The definition of ministry - practical theology described in section 1.1.3 again receives attention further. The urban challenges facing the CCAP have given rise to a method of doing theology that could be called a holistic hermeneutical practical theology. This method will be used to address the challenges that confront the ministry in Malawian cities. Monsma (1979:90) notes "Holistic studies are especially appropriate in the urban situation, for urbanites are totally dependent upon one another .... The mainline Churches and Missions have made a dichotomy between the spiritual and the secular - a dichotomy that is foreign to the traditional African point of view."

### 1.6.1 A HOLISTIC APPROACH

A holistic approach seeks to focus on the human being as an indivisible entity, the total being, of which soul and body form a unity out of the diversity. Rakoczy (1992:44) notes "Spirituality is not vacuum-packed but actualized, experienced, discovered in particular circumstances and places. A person's spirituality is not entirely private but has social ramifications." As such, the physical needs of the person are equally important as the spiritual.

Musopole in Fiedler *et al* (1996/1997:28) states "The reality of *uMunthu* [a human being] as embodied in the *munthu* has an external as well as internal dimension. While the external

aspect is defined by form or body, the internal aspect is defined by character or spirituality.” Fowler (1995:8) makes a similar point when describing practical theology: “Practical theology opposes docetic theologies that compartmentalize the spiritual and the physical, and that shrink the concerns of the church to the private and spiritual needs of its members.” Yamamori *et al* (1996:159) confirms

Holistic ministry should of course incorporate both spiritual and material results ... increased food production, better infrastructure, loving health care, spiritually transformed lives; churches planted; income generated from new businesses, trained church and community leadership, and behavioural and cultural changes.

### 1.6.2 HERMENEUTICS

Section 1.8.4.1 takes and discusses hermeneutics further. “Hermeneutics” refers to the “science of interpretation” and is derived from the Greek “*hermeneuein*,” which means “to make clear” and “to interpret.” Groome (1980:195) notes “... it connotes both the search for meaning in a text or tradition and the activity of explaining to others what one has found.” The importance of hermeneutics in the proposed theory of doing urban ministry is that it helps people to interpret and discern God’s will for them in their lives. It also recognises that this occurs in a specific contextual setting and, as such, does not claim to be an absolute, final, fault-free interpretation.

It invites dialogue because it realises the limitations inherent in all our endeavours. As Van der Ven (1998:46) notes “Hermeneutic work always implies the construction of a bridge between the past in which the text was created and the present. The result of this work is a new text representing a new reading of the old texts.” In commenting on the importance of dialogue, Freire (1998:xvii) notes “Dialogue as social praxis entails that recovering the voice of the oppressed is the fundamental condition for human transformation.”

### 1.6.3 PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

This section discusses practical theology as defined in section 1.1.3 in detail. Practical theology refers to a way of doing theology that incorporates the context of people. Ammerman *et al* (1998: 25) again note

In recent years a new way of doing theology, called practical theology, has emerged ... it moves from life to faith and then back to life (practice to theory to practice). Practical Theology begins, therefore, by describing the situation of the congregation and then correlates that situation with the faith and belief of the congregation.

Doing practical theology as Ammerman defines it, requires empowering local faith communities to grow spiritually in order for them to discern the will of God in their

situations. Hendriks (1999:5) states “This way of doing theology emerged, prompted by the fact that the world is changing so fast that individual believers and their faith communities are continually confronted with new questions and challenges.” This approach to ministry requires the full participation of the people in evaluating the results when they put their insights to work, returning to the Bible and Christian tradition to once again reshape and work on their answers.

The introduction describes the need for a study, because the present ministry practice in Malawi originated in a rural setting and has a rural ethos. Ministry models designed for the rural ministry must be modified for use in the urban sector, to equip the church for better delivery of God’s witness to the city’s population and validate a commitment to the incarnation of the Christian message (Shorter 1991:147).

According to Hendriks (1999:5): “Our presupposition is that theology is intrinsically contextual. Abstract theology does not exist. Knowledge of the context thus is part of theology.” Practical theology views the importance of understanding the context of a congregation and denomination in order to undertake ministry which can make an impact on the lives of people. The church needs to understand an ever-changing context in order to deliver a relevant Christian witness.

Pretorius et al (1996:56) note

A great number of forces, such as ideologies, cultures, religious movements, leading personalities and natural events interact to form an endless variety of patterns, only to dissolve and restructure again. We might also agree that these changes form an exciting process that presents many opportunities for the kingdom of God. On the other hand it is clear that a great deal of suffering is brought about in this process.

Understanding the context is part of theology; the church must articulate the issues prevailing in the environment in which its witness is being implemented.

Carroll *et al* (1989:48) quote James Gustafson who describes the church as a chameleon with “Its capacity to adapt to new surroundings, to find colours that fit into various environments. Because a congregation is an adapting organisation, it is important to see it in relation to its social context, the setting, local and global in which the congregation finds itself and to which it responds.”

The importance to the church of understanding social context is a reflection of the relationship between the church and the world into which the church is called. The church is not the world, for the Kingdom has already begun to manifest itself in her. Yet, she is not the Kingdom, as the Kingdom is acknowledged and realized in her only partially and imperfectly. This means that the church is a foreign body in the world; she fits in nowhere. Bosch (1978:222) narrates “She is too early for heaven and too late for the earth.”

## 1.7 HYPOTHESES GUIDING THE RESEARCH

In his book, *Understanding social research*, Mouton (1996:122) discusses several types of hypotheses, inter alia the relational hypothesis. He notes “Relational hypotheses postulate that a certain kind of relationship exists between two or more variables.” In this regard, the term “relational” refers to the fact that certain events are related when, for instance, one event always seems to precede another (1996:95).

Four relational hypotheses were formulated to guide the research presented here. These hypotheses were helpful in addressing the problems of urban dwellers in a hermeneutical, holistic, and practical way. Doing theology in this way brings the ministry in touch with the real life issues of people as well as with the Bible and Christian tradition (Hendriks 1999:5).

### 1.7.1 HYPOTHESIS 1:

*Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.*

In this situation, the Church needs to adapt to the urban setting by implementing holistic hermeneutical practical theology as a ministry theory to address the city dynamics and realities. In commenting on the vocation of the church in the towns of Africa, Shorter (1991:138) states “Besides helping to effect a change of heart, therefore, the church has to effect a change in human living conditions, in sanitation, hygiene, health care and provision of building materials.”

### 1.7.2 HYPOTHESIS 2:

*Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.*

Residents know their community best and, therefore, are most able to articulate the needs of the community. The Malawian language, *Chichewa*, has a proverb that translates: “The one, who suffers from diarrhoea, is the one who opens the door first”; the one with the problem is the first to address it. Linthicum (1991:37) states flatly, “Only the poor of the city can assume responsibility for solving their own predicaments.” Freire (2000:34) echoes

The ability to reflect, to evaluate, to program, to investigate, and transform is unique to human beings in the world and with the world. Life becomes existence about the world which also implies the conscience of the self emerges and establishes a dialectical relationship with the world.

### 1.7.3 HYPOTHESIS 3:

*A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.*

Churches have to co-operate ecumenically as well as with municipal councils, medical, social, and educational workers, forest, security and prison services, and the local community leadership. The poor themselves must also participate in addressing the root causes of their problems. Joint urban forums should be established to provide different types of expertise from which mutual development results. Urging co-operation, Shorter (1991:145) warns “Christian, and ... religious disunity is a scandal in the relative proximity of the town. It also undermines the efficiency of social action and human development ... if urbanization is to benefit ... national development as a whole, then ecumenical co-operation is essential.”

### 1.7.4 HYPOTHESIS 4:

*At present, the ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.*

In his book, *Five challenges for the once and future church*, Mead (1996:6-9) describes clericalism as a system in which the clergy control the church (make decisions and implement church activities) without the participation of laity.

Some identifying features of clericalism:

- The clergy are trained in the language of the church.
- The clergy have the authority to select denominational books of order and canons.
- The clergy exercise controls on how the rules of the church are changed and implemented.
- The clergy insist on rotating lay leadership periodically.

As a result of these factors, the clergy reinforce their own power in making the important decisions for church governance (Mead 1996:6).

In commenting on the potential misuse of the clergy's authority, Mead (1996:11) notes "The authority of the role is so great that it can be used manipulatively for selfish purposes, victimizing others. The authority of the role can turn the dialogue between clergy and lay into demonic and destructive patterns."

The clerical paradigm also does not take into consideration the Spirit's gifts to people for the edification of the church. The CCAP needs to begin training the laity to manage quality ministry to address urban poverty. Banks (1994:109) notes "Within this each member of the gathering has his or her particular contribution to make. Since all have something to give, there are no mere spectators in the church but only participants."

## **1.8 MINISTRY: A HERMENEUTICAL EXEGESIS OF WORD AND CONTEXT<sup>1</sup>**

This section examines the first hypothesis. The rural background of ministry theory prevents the CCAP to develop effective ministry in the cities. The theory is not hermeneutically sensitive. It only focuses on preaching of the Gospel without checking on the physical needs of the poor.

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<sup>1</sup> The issue is again referred to in the following paragraphs of the dissertation: 3.6.1 Men alongside the road, 3.6.2 Orlando East, 4.9 Vocation of urban church, 4.9.3 A church as a hermeneutical community, 4.10 Ministry sustainability, 5.1 Community organization model, 5.2 Effective congregational model, 5.4 A church in solidarity with the poor, 5.4.1.3 Justice, freedom, and social transformation.

Practical theology is considered to be a ministry that views the Word and context as inseparable elements of doing theology. Hendriks (1999:1) describes practical theology as "... a hermeneutical concern of doing exegesis of both the Word and the world and of discerning continually how the Word should be proclaimed in the world." This process requires the continued reflection of Scripture and tradition, stimulated by the emergent situations and challenges they face, which then calls for the transformation of the methods of living missions and offering witness (Fowler: 1995:4).

Ammerman *et al* (1998:26) note "The frames through which the congregation and its environment are observed ... are not preludes to taking up the questions of theology, but are integral to that process." Browning (1991:8) states "I argue that theology as a whole is fundamental practical theology and that it has within it four sub-movements of descriptive theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and strategic practical theology." Musopole in Fiedler *et al* (1996/1997:3) confirms this approach from an African perspective and notes "Such a model, is a typically African epistemology that connects the human being, not only to God, but to other human beings as well as the whole cosmos."

The unique hermeneutical concern which practical theology brings to the ministry can be of most significant benefit if the CCAP is to address the challenges of urban poverty in Malawi.

In order to understand this hermeneutical concern, four areas of ministry are attended to as follows: definition and practice of ministry, holistic ministry in line with an African view of reality, different sub-movements of ministry, and dimensions of practical reasoning. Finally, the importance of empiricism in ministry is discussed.

### 1.8.1 DEFINITION AND THE PRACTICE OF MINISTRY<sup>2</sup>

This section looks further at the definition of practical theology, as documented in section 1.6 above: Practical theology begins by describing the situation of the congregation and then correlates that situation with the congregation's faith and belief.

The purpose of this section is not only to orientate the reader to the definition of practical theology, but also aims at assisting the church leadership to implement practical theology as

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<sup>2</sup> This issue is again applied in the following section of the dissertation: 4.5.1 Current definitions of poverty.

defined. It is hoped that, through such a process, the CCAP in Malawi will be able to redefine its ministry ethos in such a way so as to be hermeneutically sensitive.

Fowler (1995:4) in his article, *The Emerging new shape of practical theology*, defines the ministry as:

*Critical and constructive reflection by communities of faith  
Carried on consistently in the contexts of their praxis,  
Drawing on their interpretations of normative sources from Scripture and tradition  
In response to their interpretations of the emergent challenges and situations they  
face, and Leading to ongoing modifications and transformations of their practices  
In order to be more adequately responsive to their interpretations of the shape of  
God's call to partnership.*

This definition calls for inquiry and dialogue within communities of faith, and requires the continued reflection of Scripture and tradition stimulated by the emergent situations and challenges they face, which then calls for the transformation of the methods of living missions and offering witness (Fowler 1995:4).

Browning (1991:2) agrees with Fowler's definition. His point of departure in *A fundamental practical theology* is a central question "How can communities of memory and tradition also be communities of practical reason and practical wisdom?" He points out that communities of faith come to theology with operational religious practices; the task of theologians is to re-direct them.

Browning (1991:6) observes "We are so embedded in our practices, take them so much for granted, and view them as so natural and self-evident that we never take time to abstract the theory from practice and look at it as something in itself." Theory-laden practices assist the community of faith to reflect upon its practices whenever it hits a crisis; this is a continuing process as the community tries to address the disruptions it encounters.

According to Browning, "Religious communities go from moments of consolidated practice to moments of deconstruction to new, tentative reconstructions and consolidations. Then a new crisis emerges and the community must launch into the entire process once more." Practical theology, Browning says, is a movement, which goes from practice to theory and then back to practice. This way of doing theology is different from the classical view of

movement only from theory to practice. Browning (1991:7) continues "Theology goes from present theory-laden practice to a retrieval of normative theory-laden practice to the creation of more critically held theory-laden practices."

This approach to ministry takes into consideration not only that Christianity is a historical faith, but also that the message of Scripture is "incarnation," the reality of God entering into human affairs. The presupposition is that theology is intrinsically contextual; abstract theology does not exist, and knowledge of the context is part of theology. Ammerman *et al* (1998:26) note "The frames through which the congregation and its environment are observed ... are not preludes to taking up the questions of theology, but are integral to that process."

Applied to Malawi, practical theology seeks to understand the real issues in the day-to-day experiences of people in the townships; if the church in Malawi is to be relevant, it must consider the context of people as an integral part of its theology.

### 1.8.2 A HOLISTIC MINISTRY IS IN LINE WITH AN AFRICAN VIEW OF REALITY<sup>3</sup>

In defining the term "holistic" in section 1.6 above, it was noted that the reality of *uMunthu* has been an internal, as well as external, dimension. Africans do not dichotomise spirit and body.

For a long time, African churches have been doing European theology. European missionaries brought Christianity to Africa; along with it they brought their culture. Fiedler *et al* (1996/1997:142) comment

When Christianity arrived in Africa ... it came with a western wrapping. Christianity went into the pot without being unwrapped. There was no period of observation first. But the pot ... was not quite empty. Some of what was there was pushed out, some remained and was included in the stew .... Africans want the meal, but not the indigestible wrapping which should not have been included. To some extent, the meat has not been cooked properly because it is still sealed in the wrapping.

The metaphor is particularly apt for the African context. African food is still cooked on the traditional three stones, and the dynamics of the process are distinctly non-European. There is a synergy between the cook, the fire maker, and those enjoying the warmth of the fire; it is a

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<sup>3</sup> This issue is again referred to and/or applied in the following sections of the dissertation: 6.3 Proclaiming the gospel in word and deed, 6.3.2 The practice of the city church, 6.4.2 The goals of spiritual development, and in 6.4.4 Faith crisis and spiritual development

place for hermeneutic inquiry and participation. This is the reality that the western approach missed, and continues to miss. Bediako (1995:11) notes

From our standpoint, we do not believe that Africa needed the theological interference of Europe, for the theology of Europe is derived from the conceptions of the Roman, Celt and Teuton, which have modified the Semitic ideas promulgated in the Bible. European Christianity is Western Christianity – that is to say, Christianity as taught at Nazareth, in Jerusalem and on the Mount of Beatitudes, modified to suit the European mind or idiosyncrasies.

Ministry in Africa cannot dichotomize spirit and body. To the African, body and soul are indivisible. This indivisibility is also biblical. Describing historical dualism, Newbigin (1995:37) states

The early church had to overcome this dualism .... It could do so because the starting point of its thinking was in the Bible, where this dualism is absent. It formulated its rejection of the dualism in the statement that the one God was the creator of both the visible and invisible realities. So long as this dualism remains part of popular thought, it is impossible for the Gospel to be accepted as public truth; it can only be private opinion.

Spirit and body form a unity of the diversity and, as such, the spiritual and physical needs of a person are inseparable.

The African holistic worldview can best be understood in the concept of *uMunthu*. For the African *uMunthu* underlies the responsibilities of a human being. *uMunthu* demonstrates clearly the inherent link between life and nature for, among others, the traditional Chewa people. Fiedler *et al* (1996/1997:22) comment

The aChewa meaning of creation is life and people are the only meaning discerning creatures .... People and nature form one texture of life. In other words, human life is nature life .... The notion of respect for nature seeks to emphasize the concept of persons as living-in-plenitude, i.e. people have a fellow-feeling with each other and nature; consequently people pattern their life to cosmic rhythms.

Fiedler *et al* (1996/1997:3) note “Such a model, is a typically African epistemology that connects the human being, not only to God, but to other human beings as well as the whole cosmos. The fruit of the *uMunthu* epistemology is an authentic theology that fulfils the human spirit.”

Ministry in Africa needs to take into consideration the African cultural context, its languages, hymns and songs (sermons in music). Africans themselves must be advocates of ministry cooked in the African pot, which aims to serve God through meeting the needs of the underprivileged, in particular, in both rural and urban centres. Doing theology this way adds meaning to the lives of African Christians, as their spirituality gets in touch with on-the-

ground reality. Chuba concludes his paper, *Theology cooked in an African pot*, thusly: "Africans need a theology that will redeem them from the give me, teach me, and lead me mentality, especially at this stage of an independent Africa. That theology which is not cooked or at least not boiling in an African pot has its abode in an African pit."

Not all Africans, however, were content with the cultural context of the form of Christianity introduced by colonial-era missionaries. As Fiedler *et al* (1996/1997:62) note

There is a general agreement among African theologians that African Independent Churches have taken a daring step of contextualizing or indigenizing the Church in Africa .... Consequently, they have produced a relevant theology for Africa. They have also succeeded in producing a ritual-oriented church, which appeals to the deep-seated emotions of African peoples, and thus satisfying their spirituality.

The African Independent Churches incorporate belief systems and Christian living to replace ancestor worship, divination prophecy, sacrifices, and other cultural aspects, without necessarily compromising the Gospel. But, because the missionaries did not adequately take into consideration the African beliefs and context, some African theology that arose may not be entirely reliable. One result is that much of the African way of doing things was considered unChristian. To that degree, the missionaries did not succeed in Gospel proclamation. Fielder *et al* (1996/1997:67) comment "It should be noted that in their understanding of salvation, the Independent churches consider the whole person is in need of salvation. This includes the soul as well as the body."

### 1.8.3 DIFFERENT SUB-MOVEMENTS OF MINISTRY<sup>4</sup>

The holistic theory in discussion has been developed to take into consideration, hermeneutically, the practices of people, as they seek to make meaning of life. This is critical otherwise people cannot take God seriously, when they feel He is not concerned with their situations in life.

It was noted earlier that practical theology moves from practice to theory and back to practice. It was further noted that what prompts such a movement is the fact that people come to theology with meaningful or theory-laden religious practices. Because of these practices, when a religious community hits a crisis, it then begins to ask questions about its meaningful practices. In order for this movement to happen, theology in general must be understood as a

fundamental practical theology. Browning (1991:8) again argues that "... theology as a whole is fundamental practical theology and [that] it has within it four sub-movements of descriptive theology, historical theology, systematic theology, and strategic practical theology." Browning (1991:47-54) defines the four sub-movements as follows:

*Historical theology:* It asks what the normative texts that are already part of our effective history really imply for our praxis. It provides the traditional disciplines of biblical studies, church history, and the history of Christian thought.

*Systematic theology:* It tries to gain as comprehensive a view of the present as possible. It examines the large, encompassing themes of our present practices and the vision latent in them.

*Strategic practical theology:* It refers to what is commonly understood as the church disciplines of religious education, pastoral care, preaching, liturgy, social ministries, and so forth. In this movement, questions are formed by the problems of life that impede our action.

*Descriptive theology:* It describes the contemporary theory-laden practices that give rise to the practical questions that generate all theological reflection. It is a horizon analysis; it attempts to analyse the horizon of cultural religious meanings surrounding religious and secular practices. This movement would be close to sociology if sociology were conceived hermeneutically.

Browning (1991:55-56) asks four basic questions that drive the movement:

- i. How do we understanding this concrete situation in which we must act?
- ii. What should be our praxis in this concrete situation?
- iii. How do we critically defend the norms of our praxis in this concrete situation?
- iv. What means, strategies, and rhetorics should be used in this concrete situation?

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<sup>4</sup> This issue was again referred to in the following sections of the dissertation: 3.5.2 Researching for congregations in Lilongwe city, 4.6 The causes of poverty, 4.9 The vocation of the urban church.

### 1.8.3.1 Five dimensions of practical reasoning<sup>5</sup>

Being a hermeneutical process, a holistic approach to ministry is interested in implementing five dimensions of practical reasoning. Browning (1991:71,105-106) proposes five dimensions, or levels, of all forms of practical thinking, whether explicitly religious or avowedly secular. These dimensions are helpful in enhancing critical discourse in pluralistic modern societies.

*Visional level:* Moral thinking which begins in the context of specific traditions and is carried by particular narratives, stories, and metaphors that shape the self-understanding of the communities that belong to the tradition.

*Obligational level:* The working of human reason, which elaborates general principles of obligation that have a rational structure. For example, the obligational dimension in Christianity fits the principle, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself" and the golden rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." These are the stories or narratives and metaphors that a community tells to state and justify its identity.

*Tendency-need level:* This points to the higher-order moral principles which people always have in order to organize, mediate, and co-ordinate their needs and tendencies, both within and among individuals. These needs can be categorized as basic needs, existential needs, technical needs, and culturally induced needs.

*The environmental-social dimension:* This involves social structure and ecological constraints. It refers to reason's effort to understand the social-structure and ecological factors that place material constraints on human needs.

*Rule-role dimension:* This refers mostly to the concrete dimension of actual practises and behaviour.

The holistic model considers these dimensions to be critical in practical reasoning, because they guide the claims of validity in ministry. Browning (1991:71) notes "I will recommend the use of these five dimensions both for describing the theory-laden practices found in

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<sup>5</sup> This issue was again applied in the following paragraphs of the dissertation: 5.2.3 Helping a congregation move to advocacy, 5.4.4 The possible church steps of application to development, 6.2.1 How to develop community participation, 6.2.3 Basic principles of the self-reliant, and 6.3.2.1 Advocacy for the poor, and economic development.

contemporary situations and for describing and critically assessing the Christian witness.” These dimensions are important because they are reconstructions of intuitive experience of what goes into practical moral thinking, whether conventional or critical. Browning calls them “... dimensions of practical thinking because they generally interpenetrate so smoothly that we are unaware of them as differentiated aspects of experience.”

### **1.8.3.2 Preparation for the ministry and education<sup>6</sup>**

In order to ensure the implementation of holistic hermeneutical practical theology as a ministry theory, theological students must be exposed to this process while at college. The students, in turn, will replicate a holistic religious education in the congregations.

Browning and Groome have a similar practical approach to Christian religious education and to doing and teaching theology. Their approach is through the process of shared praxis in which all the settings should follow a practice-theory-practice model. The authors divide the exercise of practical theology into these steps:

- i. Describe the situation in which a congregation finds itself. The importance of this is that the congregation becomes aware of the present reality and can implement decisions.
- ii. Examine the creeds, stories, doctrines and Scriptures that are part of one’s tradition. This is necessary to remind people of parallels to present reality, and instances in the tradition that illuminate and challenge present reality.
- iii. Create a conversation (dialogue). The current and old stories need to relate to each other in a dialogical hermeneutic. In this event the sources should give direction to a way forward in the new situation.
- iv. Formulate a new vision and strategy of how to implement the answer. This calls for a continued process of ‘action- reflection’ in a spiral manner by revisiting the steps. This is the time to take concrete action, in order to ensure that change is effected.

This approach assumes the human being as both soul and body. It also assumes that any effort aimed toward building maturity of faith in a congregation takes into consideration the

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<sup>6</sup> The issue is again referred to in the following sections of the dissertation: 3.5.8.6 The need for urban ministry orientation, 6.4.1 The emergence of spiritual development, 6.5.5 Theological premises for urban evangelism, 6.7.2 The family as nuclear support for the faith community, 6.8.2 Contextualizing Christian faith education, and 6.8.3 Leadership for urban ministries.

physical and spiritual needs of the parishioners. As such, the task of practical theology is hermeneutical. Richards (1975:316-317) advises

The task of the traditional Christian educator, cast as administrator of the church's educational agencies and the trainer of workers within them, must be redefined if we take seriously the socialization model of Christian education .... The Christian educator now becomes a designer of the life of the church for it is in the total life of the church and in all its interactions that the believers' life is shaped.

Ammerman *et al* (1998:23) summarize "Faith seeking understanding, then, is about all these things: discernment, worship, making sense of our lives, and transformative action."

This process, as we have noted above, involves finding the interaction between the Scriptures and the existential situation of people, edifying the Church and reflecting through communities of faith on how to transform their world and impart meaning to life.

#### 1.8.4 EMPIRICAL APPROACH TO MINISTRY<sup>7</sup>

This section has two aims: to document the importance of hermeneutics to the empirical approach to ministry, and the need for evaluation. The steps of empirical research and evaluation of ministry are discussed at length in the tenth pillar of holistic theory, as documented below in section 6.10 of chapter 6.

Van der Ven, a well-known practical theologian, postulates in *Practical theology: An empirical approach* (1998) that an empirical approach to ministry concerns itself with religious experience through cognitive, affective, and volitional aspects of a community's experience of faith. Ministry, he says, has religious experience as the starting point for all theology. He notes (1998:10):

Experience has to do not only with the cognitive but also with effective evaluative aspects of reality. As a result, there is not only physical and biological experience, but also social, individual, aesthetic, moral and religious experience. Experience is concerned not merely with objects, but also with relationships, with traditions, events, people and situations.

The empirical approach to practical theology met serious objections in relation to other theological disciplines (in particular that of systematic theology), and in relation to other empirical sciences (psychology and sociology of religion). Also questioned was its ability to reveal the manifestations of human acts, such as thoughts, perceptions, values, and interpreta-

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<sup>7</sup> This issue was again applied to the pillar 10 (6.10) of the dissertation.

tions. Van der Ven (1998:8-9) notes "At least five serious objections may be formulated against the empirical theology of the early Chicago School ... namely: empiricism, pragmatism, modernism, scientism, and statisticism." These five objections basically question the adequacy and relevance of, and possibility for, an empirical approach in the light of scientific inquiry.

Empirical ministry should be perceived as an effort to break through the confessional exclusivity and the authority of biblical and religious tradition in order to attune the message of the Gospel to modern people's expectations and experiences. As Van der Ven (1998:21) comments

Empiricism is presented not only as a method for achieving a better understanding of the Gospel's message for modern people, but also above all as a way to ensure the very survival of the Gospel and of theology. Modernism demands a scientific approach, for otherwise the Christian faith and theology will be dismissed out of hand by academics.

Hermeneutics is crucial to empirical theology in that it incorporates the human manifestations of perceptions, interpretations, values, thoughts and assessments that lie behind human acts. As Dingemans (1996:89) notes

The hermeneutic approach does not usually provide a sharp picture of the religious reality, but it provides a drawing of the history and the background of churches and church members, and it gives insight into people's values and norms. Moreover, it is open to more traditional methods and approaches in theology and is able to build bridges between biblical explanations and interpretations of the present reality.

An empirical approach to practical theology depends largely on hermeneutic-communicative praxis to assess faith in human manifestations, which lie behind human acts.

#### **1.8.4.1 Hermeneutic-communicative praxis in a holistic ministry<sup>8</sup>**

Further to the definition of the term "hermeneutical" in section 1.6 above (hermeneutical connotes both the search for meaning in a text and its interpretation), this section describes hermeneutical in some detailed manner.

Van der Ven (1998:41) defines an operational meaning of the hermeneutic-communicative approach as referring to verbal and non-verbal interpretation and communication of both

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<sup>8</sup> This issue was again referred to in the following sections of the dissertation: 3.5.7 City ministers' workshop at Dzenza CCAP, 3.5.8 Recommendations prepared for 2001 Presbytery and Synod, 6.4.5 The focus and evaluation of the Christian faith, 6.6.1 Urban youth ministry and in 6.6.2 The congregational care of the urban church.

written and spoken texts. He has linked the hermeneutic-communicative praxis with what he calls *orientations in practical theology*. This link is important, as ministry is a hermeneutical enterprise.

Before discussing the orientations in practical theology, which guide the hermeneutic-communicative praxis as discussed by Van der Ven, definitions of the terms may be helpful.

The definition of "hermeneutic praxis" refers to Van der Ven's (1998:46) verbal and non-verbal text interpretation. Hermeneutics is always concerned with revealing meanings produced in the past. These may include the speaker, the writer, the listener and the reader in the text, the aims of the communication within the text, the codes system and all aspects of communication. The work of hermeneutics, therefore, implies the decoding of the historical meaning of the text in question in its context. Its work always implies the construction of a bridge between the past in which the text was created and the present. The aim of hermeneutic work is not merely to reveal meaning of traditional texts, but especially to bring out their transformative power.

In communicative praxis, Van der Ven (1998:50) offers three levels of communication goals:

- *exchange* - interaction between the participants in communication. Here the participants inform each other about their cognitive, affective and volitive experiences.
- *understanding* - participants try to understand one another's experience and value the messages. This level is referred as "taking the perspective of the other."
- *striving for consensus* - the attempt of the participants to reach agreement or consensus. This process, in turn, uses cognitive, affective and volitive processes.

Van der Ven (1998:34) divides the orientations of persons and groups into three categories: the clergy, the church, and the relationship between church and society.

*Clergy:* Van der Ven (1998:35) notes "Practical theology today, understood as pastoral technology, is aimed at developing the range of pastoral instruments in the broadest sense of the term and at teaching future as well as practising pastors how to use them." Hermeneutic-communicative praxis plays a role in putting across the applied insights of major theological disciplines concerned with orientations of the clergy.

*Church:* This orientation is marked by a paradigm shift from clerical pastoral theology to church-oriented practical theology. Practical theology then becomes a general theology of the life of the church, and dogmatic and empirical knowledge is correlated. Van der Ven (1998:36) writes “The focus shifts from improving the manner in which the clergyman performs his functions to the life of the church.” This stance correlates with Browning’s thesis (1991:6) that religious communities have embedded practices which enable them to go from moments of consolidated practice to moments of deconstruction to new, tentative reconstructions and consolidations.

Churches have six basic functions: preaching, liturgy, sacraments, church discipline, Christian life, and pastoral care. These functions provide a link for hermeneutic-communicative praxis.

*Church and society relationship:* This topic is further looked at in the seventh pillar of the holistic model in section 6.7.3 of chapter 6 below, on the topic: “The church in modern and postmodern society.”

Practical theology deals with the development of Christianity within the secularization of society - practical theology breaking out of the ecclesiological framework. As Van der Ven (1998:38) states

In this orientation, practical theology is no longer located within the boundaries of the church, but rather within the system of co-ordinates made up of society, Christianity and church. The task of the church is to trace and to think through the interactions or lack thereof between religious and non-religious phenomena in society.

Empirical theology is a product of the combination of empirical and hermeneutic-communicative methods, the hermeneutic-communicative approach functioning as the frame of reference within which the meaning and significance of empirical research unfolds.

## **1.9 MINISTRY AS A SERVANT OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

This section looks at the fourth hypothesis of this study. The hypothesis states:

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and as such is unable to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

In order to make a difference, the CCAP must consider training the laity to manage quality ministry in Malawian shantytowns. The eighth pillar of holistic theory in chapter 6 below deals with the issue of equipping both the clergy and laity. The topic of this section is further described in the sixth pillar of chapter 6: 'The city mission is a rare opportunity for pastoral care.'

"The time has come, the kingdom of God is near, repent and believe the good news" (Mk. 1:14-15). This proclamation of Jesus captures the central theme in his preaching. It makes clear that the Kingdom of God requires repentance through acceptance of the Gospel, which has power to transform human lives. This requires that the motive of the church, and indeed of ministry, must be to portray and help to realise the coming of the Kingdom of God. Hughes and Bennett (1998:25) comment "The kingdom of God has become a central theme in the biblical underpinning given to much Christian action against poverty. For many the fight against poverty is an integral part of the coming of God's kingdom on earth." The term "Kingdom of God" means both the actual rule and sovereignty of God in the world as its Creator and Sustainer, and the universal acceptance of that divine rule at the completion of history.

Groome (1980:38) notes "God's vision for all creation, then, is that it will come perfectly under God's reign, which is to be a kingdom of peace and justice, wholeness and completion, happiness and freedom." Verkuyl (1978:198) further comments "The Kingdom of God is that new order of affairs begun in Christ which finally completed by him, will involve a proper restoration not only of man's relationship to God but also of those between sexes, generations, races, and even between man and nature."

The complete happiness and freedom of the Kingdom of God is the goal of church and mission as a whole; as such, it is also the goal of the CCAP. The complete reign of God has already arrived in the person of Jesus Christ in his work and ministry, as this becomes the effective agent in the world. In Jesus, God acted to bring about the definitive arrival of the Kingdom. Thus not only does Jesus preach the Kingdom, he ties its coming to his own person and ministry. He points to his miracles as physical, visible signs of the Kingdom's arrival. Through its hermeneutical concern, the holistic theory can make the difference in investigating the impact of Christ's miracles in the lives of people.

It is for this reason that John in prison sent messengers to ask him, "Are you He who is to come or do we look for another? Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: the blind recover their sight, cripples walk, lepers are cured, the deaf hear, dead men are raised to life, and the poor have the good news preached to them" (Mt. 11:3-5). Jesus' ministry was holistic in nature: spiritual and physical needs were all addressed.

God sent the church to preach the coming of this Kingdom to the whole world. Again, Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 20:21-22). Bartlett (1993:97) comments "Overall, then, the notion of 'being sent' in John's Gospel suggests that the disciples are related to Jesus as Jesus is related to his Father."

The church must continue making the Kingdom available through the proclamation of the Word. It must continue to pray the Lord's Prayer, "... thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10). Offering this prayer implies that Christians make a difference to the world, that things need not remain as they are. It implies having a vision of a new society and working for it as though it is attainable. It means, in other words, getting involved in God's mission in the world and calling people to faith in Christ, not only so that they may come to sing hymns in church, but also that they, the community of those who have enjoyed a foretaste of perfection, should share in the mission of transforming the world (Bosch 1978:244). For this to happen, the church must seek to implement holistic proclamation of the word, not only emphasizing the preaching while neglecting the church's presence in the cities and urban communities.

The Kingdom is only attainable in Jesus Christ and the church if its pastors and all the believers are God's servants. This has personal implications, for the church as well as society.

### 1.9.1 PERSONAL IMPLICATIONS

People are invited in a specific manner to accept Jesus Christ through repentance and conversion. The Kingdom must always begin in the hearts of its members; without such a conversion it cannot be embodied in social realities. Groome (1980:46) notes "This conversion is to be a constant turning toward God by turning toward our neighbour. Above all other demands the kingdom places on us is the radical mandate of love as preached by Jesus." As applied to Malawi, this approach will enable the church to address the challenges of urban

poverty as, through repentance and conversion, the rich and the poor see themselves as partners in ministry implementation.

### **1.9.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE CHURCH**

To be faithful to the teaching of Jesus, the church must exist for the sake of the Kingdom. For the church, as a social institution, to emulate the Kingdom of God, it will have to embody within its own structures the values it preaches; preaching alone will not be enough. Groome (1980:47) comments "The church will have to harness its ministry and whole way of being in the world toward helping to create social/political/economic structures that are capable of promoting the values of the kingdom." The goal is the elimination of oppressive social and political structures, and the proclamation of the Gospel through love and continued search for Kingdom core values. In so doing, the CCAP will make the desired impact on the lives of ordinary urban dwellers.

### **1.9.3 IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIETY**

God's Kingdom on Earth functions as a judgement upon social, political, economic and cultural structures. Groome (1980:48) quotes a pastoral constitution of the church in the modern world by the Second Vatican Council, which reads, "With respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour ... is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent." This statement points out that the social implication of the Kingdom for us as individuals, as part of the Christian community, and as members of a larger society, is that we contribute our part, within our context, to promote the justice, peace, and freedom for all that is the promise of the Kingdom.

### **1.10 RESEARCH METHODS FOR THE CHAPTERS**

This section documents different congregational research methods (techniques) implemented in the process of researching information for this study. Each chapter had a research method or methods focused on a particular unit of analysis, as a social entity, through which congregational information was gathered.

### ***Chapter 1: The Malawian urban context***

In the first chapter of this study, several subsections have been attended to. The purpose was to define the five components of the topic of the study, orientate the reader on the historical background and geographical position of Malawi and the social position and contextuality of the researcher. Also documented in the chapter is the urbanization in Malawi and the challenges urban Malawi is experiencing due to urbanization effects. Four relational hypotheses were formulated to guide the research and the chapter was concluded with the discussions on ministry as a hermeneutical exegesis of word and context and ministry as a servant of the kingdom of God.

Research methods used:

- Various books on the historical and geographical background of Malawi, on mission, on the formation of Malawi's urban context, and on the background and development of practical theology were researched.
- Research on Practical Theology and research methodology were studied and applied.

### ***Chapter 2: The existing ministry practice in Malawi***

In this chapter the existing ministry practice of the CCAP, in relation to multiple ministry approaches introduced by missionaries, will be discussed. The purpose of this chapter will be to examine the existing deficiencies in the ministry of the CCAP. The process will assist in the development of the holistic model in an attempt to address the urbanization challenges. The new urban context created by the urbanization effects calls for the church to redesign ministry approaches taking into consideration the current urban situation.

Research methods will be:

- Evaluating the present ministry of the CCAP through researching historical documents of four congregations in Lilongwe and Nkhoma Synod offices.
- Conducting participatory research in Lilongwe urban congregations. During this process the researcher will make efforts to interview different groups of church members with a special emphasis on those people living in the shantytowns and slums surrounding Lilongwe city.

### ***Chapter 3: Analyzing the situation in Malawian cities***

In this chapter an analysis of the poverty scenario in the Malawian cities will be described and presented. In addition, the results of analyses of two South African areas (Cape Peninsula and Orlando East in Soweto) will also be documented.

Research methods will be:

- Researching valuable information in literature and documentary reports at Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu City Assemblies.
- Conducting participatory research with people in Malawi's squatter settlements, people of Orlando East in Soweto and men standing on the side of the road in the Cape Peninsula.
- Carrying out direct observation during the participatory research. These methods are generally used to collect data in the category of human behaviour and social interaction; this includes observable characteristics such as physical locality, non-verbal behaviour and stature.

### ***Chapter 4: Urban poverty and the poor***

This chapter will deal with the extent of poverty in Malawi and a description of Christian views of the poor. The chapter will also attempt to define poverty, describe the causes of poverty, and discuss the vocation of the urban church and the importance of ministry sustainability.

Research methods will be:

- Implementing direct observation principles to collect data in the category of human behaviour and social interaction; this includes observable characteristics such as physical locality, non-verbal behaviour and stature.
- Reviewing literature on practical theology and research methodology to be studied and applied.
- Carrying out semi-structured and structured interviews with church leaders, leaders of local squatter settlements and ordinary slum dwellers.

### ***Chapter 5: Different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas***

The chapter will describe different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas. The purpose is to assess whether the approaches being used are indeed addressing the poverty challenges adequately and holistically.

Research methods will be:

- Researching various books on liberation theology, and different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas.

***Chapter 6: A theory for doing urban ministry***

This chapter will be dedicated to developing a model for urban ministry in Malawi as well as in all other African countries. A ministry model with ten pillars based on the principles of an holistic hermeneutical practical theology will be applied. The model will focus on the human being as an indivisible entity – soul and body forming a unity out of the diversity. The holistic model will view practical theology as a process which opposes docetic theologies that compartmentalize the spiritual and the physical, thus shrinking the concerns of the church to the private spiritual needs of its members.

Research methods will be:

- Researching archival or documentary sources at Nkhoma Synod offices and in four urban congregations in Lilongwe.
- Carrying out direct observation and semi-structured interviews with church members in four urban congregations in Lilongwe city.
- Conducting a two-day ministers' workshop in Lilongwe at Dzenza CCAP. The workshop will assist in defining the roles of the church and the different development practitioners to jointly address the problem of the slums.

***Chapter 7: Summary and conclusion***

This chapter will document the summary and conclusion of the study. In the process it will describe the usefulness of the study hypotheses, the study methodology used for each chapter, the study path and results (summary of the chapters), the study's contribution to the existing knowledge, and the study conclusion.

## 1.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Chapter one documented the Malawian urban context. The five components of this study's topic "Urban poverty as a challenge for ministry within the Malawian [African] context," and the developed ministry theory "Holistic hermeneutical practical theology" were described and defined.

The Malawian historical background and geographical position were also documented. The aim was to orientate the reader about the geographical position of the country, Malawi, in the Southern African Region. It described how the missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa brought the Gospel to Malawi towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

When the missionaries brought the Gospel to Malawi, there were no cities. The process of urbanization in Malawi has brought negative effects: secularism, poverty, pollution and disorientation. As a result, four challenges face the CCAP: the implication of the formation of cities for ministry in the cities, cultural disorientation, the two-city scenarios and the fact that cities attract various world religions.

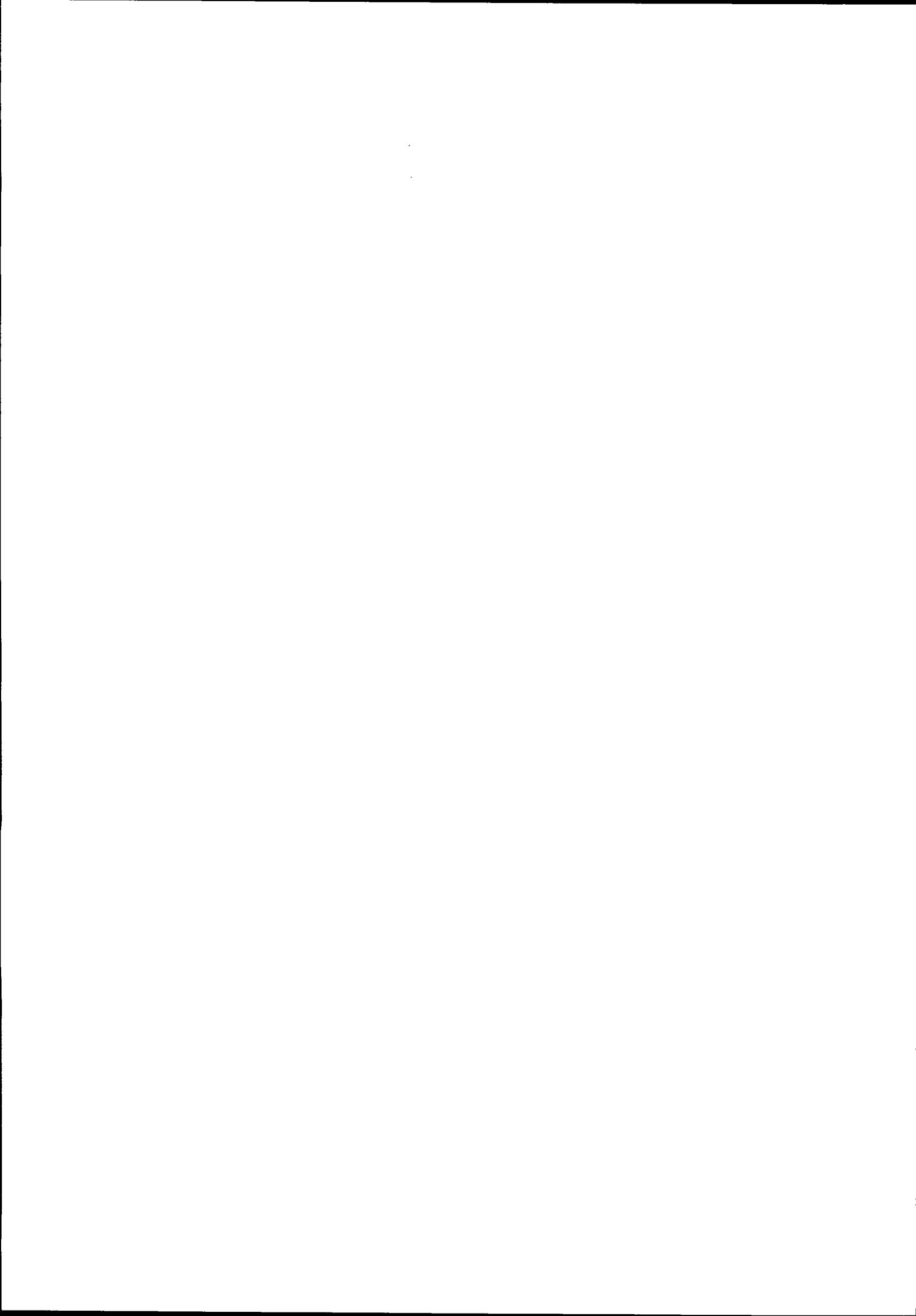
Section 1.7 of the chapter formulated and documented four relational hypotheses to guide the research. These hypotheses are:

1. Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.
2. Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can be successful only if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.
3. A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address the problems of urban poverty.
4. At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, it is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the problems and challenges of urban ministry.

Ministry as a hermeneutical exegesis of Word and context has been described in section 1.8. The purpose of documenting and defining ministry is to enable and orientate the church

leadership in order to implement practical theology by first describing the situation of the congregation and then to correlate that situation with the congregation's faith and belief. Doing theology this way will enable the CCAP in Malawi to redefine its ministry ethos in such a way so as to be hermeneutically sensitive. In the process of developing this section the first hypothesis was examined and affirmed. The hypothesis calls for developing an effective urban ministry that meaningfully addresses the challenges that face urban poor in the Malawian cities.

In section 1.9 "Ministry, as a servant of the Kingdom of God" has been documented. It has been stated that the church must continue to make the Kingdom available through the proclamation of the Word. God sent the church to preach the coming of His Kingdom to the whole world in word and deed. Jesus affirmed this when he sent his disciples to preach the Good News to the world (Jn. 20-21-22). The different implications for ministry (personal, congregational and societal) have been described. The discussion of the research methods, which will be followed for the development of each dissertation chapter, concluded the first chapter. The fourth hypothesis was effective in the process of developing the section. It calls for: empowering and equipping the laity to identify and address the problems of the urban ministry.



## **Chapter 2**

### **The existing ministry practice in the Nkhoma Synod**

#### **2.0 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter examines the existing ministry practice of Malawi's CCAP Nkhoma Synod.

Among the areas viewed are:

- The multiple approach to ministry introduced by DRC missionaries
- The manner in which the Nkhoma Synod blended the ministry into a Chewa context
- The limitations of the Reformed model
- The legitimization of the political order
- The need to ordain women in church leadership, and
- The challenges and influence of Pentecostal movements in urban centres.

#### **2.1 THE MULTIPLE APPROACH TO THE WORK OF MISSION AND CHURCH**

The importance of the first hypothesis is further discussed in this chapter. The hypothesis states:

- Its rural background and ministry theory prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) missionaries from South Africa came to Malawi at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to initiate and implement a multiple approach to ministry as the model for the Nkhoma Church. The approach emphasized a holistic approach to the needs of people: proclamation of the Gospel, education, medical work, and industrial and literary work. It later became known as the "Comprehensive Approach" or "Multiple Approach."

This approach was implemented at mission centres, and taught at the William Murray Teacher Training College. Kamwana (1998:33) reports "Along with the training of teachers, the students were also trained as bricklayers, carpenters, craftsmen, and in agriculture or animal husbandry." Pauw (1980:134) reports "Formal agriculture training was incorporated in all educational work, from the small village school all the way up to the Teachers Training

Institute. In addition formal industrial training was also introduced and conducted in connection with the Normal School at Nkhoma.”

At a later stage a separate training school was established with a multi-dimensional skills development programme. The aim was to prepare the Malawian students themselves to conduct and implement a holistic ministry. Kamwana (1998:33) notes

In 1923 an Agriculture and Industrial School was started, offering a three-year course in a variety of handicraft, including agriculture, animal husbandry, carpentry, building, shoe making, smith work, spinning and weaving, and first aid. In due course agriculture and carpentry became the two main activities of this school.

The missionaries introduced this comprehensive ministry approach to the early leaders of Nkhoma Synod, but met with resistance from some within the family of Reformed theologians who felt that the approach could jeopardise Gospel proclamation, the main task of the church. Pauw (1980:146) writes

To this, Reformed theologians amongst others, have objected, stating that *kerygma*, the proclamation of Word of God, is the primary task of mission. In the DRC of South Africa an early emphasis of this is found in the teaching of J du Plessis: The purpose which mission sets for itself is the Christianising of the World, and the only instrument which he uses ... is the Word of God. Du Plessis's statement is typical of theologians who understood ministry as a movement from “theory to practice.

This view dominated the old way of doing theology; theologians feared that in the process of addressing the physical needs of people, the church could depart from its central calling of making disciples through Gospel proclamation.

In time a new way of doing theology emerged, which moves from practice to theory and back to practice, prompted by the changing context in which the church proclaims the good news. Hendriks's description (1999:5) is quoted once again: “This way of doing theology emerged, prompted by the fact that the world is changing so fast that individual believers and their faith communities are continually confronted with new questions and challenges.” This approach is the basis for implementing a ministry that seeks to address physical and spiritual needs in a holistic and effective way.

## 2.2 BLENDING THE MISSIONARY APPROACH INTO A CHEWA CONTEXT

This section deals with the third hypothesis of this study. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

In the process of blending the missionary approach into the Chewa context, the emphasis shifted towards “saving the soul” while neglecting the physical needs. This happened after the missionaries had introduced the comprehensive ministry approach. The problem underlying this could be the same as mentioned by Pauw (1980:146), quoted above. Just as the introduction of a comprehensive ministry approach was met with some resistance in South African DRC circles, the early leaders of the Nkhoma Synod also felt that the process could jeopardise Gospel proclamation.

It should be understood that the kind of theology currently generally being implemented in Africa, and Malawi in particular, is of western making. According to Mwakanandi (1990:180), “Such theology, even though it has been taught in Africa for decades, remains foreign theology because its roots are elsewhere.” As a result, such theology often fails to make an impact on the lives of people, because it does not adequately take into consideration the traditional moral and religious thought-forms and practices. Mwakanandi continues “The result was that a superficial Christian faith struck root in the hearts of the majority of Africans, while deep down the old beliefs still lingered on.”

This type of approach made it difficult for the church to adequately address the physical needs and realities of the local Malawians; the missionary approach to ministry had to be blended into the local Chewa context. In order to do this, cultural dynamics were challenged and re-interpreted in the light of the Gospel, and a ministerial approach with an emphasis on spiritual salvation (neglecting the physical needs) was developed in Nkhoma Synod.

Rev. JS Mwale was one of the early ministers of the Nkhoma Synod, and was taught by the missionaries. Under their guidance he articulated and implemented theology in the Chewa context, as recorded by Kamwana (1998:41) in his *The spirituality of Rev JS Mwale. Minister of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Nkhoma Synod*:

Rev. Mwale received his theological training at Nkhoma Theological College. While there, Mwale was tutored by the Revs. JW Minnaar and JJD Stegman, who profoundly influenced his ministry. Aspirant ministers learnt from them a life of devotion, orderly presentation of sermons, punctuality, preparation before preaching and the life of prayer. They were taught to pray very early in the morning. It became clear to Mwale that, before speaking to man, he must speak first with God.

Such training equipped Rev. Mwale with inspiration and zeal for ministry. Kamwana (1998:44) notes

He was a minister of churches located in the Chewa villages. He lived and operated in a wider community. Other than the missionaries who lived on the mission stations, he lived according to Christian convictions in the Chewa structured society ... the Spirit of Jesus made Mwale a humble and influential leader of the Achewa people in a spiritual sense. He has always enjoyed much respect, both from his fellow ministers and the people around him because of his vision and commitment. He is considered a practical example of how a Malawian Christian should be.

Kamwana (1998:34) records missionary William Murray's parting advice to Mwale:

The missionary said to him: Josophat, I am going back to South Africa, but I expect to see many people in the Kingdom of God .... You must, therefore, take this task of preaching very seriously. These words rang and still ring like a bell in his head... he dedicated himself anew to God with the promise that not a day shall pass without speaking or witnessing to someone the Word of God.

Rev. Mwale played a crucial role in the early years of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. Kamukhwani (1990:125) quotes Mwale "The true foundation of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod is the Word of God which the missionaries concentrated on and gave us to full." His approach to spiritual salvation has been followed until today. Kamwana (1998:125) remarks "Mwale lived a practical life, what he preached was reflected in his own life. It was typical of Mwale to seek doing the will of God. He had no time for himself, he spent all active life doing the work of the Lord." A further development of Mwale's contribution will appear in a subsequent section.

### 2.2.1 THEOLOGY AND CONTEXT IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER

This section further deals with "practical theology" as defined above, in chapter 1, section 6: "Practical theology moves from life to faith and then back to life (practice to theory to practice)."

Commenting on the importance of inculturation, Daneel, in *The missionary outreach of African Independent Churches* (1980), contrasted the mission approach to salvation with that

found in African Independent Churches and found the former lacking in impact. Daneel (1980:50) states

The missionary readily proclaimed a Gospel of the soul's salvation, but appeared to be silent on issues of politics, man's physical needs and his daily struggle for survival. Looking at it from the holistic African point of view this moralistic Gospel did not spell out convincingly the salvation of the entire man. It was insufficiently related to the perplexities caused by illness and misfortune. Neither did it seem to hold much hope for liberation from oppressive colonial structures, within which Africans found themselves, and which missionaries appeared to represent and even perpetuated.

People are culturally bound, making the process of blending mission work into Chewa culture crucial, as Musopole in Fiedler *et al* (1996/7:10) points out:

Even as we seek universalism in theology, we need to remember that theology is always culturally bound. There is no theology, which is culture free, and this is how things should be. We all come out of a cultural context ... Culture is the pot in which we can cook African theology.

Bediako (1992:6) affirms "We need therefore a religious model for the study of religion of African religions .... African primal religions form part of the common spiritual heritage of mankind."

In this discussion, the process of blending missions into a Chewa context is the point at which the church meets the world in the lives of the laity. The traditional religion of the Chewas permeates all areas of life; there is no formal distinction between the sacred and the secular. The Chewa people are concerned with ideas, such as God, spirit, human life, magic, witchcraft and the hereafter, including the position of the ancestor's spirits in the spiritual world. Mwanandi (1990:11) underscores this when he notes "To define religion as a separate entity in the life of the African in general, is rather difficult, since religion and everyday life form a unity."

### **2.2.2 THE CHEWA RELIGIOUS COSMOGONY**

This section discusses further the holistic African view of reality as envisaged in uMunthu in sections 1.6.1 and 1.8.2.

The Chewa belong to the Bantu peoples of Africa and are found in Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. The Chewa in Malawi is the group, which used cosmogonic religious account. Kawale (1998:5) affirms "... it is the Chewa in Malawi who used the cosmogonic account for

ideological purposes .... The Chewa form the largest cultural community in Malawi constituting 50% of the population of over ten million people ...."

The Chewa cosmogony, Gulewankulu, together with several rites of passage, form part of the Chewa culture. Therefore, doing theology in the Chewa culture should take note of these religious aspects. The researcher does not intend to enter into a theological debate regarding cosmogonic and cosmology's concepts of God in Chewa traditional religion, Scholars, such as Kawale (1998:19-49) and Chakanza (1987:4-10), provide useful information.

Regarding cosmogony: Kawale's (1998:8) definition of the term follows: "The absolute beginning or origin of the material world .... It is concerned with the origin of the entire material world and the relationship between the originators, that is, the creator God or gods and the originated nature in Genesis 1: 1-2, 4a ..." The Chewa cosmogonies are functional because they were formulated in human societies, which in the process provided a number of realities: a character for social morality in that they enhance, express and codify the social morality of the community (Kawale 1998:8). Musopole in Fielder *et al* (1996/7:28) affirms "Community has to do with our relationship to other human beings. It is in community that our uMunthu is actualized as an inseparable and yet individuated Munthu."

In other African societies, ancestors are concerned with the fertility of their descendants, the fertility of the soil and the availability of good weather upon which the former two are dependent. Because of their close association with the living and their proximity to God, the ancestral spirits are considered as intermediaries between God and man. In commenting about the way Tswana people (in Botswana) worship their ancestors, Amanze in Fiedler *et al* (1996/7:64) notes

The Biblical image of Christ as Mediator and Intercessor (Heb 7:25; I Tim 2:5) finds its strongest support in the African concept of ancestors among Tswana. The ancestors (badimo) have always assumed the role of mediators, intermediaries, intercessors and go-between God in heaven and people here below. No one can approach Modimo except through the badimo.

Churches in Tswana society could make offerings to the ancestor's spirits asking them to take people's prayers to God. Amanze in Fiedler *et al* (1996/7:73) states

Before the church came to Botswana, Tswana had a strong belief in their ancestor spirits who acted as intermediaries between them and God. The arrival of the Bible did not abrogate the role of the ancestors as intermediaries but provided an additional channel of communication with God.

Malawi's Chewa culture differed in that Chewa people believed in the existence of God. Kawale (1998:22) confirms "Most of the Chewa religious traditions show that the Chewa believe in the existence of a High God *Mulungu* or *Chiuta* and in the rain god *Chisumphu* and his consort the goddess *Chauta*." The most important Chewa cosmogonic narrative is called "Kaphirintiwa Myth." This narrative describes the creation of heaven, earth, humans, rain and vegetation. Kawale (1998:20) comments "The Kaphirintiwa narrative has played a very important role in Chewa society. Some of its components have been dramatized or re-enacted in Chewa rituals ...." These rituals and other Chewa cultural practices formed part of the Chewa culture that foreign missionaries as well as the local church leaders faced at the time of blending the Nkhoma Synod ministry.

Kamwana (1998:49) states "Mwale takes a strong stand against certain religious ideas and practices of the Chewa, especially as they are related to ancestors and their worship. Explaining the Christian faith, he starts with the Chewa beliefs. His exposition is that of an evangelist." Rev Mwale managed to override the ancestor worship because he made it transparent that such worship was without saving power. His concern in this respect was to bring the Gospel to his people so that they may believe and be saved from their sinful ways by the blood of Jesus (Kamwana 1998:47).

### 2.2.3 GULEWAMKULU (NYAU)

The Gulewamkulu (Nyau) cult poses the greatest challenge to the church. Traditionally, it is a secret institution associated with Chewa traditional religion and is closed to all females and non-initiated males. Kamwana (1998:53) notes "It is a cult which is detrimental to Christianity and education. Members who belong to the society do not bother to educate their children nor send them to church." Pauw (1980:168) states "One of the largest problems affecting education was the Nyau cult which was still very strong in many parts of the country. A growing tension developing between Church and Mission on one hand, the Nyau cult and its supporters on the other hand ...."

The Gulewamkulu continues to be a problem. Pauw (1994:74-75) notes in an article in *Afro-Christianity at the grassroots*,

Nyau remains very much alive even to this day. The conflict between Nyau and Christianity created such a degree of polarisation that there was little scope for something between. A person was either a committed church member or entirely on the side of Nyau and traditional religion.

This was the environment in which the Nkhoma Synod developed its ministry theory.

There are at least three factors, which influenced the Nkhoma Synod as it developed a ministry ethos and approach to the Chewa people:

- i. The Chewa cultural beliefs and dynamics (ancestor worship, *Gulewamkulu*, and rites of passage) required a clear-cut distinction between Christianity and cultural beliefs. The benefit is an opportunity for people to be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ as distinct from worshipping ancestors and other beliefs (*Gulewamkulu*), which have no power to transform the human mind.
- ii. The proclamation of the Gospel is a Biblical mandate according to which the church makes disciples throughout the world. With this in mind, it was inevitable that the church would emphasize the proclamation of the Gospel as a ministry model. Paul says "... if you confess with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved" (Rom.10: 9).
- iii. In rural areas, poverty was not a particularly serious concern; people farmed and were largely self-sufficient. Urban centres, however, presented different challenges demanding the Church's attention, as a result of the effects of urbanization.

Rev. Mwale made unique contributions towards implementing local theology. He was an effective preacher and a prolific writer, as suggested by this bibliography:

- i. *Chiyero cha tsiku la Sabata* ("The Holiness of the Sabbath"). The Sabbath is a day set aside for private prayers, Bible study, and coming together of families. It is a special day for witnessing to Christ. (Mwale 1949 Nkhoma).
- ii. *Moyo ndi ntchito za akuluampingo ndi atumiki* ("Life and work of Church elders and deacons"). This book captured Christ's theological thought. Elders are urged to abstain from every form of evil. (Mwale 1979 Nkhoma).
- iii. *Makhalidwe a Mkhristu* ("The conduct or behaviour of a Christian"). (Mwale 1989 Nkhoma).
- iv. *Makwerero a chipulumutso* ("The ladders of salvation"). This book is an exposition of *buku la Katekesima*. It deals in detail with the topic of salvation. Kamwana (1998:117) notes "Mwale stresses the fact that for man to be saved he must first of all

know that he is a sinner. He must repent of his sins, and receive the salvation of Jesus Christ.” (Mwale 1989 Nkhoma).

These books helped to mobilize the propagation of the salvation model to all the congregations within the jurisdiction of the Nkhoma Synod. The leadership at all levels (ministers, elders, and deacons), as well as ordinary Christians, regarded the books as essential documents, next to the Scriptures. Departing from any teaching of the books was, to some extent, regarded as backsliding. Mwale's spirituality became deeply rooted in the lives of ordinary Christians and followers.

In order to ensure that the whole church leadership observed Mwale's teaching, the books became part of the curriculum at Namoni Katengeza Lay Training Centre. At this institution, people at various levels of leadership throughout the Synod periodically come to be oriented and receive necessary instructions and skills.

Rev. Mwale took over the leadership of the Church from the missionaries as early as 1960 and became the first Malawian Moderator, serving in this capacity until 1972. When the time came, the Synod did not accept his retirement so as to enable him to continue to work in some key areas needing attention. Kamwana (1998:42) comments “Mwale was sent to Chongoni Church Lay Training Centre to help in teaching ministers stewardship and winning people to Christ. In 1988 he was brought to Nkhoma Mission where he has become an example and a symbol of a preacher and a teacher ....”

Rev. Mwale learned his approach to ministry from the missionaries and, as was later advocated, this had a profound impact on the Church he served. Kamwana (1998:59) says

God has used him to influence the Church of Nkhoma Synod in terms of evangelical-puritan and pietistic thinking. He is a Puritan, inclined to the legalism typical of both the missionary counterparts and African Chewa religious practice and belief. His emphasis on Bible reading and prayer distinguishes him greatly.

Rev. Mwale's Puritanism sometimes made him lose sight of people's physical needs, which are intrinsically equal to their spiritual needs. According to Kamwana (1998:58), “Mwale is in life-style a conservative Puritan as only an African, a Malawian, can be. For example, he is strictly against alcoholic drinks. Anything from a bottle he regards as alcoholic! He does not even drink Fanta or Coca Cola.” Mwale's biased approach to ministry led to the seeking of

winning people for Christ with no regard to their physical needs. He also showed scant regard for his own physical needs.

It is reported that he refused a car donated as a gift to assist his mobility, which Kamwana (1998:113) confirms “The former youth minister of Nkhoma Synod, Rev. AE Mndala tells how the missionaries seeing Mwale’s responsibility, decided to give him a car. Mwale upon hearing such, thanked them for their kind gesture but observed in Chichewa *‘Pa zimene Mulungu afuna kundipatsa galimoto palibe,’* meaning, ‘among the things that God wants to give me there is no car.’ Humble as he is, there is no sign that he wants to possess a car or condemns those who have cars.”

Although Mwale did not view the physical needs of people as important as the spiritual, he is a man dedicated to God. Kamwana (1998: 125) says

Mwale humbled himself, witnessing that he is nothing before men and God, except a slave of God. A very faithful and obedient slave. He showed his faith and dedication as having no home of his own. Having nowhere to go except to rely on the providence of God, and to do the will of the master ....

### **2.3 LIMITATION OF THE REFORMED-/SALVATION-CENTRED MODEL**

The second and the fourth study hypotheses are further examined in this section. The hypotheses state:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry;
- The CCAP continues to operate within a clerical paradigm, as a result the church is unable to empower and equip the laity to address urban challenges.

The limitation of the Reformed model comes about as a result of not involving ordinary people who are most affected by challenges regarding poverty in ministry management.

The church in Malawi continues to put considerable emphasis on urging all believers to take Bible study seriously. Kamwana (1998:75) reports “The Church in Malawi, in order to encourage its members to read Scripture for themselves, made available to them the Bible study book known as *Buku la Mlozo.*”

It is certainly not wrong for the church to provide a book to encourage Bible study. But the book distribution is typical of the Reformed/salvation model of soul-care, a model which in its lacking emphasis on material needs, leads to shortcomings when applied in an African context.

### 2.3.1 REFORMED/SALVATION MODEL

In his book, *A pastoral hermeneutics of care and encounter*, Louw discusses the Reformed model by way of quoting Thurneysen. Louw (1998:25-26) observes "Thurneysen emphasizes the dimension of proclamation in pastoral care. His standpoint implies that soul-care should be viewed as an extension of proclamation of the Word, which is focused on the sanctification of human life."

This approach focuses on the spiritual needs of a person through Gospel proclamation. But a human being also has physical needs requiring the church's attention if it is to follow the example of Jesus Christ, who addressed the people's spiritual and physical needs holistically. Commenting on a holistic approach to ministry, Mwakanandi (1990:149) states "It implies the proclamation and realization of a total salvation, one which covers the whole range of human needs ... setting a person free as far as possible from every evil and grief, spiritual, mental, social, physical suffering, hunger, poverty, economic exploitation and political injustice." Such an approach is important in that it seeks to address the challenge of urban poverty through the involvement and participation of the people, themselves.

In the Gospel according to Luke 9:10-17, we read that Jesus welcomed the crowds and spoke to them about the Kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing. In reaction to the request of the disciples to send the people away so that they could find food, Jesus turned to the disciples and said, "You give them something to eat" (Lk. 9:13a). A total of five thousand people were fed. Jesus demonstrated that it was the disciples' and his responsibility to meet the physical needs of the people, along with the preaching of the Good News. Bosch (1991:405) comments "... evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty. For both are necessary expressions of our doctrines of God and man, our love for our neighbour and our obedience to Jesus Christ."

In addition to maturity of faith, people should be empowered to meaningfully resolve human sufferings, which surface due to injustice and mere greed. This approach further argues that to proclaim only the Gospel, without empowering the people to defend themselves from exploitation and other oppressive measures, is to allow people to pose as targets for evil systems. Such a model is inadequate. If practical theology is to help churches to unmask the pretences of secular value structures and the seductive injustices of capitalist and market economics, then it must work in two languages: the language behind the wall and the language for use on the wall (Fowler 1995:9).

#### **2.4 THE LEGITIMIZATION OF THE POLITICAL ORDER**

The section continues the argument of chapter 1, section 1.1.3, which defines the practice of practical theology ministry: "This approach to the ministry requires the full participation of the people in evaluating the results when they apply their insights in action, returning to the Bible and Christian tradition to once again reshape and work on their answers."

The emphasis on the salvation model, as documented above in section 2.3.1, is also examined in this section. As a result of the CCAP's biased ministry to "soul care," this led to the church's legitimization of the political order. This caused much suffering and many people paid very dearly.

The church in Malawi was deeply involved in the independence movement; many of the Malawian leaders were educated at mission schools and were thus products of Christian schooling and influence. Because of this close link, the church supported the political activists of the independence struggle. Christians in the church remained linked to the new political order, and once independence was achieved, the church remained loyal to the political party and leaders that it had supported, turning a blind eye to evils in the government and country at large. Priggis (1998:12) notes

Every Sunday in churches all denomination leaders prayed for the long life and prosperity of the dictator, Kamuzu Banda, who was ruthlessly exploiting and brutally oppressing the people. At every national occasion church leaders were present to provide religious legitimisation for the actions of President Banda.

With this linkage, the church concerned herself only with Gospel proclamation, to the neglect of the defenceless and the poverty-stricken. The church had forgotten her task of acting as a check and balance to the political administration – being accountable to God rather than to a

government. The church needs to be prophetic both in the proclamation of the Gospel and in addressing life's issues.

Today, the Malawian urban church is in the process of developing a prophetic voice; a process with its roots in Malawi's struggle for independence. In 1992 the Catholic Bishops wrote a pastoral letter to President Hastings Banda, denouncing the ills and evils with which people were afflicted by the political order. The pastoral letter, entitled, "Living our Faith," proved to be a turning point in Malawi's history, and led to the events, which eventually brought down the 30-year rule.

The ruling Congress Party was furious. It responded with a vicious attack on the Catholic Church through an article in the *Malawi News*, which stated flatly, "We shall not tolerate any church to meddle in Malawi politics. The pulpit should be distinct from the political platform."

Catholic Archbishop Theunissen responded: "If the peaceful appearance of a new democratic party based on natural human rights and Christian principles has enraged so much the Malawi Congress Party, it can but be because human rights and Christian principles, justice and charity, are most inconvenient to them."

#### 2.4.1 THE PASTORAL LETTER AND THE AFTERMATH

Passages from the pastoral letter is documented to orientate the reader on the level of human sufferings, as the result of the church's one-sided approach to ministry.

Many people still live in circumstances, which are hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Their life is a struggle for survival. At the same time a minority enjoys the fruits of development and can live in luxury and wealth .... Nobody should ever have to suffer reprisals for honestly expressing and living up to their convictions: intellectual, religious or political. We can only regret that this is not always the case in our country .... Academic freedom is seriously restricted; exposing injustices can be considered a betrayal; revealing some evils of our society is seen as slandering the country; monopoly of mass media and censorship prevent the expression of dissenting views; some people have paid dearly for their political opinions; access to public places like markets and hospitals, bus depots etc., is frequently denied to those who cannot produce a party card; forced donations have become a way of life.

With this pastoral letter, the church in Malawi accepted its prophetic responsibility to comment on the political situation. Priggis (1998:13) notes "The churches have made a point

of serving as 'watch dogs' both cautioning principal political actors and contributing to the national political discourse."

It should be noted that Nkhoma Synod did not openly take part in the democratisation process; many in the Synod were close to the MCP and therefore struggled to develop the objectivity necessary to offer the new Malawi a prophetic critique. Although individual Christians from the Synod participated deeply in the process of change, the Synod did not encourage the move; Nkhoma Synod remained loyal to the political party and leaders that it supported since independence. The Synod's membership was suspended from the Malawi Council of Churches as their relationship made it difficult for Nkhoma Synod to deal with the conflict between personal loyalties and a prophetic ministry.

Since democratisation, however, the church has undertaken its responsibility to hold the government accountable. Ross (1996:214) advises "It is the church's mission to preach the Gospel which affects the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation be it hunger, ignorance, blindness, despair, paralysing fear ...." To enhance its role as a check on the political order, the church has established a Public Affairs Committee (PAC).

One of the key functions of the PAC is to enable churches to address issues of national interest with a common voice (Priggis 1998:12-13). In this fashion the church now seeks to deliver its Christian witness holistically. The church can now proclaim the Gospel and, at the same time, ensure the implementation of the Gospel through the physical liberation of its people. That the church is now interested in the day-to-day realities of people by holding the principal political actors accountable, in addition to proclaiming the Gospel, is no small commitment to the discipleship commission.

## 2.5 THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CCAP NKHOMA SYNOD

This section further deals with the study's second and fourth hypotheses:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can be successful only if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.
- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and as such is unable to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

The women in the CCAP are achieving a notable ministry because they implement ministry holistically. In their approach to ministry, women are free to make decisions and take part in Women's Guild proceedings. The researcher is in agreement with Runyowa *et al* (2001) research and conclusions on the importance of the role of women in creating sustainable livelihoods. Runyowa *et al* (2001:532) concludes "It is clear that women are one of the most unrecognized and underutilized groups .... They play an integral role in the church in Africa, being one of the major resources of social capital." This way of doing ministry is in line with the second hypothesis of the study, which emphasizes a holistic approach to ministry. This should cause the church to empower the laity to address the challenges and problems of the urban slums.

Women in the Nkhoma Synod form the largest part of its membership, though their participation in church life is limited to *Chigwilizano* (Women's Guild) activities. Yet, even in such activities, their impact is often greater than that of the men. In the Nkhoma Synod, no female has yet been elevated to a leadership position of an elder or a deacon. In Blantyre and Livingstonia, sister CCAP Synods, women are ordained to the positions of elders and deacons; Livingstonia Synod even has an ordained female minister.

The misinterpretation of some key biblical passages contributed largely to the development of a theology, which rejected the full participation of women in the leadership and management of church activities. In Mwale's interpretation of Genesis 3:1-16, woman brought sin forth: *Pakuti uchimo uli onse utulukira mwa mkazi*. In this process, a woman is regarded as a source of evil practice and desires. This negative connotation is partly cultural, partly inadequate scriptural analysis. Kamwana (1998:72) notes "Important is the fact that Mwale does not

analyse the Bible. He simply accepts it in a direct sense, without trying to reconcile or argue its contents. He accepts all the miracles are real; he does not question them from a scientific point of view.”

Mwale's theology regarding women and sin makes it very hard, of course, for Nkhoma to ordain women. A book authored by Mwale, *Moyo ndi ntchito za akuluampingo ndi atumiki* (Life and work of church elders and deacons) is used by the Nkhoma Synod as part of the scriptural canon; it clearly reflects Mwale's approach, as well as the opinion of the DRC missionaries, as perceived by the Malawian mind (Kamwana 1998:114).

The role of women in the Nkhoma Synod has historic roots. During the early years of the DRC mission in Malawi, the education of girls was inferior to that of boys in many ways. In *African women in religion and culture* (1997), Isabel Phiri warns

In order for one [a girl] to qualify to be admitted at the hostels, one had to be at least twelve years old and should have the permission of one's parents. This meant that girls who wanted an education, but had parents against it, had no chance of going to school. It is interesting to note that boys were not expected to get permission from their parents or guardians.

While boys' education focused on preparation for future management roles, hostels emphasized the preparation of girls for homemaking. Phiri (1997:47) observes

According to the constitution of the hostels, the aim of the hostels was to lead the girls to Jesus as Saviour; to build up a good Christian character by inspiring them with the principles of obedience, order and helpfulness and by education in all kinds of domestic and manual work - washing, ironing, sewing, pottery, soap making etc. The type of education given to girls was to prepare them for home management.

This distinction had its roots in South Africa. Phiri (1997:48) notes “This was not only true for the mission field but it also reflected what was happening to women in the homeland, of the DRC, South Africa. The mission also introduced mothers' literacy classes for the same reason.” When the DRCM formed its own Mission Council in 1898, it “... consisted of only the ordained ministers of the mission. Later it included the other male missionaries. The female missionaries were left out.” The Malawian clergy and elders are still using this model for the role of women in the church.

### 2.5.1 THE INFLUENCE OF *CHIGWILIZANO*

Ironically, through their *Chigwilizano* (Women's Guild) activities, the women of the Nkhoma Synod have shown that they are perfectly capable of providing quality leadership if given the opportunity. According to Phiri, "*Chigwilizano* gives to women a feeling of belonging within a male dominated church...in many ways it also provides scope for leadership talent to develop among women."

Through *Chigwilizano*, women have assisted in the furtherance of ministry by proclaiming the Gospel to communities and societies. Phiri (1997:88) notes "Throughout the years of *Chigwilizano*'s existence the women have not been discouraged by the restrictions on their preaching in the church on Sunday. Instead, they have gone out to do house to house evangelism and open air evangelism."

In the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, women play key roles in the advancement of the Gospel through Women's Guilds despite being denied the opportunity of full participation at church leadership level. Kamwana (1998:164) reports

The Women guild is more effective than men. They carry out soul winning; help the needy, the aged and the sick. At funerals, more especially Christian funerals, they wear their uniform and mourn the dead brother or sister in a Christian way. Many people are converted to Christianity because of their practical example.

The manner, in which *Chigwilizano* women handle the burial ceremonies of their members, has a considerable impact. Phiri (1997:88) notes "A *Chigwilizano* member's funeral is respected by the wearing of *Chigwilizano* uniform just as it would be if it were the funeral of a church elder or minister." A situation is developing in the Nkhoma Synod where ministers require women to wear their uniforms to the funerals of ministers, suggesting that the role of women is recognized only when it directly benefits the leadership.

Since the inception of *Chigwilizano*, the Synod has rigidly controlled it for fear that it might turn out to be a church within a church. Inter alia, the Synod designated elders to direct the activities of the *Chigwilizano*. Phiri (1997:85) observes

Their [church elders, also known as *mkhalapakati*] role is often a source of misunderstanding between the *Chigwilizano* and the church because some *mkhalapakati* tend to dominate at *Chigwilizano* meetings instead of being observers. In the General Synod of CCAP, it is only Nkhoma Synod that has a *mkhalapakati*.

The Synod also decided that, within a particular congregation, its minister would be the leader of *Chigwilizano*, thereby restricting the free participation of women. Phiri (1997:90) notes "The decision to make a minister the overall leader of *Chigwilizano* is a clear sign of mistrust that exists in the Synod against *Chigwilizano*, and a sure way to kill the enthusiasm that women had when *Chigwilizano* was born."

Women must take part in the management and implementation of church activities. Runyowa *et al* (2001:531) confirm

Miss Tanatsiwa Tasiya is presently a youth counsellor and lecture...She served in various different congregations, teaching Sunday school classes, girls brigade, girls guild, catechism classes and youth fellowship groups for about 15 years ... the church called her to teach at Murray Theological College in the early nineties.

The examples in Scripture of the role women played should motivate the church to consider women as co-workers in the ministry of Jesus Christ. In this light, Mwale's interpretation of Genesis 3:1-16, as quoted above, leaves a lot to be desired. Original sin is not attributable to Eve alone; it is the failure of human nature as a whole.

Mwale's approach to the issue should not be surprising, given that it was inherited from the DRC missionaries. Phiri (1997:49) notes that

... the missionaries' image and understanding of the place of women in the church in the 19th century, was based on a specific interpretation of Genesis and the letters of Paul. Subordination of women was thought to be divinely sanctioned. The creation story in Genesis was seen as the biblical foundation for the subordination of women. It was interpreted as saying that woman was created from man, after man and for man's advantage.

Nkhoma's practice of refusing women for ordination was also inherited from the DRC missionaries and it should be abandoned; this practice comes from fear, not from faith.

## 2.6 THE INFLUENCE OF THE PENTECOSTAL MOVEMENTS

The third hypothesis is examined further in this section. The hypothesis states:

- As a result of the CCAP operating within a hierarchical paradigm, it is unable to equip and empower the laity for meaningful ministry in urban areas.

As a result of a biased implementation of the ministry, which focuses on “soul care” only, many people, particularly the youth, who professed the Reformed faith have withdrawn their membership from the CCAP and joined Pentecostal movements. Some reasons of membership withdrawal concern the fact that the CCAP leadership is legalist and does not want to involve the youth in its implementation of the ministry.

The growth of Pentecostal Churches in Malawi, particularly in the urban centres, has been phenomenal. The Pentecostal Churches know how to communicate with people and address their needs. Their liturgies allow freedom of movement, especially in singing and rhythmic dancing. In contrast, the services in the established churches are rigid and cold in the style of the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionaries. The youth do not understand the 19<sup>th</sup> century liturgies and leave, often to attend the Pentecostal style of services. The importance of allowing ordinary Christian to participate in the management of church activities is further dealt with in the eighth pillar of holistic model in chapter 6, section 6.8.3.

The Pentecostal movements are, for the most part, organized and led by the youth in all the main urban centres of Malawi. Esler (1995:103) comments

... groups are organized when some person(s) is not satisfied with a situation, has enough social standing to define the undesirable state of affairs, envisions a successful alternative, gives others hope for success .... The envisioned better state of affairs is the group's purpose or objective.

These young people, particularly in Lilongwe and Blantyre, argue that the institutional churches are dead, and that the reason behind it is that unsaved people are managing them. The leaders of the established churches are insulted by this notion and accuse the youth of being misled by Pentecostals, emphasising their understanding of the doctrine of being born again. The result has been schismatic: in the Blantyre Synod a schism occurred in 1998, resulting in a new church called the “Presbyterian Church of Malawi.” Lilongwe, a city within the area of the Nkhoma Synod, experienced numerous breakaway attempts, but none resulted in a major schism.

One result of the schismatic atmosphere in the Nkhoma Synod was the formation of “Friends of Nkhoma,” organised by children of the Nkhoma Synod ministers who were working and residing in Blantyre city. They requested the Nkhoma Synod to appoint a committee of three ministers through whom they could engage in fruitful dialogue regarding ministry implementation. The two teams now meet regularly and matters of theological concern are shared and resolved amicably. Through these meetings and their resolutions, Nkhoma has so far not experienced a schism.

In every dimension of their congregational programs, leaders in Malawi’s traditional churches are confronted with tensions between “born again” adherents and advocates of more structured organizations (Dudley & Hilgert 1987:31). It is clear that the Nkhoma Synod needs to do some serious rethinking of its approach to ministry; the way forward depends on how well church leaders can blend the intimate and the institutional church.

## **2.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter made use of historical and literary sources as well as archival material.

Reformed church missionaries from South Africa brought a holistic approach to ministry to Malawi. In order to deal with the cultural challenges of the Chewa context, especially ancestor worship and the *Gulewamkulu* religion; this was adapted by the Nkhoma Synod to a soul-care approach.

The soul-care model, however, implies that a human being is viewed in terms of his/her spiritual reality alone. Thus, it is limited in its ability to address the physical needs of people. The human being manifests indivisible spiritual and physical needs, and the church should imitate the ministry of Jesus Christ, who addressed the needs of people holistically.

The approach of the Malawi church has also failed to be a prophetic voice to oppressed Malawians. Many people paid dearly during the rule of single party politics, yet the church condoned the evil practices of that political order. This is a great lesson to the church; it should act prophetically towards the political order, as it is accountable to God.

With regard to women in the church office, the Synod needs to review its stance on this issue. Women, as has been noted, have managed *Chigwilizano* issues from 1940 to date and, in the process, have developed talents and skills, which have helped to further the Gospel in countless ways. It is high time that the Nkhoma Synod recognizes the ordination of women to church leadership.

The theological concerns of the youth, particularly those surrounding the concept of being “born again,” should not become contentious. The Synod should follow a participatory action approach with Christian youth movements in Lilongwe city and elsewhere within its boundaries, to transform existing practices to be both culturally relevant and theologically responsible.

The early ministers of Nkhoma developed an effective local theology for rural Malawi. It is now the task of the current generation to formulate approaches that will adequately address the challenges of urban poverty in the cities of Malawi.

#### **Hypothesis validity in the chapter:**

All four hypotheses assisted in the development of different sections in this chapter.

*Hypothesis 1* was the background for:

- 2.1: The multiple approach to the work of mission and church.

*Hypothesis 2* assisted the development of:

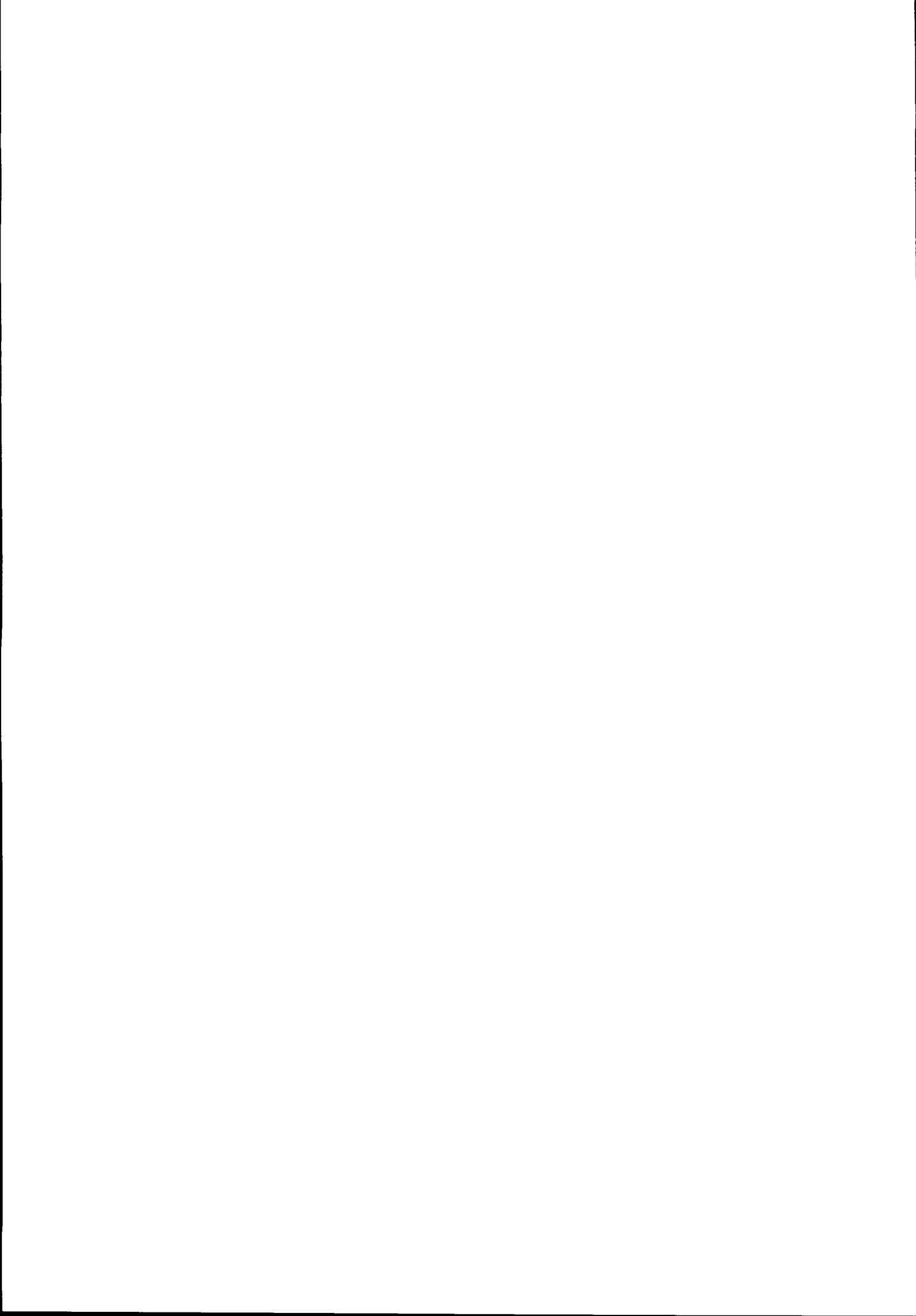
- 2.3: Limitation of the Reformed/salvation-centred model
- 2.5: The role of women in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod.

*Hypothesis 3* guided the development of:

- 2.2: Blending the missionary approach into a Chewa context
- 2.6 The influence of the Pentecostal movements.

*Hypothesis 4* was the background to these sections:

- 2.3: Limitation of the Reformed/salvation-centred model
- 2.5: The role of women in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod.



## Chapter 3

### Analyzing the situation in Malawian cities

#### 3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the situation analysis of shantytowns and slums of three Malawian and two South African scenarios. The analysis is the result of participatory research conducted in the relevant communities. Selener's (1998:17) definition: "Participatory research is a process through which members of an oppressed group or community identify a problem, collect and analyze information, and act upon the problem in order to find solutions and to promote social and political transformation."

In this chapter there are six subsections.

- Research objectives
- The growth of the inter-censal urban population
- A brief historical description of Malawian cities
- The government's effort to address urban challenges and problems
- The CCAP ministry's approach to urban ministry
- Two South African case studies.

#### 3.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the participatory research in Malawian and South African communities was to examine the validity of the four hypotheses, namely:

- Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems related to poverty.
- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.
- A holistic approach to ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address the urban poverty problems

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the urban ministry's problems and challenges.

In Malawi, the research was conducted in the Nkhata Bay District (a rural community in the Northern Region of Malawi) and in the cities of Malawi: Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu, while in South Africa, the research was conducted in Soweto (in a community called Orlando East) and in the Cape Peninsula (among the unemployed men who stand alongside the road at traffic lights asking for casual work). The research methods used during the participatory research in both Malawi and South Africa have been documented in section 1.10 of chapter 1.

Selener (1998:17) further states

Participatory research combines three principal activities: research, education, and action. It is a research method in which people are actively involved in conducting a systematic assessment .... It is an educational process because researcher and participants together analyze and learn from the process .... It is an action-oriented activity since findings are implemented in the form of practical solutions.

The research was helpful in that, in the process, the team was able to:

- Assess whether ordinary Christians participate in planning and implementing Church activities.
- Understand whether the Church and government departments are working jointly to address the needs of the urban poor.
- Appreciate the survival strategies that the urban poor have put in place in order for them to face daily urban challenges.
- Assess the actual successes and challenges of the local urban people for the purpose of developing a ministry ethos to address urban issues in an appropriate and adequate way.
- Enable urban pastors to share day-to-day ministry achievements and challenges being experienced, with a view to formulating new ideal intervention strategies and models for urban work.
- Determine the impact that government provision services have in addressing the urban poverty challenges facing the urban poor.

### **3.2 THE GROWTH OF INTER-CENSAL URBAN POPULATION**

This section further examines the challenge of the urban phenomenon as a major problem facing the developing world today. It develops the arguments of chapter 1, section 1.1.2, further.

The total population of Malawi is 9 933 868. Of this total population figure, 1 435 436 are urban, while 8 498 432 are rural Malawi population and housing census report (MPHCR) (2000: xiv). The urban figure is further divided into three regional figures, i.e. Northern 159 671, Central: 567 604, and Southern 708, 161. The inter-censal population growth data of the final census results reveals that amongst Malawi's four major urban centres, Mzuzu and Lilongwe cities had the highest population increases of 97% and 95% respectively, and their inter-censal growth rates were 6.2% and 6.1% per annum respectively. As for Blantyre city and Zomba municipality, the population had increased by approximately 44% and 48% respectively between 1987 and 1998. The inter-censal growth rate for Blantyre city was 3.3% per annum while that of Zomba municipality was 3.6% per annum (MPHCR 2000:xiv).

### **3.3 BRIEF HISTORICAL DESCRIPTION OF MALAWI'S THREE CITIES**

The Malawian urban context, as a challenge for the ministry, is further attested in this section, as documented in section 1.1.5 of the first chapter. Also investigated are the acute and diverse problems and challenges that urbanization brings in the Malawian context, as described in section 1.5 of chapter 1.

The research was conducted in three Malawian cities: Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu. This is the context where a holistic approach to ministry will be implemented. Before reporting the research findings, it is important to give a brief historical survey of each city.

#### **3.3.1 LILONGWE CITY**

Lilongwe is within the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of Nkhoma Synod. Therefore, more time is devoted to developing an urban ministry ethos for this city. There are 12 congregations in Lilongwe city being managed by 11 ordained ministers of the CCAP. This will be presented in greater detail at a later stage.

The topography of Lilongwe is characterised by a fairly undulating landscape with rivers, streams and *dambos* (valleys). The indigenous vegetation of Lilongwe has been described as open canopy savanna woodland characterized by several species of acacia, combretum, brachystegia, albida and adasonia. Tracts of exotic trees, especially the gmelina species, are also found all over the city (Kayuza 2000:2). Lilongwe was named after the river on the banks of which the city was first built in 1902. The city has an undulating terrain with lithosols mixed with rich ferromagnesian soils. The climate is cool in winter and hot, but not humid, in summer. The city is located in the centre of Malawi. Neighbouring countries can reach it by air, road or rail.

In 1904, the district became the headquarters of what was known as Central Angoniland and, in 1921, became the headquarters of the new Central Province and Lilongwe District. Roe (1992:19) notes "By the 1930's commerce and trade were developing in the town and in 1947 Lilongwe became a township and in 1966 a municipality." In 1965, it was decided to transfer the status of the capital city from Zomba in the southern region, to Lilongwe in the central region. As a result of this decision, Lilongwe was officially established as the capital on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1975.

Some of the reasons that motivated the move of the capital from Zomba to Lilongwe were:

1. To stimulate development of the whole country. Roe (1992:19) comments "The reasons for centralization were pragmatic in that they sought to stimulate development in the hitherto less developed Central and Northern Regions, by establishing a major growth point in the centre of the country."
2. To concentrate the Central Government activities at one place – previously scattered between Blantyre and Zomba.
3. The flat terrain in Lilongwe was conducive to the spatial expansion of the city, (Kayuza 2000:xii).

In his book, *Sustainable cities programme*, Kayuza has dwelt much on Lilongwe city's socio-economic aspects and sanitation. In the socio-economic sphere, he indicates that in 1998 the population of the city was 435 964, which was 31.5% of all urban population. Of the whole population 48% was below 17 years of age, showing the city had a young population, probably the result of their flocking to the city in search of employment. Job opportunities were still a problem in 1998. Employment and earnings of 1986 to 1988 show that 55 772

persons were formally employed. Kayuza (2000:xii) notes “There were no records of those employed informally. But considering the present number of street vendors and others, it is estimated that 40% of the workforce in the city is in the informal sector.”

The sanitation situation in Lilongwe city is very inadequate, particularly in the squatter/slum areas. Although the mode of sanitation in Lilongwe is by a water-borne sewerage system, septic tanks, pit latrines and stormwater drainage system, only 8.9% of the city is sewered, 19.8% has septic tanks and 70.7% use pit latrines. Kayuza (2000:xiii) states “The rest openly defecate. The prominent use of pit latrines and open defecation and urination are worrisome sources of water, visual and air pollution.”

**Table 1: Lilongwe urban growth trends**

PLACE	POPULATION			
	1966	1977	1987	1998
Total Urban Population	190, 441	319, 818	852, 359	1, 349, 092
Lilongwe City Population	19, 425	66, 842	223, 318	435, 964
City Population as a % of Total Urban Population	10.2	20.9	26.2	31.5
Inter-censal average growth rate in %	14.8	8.2	6.1	

**Source: Kayuza(2000: 3)**

The housing situation is another cause for concern for the city. Lilongwe has a population of 435 964. Of these people 78% live in low-income houses, of which 44% live in traditional houses. As a result of the high density, the people encroach on land for high-level development use. Kayuza (2000:xiii) laments “Overcrowding results in environmental deterioration and bad sanitation, which contaminates water. Unplanned settlement causes city sprawl for those settling along the major roads. Those located away from trunk roads are inaccessible to services e.g. vehicles removing sludge.” In addition, overcrowding and lack of cleanliness are the major health hazard at the Central Hospital.

### 3.3.2 BLANTYRE CITY

Blantyre city, the commercial and industrial capital of Malawi, is located in the geographical centre of the country's southern region, south of the Equator. It is a transport communications node with road, rail and air links to all parts of the country and neighbouring countries of Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania. Matope (2000:viii) notes "The city covers a total area of 228 sq. km. of a high and ragged terrain, and generally it has a cool and pleasant climate."

Blantyre was initially established in 1876 as the site of the Church of Scotland's mission in the highlands, east of the Shire River. It was the first site for European settlers in Malawi, and the first area of the country to witness true urbanization. Roe (1992:15) notes "Blantyre was first officially a township in 1900. Blantyre and Limbe, though proximate, developed at a different rate and with different character ... the two areas eventually amalgamated as the city of Blantyre." Blantyre is one of the oldest cities in the region. As a result, it has many historic and cultural heritage resources, which constitute a vital part of the city and are crucial for its identity, cultural and social well-being and attracts business and tourism. Matope (2000:27) affirms "Blantyre City is the oldest city in Malawi..."

The researcher interviewed Mr. Namankhwa (Deputy Clerk of Blantyre City: on 8 June 2001). As a result of the interview, the following information was made available:

The city of Blantyre started as a missionary centre for the Church of Scotland following exploration by Dr. David Livingstone in the early 1870's. The Church of Scotland mission (now the Church of Central African Presbyterian Blantyre Synod) was established at Blantyre mission in 1876 and has been in existence for 125 years.

The establishment of the African Lakes Corporation (Company) presently known as Mandala, followed in 1878. The business of African Lakes Corporation was, basically, transportation. As Malawi is a land-locked country, the company started by opening a river route from Beira, following the Zambezi and the Shire Rivers up to Chikwawa where all goods intended for Blantyre were collected. This route proceeds on to Lake Nyasa (now Lake Malawi) where goods destined for northern Malawi and the southern part of Tanzania were transported over the lake. This followed the opening of a water transport business on Lake Tanganyika in

Tanzania - hence its name (African Lakes Corporation). Later, tea, coffee, tobacco and rubber farms were established in the southern part.

The increase in business and missionary activities in Blantyre led to the growth of Blantyre City and on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1891, residents of the Blantyre Township established a Town Council. Then its population was 29 100. Similarly, Limbe Township also attracted settlers, following the establishment of the tobacco-handling companies such as Imperial Tobacco Company, Galher and the Thondwe Tobacco Company. Asians opened the shops, and in 1906 the Limbe Town Council was established.

The two townships grew separately until their amalgamation in 1956. In 1959 they became known as the Municipality of Blantyre and Limbe. In 1966 (the year Malawi received a Republican status) the Municipality of Blantyre and Limbe gained city status and were known as the City of Blantyre. Blantyre City occupies 22 770 hectares of land (a radius of almost 17 km) and has 26 wards. Blantyre is the largest city in Malawi and the hub of commercial and industrial activities. It acts as a model in many respects, which (due to its age and experience), is imitated by other cities (assemblies) in Malawi.

Like all other assemblies in the world, the assembly's duty is to serve the residents of the city. Equally, for it to render the desired services, it is mandated to collect revenue from the residents, sources of which comprise property tax, market fees, sewage charges and various types of business licences.

Blantyre city had a population of 478 155 in 1998 accounting for 34.5% of the total urban population, representing a growth rate of 4.1% per annum. As in the case of Lilongwe city, most people in Blantyre are young. Matope (2000:viii) notes "The city has a young population hence a high dependence ratio, about 60% of the total population are below the age of 25 years."

Urban poverty continues to be a challenge in Blantyre city as there are many unemployed people who move around the city searching for employment, but to no avail. These people ultimately do part-time jobs. Matope (2000:viii) laments "Poverty is pervasive in the city, and 65% of the total households of the city are below the poverty line. Income disparity between the high and low income earners is incredibly alarming." Most of the unemployed urban poor

in Blantyre cannot pay for house rental. As a result, the majority of the people are forced to live in slums and squatter areas. Matope (2000:viii) comments "The vast majority, 71% of the city residents, live in the unplanned and THA areas, which are characterised by poor living conditions."

### 3.3.3 MZUZU CITY

Mzuzu city is located in the Northern Region of Malawi and is the third largest Malawian city. Roseveare & Myers (1991:v) comment "Mzuzu is Malawi's fastest growing city. His Excellency the Life President Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda declared the municipality a city in 1985 and the years since then have seen urban growth at an unprecedented rate. Population growth is presently estimated at 7% per annum."

Previously, an agricultural area surrounded Mzuzu. Phiri (2000:1) notes "Mzuzu was first established as a Tung settlement in 1945 when Charles Boardman was appointed by the Commonwealth Development Cooperation to investigate the possibility of Tung on large scale in the northern part of Malawi. Between 1949-1951 a number of whites from the United Kingdom and other British colonies arrived, requiring houses and offices." Some government departments like education, agriculture, police, and churches accompanied the establishment of the provincial headquarters at Mzuzu. Phiri (2000:1) notes "In 1964 the Township boundaries were extended encompassing Katoto Camp, Singini village, area around the Bishop's house and Mary Mount secondary school. In 1991 the City was honoured with a City Status. Since then the city grows rapidly."

The city is bounded by Vipya Mountains to the North and Kaning'ina Mountains to the East and South. It covers an area of 7630 hectares and is situated between 1300 and 1350 metres above sea level. The weather is tropical with the cold season from May to August and the rainy season from December to April. Its temperature is generally very low. According to the 1998 statistics, the population was 87 000 with a growth rate of 7% per annum (Phiri: 2000:1).

Malawi has experienced rapid urban growth since its Independence in 1964. Post-independence development policies favouring the expansion of large-scale commercial agriculture, coupled with high population growth rates, resulted in a substantial increase in rural-urban migration. This is a cause for concern for city planning teams. Roe (1992:16)

comments "The problems of rapid urbanization in Africa are serious especially so when they have the effect of creating vast, amorphous squatter colonies which cling to, and surround the primate cities in many countries .... Malawi ... unfortunately is becoming typical of Africa." Blantyre, Lilongwe and Mzuzu, are increasing at an accelerating rate bringing overcrowding, squatting and the many attendant problems with them.

The rural-urban migration rate is on the increase in Malawi. Roe (1992:2) notes "It is currently estimated that Malawi is urbanizing at the rate of 2000 persons per week, with 1600 of these going to the four main centres of Lilongwe, Blantyre, Mzuzu, and Zomba." If not checked urgently, this continuing influx will create a plethora of problems which must be addressed by government authorities if a crisis is to be avoided and slum urbanization, the scourge of so many developing countries, is to be overcome.

The three cities of Malawi have been briefly discussed. The country is rapidly being urbanized. The situation is similar in other countries on the continent. Sandbrook (1982:21) comments on urban poverty in Africa, "Perhaps the most concrete manifestation of this poverty is the inadequacy of housing and the associated environmental and sanitary services." On another note Sandbrook (1982:24) further comments "To be poor in urban Africa is thus to live in overcrowded and inadequate dwellings and to confront both peculiar health hazards and the possibility of raising malnourished, and therefore mentally and physically stunted, children."

This phenomenon presents a great challenge to poor urban residents in terms of survival strategies. The next section is the analysis of the government's efforts to address urban challenges.

### 3.4 GOVERNMENT SERVICES PROVISION ENTITIES; CITY ASSEMBLIES

This section examines three hypotheses further:

- Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.
- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can be successful only if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.
- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address problems of urban poverty.

The provisions documented in this section are further examined in chapter 4, section 4.1, dealing with the extent of poverty in Malawi, and also in section 4.5.1 on current definitions of poverty.

This section deals with seven aspects of services that city assemblies deliver to urban dwellers.

- Job creation opportunities,
- Water supply, and urban sanitation:
- The high rate of unemployment,
- Commerce and industry,
- Unplanned housing and squatter settlements, poor health situation,
- Education,
- Firewood (charcoal), a source of power for the poor.

One of the objectives of the researcher was to determine the impact government provision services have in addressing the poverty gripping the poor urban population. In this case, the study pays attention to Lilongwe and Blantyre assemblies. Like all other Assemblies worldwide, the duties of Assemblies are to serve the urban residents. Such services include the provision of water, health facilities, adequate sanitation, housing, job creation, energy and power, a conducive environment to education and other necessary services that are needed in order to ensure sustainability of life to the urban poor.

### 3.4.1 JOB CREATION OPPORTUNITIES

One of the government's responsibilities is to create employment for the people. This is critical for people's happiness and for them to be able to meet their basic needs for life. The Lilongwe city population is 435 964; of this figure 55 772 are employed in the formal sector. This means that there are a large number of people in the informal sector (380 192 and are either self-employed or unemployed. Of these two groups, there are more unemployed than those in the business sectors. Kayuza (2000:4) reports "It is estimated that more than 60% of the population lives below the poverty line."

The unemployment is on the increase in Malawi's cities. As a result, the urban poor are forced to live in the unplanned squatter and slums areas, because they cannot meet the cost of house rentals. Kayuza (2000:4) comments "The majority of the people in Lilongwe live in substandard houses. Although the city assembly is giving many plots to individuals, about 80% still live in unplanned houses." Due to poverty, the urban poor resort to small-scale businesses along the roads; their profits are minimal and they live "hand-to-mouth." Street vending is a common activity in the cities, and it appears that the poor are the vendors. That most of the trade in which the urban poor are engaged is on a small scale is noted when comparing the mean monthly sales values for the poor and non-poor urban traders, Profile of poverty in Malawi (PPM 2000:30).

**Table 2: poverty and ultra-poverty lines at July 2000 prices, by poverty line area**

(The figures are in %)

	Poverty line	Ultra-poverty line
Southern rural	14.42	8.65
Central rural	17.22	10.33
Northern rural	20.74	12.44
Urban	47.18	28.31
National weighted average poverty line	19.47	-

Adjusted using the national total consumer price index. July 2000: MK 55. 00 = US\$ 1.00

Source: Malawi Government (PPM 2000:41).

The city of Blantyre is no better off. Matope (2000:5) states "Urban poverty is a pervasive growing phenomenon in Malawi, and the cities are worse. It is estimated that about 65% of the urban households are below the poverty line, comprising 33% women-headed and 32%

men-headed households.” Due to unemployment, the lack of a balanced diet is one of the challenges that the urban poor face, and, as a result, malnutrition is significant among needy children.

Matope (2000:5) notes “... poor households in Blantyre city spend more than 60% of their disposable income on food alone, and many household are forced to survive on one meal a day and malnutrition and stunting are present particularly among children.” It is believed that the situation can change if more jobs are created. So the government is supposed to initiate more jobs for the unemployed. Roe (1992:144) notes “There is a need to set up a mechanism for providing extension services to the informal sector in the form of business and technical development.”

### 3. 4. 2 COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY: THE TROUBLED SECTOR

Closely related to job creation is commerce and industry. In the historical background above, we have noted that Lilongwe was declared the central government headquarters in 1975 to improve government efficiency by concentrating central government functions that previously were shared between Zomba and Blantyre when Zomba was the capital city. We noted that the move was strategic in order to stimulate development in the central and northern regions through the establishment of a major growth point in the centre of the country.

As a result of this move, Lilongwe city became a major centre of government administration with agro-related industries manufacturing for export and domestic demand. It is pathetic that the industry sector does not deliver the expected demand to create adequate jobs. Kayuza (2000:9) comments “Causes of industrial low contribution are lack of investment in working capital, shortage of raw materials, inadequate water and power supplies, poor infrastructure and financial credit limitations.”

Although the city does not benefit much from commerce and industry, the waste produced by the industries impacts negatively on the environment. A situation has risen where the waste is not properly treated and disposed of in a manner that is conducive to human health and safety. Kayuza (2000:10) notes “At present, waste from factories that use oil, spills into storm drains thus polluting the land and eventually water courses that are used by many people within the city limits and down stream.”

Although the government is a formal major employer within Lilongwe city, hawkers, street vendors, minibus drivers, and food sellers are common features in the streets and make a sizeable contribution to the city's economy. Commenting on the vending situation in Blantyre city, Matope (2000:20) notes "The preparation, handling and vending of food in open unhygienic conditions, which is common practice in the city, is dangerous and an invitation to food-related disease epidemics specially cholera."

### 3.4.3 WATER SUPPLY

Without doubt, water is a very important element to human life. The city of Lilongwe obtains its water from two dams on the Lilongwe River. The Lilongwe Water Board (LWB) owns the dams and therefore treats and supplies the water. Kayuza (2000:7) comments "The water meets stringent standards of the World Health Organization. It is 99.9% compliant."

The challenge that faces the water sector is the fact that the urban poor cannot meet the cost of water; instead they use unprocessed water from unprotected wells and rivers, which are the major causes of water-borne diseases. Another disadvantage is that, in order to get access to water, the vendors break the water pipes, allowing contamination into the water system. Kayuza (2000:xii) laments "While the Lilongwe Water Board kills the germs where the pipe has broken, the other service providers simply seal the spot without killing the germs. In this way, germs are introduced in the potable water."

The Blantyre City Assembly faces similar water problems. Matope (2000:7) comments

The piped water system also suffers frequent pipe breakage and leakage due to pressure, age and maintenance problems. This, combined with poor drainage and sanitation leads to ponding, the formation of small water pools which become breeding ground for mosquitoes hence increasing the incidence of malaria, one of the major killer diseases in Malawi.

Another challenge surrounding this sector is the shortage of water. In the slums (Nkolokoti and Ndirande), there are a few water points where people go to buy water. When there is a water shortage, people are forced to use unprotected water from the nearby sources. Matope (2000:7) affirms "Water shortages, rationing and disruption is common in Blantyre, and this has an effect on the use of waterborne toilets and sanitation in general in the city."

### 3.4.4 URBAN SANITATION: A GREAT CONCERN FOR THE UNEMPLOYED

In chapter 6 the health situation will again receive further attention (section 6.3.2.2).

The research revealed that sanitation in Lilongwe city is divided into four activities, the piped sewerage system, pit latrines, septic tanks and the storm water drainage system. Of the population in Lilongwe 70% use a pit latrine system. Most of these are in the traditional housing areas (THAs) and slums. Due to many people using one pit latrine, the latrine fills rapidly and becomes a health hazard. Kayuza (2000:14) comments "If the family size is small, the pit latrine serves very well, but in the THAs where a plot may be used by as many as 15 people, the pit latrine fills fast and becomes a health hazard. Unfortunately these latrines do not have reinforced walls and cannot be dislodged."

Aware of the dangers resulting from poor sanitation, the city of Lilongwe had a practice of providing free toilet facilities at strategic points within the city. Regrettably people have been stealing toilet equipment leaving the place untidy and unattended to. Kayuza (2000:14) affirms "But due to vandalism, the city was forced to withdraw the service except at very strategic locations such as produce markets." The fact that the provision of free toilet facilities was discontinued has contributed negatively to the environment of the city, as people help themselves anyhow. On the other hand, the continued use of pit latrines has resulted in a health hazard in Lilongwe. Kayuza (2000:15) notes "The predominant use of the pit latrines, most of which are full and poor solid waste removal services have combined to produce many environmental health hazards particularly in unplanned and planned THAs."

Blantyre city experiences similar pit latrine challenges particularly in the slums surrounding the city. Matope (2000:10) notes "Most of the pit latrines are defective and become full quickly because of overcrowding and high toilet user ratio prevailing in these areas; and the majority of the plots are over-developed leaving no room for replacement or additional pit latrines, refuse disposal and open space." In the squatter areas surrounding Lilongwe, poor sanitation coupled with bad hygiene, constitutes an environmental health hazard. Rubbish is not collected on a regular basis in the slums as well as in some public places, especially mini-markets within the city. Sanitarily, these places are unsatisfactory as piles of uncollected refuse are commonplace. With regard to the matter of unattended refuse, Kayuza (2000:17) notes "The reasons for this situation are lack of public awareness, lack of financial capacity and inadequate regulatory mechanisms. Rain induces decomposition of solid waste

particularly if it is not collected regularly. When it is decomposed the refuse collector finds it uncomfortable to handle it because of odour and heat.”

### 3.4.5 HOUSING: UNPLANNED AND SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

The high rate of urbanization is the major challenge for both Lilongwe and Blantyre City Assemblies. The causes of the housing problem are the growing poverty, largely due to the unfavourable macro-economic environment and other causes, such as limited employment opportunities and low levels of production.

Kayuza (2000:20) comments “Out of a total population of 435 964, 78% are housed in low income housing areas and of these 44% live in traditional housing areas and the rest in unplanned traditional settlements.” The increasing number of people culminates an increasing number of houses in the city causing congestion and overcrowding. This, combined with improper disposal of sanitation, results in the contamination of surface water and contributes to outbreaks of water-borne diseases.

**Table 3: Population distribution by housing category – 1999**

Housing Category	Population	Percentage	Average Household Size	No. of Households	Average No. persons per plot
Low density housing	26, 713	5.15	4.6	8, 507	6.4
Medium density housing	8, 508	1.64	5.2	1, 636	6.1
Flats	1, 659	0.32	-	-	-
High density permanent	49, 771	9.59	5.4	9, 217	6.3
Traditional housing areas	82, 688	15.93	4.9	16, 815	9.3
Unplanned housing	285,210	54.94	4.5	63, 380	9.4
Urban areas	64, 484	12.42	-	-	-
Total average Blantyre city	519, 033	100.0	4.8	108,132	7.7

High density permanent, traditional housing areas, and unplanned housing are the locations for the urban poor.

**Source: Matope (2000: 66).**

For example, in Blantyre city the unplanned housing, including urban villages, accounted for 44% in 1977 and jumped to 67.4% in 1999. This is, indeed, a great cause for concern. Matope (2000:15) laments "If this trend continues, Blantyre city housing will be dominated by unplanned housing hence unattractive for investment and living. Furthermore, the majority of the structures in the THAs and unplanned housing areas are not suitable for habitation and require replacement, rehabilitation or reconstruction."

In Lusaka (Zambia), the situation has risen whereby the housing problems of the squatters can no longer be addressed, because the government has no place to resettle the squatters. Turner (1988:22) notes "By the early 1970s, the authorities had accepted that squatter compounds could not be eradicated. It was equally impossible to relocate their people in rural areas or in publicly subsidized housing." The poor suffer much because they cannot afford high rentals. Roe (1992:140) confirms "Housing is a problem for people at all levels of the income strata, it is the poor who suffer the most, being unable to afford the exorbitant rents now charged in the planned housing areas for adequate housing."

According to the Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP), the housing sector faces a huge challenge. This ranges from a number of constraints for low incomes amongst the would-be beneficiaries to a lack of a comprehensive housing policy. The PAP (1995:34) states the following as the most prevalent constraints:

1. Low levels of income and the impact of a high population growth amongst the poor.
2. Limited access to low-cost technologies and to credit facilities for housing development.
3. Lack of services and orderly housing development in urban areas.
4. Lack of a comprehensive housing policy and failure of recognition within the public sector of the housing sector as a productive investment.
5. Negative cultural beliefs.

The squatter settlements generally have no services and, therefore, are more exposed to epidemics. Such places are often located far from the major lines of transport, thus inaccessible for certain emergency services. In Blantyre 71% of the population live in unplanned housing areas. Matope (2000:5) warns "These areas are characterised by very poor living

conditions due to lack of basic services, sub-standard housing, poor sanitation and overcrowding." Kayuza (2000:21) echoes the situation in Lilongwe, "The overcrowding and congestion in the unplanned settlements culminate in the environmental problems such as unsightly garbage, foul smell, pests, and vermin, breeding grounds for disease transmitting insects, as well as ground and surface water pollution."

Most of the urban poor build housing structures that are of temporary inflammable material including plastic, paper, wood, bamboo and cardboard. This makes them susceptible to accidental fire. Roe (1992:141) notes "Among other things the consequences of such overcrowding are inordinately poor sanitation practices." In Lusaka, the capital of Zambia, the situation of rapid growth rate and slums is similar to that of Lilongwe and Blantyre.

Turner (1988:21) comments "By 1974, ten years after independence, Lusaka's population had grown to well over quarter of a million, nearly half of whom lived in the peripheral, un-serviced settlements." The slums in Lusaka are also in dire need of basic facilities. Turner (1988:22) confirms "Residents provided themselves with wells, pit latrines and some garbage pits. The settlements were dispersed, imposing long journeys to work for many." The squatter situation in Malawi is on the increase. The government needs to develop ways and means to discourage people from squatting. Deterioration in moral behaviour can also be correlated with deterioration in the health status.

#### **3.4.6 EDUCATION**

In 1994, the government introduced free primary education in Malawi. Just before this introduction, the sector experienced many high school drop-outs. Roe (1995:89) notes "Drop-out rates were high, and the school system lost about half of its students before they reached a state of permanent literacy. This had important negative consequences for national development as well as personal growth."

As a result of the rise in the number of primary school-going children, the sector, faced a number of challenges such as: inadequate classrooms, poor sanitation, an insufficient water supply, inadequate teachers and insufficient stationery. Commenting on the educational situation in Lilongwe, Kayuza (2000:24) states "Consequently children either learn under trees or overlap. In August 2000, the enrolment was 96 097 and there were 1432 qualified

teachers. Therefore the pupil/teacher ratio was 67 to 1 which is below the required standard of 50 to 1."

In Blantyre, the situation is not different. In the low and medium density areas there are more schools than are needed, while the high-density areas have inadequate schools. Matope (2000:25) states "The semi-urban areas do not have a primary school .... The public day secondary schools are overcrowded, and the majority of the private secondary schools operate mainly from residential premises/areas, most of them with very little facilities and under poor physical and learning conditions."

In the high-density areas, it is difficult to find land to build schools. Matope (2000:25) notes "Demolishing of buildings to create space for schools will be unavoidable to demolish buildings in order to create space for schools. Educational institutions demand a lot of water for drinking, washing, cleaning and cooking, thus competing with other sectors for the resource."

The number of children attending school has increased considerably as a result of free primary education. Kayuza (2000:24) notes "Since 1994, the government policy of providing free primary school education to children has yielded a rise in the number of primary going children from 1.9 million to 3.2 million nationwide." This obviously has resulted in overcrowding in classrooms. Matope (2000:26) notes

However, the critical shortage and poor location of schools is resulting in excessive overcrowding and congestion in classrooms, unacceptably high pupil/teacher ratios and long walking distances to/from school. Besides, overcrowding, coupled with the problem of inadequate toilets, leads to the deterioration of the environment in schools and resultant health hazards.

Enrolment in formal education is higher in the urban areas than the rural areas of Malawi. Roe (1995:10) offers the following reasons:

1. An increase of the schooling tradition amongst the urban population
2. School facilities in urban areas are generally an improvement on those found in the rural areas
3. Most urban schools have a full complement of teaching staff
4. Most THA's have a full primary school run by the ministry of education.

Although free primary education has been introduced in Malawi, it has a number of constraints, which reduce the desired impact. The Malawi social indicators survey (MSIS 1995: 101-102) documents the following constraints:

- Repetition rates are very high, particularly in Standard 1. This has serious repercussions for class size, distribution of classroom equipment, and the quality of education. It makes a future planning of the class size particularly difficult.
- Free education means that students can choose to stay in school rather than drop out. However, because of the paucity of informal and formal preschool education, students may not be adequately prepared for school and may perform poorly.
- Malnutrition and low levels of immunization may contribute to low educational levels and vice versa. The relationship between these problems should be investigated before tackling problems in only one sector.
- Higher enrolment should not be at the expense of the quality of education.

#### 3.4.7 HEALTH SITUATION: A RESULT OF THE PERVASIVE SANITATION

Chapter 4 section 4.1 "The extent of poverty in Malawi" takes and discusses the health situation further.

The poor housing situation is a major cause of poor health conditions. The poor housing leads to poor ventilation and the easy spreading of respiratory diseases such as tuberculosis. Defective pit latrines and the lack of proper sanitation pervasive in unplanned areas contribute to health hazards. Kayuza (2000:22) notes "The main killer disease, according to the hospital authorities, supported by findings of Lilongwe Urban Agenda 21 team, is TB and among children, malaria. The most common diseases are malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea."

Also contributory to poor health conditions in Malawian cities is the air pollution due to smoke from vehicles, industries and households, which leads to an increase of air-borne respiratory infections. Matope (2000:22) notes "Loose morals coupled with pervasive poverty promote promiscuity leading to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including HIV/AIDS which has a devastating impact on the economy and social fabric of the city."

### 3.4.8 FIREWOOD AND CHARCOAL: A SOURCE OF FUEL FOR THE URBAN POOR

The urban poor in the cities of Malawi also struggle as regards energy and power. Firewood, charcoal, electricity, paraffin, petrol and diesel are the main sources of fuel and power in both Lilongwe and Blantyre cities. The urban poor use firewood, charcoal and paraffin. As a result, Malawi has experienced a high deforestation rate due to careless cutting down of trees. Kayuza (2000:27) comments "Indiscriminate mass felling of trees for fuel has led to deforestation and soil erosion, which have caused a siltation of dams."

In Blantyre city, the situation is no better. The urban poor in Blantyre, as in Lilongwe, use firewood and charcoal as a source of energy and fuel. In commenting on the firewood and charcoal situation in Blantyre, Matope (2000:16) warns "By far firewood is the main source of energy followed by charcoal, for domestic use primarily for cooking and heating while electricity is mostly for lighting and operating electrical appliances. This is because the vast majority of households cannot afford electricity."

The issue of firewood and charcoal as a source of energy and fuel should be a great source of concern for the government. Government intervention is required to prevent the development of virtual desert areas surrounding the cities as a result of tree felling on a massive scale. A situation has arisen in which firewood and charcoal is being imported from nearby rural areas. Matope (2000:17) warns "Although comprehensive data is not available, it is likely that more than 85% of the firewood and about 95% of charcoal consumed in the city is imported from the surrounding rural areas and neighbouring districts of Mwanza, Balaka, Chikwawa, and Ntcheu."

In the unplanned areas where the urban poor dwell, they often experience a number of mishaps. In their need for power, the urban poor tend to interfere with electric cables. In most cases they connect power illegally and without proper knowledge of handling electric cables, which results to various disasters. Kayuza (2000:28) notes "Many houses have caught fire because owners have not re-wired them after a mandatory period of rewiring of 20 years."

As indicated above, paraffin is the most common source of lighting for the poor. Due to overcrowding and a lack of housing space, paraffin is frequently handled carelessly, causing accidents in which children invariably end up as the victims. Kayuza (2000:28) notes "The poor storage of paraffin has led to children drinking it mistaking it for water. Also the failure

by the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi (ESCOM) to attend to fallen cables has resulted in electrocution of villagers and children.”

In this process of analyzing government services provision entities, it has been established that, like other governments on the continent, the government of Malawi continues to meet challenges in addressing the effects of urbanization. The delivery of a provision services is not strategic enough to alleviate the extent of the urban-dwellers’ suffering. The government should consider relieving the present overcrowding through providing soft loans for the purchase of building materials. The loans will help the urban poor to construct the houses. It is further hoped that a noticeable difference would be evident if the urban poor were allowed to participate in both planning and implementing local development endeavours at all levels.

For this to happen local authority laws and regulations need to be examined and those that hinder the participation of the urban poor in legitimate activities should be revised. Another important area requiring government support is the encouragement of informal small -scale businesses by way of setting up a credit system, which would be available to, and suitable for, disadvantaged groups.

### **3.5 THE URBAN MISSION OF THE CCAP NKHOMA SYNOD MINISTRY**

All four hypotheses are further examined in this section. Only the fourth hypothesis is documented to remind the reader of the importance of the church allowing all Christians to participate in implementing ministry activities.

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within the hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the urban (ministry) problems and challenges.

This analysis study attends to the Nkhoma Synod’s ministry in Lilongwe city. The purpose is to work out methods through which the urban poor and Christians can participate in ministry implementation. Lilongwe city is within the Nkhoma Synod operational area and its ministry started during the early 1920s.

The section discusses nine issues positively.

- The historical background of ministry in Lilongwe
- Research sampling congregations

- The formation of research team
- Planning for the research
- Issues raised by the research team
- Groups interviewed and issues uncovered
- The ministers' workshop
- Recommendations drawn.

### 3.5.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE MINISTRY IN LILONGWE

This section reflects further on the limitations of the Reformed model described in chapter 2, section 2.3. The issues that necessitated the need for ministry in a new era and context are further discussed in pillar 1 of chapter 6.

The ministry of Nkhoma Synod started in Lilongwe at Dzenza congregation in 1921. This was after a period of 32 years when the missionaries first preached the Gospel at Mvera congregation in 1889. The Dzenza congregation was established on 21 March 1921 from the Mvera CCAP. Missionaries from South Africa, viz: William Murray and Stegmann, initiated Dzenza Mission. Dzenza was first used as a court, Gulewamkulu dancing arena and a Prayer House on Sundays. Conflicts arose as the missionaries were preaching the evils of paganism, which included the masquerades (Gulewamkulu dancers).

Consequently, Traditional Authority Chief Matanda was advised to give the missionaries an alternative place where they could conduct their prayers. This place is where the Church of the Dzenza CCAP is situated now. The mission grounds were demarcated and leased on 27 December 1927 and Rev. Stegmann (a missionary) was the resident church minister. A total of nine missionaries and eleven ministers have served at the Dzenza CCAP. Rev. Jackson (a missionary) deserves special mention because he opened the Girls Boarding School which was known as "Kumadona" (the school still operates), built the boarding hostels, the minister's manse, and planted trees along the street.

Dzenza CCAP was opened as a rural mission station in 1929 and became a congregation in 1927, but the area remained rural for 50 years, although not far from Lilongwe city. It was only in the 1970s that it was engulfed by the expansion of the new capital. The first real urban congregation was Lilongwe, established on 28 December 1946. Rev. S.P. Chalera is in charge of the congregation at present. In time, more congregations have been established in the city.

The city's present 12 congregations, established between 1921 and 2000, now follow in their particular order of age:

<u>Name of congregation:</u>	<u>Date started:</u>	<u>Name of the present minister:</u>
Dzenza CCAP	1921	Rev. S P Chalera
Lilongwe CCAP	1946	Rev. L Z Dangaya
Lumbadzi CCAP	1968	Rev. Y T Mathyoka
Msonkhamanja CCAP	1969	Rev. E N Kamunga
Chimwala CCAP	1974	Rev. A M Chiphiko
Lingadzi CCAP	1974	Rev. Mnthambala
Masintha CCAP	1980	Rev. M A Kantwera
Kapita CCAP	1995	Vacant
Kafita CCAP	1995	Rev. D F Kachipanda
Likuni CCAP	1996	Rev. G H T Kalengo
Kaning'a CCAP	1998	Rev. M Z Khombe
Kawira CCAP	2000	Rev. Chikoti (has just been called)

The urban congregations in Lilongwe are growing very fast. For example, within a period of 26 years (1974–2000) a total eight congregations were established, representing a growth rate of about 67%. With the rapid urbanization of Lilongwe city, it is expected that more congregations will soon be established (interviews with: Revs. Chalera, Kachipanda, Mathyoka, Kamunga, Khombe, Chiphiko, and Kantwera: 4 June 2001, Dzenza CCAP).

### 3.5.2 RESEARCHING FOUR CONGREGATIONS IN LILONGWE CITY

This section attests the first hypothesis further. The hypothesis states:

- Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems related to poverty.

This section also discusses chapter 1 (1.8.3) further. In order to have a deeper understanding of urban challenges, the research focused on four congregations. These congregations were chosen because they all have large areas that can be described as shantytowns or slums. The congregations are namely: Lilongwe, Msonkhamanja, Masintha and Kafita, who all belong to the Malingunde Presbytery. Before the research was conducted, the researcher had the opportunity of attending Good Friday and Easter revival meetings conducted by the congre-

gations. The crusades, which started on Friday April 13, were concluded on Sunday, 15 April 2001. The meetings were strategic in that the researcher was privileged to observe ministry implementation through semi-structured interviews with a cross-section of people and meeting with a cross-section of people, some of different faiths.

At the Lilongwe CCAP, many people did not attend the revival meetings; this was not an encouraging experience, as it portrayed a negative picture. The youth and children dominated the gathering. Most Christians, especially women and Church elders, did not support the meetings. Discussions revealed that there apparently were some misunderstandings between the minister in charge and a group of Church leaders at Nchesi Prayer House, which unfortunately led to 24 Church leaders being disciplined. This is a sad development as Church leaders are key to the future of the congregation. The matter is now in the hands of the visiting minister.

### 3.5.3 FORMATION OF THE RESEARCH TEAM

In order to preserve objectivity, the researcher did not take a presiding role in the research processes. A research team that was responsible for the research proceedings was formed, the researcher assuming a facilitating role. This approach was strategic for ministers to reflect on their own ministry issues and, at the same time, work out and develop new ministry tools. More on this will be discussed below under section 3.5.8 when documenting research findings. The research team was comprised of the following people:

Chairperson:	Rev. E N Kamunga
Vice chairperson:	Rev. D F Kachipanda
Secretary:	Rev. Kantwera
Members:	Mrs Kachipanda, Kantwera, Joda-Mbewe and the researcher.

Rev. E N Kamunga is one of the senior ministers. He was elected as Synod Moderator in 1998, and is now the Vice-moderator. Rev. Kachipanda was formerly the Synod's Senior Clerk; Rev. Kantwera is the present Presbytery Clerk of Malingunde. The author is satisfied that the research team consisted of capable persons who are knowledgeable regarding Synodical matters.

### **3.5.4 PLANNING FOR THE RESEARCH**

A meeting of the research team was held on 21 May 2001 at the Msonkhamanja CCAP for the purposes of planning the research. The research team members and Rev. Dangaya of Lilongwe CCAP were present. The team planned for the groups to be interviewed, the appropriate days for each congregation, and the process of informing other ministers within the city.

#### **3.5.4.1 Groups to be interviewed**

The team agreed that the following church groups and committees were to be interviewed:

- Church elders - at least 5 church elders selected at random
- Executive of women for Chigwilizano cha Amayi (Women's Guild) and other local members
- 10 to 15 local church members from the slum areas of the congregations
- Youth leaders and 10 other members
- Evangelism committee members
- Catechumen and Sunday school teachers
- The choir leadership
- Ministers and their wives, and the team was to visit committee members.

The research team also scheduled particular days for the research to be conducted in each congregation. This was crucial for participants to prepare for the process. After agreeing on the dates, the team informed members of the congregations, which was conducive to many people attending the research forums. The team further agreed that it should meet on 28 May 2001 at Chimwala CCAP to prepare the data for presentation during the city ministers' workshop scheduled for 4 June 2001 at the Dzenza CCAP.

### **3.5.5 MINISTRY ISSUES RAISED BY RESEARCH TEAM**

The first and second hypotheses are further examined in this section.

- Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems related to poverty.
- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.

After the planning session at the Msonkhamanja CCAP, the researcher conducted a research session, which aimed to sample the specific issues that the ministry faces in Lilongwe. The research team identified the following briefly stated issues:

- Ministry preparation is still rural in its focus. This makes it difficult for the ministers in urban areas to manage the congregations appropriately.
- Marriage officiation is done on Saturdays, unlike the rural congregations. In the urban areas people value weddings so much that each wedding is officiated separately. Not so in the rural congregations. Marriages are officiated in groups and sometimes in advance. Weddings in the rural sector are officiated on Thursday or any weekday that may be convenient for the people concerned.
- Fundraising activities are also different from those in the rural sector. The rural sector favours *kalima-kalima* (a team of people jointly cultivating a piece of land for an agreed fee). While in the urban areas a 'Big Walk' is a means of fundraising.
- In the rural sector, people tend to have unpressurised time available since they work in the fields. By contrast, in the urban sector most people are employed and therefore time-conscious. Thus, urban Christians have no time to waste.
- Lack of ministry uniformity is more apparent in urban churches than it is in rural churches.
- Bridal showers and kitchen-party practices are often observed in urban, but not in rural congregations. Such practices have a negative impact on marriage stability. Many young people conduct their own marriage services, resulting in divorced families.
- Congregational boundaries are a great concern in urban, but not in rural areas. Most people worship at far distant congregations in preference to those, which are near. This poses difficulties for ministers to conducting effective pastoral work.
- Pentecostalism is yet another challenge in urban congregations. At present, the burning issue is that of Fellowships which emphasize being "reborn." Added to this, is the issue of pastors without recognised training. Such pastors operate home cell-groups as churches, frequently in conflict with established churches.
- The Women's Guild is not spared. The challenges that this group faces include fellowship practices: some women have double membership (to Women's Guild and Fellowship), these confuse the management of the organization; the pattern of prayer and an attitude of self-righteousness receive special emphasis.

- Issues surrounding Catechumen and Sunday schools teachers. The ministers have insufficient time to manage catechesis and Sunday school classes. Instead, people, who are not well versed in the Bible, teach the youth with the result that the youth are not properly nurtured in Christian education.

(Interviews with: Revs. Kamunga and Dangaya, Rev. and Mrs. Kachipanda, Rev. and Mrs. Kantwera and Mrs. Joda-Mbewe: 21 May 2001 at the Msonkhamanja CCAP).

The above issues raised by the research team members were further crosschecked during the research sessions with other church groups.

### 3.5.6 GROUPS INTERVIEWED AND ISSUES UNCOVERED

Six different groups were interviewed in four sampling congregations. Some of the groups were interviewed several times depending on the importance of the ministry issues. The approach was semi-structured interviewing which was followed by focused group discussions, depending on the sensitive nature of the issues being discussed. The city ministers' workshop concluded the interviewing process.

#### 3.5.6.1 Interviews with Women's Guild Executive Committee of Masintha CCAP

This section describes further the role of women, as documented in chapter 2, section 2.5. Women, through the *Chigwilizano* association are making a significant contribution to the CCAP ministry.

The group reported that there are 800 members of *Chigwilizano Cha Amayi*. Each woman pays an annual membership fee of K25.00, as required by the Synod Executive Committee of *Chigwilizano*. The women are also required to contribute a sum of K10.00 every month during monthly meetings for the development of, and caring for, the needy. Women meet twice a month and manage to generate a sum of K8000.00 each month. The women are responsible for the cleaning of, and preparation work at, the church building. Each week they clean and polish the floor in addition to arranging flowers. At present, they are installing carpets in the church.

*Other areas of involvement include:*

1. Visiting and caring for the sick in the hospitals. This is mostly done during Christmas. The aim is to cheer the sick and the afflicted through provision of gifts and food parcels.
2. Assisting with transport whenever there are special events that members of the church wish to attend.
3. Being responsible for catering for visitors to the congregation.
4. Procuring church assets and equipment that are deemed necessary for the smooth management of church activities.
5. Rendering assistance in any urgent need at the manse.
6. Procuring stationery for the organization.
7. Providing food for orphans within the church.

*Mlozo (Bible study):* The Women's Guild is also responsible for evangelism and Bible study. The following are some of this group's activities:

1. Every week they meet for Bible study focusing on spiritual renewal and development.
2. They conduct revival meetings for the women within the congregation, and once a year (usually during August) with nearby sister congregations.
3. They also provide Christian witness (*makopedwe*), on one-to-one basis, amongst women in the congregation. It was reported that this is one of the most effective ways of winning women to the Lord. Through this activity, more and more women are joining the organization.

*Challenges:* Pentecostalism and "independent fellowship" were expressed as major challenges to this organization. The areas of most conflict are: speaking in tongues, the mode of prayer, the emphasis on meeting at night, and the relatively high proportions of unmarried and divorced members of the group.

*Women to be ordained or elected as Church elders:* The researcher wished to elicit the comments of women on the issues of the ordination of women and involvement of women in implementing church activities. The team responded that the practice of ordaining women is not compatible with family management and the culture. They stressed that it would not influence them if churches elsewhere ordain women. But, for them the present arrangement of having *Mkhalapakati* (Church elder) reporting for them at church sessions is in order and compatible with their culture.

*Caring for the needy congregation members:* The researcher wanted to determine what activities women undertake in order to assist impoverished people to meet their daily needs. The response was that, whenever they become aware of any need, they assist mainly by providing food. This is the traditional way of caring for the needy. The group reported that they do not support the group of business enterprises who help the needy.

(Interviews with: Mmes. Kantwera, Jekapu, Chintama, Joda-Mbewe, and Malanda: 24 May 2001 at the Masintha manse).

### **3.5.6.2 Interviews with Church elders and other groups of the Kafita CCAP**

The research group at the Kafita CCAP communicated the following as ministry areas that need to be re-examined:

*Revival meetings:* Traditionally, revival meetings provide an opportunity for spiritual renewal to congregational members, to those without faith and even to those with different faiths. They come together in the open-air and biblical messages are preached. Normally, the liturgy is not followed - a deliberate move to accommodate visitors. During such crusades, preachers from other congregations are invited to take part. Usually, there are more preachers - sometimes over 15 - particularly on Sundays. The group expressed disappointment in the way revival meetings are being conducted. They want to change the pattern in order to ensure that participants benefit from such meetings.

The group expressed the following concerns regarding revival meetings:

1. There are too many preachers. They do not have enough time to preach effectively. Sometimes they end up contradicting themselves, thereby confusing the audience.
2. Local people in the congregation do not benefit spiritually because they have the burden of caring for the preaching visitors.
3. There is no follow-up, or the preachers take counselling sessions for those who want to be assisted spiritually at all the available time.
4. There is a lack of planning and preparation for the crusades. There should be mobilization to all prayer houses prior to the crusade.
5. Lay Christians ought to be trained in preaching so that they could be part of the preaching team. The visitors do not clearly understand the local context; therefore the messages do not appeal to the local audience.

6. Wednesday services should be encouraged. People need mid-week services.

On the same topic, the Lilongwe congregation team commented that revival meetings are becoming very expensive, demanding K15 000.00 or more from the budget. As a result, few meetings are conducted in a year, in spite of which very few people attend the meetings. The group maintained that there is a great need to make an altar call in order to ascertain and assist those who have given their lives to Jesus Christ to be their personal Saviour.

*Development activities:* The Kafita CCAP is one of the newly established congregations and yet has developed beyond recognition. The secret is that the minister in charge is development-conscious. He has been at the congregation for a period of about two years, in which time several development activities have been established. For example: a brick wall has been built surrounding the Church and manse buildings, the yard has been levelled and several drains constructed, trees have been planted which provide much-needed shade for the congregants. Furthermore, plans are under way for the construction of primary and secondary schools on the church premises.

This achievement is attributed to the good relationship between the minister and the Christian community. It was also observed that transparency has played an important role in the development. The minister commented that he invited one of the city's wealthy Christians to visit the church. Thereupon the visitor donated a large sum of money towards development. Another reason was the issue of accountability. The funds contributed by members of the Christian community have been utilized for the intended projects. Every Sunday, the building committee reports to the members, which, in turn, has promoted more funds, as people are confident in the knowledge that their money is actually being spent on the planned activities.

(Interviews with: Rev. Kachipanda, Messrs. W K Banda, Chisoni, Nanchinga, Nkhoma, Nyirenda, Safuli Banda, and B. Mwale: at the Kafita CCAP on 1 June 2001).

### 3.5.6.3 Interviews with Church elders and other groups of the Lilongwe CCAP

This section examines further the influence of the Pentecostal movements, as described in chapter 2, section 2.6. In addition, the section further attests the fourth hypothesis of this study.

The Lilongwe CCAP group discussed the following ministry issues:

*Pentecostalism and fellowship groups:* Pentecostalism and fellowship groups continue to be a challenge in the city. It so happened that, just prior to the research, the General Secretary sent a general letter to all Synod congregations stating that the youth are allowed to attend fellowship groups within the CCAP congregation. It further indicated that the details of the approach and management would be communicated at a later date. The promised details had not yet been communicated at the time the research was conducted. This delay created uncertainty in all the congregations, particularly in the city, where the recommendations were implemented haphazardly.

Another dilemma surrounded the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM). The Nkhoma Synod has been a member of EAM from its inception in Malawi. Moreover, Nkhoma played an important role during the time of the registration of EAM in the country. However, there are new developments in the EAM, which conservative Christians are not happy with. These concerns are such that people feel that the Synod should reconsider her stand with the EAM.

Commenting on the issue of “fellowship,” the Kafita group expanded on the negative practices, which, if tolerated, are detrimental to the Christian faith. Some negative practices of the EAM are:

1. Dancing during services and funerals, which is not compatible with the Synod’s church practice.
2. Loud and noisy prayers, which convey an attitude of “holier than thou.”
3. The groups emphasize speaking in tongues and regard those who do not speak in tongues as non-Christians.

The group warned that the present dissent is related to the fact that some ministers of the Synod take part secretly in these confusing Pentecostalism practices. This approach is weakening the faith of most urban Christians. During the research it was reported that these groups receive funds from outside bodies, mostly in the USA.

The Masintha team commented that, in order to address fellowship practices, the preachers in both services must preach biblical messages and conduct more revival meetings through which proper teaching can be taught to Christians at all levels. This will help to build the spirituality of congregants. Besides, the ministers need to prepare preaching topics with a view to exposing the dangers of “fellowship” and Pentecostal beliefs and teaching.

*Marriage officiation:* Another challenge that faces the ministry is the officiation of marriages. Three concerns, levelled against marriage officiation, were as follows:

1. *A mixture of traditions:* There are mixed traditions in operation regarding the engagement of couples who are in love. Each family wishes to follow its own particular tradition. The dilemma is that people in Lilongwe come from different districts of Malawi.
2. *Inability to keep time:* Another challenge relates to a lack of punctuality on the day of the wedding. The bride and bridegroom arrive late at the Church for the ceremony.
3. *Long services:* Sometimes a minister holds a long sermon thereby taking more time than necessary. As a result, there is no time for instructing/advising the newly-weds. Little wonder that most marriages do not last.

The Masintha CCAP team suggested that, in order to ensure marriage stability, more time is needed for *chilangizo* (marriage instructions). The team observed that since the couple does not receive effective *chilangizo* they end up by receiving *chilangizo* from non-Christians. As a result, they follow a *chilangizo* with no bearing on Christian principles. In order to ensure that Christian *chilangizo* is done, concerned church elders must be part of the wedding committee so that they can remind the parents of the importance of adhering to Church regulations governing marriages.

On the same issue, the Kafita CCAP team suggested that the selection of *Alangizi* (instructors) must be reviewed. Instead of selecting a man and woman, who are not a couple, this should be changed to selecting married couples. This will help to conduct a joint

*chilangizo* with the new couple without bashfulness. Furthermore, the new couple will be encouraged to contact the *Alangizi* whenever the need occurs.

*Church services:* As in other city congregations, the Lilongwe CCAP has two services: in *Chichewa* (the local language) and in English. The English service takes place from 08:30 to 09:30, and the *Chichewa* services follows from 10:00 to 11:30. The challenges facing the church services are:

1. The Church elders of the two services are often in conflict, due to sudden decisions that each team takes and announces to the audience before checking with the others. The problem is that people receive inconsistent announcements; this confuses the smooth arrangement of Church activities.
2. Frequently, the ministers called to city congregations cannot preach in English. This is a great challenge, as English services are entirely in the hands of visiting preachers, who are not fully conversant with the congregation's plans and vision. Also this makes it difficult for the minister in charge to identify the problem areas and attend to these before they grow and affect Church management.
3. Frequently, the official time for services is not honoured. This disturbs those who have urgent trips to make soon after the services. Besides, time is unnecessarily spent in the vestry arguing about issues, which are not uplifting to the Church. Church leaders then enter the Church services with troubled or disturbed hearts.

The Kafita CCAP team commented on the following challenges affecting the English service:

1. Preachers preach for longer than the official time. As a result, people leave the church during the service. This disturbs both the preachers and the remaining audience.
2. Some preachers find it difficult to deliver a sermon in English.
3. Some prayers are long, which are more of a showing off than edifying the listeners.
4. It was proposed that the preacher should have quality time for preparation and not be placed under pressure of time when accepting an invitation to preach.

*Poor relationships at the Lilongwe CCAP:* One of the most important tools in participatory research is direct observation. This emphasizes the use of all senses while observing: smell, listen, touch, taste, sight and participation/sharing in the activities of the community. At the Lilongwe CCAP the researcher noted (through direct observation) that there is a poor relationship between the minister and the church members.

The following were indicators:

1. The telephone line, which was previously in the manse, has since been removed to the vestry. When a call comes for the minister, the clerk has to run to the manse to either pass on the message or call the minister to attend to the call. This is tiresome indeed considering the number of calls coming to the office of the church in a single day. The urgent calls during the night are simply left untended.
2. Very few people turned up to attend revival meetings during Easter. Formerly this was not the case.
3. The general appearance of both the church and manse premises are rapidly deteriorating. The once lovely and welcoming premises – with green grass and flowers has turned to be a place of dry and dying flowers. No one is available to water the garden.
4. Even after planning together and several follow-ups, most of the research plans were frustrated. For instance, the minister was unable to participate in some key ministerial forum where he would have received tools and ideas to enhance the management of the congregation.

The sooner modalities are put in place to address the situation at the Lilongwe CCAP, the better. Failing this, the situation will get out of hand.

(Interviews with: Rev. Dangaya, Messrs. Maluwa, Mvuta, F. Banda, Ntchafu Phiri, Nkhata, Phungwako, and S. Jamu at the Lilongwe CCAP on 31 May 2001.)

#### **3.5.6.4 Interviews with *Chigwilizano cha Amayi of Kafita CCAP***

The family of the researcher was staying at the Kafita CCAP manse. This presented an opportunity to learn more of urban congregations. The researcher was requested to take part in Church services, both in English and *Chichewa*. The Church is always full on Sundays and more people even sit outside the church on the pavement and drains. Youth meetings are also well attended.

However, it was noted during our stay that the executive committee of *Chigwilizano* did not relate well to the minister's wife who is also required to be the advisor on *Chigwilizano* matters. The parties lacked the accepted cordial manner of doing things. The following were observations:

1. Inadequate kitchen facilities at the manse, yet the committee maintained that sufficient utensils had been procured for the manse kitchen, but wondered where they were.

2. It is standard practice in the Nkhoma Synod that a maidservant is recruited to assist with daily work at the manse, but there was no such servant. The committee maintains that maidservants were recruited from time to time, but did not stay. However, the group did not elaborate on the reasons. It must be noted that *Chigwilizano* pays the salary of such a person.
3. By means of direct observation it was noted that the minister's wife apparently feels that the committee is reluctant to listen to her, because they are more educated than she is.
4. The committee feels that the ex-chairperson has more power than the present leader, because of a closer association with the minister's wife.
5. The congregation received a visiting choir (33 women and 2 men) from Zambia. In normal circumstances, those who cater for visitors also cater for everyone at the manse as catering services are done at the manse. Besides, the leaders of the delegation were sleeping and taking their meals at the manse. But it was noted that the manse was also busy catering for them, which was duplicating the effort and uneconomical budgeting as food was being bought while cartons of the food were lying idle in the passage.
6. There are 14 areas of *Chigwilizano* in the congregations. Once a month each group (area) comes to visit the manse. During this time gifts in kind are brought along to the manse. This is a very good tradition of ensuring that the manse has enough supplies. Once a year (August) *Chigwilizano* women from all the 14 areas come to the manse with supplies in kind.

The lesson learnt is that Christians in urban congregations are doing their best to ensure that the manse has sufficient supplies. The supplies are for their minister and family and also for the visitors of the congregation. So care should be exercised to ensure that members of the congregation utilize supplies, as intended.

(Interviews with: Mmes. Kachipanda, Mwale, Salima, Zulu, Joda-Mbewe and Kachimanga on 2 June 2001 at the Kafita CCAP).

### **3.5.6.5 Interviews with Church elders and other groups of the Masintha CCAP**

The Masintha CCAP team was yet another exciting group. The group contributed a great number of issues some of which overlaps with other issues that have already been attended to in the reports above. Three issues that the group commented on are now reported.

*Relationship with other CCAP congregations and churches:* The ninth pillar of Chapter 6 further described the need for ecumenical alliances in African cities. It is quite negative if churches work in isolation and in competition.

Congregational boundaries in Lilongwe City are the major cause of misunderstandings between the leadership, while in the rural areas boundaries are fixed and well demarcated; in the city there are free zones. Christians pass each other on Sundays to attend services at the CCAP congregation of their choice. While the practice may be valuable for some purposes (familiarity with the particular church and presence of many friends), personal problems and failures motivate some to hide by going to a church far from home, where they are strangers, unknown to anyone. The Synod's ruling is that people in urban areas are free to join any congregation of their choice. The situation in Lilongwe city is that there are now free zones instead of boundaries. But this arrangement has more problems than solutions. The team recommends that the Synod discard the free zone scenario because it is a source of conflict within congregations of the same Synod.

Another area of misunderstanding between congregations is the fact that certain ministers implement aspects of liturgy that are alien to the Nkhoma Synod liturgy. Congregants in Lilongwe come from all parts of Malawi, and they tend to bring with them the liturgies and Church orders to which they are accustomed. This is in conflict with those of Nkhoma Synod congregants, and people resist new practices. The example was given of the Lingadzi CCAP where strict adherence is not observed.

*Challenges that face revival meetings:* Other teams have already reported much on this section. As a regular practice, other preachers are invited to participate in revival meetings conducted in other congregations. Usually, the minister in charge approves the team to preach, and an official letter, with a congregational seal, to this effect is sent. But of late a situation has developed whereby some external preachers have organized false seals, which

they use in order to participate at meetings without having been invited. Most people, who do this, come from the “fellowship” groups.

It was reported that the financial assistance given after such services is the major motivating factor. The team warned that care should be exercised when planning and inviting preachers. Commenting on the fact that some ministers back fellowship practices, the team was highly disturbed on this point. It stated: *Ngati pali ena onena kuti chipulumutso chimene eklesia wa Nkhoma amaphunzitsa ndi kukhulupilila ndi chosakwanila achoke. Ngakhale abusa, akuluampingo kapena atumiki apite!* (If there are some people within the Synod who feel that the teachings and beliefs of the Nkhoma Synod are inadequate or unscriptural, they must feel free to leave the Synod and do whatever they want outside the Synod. Irrespective of position - whether a minister, church elder, or a deacon - all must go!)

*Teaching of the catechesis and Sunday school:* Christian education has deteriorated in urban congregations. The youth are no longer interested in church matters. They focus their attention more on videos, which they find appealing. One of the causes is the fact that those who teach the catechesis and Sunday school are not well trained for the task. It was reported that most teachers do not prepare for their teaching lessons. More often the teachers preach instead of teach. In addition, those who offer to teach the youth often are young people who have just been baptised into God’s family and lack teaching and Christian experience.

The team stressed that there is a great need for teachers to be trained at Namoni Katengeza Lay Training Centre, as this is the sole aim of this Centre. They expressed their concern that the Centre has changed the original purpose for its existence. Now, it operates purely for commercial reasons. This move is in contradiction to the Nkhoma Synod’s agreement with, and expectations of, the Centre. The team charged that: “Namoni Katengeza is becoming too expensive for congregations to afford. Yet the Centre is supposed to cater for the very congregations whose members are denied participation.”

(Interviews with: Rev. Kantwera and Messrs. Malanda, Chilunga, Makalani, Zawanda, Kadula, Hauya, Chapata, Kampala, Kaunde, Chisale, Butao, Simwaka, Chazama, Kambwiri Banda, Chikamveka, Lungu, Chikweza, Majekete, Soko, and Kwalira at the Masintha CCAP on 29 May 2001.)

*Unemployment is on the increase:* One common issue that all groups raised was the fact that unemployment is on the increase in Lilongwe City. The people who live in the slums are struggling to meet their daily needs of life. Some of them depend on small-scale businesses, which are not profitable enough to meet their costs of living, due to inadequate capital. The majority of this group depend on piecework, which is difficult to come by. In most cases, people get a chance to work once or twice per fortnight, and, obviously, the income cannot meet the needs of the family for a month, as the wages are extremely meagre. This topic will be discussed further under the case study below regarding men along the roadside (in the Cape Peninsula).

The fact that unemployment is on the increase in Lilongwe City is indeed a disturbing development. The researcher and three other ministers (Revs Kachipanda, Kantwera and Kalengo) had a negative and scaring experience on the evening of 4 June 2001. The City ministers' workshop ended at about 19:30 at the Dzenza CCAP. The researcher gave a lift to four ministers. The first trip was to Lumbadzi CCAP (North of Lilongwe). When driving back the team was faced with an illegal emergency roadblock on the airport road just before Magwero School. A roadblock of huge stones obstructed the road. The researcher was driving the vehicle. He swerved to the left and drove through the bushes and turned back on the road without stopping. This saved the lives of the team.

On enquiring, it was learnt from team members that the robbers (equipped with fire arms) put up illegal roadblocks in order to kill and rob the victims. Several similar incidents in some parts of the city have been reported in which people are gunned down when they stop to remove the stones from the road. We then speeded to the police station and reported the incident. The police officers rushed to the scene fearing that other vehicles may stop and that the occupants will become the robbers' victims. While at the police station, the researcher asked the policeman on duty what the motivation was for illegal roadblocks. The response was that the level of poverty has risen to such an extent that people have no living means and therefore resort to theft, vandalism, and other negative practices. Thus, the illegal roadblock is one of the effects of poverty as a result of unemployment in the city of Lilongwe.

The groups interviewed raised very important issues regarding which the Presbytery and the Synod could develop tools for the ministry in Lilongwe city. For this reason the city ministers' workshop of 4 June 2001 (as documented below) deemed it necessary to write recom-

mendations to the Presbytery and the Synod to discuss possible ministry tools for city congregations.

### **3.5.7 CITY MINISTERS' WORKSHOP: THE DZENZA CCAP**

The third hypothesis is further examined in this section. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

Also the section deals further with issues described in section 1.8.4.1 of chapter 1 on the relationship between church and society: Practical theology should not apply only within the boundaries of the church, but rather within systems of co-ordinates: society, Christianity, and the church.

A one-day workshop for city ministers was conducted at the Dzenza CCAP on 4 June 2001. In preparation for the workshop, the research team members and Rev. Chiphiko met at the Chimwala CCAP. The objective of this meeting was to discuss the research results of the four congregations and, at the same time, document the findings, preparing for the presentation thereof at the City Ministers' Workshop on 4 June. Rev. Kantwera acted as the secretary of the research team. A report was formulated and presented at the workshop.

#### **3.5.7.1 Attendance**

Rev. AM Chiphiko chaired the workshop and led devotions, reading John 13:34-35. Love is a very important aspect of our ministry and, for this reason too, Jesus commanded the disciples to love each other. God has unconditional love. Rev. Chiphiko spoke of the importance for ministers to love each other and work together as servants of the Lord. It was very moving.

Present were Revs. S P Chalera (a past Synod Moderator for almost a decade), E N Kamunga (Synod's Vice-moderator), Y T Mathyoka, M A Kantwera (taking notes), D F Kachipanda, M Z Khombe (Synod's Vice-moderator in 1997), G H T Kalengo, Pastor Im (from Korea), and the researcher.

### 3.5.7.2 Presentation of congregational reports

Each minister was given the opportunity to present the report of the congregation in which he is currently serving. The objective was three fold:

1. To understand the present issues that each congregation has, and continues to experience.
2. To instil in the hearts of the ministers a sense of participation. At a workshop every minister is required to take part in the proceedings.
3. To give the ministers an opportunity to learn from each other through discussions and the sharing of experiences.

### 3.5.7.3 Reporting format

The following was the agreed reporting format:

*Historical background of the congregation:* This covered an analysis of the situation; reasons for, and dynamics experienced during establishment of the congregation; the ministers who served the congregation; and any other major decisions taken that affected the move.

*Achievements:* Successes that the people feel happy and rejoice about in their congregation - a source of encouragement and celebration for Christians. Things they are proud of through the Christian journey of their congregation.

*Challenges:* Negative experiences which the congregation may have been faced with, situations that may have led the Christians to call for joint prayers as a team, or any major conflict that members may reflect upon as a threat to ministry implementation.

*Future plans:* What the congregation intends to undertake in future for strategic implementation to ensure the development of the congregation, Presbytery, or Synod.

After the presentation of their congregational reports, the research team also presented the research findings for the four sampled congregations. After these presentations, the forum discussed all the documented issues in a plenary session.

### 3.5.7.4 Issues discussed at the ministers' workshop

A list of ministry issues discussed at the workshop on 4 June 2001 will now follow.

#### *Achievements:*

1. The congregations continue to proclaim the saving Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and, by God's grace, the number of Christians is increasing daily. Almost all the congregations (except at Lumbadzi, Likuni and Kawira) have two Sunday services (English and Chichewa).
2. The organization of *Chigwilizano cha Amayi* continues to provide a notable ministry in each congregation.
3. In some congregations, youth fellowships have been established while others are still struggling to organize youth committees. It is hoped that, in time and with the assistance of other congregations, youth committees will be in place in all congregations.
4. Many choirs have been formed. A situation has arisen in which cooperation with choirs from other countries (Zambia and Zimbabwe) has been established to the extent that choir members from both sides visit each other. Through this, apart from building the level of spirituality, members have the opportunity to travel and visit neighbouring countries – contributing to the educational process and transformation of people on both sides. In addition, it provides an opportunity for shopping.
5. New congregations continue to be established in the city. Many people no longer travel very far for services, as was the case previously.
6. Afternoon fellowships (*milaga*) are conducted mostly on Sundays. This proves very rewarding to Christians in these areas. They gather for prayers, share ideas, get to know one another, and assist each other in times of need.
7. Revival meetings are conducted in all congregations. They have helped to nurture spiritual growth of Christians. In addition, marriage seminars have helped to stimulate the spiritual growth of most families.
8. Brick walls around both the church and manse (Kafita and Msonkhamanja) have been constructed in few congregations, providing adequate security.

#### *Challenges:*

The following are the challenges that the city ministers identified:

1. *Pentecostalism:* Some Christians, mainly the youth, are easily drawn to join the Pentecostal Church because of their charismatic form of worship. These churches advocate that to follow a liturgy is a traditional and "dead habit." The youth do not have sufficient background information to understand how and when such variant forms of worship originated. The youth, being emotional, are therefore carried along to join such denominations. Pentecostalism is growing fast in Malawian cities. The church is challenged to find ways of helping the youth from being carried away by Pentecostal teachings.

2. *Satanism:* There are satanic worshippers in the city of Lilongwe and this movement is growing fast. Some Christians have joined them because they are promised wealth. If the Synod does not come up with immediate ways to address satanic teachings, it will exploit not only young Christians who are looking for employment, but there is the danger that Satanism could get a grip on people who are in key positions of decision making.

3. *Islam:* The Islamic religion is a huge challenge to Christianity in Malawi, particularly in the cities. Moslems have built mosques and Islamic centres that offer free education. The targeted areas are those with a high rate of illiteracy and poverty (slums and squatters) so that Christian families are induced to send their children to such schools. They are later potential converts to Islam. Islam is indeed one of the cults that use the promise of wealth to attract members, especially poor Christians. In most cases, the members hold regular meetings within 100 metres of some Reformed Churches, thus humiliating the Christian faith.

4. *Poverty:* There is much poverty in the city of Lilongwe, particularly among squatters and those who live in shantytowns. This is due to a high rate of unemployment and high inflation rate in the country. As a result, people indulge in several malpractices as a means of survival. Poor Christians are easily converted to other denominations that promise and offer them wealth in cash or in kind. Prostitution is one of the practices resulting from poverty. In their fight for survival many people, particularly young Christian girls, turn to prostitution. Many incidents of prostitution take place at night in surrounding hotels and other public premises. Due to poverty, theft is rampant even among Christians.

5. *The scourge of AIDS:* Prostitution is rife in the city and leads to the more serious challenge of AIDS. The forum noted with concern that AIDS has not spared our church in all life's aspects. Many able-bodied Christians die prematurely every day. As most Christians

who die are young, they leave their children lacking parental care. As a result, the number of orphans is increasing daily.

6. *The sect of the Jehovah's Witnesses:* This sect is spreading so fast, due to the present freedom of worship. The previous government did not allow this sect to operate in Malawi. They have recently built a church 50 metres from the Masintha Church. They constantly go to Christians of the Reformed faith trying to lobby them to join the sect. The research participants lamented that there is a need to develop tools in order to help the youth to be biblically planted in the Word of God.

7. *Paganism:* Paganism is still being practised in the city. This takes different forms among which are:

*Gulewamkulu:* Some now regard this as a religion because the members arrange to have pastors, elders, deacons, and Women's Guild members to compete with Christianity. It is an extremely big challenge to the church. It is strong in the rural part of some city congregations.

*Traditional beliefs and cults:* Some Christians indulge in traditional beliefs and cults, for instance tattooing their bodies when a relative dies in the belief that this will protect them from his/her spirit, which is dreaded.

*Divination:* Some Christians practice witchcraft, magic and spiritualism.

8. *Need for urban ministry orientation:* Since the inception of the Nkhoma Synod ministry in 1889 at the Mvera CCAP, the preparation of ministers has been rural in focus. This is not surprising, because there were no cities, as we know them today. Now, this poses a challenge because ministers find it difficult to minister effectively in city congregations. Most Christians in the city are highly educated and hold senior positions either in the government or Non-Government Organization offices. Church ministers find it difficult to relate well with such groups due to feelings of inadequacy. Two examples illustrate the point under discussion:

i. *A senior court judge withdrew his membership:* A church elder also a senior government judge, withdrew his membership from a Nkhoma Synod congregation in the city because the minister in charge failed to assist him at the death of his mother. The story has it that the mother of the judge was sick. The judge brought his mother to his own home in the city for better medical care. She came with a visiting church certificate,

which was surrendered to the church, and the minister visited the patient regularly either at the hospital or the judge's home. The mother was discharged and went back to her home in the rural area.

The mother became ill again and the son again took her to his home for treatment. This happened a couple of times and each time the mother remembered to take her church certificate with her. Sadly, one day she became seriously ill and forgot to take the church certificates with her. Unfortunately the mother now died and they decided to bury her in the city where most of the son's friends live. The message was sent to the minister informing him of the matter, but he refused to bury the mother because she did not bring the church certificate.

The judge had to send someone to drive a distance of more than 650 km to fetch the church certificate. When he received the certificate, he called to inform the minister that he had fetched the certificate and that he would reach Lilongwe late that night. The minister then authorized Christians to start preparing the funeral arrangements. The mother was buried as a Christian. The judge withdrew his membership saying that if he, as a church elder, could not be trusted in such a matter, what hope was there for ordinary Christians to have confidence in the congregation!

ii. *A minister preaches two sermons at once:* Another story is that a minister preached two sermons (Chichewa and English) without an interpreter. On this particular Sunday the church had a joint service, in which those who attend Chichewa and English services join together in a service. The church elders expected the minister to choose an interpreter for the benefit of the audience, but for a reason best known to the minister himself, he chose to preach the two sermons himself. He started with the English sermon and then continued with Chichewa soon after the English. The Christians stayed in the Church for the duration of two sermons. The frustrating part was that the Chichewa sermon was exactly the translation of the English sermon. People were very disappointed as they sat waiting for a long time to give their Sunday offering. In both stories the lesson seems to be the minister's inability to make the right decision at the appropriate time, and failing to involve church elders in the decision-making process.

The achievements and challenges that Lilongwe City ministers discussed during the workshop of 4 June 2001 have been documented. The participants agreed to develop a new ministry approach; taking into consideration the challenges that face the ministry in Lilongwe City. The old ministry approach that was developed in the early years of Nkhoma Synod, with the rural context in mind, is no longer effective in urban Lilongwe. With this reason in mind, the participants drew up and agreed to forward the following recommendations to both the Presbytery and the Synod.

### 3.5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS PREPARED FOR 2001 PRESBYTERY AND SYNOD MEETINGS

This section describes further the orientations of the Church in chapter 1, section 1.8.4.1. "Churches have six basic functions: preaching, liturgy, sacraments, church discipline, Christian life, and pastoral care."

The participants of the city ministers' workshop drew up the recommendations in an attempt to arrest the negative effects of urbanization that face city congregations. It was hoped that these recommendations would be considered at Presbytery meetings scheduled for August 2001 and the meeting of the Synod, which followed in October 2001. The researcher attended the Synod meeting with a hope to present the research report to the Synod meeting. Sad that the Synod leadership however, did not approve to discuss the report for reasons known best by themselves.

In Nkhoma Synod a situation has developed that any minister with a high theological qualification is seen as a threat to the current leadership. As a result ministers with high theological qualifications are posted to positions usually outside the synod. The 2001 Synod meeting is the first to elect a minister with Ph. D qualification to a position of General Secretary. The move came about with a lot of difficulties. The current General Secretary was until his appointment working with the Bible Society of Malawi.

Contrary to the negative opinion of Synod leadership, the participants of the Synod Assembly enthusiastically read the report and confirmed it addressed the current challenges of urban congregations. It is believed that the current Synod leadership will seek ways to implement the research findings.

### 3.5.8.1 Two church services (Chichewa and English):

There is a need for the two church services (Chichewa and English) to continue in the city congregations. This will provide an opportunity for worship to the working class group some of whom have job responsibilities, which demand that they must work or travel on Sundays. Each service should have its own committee for the smooth planning and management of these services.

Caution needs to be exercised to ensure that biblical preaching is implemented. It is important to be aware of the fact that people come to the church because they believe that God is present in his Word. People today (particularly in Lilongwe city), do not come to church to hear the minister's ideas about the Word of God. They are weary of sermons, which do not impact on their lives. Frequently, people leave the church service complaining about the mediocrity of the sermon that they have heard.

Commenting on the issue of preaching, Runia (1983:5) notes

But modern man does not want to be treated as a passive sheep that has to be fed. He wants to know why it is worthwhile to believe what the preacher tells him .... Moreover believing is not a once-for-all happening, but a process in which the faith of the believer, by means of ever-new experiences, continually changes and develops.

People withdraw their membership when they feel they are not fed spiritually. When the sermons are not well prepared, ordinary people find them extremely boring. Since they do not know how to argue, they simply join other churches. Runia (1983:14) comments "And since they have no real say in the matter - they are literally at the receiving end - they can make their disappointment and their dissatisfaction heard in only one way - by staying away."

Preaching in city congregations must focus on transforming the human mind by bringing hope and happiness to people in the shantytowns. Shorter (1991:143) comments "Only the Church can turn the populous urban centres from being places of de-humanization and despair, into beacons of hope and happiness, because only the Church can give the town a soul."

### **3.5.8.2 Ministry in partnership with the urban poor**

Pillar 2 of chapter 6 discusses this section further. The forum expressed concern on the manner in which the urban poor struggle to meet life's basic needs. It was noted that they sometimes stay without proper food while some well-off church members have plenty in their homes. The team agreed to make a definite decision to address the needs of the poor through income-generating activities.

### **3.5.8.3 Need for a common base (office in Lilongwe) for ministers' meetings**

It was noted that the young and recent churches (particularly Pentecostal) seem to be well organized because they have offices and meet jointly on a weekly basis. The Nkhoma Synod ministry has been operating in the city for a period of almost 50 years without an office. The team expressed a need to have an office in Lilongwe as a base for ministers' planning meetings and the secretariat.

### **3.5.8.4 Congregational committees**

Ministry in the city should not be a one-man-show, but rather a priesthood of all believers. People who have gifts should not be ignored in their efforts to implement their God-given gift for the upliftment of God's name. For this reason, it is recommended that people be given the opportunity to be part of congregational committees and assist the minister to implement ministry activities. Ministers should assume new roles as teachers and be able to delegate others to do the work. Runia (1983:5) notes "Man not only has an ear, but a tongue as well! Instead of being at the receiving end only he wants to join in the discussion." So ministers must not feel threatened when Church elders and other laymen are performing far better than they are.

### **3.5.8.5 Congregational development activities**

It is high time that the Church broadens its past focus on spiritual development. This is a one-sided implementation of ministry. The Church must also be concerned with the physical situation of the congregants and the development of the church at large. It is hereby recommended that the Church should seriously begin to also manage development activities with a view to assisting poor congregants. Handouts are not enough to meet the needs of the growing numbers of needy people. In commenting on the importance of servicing urban basic communities, Shorter (1991:104) notes

... it is clear that urban basic communities probably require more care, attention and maintenance than rural basic communities. However, they should not depend wholly

on the visits of a priest or member of the pastoral team in order to function properly, to solve their problems, or to replace leaders.

In Lilongwe, most people live in the slums, yet are members of the congregations. Here one may raise the question of what the church is doing in order to assist this group of people.

Shorter (1991:139) notes

A major goal for the Church in the town is to convince people that resources should be husbanded, safely exploited, and fairly shared ... besides helping to effect a change of heart, therefore, the Church has to effect a change in human living conditions, in sanitation, hygiene, health care, and the provision of building materials.

If the urban congregation does not defend the cause of the urban poor, then it will be difficult for the church to implement Christian witness to the advantaged group living in shantytowns. It will be hard for people to believe in the God who does nothing to change their predicament.

Shorter (1991:77) comments

The Church in the city tries to improve conditions through socio-economic liberation and change. People from the squatter self-help areas must be helped to acquire a share in the urban services to which they are entitled and which only a minority of town dwellers enjoy. This is a question of justice, especially since many squatters are integrated into the city's large scale, formal work sector.

### **3.5.8.6 Need for urban ministry orientation**

This section takes and discusses chapter 1 section 1.8.3.2 further. Pillar 8 of chapter 6 describes the need for ministry orientation further.

Participants in the city ministers' workshop at the Dzenza CCAP were excited with the research process that was undertaken, and eager that the process should be exposed to all ministers of the Nkhoma Synod at a ministers' refresher course at the Synod's Lay Training Centre. This observation came in recognition of the urban challenges. The team expressed a need for a continued process of similar nature so that they can be better equipped. It was then proposed that the book, which the researcher is writing, should be published for those in urban centres. Besides, the urban ministers requested the researcher to summarize each chapter to be easily grasped and understood.

On the same issue, it is noted with concern that when ministers of Nkhoma Synod are trained they should be given the opportunity to share and implement what they have learnt and studied for the benefit of the ministry. The team brainstormed a couple of related reasons. It was felt that the leadership fears to lose their position when trained personnel return home after their studies. Instead, opportunity should deliberately be made with a view to

incorporating new and additional knowledge acquired for effective ministry. In addition, city ministers need to remember that God positioned the Church strategically to care for the poor. This is seen clearly on the Jesus' ministry agenda as we read Luke 4. Shorter (1991:140) comments

Certainly, the Church can help the poor understand the causes of their poverty, can appeal to the conscience of the affluent, and can spearhead the Christian rebellion against poverty and injustice .... Above all, the Church can help new town dwellers to capitalize their creative talents, build on the positive urban value of self-determination, and make good their right to urbanize themselves.

### **3.5.8.7 Relationship between CCAP ministers and other churches**

Pillar 9, in chapter 6, describes further the need for ecumenical alliances.

The recommendation is made here that the free zone boundary created in Lilongwe should not divide the ministers. The Synod must develop plans to resolve the issue amicably. Instead, co-operation should be promoted amongst the ministers for improved implementation of ministry activities. The command to love, which Jesus gave to his disciples in the New Testament, should also apply to city ministers. Shorter (1991:82) notes "The great value of the urban phenomenon is the experience of unity-in-diversity, of appreciating others in their difference, learning to receive from, and share with, other."

Ministry in the city is effective if ministers of different churches work together as a team. This is crucial because, in the city, churches of different faiths are closer to each other than in the rural areas. Shorter (1991:125) comments "Ecumenical reluctance in the African town may be a symptom of the urban privatization of religion. Worse still, it may contribute to the growth of a secular attitude and a conviction that religion is irrelevant to the city's problems." If urban churches are to make the desired impact in the city of Lilongwe today, they should begin to work as a team. This is so, because one church alone can never be expected to arrest all the effects of urbanization. Shorter (1991:126) notes

It is obvious that the Churches have much to learn from one other in addressing the problems of urban dwellers, and although associations of Independent Churches are coming into being, it may not always be through inter-Church councils that co-operation is best articulated .... Probably the best approach is that of joint action groups which proved such a success in Bulawayo.

### **3.5.8.8 New calling system for city ministers**

The list of recommendation cannot be considered complete without developing a new calling system for ministers. If the present system continues, then no change, as a result of ministry impact, is anticipated, as rural ministers will continue to bring a rural mentality to the city. But the gist of the matter is that the minister with rural experience quickly finds that rural methods and routines do not work in the Lilongwe urban context.

The recommendation is that a committee of not less than six city ministers should assist in calling a minister to fill any vacant post that may exist in the city. The team would work jointly with the session concerned. The successful candidate should be spiritually mature; have the ability to preach and/or lead both services in both Chichewa and English; demonstrate a high level of financial accountability; and be a person of clear vision (Prov. 29:18).

The candidate must have received training in urban ministry and have an academic qualification that would enable him to relate to the academicians without fear and feelings of inadequacy. Shorter (1991:146) comments "Although there are excellent courses in urban ministry offered in Europe and America, these are not necessarily well adapted to the African urban experience. What is needed is a course that takes the realities of the African urban situation into account."

### **3.5.8.9 The impact of HIV/AIDS: An urgent concern for the church**

Pillar 6 of chapter 6 discusses the HIV/AIDS further.

The most urgent and pressing problem that the Church in Africa faces is the AIDS pandemic. Not a single household, congregation, office, or community in Malawi is unaffected by this deadly tragedy, as is the case in Southern Africa. City congregations in Lilongwe are also struggling with this challenge, as middle-aged people with potential are dying, leaving their children without anyone to care for them. The recommendation was made that the Synod should create tools to arrest the tragedy before it is too late. The researcher was not able to acquire actual statistics of this pandemic, because people are not willing to discuss it freely. However, observation established that people are dying in large numbers.

On 19 March 2001, the researcher had a meeting with his supervisor (Prof. Hendriks). The purpose of the meeting was to present the research plan that the researcher had developed and

proposed to conduct in Malawi, and also to take leave of the supervisor, as the researcher was about to depart for Malawi. At the end of the discussion, Prof. Hendriks mentioned the NetACT proposal to address the Aids pandemic in Southern Africa, using the available church machinery. The proposal has very real merit. To develop leadership that empowers suffering people to take responsibility for their future - especially in addressing the AIDS pandemic - is both a very commendable and an absolutely necessary objective. Neither AIDS nor poverty will be addressed effectively in any other way but through organizing the people to address such issues themselves, and to do this together.

Of course, the true key to this proposal is its implementation. It does not stand or fall by its design. It stands or falls by its implementation. The challenge is in effectively training willing and committed leaders in academic and ecclesiastical institutions associated with Stellenbosch, who will also faithfully take their training to their local congregations. But, should congregational pastors and leaders fail to carry out their commitment to teach others, then the whole project will fail. So the question becomes, "How can this process be so organized that each will do his or her part?"

That will entail the necessity of developing a web of expectation, accountability and frequent evaluation at every level. And this, in turn, will not happen effectively unless the entire strategy is shaped around the building of committed relationships at every level. Relationships will be the key - and, through these relationships, people embracing a feeling of deep commitment not to let down both their fellow partners in this work, nor the organization itself. So the tactics of building and sustaining these relationships *at every level of the project* will be the key to guaranteeing the success of this venture. It is a workable and achievable plan to arrest the AIDS pandemic and tragedy, but will require efficient organization and the development of a significant relational culture to sustain it.

#### **3.5.8.10 Marriage officiation**

The participants further recommended that the Synod should once again remind its congregations about the danger of bridal shower and kitchen party practices. The continued practices which some congregations are still pursuing is causing conflicts in Lilongwe. The following are the dangers of these practices:

- *Only the lady attends the bridal shower:* The origin of the term "shower" is not known but it involves around marriage instructions. The Synod questions it because

normally Christian instructors are not allowed to participate and the man does not attend the function. He is kept in the dark of what his wife-to-be goes through. As a result conflict easily arise in the marriage. Besides, people doubt the kind of marriage process, which allows only the lady and denies the man.

- *Gifts:* It was reported that during the bridal shower, the lady receives gifts with which to start the new family. In some quarters there have been situations where the two simply marry outside the church as they feel the gifts that ladies receive are enough to start the family with. In the end such marriages do not last.
- *The lady receives unChristian instructions:* It has come to the attention of the church that most women who attend bridal showers are not confessing Reformed Christians. It is feared that the lady receives unbiblical instruction. On the other hand, it must be remembered that mixed marriages is one of the challenges that city congregations face. A Reformed Christian who marries a Moslem or a Pentecostal Christian, or a Christian from other denominations may transfer to her husband's denomination. This is very common among women and young people. Women are compelled to join their Moslem husbands out of fear of divorce.

Through the description of the government services provision entities and the urban mission of the CCAP it has been noted that urban poverty continues to be a challenge in the cities of Malawi. With this background, this study seeks to address a third hypothesis, which states: A holistic approach to urban ministry with city joint forums for development is needed to adequately address urban poverty problems. This means that churches will have to co-operate with government entities as well as with the local community leadership in implementing development activities.

The next sub-section details the analysis of two South African poverty situations.

### 3.6 THE ANALYSIS OF TWO SOUTH AFRICAN SITUATIONS

This section examines the second and third hypotheses further.

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the people who live in the slums can participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.
- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

This section is about two poverty analysis scenarios in South Africa.

- Unemployed men in the Cape Peninsula who stand along the road searching for casual work
- The unemployment situation in the Orlando East community, Soweto, Johannesburg.

While studying at the University of Stellenbosch, the researcher had an opportunity to visit a number of sites in the Cape Peninsula where, early in the morning, unemployed men stand along the road waiting for job opportunities. In addition, the organization of World Vision South Africa contracts the researcher from time to time to conduct participatory research in different communities where the organization is working. One of such communities is Orlando East in Soweto.

#### 3.6.1 THE SITUATION ANALYSIS OF MEN ALONGSIDE THE ROAD - CAPE PENINSULA

Chapter 1 section 1.8 continues to receive attention in this section. This scenario describes the need to bring hope to unemployed men standing on the side of the road (near traffic lights) in the Cape Peninsula. The purpose is to capture the Cape Town scenario of these men who daily wait for casual jobs, but with little hope. Around the Cape Peninsula there are more than 35 sites where these men stand alongside the road every day looking for jobs. The case study aims to elucidate the lessons learnt through this project over a period of six months. This is to direct the reader's attention to the urban challenges that unemployed men are experiencing in the Cape Peninsula. The project is called "Men on the Side of the Road" (MSR). Its main objective is to bring hope to these men. The MSR project is part of the Catholic Welfare and Development organization (CWD).

It came about as a result of the researcher's involvement with these unemployed men. Noting the numerous sites, the researcher approached the manager of the CWD to find out whether he would be interested to include the men's project in the CWD. The organization accepted the proposal and the project was initiated. The researcher documented funding proposals and trained two graduates to manage the project. It continues to operate to date.

### 3.6.1.1 The problem

The unemployed men on the side of the road are a consequence of the use of casual labour, which came about as a result of capitalism, and has become an international trend. The African continent, in particular, has suffered heavily from this practice and now it has become very difficult to address. In the Republic of South Africa (as is the case elsewhere on the African continent) the situation of unemployment is on the increase. More and more people are resorting to casual jobs as a means for their livelihood.

These men have no hope. Every day, they come to the roadside without knowing whether they will obtain work, or not. This is a very de-humanizing situation, as they have no idea when next they will have a plate of food. Some of the problems that the men face are:

- i. They suffer under community/family pressure. This motivates the men early in the morning to look for employment as a way of gaining the image and respect attributed to manhood.
- ii. Exploitation by subcontractors is extremely prevalent on the sites where men wait for casual jobs. The subcontractors do not allow men to bargain for adequate payment. If they do, the subcontractors view them as troublemakers.
- iii. A situation of desperation for money has developed amongst the men. "Job greed" as it exists at the sites is out of keeping with *ubuntu*, in which the regularly employed men would pass-up or sacrifice jobs sometimes to give others an opportunity.
- iv. There is strong competition for jobs and this has resulted in a high level of mutual distrust. Although the men occupy the same site together for long periods of time, they continue to be strangers to one another.

A participatory process was conducted with these men at eleven sites. The process engaged them in dialogue. The purpose was to understand their situation through interviews and observation. The men were willing to participate towards transforming their lives through

dialogue and interaction. As a result, the team gathered valuable information around which to initiate development activities.

Through this project, the team learnt a great deal about the hardships that unemployed men are experiencing. Some of the observations are:

- Although some men have skills, they view them as without value, as the chance of getting jobs is very limited. So they disregard their skills and opt to be mere labourers.
- The desperation for money is very intense, to the extent that the sense of commonality with their fellow men is highly obscured.
- Exploitation by subcontractors is the disturbing daily experience of every man on the roadside. There are many humiliating stories that reflect the daily life situation of this group of people.
- The men are committed to coming to the sites each and every day in spite of probably not getting a job. This represents a strength that the project can build upon.
- The men are not interested in a continued dialogue that makes no effort to address their predicament. They want a process that focuses on enabling them to manage income-generating activities. This was noted in all the sites investigated and is understandable given the situation in which they are gripped.
- Some activities that the men want to implement, in order to turn around their situation, are: making ironing boards, chicken rearing, making burglar bars, vegetable selling, bead craft.

These helpless men on the side of the road, although uneducated and unemployed, have a vision for their future and are able to identify development activities in order to transform their communities. This is what community organization does. These unemployed men have practical reasoning and wisdom. All they need is a process of empowerment.

### **3.6.2 THE ANALYSIS OF ORLANDO EAST COMMUNITY - SOWETO**

In this section, "ministry as hermeneutical exegesis of word and context (1.8) is further discussed. The office of World Vision of South Africa (WVSA) has initiated a development programme in the Orlando East community. Before initiating the programme WVSA requested the researcher to carry out participatory research, a process aimed at understanding the successes and challenges that the people in Orlando East community are experiencing. Some of the research objectives were: to assess the actual successes and challenges of the

local people for the purpose of designing an Area Development Program for World Vision of South Africa; to formulate ideal intervention strategies and models that could assist in addressing and reversing challenges, at the same time encouraging successes, and to create a research team for the Orlando East community.

The South Western Townships (SOWETO) are situated south west of Johannesburg and have a total population of about four million people. This is one of the largest metropolitan areas in South Africa and has over 20 townships. Orlando East is one of the oldest communities in Soweto and here the majority of inhabitants live below the poverty line. The mineworkers (predominantly black) established the community in 1932 and it covers an area of 445 hectares. The community has 29 churches including Mainline denominations, Pentecostal (Charismatic) and Indigenous groups. The majority of the people of Orlando East are Christians. The rest belong to the indigenous Shembe and Zionist churches. However, these religions co-exist comfortably since they all recognize and believe in God and the Holy Spirit, but differ about belief in Jesus Christ.

### **3.6.2.1 The challenges that people face in Orlando East**

*This research revealed the successes as well as the challenges that people are experiencing at Orlando East. Some of the revealed challenges are: family abuse, the high rate of unemployment that poses a great challenge to the residents, problems surrounding schools, clinics and security. The local government shows an inability to make the desired impact on the community and have abandoned facilities that otherwise could have made a difference.*

Pollution, as a result of overcrowding in Orlando East, is one of the major challenges. The proliferation of shacks in Orlando East represents a serious development. In 1990, it was estimated that Orlando East had 15 280 shacks. The figure has trebled during the last ten years. The residents have identified shack letting as a source of income. Some say that, due to the high unemployment rate, shack letting is an alternative way of generating income. During the research, it was learnt that many people come to Orlando East from other countries and also from within the Republic for jobs. This influx aggravates the overcrowding and the proliferation of shacks. This situation has also exacerbated the crime rate.

Crime is on increase in this area. Thugs and gangsters indulge in crime as a quick and easy way of getting rich. The gangsters burgle other people's property; people are robbed daily of their possessions and often killed for petty articles such as cell phones, handbags and anything that the thugs can easily sell. People, particularly the youth, resort to this behaviour, as they have nothing to do during the day. Visitors to Soweto should be on guard against any eventuality at anytime. Rape, brutal murder and robbery commonly occur in Orlando East.

Rev. Jack Mabaso of the Church of England in South Africa has pastored the Saint Matthews Family Church in Orlando East for a period of 13 years. Rev Mabaso was a research team member and described to the researcher how the Lord miraculously rescued him from the hands of thugs.

*The story as presented by Rev Mabaso:* "On the 13<sup>th</sup> November 2000, on a Monday morning, at about 10 a.m., I heard a knock at the door. As it was still early for me, and about to take a bath, I left the bathroom to open the door for the person who was knocking. It was a surprise visit of four clean young gentlemen between ages of 18 and 24 years.

At first I was not suspicious as youth of my area know me and I know some of the youth, particularly those within my church. The visitors asked me to give them money - and I felt a bit jittery in answering, and immediately the phone rang. One of the four stood up to answer the phone, and the caller wanted to speak to the Reverend Mabaso. So, the young man looked at me as if he wanted an answer, not knowing that the caller was a detective from Orlando East police station. I said to him, tell the caller to come in 20 minutes to my house.

As they changed their position, I noticed that two had firearms, and I prayed Psalm 144 silently in my heart. "God, you teach my hands to protect myself and to fight, and my fingers ... to defend my life." The four were becoming too angry as I now took a position of fighting the four with the sword of the spirit. Memorizing scripture is a powerful weapon whenever you are faced with difficulty in life. Within minutes, a policeman arrived without knowledge of my situation. When he entered, I winked at him and told him these men want money. He was very quick and instructed them to raise their hands, and with his firearm he shot at one as he tried to resist. He dropped down. God works in mysterious ways in our lives, while we do not notice his angels coming to our rescue. The detective called for help and the three were apprehended. The fourth was taken to hospital where he died within a few days. I will tell of

the goodness of my God as long as I live. Today, as I look back, I can boldly say, the Lord is my shepherd and my refuge, an ever present help in times of trouble, Psalm 23:1 and 46:1.

As in the case of the men on the side of the road in the Cape Peninsula, people in Orlando East participated fully in identifying the needs of their community. This was good. It means that the people are able and prepared to participate in transforming their lives and communities. A research team of thirty young boys and girls was formed in Orlando East to continue to work in partnership with the World Vision South Africa development programme in the area.

The research findings give a clear scenario of the cycle of poverty and the situation that grips the people of Orlando East. Throughout the research and mostly during the semi-structured interviews, it became most apparent that ordinary people in Orlando East have dreams and plans to transform their community. The biggest challenge however, is that they are not consulted or involved in any development endeavour. The people, though poverty stricken, are willing to be part of any process that seeks to transform their community. People's participation in research is rare and this indicates a willingness to bring about change in Orlando East. In addition, the willingness and comments that people contributed during the semi-structured interviews demonstrate their high level of commitment.

### **3.7 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Research conducted in South Africa and in Malawi has highlighted the plight of the urban poor. The disadvantaged groups in urban Africa are really struggling to survive. The pastoral letter, which the CCAP in Malawi sent to the President, succeeded in articulating the sufferings and injustices that the urban poor in Africa are experiencing. Since the urban poor have no voice, the Church must exercise the prophetic voice on their behalf. This will help the political order to focus on the needs of those who live in shantytowns in urban centres.

This report has also documented that the Church must seek to implement development activities in order to address the needs of the poor who form part of the church's ministry. Focusing only on the spiritual growth of people is to deny part of the total purpose for which God has called the church. The challenges of the city are indeed so numerous that the Church alone cannot handle them. This chapter has documented that the Church must cooperate with the government in matters of development. At the same time, all the churches in the city,

irrespective of their differences in doctrine and tradition, must seek to work together ecumenically.

This research assisted the urban ministers in Malawi to examine the Christian journey through achievements and challenges that they have experienced. Through this process the ministers were able to note the challenges and present some recommendations that will form part of the Presbytery and Synodical proceedings. It is hoped that, through such discussions, appropriate tools and methodologies will emerge for the ministry in Lilongwe city.

The new calling system for the ministers to serve in urban congregations is one of the recommendations. The purpose is to ensure that the ministers who accept to serve in the city of Lilongwe should be *au fait* with city dynamics. This will serve to encourage training for urban needs, in preparation for city ministry. The importance of involving the laity in managing Church activities has also been emphasized. This will give the ordinary Christian an opportunity to implement Spirit-given merit and gifts for the advancement of God's ministry. On the other hand, the ministers will assume teaching responsibilities to groups of the laity. This is a step towards achieving the priesthood of all believers.

The effects of HIV/AIDS and related sufferings have been highlighted. The AIDS pandemic is having a negative impact as it is claiming the lives, prematurely, of many. Numerous children are orphaned as a result of AIDS. Unemployment, which results in poverty, has another negative impact: it is a serious challenge to the church of today. Therefore, the Church should try to create modalities in order to arrest the effects of urbanization. NetACT is an appropriate effort in the right direction, taking into consideration the situation prevailing today. Christians must commit themselves to organize people to address poverty and AIDS-related suffering in the various Southern African communities. The Church in Southern Africa should work hard in order to save the lives of many orphans whose parents have died as a result of the disease.

All of the four hypotheses have been very helpful in the research process of this chapter.

*Hypothesis 1* guided the development of:

- 3.4: Government services provision entities: City Assemblies
- 3.5.2: Researching four congregations in Lilongwe city
- 3.5.5: Ministry issues raised by the research team

3.5.7: City ministers' workshop: The Dzenza CCAP

*Hypothesis 2* was the background for:

- 3.4: Government services provision entities: City Assemblies
- 3.5.5: Ministry issues raised by the research team
- 3.6: The two South African poverty scenarios.

*Hypothesis 3* supported the following:

- 3.4: Government services provision entities: City Assemblies
- 3.5.7: City ministers' workshop: the Dzenza CCAP
- 3.6: The two South African poverty scenarios.

*Hypothesis 4* confirmed the following section:

- 3.5: The urban mission of the CCAP ministry.

## Chapter 4

### Poverty and the poor

#### 4.0 INTRODUCTION

The topic of this study is: urban poverty as a challenge for ministry within the Malawian (African) context. This chapter examines further the definition of poverty as described in chapter 1, section 1.1.4. "Poverty manifests itself in various ways and a conclusive definition of the term is elusive." Nevertheless, the nature of poverty includes poverty as a deficit, poverty as entanglement, as a lack of access to social power, as disempowerment and as a lack of freedom to grow. In this sense, the poor are wrapped in restrictions and are limited in four areas of life: physical, mental, social and spiritual.

The formulated hypotheses, as documented in chapter 1, section 1.7, are examined further in this chapter. This chapter has ten sub-sections:

- The extent of poverty in Malawi
- A description of the poor
- Christian views of the poor
- Defining poverty
- An overview definition of urban poverty
- The causes of poverty
- The urban informal economies
- Development, as a response to poverty
- The vocation of the urban church.
- The importance of ministry sustainability.

#### 4.1 THE EXTENT OF POVERTY IN MALAWI

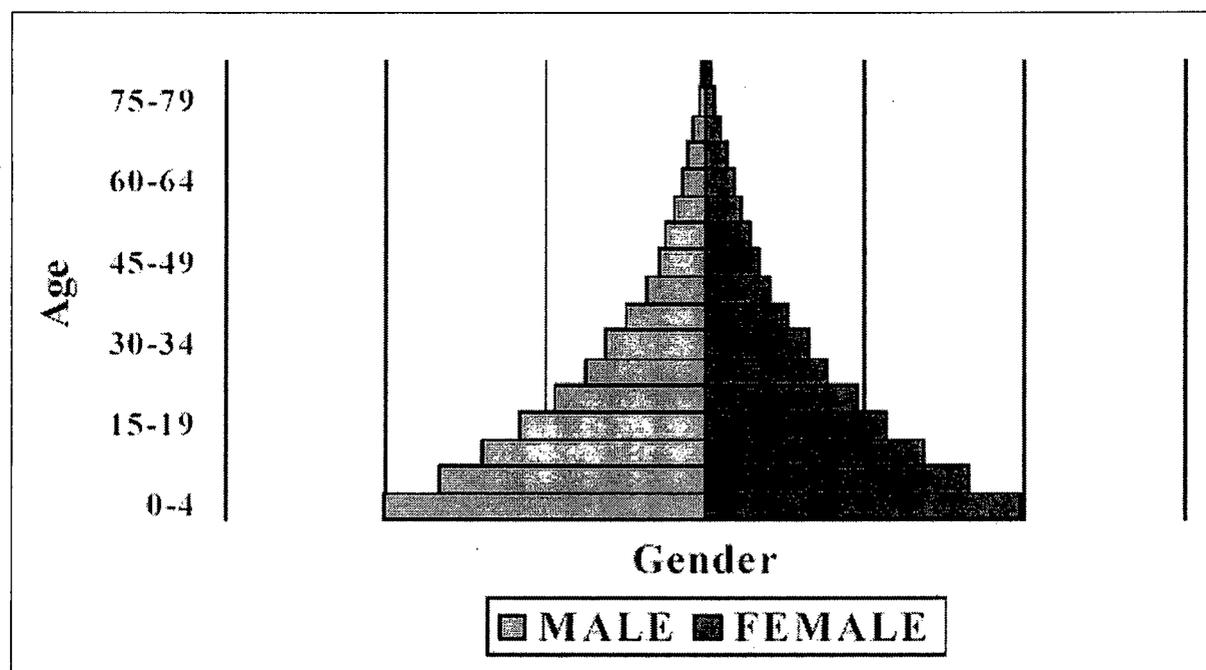
The second hypothesis continues to guide this section. The hypothesis states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.

The section expands on the definition of poverty in chapter 1, section 1.1.4. Also, in describing the two-city scenario as a challenge to the ministry in chapter section 1.5.3, it was noted that, due to poverty, prostitution of women and children in urban areas is one of the most common ways of making a living in the slums. This leads to erosion of family cohesiveness and the residents in the squatter settlements being morally disoriented by their favouring sexual promiscuity.

The poverty situation in Malawi is extremely disturbing. The recent studies on poverty in Malawi (Malawi Growth through Poverty Reduction, and the Situation Analysis of Poverty in Malawi [SAPM]) have indicated that poverty in Malawi is a pervasive problem affecting approximately 60% of the population. In particular, urban poverty in 1995 was 65% (Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP: 1995:2-5). HIV/AIDS is a pervasive among the poor and is best evidenced as reflected in the country's population pyramid 1999 done by UNAIDS/WHO Working Group on Global HIV/AIDS and STI Surveillance (2002:2).

#### Population pyramid, 1999.



Indicators	Year	Estimate	Source
Total population (thousands)	1999	10,640	UNPOP
Population aged 15-49 (thousands)	1999	4,694	UNPOP
Annual Population growth	1990-1998	1.3	UNPOP
% of population urbanized	1998	14	UNPOP
Average annual growth rate of urban population	1990-1998	2.9	UNPOP
Crude birth rate (births per 1,000 pop)	1999	47	UNPOP
Crude death rate (deaths per 1,000 pop)	1999	23	UNPOP

Maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births)	1990	560	WHO
Life expectancy at birth	1998	39	UNPOP
Total fertility rate	1998	6.7	UNPOP
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	1999	135	UNICEF/UNPOP

#### Estimated number of adults and children living with HIV/AIDS, end of 1999

These estimates include all people with HIV infection, whether or not they have developed symptoms of AIDS, alive at the end of 1999

<b>Adults and children</b>	<b>800 000</b>		
<b>Adults (15-49)</b>	<b>760 000</b>	<b>Adult rate (%)</b>	<b>15.96</b>
<b>Women (15-49)</b>	<b>420 000</b>		
<b>Children (0-14)</b>	<b>40 000</b>		

#### Estimated number of deaths due to AIDS

Estimated number of adults and children who died of AIDS during 1999:

<b>Death in 1999</b>	<b>70 000</b>
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#### Estimated number of orphans

Estimated number of children who have lost their mother or both parents to AIDS (while they were under the age of 15) since the beginning of the epidemic:

<b>Cumulative orphans</b>	<b>390 000</b>
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Estimated number of children who have lost their mother or both parents to AIDS and who were alive and under age 15 at the end of 1999:

<b>Current living orphans</b>	<b>275 539</b>
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UNAIDS/WHO (2000:3) document "In Malawi, Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu are considered major urban areas. From 1985 to 1993, HIV seroprevalence among antenatal women increased from 2 percent to 30 percent. In 1998, 26 percent of antenatal clinic attendees tested HIV positive. In 1997, 17 percent of the women less than 20 years of age were HIV positive. Peak HIV prevalence of 28 percent was seen among women aged 25-29 years of age."

The country's social indicators include: high population density, household food insecurity, environment degradation, high illiteracy rate, low education coverage, declining incomes, and the high gender imbalance (PAP 1995:2-5). In order to address the poverty situation, the Malawian government developed a policy framework for Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP) in 1995. It is both a policy and strategy to guide all development activities in short-, medium- and long-term perspectives. As a result, no public projects without a justified impact

on poverty are to be implemented. Page 10 of the PAP document contains its vision and mission statement to transform the economic structures to ensure that they contribute meaningfully towards the raising of the standards of living where the people (PAP 1995:10):

- i. Have adequate food
- ii. Have good shelter/housing
- iii. Have access to good health, and social facilities
- iv. Are able to read and write
- v. Have equal access to income opportunities
- vi. Are gainfully employed
- vii. Have access to credit facilities
- viii. Have access to and ownership of land
- ix. Have access to safe water
- x. Have access to good roads, transport and communication networks, and
- xi. Participate effectively in their own development.

One important aspect that PAP has managed to articulate well is community participation. The previous government emphasized community participation in development. This helped community members to own development activities. But, the situation changed during political democratization. The present leadership denounced community participation as “*Thangata*” (mistaking it to mean a form of slavery) and promised to stop the practice as soon as they come in power. But the literal meaning of *Thangata* is “to help” and refers to the traditional custom of a group of people doing a communal task together such as putting up a roof or hoeing a garden.

However, in order to discourage people from assisting each other, the present leadership were using the concept intending to force people to work, which was not the case. Self-development, having been called a *Thangata*, destroyed the community’s morale of participation in development implementation. Consequently, people no longer participate in development activities.

This scenario works against the government efforts since the latter is expected to do everything for the people. The drawback is that there is an inadequate impact of development on the communities. Of late, the government has realised the importance of involving people

in all development endeavours. The government's realisation is well reflected in the PAP (1995:13) document, which states,

... community participation in the development process has been hampered by a top-down system that crippled the potential capacities of ordinary citizens to mobilize and organize for self-managed development. Therefore, the PAP is designed to set up a responsive institutional framework that promotes community development.

## 4.2 WHO ARE THE POOR?

This section examines further the poverty definition in Chapter 1, section 1.1.4. Poverty, as entanglement, describes poverty as the "traps" of material poverty, physical weakness, isolation, vulnerability, powerlessness, and spiritual poverty. The second hypothesis continues to provide groundwork for this section. The hypothesis states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.

It is crucial for the CCAP to develop ministry approaches that seek transformation of urban dwellers in the cities. For this reason, therefore, it becomes relevant to begin with a question "who are the poor?" Hurley (1990:3-4) describes the urban poor as the majority of the city's inhabitants who form the scene of an exhausting daily struggle for survival. They lack dynamic national economies and face innumerable barriers such as caste, skin colour; gender, lack of education; capital or connections that obstruct their efforts to break out of poverty.

The fundamental premise in this section is that the poor are people created in the image of God. They are whole, living people, indivisible bodies of soul, mind and heart. Myers (1999:62) notes "The biblical narrative tells us that the poor are made in the image of God and thus have gifts, skills, and the potential to become kingdom-like, just as we do." From the above statement quoted from Myers, it is clear that the poor are people who are just as good as the rich. Both were created in the image of God, both experienced the consequences of the fall, and both are the focus of God's redemptive work.

Myers (1999:55) affirms "The only difference is social location. The poor are on the periphery of the social system while the non-poor [the rich], even when living in poor communities, occupy places of preference, prestige, and power." The poor are indeed part of

God's kingdom and plan and, as such, were also part of Jesus' ministry. Bosch (1991:100) agrees

The first words the Lukan Jesus speaks in public (Lk 4:18f) contain a programmatic statement concerning his mission to reverse the destiny of the poor ... The words from the Book of Isaiah become, in Luke's gospel, a sort of manifesto of Jesus ... The prisoners, the blind, and all the oppressed (or the bruised) are all subsumed under - the poor - they are all manifestations of poverty.

The definition of who the poor are, leads us to explore the Christian views of the poor as follows.

### 4.3 CHRISTIAN VIEWS OF THE POOR

Hypothesis 3 guides the development of this section further. It states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

In defining ministry in chapter 1, section 1.1.3, it was noted that individual believers and their faith communities are continually confronted with new questions and challenges. These people receive the opportunity to take part in the process of implementing ministry activities.

In order to have an in-depth understanding of Christian views of the poor, it is imperative to explore the work of Bryant Myers, *Walking with the poor*. In this book Myers (1999:60-61) discusses at length the ways Christians think about the poor by quoting Richard Mouw's (1989:20-34) typology or classification. We now attend to the five views of the poor as supplied by Myers.

#### 4.3.1 THE POOR AS MADE IN THE IMAGE OF GOD

This view draws on the creation story. Poverty is the result of a lack of skills and opportunity. What they need is a "leg up."

#### 4.3.2 THE POOR AS PEOPLE IN REBELLION

The poor are viewed to be lazy and that they make bad choices. They need to accept the Gospel, go to work, and make better choices. The poor as people in rebellion is a view that draws on the fall of man as the defining reason for the state of being poor.

### 4.3.3 THE POOR AS CHRIST INCARNATE

This view draws on Matthew 25. The view of the poor centres on the Incarnation and, like Mother Teresa, sees Christ in the distressing guise of the poor. The poor lack love and relationships; they do not belong. The poor need accompaniment, in order to relieve much suffering.

### 4.3.4 THE POOR AS GOD'S FAVOURITES

This view draws on the prophetic literature and the Exodus account. The poor are the ones who are blessed, for theirs will be the Kingdom. They are poor because they are oppressed by social systems that keep them poor for the benefit of the rich. In defining the rich in relation to oppression, Bosch (1991:99) notes "The rich are primarily those who are greedy who exploit the poor, who are so bent on making money that they do not even allow themselves time to accept an invitation to a banquet (Lk. 14:18f), who do not notice the Lazarus at their gate."

The poor need justice and help in finding their voice and place in economic and political systems.

### 4.3.5 THE POOR AS LOST SOULS

This view draws selectively on the Gospels and reflects the dichotomy between the spiritual and the physical as held by the modern world. The poor are lost and they need to be saved.

The researcher's view on this topic is two fold:

- First:           The poor, like the rich, all have fallen short on the glory of God. And all are in need of God's redemption given in Jesus Christ. All are lost and require God's forgiveness through repentance.
- Secondly:      The poor are poor because they are oppressed by social systems that keep them poor for the benefit of the (few) rich.

Therefore, with this in mind, the poor need to be empowered through holistic transformational ministry that addresses both the spiritual and physical needs of people as being indivisible. Linthicum (1991:38) comments "If people can be empowered to work cooperatively, to work as a single unit, then they will be able to take responsibility for the life of that community and consequently, to participate fully in the life of that city." We shall discuss further views on the poor in section 4.4 under "The causes of poverty."

Meanwhile, it is important to explore the meaning of poverty. This will give us a clear understanding as to why the poor are poor and the possible causes of poverty. Such knowledge is crucial for the church to be able to develop possible innovations for the transformation of the urban poor.

#### 4.4 WHAT IS POVERTY?

Hypothesis 3 guides the development of this section further. In chapter 1, the definition of the term "poverty" received attention. In this definition several aspects of the term were examined and shared. It was noted that poverty is described in various ways and with increasing sophistication. Bruwer (1997:7) affirms

It is very difficult to define poverty. Is it mere lack of money, knowledge or choice? Even when we know intuitively when people are poor, why are they poor? What causes poverty? And who can figure it out? Can someone who is not poor know what poverty is? It is difficult for outsiders to understand.

Myers (1999:81) agrees about the difficulty in defining poverty and warns, "I doubt there is or ever will be a unified theory of poverty. There is always more to see and more to learn. The corrective is to keep using a family of views to see all the things we need to see. We must work hard to be as holistic as we can be for the sake of the poor." Muller (1987:18) notes "As an absolute measure, poverty refers to a lack of resources or in current parlance, the failure to fulfil basic human needs. Relatively, poverty simply means that some are less well off than others and thus feel relatively deprived."

The researcher agrees with Bruwer. It is an accredited known that those who are outsiders - in this case the rich - cannot understand practically what it means to be poor. For the simple reason that if the rich want to become poor they have the luxury of choosing to do so, while the poor are poor because it is their destiny, i.e. they do not have a choice. In other words, the poor are forced by life's prevailing circumstances.

What also makes it difficult to describe poverty is the fact that poverty manifests in so many faces better understood by the poor themselves. In the countries of Southern Africa, as in the case of other countries within the African continent, poverty is on the increase and poses a great challenge to the churches, particularly in urban areas. Further to the study of Wilson and Ramphela, Bruwer (1997:9) asserts the following faces of poverty:

- i. Overcrowding
- ii. The struggle for access to sources of energy - women walk long distances over long hours, to collect one load of firewood on their heads
- iii. The need for water, one water tap for 760 people
- iv. Unemployment and underpayment of workers
- v. Hunger, malnutrition and endemic sicknesses
- vi. Housing shortages, people living in shacks
- vii. Illiteracy; and
- viii. Politics - apartheid's assaults on the poor.

#### **4.5 DEFINING URBAN POVERTY: AN OVERVIEW**

This section is about providing an overview of urban poverty. The objective is to clarify, in depth, a shift in recent years in understanding the reconsideration of the definitions and causes of urban poverty. This is important in order to identify all the various approaches for addressing urban poverty.

This section examines further the urban context as a challenge, as described in chapter 1, section 1.1.5: "Urbanization poses a challenge to the church." Its effects: poverty, disorientation, secularization and pollution prevent the CCAP to achieve an impact through ministry.

Jones and Nelson (1999:9-15) in their book, *Urban poverty in Africa*, have given an overview on urban poverty, which is in line with the researcher's thinking.

##### **4.5.1 CURRENT DEFINITIONS OF POVERTY**

This section is about six current considerations important when defining urban poverty. Through these definitions it becomes clear that poverty has several aspects that need to be considered when developing strategies for the ministry. The process of describing this section looks further to the definition and practice of ministry of section 1.8.1

##### **4.5.1.1 Poverty defined internationally as a lack of income**

While it is true that poor families do not earn a regular income, their needs are far more than mere cash inputs. Therefore, to define poverty as a lack of income alone is inadequate. Jones and Nelson (1999:11) note "It is also only a partial and limited perspective on poverty. It

shows little regard for a wider range of issues facing the urban poor, in relation to social, health and education conditions.”

#### **4.5.1.2 Identifying figures for poverty at national levels**

The approach of assessing the number of urban poor at national level leads to a serious under-assessment of actual estimates. The other problem of figures at national level is to perceive urban poverty as a problem concentrated in the capital city without taking into consideration those urban poor living in slums and squatter settlements. Jones and Nelson (1999:11) comment "... two thirds of the urban population in countries in the South live in urban centres with less than one million inhabitants. There are also significant groups of urban poor living in peri-urban areas and with different problems to those in inner city slums." This means that it is not simply a case of defining the poor in quantitative terms. It also requires recognition of the fact that different types of urban poverty exist.

#### **4.5.1.3 Poverty defined in terms of basic services**

While it may be true that the poor are defined in relation to a lack of services to which other urban residents have access, such a basic services approach, is inadequate because it assumes that the predicament of the poor can be addressed by injections of facilities and services. Jones and Nelson (1999:11) warn "It also presumes that all poor people will have equal access to resources provided, when the reality is very different." In addition to basic service provision, the poor need to identify their own felt needs. The basic service approach cannot provide effective responses if they are not designed by, with, and for the poor. The urban poor may view their situation and challenges in a much more qualitative way.

#### **4.5.1.4 Qualitative definitions of poverty**

Jones and Nelson (1999:12) summarized alternative and more qualitative definitions of poverty as follows:

- i. Vulnerability, powerlessness, isolation and humiliation
- ii. Entitlement
- iii. Deprivation
- iv. Social exclusion.

#### **4.5.1.5 Defining the poor as active managers**

The urban poor are people who can make choices in life, if given a chance. They know what they want in life and how to get it. So, they know of the ways and strategies to implement in order to meet the needs. Jones and Nelson (1999:14) comment "The poor are not just passive in their circumstances but are active managers of complex asset portfolios." There are many things that the poor do which illustrate how well they manage their assets, as well as how they fundamentally manage crises and shocks that affect them.

#### **4.5.1.6 The links between the urban and rural poor**

The urban poor have links with rural relatives from whom they receive support and assistance. Some urban poor work in the fields in rural areas; the crops are then transferred to the city for food. Jones & Nelson (1999:14) note "... but increasingly links between the rural and urban poor are being recognized as one dimension of urban poverty coping strategies. All these mutual and reciprocal relationships should be considered when assessing the circumstances of the urban poor."

The above aspects of poverty are just a few examples of the impact of poverty on the lives of people. The effects of poverty penetrate right into the human mind and soul. The feeling of total hopelessness leaves the poor in a state of utter helplessness, despondency and robs them of their initiative. Bruwer (1997:42) advises "When working with the poor, it may become one's biggest achievement when hope is brought back to people or to a person, that moment when they reach out again. That moment becomes a glorious moment of discovery - I am a human being!"

The overview of urban poverty leads us to the section on the causes of poverty.

### **4.6 THE CAUSES OF POVERTY**

The third hypothesis provides the background work of this section. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

The discussion of different sub-movement of ministry documented in chapter 1 section 1.8.3 continues here. The need to empower people to take charge of their own situations is further examined in chapter 5, sections 5.1.3.2 and 5.2.

In this section, five causes of poverty are discussed positively.

- Physical causes,
- Social causes,
- Mental causes,
- Spiritual causes,
- Exploitation and oppression as primary causes of poverty.

A clear understanding of the causes of poverty is critical because it determines how poverty may be addressed. This in turn shapes the church's approach to transformational ministry amongst the poor in squatters' areas surrounding Lilongwe city. Just as there are many faces of poverty, so too its causes are multi-dimensional. The causes of poverty are diverse in nature. Although there are several causes of poverty (as discussed below), Myers believes that the root causes of poverty are the people themselves.

Myers arrives at this conclusion after a long discussion on the importance of understanding their ideas, values, and worldviews, all of which need to change if poverty is to be addressed adequately. Myers (1999:83) notes "At the end of the day, people are the cause of poverty, and it is people who must change for things to change." Blount (1995:169) confirms "Jesus recognizes that the victims of societal oppression could be as evil as the perpetrators of that oppression. It was therefore necessary to change more than systems alone; people themselves needed to be altered."

In order to capture a clear picture of the scenario of poverty in Malawi, we shall once again consider the PAP document, which has outlined the key causes of poverty as follows (PAP 1995:5):

- i. Low agricultural production
- ii. Limited employment opportunities
- iii. Low levels of education
- iv. Rapid environmental degradation
- v. Poor health
- vi. Limited credit facilities
- vii. Low non-farming income
- viii. Rapid population growth
- ix. Limited access to productive assets, e.g. land

- x. Weak institutional structures.

The document summarized the inter-relationships of poverty factors and the way they impact on the poor. The following are the most poverty-affected groups (PAP 1995:6):

- i. The urban poor
- ii. Women in poverty
- iii. Smallholder farmers
- iv. Estate workers
- v. Tenant farmers in estate agriculture
- vi. *Ganyu* or seasonal/casual labourers
- vii. Children in poverty, and
- viii. Youth in poverty.

It is noted that it is not only the general low productivity level of the economy that creates and sustains severe poverty; there are also powerful processes making certain people weaker than others in the struggle for a livelihood, both within and beyond the limits of the household. Marginalization and exploitation contribute to the poverty situation of the urban poor.

#### 4.6.1 PHYSICAL CAUSES OF POVERTY

The physical causes of poverty are material poverty and physical weakness. These include food, shelter, water, clean air, and an environment that supports life. Helpful assets, inter alia, are land, money, and livestock. Myers (1999:83) warns "If these things are wholly or largely absent, poverty is the result."

#### 4.6.2 SOCIAL CAUSES OF POVERTY

Social causes of poverty are large-scale social practices usually approved by the members of society who cause or perpetuate injustice or misery. The social causes of poverty may also be attributed to any stakeholder who stands behind each limitation to growth. The best example is to seek for the explanation why the world map of development is the way it is. Myers (1999:84) notes "Why does there seem to be progress in one part of the world and not in others? Why did Europe take off in the nineteenth century and the Asia tigers in the late twentieth century?" One can still wonder why Africa continues to be poor, yet has all the resources and strengths that the world requires.

#### 4.6.3 MENTAL CAUSES OF POVERTY

Poverty also affects the mental condition of the poor. This is about believing the lies that disempower the poor in the process. This further leads to the marred identity of the poor causing the powerlessness of this disadvantaged groups. They are disempowered due to oppressing structures that are put in place by the rich and powerful. Myers (1999:85) states "There are structures - economic, political, religious, and only then psychological - that oppress people and resist all attempts to end their oppression."

In addition to powerlessness, is the issue of hopelessness that grips the poor. The situation of hopelessness surfaces as result of the process of reflection on their past experiences. Since history portrays hardships and struggles, the poor see their future doomed and are hence less committed to improve their situations in life. Myers (1999:85) comments "The way the poor remember their history shapes the day-to-day life of the poor today. In this way, the past can become a limitation on the future."

#### 4.6.4 SPIRITUAL CAUSES OF POVERTY

The three causes of poverty discussed so far concern the physical being of a person. The work is not complete without dealing with spiritual causes of poverty, because a human being also has a spiritual reality. Often academics working on development overlook or do not pay close attention to spiritual causes of poverty, thus this important aspect of a human being is often missed.

Lack of spirituality plays a very significant contribution in preventing people from getting out of the poverty trap. People feel disempowered and, in their search for protection, use money to appease unseen powers. Myers (1999:86) supports this view, "Money is spent on charms for protection and time is lost to feast days, all in an attempt to manage these powers." Spiritual causes of poverty also require full attention, as is the case with the physical causes of poverty, if the poor are to be transformed. Maggay (Myers 1999:86) comments "Social action is a confrontation with the powers that be. We are, ultimately, not battling against flesh and blood, nor merely dismantling unjust social systems; we are confronting the powers in their cosmic and social dimensions."

Now, exploitation, as one of poverty's causes, will receive attention.

#### 4.6.5 MARGINALIZATION, EXPLOITATION AND OPPRESSION CAUSE POVERTY

We cannot conclude the discussion on causes of poverty without examining marginalization, exploitation and oppression as primary causes of poverty. Linthicum (1991:10) states "Poverty is not so much the absence of goods as is the absence of power - the capability of being able to change one's situation. It is because one is already severely limited in what he or she can do to change one's plight that one becomes impoverished."

For a better understanding of these causes, one must first understand how power is used or exercised in the urban centres and how it culminates in the poor. In describing how the police exploited teenagers among the black community in a slum of a large city in the United States, Linthicum (1991:10) laments "The entire legal and political system of that city was arrayed to protect a mass betrayal of the people to enable police, judges and politicians to enrich themselves at the people's expense." Therefore, it is important for the church in urban Malawi to study and examine carefully the primary systems that make a city function and then analyse these systems biblically.

Linthicum (1991:10) warns "A city's evil is far greater than the sum of the sin of its individuals. The very systems of a city could become corrupt, grasping, oppressive, and exploitative." Monsma et al (1991:6) state

And when poverty is caused by or made worse by the oppression of the poor by those who are rich and powerful, God made it clear in his Word that He is on the side of the poor against those who are oppressing them: He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker but he who is kind to the needy honours him.

The Bible has a great deal to say concerning the systems and structures of human society. The problem is that people often do not have quality time to study the Bible seriously in order to analyse the issues at hand. Linthicum (1991:11) notes "It is because we approach the Bible with a highly individualistic perception of Christian faith that we miss the biblical writers' corporate and systemic analysis of human society." God cares about the poor. His people are to be concerned about the poor. Hedlund (1991:76) notes "If there is a poor among your brothers ... do not be hardhearted or tight-fisted toward your poor brother (Deut. 15:7). Social concern is built into God's law: be open-handed and freely lend him whatever he needs ...."

The church in urban Malawi must seek ways to liberate and transform people holistically. The church is not there to legitimize the political order, but rather to oppose it and free the people.

Linthicum (1991:11) warns "If the church does not deal with the systems and structures of evil in the city, then it will not effectively transform the lives of that city's individuals."

The study of the causes of poverty is very important because it informs the church of the context of the city's situation and also the struggles that urban people experience. Such a study enables the church to map out effective strategies for ministry.

#### **4.7 URBAN INFORMAL ECONOMIES: BETWEEN POVERTY AND GROWTH**

The second and third hypotheses receive further attention in this section. The hypotheses state:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.
- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

This section deals with the informal sector, as one of the survival strategies that the urban poor embark upon. The importance and problems of this sector, their livelihood shocks and stresses, and coping strategies in the Malawian urban areas are documented.

##### **4.7.1 ORIGIN AND DEFINITION OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR**

The informal sector is regarded as a powerful engine of development and is vital to the survival of the urban poor. Fapohunda (1985:1) notes "The term informal sector probably originated from Hart's study in Ghana but was brought to prominence by the ILO/UNDP employment mission to Kenya. The term had always been used in connection with the economics of the developing countries." The urban poor in Malawi use the informal sector as a survival mechanism. Roe (1992:51) comments "The sector is dynamic, responding to community needs and market gaps. The sector rises to meet the shortfall created by the urban authorities' inability to meet the demand for services and facilities - including housing in the low income areas."

As a result of this situation, small businesses proliferate at every corner and outside many households both in Lilongwe and the Blantyre suburbs. While men and women are involved in the informal sector, young children very often operate these businesses although they may

not always be the initiators, but frequently are the sellers. Roe (1992:67) notes "The informal sector is becoming increasingly more attractive as a result of declining real wages in the formal sector, the contraction of the sector and the fact that the informal sector responds to the needs and demands of the urban areas."

Intervention for income generation is crucial to empower the economic status of women. When income earnings of women are raised, they feel a sense of empowerment. Hurley (1990:60) comments "Enhancing women's income earning capacity, particularly when the women are controlling the economic activity or where they have higher value in the labour market – therefore better bargaining power - can be of great significance." The businesses that most urban poor are involved in are: selling second hand clothes; beans; *mandasi* (fat cake) and maize, carpentry and market hawking.

The origin of the informal sector and its definition have been discussed. The next section describes the characteristics of the informal sector.

#### 4.7.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR

Gilbert and Gugler (1991:73) have quoted Hart's terminology, which was adopted by a mission to Kenya organized by the international labour office. It argued that the informal sector provided a wide range of low-cost, labour-intensive, competitive goods and services, and recommended that the Kenyan government should promote the informal sector. The informal activities are not confined only to the periphery of the main towns, but also even in the rural areas where people live below the poverty line. Gilbert and Gugler (1991:73) have documented that informal activities are a way of doing things, characterised by:

- i. Ease of entry
- ii. Reliance on indigenous resources
- iii. Family ownership or enterprises
- iv. Small scale of operation
- v. Labour-intensive and adapted technology
- vi. Skills acquired outside the formal school system, and
- vii. unregulated and competitive markets.

The formal sector activities are the opposite of these, namely:

- i. Difficult entry

- ii. Frequent reliance on overseas resources
- iii. Corporate ownership
- iv. Large scale of operation
- v. Capital-intensive and often imported technology
- vi. Formally acquired skills, often expatriate, and
- vii. protected markets (through tariffs, quotas and trade licences).

The activities of the informal-sector are largely ignored, rarely supported, often regulated and sometimes actively discouraged by the government. The informal sector is not without constraints but is faced with a number of problems and challenges.

#### 4.7.3 CHALLENGES OF THE INFORMAL SECTOR

The challenges that face the informal sector are numerous and hinder its growth. Fapohunda (1985:86-106) in his book, *The informal sector of Lagos: An inquiry into urban poverty and employment*, has discussed at length the problems of growth of the informal sector's enterprises which the researcher also experienced in urban Malawi. Five challenges are discussed as follows:

##### 4.7.3.1 Problems associated with starting the business:

Establishing the capital and accommodation often pose a great challenge to the urban poor. They have no capital to initiate the business with nor are they able to meet the cost of rentals. In most cases urban poor are not allowed to get credit facilities because the banking institutions and the rich who control the credit opportunities do not trust them.

##### 4.7.3.2 Problems associated with expansion of production capacity and improving production methods

Although the urban poor may have a desire to expand their businesses, a funding opportunity still remains the major limitation and obstacle. Fapohunda (1985:91) comments "Almost 79% of all establishments gave lack of credit from banks at moderate interest rates as the main obstacle to expanding productive capacity. Another 7% gave government regulations with regard to licensing, location, permit as their main problem."

#### **4.7.3.3 Problems associated with changing methods of production**

When it becomes necessary to increase their productive capacity, the poor are faced with problems of changing methods to ensure quality production. This may be done by either using relatively bigger equipment of the same type, or by using altogether new machines in order to increase the output to meet the production demands. This poses a challenge to the urban poor managing the informal sector because they do not have the means. Fapohunda (1985:96) notes "One big problem of the informal sector is to get entrepreneurs to learn better production techniques and improve their business organization methods."

#### **4.7.3.4 Problem of competition**

When it comes to competition, the informal sector suffers major losses. Under perfect competitive market conditions, inefficient firms would be eliminated and all firms would earn normal profits. Under various market conditions, imperfect competition could be inimical to the economic progress of an enterprise. Fapohunda (1985:99) comments "The big firm may deliberately pursue a competitive pricing policy aimed at eliminating the small enterprises so that the big firm could eventually become a monopoly."

#### **4.7.3.5 Lack of skilled manpower**

Chapter 5, in section 5.2.3, "The lack of manpower" is further examined in the section: "Helping a congregation to move to advocacy."

Since the urban poor are not educated, or are less educated, compared to those in the formal sector, the informal sector suffers from a lack of executive manpower and managerial skills. Lack of managerial skills is a major and common problem that the urban poor in Africa face. Fapohunda (1985:100) comments "The employment scene in Nigeria is characterised by a shortage of high-level and intermediate level skills, a shortage of unskilled workers in certain industries, a measure of unemployment particularly in the urban areas and under-employment in the rural areas."

The five constraints that the informal sector faces have been discussed. The lesson learnt is that the informal sector requires government assistance by way of creating capital and making it available to entrepreneurs, either to start new businesses or to expand existing ones. In addition, the government, as an agent of economic growth, needs to soften the economic regulations that affect particularly the urban group. Naturally, the government cannot provide

employment opportunities to all people. But, in this situation, the government should create a conducive environment for informal economic activities.

#### **4.7.4 LIVELIHOOD SHOCKS AND STRESSES IN URBAN MALAWI**

Pillar 6 of chapter 6, section 6.2.1, has developed steps on how to develop community participation. In this sub-section six shocks and stresses that the urban poor are experiencing in Malawi are discussed. The aim is to understand the livelihood situation in urban Malawi, which is the context of the designed ministry strategy.

The work of Devereux, *Making less last longer: informal safety nets in Malawi*, is most helpful. Devereux (1999:21-24) discusses at length the shocks and stresses prevailing in urban Malawi. These areas are dominated by two major risks, namely unemployment and rising food prices due to continual devaluation. The two risks result in the following shocks and stresses:

##### **4.7.4.1 The poverty level in urban Malawi is high and rising**

As a result of rising commodity prices, the urban poor find it difficult to meet the cost of living. The food expenditure has risen from 37% in 1980, to 48% in 1989, and 56% in 1992, in Lilongwe and Blantyre, while in Zomba in 1992 the comparable figure was 63% (Roe 1992b: 66). Devereux (1999:21) notes "Part of the 1980s trend was due to falling real incomes: fourteen days' work at minimum wages bought a bag of maize in 1983, but by 1988, twenty-nine days work was needed." With these figures in mind, it is clear that a substantial and increasing proportion of urban households in Malawi are subsisting below the poverty line, many in absolute poverty.

**Table 4: Indices of inequality in total daily consumption by region****As a percentage of the total consumption of the population**

	Gini coefficient *	Consumption of the poorest 20% of the population	Consumption of the richest 20% of the population	Consumption of the poorest 10% of the population	Consumption of the richest 10% of the population
Malawi	0.401	6.3	46.8	2.5	31.8
Southern region	0.423	5.9	48.7	2.2	43.0
Central region	0.383	6.6	45.4	2.6	30.3
Northern region	0.362	7.4	44.2	3.1	28.8
Rural	0.374	6.7	44.3	2.6	29.0
Urban	0.520	4.5	58.4	1.7	42.9

\* The Gini coefficient provides an indication of how equitable the distribution is across the population. A Gini coefficient of zero results if all households have the exact same level of consumption and expenditure – perfect equity. A coefficient of one results from a situation where all except one member of the population have no consumption and expenditure.

Source: Malawi Government (PPM 2000:45).

#### 4.7.4.2 Retrenchment due to structural adjustment measures

Another shock and stress that the urban poor have experienced in Malawi is retrenchment due to structural adjustment measures. Thousands of urban residents were retrenched from work. This move increased the unemployment figures in urban areas. Devereux (1999:21) comments “In 1995 alone, the government retrenched about 20 000 in a civil service reform programme, and thousands of additional job losses have followed the privatisation or liquidation of public enterprises.” Worse still, the retrenched workers generally receive small retrenchment packages that cannot assist them to initiate any small-scale business as an alternative. A few of the retrenched workers are offered alternative employment at a very minimal wage.

#### 4.7.4.3 No protection act for workers

Although the government went ahead with the privatisation process, it did not put in place a “public enterprise act” to provide protection for the workers, in spite of the trade unions’ opposition to swift privatisation activities (Chilowa & Chirwa 1997:56). In addition to the lack of this public privatisation act is the fact that workers in Malawi are not helped in their relocation to new employment sectors with training or soft loans, as is the case in other

countries. Devereux (1999:22) comments "The immediate effect of retrenchment on household welfare is a dramatic drop in wage income, which in general is only partially compensated by alternative activities such as small business or a reversion to farming."

#### **4.7.4.4 Continual devaluation of local currency**

As if the above was not enough, the urban residents in Malawi experienced yet another shock: the Malawi Kwacha has been heavily and repeatedly devaluated. Devereux (1999:23) notes "Cumulative devaluations between 1982 and 1992 amounted to 131% in normal terms." Chilowa and Chirwa (1997:43) note, "In 1994 the Kwacha was floated and by the end of the year it had depreciated by 300% against the US dollar."

This devaluation resulted in other stresses for the Malawians. The cost of fuel rose steeply and this also caused the price increases of all commodities in the Republic. Devereux (1999:23) comments "... the price increases were compounded by higher transport costs, and a second round of price rises followed as traders passed on these costs. Service providers exploited the opportunity to raise charges on the grounds that living costs had risen for their employees."

#### **4.7.4.5 Business profits adversely affected**

The fifth shock is the fact that business profits of the small-scale informal sector were adversely affected as a result of the 1998 devaluation. The prices of raw commodities doubled to such an extent that women, who were selling cooked food in the cities of Malawi, could not afford to continue. Many people who were living on profits of small-scale businesses were forced to close down due to a lack of capital.

#### **4.7.4.6 The growing demographic problem posed by HIV/AIDS**

The last discussion on the shocks and stresses affecting the urban dwellers in Malawi concerns the impact of HIV/AIDS. Many people are dying prematurely. As a result, the number of orphans is rising fast in especially the urban areas. Relatives of the deceased parents care for some orphans but, in this event, the relatives find it difficult to cope with the enlarged family and concomitant responsibilities. Devereux (1999:24) notes "Sometimes step-parents are violent towards orphans, or neglect them in favour of their biological children; in consequence, many orphans leave home and wander around the markets, begging." The situation is even worse when there are no relatives of the deceased to care for the

orphans. In such instances, old grandparents, who lack support, assume the responsibilities of caring for the orphans.

The shock and stress of HIV/AIDS is a universal phenomenon. Africa (of all the continents in the world) is severely faced with this challenge. One of the reasons is the cultural norm that Africa has acted as a prey for the deadly disease; therefore, it is no wonder that it is becoming a community and systemic problem. Louw (1994:22) comments "The acuteness of the problem does not stem merely from the fact that communities are affected, or could even be wiped out by the end of this decade, but from the fact that AIDS will place incredible burdens and obligations upon medical services, health care and religious communities, such as churches."

The discussion of the shocks and stresses that urban people in Malawi are experiencing has now been concluded. The next section is about the coping strategies that the urban poor have implemented for their survival.

#### **4.7.5 URBAN COPING STRATEGIES**

This sub-section describes five coping strategies that the urban poor are implementing in Malawi.

##### **4.7.5.1 Informal sector employment**

Much has already been said regarding the informal sector, as a coping strategy for the urban poor. It is again mentioned here because the importance of this sector cannot be overemphasized as it holds the key for survival of a huge number of households (Roe 1992b: 96). Devereux (1999:32) notes "A series of surveys in all of Malawi's main urban areas in the early 1990s found that a surprising high proportion of households had access to formal sector employment ... but the dominant activity underpinning urban livelihood systems was informal sector employment ...."

##### **4.7.5.2 Urban gardening and rural farming**

As a coping strategy, urban residents cultivate open plots around their houses. Roe (1992b: 110) comments "Urban gardening takes place in Malawi's towns. About one in three households surveyed in Zomba's low-income settlements had a plot outside their house." Maize, vegetables and beans are grown in order to provide meals. The challenge met in this

area is of lack of land and rising concerns about theft; as a result, gardening tends to be a very limited in scale.

Agriculture, as a coping strategy, is also linked with rural areas. The urban people go to rural areas during their vacations to cultivate the fields or they send funds to rural homes to relatives who supervise the agriculture on behalf of those in towns. Devereux (1999:33) notes "In addition to cultivating small plots around the home itself, the majority - two thirds or more - of the urban residents also maintain some agricultural activity in the rural areas, usually but not always in their home villages."

Chilowa and Chirwa (1997:44) echo "Most of urban poor who survived did so by maintaining links with their home villages by sending money for cultivation and/or acquired land in nearby rural areas for growing food." The practice of urban gardening and rural farming, even in small quantities, reduces market dependence and vulnerability to food price fluctuations.

#### **4.7.5.3 Livelihood diversification**

Another coping strategy is that of livelihood diversification activities, as more people are resorting to alternative sources of income. Devereux (1999:34) comments "In urban areas of Malawi the numbers of people engaging in standard income-generating activities, for example; street vending - everybody is trying to sell something - as well as illicit and even illegal activities - prostitution, theft, selling stolen or smuggled goods - have visibly increased."

#### **4.7.5.4 Expenditure reduction**

The urban poor have to cope with high costs of living in the cities. As a result they have many more coping mechanisms than those in the rural areas. Roe (1992b: 95) has described some of these coping means, which include:

- i. Resorting to cheaper foods to save on food bills;
- ii. Eating smaller portions or fewer meals per day;
- iii. Moving to squatter areas where rents are cheaper;
- iv. Using unprotected sources of water for secondary uses (washing) and even for primary uses (cooking and drinking) to save on water charges;
- v. Walking to work and the shops to save on transport costs;
- vi. Not sending children to school to save on fees and other costs;

- vii Sending children to relatives in rural areas to reduce costs of feeding them;
- viii Walking long distances to collect firewood instead of buying it, or using sawdust, maize husks, beer cartons and other combustible items instead of wood;
- ix Lighting fewer fires and cutting back on other fuel uses.

#### **4.7.5.5 Borrowing**

Borrowing from informal sources is one of the coping strategies for the urban poor. The informal sources are very prevalent because the formal sources, such as the banks, very rarely offer loans. Devereux (1999:35) notes "Rates vary greatly, however, so borrowing from one source at a soft rate - at low or no interest - can be considered an informal safety net, while borrowing from another source at usurious rates is an erosive coping strategy."

The informal borrowing between friends and relatives in urban areas seems to approximate the reciprocity arrangements highlighted by the moral economy literature. Roe (1992b: 102) has documented that a survey of actual loans taken by the poor in Lilongwe, Blantyre and Zomba found that almost 80% were taken from friends, 10% from employers, 7% from relatives and just 2% from moneylenders.

The discussion of the coping strategies of the urban poor in Malawi has concluded the section on urban informal economies. The lesson learnt is that the urban poor are experiencing huge challenges for living in the cities. The informal sector is one of the strategies that the urban poor implement for survival. The church is expected to include the need of addressing the challenges of the urban poor on its agenda. The church should seek to alleviate poverty in liaison with government development entities, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the urban poor themselves.

## 4.8 DEVELOPMENT IN RESPONSE TO POVERTY

The need for a response to poverty receives further attention in chapter 5, section 5.4, "A church in solidarity with the poor and oppressed," and pillar 2 of chapter 6, "Urban ministry among the poor needs community participation.'

In this section the meaning of the term "development" is defined. The importance of development as a tool to transform the lives of the urban poor through their taking charge of their own situations is also described. In order to do quality ministry in the urban areas of Malawi, the poor themselves must be given an opportunity to participate in all development processes. Myers (1999:88) notes "There can be no practice of transformational development that is Christian unless somewhere, in some form, people are hearing the good news of the gospel and being given a chance to respond."

### 4.8.1 DEFINING THE TERM "DEVELOPMENT"

Pillar 2 in chapter 6, section 2.1, defines development further.

To address poverty is a great challenge for the church. Bruwer (1997:19) affirms "Poverty has become the most burning issue the church has to handle. And here the Church's biggest problem is to shift its emphasis from word to deed and from dogma to action." It is difficult to define the term "development" because there are so many issues that come into play when one deals with development. Burkey (1993:33) comments "There can be no fixed and final definition of development, merely suggestions of what development should imply in particular contexts. Development necessarily involves structural transformation which implies political, social and economic changes."

Part of the difficulty in defining development is that people in the Third World were not allowed to participate in the process of development; instead they were recipients who had often not even been consulted. Bosch (1991:433) states "For the West, development meant modernization ... it operated on the Enlightenment presupposition of the absolute distinction between the human subject and the material object ... it assumed one-way traffic without any reciprocity ...."

The West considered development as mere technological expertise. As a result, the people who needed to be transformed were denied an opportunity of participation and making choices surrounding the project. The project did not succeed to eradicate or minimize poverty in Africa. Bosch (1991:434) warns

Poverty would not be uprooted by pouring technological know-how into the poor countries but by removing the root causes of injustices; and since the West was reluctant to endorse such a project, Third-World peoples had to take their destiny into their own hands and liberate themselves through a revolution.

However, in our situation, a working statement as a definition of development is: "a process of change through which transformation of human lives - particularly of disadvantaged groups - is achieved." Bruwer has defined development by linking it with the liberation of creation that the apostle Paul spoke about in Romans 8:18-21. Bruwer (1997:26) notes "If understood in this biblical way, development reveals enormous hidden reality and potential in all creation and especially in human beings ... what a loss if we think of development only in terms of Western technology!"

In order to achieve the desired change, the poor themselves must take part in the process. The people who are most capable of solving a serious city problem are those who are most affected by the oppressing circumstances. Linthicum (1991:38) emphasizes "Only the poor of the city can assume responsibility for solving their own powerlessness. And the church must find ways to support and encourage the actions of the poor to assume control over such powerlessness, rather than contributing to it by encouraging greater dependency."

In search of a clear definition of development, the work of Myers in his book, *Walking with the poor*, is very helpful. Myers (1999:171) refer to Mary Anderson and Peter Woodrow (co-directors of the International Relief and Development Project at Harvard University). These two defined development as, "The process by which vulnerabilities are reduced and capacities are increased." By "vulnerabilities" they mean long-term factors that affect the way in which the community is able to respond to disasters or direct its development.

By "capacities" they mean long-term strengths within a society. The capacities of survival strategy should be displayed. All people of both genders and different ages ought to take part in the displaying process. Myers (1999:171) notes "Anderson and Woodrow suggest that the analysis of vulnerabilities and capacities be done for men and women, and for the rich,

middle-class, and poor.” The way people are organized in order to take charge of their own situations through the process of empowerment receives detailed attention in chapter 6.

#### **4.8.2 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES: AN OVERVIEW**

A brief discussion on a number of types of development is necessary before discussing the goal of development. Sandbrook (1982:81-114) in his book, *The politics of basic needs: urban aspects of assaulting poverty in Africa*, has outlined five types of development strategies. It is helpful to discuss these strategies in order to understand the importance of implementing appropriate development strategies with a view to transforming the lives of the urban poor.

##### **4.8.2.1 The neo-colonialism model:**

Sandbrook (1982:83) describes this model as the most generative of economic growth in which an auxiliary bourgeoisie accept a subordinate position in relation to foreign capital in order to attract a share of the surplus for itself. Sandbrook (1982:83) notes “The major facets of this policy include: coercion, and demobilized population, open access to raw materials, tax and other incentives to foreign investors.”

The model allows foreign total economic control; ownership and management while the national people obtain a minority share of the earnings plus tax revenues. Taiwan and South Korea were perhaps the most successful examples of this approach. In Africa, the approach was followed by: the Ivory Coast, Senegal, Upper Volta, Chad, Niger, the Central African Republic and Malawi.

This model is inadequate to address the needs of the urban poor, for the simple fact that it is in the hands of the foreigners who are not aware of local challenges facing the poor.

##### **4.8.2.2 National developmental model**

The national-development model reflects, essentially, the desire of local people to reduce or eliminate their junior status in relation to foreign capital. The state aims to use its leverage in order to redefine the terms of dependency and secure a larger share of the economic surplus. In so doing, it squeezes or limits foreign capital by means of taxation policies, selective, partial, or total nationalization, the substitution of management contracts for foreign ownership and indigenization. Sandbrook (1982:90) comments “Nationalizations are the

dramatic means of local control in Africa, in fact, experienced a greater number of these than any other region in the period 1960-74 .... Indeed, Africa led in nationalizations in all economic sectors except petroleum." The countries that implemented this model are: Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Somalia, Benin, Guinea, Mali, Zaire, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and a more minor one in Malawi.

In Africa, this model did not make much difference because what emerged is still essentially capitalist. Sandbrook (1982:91) notes "In practice, state capitalism is the more common outcome. The heritage of the post-war colonial practice of employing state corporations and marketing boards to develop the economies ... and a widespread distance of neo-colonialism all combine to favour this policy." This is therefore not a propitious environment for sincere commitment to basic-needs development.

#### **4.8.2.3 Strategies for basic-needs development**

This development model encompasses a consideration of accumulation strategies that might alleviate poverty that tends to reproduce marginalization. This model surveys the possible strategies that might lead to satisfy the basic needs of people, focusing on weaknesses and strengths. Sandbrook (1982: 98) notes

One generic constraint upon basic-needs strategies needs mention at the outset. To implement any such strategy, the state requires a bureaucracy characterized by efficiency, honesty and ideological commitment. This is so because any assault on poverty will necessitate extensive state intervention into economic life."

The challenge that African states are experiencing is the rarity of exemplary behaviour on the part of public bureaucracies. Sandbrook (1982:98) comments

In much of rural Africa and Asia, the bureaucracy itself has become a caricature, and its performance a drama which would be tragicomic if the substance of the issues were not so important. In these settings, everyone except the visiting officials and experts from headquarters understands the underlying hopelessness of the situation. All but most routine administrative actions become a charade: performed only when superiors are expected.

#### **4.8.2.4 Bureaucratic-collectivist and transition-to-socialism models**

The characteristics of these models are that the state owns the means of production. This is a distinct mode of production and form of class society, of which Stalinist Russia was the prototype, masquerading as socialism. Sandbrook (1982:103) notes "Like socialism, bureaucratic collectivism requires the socialization of the major means of production. Unlike socialism, bureaucratic collectivism is exploitative, in the Marxian sense of the word."

These models use authoritarian methods and control of the economy to extract a surplus from the direct producers and to allocate this between public investment and the enlargement of its own class privileges. Sandbrook (1982:105) comments

Bureaucratic collectivism is thus an ambiguous strategy from the viewpoint of the poor: it can handle the dislocations consequent upon a reorientation of the economy towards the fulfilment of basic needs, but at the expense of movement towards basic human rights. For this reason, it is wrong to assume that bureaucratic collectivism is obviously the choice of right-thinking workers and peasants where the alternative is some capitalist approach.

Freire (2000:61) echoes "Administration structures at the service of centralized power do not foster democratic behaviour. One of the roles of democratic leadership is previously overcoming authoritarian systems and creating the conditions for decision making of a dialogue nature."

In Africa, countries that implemented these models include: the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, the Republic of Guinea, and Tanzania. The bureaucratic collectivist nations fail because of a lack of coercive potential to implement rural and industrial collectivization and central planning. The two reasons for their sources of political weaknesses are:

- i. Inability to build a cadre of trained and dedicated revolutionaries sufficiently large to care for the party and state apparatus.
- ii. Lack of loyal, reliable and disciplined coercive instruments.

Sandbrook (1982:106) comments "In the light of these constraints, it is probable that a bureaucratic-collectivist thrust could successfully satisfy mass basic material needs only in a context of collective self-reliance ...."

#### **4.8.2.5 National-populist model**

This model refers to a government strategy seeking to articulate an alliance between a fraction of the people and the working class, on the basis of a programme focusing on a more equitable distribution of income. Sandbrook (1982:100) comments "National populism differs from national developmentalism in that it fosters both the organization of the working class and other dominated classes, and a fairer sharing of the fruits of capital accumulation." This model meets an eminent opposition as the dissident fraction is often determined to capture state power. Therefore, the prospect of such a national-populist programme in any tropical African country appears dim. The populist state focuses reform upon the nationalization of

foreign-owned assets and the distribution of income, not upon a change in relation to production.

The disadvantage of this model is that populist movements do aim to change the social structure. The working class is often too small and disorganized to form a social base for a socialist movement, while the peasant group is big enough to form a revolution. Sandbrook (1982:101) notes "The problem with national populism, from this viewpoint, is that it short-circuits working-class consciousness through the use of corporatist techniques and an ideology emphasizing charismatic leadership, class reconciliation and reformism."

The development strategy, which the researcher is advocating, is a participatory holistic approach to ministry. This approach allows the participation of the poor themselves in the implementation of ministry activities. In fact, it partners with the ordinary people who are most affected by poverty to articulated issues upon which projects are to emerge. For more information or discussion on this approach, see chapter 6.

#### 4.8.3 THE GOAL OF DEVELOPMENT

The third hypothesis continues to guide the development of this section. It states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

The goal of development is to transform the lives of people through healing the marred identity of the poor. Musopole (in Myers 1999:116) notes "It is a transformed person who transforms his or her environment." Myers (1999:116) adds "People, not money or programs, transform their worlds." In dealing with the goals/objectives of development, the work of Bruwer in his book, *Beggars can be choosers*, is extremely important. In the third chapter of this book Bruwer discussed issues of development at length. It is not possible to comment on all the aspects that he discussed. However, we shall focus on four issues, namely:

#### **4.8.3.1 Under-development, or even poverty, is a state of mind**

Development has to touch the human mind first. Since development projects deal with audible, visible and tangible things, people can become part of a development project and remain, in essence, under-developed. Bruwer (1997:27) states

The Church basically deals with the soul of a person. Teaching is good when it touches the soul and so directs the whole of one's human person. Such an education can only come about when all the symbols that touch the mind are being used - the totality of the human drama. This should be part of a development program.

Paul echoes the same sentiments when writing to the Romans, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will" (Rom. 12:2 NIV).

#### **4.8.3.2 Development moves into the world of creation, and humanity is the centre of creation**

Real and successful development must be human in all its aspects. Human beings must be the centre and sole reason of development, nothing else. The WCC Uppsala Assembly (Bosch 1991:435) stated, "We heard the cry of those who long for peace; of the hungry and exploited who demand bread and justice; of the victims of discrimination who claim human justice; and of the increasing millions who seek for the meaning of life."

Bruwer (1997:27) supports "Development does not start by someone attending a class or handling a tool, but it starts when people recognise their own humanity and that of others, thus making the environment a better place for human existence." Poor people must be assisted to discover themselves through addressing their marred identity. Bediako (quoted by Myers 1999:116) confirms "Transforming people begins with helping people to discover that their human dignity and identity are intrinsically related to God in Christ through his redemptive purpose in salvation history."

#### **4.8.3.3 The person of the developer is of prime importance**

The church is a community with a difference because its work is a mission of hope to the world. Therefore, it seeks to enable people to become more caring, creative and free. It is, indeed, the responsibility of the developer to encourage and edify people to grow spiritually through action/deeds and respect. We can learn more from the way that Jesus implemented his ministry through appealing to the will of the disciples. Bosch (1991:66) comments "Jesus'

teaching is an appeal to his listeners' will, not primary to their intellect; it is a call for a concrete decision to follow him and to submit to God's will."

In order to ensure people's transformation, it is important to allow people to take part in the implementation of ministry. Bruwer (1997:23) warns "Julius Nyerere of Tanzania once said that a person is not being developed when he is herded like an animal into a new venture." Church leaders must emulate the good example of Jesus Christ, who always made it possible for the disciples to participate in the implementation of the ministry. Bruwer (1997:28) also asserts

The basic appeal of the gospel is an appeal to the will: stand up and walk! Follow me! To follow Christ among the poor is not a simple act of sympathy, but a life of concern and participation. The story of Christ relates his full participation in all the aspects of life ... The results of participation may be manifold, but the end is always a life of satisfaction and fulfilment.

#### **4.8.3.4 The importance of choice**

Giving people the opportunity to make choices and to be responsible for their choices is a sure step towards transformation. Bruwer (1997:27) states "It seems to me that choice is at the very essence of the gospel message: beggars become choosers. We are the chosen people of God, and we have chosen Him." To give people the chance to make choices is crucial, because development without the element of choice is questionable. Bruwer (1997:28) notes "When development embraces the whole of the person, sets him or her free, remains human, and is done by the right person who makes choice possible, it will without doubt contribute to the work of the Church among the poor."

Development, in response to poverty, will now be discussed. It has been argued that, in order to address poverty, the affected people must take part in all development processes. The goal of development is to free people through their identification of their own marred identity. This is only possible if a human being is at the centre of development. And that transformation is only possible if people are first transformed. The next section concerns the task of the city church.

## 4.9 THE VOCATION OF THE URBAN CHURCH

The third and fourth hypotheses guide this section. The hypotheses state:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.
- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and as such is unable to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

This section examines chapter 1, sections 1.8.3 and 1.9.2, further on the implication for the church: "The goal is the elimination of oppressive social and political structures, and the proclamation of the Gospel through love and a continual search for Kingdom values." In chapter 5 section, 5.4.2, the issue of the church's vocation will receive further attention.

In this section, four aspects of the church's task in the city receive attention, namely: the church as a servant of the Kingdom, as a community with a difference, a hermeneutical community, and a hope for the poor and the exploited.

### 4.9.1 THE CHURCH AS A SERVANT OF THE KINGDOM

The church is sent into the world to proclaim the good news of salvation. In so doing, it announces the coming of the Kingdom of God and, as such, it has an obligation to fulfil. Bosch (1978:222) notes "The Church is not the world, for the Kingdom has already begun to manifest itself in her. And yet she is not the Kingdom, as the Kingdom is acknowledged and realised in her only partially and imperfectly." What Bosch alludes to here is very important because it clarifies that, in the urban centres of Malawi, living witnesses of God are already present in the form of local churches that are busy proclaiming the Gospel.

Through these local churches, God is at work bringing his Kingdom to the people. As a result, the transformational development process to address the plight of the poor is already under way. However, it is necessary to train the church personnel to implement holistic development that empowers the poor. Myers (1999:126) advises "Our goal must be to help the church be what it is intended to be, not to judge it or relegate it to the transformational development sidelines. Every one is in need of transformation – the poor, the church, and

ourselves. We are all on a journey." What, in essence, Myers is saying here is that God is already present in the form of the local churches.

The church as a servant of the Kingdom has the mandate to proclaim the brotherhood of all believers. This fact was emphasized even during the early ministry of Jesus Christ. He taught clearly that his Kingdom was not established in the rich and powerful, or the king and government, but in the poor and oppressed (Lk 4: 18f). So, the poor are also participants in the Kingdom. Bruwer (1997:60) comments "In the kingdom of God the poor are the participants. They do not merely receive justice and goodwill from the powerful and the rich, but are also donors in their own right and participate in decision-making. Beggars become choosers."

The church, as the servant of the Kingdom, is duty bound to take the cross seriously, knowing that where the cross is not taken seriously, no community can afford to take the poor seriously. Bruwer (1997:61) notes "In the deepest sense the death of Christ was necessary for the reassessment of the position of value of the poor .... The church is a community gathering around the table of the Lord. There we are reminded of the service, not of a king, but of the Lamb of God to humankind." In a similar manner, the churches in urban Malawi should seek to bridge the gap between the poor and the rich through Gospel proclamation and projects to address the needs of the poor. This is crucial, as all of them are heirs to the Kingdom.

#### **4.9.2 A CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY WITH A DIFFERENCE**

The church is the community with a difference because it operates out of love. She was first loved and "love" becomes the business principle. The world does not know how to love, because it is not the body of Christ. Bosch (1978:222) notes "The world has no faith to confess. It can neither pray nor believe. It cannot enter into a personal relationship with God." Since the church operates on the basis of love, there needs to be a noted mutuality amongst the churches.

Bediako (in Myers 1999:127) comments "Working toward a relationship of mutual spiritual accountability with local churches is part of what it means to be holistic in taking both the gospel and the context seriously." As churches operate on love, the poor also have the right to be *in* the ministering circle, and not to be ministered *to* all the time. When the poor take leadership roles in implementing ministry activities, then the churches are truly being com-

munities with a difference. Bruwer (1997:62) notes "The only way of ensuring that what is being done makes sense to the poor, is to include them in all the processes of the Church." Strengthening the poor means strengthening the church. Bruwer's statement affirms hypothesis 2.

#### **4.9.3 A CHURCH AS A HERMENEUTICAL COMMUNITY**

This section continues with what was described section 1.8 of chapter 1, "Ministry as a hermeneutical exegesis of word and context." Chapter 6, pillar 6 of section 6.8.2, will deal with the same issue.

In order to be responsive to the needs of the urban poor, the Church must be a hermeneutical community. This will help it to interpret the Scriptures, taking into consideration the people's prevailing context. Failing that, the church will be proclaiming a detached god who disregards peoples' experiential realities. Bruwer (1997:63) comments "My contention is that the Church should venture into co-operative programmes in destitute communities, programmes in which the Church participates with the poor, inviting capital for these projects, and to act as trustee." In commenting about the Church as the hermeneutical community, Myers (1999:127) has made three contributions demonstrating that only the church can provide transformational development. The three critical contributions are:

##### **4.9.3.1 The Church to work for a better social order**

The role of the church in transformational development is the same as any development agency, namely to be a servant and a source of encouragement, not a commander or a judge. Maggay (in Myers 1999:27) notes "If the Church is to lead at all, it is in serving; in applying the creative energies released in Christ towards the stewardship of creation and the bringing of fallen structures closer to God's original purposes."

##### **4.9.3.2 The Holy Spirit: A significant source of inspiration**

The church can make critical contributions to transformational development because the Holy Spirit can be a source of inspiration (and perspiration!) working for life and peace. The church is more important as a source of people than as a source of instruction or prophetic word. Newbigin (in Myers 1999:127) comments "The major role of the church in relationship to the great issues of justice and peace will not be in its formal pronouncement, but in its

continually nourishing and sustaining men and women who will act responsibly as believers in the course of their secular duties as citizens.”

#### **4.9.3.3 The Church is a community of hermeneutical concern**

Only the church, not the world or any other development agency, has a capacity of hermeneutical concern that reads the biblical story and applies it to the concrete circumstances of its time, place and culture. Because of this strategic position accorded her, the church has a capacity to transform human lives, thereby paving the way for the coming of the Kingdom. Myers (1999:128) states “This is the community within the community from which the word of God is heard, lived and revealed. This is the community that, because it knows the true story, can and must challenge the delusional assumptions and the web of lies.”

#### **4.9.3.4 The church is a hope for the oppressed and exploited**

Chapter 6, pillar 6 of section 6.6.2, will further discuss the need for a church to give hope to the oppressed and exploited.

Part of the responsibility of the urban church is to implement the ministry of care and love to those that are in dire need of support. This can best be done if the church seeks to work and implement Jesus’ manifesto, as documented in the Gospel of Luke: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ... to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed ....” (Lk 4:18f). Bruwer (1997:64) states

The duty of the Church is to move away from power toward servant-hood. The position of the poor within the Christian community compels the church to be positioned among the poor, rather than to be their security, support and suppliers of goodwill and gifts from above.

Linthicum (1991:21-24) discussed, at length, the tasks of the urban church in his book, *Empowering the poor*. He notes,

There are three distinctly difference responses that any church or mission organization can make to its city. The response the church chooses to make decides whether that church will play a significant role in the poor’s empowerment, will provide social services out of its largess or will simply ignore the needy around it.

The researcher will now attend briefly to the three responses that Linthicum made.

*The church in the city:* The church in the city, is that church which has ceased to be effective in promoting the spirituality of its attending people. There are no activities of reaching out to its members and no significant commitment to that city's life. Linthicum (1991:21) states

It [the church] does not feel any particular attachment to that city. It does not particularly identify with the community. It is simply physically present in that community. That happens to be where its bricks and mortar meet the ground. It may have no particular relationship to the people of that community.

This scenario results in a situation whereby people have no stake, no psychological ownership of the church in that community. This is very destructive because these people are not committed to the Gospel message. As a result, they cannot appreciate the difference Christianity brings about.

*The church to the city:* The church to the city is the church that is learning the lessons of the dying church (the church in the city). Aware that if it is to live, it has to find some way of reaching out to its community, so the church becomes concerned with the needs of the people. The concern of spiritual growth frequently comes the fore; in the process, this sidelines the physical needs of people. Such a kind of ministry is bound to fail to have the desired impact, as poor people struggle to meet the daily needs of life. Linthicum (1991:22) notes "It is inadequate to be concerned with the souls of the people around the church – particularly if those people are poor – unless the church is also going to be concerned about the social and economic needs of the people."

One of the reasons why churches do not succeed in implementing the ministry is that they do not allow ordinary people to take part in decision-making. If people are not allowed to participate, the danger is that whatever the church intends to do it will fail. People know what they need in life. So their participation is the right direction for the ministry. Linthicum (1991:22) states "The reason why is that the church operates out of the unbiblical assumption that, because we know the gospel, we know what is best for that community. Therefore, we undertake ministry in that community out of our definitive understanding of the needs of that community."

This is the mistake that the church makes. It is not appropriate for the church to look at its community and decide what it needs to do to the community in order to change it. Linthicum (1991:23) warns "Such an attitude is actually colonialist in nature, and reveals a paternalistic attitude toward people."

*The church with the community:* The third response of the church *in* the city is to be the church *with* the city. In this response, the church respects people and sees them as partners in ministry. The church joins with the people in dealing with the issues that the people have identified as their own. The church with community is the approach in which the most authentic urban ministry is actually done. Linthicum (1991:23) notes

The third response of the church – to be with the people of its neighbourhood – is an approach which enables the church to join with the people in addressing the issues of that community, but doing so from the recognition that the only people who in the final analysis have the capability to change that community and to deal with its problems are the people of that community.

In order to do quality ministry in Malawian urban areas, the church should seek to work with the people as partners in ministry implementation. When the church takes this ministry approach, it incarnates itself in the city. It enters into the life of the community and becomes partners with the community in addressing the community's needs. Linthicum (1991:23) comments "That means the church allows the people of the community to instruct it as it identifies with the people. It respects those people and perceives them as being people of great wisdom and potential."

The vocation of the urban church has now been attended to. It has argued that some tasks of the urban church involve the proclamation of the Gospel. In addition, the church must also be a community with a difference, since it operates on the basis of love. In order to deliver transformational ministry, the urban church ought to be a hermeneutical community – thus taking into consideration the prevailing context at hand. Ultimately, the urban church must seek to be a hope for the oppressed and all victims of their circumstances.

Our next sub-section is on ministry sustainability.

#### 4.10 MINISTRY SUSTAINABILITY

The second and third hypotheses guide this section further. The hypotheses state:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.
- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

Chapter 1 section 1.8 continues to receive attention in this section. The tenth pillar of chapter 6 "Congregational research, monitoring and evaluation," will further develop evaluative steps for the ministry.

This section is about the importance of sustainability. It argues that ministry without impact is a welfare organization, because it does not transform the lives of people. In order to ensure sustainability, development strategies must include all aspects of human realities, namely: physical, spiritual, social, and mental (Myers 1999: 129).

By "*sustainability*" the researcher refers to the meaning of the Oxford Dictionary, which states: "To support life in, or to provide for the life or bodily needs to furnish with the necessities of life." With this meaning in mind, therefore, the objective of development is to bring about a difference in the lives of people through transformation. The Oxford definition points to the fact that any development endeavour that fails to bring about an impact is bound to be either benefiting the already rich or is a mere welfare organization.

Most development activities fail to bring about sustainable results. Sometimes development programming seems to be making a difference as long as the staff and the money of the development agency is there. But program evaluations, performed after the staff and money were withdrawn, revealed that the community could not sustain the program independently. Within a year or two, it is hard to find evidence that there has been a program. Myers (1999:128) comments "In some cases, things actually got worse because the community had become dependent on external resources and now suffered from diminishing capacity."

In order to understand the importance of sustainability, the researcher follows the four categories that Myers has discussed.

#### 4.10.1 PHYSICAL SUSTAINABILITY

This dimension of sustainability includes all the basics that people need for life: food, health, water, finances and a sustainable environment. In brief, physical sustainability implies enhancing the productivity and life-supporting capacity of the local environment in ways that ensure its future. Myers (1999:129) comments "Adequate food and nutrition require sustainable agriculture, an approach to increasing agricultural production that is not dependent on chemicals that are costly or that damage the land and the water." The following are important components of this dimension:

- i. To ensure that people are able to manage his or her own health care to the greatest extent possible. This is possible through the creation of a basic approach in which community members are empowered to utilize local indigenous knowledge and traditional sources with the minimum dependence on expensive health care systems that the wealthy depend upon.
- ii. A second aspect is enabling ordinary citizens to create wealth. The poor should be able to establish development activities that promote capital formation in disadvantaged communities, that teach others to run small-scale businesses, and to save money from such economic endeavours.

#### 4.10.2 MENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

In the section under "Causes of poverty" above, it was also pointed out that poverty's most profound form is poverty of being, ontological poverty. There is a need to seek the healing of the marred identity of the poor. The poor are valuable human beings and ought to be treated as such. If anything, they need to be encouraged by witnessing to them that God loves them and that God has given everyone something to contribute.

The poor must be assisted to believe in themselves; otherwise true mental sustainability cannot take place without belief in them. Myers (1999:130) comments "Helping people discover that they can study and make sense out of their world, that they can identify their capabilities and vulnerability and plan based on what they learn, is part of mental transformation that changes the people from inside." The church must realise that helping to learn how to learn, is a transformative process.

### 4.10.3 SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The social dimension of sustainability focuses on enabling the poor to take charge of their situations. This approach favours an emphasis on local decision-making, local participation in democratic processes, local self-reliance and social learning. Social sustainability takes place when the poor are enabled to have a political voice of their own. Myers (1999:131) comments "Therefore, sustainability ... requires sustainable social systems that are transformed into political power to engage the struggle for emancipation on a larger national and international terrain." In addition to this, social sustainability should include establishing or supporting the development of local organizations with social agendas. Myers (1999:131) again notes "People need to develop a sense that, as part of a larger political community, they have rights on which they should insist to development, to a sustainable livelihood, to respect for civil and political rights."

### 4.10.4 SPIRITUAL SUSTAINABILITY

Spiritual sustainability begins with the realization that human beings are dependent on God. Every person is dependent on God, whether this fact is acknowledged or not and therefore each person must believe passionately that he/she is dependent on God. For this reason, churches, mosques, and temples are faith-based organizations in the community without which human society cannot function. Myers (1999:133) comments "At the heart of this kind of change is repentance and forgiveness, the twin foundations of reconciliation. At its best, this is the work of the religious community."

Another dimension of spiritual sustainability has to do with Christians. The church in the community is supposed to be the sign of the Kingdom, of God's better future. In this respect, the church becomes more effective if it *does* more than what it *says*. Myers (1999:133) comments "The church is not so much the Christians gathered, although it is this too, as it is the place where Christians learn and are challenged to live the whole gospel in the fullness of the life of the larger community." It is important to realise that no Christian view of building civil society can neglect the fact that social systems have a spiritual core. Therefore, it is hard to imagine sustainable transformation without churches committed to soul care and social care.

The discussion of spiritual sustainability has concluded sustainability of the ministry. This discussion emphasized that any development endeavour, without an impact on the four

categories of ordinary community people, is a welfare organization. This is what the congregations in urban Malawi should seek to avoid. For desirable sustainability, the urban poor in the slums and shantytowns should participate in all development stages. In other words, the churches should initiate development projects in which people living in the slums take a leading role in addressing their issues. Through this process, local church members are enabled to implement ministry activities.

#### **4.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter was about poverty and the urban poor. The purpose was to understand the extent of the situation with a view to engaging appropriate development strategies for addressing urban poverty, which poses a great challenge to the poor. The extent of poverty in Malawi has been discussed. The situation in urban Malawi is threatening human life, as people are facing trauma and stresses. The urban poor are human just like the affluent, and God also created them in his image. Therefore, they should be accepted as fellow human beings. This is the key to understanding Christian views of the poor.

The term "poverty" has been discussed at length. The argument is that poverty is not only a lack of money, as it is mostly regarded. Poverty is more than a lack of financial means, it includes: physical, mental, social and spiritual aspects of life. To this effect, new definitions of poverty were discussed and documented. This led to an overview of poverty related issues. It was noted that new definitions of terms are being developed, particularly focusing on urban poverty itself. The overview has contributed towards an understanding of the current worldwide reflection on basic needs in urban settings.

The poverty overview led to a definition of those who are affected as a result of poverty. Under this section, Christian views of the poor are described. Five causes of poverty have been identified and documented, namely: physical, social, mental, spiritual, and exploitation. The importance of this discussion is to enable the church to create appropriate ministry tools for addressing the causes and challenges of poverty. It is not enough to merely document the causes of poverty without formulating possible ways of alleviating poverty. To this effect, development as a response to poverty has been discussed as a means to address poverty.

The urban poor are experiencing high rates of unemployment. Informal economies have been viewed as one of the coping strategies of the poor in urban Malawi. The origin and definition

of the informal sector started in Nigeria and moved to Kenya. Now, it is a commonly understood terminology worldwide. It was further noted that informal economies are not restricted to the urban areas, but also the rural poor indulge in informal economic activities.

The discussion of informal economies led to the description of development, as a response to poverty. A development overview has been examined and discussed. The purpose was to understand various development strategies that have been used, or are options available for urban ministry. Most of the strategies are top-down oriented; consequently, they failed to address poverty in an amicable way, because the poor themselves did not participate in both the needs assessment and formulation of development interventions.

This led to the vocation of the churches in the city. The emphasis is that churches are in the city not only to preach the Gospel, but that, in addition to Gospel proclamation, the people's physical, mental, and social needs must also be addressed. The chapter concludes with a discussion of ministry sustainability. The importance of focusing on four aspects of life – physical, mental, social, and spiritual is emphasized. It is argued that sustainability, which does not focus on all realities of human life, is bound to fail; therefore, sustainability must ensure that transformation takes place as a result of the ministry interventions.

The confirmation and validity of hypotheses. All four hypotheses except hypothesis 1 were helpful in the process of developing this chapter.

Hypothesis 2 guided the formulation of four sections:

- 4.1: The extent of poverty in Malawi
- 4.2: The description of who the poor are
- 4.7: Urban informal economies: between poverty and growth
- 4.10: Ministry sustainability

Hypothesis 3 was the background work for seven sections:

- 4.3: Christian views of the poor
- 4.4: The poverty definition
- 4.6: The causes of poverty
- 4.7: Urban informal economies: between poverty and growth
- 4.8.3: The goal of development

4.9: The vocation of the urban church

4.10: Ministry sustainability

Hypothesis 4 assisted in the development of:

4.9: The vocation of the urban church.



## Chapter 5

# Different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas

### 5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter is about different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas. The purpose is to assess whether the approaches being used are addressing the poverty challenges adequately and holistically.

Two hypotheses guide the development of this chapter:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the people who live there can participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.
- At present, the ministry in the CCAP operates within the hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the urban ministry problems and challenges.

The researcher has researched and consulted various books in order to understand different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas. This method holds great potential for the development of empirical theology, particularly towards parish development and pastoral planning (Van der Ven 1998:128).

The research on different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas focused on four different approaches to squatters' settlements:

- A community organization model
- Developing effective congregational-based advocacy ministries
- A liberation model
- A church in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed.

The first model known as “community organization” will now receive attention.

## 5.1 THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION MODEL

In this section, the third hypothesis is examined further. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

The community organization model focuses on forming forums with a view to work jointly with the authorities of urban organizations. In describing this model section 1.8 "Ministry as a hermeneutical exegesis of word and context receives further attention. The model emphasizes the process of empowering ordinary people to take charge of their own situations. The approach enables people, affected by poverty, to participate in addressing and transforming their future.

Burkey (1993:107) notes "To work with people is easy because they have a sense of humour. The biggest obstacle to work with a bureaucracy is that its very nature is against humour." Bruwer (1997:115) echoes this: "The clear message is: where people take initiative, cooperate and are supported, they can break out of poverty." In order to describe the community organization model, four aspects of the approach are discussed. These are: definition of the approach itself, characteristics of the model, and normative presuppositions in community organization.

### 5.1.1 DEFINING COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

The community organization model aims to enable the poor to address their community situation through empowerment. Linthicum (1991:25) comments "Community organization is the process by which the people of an urban community organize themselves to deal corporately with those essential forces that are exploiting their community and causing their powerlessness."

The task of the Church is to support the poor by advocating the situation of the poor to the rich, and to join with the poor in addressing the forces that are exploiting their community. Linthicum (1991:25) notes "The church's place in such organizing is to join with the poor to take responsible action to identify and deal with the forces that are destroying that community." Freire (1987:172) echoes "The liberating educator is with the students instead of

doing things for the students. In this mutual act of knowing, we have rationality and we have passion."

Furthermore, this section links with chapter 4, section 4.6, which described the causes of poverty. Some of the causes of poverty discussed in chapter 4 are marginalization, exploitation and oppression. They become the causes of poverty because people lack the power to change their situations. Linthicum (1991:10) states

Poverty is not so much the absence of goods as it is the absence of power - the capability of being able to change one's situation. It is because one is already severely limited in what he or she can do to change one's plight that one becomes impoverished. Marginalization, exploitation and oppression are not simply results of poverty, but its primary causes.

With this discussion in mind our holistic approach to development must begin by understanding how power is exercised in the city and how it produces the poor. In order for people to engage power they need to go through a process of conscientization. Coetzee *et al* (2001:472) comment "Conscientization describes the process whereby poor and oppressed become politically and socially aware that their living conditions are not 'natural' but are a result of exploitative policies implemented by the state and their country's elites."

The process of conscientization is discussed fully in chapter 6 below, in the second pillar of the holistic model, section 6.2.1 on: "How to develop community participation." Central to this concept is active participation in educational social organizations in conjunction with others, to enable the oppressed people to actively change the elite's power.

The holistic hermeneutical approach to the ministry has five important conscientization steps for the empowerment of the poor (Linthicum 1991:25). The steps are now described.

- *Networking*: To visit and befriend the people, identifying key issues and leaders while building trust between the poor and the church.
- *Coalition-building*: To gather the poor and the Christians together into coalitions so as to address community needs.
- *Acting/reflecting/acting*: A process that people follow in order to identify the root causes of the problem. They reflect, act, evaluate, act again and reflect more deeply. Self-confidence and community trust are built as a result of this process.

- *Leadership empowerment:* The leaders of the coalition inevitably surface, are identified, and equipped. This is the leadership that supports networks and coalitions.
- *The birth of community:* The members of the community begin to take charge of their situation, as a result of these problem-solving coalitions. This leads to the transformation of the community and a better future.

These five steps of conscientization have been discussed. The steps have formed part of the holistic model, because they guide people through the process of empowerment, thereby enabling them to take charge of their own predicaments. The next sub-section is on the characteristics of the organization model.

### 5.1.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF A COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

This section is about the features of a community organization. The characteristics have formed part of the approach of a holistic hermeneutical practical theology to ministry.

The effectiveness of the community organization approach lies in its empowering the poor to determine, for themselves, the actions they intend to take in order to deal with the essential forces that are destroying their community and that are consequently causing their powerlessness. Not the government nor the church, but ordinary people take conscious decisions to transform their community. Coetzee *et al* (2001:472) note "Participation thus leads to a process of self actualization, which enables oppressed people to take control of their lives, simultaneously challenging the dominating classes and their political regime."

The holistic model has 11 characteristics that assist in the process of organizing people to address the community issues collectively (Linthicum 1991:32).

- *Relational:* Based upon the development and maintenance of one-to-one contacts out of which mutual risk and trust grow.
- *Pragmatic:* Acting locally and doing what the community identifies as needing to be done in that community.
- *Winnable in the actions it takes:* Carefully selecting its issues so that people experiencing success in the early stages of the organizing effort, make its actions realistic in the scope.
- *Democratic in its decision-making:* Including all the groups and peoples in that community in the decision-making process.

- *Developmental:* Committed to a process of discovery and action, rather than following programs and procedures.
- *Seeking structural changes:* Not preoccupied with direct service for the needy of its community, but concerned to give people the power to make decisions so that systems can be changed.
- *Consciousness-raising:* Thinking globally and systemically about issues.
- *Leadership-intensive:* Not staff-intensive; a primary part of the staff's job is to awaken, develop and train the natural leaders of the community to assume effective leadership of the community.
- *Pro-active:* Rather than reactive; with a long-term vision for that community, the organization can decide the issues that they will address rather than react to the decisions and actions of the politically, economically or religiously powerful.
- *Initiative-seizing,* rather than being defensive; anticipates what will happen in future.
- *Value-based rather than issue-based:* The community organization acts from the standpoint of faith, vision and conviction in its commitment to that community.

One important aspect of the characteristics of the community organizational model is the emphasis on people's participation at all levels. This includes decision-making, faith, vision, and the conviction to transform the communities. Commenting on the importance of spiritual development lacking in the South African process of national development, Du Toit (1996: 13) notes

The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was introduced with the intention of involving all the people in the country, rich and poor. The RDP will fail if it means that houses and jobs will simply be made available. It has been emphasised by many cultural and religious values, motivating them to be courageous and take responsibility.

The next section is about standards in community organization.

### 5.1.3 THE NORMATIVE PRESUPPOSITIONS IN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

This section is about standards that guide the community organization approach to ministry. These standards are helpful, because they are a foundation upon which a holistic ministry is built. Linthicum (1991:37- 42) deals with five normative presuppositions upon which everything else in both urban and community organization rests. Due to the importance of these standards, the researcher has integrated them into the holistic hermeneutical approach to ministry. The following discussion affirms hypothesis two again and again which states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.

We shall now attend to the five normative presuppositions, as discussed by Linthicum.

#### **5.1.3.1 Only the poor of the city can assume responsibility for solving their own predicaments**

The people who are most capable of solving severe community problems are those who live in that particular community. No one else, not those outside the community, nor even the church, could possibly know what is best, or assume responsibility for a community. Linthicum (1991:38) warns "Only the poor of the city can assume responsibility for solving their own powerlessness. And the church must find ways to support and encourage the actions of the poor to assume control over such powerlessness, rather than contributing to it by encouraging greater dependency." Bruwer (1997:104) affirms this: "As I see it, those who suffer have to take the initiative to grow out of the misery only they know. This is our most important principle."

#### **5.1.3.2 The poor can be empowered only by acting collectively through reflection, projects and actions**

Marginalization points to the fact that people have been excluded from full participation in the political, social and economic spheres of their city. These people must be empowered to participate collectively. If they are empowered to work as a single unit, they will be able to take responsibility of their community and its life. The power of the poor emanates from collective action. Linthicum (1991:38) states "There have been two kinds of power through history - the power of money and the power of people. One of the realities of life is that the power of money often wins battles, but rarely wins the war. Every revolution has been the result of collective people power."

Commenting on the South African situation of not allowing the poor to handle money, Bruwer (1997:114) notes

Money is power, and handing it over builds trust and responsibility. Traditionally the poor have not been entrusted with money. That was the right of the rich. Money was kept away from the poor, lest they abuse it. If, however, we are serious about development, we must put money into the hands of those who are going to assume the responsibility for the work.

### **5.1.3.3 The body of Christ in a city can best carry out ministry in that city**

This presupposition alludes to the fact that the external mission or organization cannot adequately address the problems of the community for the obvious reason that such organization will leave the community or country. When that happens then the mission's activities stop. God is already present in the community through churches and He wants to carry out his ministry through the church leadership in that particular community.

Linthicum (1991:39) states

It is my firm belief that God has already placed in every city of the world and is calling forth the leadership that God wants to carry out ministry in that city. God does not leave his church bereft of leadership. Nor does God make the church dependent upon outside leadership; for that to happen is to leave the church in a dependent and vulnerable stance – as helpless as are the poor, the oppressed and the marginalized of the city.

The task of any external denomination or mission organization is to help equip the leadership, to come alongside them and strengthen them in their work and then to remove themselves.

### **5.1.3.4 The church can assume its local mission only through proclamation, ministry among and with the poor, and focusing that ministry in empowerment**

The two pillars of chapter six below (pillar 1, section 6.1.4: "A people of the way," and pillar 8, section 6.7.7: "Become an apostolic people of God") describe the fourth presupposition at length.

The fourth presupposition points to the fact that, traditionally, the church carries out her tasks through its proclamation, presence, prayer and practice. The church must carry out these four areas in such a way that the powerless and the marginalized people are supported and motivated to take charge of their situation. Linthicum (1991:41) notes "The end result of the church's presence, prayer, practice and proclamation in the city ought to be the liberation and empowerment of the city's poor both spiritually and materially." Bruwer (1997:115) echoes this: "The main vehicles for transformation in such a situation are the church and the school, because these institutions are vested in the community itself, and can work from within."

**5.1.3.5 The task of the para-church organization, denomination or mission group is to support the local body of Christ in whatever ways will more effectively enable the church to undertake ministries of empowerment with the poor**

This last presupposition focuses on the tasks of external missions or para-church organizations. The purpose is to equip, support and motivate the local people or leadership to do desirable ministry. This can best be implemented through on going biblical reflections in partnership with churches in slums and squatter settlements. Burkey (1993:35) comments "It was felt that development in any meaningful sense must begin with, and within, the individual. Unless motivation comes from within, efforts to promote change will not be sustainable by that individual. The individual will remain under the power of others."

Allowing the poor to participate in implementing their own development is very important. As we have noted in chapter four above that economic and mental dependence of the poor on others who are rich and more powerful, is one cause of poverty. Allowing the poor, with this background, to participate in their development enables them to address the challenges amicably. Burkey (1993:130) warns

It is difficult for the poor to break away from the vicious circle of dependence and poverty individually. It is only through collective effort and organisation that they can reduce dependence and initiate a course of participatory, self-reliant development. Thus participation implies mobilisation, conscientisation and organisation ... in that order.

The approach of holistic hermeneutical practical theology to ministry endorses some aspects of the community organization model. The model deems it critical to allow ordinary people to contribute their practical reasoning in implementing development activities. The people's involvement has the further importance of realizing the priesthood of all believers, as well as developmental sustainability.

## 5.2 AN EFFECTIVE CONGREGATIONAL-BASED ADVOCACY MODEL

This section deals with the fourth hypothesis of the study. The hypothesis states:

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the problems and challenges of urban ministry.

This section documents the features of congregational-based advocacy ministries as an approach to address poverty challenges. In the process it discusses section 1.8. In discussing the congregational-based community organizing approach, three important sub-sections are described, namely:

- The reasons why congregations shy away from advocacy,
- Paths to advocacy, and
- Helping a congregation move towards advocacy.

Jacobsen (2001:23) notes “Congregation-based community organizing has its roots in the organizing principles first forged by Alinsky in the Black of the Yards neighbourhood of Chicago in the 1930s.” The assumption was that poverty was a result of the poor people’s inability to managing their matters properly. It is to this effect that Alinsky formulated congregational-based organizing to enable the poor to take charge of their own situation. Jacobsen (200:23) comments “He [Alinsky] concluded that the problem was not with the people in the community but rather with the outsiders who profited from and abused the community.”

Another emerging community organizing similar to congregational-based community organizing is called *Gamaliel Foundation*. Jacobsen (2001:25) notes “Formed in 1986, Gamaliel’s network includes forty-five organizations in fifteen states and three organizations in South Africa.” The network has this distinction: it is one of the few networks with an organized and staffed national clergy caucus. Jacobsen (2001:26) notes “The Gamaliel national Clergy Caucus (GNCC) has a structure of elected officers and regional representatives who meet quarterly to plan annual theological training for clergy ... to facilitate network expansion, and to deepen judicatory relationships.”

The holistic approach to ministry has developed effective congregational-based advocacy ministries to allow city congregations in Malawi to address urban poverty challenges

adequately. To explain “*advocacy ministries*,” the researcher refers to Dudley’s definition of the term: ministries that seek systematic solutions to problems, not simply individual solutions. The advocacy ministry is conclusive in nature and covers the large spectrum of the problem. Dudley (1996:55) states “Advocacy is using both love plus power to seek justice in society.” The Nkhoma Synod congregations in Lilongwe do not have advocacy ministries as yet. Therefore, the city congregations in Lilongwe are challenged to implement advocacy ministry to ensure effective ministry in the city.

Most church leaders refrain from advocating to the needs of the oppressed even though they see the rich victimizing the urban poor. The next section seeks to unveil the possible reasons why the congregations fail to advocate for the oppressed. The purpose is to encourage church leaders to work with the oppressed in addressing their challenges.

### **5.2.1 WHY CONGREGATIONS SHY AWAY FROM ADVOCACY**

The holistic hermeneutical model recognizes that most congregations shy away from advocacy. There are many reasons for this. Four of the reasons (Dudley 1996:56) are:

#### **5.2.1.1 When congregations focus on serving groups of people**

The limitation of this approach to ministry is that when a congregation focuses on the person rather than on the issue, in most cases it ignores the social problems that are impacting on the people it seeks to serve. Dudley (1996:56) comments “The concern for this ministry arises out of their love for people, but it is usually limited to the approaches that serve these particular people .... But advocacy approaches are likely to affect more people for a longer time.”

#### **5.2.1.2 Some congregations are out of touch with the community**

Failure to involve the affected people is the main problem of this approach. The outreach advocacy ministry is developed without consulting the people they seek to serve. Dudley (1996:57) warns “Without their participation the ministry that the congregation develops may be paternalistic to the community it seeks to serve; even more, it may not address the issues that are impacting the lives of the people the congregation wishes to reach.” Grassroots involvement is critical to development. Coetzee *et al* (2001:476) comment

This term refers to the necessity, in order to get genuine participation, of involving as broad a spectrum of people as possible in the decision-making process around development. It refers to the involvement of the ‘poorest of the poor,’ especially women, and uneducated people in both rural and urban contexts.

### **5.2.1.3 Congregations doubt if they can make a difference**

Traditionally, churches often feel more appropriate to deal with charitable work than advocacy that focuses on changing systems. This surfaced during the research that the researcher conducted in Lilongwe in preparation for this study. The groups of Women's Guild ladies interviewed reported that they are all mostly involved in charitable work, such as distributing food to the needy but have never assisted them to start a business through which they could generate income for the families' upkeep. Dudley (1996:57) warns "Charitable ministries enable church members to feel good about themselves because they believe they are helping keep 'somebody' nourished, clothed, and housed even if it's just for one day."

### **5.2.1.4 Congregations are uncomfortable about discussing and using power**

Churches feel uncomfortable to challenge injustices even when they impact negatively on the ministry. They seem to confuse power with evil. Many church members shy off when it comes to politics, saying politics is not the role of the church-based ministry. Dudley (1996:57) states "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., frequently said that power without love is dangerous, while love without power is insipid; together power and love produce justice." Freire (1996:26) affirms "Only power that springs from the weakness of the oppressed will be sufficiently strong to free [the oppressor and the oppressed] both."

### **5.2.1.5 Congregations lack recognized authority for action by the pastors and biblical ignorance about God's desire for justice**

Church leadership must seek to understand God's vision for the world and all the communities. This will help the leadership to position its ministry to focus on the whole community rather than on individuals. The church leaders will begin to understand the extent of their calling and task. Dudley (1996:58) comments "But when they know how God cares for communities, they may lead more toward ministries that advocate changing systems of oppression and exploitation."

Pillar 2 of holistic model in chapter 6, section 6.2.4 on "Biblical examples of empowerment," will describe further the five empowering principles that Nehemiah used in his ministry to the Jews in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

### 5.2.2 THE PATHS TO ADVOCACY

The holistic model has three built-in aspects of paths to advocacy (Dudley (1996:58). The paths are important if the advocates involve community people in the ministry, listen to their stories, and then the advocates must also have their eyes and ears open for possible injustices within the communities.

The three paths to advocacy are described as follows:

- *Community ministries that are designed by and run by the affected people:* The affected people have the strongest initial advocacy components because they are more willing to change the systems that victimize them than those not directly affected.
- *Community ministries that have built-in strong listening/discernment components:* Any church ministry seeking to advocate for the poor must listen to the stories of the poor themselves. A church that does not listen to community residents, misses the grassroots issues crucial for advocacy.
- *Learning about broader problems in the process of providing services:* The third path focuses on the need for church members to assess and understand the negative impact that community people may experience as a result of unjust acts of organizations or fellow citizens.

The paths to advocacy underline the importance of local people to be free and to make choices for the transformation of their future. Coetzee *et al* (2001:514) note

Freedom to choose options is part of well-being. The focus of development projects should be on the manner in which people's choices can become enlarged, in such a way that the enlargement of the choices of one section of the community is not at the expense of the legitimate choices of another.

### 5.2.3 HELPING A CONGREGATION MOVE TO ADVOCACY

This sub-section is about guidelines for helping a congregation to develop prophetic commitment to advocate essential systemic change. It carries the discussion of five dimensions of practical reasoning (section 1.8.3.1) further. The five guidelines emphasize the participation of congregation members in advocacy (Dudley 1996:60–63). This emphasis makes the guidelines crucial to the developed approach of holistic hermeneutical practical theology to ministry.

The valuable holistic guidelines are as follows:

- Seek to involve people directly affected by problems in the design and implementation of community ministries.
- Design extensive listening and discerning process to ensure that community problems are truly heard and understood.
- Build in opportunities to help congregations reflect on their ministries.
- Challenge Christians to understand and use their power.
- Develop a long-term vision on a spiritual foundation.

In larger cities, the congregational-based model takes the shape of metropolitan organizing. Jacobsen (2001:72) comments “Congregational-based community organizing needs to draw on Scripture and faith as a means of creating the vision and moral mandate needed to overcome the many obstacles to the metropolitan organizing.”

The congregational-based community model fits well with a holistic approach to the ministry. More importantly, the effort to involve churches in advocating for the poor is very crucial. This is the right direction to encourage ordinary people to work for the transformation of all human realities rather than spirituality only. The urban congregations in Lilongwe can have a desirable ministry if the leadership could help the Christians to liberate themselves through the implementation of advocacy ministries. The fourth hypothesis is confirmed by this discussion. Leadership in the CCAP have never been orientated or trained to empower the poor to develop an advocacy based approach.

### 5.3 THE LIBERATION MODEL

The third hypothesis continues to guide this section. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

This section describes further the danger of an one-sided ministry implementation previously dealt with in chapter 1, section 2.3.1 on: "Limitation of the Reformed/salvation model."

The sections examines further the definition of "holistic" discussed in chapter 1, section 1.6: "A holistic approach seeks to focus on the human being as an indivisible entity, the total being, of which soul and body form a unity of the diversity. As such, the physical needs of the person are of equal importance to the spiritual."

The one-sidedness of the liberation model now receives attention. The people who advocate the liberation model claim that they are moved to address the needs of the poor - thus solidarity with the poor, worshipping God and communing with Christ. Boff & Boff (1989:43-44) comment

Liberation theology can be understood as the reflection in faith of the church that has taken to heart the clear and prophetic option expressing preference for, and solidarity with, the poor. It is for them, and with them, that the church seeks to act in a liberative manner.

The causal factors leading to the development of the liberation theology are varied and at different levels. However, the fundamental explanation of liberation theology lies in the historical social situation of the people of Latin America. Komonchak *et al* (1987:571) note "The people, that is, the majority of the population of Latin America, live in destitution, so that poverty and oppression are the deepest causes of the growth of this theology." Komonchak's statement is understood to mean that liberation theology came into being as a religious response to the social conditions of the poor.

The holistic hermeneutical approach endorses this stance. The importance of this stance is that it helps the church to address the challenge of urban poverty as the theology interacts with the social realities of community people. It is, indeed, the task of the church to describe human situations in need of redress, and then current theological teaching in response to these

human dilemmas. However, the holistic approach is uncomfortable with liberation theology's Marxist method of addressing the problems of the oppressed.

Boff & Boff (1989:28), a liberation theologian, note

In liberation theology, Marxism is never treated as a subject on its own but always from and in relation to the poor .... Liberation theology freely borrows from Marxism certain methodological pointers that have proved fruitful in understanding the world of the oppressed.

Here Boff acknowledges the fact that Marxist approaches are used in the liberation model, in response to the social conditions of the oppressed group. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines the term "Marxism" as political and economic theories of historical development, which led to the violent overthrow of the capitalist class and the taking over of the means of production by the proletariat - the lower class of citizens (Murray 1989:418).

The Marxist approach is helpful in advocating systemic changes in the communities. However, there is a need to strike a balance so that the oppressed people will not be encouraged to rely on their own human effort as a means of attaining salvation and peace without yielding their lives to God through conversion and repentance. The church, least of all social institutions, should be expected to borrow from Marxist ideology. This is important to enable people to work out their liberation from the social ills brought about by injustices and marginalization.

The Catholic Church, through her doctrine of faith called "*libertatis nuntius*," criticizes attempts to work towards a Christian option for the poor by means of a Marxist analysis of the political, economic and social conditions. Komonchak *et al* (1987:631) note "A Marxist social analysis, [*libertatis nuntius* argues] cannot be separated from an atheistic and humanist ideology. To attempt to harness that analysis in the service of a Christian value of belief, worship and practice is purely secularist, humanist terms."

The violence model, which is the result of the Marxistic approach, is viewed as a one-sided model as it leans more towards liberation on the physical level, without attending to maturity of faith. The violence strategy, which is central to the liberation model, is in conflict with the norms of ministry as practised by Jesus Christ. During his earthly ministry, Jesus Christ facilitated a non-vengeance approach to ministry. He emphasized the ethics of love and forgiveness in order to appropriate Kingdom values.

This is the reason why the Nazareth congregation was so angry about his message and tried to assassinate him (Lk.4: 14-30). The Jews were looking for an opportunity for revenge against their opponents for injustices performed against them (Bosch 1991:111). The holistic model, which focuses on *uMunthu*, is important because the needs of human beings are addressed to the full. Musopole (in Fiedler *et al* 1996/1997:28) comments “*uMunthu* symbolises all that is good and worthy in human life or a historization of moyo.”

In conclusion, it should be noted that the church must empower people to take charge of their situations. The Marxist approach is most important in this regard. Its social analysis is very strategic in that it focuses on the needs of disadvantaged people. However, the church must be aware of possible dangers and temptations facing the liberation model.

### **5.3.1 TEMPTATIONS FACING THE LIBERATION MODEL**

There are some challenges that prevent the liberation model from addressing the needs of the poor in an adequate way. Boff & Boff (1989:64) comment "Let us not pass over the temptations to which liberation theologians can be liable, temptations pointed out some time ago by critics and –at least in part- repeated by the magisterium ...." In this sub-section four obstacles of the liberation model are discussed.

#### **5.3.1.1 Overemphasis of the political aspect**

The model emphasizes political freedom more than other important human aspects. Some liberation theologians are aware of these temptations. Boff & Boff (1989:64) warn “... questions relating to oppression and liberation, at the expense of other, more supple and more deeply human aspects: friendship, pardon ... and spiritual riches.” This is a one-sided approach because it views a human being as a political being only.

#### **5.3.1.2 The disregard for mystical roots**

The model’s emphasis on liberation makes it difficult to be committed to the ministry, with prayer and meditation as the roots, that God intended for people. Boff & Boff (1989:64) state “It is in prayer and contemplation, and intimate and communitarian contact with God, that the motivation for a faith-inspired commitment to the oppressed and all human-kind spring and are renewed.”

### 5.3.1.3 The absolutization of liberation theology

The liberation model focuses more on social-economic aspects of evangelical poverty - neglecting spiritual poverty. This leads to an under-emphasis of other types of social oppression. As a result, the model runs the risk of losing the goal of the church's mission to make disciples for the Kingdom.

### 5.3.1.4 The lack of concern for dialogue with other Christian churches

Another aspect that makes the liberation model different from a holistic model is its lack of concern for profound dialogue with other Christian churches. Boff & Boff (1989:65) comment

Unconcern on the part of liberation theologians for making themselves intelligible to the different levels of church authority, with a consequent delay in the process of converting the church to the poor and in the ecclesiastical championing of human rights, which apply in the religious sphere as well.

The contribution of the holistic approach to the liberation model, replaces the violence strategy embodied in it, with confrontation. The term "confrontation" is an integral part of any transformative process for a community, a city or even a non-governmental organization (NGO). Joda-Mbewe (1998:22) notes "Confrontation means face to face, direct encounter, seeking the end of resolution; word literally means 'at foreheads' contemporary expression 'in your face.'" Violence is an exercise of physical force in order to gain one's way.

This is the opposite of confrontation and the sign that confrontation has failed. Joda-Mbewe (1998:22) comments

Christians have trouble with confrontation because we believe it is inconsistent with a loving faith. In reality, it is the healthy process that enables humans to resolve pronounced differences of opinion. A person cannot bring about significant change by avoiding confrontation.

The holistic model views the incarnation of Jesus Christ as the reality of God entering into human affairs and history. On account of this, theology also pays attention to context (Ammerman *et al* 1998:25). In a similar manner, spiritual and physical needs are an indivisible entity. In other words, a theological principle of mutuality of obligation is at work between theology and context, mirroring soul and body (Ellis 1989:61-62).

We have now completed a discussion of the relationship between a holistic approach to urban ministry on the one hand, and the approach of the well known liberation model on the other.

In this discussion it was established that the holistic approach has contributed to the awareness of the need to empower people physically so that they are able to address injustices as a means of resolving their felt needs while, at the same time, replacing the element of violence with confrontation in the liberation model. Through this approach, urban poverty as a challenge to the ministry is addressed.

A fourth and the last model of the different approaches to urban ministry, described, as “The church working with the oppressed” will now receive attention.

#### **5.4 THE MODEL OF A CHURCH IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR AND THE OPPRESSED**

The second hypothesis examines this section further. The hypothesis states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.

As this section outlines an approach to poverty called “*A church in solidarity with the oppressed*,” it also affirms, the definition of ministry as a hermeneutical exegesis of word and context (section 1.8). The poverty and the plight of the poor should concern the church because God wills abundant life for the people He created, even for those who inherited misfortune – those born blind, lame or deaf. It is with the same concern that Christ showed compassion for the poor, the marginalized and the destitute. He ministered to them and proclaimed the Good News to them.

The discussion of a model about a church in solidarity with the oppressed has four main sub-sections namely:

- Actions of the church in working with the oppressed;
- Marks of a church in solidarity with the poor;
- Justice, freedom and social transformation important to the poor, and
- Possible steps of application to development.

These sections now receive attention.

### 5.4.1 ACTIONS OF THE CHURCH IN WORKING WITH THE OPPRESSED

This topic receives further attention in the second pillar of the holistic model in chapter 6.2: “Urban ministry among the poor needs community participation.”

A state of impoverishment is a serious challenge because it is not only poverty as an actual condition that is endemic and crippling; it is an active and continuing process because it comes about as a result of evil structures that the rich make in order to dominate and exploit the poor. Nash (1984:15) warns

The process of impoverishment is not accidental: it is the result of choices and decisions made by those who have power. These choices and decisions are made personally and through structures, for example laws, wage scales and housing policies. It is also the result of the compliance or inadequate resistance of those who are being dominated and exploited.

Monsma *et al* (1991:66) advise

The church in Africa should recognize the importance of lobbying as a strategy or social reforms. Take, for example, the individual Christians in our congregations who may also be policy-makers in government. These people provide one of the important venues by which the church can influence the way the society is run.

The model of holistic hermeneutical practical theology has five actions for a local church to combat poverty and promote development within its powers and mandate (Nash 1984:21-28). The actions are as follows:

#### 5.4.1.1 The preaching and teaching

The third pillar of the holistic model in chapter 6.3 describes further: “Proclaiming the gospel in word and deed in urban areas.”

The first action relates to preaching and teaching. The aim is to make known the Good News of Jesus Christ and to draw people into his community of faith, love and obedience. In fulfilling this task, the local church must contextualize all preaching, mentor individuals and groups to manage ministry activities rather than overwork the clergy, seek or create special opportunities to expose the “comfortable” to the harsh realities of poverty and suffering, encourage presbytery or regional cooperation, and use educational work to advance God’s intention for all people that He created.

In discussing the importance of the church’s educational work, Nash (1984:22) comments

... to educate conscience and to develop informed and competent Christian commitment to the struggle against dehumanising poverty, locally and further afield. This means that in addition to Scripture and liturgy other inputs are used, such as visits from people from relevant situations - squatter settlements, hunger relief projects, tape and video recordings, newspaper and other media reports.

#### **5.4.1.2 Local fact-finding and analysis – participatory research**

The tenth pillar of holistic theory describes further the importance of research in section 6.10.3.4, "Methods of congregational research."

The local church should conduct a participatory research or do local fact-finding and analyses of needs and resources for meeting the identified needs. The research findings help the local church to understand local challenges and plan appropriate interventions to resolve them. The research findings will reveal the facts and causes in the light of the Gospel. These form material to work out what action could be taken to transform the ministry. Linthicum (1991:177) comments

Moody was once asked how he would define a great urban preacher. His definition is a classic statement. He responded, a truly great urban preacher is the pastor who climbs into the pulpit each Sunday with the Bible in one hand and the newspaper in the other.

This response stresses an awareness of both the Bible as well as one's urban reality to make proclamation effective. Linthicum (1991:178) states

The Bible may be a good news, but if it is not applied to our world, it is news that is irrelevant to us. The newspaper, by contrast, is always relevant news, but without biblical interpretation, it is only bad news. Proclamation requires both a conceptual framework - the Bible and one's context - the newspaper.

#### **5.4.1.3 Encourage self-help and collective self-reliance**

This section looks back to the section 1.8 further. The topic receives further attention in the second pillar of the holistic theory in section 6.2.3, "Basic principles of self-reliance."

The third action of collective self-reliance requires the local church to encourage self help and collective self-reliance by: making church premises and facilities available for self help groups and adapt them as necessary, call needy and unemployed people together to take part in community-based issues, encourage church members to share resources, organise credit unions and cooperatives for purchases and for production (also for mutual support groups), open a church-based advice office or cooperate in a community-based advice office as a centre for information. Coetzee *et al* (2001:515) warn "Only a solution that bears the mark of

dialogical encounter in its formulation and implementation can be seen as standing the test of development in human terms.”

The local church should encourage people to cooperate with, or establish a local inter-church aid committee that can provide links with other development projects in the area, keep reporting on and publishing poverty and development activities and to adopt a policy of contact and cooperation with specialized community development agencies. Nash (1984:26) advises “Where these do not exist locally see whether you [the local church] can help to create them or can develop local extensions of existing agencies.”

#### **5.4.1.4 Identify and oppose unjust social structures**

The fourth action calls for the local church to concern itself with practical issues that affect people. The action should start with simple, daily issues that people complain about. Then organize around these issues with other local churches and community organizations. Another method is to use the newspapers to make people aware of issues that are both local and more general. Through this process, the local church exposes injustices and pushes up the political cost of unjust actions and policies. Nash (1984:27) states

No government is all-powerful. By making it use more money, people and effort to carry out its decisions and by embarrassing it in eyes of other countries with which it is trying to be friendly, we slow down its progress, shorten its life and hasten the day when it gives way to a democratic social order.

Monsma *et al* (1991:65) echo

The church must move beyond merely dealing with symptoms of oppression and get to the root of the problem so that no more people are victimized. It is quite disappointing that the church is often content with ministering to the victims of oppression, by giving charity to the poor, while failing to condemn those socio-economic and political structures which cause poverty on a large scale.

#### **5.4.1.5 The search for, and promotion of, just social structures**

The fifth and last action seeks to encourage people to realize that the way they live now is fundamental to transform the lives of people. The local church can do this by introducing the cooperative principle into the organization of church life where it is lacking, support movements in the wider community that have the same values as those of the local church and are working to implement them. Nash (1984:28) advises

Live the coming future now. Alternative structures and procedures for the society that is just, participatory, sustainable and self reliant do not fall readymade from heaven, nor do the people and organizations that are able to create and use such structures. We can and must begin with ourselves at the grass-roots.

The actions of the church in working with the poor have been discussed. The church does not exist to proclaim the Good News alone, but also to involve itself in-day to-day issues affecting the people. This approach helps the church to be relevant in its proclamation.

The next section is about the marks of a church in solidarity with the oppressed.

#### 5.4.2 THE MARKS OF A CHURCH THAT IS IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR AND OPPRESSED

The church that seeks to advocate the cause of the poor by way of communicating the holistic ministry, has marks that distinguish it from others that do not implement a ministry focusing on the all-human realities. The holistic model has nine important marks, with which the researcher agrees (Nash 1984:35-36). The marks now receive attention.

- It keeps testing each aspect of its life and action to express solidarity with the poor in their needs and aspirations.
- It is not only confined to the church buildings in its proclamation of the Gospel, but preaches the Word in the open air: squatters' shacks, on the streets, at gatherings of workers on strike and commuters boycotting public transport, and even in conflict-oriented bible study.
- It develops theology with people in the townships and squatter settlements, bus terminals and streets, wherever people are in pain and crying out to God for assistance and care.
- It empowers the powerless by helping them to think and speak for themselves and to obtain the information that they may need for action and help them to link up with others who are struggling elsewhere.
- In the struggle against the forces of evil that destroy family life, it engages with others, including those who do not share a similar faith in God to fight against corrupt morale and relationships. It fights the evil that undermines people's will to live lives of love and service to God and to one another.
- It organizes its life to nurture persons and groups eager to develop gifts of leadership.
- It shapes its future leadership within the ongoing struggle to understand and reshape human society that focuses on changing the whole human community.
- It provides networks of communication and cooperation for those who are actively engaged in transforming communities.

- It sheds whatever material structures prevent it from sharing fully and freely in the struggles of those with whom Jesus identified.

Echoing the marks of the church in solidarity with the poor and oppressed, Gillan comments about the importance for a church not to shun its task to pronounce truth, justice and compassion. Gillan (1998:93) warns

The church without a project, a dream or vision runs the danger of being irrelevant and may also perish as well ... We have to bear in mind that the final death of apartheid does not necessarily mean the end of spiritual need and substance nor the end of poverty and injustice, be it social, economic or political. These areas will remain terrains of strife and struggle unless we delude ourselves in some Utopia.

If the church shuns its mission, then the danger of losing the prophetic voice is imminent. Gillan (1998: 95) warns

The prophetic role of the churches has not ceased because apartheid is off the books. In fact this role will have to be more focused than ever before because transition is fraught with pitfalls and threats to human well being ... The church should also strongly denounce the violation of human rights and the abuse of power and office.

The CCAP ministry can make a huge difference if it implements these marks.

#### 5.4.3 JUSTICE, FREEDOM, AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION

The fourth hypothesis guides this section further:

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

In order to transform the lives of ordinary people, the CCAP must discontinue to operate within a hierarchical paradigm.

This sub-section is about justice, freedom, and social transformation in dealing with the challenges of poverty. In this section, the mechanisms of injustice and practical implications for the church are discussed. What prompts discussion of this nature is the fact that the gap between the rich and the poor widens as the standard of living of the rich minority steadily increases.

Samuel and Sugden (1987:218) comment "There is a saying in Haiti: 'When God made the world he did a good job, but he forgot one thing - to distribute the wealth evenly.'" The church

must focus on implementing justice and freedom to all people in the communities. The ordinary people must be enabled and empowered so that they can participate at all levels of decision-making. This will give them an opportunity to transform their communities. The church must also create special opportunities to expose the 'comfortable' to the harsh realities of poverty and suffering.

#### **5.4.3.1 The mechanisms of injustice**

The suffering of the poor is not limited to material needs alone, but their life is also characterized by dependency and oppression. They have little opportunity to make their own decisions to shape their lives. Samuel and Sugden (1987:219) warn "When we speak of poverty we are not dealing primarily with conditions of scarcity but rather with fundamental questions of power, control, and distribution." There have been, and are, individuals, groups, governments, voluntary agencies, and even churches for that matter, who talk as if their sole intention is to transform the situation of the urban poor, yet they have their own hidden agendas - to benefit personally from the helpless situation of the poor.

This is clearly noted when the authorities of such organizations refuse to reframe their proposals when noted to be oppressive in nature. Samuel and Sugden (1987:220) warn "These efforts fail to reverse the marginalization of the poor, for they fail to involve them as important agents in their own situation. The poor strive to be treated as subjects rather than mere objects, as having the potential to change their own situation and society as a whole."

One of the hypotheses guiding this study as observed in the introduction of this chapter is: *Local Christians' participation in the process of implementing ministry activities – this points to a priesthood of all believers.* The purpose of allowing Christians to take part in ministry implementation, inter alia, is preparing them to be an effective leadership in ministry in the face of a new mechanism of injustice and oppression of thought control intimately linked with the technology of communications. Samuel and Sugden (1987:220) comment "Now, through communications techniques, the majority of Third World leaders maintain absolute thought control. They control what the people can know and learn so they deprive them of independent choice and judgment."

Another level of mechanism of injustice is the church's inability to face the facts squarely. It appears that churches are able to identify with the social economic, and political system that

is founded on, and still continues to propagate, the dominance of the few over the many.

Samuel and Sudgen (1987:221) warn

This practice often degenerates into what many have called a civil religion, which blesses the status quo instead of calling it into question. Civil religion is amoral and has little capacity to bring a word of judgment or correction to the social order. Its function is to provide religious justification for the social order, to serve as the ideological glue that holds the society together in consensus and conformity.

#### 5.4.3.2 Practical implications for the church

The mechanisms of injustices discussed above call for the church to directly denounce the injustices, recognizing that silence in the face of oppression speaks even louder than words.

The church must preach a full Gospel that allows no separation between the spiritual and physical needs of humanity. Samuel and Sudgen (1987:223) state

The mission of the church is thus threefold: first, to plead the cause of the poor, defending the weak and helping the helpless (Prov. 22:22; Ps. 12:5; 10:17-18); second, to stand for equality and social justice (Prov. 14:21; Ps. 41:1); and third, to institute structures that will create a just and more equitable distribution of wealth (Lev. 25: 28).

The church cannot choose to play it safe by adopting policies of neutrality. It must not ally itself with the powerful when the well-being of the poor is at stake. The church should take practical steps such as:

- It must be compelled to side with the poor instead of the forces in the society that create oppression, dehumanization, marginalization, capitalism, and poverty.
- The church should consequently attempt to root out the injustices in all sectors of life through direct confrontation with the centres of worldly power.
- Ignorance may be another ally of those seeking to maintain the imbalance between the rich and the poor. The church must educate the masses on the spirit of love. Samuel and Sudgen (1987:223) advise

We must be concerned for whole persons in their biological and physical, social and economic development. The church must educate its members to hold to the precepts of respect, justice and human dignity and to beware of seeing the individual as a mere object, case study, or experimental material.

- The church must try to create structural changes in society by following the policies of social justice. When people share their experiences, they are motivated to contribute a fair share to the social effort. Samuel and Sudgen (1987:223) warn "So the church is not to join the existing status quo. Its mission is to be always on the move, to get

people serving, to act as a prophet in the midst of an unjust society. It is always to be in the breach, defending the rights of the oppressed.”

The practical implications for the church have been described. Steps of application that local church can seek to implement in addressing urban poverty challenges will now be attended to.

#### 5.4.4 POSSIBLE LOCAL CHURCH'S STEPS OF APPLICATION TO DEVELOPMENT

This sub-section is about six steps of application to ensure the local church's impact in its ministry to the poor and it discusses the five dimensions of practical reasoning further. The developed model has helpful practical steps of application for the development of the local church to achieve a balance between the social and spiritual ministries (Samuel & Sugden 1987:238-239). A description of the steps now follows.

- To develop a sound understanding of, and teaching about, the biblical principles of a balanced ministry.
- To examine assumptions and practices of the church's past and present involvement to check for a balanced ministry.
- To examine the practices of relief and local church activities to see if they are consistent with a balanced ministry. The local church should not take things for granted; it must check all the practices. If they are not delivering they should be remodelled so that they can be useful tools.
- The local church must also check if the relationship with the missionary church is sound and appropriate for the advancement of the Gospel. If not consistent with biblical principles of balanced ministry, the local church must improvise a plan to correct the inconsistencies.
- The local church should ensure that the ministry's emphasis fits into a total development strategy.
- It must be remembered that the objective of all missions is to minister to people in such a way that they develop in every area of God's purpose for them.

The model for the discussion of the church in solidarity with the poor has been documented. As discussed in this model it has been noted that involving people at grass roots level to participate in their own transformational development is the key. In the process, it has been emphasized frequently that in ministry a full Gospel of spiritual and physical needs is very

essential. An approach to holistic hermeneutical practical theology to ministry endorses these fundamental insights.

The discussion on the church's developmental steps of application has concluded the model of a church in solidarity with the oppressed. The next section contains the concluding remarks of the chapter.

## **5.5 CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Hypotheses two, three and four were most effective and strongly affirmed in the development of chapter five. In this chapter, four different approaches to urban ministry in poverty slums have been documented. The approaches are: community organization, a model of developing advocacy ministries, a liberation model and a church in solidarity with the oppressed.

The community organization model uses networking, coalition building, an acting/reflecting process, leadership empowerment and the birth of community as five steps to empower the poor. These steps are helpful in equipping the oppressed to take charge of their own situation. Another area of valuable contribution to a holistic approach to the ministry has been the characteristics and normative presuppositions of this model. Community organization model called for by hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. The church must involve urban dwellers in implementing urban ministry. Further, the church have to cooperate with ecumenically as well as with government entities operating in the cities and local community leadership. Equipping the laity to be involved is part of the holistic ministry.

The description of developing effective congregational-based advocacy ministries has been very resourceful for the holistic model. In particular, the discussion of the reasons why churches refrain from advocacy, paths to advocacy, and helping congregations move to advocacy, have contributed immensely to the developed holistic approach to ministry. The effective congregational-based advocacy implements what hypothesis 4 called for: enabling laity to manage quality ministry to address urban poverty is a crucial step, which the CCAP must take. The clerical paradigm, which the CCAP is currently implementing, conflicts with the Spirit's gifts to people for the edification of the church.

The liberation model has also been discussed at length in this chapter. The danger and one-sidedness of this model is its Marxist approach that encourages the poor to rely upon their own efforts as a means to achieve salvation, without yielding their lives to God through conversion and repentance. Four obstacles of this model have been documented. All of them affirm the limitation of the model. The liberation model asks for the issue raised by hypothesis 3 which states: "A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty challenges."

The last model attended to in this chapter is a church in solidarity with the oppressed and the poor. Important sections have been: the actions churches can take in working with the oppressed, marks for promoting just social structures, justice, freedom, and social transformation and possible steps of application to development. These sections have contributed largely to the developed holistic model because of the quest to understand the context of the oppressed people. Hypothesis 2 calls for the participation of poor in all stages of ministry. The church in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed model has described actions to be taken in order to ensure the poor participate in development activities.

## Chapter 6

### A model for doing urban ministry

#### 6.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the theory for doing urban ministry in Malawian (African) cities known as “Holistic Hermeneutical Practical Theology” is taken a step further. The implication of the theory and the hypotheses are now developed into a model for ministering in urban areas.

The developed ministry model has the following ten pillars:

- The ministry in a new era and context
- Urban ministry among the poor needs community participation
- Proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas
- Christian faith development
- Urban evangelism
- The city mission requires effective pastoral care
- Building urban faith communities
- Orientating clergy and laity on urban ministry
- Towards ecumenical alliances in urban Africa
- Congregational research, monitoring and evaluation.

A holistic hermeneutical practical theology emphasizes a hermeneutic-communicative praxis, which makes it constantly concerned with understanding the Christian meaning produced in the past, and relating it to interaction with the present-day faith community. In such a way, the church in urban Malawi will address the challenges caused by the effects of urbanization and industrialization.

In this chapter, the theory is applied, juxtapositioning it with the four hypotheses, to a number of activities called pillars. This is presented as a model for doing urban ministry in Malawian (African) cities. In the process of describing or developing the model, the four hypotheses, which have already been thoroughly proved and discussed, now serve as orientation markers pointing the CCAP towards its future role in urban ministry.

## 6.1 THE MINISTRY IN A NEW ERA AND CONTEXT

The first hypothesis guides further the discussion of this pillar. The hypothesis states:

- Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.

This pillar deals with four subsections:

- The focus of re-designing the ministry
- Challenges facing the CCAP towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century
- In search of the unchurched, and
- A people of the way.

The introduction of a holistic approach to the ministry calls for a ministry in a new era and context. As a result, there is a need to re-design the CCAP traditional ethos, which was developed in 19<sup>th</sup> century, taking the rural context into consideration. Today those approaches are no longer viable in the urban context of Malawi. Kalilombe (1999:45) underscores it well as he notes

Our project of Pastoral Rethinking will need to be made with an adequate understanding as possible of the conditions in the country today and tomorrow. We are dealing with the Church as it is called by God to face the world of today and prepare itself to serve faithfully that of tomorrow ... therefore, let us constantly observe the signs of the times, ascertain the reality as it is, the real problems that we face, the needs that have to be met ....

The new urban context discussed in chapter one, section 1.1.5, is examined further in this section. The high rate of urbanization in African countries in general, and in Malawi in particular, poses a continued challenge to the church. The effects of urbanization - poverty, disorientation, secularization and pollution - make it difficult for the church to achieve its desired impact. Shorter and Onyanha (1997:61) comment

Life in the city is hard and stressful for the poor, and there is a strong temptation to seek solace in week-end recreations, many of which are illicit. Drug and alcohol addiction are rife among the urban poor, and this compounds the problem of finding a solution to their predicament.

In its ministry and approach to the urban context and the needs of urbanized people, the church has to redefine its role and methods and adapt its ministry to a new and changing situation. In addition to urbanization and its socio-economic effects, there is the added impact of globalisation and secularisation, as well as a shift in religious inclination and orientation.

The impact of secularization is a particular cause for concern to the church. In the cities of Malawi, the church is less visible than in the rural areas, and it finds it harder to make headway against the materialism brought by modernization.

The new urban context, effected as a result of urbanization, is a worldwide phenomenon. Today, the world is increasingly becoming a global village. As a result, the researcher feels that Mead's book, *The once and future church* (1991), which describes the American context, is also applicable to the Malawian urban context. In addition, the missionaries who brought the Gospel to Malawi implemented the Christendom paradigm, which was operational at that time. This paradigm is still being implemented in Malawi to this day. Therefore, it is fitting to re-design the traditional ethos in order to allow the implementation of the theory of ministry and approaches designed for a new era and context.

*Defining the Christendom paradigm:*

Loren Mead (1991: 13-29) defines the Christendom paradigm to mean: the church system in which Christianity by law became the official religion of the Empire. There was no separation between the world and the church within the Empire. The missionary frontier disappeared from the doorstep of the congregation and became, in effect, the far distant political boundary of the society itself.

Such an identification between the Church and the Empire changed the structures and form of mission immeasurably. The ordinary person's commitment to the Lord under-girded the structures of society that strengthened and enlarged the Empire. The unity of sacred and secular was emphasized; mission was a far-off enterprise. Winning souls for the Lord became a similar task as winning nations for the Empire. The clergy had all the powers in the church. The laity were required to be totally obedient to the clergy and were not permitted to participate in church management. Joining the church was a matter of birth, not will.

The laity were expected to listen to the clergy and political leaders who controlled them at all levels of life. Mead (1991:21) affirms "Lay persons in the late period of the Christendom paradigm continued to be seen as the royal citizens of the realm, expected to be obedient to the powers, to pay their dues to church and state, and not to bother their heads too much about theological matters." Another reason why the traditional theory of ministry is not working in urban Malawi is that missionaries, who viewed mission as a far-off enterprise, developed it.

Mead (1991:15) notes "Because the mission field by definition was outside the empire, mission became a task of foreign policy .... Mission was no longer the direct responsibility of the ordinary person." But in Malawi cities situations have changed completely. Most learned people want to participate in ministry affairs. This situation calls for the developed approach of a holistic hermeneutical practical theology to urban ministry.

The CCAP urban congregations in Malawi should see the needs of the disadvantaged poor as a mission area not as far afield as was the case with the missionaries. Mead (1991:25) notes "We now assume that the front door of the church is a door into mission territory, not just a door to the outside." The change of the mission field does not affect the Malawian church only, but also all other churches on the continent.

### 6.1.1 THE FOCUS OF RE-DESIGNING THE CCAP MINISTRY

What necessitates the re-designing of the ministry is the different urban context. As a church, we cannot completely eradicate the presence and continuity of the urbanization and industrialization processes. However, the church has a responsibility to ensure that it fulfils its task and calling, despite current the prevailing conditions. Mead (1991:43) notes "... God who called the church out into the apostolic world two thousand years ago, is again calling the church out, this time into a secularized world where its mission and its life must be once again redefined."

During the formation of Jesus' movement, the then present forms of worship (Pharisees and Sadducees) did not accept the radical Gospel of Jesus Christ, but this movement continued to preach the Gospel until the Christendom era when we also inherited it. Those forms of ministry have now stopped working. Now, God is calling us out of the current ministries to systems that will support our life and mission during the 21<sup>st</sup> century and beyond. Mead (1991:43) advises

The dilemma of the church in this transitional time is that the shells of the old structures still surround us even though many of them no longer work. Some of the structures are institutions, some are roles, and some are mind-sets and expectations. At one moment they mediate grace to us and at the next they block and confuse us. Sometimes some of them actually support and nourish us, while others get in the way of the new structures we need.

The areas for re-designing the ministry are:

*Understanding a congregation:* The process of re-designing the ministry requires a clear understanding of a congregation, as the pendulum swings toward it. A congregation focuses on people - both those who believe and are committed Christian today and those who have not yet accepted Jesus, as Lord and Saviour. Christ's work of redemption included all people, regardless whether they are saved or not. Mead (1991:45) notes

At best, congregation nurtures an intensity of faith-commitment that can result in personal, moral, and spiritual growth at the same time it impels individuals to minister to social ills. At best, congregation is able to recognize the injustices of the political realm, often because of the consequences to specific persons.

The church seeks to address the ills of people because Jesus called it to be *in*, but not *of* the world.

*The meaning of the church's mission:* The church's understanding of its mission is equally crucial. Just as Jesus called his followers to go to the ends of the earth to proclaim the Gospel and also to serve all people regardless of originality. In similar manner the urban congregations in Malawi must seek conversion with the city dwellers regardless of status. On the other hand, members must be trained to be the servants of the Lord in the cities at all times.

*The tasks of a congregation:* The congregations must avoid a sense of rigid and legalistic exclusivity, which results in separating the righteous from the unrighteous according to manmade standards. Exclusivity is important only when a decision or a belief and action mark the difference between who is in agreement and who is not. On the issue of inclusivity, Mead (1991:48) comments

Inclusivity ... opens its arms wide to the diversity of the world, inviting the stranger into community without question. At its best it represents hospitality and prevenient grace - acceptance before it is asked for or earned. It points to the acceptance of the unacceptable.

The urban church must learn how to balance the polarity of exclusivity and inclusivity, as the two will continue in tension.

*Theology in the future church:* In the future church both the clergy and laity have a responsibility to develop theology that takes into consideration the city's prevailing context. Browning (1983:85) comments

Theology is practical in the sense that it concerns, in all of its expressions, the most basic issues of human existence. It has to do with the human pilgrimage in its totality:

with its meaning and significance, with the determination of appropriate responses to the realities we confront during its course, with the growth of persons in community....

The formulated theology must contextualize the needs of a new missionary frontier. Mead (1991:56) affirms

... it is on that frontier that God will be revealing God's nature, opening doors to the new theologies of tomorrow's world. The laity will be on the front lines of theology as well as mission. Clergy and theological faculties need to be retooled to become resource persons to lay theologians.

*The church has turned upside down:* The ministry in a new era and context must focus and address local issues more comprehensively than before. The church of the Christendom structured itself to address mission beyond the Empire. In order to fulfill its mission, it built regional structures, which are not required by today's mission. The missionary frontier has changed. It has become local. It now requires local people to handle it.

For example, the misuse of drugs in Lilongwe city does not need the attention of the General Secretary who resides at Nkhoma far from the city itself. The misuse of drugs is predominantly a local problem, involving decisions of individuals, the life of families, neighborhoods and schools. Mead (1991:59) comments

The leaders in this mission are the laity. The first-line resource people and trainers are also laity - experienced, theologically solid laity. The clergy supports the laity. The clergy and the laity are the strategic teams, but they have to learn a new way to work together.

So, the upside down church has not changed at heart. Its focus is still mission, but the mission location has changed.

*Resources for change:* The resources for the reinvented ministry will include redirecting theological seminary resources into new forms of service, adapting to the changed conditions of church life, as the 21<sup>st</sup> century may require. The current structures also need to change to be appropriate for the kind of mission frontier that faces us today. In the past, we did not have a research team at the Synod or at congregational levels. With the shift of the mission frontier, we very much need research teams in almost every congregation to study issues that affect the church to, thereby, develop relevant theological and developmental approaches.

Mead (1991:68) advises

We are at the front edges of the greatest transformation of the church that has occurred for 1,600 years. It is by far the greatest change that the church has ever experienced .... That transformation is occurring because of the persistent call of God that our whole world be made new, and that the church's mission in that world be itself transformed in new patterns of reconciling the world to God.

Changing church structures in any significant way takes time, energy, imagination, money and dedication.

*Principles and strategies that can be used in transformation processes:* The process of re-designing urban ministry cannot be considered done without touching on the principles and strategies of ministry. Some important principles and strategies in transformation processes are:

- Looking for learning points
- Working experimentally
- Paying attention to boundaries
- Steadiness and accountability
- Building bridges and seeking allies, and
- Valuing failure.

Failure in life is a very important resource for further learning. In life, many more things must be attempted, than can be expected to succeed. Mead (1991:80) notes

A church or organization that moves ahead must be ready to value its failures, to expect many things not to work .... Building a climate that welcomes that kind of effort is not going to be easy. The church tends to honor only those who succeed and has been known to shoot its wounded.

The areas of focus for re-designing urban ministry in Malawi have been documented. The next sub-section describes challenges that the CCAP is experiencing.

### 6.1.2 CHALLENGES FACING THE CCAP MINISTRY TODAY

The inability of the CCAP to be hermeneutically sensitive is a source of a number of challenges that the church faces.

There are a number of challenges that have afflicted the Synod's ministry towards the closure of the previous century. The challenges came into existence due to the CCAP's lack of vision, more particularly as result of implementing a rural ethos in a new urban context, short tenure

in leadership roles, the maintenance of the status quo that leads to prevention of change, progressive erosion of financial resources, and lack of trust among the people and the leadership. There is a great need for the challenges to be addressed, otherwise the CCAP ministry will be in jeopardy.

Some of the challenges will now receive attention.

#### **6.1.2.1 Transferring the ownership of the church**

The fourth hypothesis continues to guide this section further. The hypothesis states:

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the problems and challenges of urban ministry.

One of the ways to ensure good church governance is to allow ordinary members to participate in church management. The power of the clergy has destroyed the church in various ways. For example, such authority has been used manipulatively for selfish purposes, victimizing others and this turns the dialogue between the clergy and laity into demonic and destructive patterns. Mead (1996:11) comments

In more recent years the issue of the authority of the clergy role has become more familiar to us for the worst of reasons; we have discovered in very public ways that many clergy have misused that role, abusing those around them in many ways, often, tragically, for sexual exploitation.

#### **6.1.2.2 Finding new structures to carry our faith**

The institutional structures, which the missionaries developed at the time they introduced ministry in Malawi, are no longer working. The current challenge to the church today is to re-design new institutional structures that can carry the faith to future generations. The rural ethos that has survived the past generations is inadequate to pass on the faith to future generations without being modified. The crucial task for the church is to break through the structures and help the insights, if they are still viable, and find structures more adequate for a new era and context. Mead (1996:17) affirms

Many kinds of structures are needed to carry any movement from one generation to the next, and the church is no exception to this. The church must find organizational structures and structures of community that can enhance communication with the new generation – any new generation.

### **6.1.2.3 Discovering a passionate spirituality**

A passionate spirituality seeks to connect knowledge of God with experience of God. The spirituality of the people during the time of Jesus' earthly ministry had a depth of power that helped them through enormous trials and carried them through long hard journeys that tested them in every way. Mead (1996:32) notes "It was a spirituality that held them together in the face of tragedy and went with them into the valley of the shadow. It was a real spirituality. A real sense of firsthand communion with God. But it was a spirituality that nobody much talked about." This is a kind of spirituality that the urban congregations should seek to develop. People must commune with God through congregational activities and services. This empowers and transforms the church.

### **6.1.2.4 Fulfilling the world's need for community**

The fourth challenge requires urban congregations to develop caring communities, places in which all people will no longer feel that they are strangers; they will feel at home. It is through fellowship that people begin to relate to one another, as God intended it to be. A community must be a web of interdependency and mutual obligation. It must be a central generative force in shaping people's personal lives and their sense of self-esteem. The community must impact upon our understanding of the role of families, influence the values people seek to live by and shape many of the structures in which people live.

The challenges facing the CCAP have been documented. As a result of not addressing the challenges, many people have developed a culture of being unchurched. The next sub-section is about the unchurched people and how they can be motivated to become dedicated congregational members.

### **6.1.3 IN SEARCH OF THE UNCHURCHED**

The unchurched culture is one of the challenges with which urban congregations in Malawi are grappling. Many people do not see the need to become a member of any congregation even though they were Christians in their respective rural homes. Lack of spiritual vitality has contributed to the culture of being unchurched. People become members without realizing fully what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ. Klaas (1996:51) narrates

Unchurched people do not feel compelled to experience the worship life of a congregation when that worship experience does not communicate meaningfully with them. They do not feel compelled to participate in congregations simply out of a sense of responsibility.

There are various reasons why people drop out of congregations. In most cases, they drop out of a church as a result of poor congregational programming and lack of caring. In commenting on research findings with unchurched people, Klaas (1996:52) reports

They described the full spectrum of life problems. One after another, these former members related stories of hypocrisy, theological belligerence, sexual harassment, bias, and bigotry. In all cases, it was overtly or subtly made clear to these people that they were not wanted in the congregation.

The reasons discussed so far provide enough information as to why the unchurched people leave congregations. The church that seeks to work with the unchurched people must focus and implement Scripture-based teachings, good music, moving worship, and programs for children as remedies to avoid a further unchurched situation. The church leaders should be aware that life's events, more than improved programs, are the powerful motivators that cause people to consider giving the church another chance.

Some unchurched people have no church background whatever. Others have to overcome negative treatment received in another congregation. Much care and planning are required when a congregation wants to motivate the unchurched. Urban congregations should seek complete congregational growth in four modes: numerical growth, maturational growth, organic growth, and incarnational growth. Mead (1993:v-vi) confirms "... I focus on four different ways I think all congregations are called to growth: in numbers, in maturity, in corporate effectiveness, and in transforming the outside world."

One way of motivating the unchurched is to implement the "Circle of Fulfillment Approach" (CFA) (Klaas 1996:55). This is an integration process of a sequence of four courses replacing the traditional receiving or welcoming of new members. The traditional way of welcoming new members in the CCAP takes place in two, if not three, ways: from Sunday school to catechism to baptism, or through member referral system. The third is whereby people without a church background approach the congregational leaders asking to become members. Depending upon the age of a person, these are integrated into the system accordingly. Whatever method is applied, the Synod does not implement the CFA approach.

*The Circle of Fulfilment Approach:*

The four-course sequence of the Circle of Fulfilment Approach will now be described.

*Discover the congregation:* This sequence aims at assisting members to understand all the processes that particular congregations follow at all levels. The purpose is to orientate the members so that they can make informed decisions about either joining the congregation, or not. During this time they receive all the information and explanations about the congregation. Frequently, new members have no idea what a congregation is, or how it operates.

*Discover maturity in faith:* Further to the first sequence is the fact of attaining maturity in faith. People come to join the congregation, not theology, As such; they need to know the teachings of the congregation. Klaas (1996:55) notes “In this second course, the beliefs and fundamental teachings of the congregation are explained.”

*Discover ministry in others:* This sequence points to the fact that faith is universal. Therefore, it is not something individuals keep to themselves. This is the reason why all congregations tell people to live out their faith. A congregation must take time to help people feel the need to take action.

*Discover mission in our community and around the world:* The aim of this course is to help new members to select a ministry, to go beyond having faith. This course helps people to live out their faith towards realization of the priesthood of all believers.

This approach is good and crucial. Very often people are received simply without being offered any course to integrate them into the systems of the congregation. As a result, many people develop and create a culture of being unchurched. Another way of addressing the unchurched, is through two different kinds of outreach known as: “Presence outreach” and “Great Commission outreach.”

- The presence outreach means touching the daily physical lives of people in the name of the church.
- The great commission outreach can start with the same activities as the presence outreach, but should touch the spiritual lives of people.

Klaas (1996:18) comments "Presence outreach is contrasted with 'Great Commission outreach.' The Great Commission outreach means touching the spiritual lives of people, thus preparing fertile ground for the Holy Spirit to establish and nurture faith in Christ as Savior and Lord." The remedy to heal the situation of the unchurched is the attitude of congregational leaders and members.

In order to transform the lives of people, the church leadership needs to be a team committed and filled with the Holy Spirit. When leaders and members focus on themselves, the congregation subsequently dies. Congregations that touch the lives of large numbers of unchurched people, recognize that love and caring - not theology and dogma in the first place - are needed. Such congregations adopt various ways to support a caring ministry. The leaders see a caring ministry as following Jesus' example of touching the temporal and spiritual lives of people.

The need for integrating new members into congregational life has been discussed. The purpose of integration is to prepare and mentor people for a mission task of being the priesthood of all believers.

The next topic is about a people of the way.

#### 6.1.4 A PEOPLE OF THE WAY

This section attests the fourth hypothesis further. In addition, the challenge of the urban context, as documented in chapter 1 section 1.1.5, is also examined. As a result of the urbanization and its socio-economic effects, there is the impact of globalisation and secularisation, as well as a shift in religious inclination and orientation. The impact of secularization is a particular cause of concern to the church.

In this section, the work of Rasmussen, *Moral fragments and moral community: A proposal for church in society*, is crucial. The book is about a church, as a community of moral conviction, and deals with a broader question on how communities of character formation are faring in this society, the churches among them. Although he wrote the book with a specific context in mind, the researcher finds the work extremely relevant to the Malawian urban context and situation. The book focuses on the modern world, in particular on the health of

the communities whose vocation it is to form moral character and conviction. This material prompted the researcher to examine the book.

The redesigning process of the Malawian urban ministry will enable the church to be a people "of the way." This means that although sinful, the church is a people of the way, a moral community. This implies recognition that human beings are earthen vessels with their quirks and drastic shortcomings. Rasmussen (1993:137) affirms

We've got flaws we haven't even used yet .... We have met the enemy and they is us, and what we face, friends, are insurmountable opportunities .... These incumbent inadequacies are compounded when the story is one of character and morality, a story of the kind of persons people of the way are, or any people are, from a moral point of view.

In spite of their shortcomings, the people of the way are a community of the Gospel and of moral formation and conviction. Resignation is the least helpful of all responses to acculturation and fragmentation.

The term "*Christians of the way*" was first used during the early church, which designated the followers of Jesus Christ. Rasmussen (1993:138) states "... with the name the Jesus people wore before the early onlookers in Antioch tagged them 'Christians' for ever. Before they were Christians they were '*the people of the way*.'" The church is called to be a moral community. Bartlett (1993:26) notes

Christians were gifted by the Spirit, and those gifts were a foretaste of the new age soon to be fulfilled. The need for the church was not to set up structures but to acknowledge the gifts and to allow, encourage, diversely gifted people to live together without chaos, boasting, or shame.

The moral life itself, for Israel and Jesus, was to witness to this way in a particular pattern of community living, in the instruction and training required for this discipleship and in continuous remembering, retelling, and the sacramental reenactment of the formative events by the people of the way themselves.

The urban congregations should see themselves as people of the way. This is the Christian image, which refers both to the path itself and the manner of travel. Furthermore, urban congregations must seek to walk in "the way," as "*people of the way*" which involves a moral style so intimately related to the destination itself that to wander from the way is also to miss the goal. For this to happen, the church must focus on Jesus and the particular way He incarnated the way of God with his community.

As a community called for moral formation, the urban church must understand that the Reformation principle is always valid. A Reformed church is continually in need of further reformation, sparked by returning to its sources with new eyes, thereby paying attention to communal enclaves of a certain kind. Such an approach results in "anticipatory communities" who socialize their members into distinctive, observable ways of life. Rasmussen (1993:143) comments "Anticipatory communities are those who work out, in nuts-and-bolts, trial-and-error fashion, ways of life that just might map the ecology of community for greater members of people on the far side of a tangled, precarious, extended time of transition."

Such communities usually inhabit the margins of society, at least at the outset, and usually gather their membership from those who are not, or do not feel, most heavily invested in prominent and dominant structures and ways. A people on the way are a community for society renewal in the following two ways.

Firstly, in the development of community - creating religion among lower socio-economic classes, among other marginalized groups, and among those disaffected from the ranks of the socially privileged. What bounds people together here is an urgent sense of clear human need linked to a faith full of feeling, energy, clear conviction and direction.

Secondly, in the conceptual and ritual revisioning of inherited traditions in times of deep, bewildering, and sometimes frightening, dangerous change. Rasmussen (1993:144) warns

When these movements come together, new religious vitalities are loosed upon the world. The outcome is never clean, to be sure. It is conflicted the way things human always are .... But communities and ways of life are forged and refined in such crucibles, and occasionally the wider world awakens one morning to find instrumentalities it didn't remember molding.

#### **6.1.4.1 Implications for CCAP urban congregations**

Four implications (Rasmussen 1993:150-167) are described for the urban ministry implementation process.

*No living barriers between the rich and the poor:* The Christians should demonstrate a transformed life by living as if the barriers between rich, poor, and lower class were not given. This is contrary to what the present economy says about them. To live without barriers signifies living as if we constitute a single moral community wrapped in a common garment

and shared destiny. The church, as an inclusive moral community, is well poised to give leadership to matters of universal concern and ethics. Religious communities are expected to reply to the queries of the heart and mind arising from postmodern confusion. Rasmussen (1993:150) comments "This kind of community mirrors the audacity of the early church and its faith. Small, cell-like as it was, it understood membership as dynamically creating a third race, a new humanity from estranged peoples."

*Cosmological thinking:* Urban ministry requires implementation of a cosmological thinking - not nationalistic culture, but broader and wider perspectives. This calls for a new vision that a person and community, and community and cosmos, are inseparable and mutually reinforcing and enhancing. This process enables people to be citizens of a world without borders. The purpose is to move towards a catholic moral vision, which cancels dividing walls of any form. Rasmussen (1993:152) states

Even irrepressible dreamers know that nothing is ever real until it is embodied. However, what counts with God and one another is not opportunity, or even vision, but incarnation. What carries power and promise and generates conviction and courage is concrete community. So we must speak of moral leadership in the form of the church as a community of pioneering creativity.

*The community/church as haven or way station:* The pioneering creativity of the church is seen in the form of promoting communities with those practices that gather strangers together to share a common space, membership and purpose. It is here that religion and morality classically function, then, as social glue, as a force for cultural cohesion they bind and conserve.

Religious communities are seen as places of solace and reassurance in a world of stress and strain. The church community, is crucial as a haven for many marginalized basic Christian communities. Rasmussen (1993:164) warns

Moral conviction cannot be sustained - indeed, almost none of the dimensions of the moral life can be - without such havens and way stations. It is cruel and fruitless to call for social transformation in a long season of unavoidable experimentation without at the same time providing this community haven.

*Exercise the role of the moral critic:* This role alludes to the fact that everything should be open for critique. This means that accepted family patterns, the going economic and political arrangements of systems, current community polities, the standard ordering of ideas and perspectives themselves - ideology are all moved from the status of practical necessity to that of review and possibility. No particular arrangements are categorically indispensable, nor are any categorically forbidden. Rasmussen (1993:167) observes

When social forms build up community and world, conserve them. When not, change them. The forms for life together are as open-ended as the imaginations and the resources of those struggling to live as though God now reigned and none else had power. Here is full Christian freedom for moral critique and construction ... The constructive side of this critical freedom is empowerment ....

The urban congregations in Malawi need to demonstrate a transformed life whereby the rich and the poor live and assist each other as neighbors. For this to happen, the church leaders must develop a vision that reinforces mutuality. Through this process, the church becomes a community of moral conviction.

The discussion on the implications for urban congregations has now concluded the documentation of the first pillar. The next section is about working with the poor in transforming their lives.

## **6.2 URBAN MINISTRY AMONG THE POOR NEEDS COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION**

The second hypothesis of this study is further attested to in this pillar. The hypothesis states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the people who live in the slums can participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.

The sub-sections of this pillar are:

- Development as a hermeneutic social transformation,
- Working with the urban poor of Lilongwe,
- The basic principles of a self-reliant participatory approach, and
- A biblical community organization that empowers the poor.

In the preceding chapter, under the section "Ministry in solidarity with the poor," the importance of working in partnership with the poor was emphasized and discussed at length. This section simply endorses the importance of disadvantaged people's participation in all development stages. As already noted, development is a process of social transformation. It is more than the provision of social services and the introduction of new technologies. Burkey (1993:48) comments "Development involves in the awareness, motivation and behavior of individuals and in the relations between individuals as well as between groups within a

society." Kalilombe (1999:186) affirms "They [people] must be enabled to shake off the enslaving myths of their ignorance and incapacity. They must learn to identify their real needs, to assess the resources at their disposal and to accustom themselves to getting organized for purposive action."

Understanding development in this way, allows people to participate in the process of making changes towards transforming their communities. These changes come from within individuals and groups of people within the community itself. Through the participation of ordinary people, the people's culture is then integrated to allow human transformation. Burkey (1993:48) observes "Integrating local cultural traditions with participatory development is a powerful tool for helping the poor become better aware of their situation and helping them to find culturally acceptable solutions to their problems."

### 6.2.1 HOW TO DEVELOP COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

The second hypothesis is further examined in this section. Also examined are the five dimensions of practical theology documented in chapter 1, section 1.8.3.1 above. The dimensions are visional, obligational, tendency, environmental and rule-role.

Involving people in social development is a crucial tool for an empowering process, because people feel and believe their efforts are able to drive the development process. Ellison (1974:135) comments "Unless we are able to identify sufficiently with people to understand their needs and to communicate in forms that speak to them, I am afraid the Gospel will fall on deaf ears."

In the holistic model, participation of local people is crucial. Such an approach brings about valuable benefits to people. The benefits cannot be achieved if people are denied the opportunity of participation in the process. The three benefits of participation will now be described.

*To develop the self-reliance of the poor:* Self-reliance is one of the benefits of participation. When people take part in the development process they feel that their contribution can make a difference in transforming the community. This is most crucial towards sustainable development. When people begin to do things for themselves, they maximize their human capacities. Self-reliance is an eye-opener to people, as assistance from outside the community is only for what they, as yet, are unable to manage for themselves. Burkey (1993:50) states

You cannot make people self-reliant; people become self-reliant. It is more a question of attitudes than money and materials. Too much money and materials from external sources can easily prevent the emergence of self-reliance. Self-reliance is the ability to do things for oneself, maintaining one's own self-confidence and being able to make independent decisions.

Through their participation, people gain confidence in their own knowledge and skills, in their ability to identify problems and to find solutions in order to improve their own lives. When people are self-reliant, they are able to do transformational development. Burkey (1993:51) affirms "No government and no development agency is ever going to develop a rural region; it can only be done by the people themselves perhaps with the assistance of government and other developmental agents."

*Conscientisation:* Conscientisation is a process of making people understand their prevailing situation, thereby making appropriate decisions in addressing their predicaments. It is a process of enabling themselves to interpret their experiential learning and reality and provide a basis for the acquisition of a modern understanding of realities, allowing them to become competent in analyzing situations and making the right decisions. Burkey (1993:55) notes "Conscientisation is a process in which the people try to understand their present situation in terms of the prevailing social, economic and political relationships in which they find themselves."

It is important to realize that conscientisation means something that occurs within a person. It cannot be imposed from outside. Paulo Freire in Burkey (1993:55) formulates conscientisation as the stimulation of self-reflected critical awareness in people of their social reality and of their ability to transform that reality by their conscious collective action.

*Participation:* Participation must be much more than the mere mobilization of labor forces or coming together to hear about pre-determined plans. It must be more than a policy statement. In order to understand the full meaning of participation, there must be genuine commitment at all levels to encourage participation. Burkey (1993:56) notes

Participation is an essential part of human growth, that is the development of self-confidence, pride, initiative, creativity, responsibility, and cooperation. Without such a development within the people themselves all efforts to alleviate their poverty will be immensely more difficult, if not impossible.

Roodt (in Coetzee *et al* 2001:469) affirms, "By participation we mean people involving themselves, to a greater or lesser degree, in organizations indirectly or directly concerned

with the decision-making about, and implementation of, development.” Participation is essentially learning by doing an exercise: plans are made, action taken, results studied, lessons learned and new plans and action take place. Pearse and Stiefel (in Burkey 1993:59) comment “Participation involves organized efforts to increase control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control.”

While it is important to emphasize participation in working with people, at this stage, mention is necessary that when the local elite monopolize power and often are hostile to widespread participation, it is difficult to achieve genuine participation in this regard. Three challenges face people-centered development. The challenges are now briefly discussed.

*Neo-liberal context:* It is difficult to implement a people-centered development in a context dominated by a neo-liberal economic policy because neo-liberalism stresses growth through the free market and privatization of state enterprises. Coetzee *et al* (2001:484) warn

The influence of neo-liberalism has been seen in South Africa by the shift in official development policy from the earlier more welfare-oriented Reconstruction and Development Programme to the later more market-oriented Growth, Employment, and Redistribution Macro-economic Plan .... These shifts place a special onus on NGOs to represent and to argue the case for the poor.

*Problems of legitimacy:* NGOs that try to implement the new policy agenda, experience problems of legitimacy in that they become less credible to their popular support. The danger of legitimacy is that the NGOs will assume a level of authority equal to the government, thereby losing community representation. In other words, the NGOs will assume the status quo equal to the government. Coetzee *et al* (2001:485) state that “... NGOs face the contradiction that becoming more effective negotiators for the poor also makes them less effective representatives of the poor.”

*Non-economic dimensions of development strategies:* In development debates, positive moral and ethical foundations are considered as necessary bases for economic success. It is further reflected that an exclusive focus on political and economic priorities at the cost of psycho-cultural transformation is wrong. Ramogale in Coetzee *et al* (2001:485) concludes “The failure of African countries to create successful economies and political stability is evidence that current value systems are flawed.”

In order to ensure that development benefits the poor, the involvement of churches and NGOs in development processes is critical. The government cannot adequately implement sustainable development because it operates according to non-voluntary principles, which creates a tension between the material and economic powers versus the moral power and voluntary principle of society. Churches and the NGOs are strategic institutions to implement sustainable development, because the two are overlapping civil society institutions, both are voluntary and they have a high moral profile. Boesak in Coetzee *et al* (2001:486) confirms "From the earliest stages a strong church and Christian presence existed among development NGOs ... In Latin American countries ... and South Africa, churches constituted important allies in the liberation struggles and grassroots socio-economic activities of NGOs."

It is always important to ensure that development must be sustainable. The government must change the non-voluntary approach to a voluntary approach, which takes the situation of the affected people seriously. To this end, the government is bound to implement sustainable development by improving the human resource management of the natural resource base in order to maximize human welfare and maintain the environment now and for the future. Coetzee *et al* (2001:502) affirm "The role of the state is steadily changing from being a 'doer' to becoming a facilitator and controller of standards."

In order for development to be sustainable, it must essentially be concerned with improving the human resource management of the natural resource base. This puts the focus squarely on the human capital component. But urban development has also much to do with economic aspect of development so that the unemployed and poor living in Africa's shantytowns surrounding the cities can be economically viable. The state must try to create a conducive atmosphere for sustainable economic development in addition to creating jobs.

Coetzee *et al* (2001:406) affirm "The key to sustainable economic development is to ensure that business opportunities ... can be harnessed and developed to provide employment opportunities." In order to ensure sustainability, development must meet the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The next sub-section is about possible ways of working with the poor.

## 6.2.2 WORKING WITH THE URBAN POOR

Working with the poor requires an attitude of trust. The poor need to be trusted that they are responsible for their thoughts and actions. When they feel that they are honored and given self-esteem, they become free to think, act and relate to each other responsibly. Burkey (1993:130) notes

Poor people know they are poor, sick, etc., but often they do not want to confront the situation. Many of them think the problems they face are their individual problems and they can do nothing to change the situation. By getting the people to look at their problems collectively we help them see the commonality of their problems and to understand the structures, which are oppressing them.

To working with the poor is to empowerment of the poor, as Stumme (1991:20) contends "The Church will need to learn to work with the poor so that their lives may be lived above despair, their human dignity be affirmed, and their fuller participation in the benefits and obligations in society be encouraged."

One way of working with people is through group formation. Burkey (1993:135) comments "One of the critical elements in group process work is the formation of the group itself. The process starts when a number of individuals are motivated to form a group and agree to undertake concerted or collective activity which will further their interests." Formation of a group is most important, as it signifies a change from a state of resignation to a state of awakening. Campolo (2000:161) notes

In the task of job creation, the church can do things that no other institution can do. Among them is selecting and grouping together those who are ideally suited for owning and running church-based microbusinesses .... The church can be the catalyst for the formation of small groups able to impact to those who come out of the culture of poverty the confidence and values that make for dependability and effectiveness in the work place.

Critical in the process of group formation is the motivation of people to work as a group for their own common good. Burkey (1993:136) notes "This motivation must not be imposed from outside. If it is, the group will fail."

The poor need to see that working in groups leads to increased solidarity and strengthens them as a group. These groups must be free to accept or reject new members as they wish. Coetzee *et al* (2001:474) state

People centered development stresses the participation of the majority of the population especially the previously excluded components such as women, youth and the illiterate in the process of development. This process is considered the bottom-line for the successful implementation of any project or programme.

Another important aspect in working with the people, are group meetings. The groups must meet at least once every two weeks. The importance of having meetings is the opportunity to discuss and share issues concerning plans for the future of the group. Burkey (1993:144) comments "The group meeting is the key in the participatory approach and in the life of the group. The frequency of group meetings must be decided by the group." Rahman (1993:39) echoes "People's power implies spontaneous (creative) collective action by the people as opposed to centrally directed people's action."

For the group meetings to achieve the intended goals depends upon the type of leadership. If the leadership has no strategic plans to be achieved, then group members normally cancel their membership due to frustration. The leadership must be able to encourage the momentum of the group. Browning (1991:288) notes "Leadership is a matter of energizing, contributing to, and orchestrating the various levels of practical reasoning that function in a group."

The holistic model for ministry has five built-in principles useful for implementing into groups' activities (Burkey 1993:148–149). The principles are now described as follows:

- *Involvement*: The group must be involved in all project processes, project formulation, decision-making and implementation. In fact, it is important to allow people to participate in the whole operation of the basic project.
- *Minimize dependence*: The group must try all possible means to minimize dependence of any kind. Otherwise the group autonomy is in jeopardy.
- *Sustainability*: The activity must sustain the lives of people. The people must have the initiative to develop the activity further without difficulties.
- *Next step*: The group must be able to take further steps through the process of action-reflection-action.
- *Effective as opposed to efficient*: In order to be effective, the group activities must use local available resources as opposed to hand-outs from outside the community, which sometimes are difficult to come by.

However, there are common causes for group failure. Some of the failures are: not sufficient preparation, too little confidence, not enough immediate benefits, and non-constructive participation. Important to note that there are other causes for group failures. The holistic approach identifies six failures (Burkey 1993:161), namely:

- Group membership is non-voluntary,
- Groups are too large thus making it difficult to hold open and profound discussions,
- Projects are imposed on groups either directly or by suggestion,
- Group leaders are appointed by outsiders, and no rotation,
- Book-keeping is controlled by an individual, and
- Lack of unity and cohesion.

In order to work in partnership with the poor, the people must go through a process of self-participation. This forms the discussion of the next sub-section.

### 6.2.3 BASIC PRINCIPLES OF THE SELF-RELIANT

The hermeneutical dimension of practical reasoning being addressed in this section is that of the tendency-need level, as discussed in chapter 1, section 1.8. 3.1, above. A tendency-need level points to the higher-order moral principle that people always have in order to organize, mediate, and co-ordinate their needs and tendencies, both within individuals and among individuals.

At this stage, it is important to discuss practical principles regarding self-reliance. There are 11 key principles, based on various groups' experiences in Asia, Africa and Latin America (Burkey 1993:207-210). The basic principles are now described as follows:

*Interdependence and social transformation:* In order to alleviate the suffering of the poor and disadvantaged, the poor must participate actively in their own development. In this sense, development programmes must initiate a process in which the poor acquire greater control over their life situations and solve their fundamental problems. Burkey (1993:207) advises "... aim to enable the poor to transform the structures so that they better serve their interests and enable them to improve their lives."

*Recognize that communities are not homogeneous:* Every community has its own unique context, different from others, although there may be a few similarities. In view of this, community members need to be equipped to transform their community in such a way that those who have power within the community, must try to include the poor in the development processes.

*Self-reliance:* It is important that the poor first gain access, within the community, to available resources to which they are entitled, before accessing credit sources if they are to manage economic development. Burkey (1993:208) comments "Social development activities must have firm economic and political bases if they are to be sustainable." Commenting on Bhoom Sena's response regarding people's attitude to snatching bank money, Rahman (1993:43) notes "If we get money through concrete struggle then everyone becomes more responsible for its use. If money is just snatched away, then such money is misused ... individuals snatch it also for themselves ...."

*Development as a process:* Development processes attempt to change the mentality of being dominated and to develop a conviction among the poor that they have the ability to influence their own future development. Burkey (1993:208) warns "Self-reliant participatory development is a slow-moving process and requires considerable patience, and for the participants it is never-ending. There will be many setbacks and even total failures, but the successes will be genuine and long-lasting."

*Agents for external change:* While there is some truth therein that the poor are seldom able to initiate a self-reliant development process without outside assistance, it is advisable for external agents to be the catalysts. The agents for change are not normally aware of local dynamics prevailing in the community. This is the key for sustainable development.

*Participatory action research:* This is action-oriented research in order to identify root causes and contributing factors specifically for the purpose of guiding future action. Burkey (1993:209) states "No development activities should be attempted until participatory action research has been carried out and the socio-economic factors affecting a problem are well understood by the people and the change agents." Bradbury (1989:9) echoes

The greatest evil and bitterest injury in their [people] state is not the animal grievance of hunger or discomfort, nor even the mental grievance of vacuity and boredom; it is the spiritual grievance of being allowed no opportunity of contributing to the general life and welfare of the community. All efforts for their assistance should therefore look towards the provision of that opportunity.

*Conscientisation:* As already noted, participatory action research is the step in a process of awakening people's consciousness. No development activity can be successful until this process is well underway. Lartey (1997:33) states

... pastoral carers who work with an empowerment model seek to assist in the conscientization of the oppressed and marginalized through enabling them to ask questions about their life situation ... conscientization is a process within which people become more aware of their situation and of the resources they possess to respond and change things.

*Small-scale interest groups:* The key is the fact that the small groups must be voluntary and assume complete responsibility to manage their own groups.

*Development activities:* Usually, development activities require the acquisition of new skills and knowledge on the part of the poor, as well as the selection and introduction of new technologies and processes. Burkey (1993:210) notes "New skills and knowledge must be developed through non-formal educational experiences in which the poor actively participate as subjects instead of remaining passive objects." Freire (2000:56) echoes "From a pragmatist point of view, since there is no right or left any longer, it is important to make people more competent to deal with the difficulties with which they are faced."

However, in some situations the poor must first challenge and overcome social oppression and exploitation through legal processes.

*Independent autonomous associations:* It is advisable that the small groups should link with other larger groups in order to achieve sustained development through sharing knowledge.

*The golden rule:* In working with people, the golden rule is: don't do anything for people that they can do for themselves.

The basic principles of a participatory approach in the holistic model have now been documented.

The next sub-section is in respect of steps towards empowering people to assume a status of partnership with churches, governments and other agencies.

#### 6.2.4 BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF EMPOWERMENT

This section clarifies further the fourth hypothesis, which takes note of the need to empower local people towards the transformation of their lives.

The purpose of this section is to document that Scriptures provide evidence that the body of Christ can truly be effective in a holistic ministry in the urban centres of Malawi through the empowerment of people. The church that does effective ministry has four marks (Linthicum 1991:193), which are now described as follows:

- Do the city's systems being confronted offer real potential for change?
- Are the poor and exploited of the city provided with the vehicles by which they can bring about change in their situation?
- Are the middle class and the powerful given the opportunity to join in a common cause with the poor to control the city's systems and seek their transformation?
- Is there an on-going spiritual transformation in that city, or are the changes only social? Are the lives of both the city's poor and its powerful being changed by God?

The Scriptures provide us with examples of effective ministries. For example, the book of Nehemiah provides us with empowering steps that, if implemented, can make a difference in the lives of city dwellers. Linthicum (1991:198) comments "Nehemiah was not the only biblical networker: among the finest were Moses and Paul." If the ministers in the urban centres intend to empower people for effective ministry, they need to learn the steps that Nehemiah implemented. The seven empowering (Linthicum 1991:195-205) principles that Nehemiah used are now briefly described.

##### *Begin with yourself:*

The process of empowerment requires that the organizer must begin with him-/herself before organizing others. This is what Nehemiah did. When he heard the devastating news about Jerusalem, he wept and grieved. Linthicum (1991:195) comments "First, Nehemiah wept! He allowed his heart to be broken by the things, which break the heart of God. He did not try to avoid the pain nor dismiss his grief as he went about his daily tasks in Susa. Instead, he gave himself permission to live into that pain and to feel it to the very core of his being." This implies that the minister must put himself in the shoes of the urban poor and have passion with their situation. This can only be done through understanding and studying the predicament of the poor.

*Build networks:*

Networking is building and maintaining contacts, which enables people in that network to carry out the ministry more effectively to, and with, the exploited, and with the church in a given location. Linthicum (1991:198) defines "Networking is the intentional and systematic visiting of the in a community by the pastor and church people to lead to that community's organizing of itself to cope with its most substantive problems." Tonna (1978:158) echoes the importance of network in urban ministry as he notes "Urban mission, accordingly, will consist in establishing relationships where they did not exist before (generic mission) and in transforming already existent relationships into relationships of evangelization ...." After Nehemiah lived in pain and grief, he started building networks with people in authority.

In a way he was building the foundation upon which his entire ministry in Jerusalem would rest. The king allowed him to go to Jerusalem and as per his request. Linthicum (1991:197) notes "So it was that Nehemiah shared with the king his burden and the king responded to Nehemiah's pain. The response was to approve Nehemiah's request." Nehemiah also got the support of the queen, the governors, the keeper of the king's forest, and strategic army and cavalry officers.

The ministers in Malawi cities ought to build networks with the rich, the powerful and those with influence. Through this process, the plight of the poor will be mobilized and funds gathered to initiate development activities leading to transforming the lives of people. However, the disadvantaged groups should plan and implement their development.

The impact of networking is superb and produces a lasting transformation. The developed model has eight important techniques that urban congregations in Lilongwe could benefit from (Linthicum 1991:201). The strategies are:

- It builds and nurtures a wide and steadily expanding system of relationships with the true leaders, concerned people and groups, and the ordinary folk of the urban community.
- It identifies those people in the community with whom the pastor or the church may want to build relationships.
- It influences the preaching and teaching of the church (as the church seeks to be responsive to the issues and needs that are uncovered in the community).

- It influences the church's plans and programs in, and for, the urban community.
- It affects the interior life of the church, sometimes in profound ways.
- It creates a community awareness of, and respect for, the church, and adds significantly to the church's credibility by creating a community consciousness of the church.
- It identifies possible future evangelistic contacts.
- It either confirms, or requires the church to adjust the research it may have gathered on the community.

*Organize the community:*

One of the key issues that Nehemiah carried out was through community organization. Organizing the community for social change is crucial in the process of empowering the people. Freire (1998:105) comments "If the great popular masses are without a more critical understanding of how society functions, it is not because they are naturally incapable of it – in my view – but on account of the precarious conditions in which they live and survive, where they are forbidden to know." This step is best attempted after networking. In community organization it is important to keep in mind three key areas:

*Identify the community problem:*

The broken walls and gates were not the real issues of Jerusalem. These were just indicators of the problem. The issue was the powerlessness that the Jews experienced as a result of the war. Linthicum (1991:202) affirms "... and based upon his own personal research, Nehemiah identifies that issue which the people feel is most pressing: their sense of vulnerability due to their broken and ruined walls."

*The organizer must be in the shoes of the ordinary people:*

As organizer, the pastor must see him- or herself as part of the situation and must identify with the people. Nehemiah felt vulnerable just like the people, yet he was holding a key position in the palace in Susa. The question is: what is the key to addressing a problem? What are we going to do about it? Linthicum (1991:202) echoes: "[Nehemiah urged the people] Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. Let us assume responsibility for our own situation, and do something about it."

By urging people to build the city walls, in essence, Nehemiah was building the hope of the people. Hope, is most important for existence, and hopelessness and despair are both the consequence and the cause of inaction. Freire (1998:9) comments "One of the tasks of the progressive educator, through a serious, correct political analysis, is to unveil opportunities for hope, no matter what the obstacles may be."

*Involve God in the process:*

Nehemiah as an organizer moved further and assured the people that they were not alone in the process of building the walls and gates of Jerusalem - God was in their midst working through them. Linthicum (1991) 203) notes "Moreover, God had so blessed this endeavor that it was obvious that the Lord was behind the effort, too."

*Deal creatively with conflict:*

The benefit of a holistic approach to ministry is that it is hermeneutical. It takes into consideration the prevailing situation at hand. The process of empowering the poor is a great threat to the rich and the powerful because it exposes their lies. This, in turn, causes conflict, as the rich and powerful respond negatively to the actions of the poor. Linthicum (1991:210) affirms

Empowering the poor and the marginalized will inevitably create conflict. Those who hold power will not like the poor or the marginalized taking charge of their situation – and thus taking power away from the power-brokers .... Conflict is the sign that effective empowerment of the ordinary people of a community or city truly is occurring.

Nehemiah had also experienced conflict from both without and within. He however, managed to deal with the resistance creatively. Linthicum (1991:212) states "Nehemiah's first attempt was to seek to build relationships with Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem (Neh. 2:10 –20). Only when such negotiations failed did Nehemiah move to more firm action." Church ministers in the cities must learn from Nehemiah and deal creatively with conflicts that try to hinder the ministry.

The secret of Nehemiah's success is the use of five holistic levels of empowerment (Linthicum 1991:205). The levels now follow:

- He allowed their plight to burn into his own soul to such a degree that he was obsessed with bringing about their empowerment.

- He networked with the powerful in order to gain their personal support, money, and resources.
- He networked with the people in order to ascertain what they perceive to be their city's most urgent and immediate issues.
- He personally researched the situation to determine the accuracy of both his own perception and that of the people regarding their most urgent issue.
- He challenged and inspired the people to take charge of their own situation.

This documentation of the biblical steps of empowering has concluded the second pillar on urban ministry among the poor for community participation to meet their needs. The third pillar is on proclamation and the practice of the urban church.

### **6.3 PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL IN WORD AND DEED IN URBAN AREAS**

In this pillar, the importance of a holistic hermeneutical approach, chapter 1, section 1.6, and section 1.8.2 receive further attention. The brief definitions of the two terms are again noted:

*"Holistic"*: seeks to focus on the human being as an indivisible entity, the total being, of which soul and body form a unity of the diversity.

*"Hermeneutical"*: helps people to interpret and discern God's will for them in their lives. This occurs in a specific contextual setting and, as such, does not claim to be an absolute final, fault-free interpretation.

Further to the above, the pillar examines the third hypothesis of this study. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

The pillar is about the church's holistic calling to the ministry: "Proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas." It is hoped that in the effort of implementing this pillar, the CCAP will be well positioned to combat the evil, which results into social injustices. The objective is to address both the physical and spiritual needs of people, each being an indivisible reality. Therefore, any urban church, which does not focus on both realities, will not be able to address the challenges of urban poverty in an amicable manner. Wilson

(1995:21) comments "Preaching is an event of encounter with God that leaves the congregation with stronger faith and deeper commitment to doing God's work."

The pillar has two major sub-topics:

- Preaching in the city, and
- The practice of the urban church.

### 6.3.1 PREACHING IN THE CITIES

This section examines further the ministry as a servant of the Kingdom of God, as documented in chapter one, section 1.9.

Preaching the Gospel is the first aspect of the great commission: Go and proclaim the Gospel (Mt 28:18-20). White (1983:171) states "No one is born a Christian. One becomes a Christian through becoming part of a community with a distinctive way of life involving definite ethical and creedal commitments." The participatory research conducted in Lilongwe revealed that all the congregations do proclaim the Gospel be it at Sunday's services, revival meetings, "miraga" group meetings, funeral services, any other events, and/or situations necessitating Gospel proclamation. This is good. Some congregations conduct two services, in *Chichewa* and in English. The two services help foreign members who do not understand *Chichewa*.

Preaching is not a recent development; it, in fact, goes back to the earthly ministry of Jesus Christ. The ministry of Jesus Christ was also basically a preaching ministry. When Jesus appointed the twelve disciples, he commissioned them to his same task of preaching and having the authority to cast out demons (Mk. 3:14-15). When reading closely about Jesus Christ's ministry, particularly about the way he started the ministry, it is evident that he realized and confirmed the importance of proclamation. Jesus stated, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent" (Lk. 4:42-44). And he continued to preach in the synagogues of Judea.

Jesus underscored the pivotal aspect of preaching when he inaugurated his ministry. He emphasized the need to address the plight of the poor. Linthicum (1991:181) affirms "That he would select a passage on which to begin his ministry that stressed preaching Good News to the poor, freedom for the prisoner, recovery of sight for the blind, freedom for the captive, as well as proclaiming the Year of Jubilee (Lk. 4:18-19) shows his priorities."

The proclamation of the Gospel is also best seen in the book of Acts. Runia (1983:21) comments "In Acts we also see how immediately after the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost the new Christian church becomes a preaching church." In the act of preaching, the saving power of these facts becomes a present reality for the hearer. Bakke (1987:145) contends

Good preaching and liturgy meet many needs, and funerals and weddings can provide opportunities for care and support. Churches need thoughtful, well-established procedures for their major public rites, so that the newest or the poorest members understand their theological significance.

However, all is not well with Gospel proclamation. There are some difficulties that hinder effective proclamation. Since the world is now a global village, the Malawian urban congregations are also faced with similar challenges affecting Gospel proclamation in the other parts around the world. In this case, Runia's book, *The sermon under attack*, becomes relevant to Malawi's urban context. Describing the urbanization effects in Malawi, as already documented in chapter one, section 1.5.4 relates how the cities attract various world religions.

### **6.3.1.1 Criticisms facing proclamation today**

This sub-section is about the criticism that the sermon, as institution, evokes. The researcher conducted a participatory research in Lilongwe city and observed that many people were dissatisfied with what they heard during the Sunday services. Their criticism concerned the kind of sermon they heard, rather than the sermon itself, as an institution. Runia (1983:3) affirms "Today they [criticisms] are coming from all sides, not only from the social scientists and communications theorists, but also from the theologians, and above all from the ordinary people in the pew. All question the usefulness and validity of preaching in our modern day."

Runia (1983:7-14) discusses four proclamation criticisms and these will now be discussed.

*Social scientists:* Social scientists are of the opinion that modern life has become far too complicated for a sermon to be prepared by one single individual. This points to the fact that, in the modern age, human knowledge increases at such a speed that no individual can keep abreast of all developments. The modern human wants to be regarded as a partner rather than as a dependent and subordinate follower.

Social scientists question how one person, in such position, can deal with the concrete problems of his listeners, let alone the many micro-ethical problems that affect urban life in

Lilongwe. Runia (1983:7) notes "He [the preacher] most certainly cannot do it on his own, but needs the assistance of the members of his congregation who often know much about these problems than he." In other words, there is hardly any place left for our traditional Protestant form of monologue preaching.

*Communication experts:* This group point out the great changes that have taken place in the communication structure. They say the weakness in the traditional sermon is the fact that the sermon still continues to be monologue, a one-way communication, and that there is no feedback. Added to this, is the low degree of effectiveness of the traditional sermon. Runia (1983:9) comments "The preaching minister has no real means to gauge the reactions of his listeners and to make the necessary corrections and adjustments in his approach ... because it is non-cooperative communication, is no longer suitable for our time. It is like using a kerosene lamp in the age of electric light."

*Theologians:* The criticisms by theologians concern the fact that the traditional sermon is far too introverted in character. It concentrates almost exclusively on the religious needs of the individual members of the congregation. They say both the traditional sermon and the traditional worship service are inadequate to match Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom whose primary call is to break down the structures of injustice that abound in the world and to work for a new world of justice and peace for all. Runia (1983:13) comments "... but preaching is no longer the prerogative of the minister or the leader, and its main purpose is no longer the building up of the personal faith of the individual believer, but rather the preparation of the whole congregation for social and/or political action."

*Criticism of the laity:* The last criticisms come from the man and woman in the pew. This is the group, which is mostly involved and affected by preaching. Among other criticisms, the main complaint is that many sermons are so terribly boring. The people are disappointed. As a result, they just stay away. Runia (1983:14) notes "There is also plain unbelief ... many church people are deeply dissatisfied with the preaching of their minister. Apart from unbelief, boredom is the greatest enemy of the sermon."

The four criticisms discussed warn the ministers in Malawi to put more effort and attention in sermon preparation. One way to do this is by the ministers involving the members of the congregation as much as possible. Create an opportunity and a conducive atmosphere for

Bible study and other forums where the pastors can mix with the congregation and learn more of the members' congregational views. These are steps in the right direction.

An effective sermon must take into consideration the following aspects:

*Preaching and the situation of the listener:*

Runia (1983:57) advises "If our preaching is to be truly biblical preaching, it has to take the listener and his situation seriously ... preaching always means two things: first, the exposition and second, the application of a passage of Scripture." The living Word of God always occurs at the point of intersection of the message of the text with the concrete situation of those who hear the message. Runia (1983:67) affirms "The true prophet must be able to distinguish whether a historical hour stands under the wrath or the love of God. The same applies to the true preacher of today."

*The context of the sermon:*

Holistic proclamation is preaching which takes into consideration the entire context in which a sermon is prepared and delivered. In order to ensure relevant preaching, the context of sermon must therefore be taken into consideration. Craddock (1985:31) comments "A sermon, to be properly understood and to have its purpose fulfilled, has to be experienced in its context, or rather in its several contexts." The four different sermon contexts are now briefly discussed:

*Historical context:* This context lies within the personal memories of both preacher and listener. This has to do with the way the tradition has affected how the sermon has been delivered and heard. A congregation may have a number of ministers who managed it. These ministers have different gifts and styles of delivering sermons. Craddock (1985:34) notes "Above all, a preacher should not try to compete with predecessors or devise ways to erase the memory of other ministers known and loved by the parishioners."

*Pastoral context:* This context denotes, all the ways that the minister interacts with, and relates to, the congregation. Members profoundly influence what is said and what is heard, as the preaching takes place in a pastoral context. Craddock (1985:39) comments "...

one observation is essential: preaching occurs in a pastoral context and is in many significant ways influenced by the context. In fact, at every stage from conception to delivery and beyond, pastoral functions and relationships enter into the preaching ministry.”

*Liturgical context:* Liturgy, as a context, means that most sermons are prepared and delivered in a liturgical context, thus spoken and heard in an assembly gathered for prayer and praise – preaching happens in the context of worship. Craddock (1985:41) notes “An assembly of believers gathers to worship; that is, to narrate in word, act, and song the community’s memories and hopes, glorifying the God who redeems, enables, and sanctifies.”

*Theological context:* The fourth and last context of a sermon is theological context. This context entails that a sermon is delivered as part of the minister’s own beliefs and ongoing theological conversation with the congregation and heard by people who have their own values and convictions. In addition, a sermon is shaped by the minister’s experiences and reflections that far exceed all recollection which mixed with the preacher’s words to create the real sermon. Craddock (1985:48) notes “A theology of preaching sustains and nourishes the pulpit with a constancy that survives the ebb and flow of the feelings of the one standing in it as well as the smiles and frowns of those who sit before it.”

The preaching of urban congregations has now been discussed. The next section is on the practice of the urban church.

### 6.3.2 THE CHURCH PRACTICE IN THE CITY

The task of the urban church in the cities of Malawi is not only the proclamation of the Word, but also the deeds and actions as a process to implement the proclamation. In the process of describing this section, chapter 1 section 1.8.2 is looked at once again. What the church’s practice in the city requires to be truly effective, is not allowing itself to be overwhelmed by the city’s evil. The church must take delight in the people surrounding it, and in each other in the community of faith.

Linthicum (1991:165) states “The church is called to be a cheerleader to the city. It is also called to name all that is evil and dark about the city, and particularly to confront the city’s systems and structures when they act in exploitive and oppressive ways.” Bradbury (1989:117) echoes

The Church in the inner city can provide a community of healing and human growth. As its congregation struggles corporately with prayer, the tradition of faith and its own difficulties and human conflict .... The Church is able to lead people from alienation to reconciliation and from despair to hope.

In order for the church to fulfill tasks of its practice in the city, it must position itself to be concerned about the following areas: health care, housing, economic development, advocacy for the poor and stewards of the city, just to mention a few.

### **6.3.2.1 Advocacy for the poor, and economic development**

In this section an obligational dimension of practical reasoning, as discussed in chapter 1 section 1.8.3.1, is further looked at. The obligational level focuses on human reason, which elaborates general principles that have a rational structure. For example, the obligational dimension in Christianity applies the golden rule, "Do to others as you would have them do to you." It stresses the love ethic: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

This section takes and describes section 4.7 "urban informal economies between poverty and growth" as well as section 5.2, "effective congregation-based advocacy ministries" further.

In a way, these two aspects have already been discussed in the preceding chapters where it was noted that, due to a high level of unemployment, the urban poor struggle to meet the daily needs of life. As a solution, economic development is the viable direction to minimize the unemployment challenge. Linthicum (1991:169) echoes

In one way or another, the church must become involved in economic development - the creation of jobs, the organizing of people to create community industries and trades, job re-training, economic self determination .... Though the strategies and action plans should differ from city to city, the essential principles are the same.

The urban people are poor because of, inter alia, marginalization and oppression. In order to address these problems, the church must advocate for the urban poor. Linthicum (1991:173) states "Integral to God's commitment to the poor is Yahweh's assumption that the chief defenders of the poor must be God's prophets, apostles, and people. It is a primary task of the church in the city to be the advocate and champion for those who are poor." Greenway and Monsma (1989:8) echo

The Church in the city has a task to perform that carries its members into all the systems and all the areas that constitute urban life. Whether in education or politics, city hall or the marketplace .... They must pray for the city's welfare, attack its abuses, and promote its true good. God's people know where the crucial issues lie. They know that the city's deepest struggle is religious.

The urban congregations in Malawi should consider advocating for the cause of the poor in the cities.

#### **6.3.2.2 Health care**

The poor health situation described in chapter three, section 3.4, receives further attention in this section.

The health situation of the communities surrounding the cities of Malawi is hygienically extremely poor. The environmental care is pathetic, most poor people use contaminated water flowing from the nearby rivers. This, in addition to sewage disposal, is the main source of illness. The church must be concerned about the stress of city life, which is a major contributor to both psychological and physical breakdown. Linthicum (1991:166) notes "Health care in the city, therefore, means more than adequate medical care for all; it also means dealing with the variegated stress of the city and with the environmental issues. The Bible indicates that such concern needs to be part of the work of the church in the city."

#### **6.3.2.3 Housing**

The issue of housing is one of the major challenges, not only in African countries, but also in the pivotal cities of the world. Linthicum (1991:167) comments

Even in a country as wealthy as the United States, homelessness has become an epidemic as urban dwellers become accustomed to the bag-ladies and grate-dwellers and the people sleeping in the doorways, the parks, and on the sidewalks throughout our U.S. cities. God is displeased with such inequality and expects his people to work for adequate housing for all the people.

The challenge is that, in dealing with urban housing, there are three issues that surface: adequacy, distribution, and safety. The church in Malawi should be concerned with the shantytowns and slums situation of the surrounding communities by including a housing agenda on the annual plans. It is helpful to encourage the rich to visit the nearby slums to feel and see the circumstances in which the poor people are living. Linthicum (1991:167) notes "It is a shock to enter into a squatter settlement of the third world city; these settlements elected overnight by the people migrating to the city; cling tenuously to the side of steep hills or over precipices ... their houses built of cardboards, packing crates, metal sheets, and mud-bricks."

#### 6.3.2.4 Stewards of the city

God has placed the church in the city. In fact, God was in the city before the city came into existence. On this basis, therefore, the city is a massive investment made both by God and by humanity. Humanity provides for the stewardship of the city regarding the political, economic, social, and material, through the systems and structures of the city. Linthicum (1991:177) affirms “Just as a city depends upon the prayers of the church for its welfare, so, too, the city depends upon the church’s faithful stewardship.”

The issue here is that most people are not aware that the church cares for the spirituality of the city. Most of the times, the church prays behind the scenes for the goodwill and peace of the city, to make it holy and acceptable before God. Linthicum (1991:177) notes “That is why the church involves itself in health care, housing, economic development, and advocacy of the poor – for, whether addressed or ignored, all those profoundly affect the depth of spirituality of the city, for good or for ill.”

The third pillar on proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas has now been described. The holistic model for ministry enables the church to balance its approach by addressing the total needs of humankind.

Hypothesis 3 guided this pillar and proved effective. The pillar linked with the definitions of holistic and hermeneutics as discussed in chapter 1, section 1.6. The pillar has further linked with the practical reasoning as discussed in chapter 1, section 1.8.

## 6.4 CHRISTIAN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

The third and fourth hypotheses continue to guide the development of this pillar. The hypotheses state:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.
- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and as such is unable to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

The main purpose of Christian faith development is to provide a communicative praxis, which is crucial in the holistic hermeneutical practical theology model. This section covers five sub-sections, namely:

- Three sources from which Christian faith development emerged
- The goals of Christian faith
- The methodology of spiritual development
- Faith crisis and Christian witness, and
- The focus and evaluation of spiritual development.

Spiritual development is an integral part of transformational development among communities. The community's understanding of sustainability must include the spiritual, physical, mental, and social dimensions. It calls for liberation that affects all of life. It is a call to discover new life in Christ. But it is also a call to come besides the hurting of the world and enable them to empower their lives, their communities, and their cities. Myers (1999:204) comments "Being Christian means being a witness. By definition the Christian faith is a missionary faith. Gospel means 'message' or 'good news.' Messages are not messages unless they are announced." Pretorius *et al* (1996:82) echo "... witnessing is not one among many functions or activities of the church but that it is the essence of the church, and that it is out of this witness that all its other activities arise."

Christian faith development is a process of proclaiming the Gospel in response to a new reality that requires an answer. In most cases the new reality is an extraordinary day-to-day understanding of life. It is primarily relating the Gospel in relationship to life issues, values, priorities, and ordering relationships. Gospel proclamation, in most cases, focuses on a single text and this limits communicating the biblical story as a whole. Christian faith is the beginning of transformation. By sharing God's news with people, we offer the start of the process of recovering identity and vocation. Myers (1999:210) notes "In each case, the Gospel is proclaimed, not by intent or plan, but in response to a question provoked by the activity of God in the community."

#### 6.4.1 THE EMERGENCE OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The importance of ministry preparation already discussed in chapter 1 section 1.8.3.2 continues here. There are three reasons that compel Christians to implement spiritual development. The three reasons will now receive attention.

*The relatedness of preaching to transformation:* To proclaim the good news of Christ is directly related to a Christian understanding of transformation. This is in the frame of "go and tell." For Christians, belief is the beginning of knowing. Myers (1999:204) comments "Social change is primarily what happens to people in that level of being where the Spirit alone has access."

*The Christian must bring the best they have:* Proclamation of the Gospel is the best news that Christians have for the world. All development processes are good - thus they enable the empowerment of people to manage different projects in the community, but cannot surpass the Gospel. Myers (1999:205) comments "... our own experience tells us that Christ has the power to seek, to save, and to recompose our stories into the stories of hope and purpose, we can hardly help sharing this very best of our good news with others."

*Two simple commandments:* Christians have two commandments (the summary of the law): to love God with all we have, and to love our neighbors as ourselves. This is the reason why Christians are motivated to work with the poor at all cost. Myers (1999:205) asks "How can we say we love our neighbors if we limit our work to improving their material lives in the here and now and never share the news that holds the promise of transforming their lives now and forever?"

The reasons discussed are crucial to spiritual development. Christians must understand that whatever they do or think of in practice should always have an evangelistic intent. God is not limited to proclamation alone, He is able to use any other means to bring people to faith. So, Christians are called to be sure they carry out development with an attitude that prays and yearns for people to know Jesus Christ. The next sub-section is on Christian faith goals.

#### 6.4.2 THE GOALS OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The focus of Christian faith is more on the relationship between God and Christians, witness-by-word moves to center stage alongside witness-by-life and witness-by-deed. This section underlines the importance of chapter 1 section 1.8.2 about an African holistic view of reality. One fundamental aim of Christian witness is to verbalize the Good News of the Gospel with the motive to invite people to faith in Jesus Christ, so that others can hear and know the Good News, which has the power to save. Pretorius *et al* (1996: 87) warn “Christians have to check their words, deeds, and attitudes constantly so that they may further the course of the Gospel instead of hindering it.”

Myers (1999:212) echoes “The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the best news that we have, better than community mobilization or development technology. As Christians, we have experienced the most fundamental of discoveries: ultimately, any social transformation happens in our deepest level of being, that part where God alone can go.” Christian faith is the same as transformational development; as such, the goals are the same. Important is to realize the difference in terms of the focus. The strength of the developed ministry theory: holistic hermeneutical practical theology – is to overcome the dichotomy between the physical (development) and spiritual (faith development).

The two goals of spiritual development are now attended to, namely:

##### 1. *Recovering true identity and discovering true vocation*

Christian faith seeks to transform people so that they can recover their true identity, which consequently ends in discovering their true vocation. This is very important. In other words, the process of transforming people begins with helping them to discover that their human dignity and identity are intrinsically related to God in Christ through his redemptive purpose in salvation history. Myers (1999:117) affirms

If poverty is the world trying to tell the poor they are god-forsaken, then transformation is the declaration that they are made in God’s image, that God allowed

his Son to die for them, and that God has given gifts to the poor so that they can fulfill God's creation mandate that they too may be fruitful and productive.

## 2. *Just and peaceful relationships*

Christian faith also focuses on healing relationships and discovering the vocation. The process of healing relationships has a number of aspects: relationship with God, fellow man, oneself, and the community. But when a healing relationship with God is the primary concern of spiritual development, then other areas will simply fall in place. Myers (1999:118) notes "The central relationship in need of restoration is one's relationship with the triune God, the God of the Bible. The good news is that God desires this restoration and has already taken the steps necessary for this relationship to be restored."

If people seek God, many other good things will follow and become possible. If they are not, the horizons of change are more limited and difficult. When people are at peace with one another, then it means adding the ministry of reconciliation to the transformation agenda. Myers (1999:119) comments "... the beginning of reconciliation and hence the path to justice and peace is the embrace of the other, in spite of all that the other has done. There can be no justice without the will to embrace. This call transcends the issue of who is right or wrong, who is righteous or unrighteous."

Christian faith development is the organic relationship of life, deed, word, and sign and this creates the interesting ability for the process to be customer-centered. This paves the way for witnessing with whichever part of the Gospel message relates most closely to the needs of those to be witnessed to. As a result, a holistic understanding of the Gospel begins with life, a life that is then lived out by deed, word and song. Myers (1999:213) comments

Any Christian understanding of transformation must find expression for all elements of the Gospel message - life, deed, word, and sign - each in God's time. Everyone needs to encounter and engage the Gospel message in its wholeness. To stop short is to truncate the Gospel.

The next sub-section is on the process of spiritual development.

### 6.4.3 THE METHODOLOGY OF A HOLISTIC SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

This section is about the methods of spreading the Christian faith. There are six steps on how Christians can witness the Gospel. The steps are briefly discussed:

*Living eloquent lives:* Important in witnessing is the lifestyle of Christians in the community where they find themselves to be. They should live a life that provokes the question concerning their lifestyle. Christians need to do their work and live lives in a way that calls attention to the new Spirit that lives within them. Myers (1999:216) notes “We need to relate to people and promote our development technology in ways that create a sense of wonder. We must seek a spirituality that makes our lives eloquent.”

*A crucified mind:* In Christian faith, one’s attitude is crucial because it acts like a corrosive acid eating away at our effectiveness in both the Christian faith and transformational development. Christian witness does not favor the attitude of superiority. Important to witnessing is the crucified mind, the mind of Christ, being the Son of God, yet chosen to set this prerogative aside, even to the point of death on a cross. And so Christians must be. Added to this is a life of humility for the basic reason that Christians are the carriers of the message not an actor. The good news is God’s story, not ours. Myers (1999:217) comments

The beginning of the crucified mind is the unconditional embrace of the other, just as Jesus unconditionally embraced us .... This is how God loves every person, and the one who is a messenger about the good news of God’s love cannot limit the gift of God. The embrace itself becomes the message.

*Recognizing the fingerprints of God:* What Christians should always remember is that they are witnessing all the time in everything they do. The challenge most of the times is that Christians are not good witnesses because human beings are not good at recognizing God even when God reveals himself. Myers (1999:217) advises “The key, then, is to work harder at recognizing God’s fingerprints in daily life as part of our daily practice of Christian witness. We need to use every conversation, every program activity, as an opportunity to point to the work of God.”

*Seeking meaning together:* Partnering together with the people in seeking God is one of the effective ways of bearing witness to the Christian faith. No person is a champion in knowing the fingerprints or the will of God. All people have been created by one God and given the spiritual gifts by one Spirit. God has been active in the communities since the beginning of time, so community people must seek meaning together about God. Myers (1999:117) notes “We must work alongside the poor and non-poor alike, helping them and helping ourselves

uncover and accept our identity as children of God.” Christian faith is a process of knowing God and, as such, is a journey that needs seeking meaning together as a team to learn from each other.

*Interpreting technology with God in the picture:* Today is the time of technology. It is critical to interpret development technology, so that it is understood as evidence of the work and character of a loving, engaged God, rather than setting itself up as the explanation of its own success. It must be recognized that technology is good, but a limited good. It is true that it has sped up the rate of change in the material world, but there are too many things that technology cannot do. Myers (1999:222) states “Even when technology works in our relationship with nature, technology is a double-edged sword; it can make life easier or it can be used to kill our neighbor. Science cannot create and does not operate within a vision of what ought to be.”

*Say what we believe:* The other method of witnessing is to say what we believe. One problem that Christians indulge in, is hesitating to speak out what they believe. They may do this due to fear of not disappointing the other person or due to being sensitive. Sensitivity is a good thing, but making ourselves silent is not. A story is told of a development facilitator who went into the community to assist people to develop and transform the community. But he stayed there for quite a long time before informing people what his mission was.

In the end he explained the development process for which he came there. The response was immediate, 'If this is why you came here, why did you wait so long to tell us about this (Myers 1999:224).' It is important, therefore, for Christians to speak out what they believe. Myers (1999:225) states “This is a call for conversation, not monologues. The story of Jesus and the woman in John 4 suggests that treating people as equals and having provocative, stretching, engaging conversations about ultimate things are often valued and transformational.”

*The use of the Bible in spiritual development:* The process of seeking the truth from the biblical story is the beginning of witnessing and transformation of lives and relationships. Before discussing the seven steps for Bible searching in Christian witness, five clarifications on the importance of Bible use must be briefly pointed out. The Bible is the only true and

unbiased source of guidance. It is a living book. The word of God is a creative word, the birthplace of our identity. It is a universal history.

*The seven steps approach to Scripture:* As noted so far, the Scriptures are central to Christian faith. There are seven different approaches to Scripture important to this study. Documented below is the outline of seven steps in which Scripture is used in spiritual development.

*Invite:* Christians must remind themselves that the risen Lord is with them. This forms a foundation for welcoming Jesus in a prayer.

*Read:* Christians are “people of the Book” as such they read the Bible with others as a way of witnessing the Gospel.

*View with wonder:* The process of witnessing comprises selecting a word or short phrase, reading it aloud prayerfully, allowing enough silence between the group so that their hearts can meditate on the word/passage.

*Listen:* One must listen to allow God to speak to the group. Furthermore, listen to each other as they share what God has communicated to them in silence.

*Share:* The process of witnessing and knowing God requires seeking meaning together, as a team. This is best done through sharing the Gospel insights. It is not, as it were, a one-man-journey as with preaching.

*Group tasks:* This is the time to plan and assign tasks to one another. Each member of the group reports back about his/her experiences as a result of implementing the tasks. This calls for new plans of action.

*Pray:* Spontaneous prayers are offered, inviting God to lead and guide the whole process. Choruses and hymns are part of the prayers.

In commenting about the seven-steps approach to Scripture, Myers (1999:231) explains “The seven steps is more a method of Bible reading .... The emphasis is on group listening and receiving .... The focus is on what God is saying to me ‘or us’ - on sharing and hearing ....”

#### 6.4.4 FAITH CRISIS AND SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The hermeneutical part of the holistic model (section 1.8.2) enables the approach of interacting with people. Through such interaction, actual situations that people experience are revealed and dealt with appropriately.

Another circumstance calling for holistic Christian faith is the area of faith crises. This is the stage when faith is destroyed or on the edge of being destroyed, due to acute disappointments experienced in life. The New Testament church was faced with two faith crises. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:76) comment

The first crisis arose in Jerusalem within the Jesus movement, and revolved around an understanding of kingdom .... The second crisis was anchored in the growing disappointment over a delay in the expectation return of Jesus. In each instance an apparent setback became the trigger to mobilize an even greater zeal. Disappointment did not lead to disillusion.

*Cognitive dissonance:* In the area of faith crises we shall discuss cognitive dissonance and its different forms. This section concludes with implications for the witness.

Cognitive dissonance is a theory, which describes the behavior of people who experience a crisis between their expectations or beliefs and the object of data from a historical event. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:78) affirm "Festinger calls this disconfirmation and the behavior that follows 'cognitive dissonance.'" Cognitive dissonance may appear in many forms covering a number of social issues, such as eating habits, world peace, racial prejudice, teacher grading practices, fairness in sports, commercial advertising, and social lives of homosexual men (Dudley & Hilgert 1987:78). Some instances are: when a marriage dissolves, people no longer have faith in God, and back slides occur when a dream is lost, when trust is broken, and when a world dissolves.

*Implications for the urban ministry:*

In order to address the impact of cognitive dissonance Christian faith requires resorting to the following responses:

*Witnessing strategies:* Urban congregations can address faith crises by implementing, for example, community growth, family friendship, shared social concerns and all extensions of homogeneous activities. Here the need for research before implementing activities is most crucial. Furthermore, the churches within the area must work closely with each other so as to

share experiences and encourage those that lack visionary input for growth. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:96) comment "But for many people in established churches, cognitive dissonance is a disturbing concept which is associated with marginal groups and unpleasant experiences."

*Pastoral leadership in faith crises:* It has been noted in the definition above, that cognitive dissonance comes as a result of disappointments on various levels. It therefore calls for leadership to console the people in such situations of despair and tribulations. Clinebell (1966:169) comments "Religious resources have more than a supportive function in bereavement. Death confronts survivors inescapably with their own mortality and fear of death. Anxiety about nonbeing can be handled constructively only within the context of faith ...."

Through cognitive dissonance, Christians see with eyes of faith what seems foolish to the surrounding world. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:97) confirm "In the experience of cognitive dissonance, the leader is expected to remain strong when others are weak. Based in confidence that the pastor has a sustaining relationship with the transcendent God, members of the congregation assume that the pastor is a trusted guide through the crises of their lives."

*The function of doubt:* Generally, doubt is regarded as a weak point, if not sin. But, in actual fact, it is not the enemy of faith, but the entry into it. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:98) advise "The concept of cognitive dissonance denies any easy solutions or obvious answers. We must travel through dissonance before we find faith, or it finds us." There is a need for a personal, social and supporting community, which cares but does not deny our pain, and the Christian confession of a transcendent God whose home is beyond us, but whose love is available. Cognitive dissonance admits a sense of mystery and mutual dependency. Only by doubting the past can we begin anew (Dudley & Hilgert 1987:99).

*The function of need:* It is suggested that people who experience cognitive dissonance are particularly willing to yield to the Gospel. This is so, because they are open for encouragement and comfort. People who are faced with traumatic changes in their lives may appreciate the community's attention. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:99) comment

Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe have listed the most demanding events of crisis and readjustment, beginning with death of a spouse, divorce, separation, jail, personal

injury or illness, change or loss of employment, ... pregnancy, change of financial status, and many other.

Spiritual development is only possible if ministers understand people's situations. Therefore, this calls for a developed holistic approach to ministry. The next sub-section describes the assessment of the impact of spiritual development.

#### 6.4.5 THE FOCUS AND EVALUATION OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

This section looks back to chapter 1, section 1.8.4.1 "Hermeneutical-communicative praxis in a holistic ministry." Chapter 6 section 6.10 "Congregational research, monitoring and evaluation" discusses the issue further.

The process of evaluating Christian faith aims at checking the impact made. If there is no impact, the identified challenges or hindrances are further examined in ministry research in order to ensure effective ministry results. The evaluation of Christian faith focuses on the following:

*Recovering identity and vocation:* We have already discussed the issue of recovering identity and vocation while discussing the goals of spiritual development. The evaluation should therefore ensure and check if, indeed, the identity and vocation have really been recovered. Myers (1999:234) warns "This is not easy, since one of the outcomes of poverty is an identity so marred that believing one is a child of God is like being asked to believe that one can fly."

*Just and peaceful relationships:* A peaceful relationship is also the goal of Christian faith, as noted above. Relationships must change and be transformed – within the household, the social systems and all other areas needing just and peaceful relationships. Myers (1999:236) notes "When people change, everything else comes under pressure to change ... In these ways holistic Christian witness addresses social, political, economic, and cultural relationships, calling into account those that inhibit life or limit the participation of the poor."

*Changing worldview:* The changing of a worldview is a serious matter in spiritual development, because it is a source of a web of lies that disempowers the poor. Besides, changing a worldview means more than changing behavior. Other ways to change the worldview are considering what happens to traditional cultures when Christian witness is not

holistic, and the focus on cultural systems and its contribution to the web of lies that disempowers the poor and validates the god-completes of the non-poor.

Myers (1999:236) comments "Leaders with a biblical worldview know that all power belongs to God and that they exercise power only as stewards, not as owners or masters. Of those who have more, more is expected." Working for a worldview change requires sensitivity, skill, and openness to change on both sides. Fasting and prayer are important tools in dealing with the work of changing the worldview, because it is a form of spiritual discernment.

The discussion of Christian faith has been concluded. The holistic model emphasizes Christian faith as tool for the ministry. The process claims that there is no champion of faith. All people are learners seeking to know God better.

The third and fourth hypotheses were very effective and strongly confirmed in this pillar. The next pillar deals with the role of the laity in urban ministry.

## 6.5 URBAN EVANGELISM

The fifth pillar of holistic approach examines further the fourth hypothesis of this study, which reads:

- At present, the ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

This pillar deals with the strategic role of the laity in an urban church. The Scripture guiding the section is, "Where there is no vision, the people perish" (Prov. 29:18 NIV). Six subsections documented in this pillar are:

- Defining evangelism,
- Can the city be saved?
- Recognition for the church's tasks in a metropolitan city,
- Reasons for the involvement of the laity in the city,
- Theological premises for urban evangelism, and
- The influence of Independent Churches in urban areas.

The role of the laity must change from that of doing routine activities to managing the church activities. Mead (1991:35) commented on the response that one of his senior wardens gave: "My job is to back you up. Make sure the parish budget is raised and balanced ... beyond that my job is to keep my nose clean, pay taxes, do my job, not run around, keep the booze under control ...." Such was the situation during the Christendom paradigm. Obviously, such a stance denied the participation of the laity in managing church activities. The approach was not holistic in nature.

In addition to Christian witness, as discussed above, urban congregations in Lilongwe are to implement effective evangelism principles. Kyle (1988:93) notes "The cutting edge of the church in the city is evangelism to all unreached peoples." And this is the next discussion. But, before we embark on this discussion, the definition of the term "*Evangelism*" as this researcher is using it, is crucial at this stage.

### 6.5.1 DEFINING "EVANGELISM"

Evangelism is the verbal sharing of Jesus Christ's Good News and his offer to fallen human beings. In this stance, a "human being" is a totality of spiritual and physical needs that requires renewal and transformation. At this point evangelism meets with worship. Webber (1992:212) contends

In a sense worship is a kind of evangelism because what lies at the very heart of worship is the celebration of the victory of Christ over the process of evil, the forgiveness of sin resulting from Christ's sacrificial death, and the call to a new life based on the self-giving love of God demonstrated in Jesus. Here is the Gospel in motion. Here, the very heart of the Christian faith is recalled again and again.

It is the Gospel's invitation to a relationship, not a mere intellectual assent or agreement to a set of ideas. In this sense, the Gospel is not in conflict with other religions; it is simply true. Pretorius et al (1996:97) notes "Evangelism means doing justice and preaching grace." Evangelism is not simply speaking about something that we believe or that we feel compelled to share. It announces something that has happened in the world, about which everyone has the right to know.

William Abraham (in Myers 1999:206) notes "What makes proclamation evangelism is not the proclamation per se, but the message being proclaimed: the coming rule of God .... Without this announcement, people will not know about its arrival, nor will they have a clear view of what it means for the kingdom of God to come now in the present or in the future." Walter Brueggemann (in Myers 1999:206) further defines "Evangelism is an invitation to choose a new story, employing the biblical story as the definitional story of our life, and thereby authorizing people to give up, abandon and renounce other stories that have shaped their lives in false and distorting ways."

#### ***Evangelism and Mission:***

At this stage, it is important to define "mission" and "evangelism." To define these two terms is crucial in order to understand the context in which the terms are being used and applied. Although mission and evangelism are not synonymous, nevertheless, the two are indissolubly linked together and inextricably interwoven in theology and praxis. It is not the intention of the researcher to enter into a theological debate regarding mission and evangelism. The work of David Bosch (1991:368-519) *Transforming Mission*, part 3: Towards a Relevant Missiology number 12: "Elements of Emerging Ecumenical Missiology Paradigm" deals

extensively with Mission and Evangelism. For the purpose of this study, "a holistic hermeneutical practical theology," the researcher confines himself to the following working definitions of the terms:

*Mission:* The researcher refers to Bosch's (1991:412) definition of the term:

Mission denotes the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, but always related to a specific context of evil, despair, and lostness as Jesus defined his mission according to Luke 4:18f .... It embraces all activities that serve to liberate man from his slavery in the presence of the coming God, slavery which extends from economic necessity to Godforsakenness .... Mission is the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate.

This definition of mission focuses on people subject to social, economic, and political conditions in this world. There is, therefore, a convergence between liberating individuals and peoples in history and proclaiming the final coming of God's rule. According to this perspective the church is the people of God in world-occurrence and the community of people for the world.

*Evangelism:* The researcher refers to Bosch's (1991:412) definition of this term:

Evangelism involves witnessing to what God has done, is doing, and will do .... Evangelism is announcing that God, Creator and Lord of the universe, has personally intervened in human history and has done so supremely through the person and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth who is the Lord of history, Savior and liberator. In this Jesus, incarnate, crucified and risen, the reign of God has been inaugurated. Evangelism thus includes the gospel events. It is essentially, not a call to put something into effect, as if God's reign would be inaugurated by our response or thwarted by the absence of such a response.

Evangelism should not be treated as marketable products enticing people to buy. Christians are just facilitators of people's own discovery about God. As facilitators, Christians do not know the souls and hearts of people but only God does. Myers (1999:206) warns

The great danger to wrong-headed thinking about evangelism is that we will use evangelism as a way to play god in the lives of other people, believing we know the state of their soul, when they need to say yes to God, or that we know something about their future that they do not.

Evangelism is a commitment to sharing, not an announcement of expected results.

There are four bases of evangelism namely:

- Reconciliation with God through Jesus Christ
- Living a Christian life of reconciling people to each other
- Christians are themselves committed to building a better community as a result of being reconciled with God and one another, and

- Advocating, without apology, a true conversion experience (Ellison 1974:162-163).

The term “evangelism” is defined as a process of bringing people to a relationship with God and, as a result, building a better community. Christians are only facilitators of the process.

The next topic is on whether a city can be saved.

### 6.5.2 CAN A CITY BE SAVED?

A city can be saved. It is the church’s responsibility to save cities even if the viability of urbanization has become a serious question, as urbanism has become a universal characteristic of human society. Greenway (1979:60) notes “Salvation is an issue that the church and Christians must always face. Probably all Christians acknowledge that the church has a mission to the city, and surely none would dare suggest that the church is accomplishing this mission.”

Ellison (1974:135) affirms “... the central city calls for Christians to evangelize through action as well as verbal proclamation. Witnessing must not be stereotyped and limited. We must be willing to demonstrate Christ in lives of compassion and know how to articulate the Gospel.” Kyle (1988:95) notes

A biblical call to repentance and faith in Christ does not call us away from the city; it calls us to live under the lordship of Jesus Christ at every area of the city. Personal commitment to Jesus is foundational. But on that foundation we erect a model of home, living out the full implications of the gospel for urban Christians.

The urban church is increasingly finding it very difficult to evangelize in the urban centers of Malawi. Greenway (1979:61) affirms “Urban churches by the thousands in many lands fail to see and serve the city as an interdependent whole .... New living patterns ... seem to render obsolete traditional types of ministry and leave the church confused as to how to implement its mission.” Ellison (1974:135) furthermore narrates

In its concern for ministering to the whole person, the urban church must not overlook its responsibility to face people directly with their spiritual destiny. The urban evangelical must be bold yet discerning; evangelistic but not compulsive about a form of evangelism concerned about the person’s eternal destiny but equally concerned about his earthly experience. The task is to reconcile men with God, and then men with men.

### 6.5.3 THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN THE CITY

The second hypothesis is the background of this section. The hypothesis states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.

A city is the locus of decisions and crises and these directly or indirectly affect its residents. The church must recognize this challenge, then shape the ministry direction strategies accordingly. Greenway (1979:61) notes "Interdependence of people, communities, functions, and structures for power and action is the inescapable characteristics of metropolitan life." The church should also recognize the secular character of the city. Such an approach enables the church to implement a relevant ministry for the city's residents.

In Malawi, there are many churches available but diffused throughout the cities in many ways. Greenway (1979:62) comments "In some situations religion is reviving in the city and is more diversified than ever. But religion has no centrality in the metropolis. The dynamic centers are specifically secular and are little affected by religion, at least in any direct or tangible way." Therefore, the church is expected to seriously ask itself what is to be the mode, or modes, of its presence in the cities.

The church must also recognize that in the city the needs, problems, and opportunities are diverse and complex. As such, the church should try to develop multiple approaches for ministry. Greenway (1979:63) comments "They [problems] range from superstitions, fanatical types of religion to religion less existent; from nihilistic, destructive, and criminal modes of life to lofty ethical idealism ... Diversity and complexity they defy description are the marks of metropolitan society." The last recognition is the fact that the city is worth saving.

The city will not be saved until the church really wants to save it. If anything, the urban congregations are faced with a huge challenge to save the city. The congregations in Malawi have acknowledged the importance of saving individuals in the city. The fact that the city's individuals cannot be saved unless something is done to save the city itself, is not understood. Greenway (1979:64) advises "The problem is that our concept of salvation has been almost exclusively other-worldly in its orientation. We have aimed to get people to heaven, with all too little interest in liberating them from earthly hells. What is more, we have been very selective in our decisions as to whom we should try to save." Meyers (1992:200) echoes "If

we are to heal a broken world and communicate the good news in the midst of the bad, we must find dramatic new ways of practicing faith and spirituality and enable people to practice a spirituality that addresses the tragic places where life is split asunder." City evangelism needs to focus on three areas:

1. The large number of normal, weak, and immature Christians,
2. The secularization process, which is especially rapid in the urban environment,
3. The many people who follow other organized religions and worship other gods (Greenway 1979:89).

The church can make the desired difference in the city. For this to happen, it must change its previous way of doing business. The laity must be the ones doing evangelism, not the pastors.

#### 6.5.4 THE INVOLVEMENT OF LAITY IN CITY MISSION

This section takes the topic and argument raised in chapter one section 1.9.3 further. It deals with ministry as a servant of the kingdom of God. It is related to hypothesis 2 that states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.

The passage in chapter one quotes the Second Vatican Council's pastoral constitution of the church in the modern world, which reads, "with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or cultural, whether based on sex, race, colour ... is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intent."

The involvement of the laity in city evangelism points to the study's fourth hypothesis, which seeks to empower the laity for holistic ministry. Doing ministry in this way is a step ahead towards realization of the priesthood of all believers. Bakke (1987:147) says "I would suggest that the only evangelism suitable in urban contexts is personal. This means church members ministering to their own – worlds of relationship – family and extended family ...." The Holy Spirit has given spiritual gifts to all people for the edification of the church. The church's personnel problem in the cities is the core reason for requiring mobilization of all the members of the whole church. The rapid urbanization in Malawi cities both excites and bewilders the church's city-wide mission strategies.

Greenway (1979:128) advises "The role of the laity in urban evangelization should be viewed as urgently needed, biblically warranted, multi-dimensionally expressed, and pastorally activated." Bosch (1991:467) echoes this: "The movement away from ministry as the monopoly of ordained men to ministry as the responsibility of the whole people of God, ordained as well as non-ordained, is one of the most dramatic shifts taking place in the church today."

The four reasons (Greenway 1979:128-132) for necessitating the involvement of the laity in urban evangelism are:

- The paid pastors are inadequate to do urban mission due to the personal dimension in urban settings. Greenway (1979:128) notes "The limitation of time and movement by professionals simply requires that mission of God be the direct concern and task of every believer."
- The number of ordained pastors will remain too few, because the church will never have sufficient finances to employ more pastors for mission work. This is another reason why the laity must be trained to do mission work in urban Lilongwe.

Greenway (1979:129) warns

Never will there be a sufficient number of ordained men for the ever growing city populations. If we are to succeed in the city work, we must put as much or more emphasis on the mobilization of the entire membership for evangelization as we do on a trained ministry. This requires the teaching and training of all believers in the techniques and practice of witnessing.

- The emphasis on the role of laity in urban evangelization is a key issue, considering the rate of urbanization and growing masses of people coming into urban areas on a daily basis. The church needs to consolidate evangelistic gains, based upon the role of the laity in evangelization. Greenway (1979:129) comments "The expansion of any movement is in direct proportion to its success in mobilizing its total membership in continuous propagation of its beliefs."
- All God's people have the right and duty to transmit the Gospel to others. This was a clear understanding during the early church and the priesthood was pointed out to all believers. Greenway (1979:132) notes "Underlying all these lines of evidence, however, is a fundamental and profound reality. The whole church is missionary in its nature. She is radically apostolic."

The discussion of the reasons for involving the laity in doing mission in African cities is critical. It requires that Christians must be encouraged to see that proclamation of the Gospel and other verbal forms of such communication represents a doing of social activities. Furthermore, it helps people to understand that acting Christianly in every relationship is a testimony to the only Lord and Saviour. Therefore, the laity must be motivated and equipped for stating and representing all Christ's claims in every situation into which God calls and leads them to function.

### 6.5.5 THEOLOGICAL PREMISES FOR URBAN EVANGELISM

The first hypothesis guides this section further. The hypothesis narrates:

- Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.

The importance of ministry preparation, as discussed in chapter 1 section 1.8.3.2 continues in this section. The holistic model champions four important theological premises for urban mission (Greenway 1979:182–191). These premises will now be described.

1. *To teach the goal of transformation:* Urban theological education should prepare and challenge Christians to create a spiritual-corporal community that gives body and life to the reconciliation offered by God in Jesus Christ.
2. *To fulfill its goal of reconciliation:* Urban theological education should prepare Christians to carry out a shared ministry that incorporates each member according to his/her gifts into the preaching, counseling, and healing service, both within the local spiritual fellowship and in the broader community of which it is a part.
3. *To fulfill its goal of a relevant ministry:* Urban theological education must prepare Christians for the painful process of re-evaluating their lives and ministry in the light of their immediate and broader context. For this task, a serious study of the social, economic, and anthropological sciences in an inter-relation with theology is imperative.
4. *To fulfill its goal of critical theological education in inter-disciplinary self examination:* Urban theological education should prepare men and women to define and put into action programs of love and justice at local, national, regional and international levels.

If urban congregations are to implement these theological education premises, a theology for urban mission and, consequently, theological education for urban missions in Malawi must be relevant to the extent that the congregations will relate fully to the life of the urban communities. Shorter (1994:57) states "The activity of evangelization should be an integral part of the life of a baptized Christian, but does not mean that the evangelizer acts alone .... Community-building is linked to evangelization, it is also true that evangelization is a community responsibility." Greenway (1979:193) affirms

This requires an education that is contextually aware and a theology of the city that moves beyond pietistic retreat. When Christians enter into a responsible relation with their fellow city dwellers, show what it means to be obedient disciples of Christ, and give a living testimony of faith in Him, urban mission will take on new relevance.

Some important practical guidelines for urban ministry will include: training for multiple ministries, for integral ministries, and for informed ministries.

The influence of indigenous churches will now receive attention.

#### 6.5.6 THE INFLUENCE OF THE INDEPENDENT CHURCHES IN URBAN AREAS

This section deals further with the third hypothesis that realizes the need for churches to have co-operation ecumenically, as well as with municipal councils, medical and social city services. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

In African cities, shantytowns and slums in particular, Independent Churches are making effective inroads in townships surrounding Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu in Malawi, Harare and Bulawayo in Zimbabwe, Lusaka in Zambia, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Pretoria in South Africa. In these cities Independent Churches have many followers. Because of this fact, therefore, the researcher deems it necessary to incorporate these churches in this study. These churches, too, require implementation of a holistic hermeneutical practical theological approach to ministry.

A brief historical background of Independent Churches is crucial at this stage. Daneel's book, *Quest for belonging* (1991), provides a valuable study of these Churches. Daneel (1991:9) states "These churches ... may indeed be seen as the fifth major Christian church type, after the Eastern Orthodox churches, the Roman Catholic Church, the Protestant Reformation, and

the Pentecostal churches.” In this book, Daneel argues that, in developing an intimate corporate life, the Independent Churches compensate for the lack of love in the historical churches.

Daneel (1991:18-19) comments “... the root cause of the entire Independent Church movement in the missions’ failure to demonstrate consistently the biblical concept of love in the African context ... at the heart of this whole movement, directly or indirectly, will be found the sin of the white man against the black.”

The Independent Churches have some influence in African urban centers. There are many churches that originated and grew in the cities. The objective of studying these Independent Churches is to learn how they implement their ministry activities. The information will enable the Reformed faith to plan accordingly in working with such groups. There are variations of Independent Churches in urban centers. Daneel (1991:134) comments “Martin West’s comments on the appeal of the Independent Churches in Soweto (Johannesburg) and their value in the urban community have sufficient universal validity to warrant our attention.”

In the urban centers the Independent Churches are making an important contribution because they are emerging as reorientation centers. This study examines eight activities with a view to understanding the nature of activities depicted as a quest for belonging (Daneel 1991:134-137).

1. *Fellowship*: Individuals use the term “brother” and “sister” signifying a sense of unity since all belong to the same church. The importance of this is that it breeds a sense of solidarity.
2. *Social intercourse*: In the urban centers there is no or little sense of community. The Independent Churches provide an association for forming friendships. In this way, individuals are recognized and are able to cope with the problems of urban life.
3. *Sense of identity*: Instead of isolation and frustration, the Independent Churches afford members a new sense of personal worth. This is made possible through leaders who, among others, visit people and accommodate their real needs.
4. *Protection*: The leadership constantly gives advice, help with finding jobs, and with business matters. They encourage self-confidence in members, and constantly offer exposure to witness and proclamation.

5. *Social supervision*: The church leadership sets behavioral codes, such as prohibition of smoking, liquor, dancing and extramarital sex. Other codes concern marriage. The codes assist in the areas of social control purposes.
6. *Inter-ethnic contact*: The fact that people of different cultures live together in urban centers, this is an opportunity for people of different languages and cultural backgrounds to worship together. In this sphere, the church is making a valuable contribution.
7. *Information service and mutual aid*: Another area in which the church is making a notable contribution is information service and mutual aid. People are given useful information regarding job opportunities, transport systems and where to apply for housing. They help with funeral expenses and other necessary material aid. Daneel (1991:136) notes "West found that in Soweto the offer of material help in particular persuaded people to join some active Independent Churches congregations."
8. *Leadership*: Independent Churches have a system that offers little opportunity for leadership. The exercise of authority in these churches provides an outlet for political frustration. Daneel (1991:137) notes "Soweto's Independent Churches provide a blend of old and new which is particularly attractive to the people who join them." Important is to recognize that the group is able to give both moral and material support in times of need, and assists individuals in their adjustment to city life.

Independent Churches are currently implementing the discussed activities in urban centers of Africa. Reformed ministers should take note of these activities with a view to identify common areas that require joint efforts to ensure effective ministry. Working in partnership with Independent Churches in the cities of Africa is a step ahead towards ecumenical alliances. The need for ecumenical alliances is discussed at length in the ninth pillar of this chapter.

At this stage five pillars of holistic approach to ministry have been covered. They are: The ministry in a new era and context; Urban ministry among the poor requires community participation; Proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas; Spiritual development and urban evangelism.

In developing the five pillars, all the four hypotheses were confirmed and proved effective for implementing a holistic hermeneutical practical theology model in urban ministry. The sixth pillar is on pastoral care.

## 6.6 THE CITY MISSION REQUIRES EFFECTIVE PASTORAL CARE

This pillar discusses the importance of a holistic approach to ministry further. It also takes and the definition of mission as documented in section 6.5.1. The pillar also examines three (the second, third and fourth) hypotheses:

- Participation of the shantytowns and slums residents
- Formation of urban joint forums for development, and
- Empowering the poor to address problems amicably.

The pillar deals with two subsections.

- The youth ministry, and
- The congregational care of the urban church.

### 6.6.1 URBAN YOUTH MINISTRY

This section further examines chapters 1 section 1.8.4.1 on the hermeneutical-communicative praxis in a holistic ministry and chapter 2, section 2.6, on the influence of the Pentecostal movements. As a result of a biased ministry implementation which focuses on “soul care” only, many people, particularly the youth, who professed the Reformed faith have withdrawn their membership from the CCAP and have joined Pentecostal movements. Some reasons for their membership withdrawals concern the fact that the CCAP leadership is legalist and does not want to involve the youth in its ministry implementation.

Youth ministry is one of the most challenging areas in the cities and yet the most rewarding ministry of the church. It requires knowledge of what really wins the youth to faith and helps them to get into their stride as growing Christians. DeVrie (1994:14) comments “... every one of us knows that churches die down like forests when they do not win the next generation to faith in Jesus Christ.” One of the ways to ensure faith development in the youth is to implement family-based youth ministry. DeVrie's research was done in the USA. Since cities and the forces that create and drive them, are Western and capitalistic in origin, it quite remarkable how well it applies to cities everywhere – to Malawian cities as well.

The African saying puts it well: “It takes a village to raise a child, and the first village for every human being is the family of origin.” Working with the youth will never be easy. A long-term effective approach to any Christian ministry to teenagers is crucial. DeVrie

(1994:18) advises "One of the secrets to a lasting ministry with teenagers is to find ways to under-gird nuclear families with the rich support of the extended Christian family of the church and for these two formative families to work together in leading young people toward mature Christian adulthood."

The Malawian church faces serious challenges, as the traditional theory to ministry currently being implemented, cannot adequately win the youth to faith.

#### **6.6.1.1 Challenges in traditional youth ministry**

Isolation is the most frightening situation faced by the youth. It, more than any other factor, precipitated the critical deterioration of public education and the breakdown of Christian families. In describing the study conducted on a group of teenagers in a suburban setting, revealed this unprecedented neglect of teenagers by adults. DeVrie (1994:36) reports "The study documented the very large amount of time that teenagers spend alone and the dangerously limited contact they actually have with the adults."

The adults have separated from the teenagers in the following ways (DeVrie 1994:3637):

- The fathers' vocational choices remove them from the homes for lengthy periods of time
- An increase in the number of working mothers
- A critical escalation in the divorce rate
- A rapid increase in single-parent families
- A steady decline in the extended family
- The evolution of the physical environment of the home
- The replacement of adults by the peer group
- The isolation of children from the working world
- The insulation of schools from the rest of society.

In addition to isolation, the teenagers also experience problems as a result of schedules at schools, social activities, the church, families and communities. DeVrie (1994:37) comments "In neighborhood, schools, social activities, their own families and even at church, young people are afforded less and less opportunity to be with adults."

The church is the one place where young people could logically be linked to the world of adults, but this is not the case with most churches. The teenagers continue to be isolated even at churches. DeVrie (1994:41) affirms

It might be hoped that churches would stand in the gap ... But sadly enough, for many teenagers, the place they are most segregated from the world of teenagers from the world of the adults is their church. And churches with the more successful youth programs seem to particularly exacerbate this problem.

Waruta (1995:112) echoes "Many churches have commendable Sunday School programmes for children up to early teenage. However many churches do not cater for the needs of some teenage and young adults. The youth therefore feel neglected." Any new models for youth ministry that the church develops must take seriously the teenagers' growth toward mature Christian adulthood as they are connected to the total body of Christ, not isolated from it. One contributing factor for teenagers' isolation in Malawian urban congregations is that parents do not attend church services together with the youth. This makes it difficult for parents to know what the youth are involved in. As a solution to the problem, the parents must be urged to attend services together with the youth, as a family.

#### **6.6.1.2 Treating adolescents as adults**

Another corresponding challenge to youth ministry is the fact of adolescents being treated as adults. DeVrie (1994:54) states "Perhaps the most tragic shift over the past fifty years has been that we have begun to treat adolescents as adults rather than as children in transition toward adulthood." The danger of this shift is that the lines between childhood and adulthood have become increasingly blurred. If this situation is not checked, the young people will develop their own culture, which, in most cases, places teenagers at cross purposes with their own development. DeVrie (1994:56) advises "Youth culture, like most youth ministries, is essentially an orphaning structure. It does not carry its members through life; rather, it orphans them at the time they are most in need of a stable culture."

The inadequacy of this traditional approach is that, in most churches, the youth are given a responsibility to each other in the process of Christian education. It is sad that those given the responsibility to teach others are themselves in dire need for spiritual growth. This leads to a well-known saying of Jesus Christ: A blind man leading another blind man – leads into chaos. The holistic model emphasizes the vision of family-based ministry replacing the traditional one.

### **6.6.1.3 The vision of family-based youth ministry**

A family-based youth ministry is an ideal strategy, as the real power for faith formation is not in the youth program but in the families and the extended family of the church. The church must create house groups where young people can be involved in a great experience of building friendships with Christian adults. Critical is that large trees grow by two means: either by being planted or by being pruned. Family-based youth ministry does just that effectively. DeVrie (1994:63) comments

Almost without exception, those young people who are growing in their faith as adults were teenagers who .... came from the families where Christian growth was modeled in at least one of the parents or .... with adults within the church that had become an extended family for them.

In order to ensure effective family-based ministry, the church must endeavor to equip parents, themselves, to communicate the faith to their teenagers. DeVrie (1994:66) states "Churches can learn to be just as intentional about equipping parents as they are developing programs for children and youth." Furthermore, the church must equip the extended family of the church. As the youth hear adults speaking of their own faith experiences, they learn how to describe their own experiences of God. DeVrie (1994:66) warns "Without strong ties to specific extended families for example, church, neighborhood, nation, nuclear families have become self-perpetuating breeding grounds for rootlessness and alienation."

Urban congregations should consider assigning the youth ministry to a minister to deal with the teenagers' spiritual development. The minister must work with the parents in implementing the ministry, because doing youth ministry without parents is like driving a car without an engine. A car without an engine simply has no lasting power. DeVrie (1994:74) comments "By focusing on equipping parents and the extended Christian family, churches can maintain an open and flexible stance toward the changes that will be demanded of youth ministry in the twenty-first century."

### **6.6.1.4 Problems in today's family**

In order to implement a holistic family-based youth ministry, the ministers must take family problems seriously. One way of doing this, is to conduct effective pastoral visits to families, in addition to preaching family-based sermons with a view to motivate and cultivate parents' initial love. Family-based youth ministry may face problems with family situations such as:

1. *The immature Christian parent:* Such parents cannot become good Christian models. The youth cannot be well nurtured, due to a lack of a foundational Christian base.
  
2. *The helpless parent:* Today's parents have become victims of their own schedules. They feel helpless and no longer in control of their own priorities. The most common problem is the busy schedules of adults - they do not have time. As a result of this, parents are unable to handle their own children. DeVrie (1994:94) states "Parents in the church feel threatened and out of their depth when it comes to communicating the message of the Gospel to their children. They are not only insecure in their grasp of the Gospel, they are insecure in their grasp of their children."
  
3. *Decline of the family:* Although families are declining due to different cultural trends, yet, parents have taken youth education as a priority. Parents are becoming hungry to involve children in day-to-day activities more than ever before. This is a positive phenomenon indeed. DeVrie (1994:97) narrates "They want to spend more time with their children. They feel acutely the need to be better equipped as parents. As a result, the climate is ripe for parents to become increasingly involved in programs that can equip them in the spiritual formation of their children."

Adults unfairly criticize the youth simply because they do not really understand and know the needs of the youth. Many parents simply find it much easier to reluctantly give the youth what they want, rather than to listen to them, explore other options, or to show them what they should have. There is no communication between the youth and their parents. This is one of the reasons why the holistic hermeneutical model has been developed. It seeks to understand the prevailing situations of parents as well as children.

Parents should remember that the generation gap requires them to fully understand the needs of the youth. Schutze *et al* (1991:3) note "One of the great myths of contemporary life is that youth today have little in common with youth of the past." Today's youth are in a different world of musical, hair, and clothing styles as well as electronic technologies. Schutze *et al* (1991:4) affirm "Electronic technologies feed this seemingly insatiable appetite for new cultural expressions and experiences. Today's electronic media are far more market-sensitive to generational change than any media of the past."

Faced with their own irrelevance, parents increasingly look to other adults, especially teachers and youth workers, to assist their youth. Yet, even those people are not well equipped to raise their own children. In order to turn the situation around, the urban congregations must involve parents in issues of the youth.

Through such involvement, parents will creatively orientate the youth into adult tasks and responsibilities. Many parents find it much easier and less time-consuming to turn their children loose in the adolescent culture. Schute *et al* (1991:5) narrate

Thus it is far easier, for example, to buy teenagers their own TV sets and VCRs than to watch programs with them and discuss what is worth viewing. In effect, parental attitudes have usually aided the corporations, especially those involving the electronic media, that market products to adolescents.

#### **6.6.1.5 Planned immaturity and buying happiness**

Another two challenging issues of the day are planned immaturity and buying happiness. Today it is fairly common for 40 year-old men and women dressing like their teenage children, some even undergo surgery to rejuvenate their faces and bodies. These adult "adolescents" hope to prolong their youth as long as they can. In their view, maturity steals the joy and fun from life.

Schutze *et al* (1991:6) note "... the postponement of maturity is an attempt to hang on to youthfulness as long as possible. Unfortunately, such delayed maturity extends the identity and intimacy crises faced by so many North American teenagers." The purpose of much entertainment today frequently is to develop devoted customers by offering what few seem to have. No wonder that the rise of the entertainment industry then parallels the decline of local sources of authority and models of communication.

The media regard themselves as quasi-parents who help the youth to find their way in a rapidly changing society. Schutze *et al* (1991:7) comment "Put simply, probably the most important trend in youth entertainment is the marketing of happiness 'which has much to do with identity and intimacy' through products and services." For sure, there are good and bad products, including musical recordings, but no products should substitute for interpersonal nurture. As things now stand, both the entertainment industry and many local authority figures treat the youth as mere objects or receptors to be moulded by good or bad consumption. Schutze *et al* (1991:55) warn

With the media-inspired national youth culture comes generational discontinuity and crises of authority. Traditionally parents have raised their children, but now the electronic media accomplish much of the socialization of youth .... And very often youth seem to turn intentionally to the media for the guidance and support that they fail to receive at home.

This will not take the church any further. As long as families, schools, neighborhoods, churches, and the like, do not help provide more inviting, healthy, and personal ways of meeting these psycho-relational needs, the media will play an overbearing role in determining what the youth deem worthwhile and significant. Schutze *et al* (1991:74) argue

... that technology cannot by itself solve the youth 'problem,' history shows us that advances in communications technologies have not solved major social problems of the past. Ironically, new electronic communications technologies have often fostered, not cured, certain crises in authority and generational discontinuity that plague families, schools, ethnic groups, religious organizations, racial neighborhoods, and the like.

#### **6.6.1.6 Procedures in the religious education of adolescents**

The challenges that face the modern youth, as discussed above, warrant effective youth ministry and religious education. The process of youth ministry should focus on guidance, counseling and administration. Ratcliff and Davies (1991:217) note "There are three main forms of intentional education, namely instruction, guidance and counseling, and administration."

Three main forms of intentional education will now be described.

*Instruction:* is the process through which learning, in some way, is caused in an individual.

*Guidance/counselling:* is a process by which the youth are assisted in fulfilling their human potential, in negotiating the tasks of development, and in solving special personal problems.

*Administration:* is the process of directing, controlling, and managing instructional and guidance activities.

In the critical process of youth education, "reflective teaching" is the name given to the act of continuous instructional awareness. Ratcliff and Davies (1991:232) comment "... reflective teaching as the cognitive process by which an educator thinks about what has happened in the instructional even, why it happened, and what else could have been done to attain the desired

learning outcome.” John Smyth (in Ratcliff & Davies 1991:232) sees reflective teaching as proceeding along four sequential steps:

- i. Describing - what did I do?
- ii. Informing - what does it mean?
- iii. Confronting – how did I come to do this or be like this?
- iv. Reconstructing – how might I do things differently?

The reflective teaching is a process of self-questioning. The youth are guided in this process of self-finding socialization. This is the right direction to lead the youth into hermeneutic-communicative methods which the holistic model is championing.

#### **6.6.1.7 The holistic pastoral care of urban youth**

In African cities many children are roaming the streets day and night searching for a place to sleep and for food. Shorter (1991:110) describes a boy (nicknamed Kalulu) who was killed in a car accident in a Kenyan city, Nairobi. He notes

Driving is erratic in the city and accidents are far too numerous. In fact, a few days before the boy's death, I myself had given conditional absolution to a man lying in the road in a pool of blood ... But what was a small boy of eight doing on these dangerous roads at night?

Kalulu was a street scavenger, one of thousands of such children who roam the street day and night, scavenging for food in dustbins and rubbish dumps. Greenway and Monsma (1989:184) define "street people" as follows

A broad term that covers a heterogeneous population with one thing in common: its members are homeless. A wide variety of individuals is included: runaway boys and girls, displaced families, legal and illegal refugees, prostitutes, alcoholics and drug addicts, the aged and senile, and the mentally retarded.

At night, they sleep in a huddle under newspapers or cardboard in the markets or public toilets. It is difficult to wean them from the freedom of the streets. Shorter (1991:111) further narrates, “He begged from everybody. He was everyone's child. In my earlier, idealistic days I tried to help Kalulu by giving him some new clothes that I had received for poor children.”

Many children like Kalulu are not at home during the day or night because home does not really exist for them. Many urban poor are uprooted from home because of systemic forces such as homelessness. Meyers (1992:269) notes “... the homeless are victims of bewildering transition ... sufferers of a kind of social shell shock, totally unprepared for coping with a

society whose economy and social arrangements have dramatically shifted.” Browning (1991:211) asks

How do we reconcile the Christian demand that we offer hospitality to the homeless, the persecuted, and the refugees of this world, and the demand of citizenship to obey the law? More specially, how do we reconcile discipleship with citizenship when this law has been established in a liberal democracy?

That children spend most of their time in the cities searching for security and food, is a risky factor for spreading Aids and drug abuse. Shorter (1991:112) comments

It goes without saying that decent people frown on prostitution, thieving and drug taking, yet, from the point of view of the street children themselves, these are survival strategies. Girls are seldom prostitutes from choice. They may be using their only available asset, the ability to exploit the sexual proclivities of men. In most cases, these children were born in towns, and their fathers are unknown. For them, the best solution is to develop the gang principle for security reasons and artificial families.

Meyers (1992:280) warns “The risk of AIDS infection for teenagers and young adults who are exploring their sexuality and experimenting with drugs represents the next wave of the epidemic, especially within communities already heavily affected by alcohol, drug addiction, and AIDS.” The urban congregations in Lilongwe should seek to implement youth activities with the purpose of rehabilitating these street children. Shorter (1991:119) comments “What is done for youth in urban parishes falls under four main headings: youth associations, choirs, sports and special activities.” The city is, indeed, a place of mission, of ministry with vision, creativity, persistence, tolerance, acceptance of others, prayer, and lay and ministerial involvement. It is the place, which now needs the best in missions.

#### **6.6.1.8 Implications for CCAP urban ministry**

If the urban congregational ministries are to have a lasting impact, the ministers must move away from the traditional model of placing highly programmed youth activities at the heart of their work. Instead, they must give a central place to the more significant ministry of connecting young people to their own families and extended church family. The following are some helpful points:

1. Family-based programming should be given a higher priority than traditional youth programming. It is likely that the church will never get round to the task of building a solid foundation for its youth ministry.

2. Youth ministers must orientate parents to youth programs each year by documenting for them the incredible power that they have in their children's lives. The parents should join the church as covenantal partners in the nurturing and Christian education of their children.
3. The leadership of any church should understand the importance of programming for parents of children and teenagers as being central and foundational for the youth ministry.
4. Establish a congregational research committee to investigate issues affecting the youth and determine ways that the church can provide more opportunities for the teenagers in the church to build relationships with the adults. Let the youth participate in the research processes so that they can develop a sense of critical thinking. Since, without the habit of critical thinking, our teenagers become easy prey to anyone who has something to sell.
5. Youth-based ministry has some limitations due to the problems affecting families. Therefore, maintaining a vision for family-based youth ministry does not mean that all the programs will be successful. It does mean that the church will continue to try a variety of programs that can help the church to faithfully lead young people toward mature Christian adulthood.

The next topic is on congregational care.

#### 6.6.2 THE CONGREGATIONAL CARE OF THE URBAN CHURCH

This section discusses the issues documented in chapter 1 section 1.8.4.1 and chapter 3, section 3.5.7.4 further. The ministers in Lilongwe city discussed these issues during a workshop held in June 2001 at Dzenza CCAP. The section also examines the second hypothesis that states:

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the ministry.

The results of the research conducted in Lilongwe revealed congregational issues requiring the church's urgent attention. The issues comprised: a high rate of unemployment leading to poverty, the scourge of Aids, prostitution practices, and threats of Satanism, Islam, paganism, to name but a few. If the church is to make any impact, it must position itself anew to address these problems.

The implementation of congregational care in Lilongwe congregations is extremely vital and much rewarding. The urban context reveals various pastoral situations that face the ministers. Louw (1998:351) narrates "However it does help if pastors have a particular structural framework which enables them to fulfill their pastoral functions more purposefully." This situation requires redefining the pastoral care approach in terms of the complexities and problems facing the post-modern society.

The area on which to focus should concern meeting the secular person's need for intimacy, spiritual needs, humanity and the quest for meaning. The urban people are currently suffering intensely. This leads to their frustration and loss of hope. In such circumstances, people look to the minister and church leaders to initiate hope and faith in God's promises. Louw (1998:305) comments "They [the ministers] must be able to interpret life's issues in the light of the Word of God and the Word of God in the light of life issues. This task faces pastoral care with the challenge of biblical counseling and the application of God's promises to problematic situations."

Waruta (1995:19) affirms "Biblically based pastoral counseling therefore emphasizes the role of faith in the process of restoration to wholeness and dependence on God through prayer. This is one of the most successful approaches to pastoral counseling and the restoration of persons to wholeness." In order to ensure effective ministry, urban congregational care must implement various modes of biblical counseling, inter alia (Louw 1998: 317-320):

- *Admonishing*: A process of confrontation as a variant of constructive challenging. It strives to change sinful behavior, and not to reject a person as a sinner and therefore should always be accompanied by an attitude of love.
- *Teaching and instruction*: A process of developing new perspectives and communicating correct information for the purpose of changing a person's views of a matter.

- *Recalling:* This is a reflection on the Scriptures, which promotes the focus of thoughts on positive contents. Familiar passages stimulate constructive memories. This recalling enables people to experience security and safety.
- *Comfort and consolation:* This process uses Scripture to articulate a particular emotion, condition, or feeling.
- *Transformation:* Restructured behavior as a result of changing the value system, priorities in life and ethical codes of behavior.
- *Representation:* The process of sustaining and encouraging people by using their own experience of God's comfort as a means to comfort them.
- *Witness and proclamation:* Proclamation is a key in pastoral counseling. Situations often arise in which the minister conveys information in the form of a prophetic proclamation.
- *The narrative approach and story-telling:* In some cases, Bible stories are told in order to make the person aware of God's concrete, active presence in our human history.
- *Doxology:* This is used as a mode of biblical counseling, its aim is to encourage the person to praise, worship and thank God. This is usually used when a person experiences gratitude and discovers that God's grace is a gift, that life itself is a gracious gift.

Through its hermeneutic communication, the holistic model is developed in such a way as to enable ministers' assistance to the suffering groups. The aim is to ease and address the pain and discomfort that people experience.

The next sub-section explains how the church can identify with human suffering.

#### **6.6.2.1 Pastoral care to the suffering**

Hermeneutic-communicative praxis is the key if pastoral care to the suffering is to make any difference. The African urban centers are largely plagued by HIV/ AIDS, which brings much human suffering. Waruta and Kinoti (2000:94) comment "AIDS is a major problem in many countries especially in East, Central and Southern Africa .... AIDS comes on top of Africa's already intolerable burden of economic, social and health problems."

The urban church, which does not identify with suffering, is biblically out of touch with life's realities. Intense pain creates the impression that God is absent. Therefore, the ministers' knowledge of the use of lament during the period of suffering may encourage the people to communicate their pain by lamenting to God. Louw (1998:330) consoles "God reveals his compassion for suffering humankind in Christ's suffering. This identification between God and suffering confirms the covenantal faithfulness of God: I will ... be your God - Genesis 17:7."

In commenting on the stigma that HIV/AIDS has brought to the modern world, Waruta and Kinoti (2000:94) note "It is a highly stigmatizing disease and patients with it fear discovery, discrimination, rejection and abandonment. It involves the victim's feelings of hopelessness, uselessness, guilt, shame, loneliness, pain and fear of losing one's mental and physical faculties during the progression of the infection and finally death."

Meyers (1992:275) echoes

Then AIDS came along. Caring broke down. Families sometimes fled; communities were often idle or indifferent; churches and clergy frequently stood in judgment; and the once idealized medical establishment initially had little to offer and in some places even less inclination to provide it.

The biblical counseling aims at making it possible for the interaction between the day-to-day experiences with Scriptures. Only then a person gets the meaning and understanding of who God is. Louw (1998:317) narrates "Biblical counseling in a pastoral hermeneutics tries to link the history of salvation to the history of suffering. It attempts to mediate the Word of God to the world and to enhance the interaction between 'God-talk' and 'self-talk.'" In pastoral care to suffering there are numerous challenges of which some are anger, desperation, tribulation (theodicy), despair, depression, grief and affliction, death, dying and the terminal condition, loneliness, anxiety and fear, homelessness, and lack of food and other essentials.

People need to be counselled in all these areas. Louw (1998:351) advises "A definite method and a perspective system for using Scripture, clearly does not exist because the various pastoral situations are too distinctive and dynamic." The urban pastor must understand the situation of people hermeneutically. There must be a dialogue between pastors and congregational members. This approach frees people to share the challenges being experienced. Pastoral counseling is very important in urban centers, particularly due to the

rapid changes in the economic, social and political life of most urban dwellers. Waruta (1995:3) comments

While the traditional African society provided definite support systems in response to life pressures for persons of all ages, these systems are no longer available and the contemporary African person has to suffer psychological pressures with little or no chance of finding reasonable and acceptable help.

In commenting about congregational care in a Black Pentecostal Church, Browning (1991:243) notes "The Scriptures are the clear and unambiguous classics of the church. The minister and the congregation are in a playful yet serious dialogue with them. It affects all aspects of the church, including pastoral and congregational care."

Hermeneutical models and counseling approaches to pastoral care are very helpful in that they articulate people's problematic situations, thereby allowing conversation and dialogue. Browning (1991:247) advises "All social interaction, even that between therapists and clients, takes the shape of historically situated dialogue. This is why ministers and Christian counselors have the right to bring their religious commitments into their helping dialogues with others. In truth, there is no way to escape it."

As a result of continued depression, grief, fear and desperation, urban dwellers experience God as distant and uninvolved. God's compassion and identification with human suffering is questioned. The people need to be encouraged to have hope for the future. Urban pastors are, therefore, challenged to hermeneutically understand the life situation of people to whom they preach. Louw (1998:305) comments

If pastors are going to be able to generate hope in God's promises and to edify the person concerned, then they must be able to interpret life's issues in the light of the Word of God, and the Word of God in the light of life's issues. Pastoral care faces this task with the challenge of biblical counseling and the application of God's promises to problematic situations.

Browning (1991:248) confirms "The counselor creates change by becoming simultaneously a metaphor both for past figures in the person's life and for the Spirit of God in Christ." The HIV/AIDS pandemic is a huge challenge as no single household on the continent is spared. The situation is much worse in African urban centers. This challenge calls for effective pastoral care to the suffering. What is amazing is that the church, an institution supposed to be in the forefront to fight against the AIDS pandemic, is far from it.

The silence on the AIDS situation seems to be an international phenomenon. Meyers (1992:281) notes "Although a decade has passed since U.S. society was first confronted with the AIDS crisis, many churches have remained strikingly ineffectual, not recognizing the extent to which the epidemic mirrors the broader problem of our culture: poverty." Once again, pastors of Malawian urban congregations have a responsibility to break the silence on HIV/AIDS. They must develop educational materials directed towards the young about drugs, sex, and AIDS. Meyers (1992:282) comments

Most clergy have missed the complexity and nuances of AIDS and its diverse sufferers. AIDS is not only about dying; it is about living with an often-brutal disease that may span many years of an individual's life. AIDS is about healing and support for people continuing to work and play as they live with AIDS ... for those who are dying from it.

Urban congregations should begin to develop AIDS/HIV strategies. They must have powerful AIDS visionary strategies for fighting the disease in the city. Waruta and Kinoti (2000:95) state "It is the Christian duty of the Church to provide pastoral care to the victims and families, relatives and friends of those suffering from AIDS." In addition, the congregations should be hospitable to those who suffer, to those who grieve and to those who struggle. Meyers (1992:283) asks

When should the parish start a particular AIDS ministry? When might it work with other religious or community groups? When could it deploy its people into already existing programs? When does it recognize that at a particular moment its energies must go into caring for the sick, the dying, and the bereaved in its midst?

Aids is not somebody else's problem, it is everyone's problem. Therefore, it is important that the ministers in the urban congregations should open their ears and hear, open mouths and speak the Gospel's language of love, truth, and justice in the midst of this grave human crisis.

The documentation on a city mission, as a rare opportunity for pastoral care, has now been concluded. In this pillar three hypotheses (2, 3, and 4) have been confirmed and proved effective in doing holistic hermeneutical practical theology. The next pillar is about the need to build communities for effective ministry in urban centers.

## 6.7 BUILDING URBAN FAITH COMMUNITIES

The fourth hypothesis guides further the seventh pillar of the theory of holistic hermeneutical practical theology ministry. The hypothesis states:

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and as such is unable to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

The hypothesis points to the need of the CCAP to discontinue operating within the clerical paradigm and requires the empowerment of local Christians to take charge of their situations.

The work of Rasmussen (documented in section 6.1.4) on moral fragments and moral community, a proposal for Church in Society, is further discussed in this pillar. The quest for modernity that has damaged and destroyed the community (the backbone for morality) has prompted the use of this book. The purpose is to develop steps through which to build the faith communities in urban Malawi.

The pillar has six sub topics namely:

- Congregations as generators of community
- A family as a congregational support for the urban community
- The church in modern and postmodern society
- A church as a community of moral conviction
- The nature of communities, and
- The mission in the African urban communities.

For Gospel advancement to ensure that essentially there are effective communities in Lilongwe, is a critical matter. Urban people, by nature, are mobile and therefore not static as a community responsible for caring for the needs of others. The holistic approach emphasizes the importance of mutual communality where a person is no more a stranger, but a citizen.

Universally, the quest for modernity has done great damage by destroying the community, which is the backbone for morality. Rasmussen (1993:9) laments

Fraternity/community/solidarity – the radiant virtue in the sacred triad with liberty and equality all but forgotten in modern democracies, a loss for which we now pay a frightful price. Community, the nexus that humanizes and harmonizes the other two,

keeps liberty, so prone to abuse ... able to reconcile these contentious siblings, community saves.

Community is extremely important, because it forms conscience and conviction. Formed conscience acts as moral conviction – therefore, conscience and conviction are a matter of community. Rasmussen (1993:12) notes “The word conscience comes from *con-scire*, ‘to know together.’ Conscience is the ethical compass of character, and character is formed in community, as moral convictions themselves are.” A community is most essential in life as it is the matrix of moral life itself. Rasmussen (1993:12) states “No community, no moral life; no moral life, no society worth living in – it is as simple and basic as that.” A community is the most fundamental and far reaching for all people.

It is “the primary good” that people distribute to one another in its membership. People without community membership are stateless. Rasmussen (1993:13) comments “The primary aspiration of all history is a genuine community of human beings. Yet we are invariably at a loss to specify what ‘genuine’ in ‘genuine community’ genuinely means. Or what community membership as ‘the primary good’ is humanely about.” Suburban settings call for different kinds of congregational life (than the rural); that in itself provides the community that people need.

Mead (1996:53) notes “There congregations can still be a focus in which the whole life of the whole neighborhood is celebrated and offered to God in the community of faith.” In great occasions of worship, urban congregations in Lilongwe have the ability to be communities. The pastors through preaching and leading worship can bring the gift of community to incredibly diverse groups. Mead (1996:54) comments “For the most part, however, urban congregations have to seek ways in which the congregation can support the development of human community in the larger society.”

### 6.7.1 CONGREGATIONS AS GENERATORS OF COMMUNITY

The congregation can be a generator of a community in several ways, depending on its setting. Mead (1996:55) states “But whatever it is, a congregation has a function of being a generator of community - an institution that seeks by what it does to stimulate opportunities for people to find community with others.” There are four ways through which congregations are already working to create communities namely:

1. *The image of the house church:* This was used in widely disparate forms. House churches have been around forever. The congregations described in the New Testament were probably house churches. Mead (1996:55) notes "Characteristically a group of families covenant together to become a church, and they build the structures and patterns of life they need. House churches often fulfill a need for intimacy and closeness that ordinary congregations cannot sustain."
  
2. *The church groups:* Part of the church's task is to recognize the opportunities of groups to generate community in the ordinary interactions that make up congregational life. Mead (1996:56) advises
 

Congregations need to understand the rich opportunity for generating community that already exists in ordinary congregational groups. Established groups, such as Sunday school classes, choirs, teachers' groups, guilds, even committees, can get so focused on their assignments that they simply overlook the chance to help generate community ....
  
3. *The church board meetings:* The meetings of the church boards can also be a means through which a community is generated. Mead (1996:56) advises "Church boards have a special calling to transform themselves from places noted for slogging, depressing work to places of community and spiritual growth."
  
4. *The small groups:* The small groups have the capacity to generate community within the congregations. The experts of small-group advocates include three different types of small-group development, each with its true believers. Mead (1996:57) comments "Local congregations need to be in business of generating small-group opportunities for their people - small groups tasked with no specific purpose other than being community with one another within the context of faith."

Commenting on the importance of small groups as a process of forming communities, Rasmussen (1993:71) affirms "It is largely by way of relatively intact small-scale communities with some staying power that we learn trust, temper individualism as a moral style...." Churches have much to offer as generators of community in a society that is increasingly deprived of community. Members of congregations have a right to call upon the church to help them connect with community.

## 6.7.2 THE FAMILY AS NUCLEAR SUPPORT FOR THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Chapter 1 section 1.8.3.2 "Ministry preparation" receives further attention in this section.

The congregational abilities to support and generate communities can still be strong in large cities where people are mobile. A family unit is very critical in community formation despite the breakdown in family life, so deplored by society's leaders. It is clear that most people's primary experience of community occurs within the family. Mead (1996:60) states "... it is in families that most ordinary people find that sense of closeness that fosters the growth of identity. Most people go to family when hurt or damaged by life experience. And, for many people, family is where they can count on being taken in, no matter what."

In normal life patterns and experiences, people are often confronted with dilemmas and challenges. In such cases the congregation is seen to be "another family" that people turn to for assistance and consolation. Augsburger (1986:179) notes "The family is best understood as a living system. composed of members who do not function independently of one another but as a united whole." Mead (1996:60) affirms

The congregation is one of the new family back-up systems in our society. Simply being there at the critical events that make and shape families is a central function of congregations - the bonding of two people, the birth or adoption of children ... the uncertainties of new challenges, the farewells of death.

On the importance of family in forming a community, Rasmussen (1993:40) affirms

With the uprising of the modern world, then, separation occurred between community as place and community as experience. If there was continuity at all, it was community as that blessed company of family, friends, and acquaintances who satisfied the never-dying need for intimacy and belonging, that sanctified church which gathered the emotions and catered ....

The congregations are also helpful in areas of supporting people to look beyond their own personal life or even family life and also to support community by challenging people towards generosity and becoming experts in their own family and congregational life. Our society has lost many of the ingredients that made for community, Even a new individualism has appeared that divides and separates.

Mead (1996:61) narrates "Congregations, caught up in their own survival and enculturated in the larger societal trends, have lost much of their ability to be a community, to generate community for their people, or even, in some cases, to support community." The gift of community, so badly needed by society, has not been well cared for within the church. It is

very pathetic to note, as Christians, of all people, were supposed to nourish community because God has been a God of community from the beginning.

Mead (1996:61) notes "It is doubly ironic that we are the people to whom community was especially revealed, whose theology articulates God as God-in-community, and who came onto the world's stage as a people noted for how they loved one another." The church does well to realize that she is responsible for this problem, which has resulted in the public no longer looking to her for answers or help in the public's search for a true community.

The church, in this situation, must once again become a wellspring of the experience of community within the world it serves. The church is the community of God, the community for others. It is a living community witnessing to God's love and forgiveness for all; this is the central theme of the service of our worship. Mead (1996:62) affirms "The act of worship itself is a cry to God for community, but it is also paradoxically an opening through which God's power to give community gets into our lives and into our inadequate community."

The church is a servant of God in the world. As such, it is expected to safeguard her prophetic roles and functions, otherwise it is absorbed into the world that it is supposed to serve. One of the important distinctions is to work on boundaries. In this regard the congregation's story, and the heritage form the boundaries. Mead (1996:65) notes

Rebuilding the boundary of the congregation means building a community of faith within the congregation that shows itself and can differentiate itself from the spirits of this age .... Rebuilding such a boundary is what I'd call a boot-strap operation, experimentally moving ahead, testing, then adjusting direction and speed.

Rasmussen (1993:71) affirms "Boundaries between 'community' and 'society' are admittedly porous in the modern world because of the widespread existence and use of associational ties - ties among casual acquaintances around matters of common interest and welfare." The challenge that urban congregations face, is how to belong to communities that adjust their direction as they move ahead. This is the case, because the church does not train the people to create and implement their own ministry standards.

Instead, they adopt already-made standards, which in most cases cannot be implemented as they were created outside the context. Mead (1996:66) affirms "Increasingly, congregations are adopting more stringent training for new members, but rare still is the congregation that genuinely owns standards for membership, takes responsibility for modeling those standards,

and is prepared to enforce those standards upon new members.” Genuine community in the church can come only with a new clarity about identity with the Christian faith and a willingness to make that identity central to the congregation. This is the reason why the holistic model stresses the need for building communities. One way of doing this is by delineating the boundary for one to cross for entry into the community. The congregation that encourages house churches and small-group life, finds that community is able to receive and give much to the congregation’s growing sense of identity.

### 6.7.3 CHURCH IN MODERN AND POSTMODERN SOCIETY

Rasmussen (1993:26) defines “modernity” as the name for the promise of rational, science-based progress as a human historical project linked to capitalist and socialist economic engines, with a claim on democracy as the polity of choice, with the nation state as the primary form of political sovereignty, and with the bourgeoisie as modernity’s most prominent inventor as well as its vanguard and heart.

Modernity was aimed at addressing the social ills that the world is experiencing. But, it turned out to be detrimental to humankind. The very evil modernity was destined to destroy, triumphed. Rasmussen (1993:27) states

.... through scientific knowledge and technology, and the extension of industrial civilization and the democratic process, poverty, disease, and toil could be supplanted with an abundance that would permit the good life as one of the enriching, individual choices in the context of enhanced liberty and untrammelled opportunity.

It is sad that modernity did not achieve the science-based progress as expected; instead it has created more problems than before. Rasmussen (1993:29) laments “Modernity has stripped down the meaning of life to a struggle between the human mind and the rest of the natural world, and, through economic expansion and heightened human agency everywhere, promised autonomy and deliverance.”

Today life is very complicated and creates a lot of miseries, troubles, and misfortunes to numerous poor and marginalized groups. It destroyed indigenous cultures and peoples, broke down close communities and organic traditions. Rasmussen (1993:30) again laments “Aye, but things go oft awry! The grand promise of modernity – autonomy and deliverance in the blessed form of ever-increasing well-being for all – has foundered, even crashed.”

As if the negative effects of modernity are not enough, the world has begun speaking hesitantly of postmodern as coming next in the process of searching for increased well-being.

Rasmussen (1993:31) comments

But for the moment we can say that postmodern means a yearning and a search, which issue from a set of internal crises .... a yearning of the spirit that modernity promised to satisfy but manifestly has not, even with periodic bursts of hyperactive affluence ... and yoga lessons packaging serenity on video tape.

If the world still needs to search for an increased well-being of life, it should focus its search on the community and its morals: the very institution that the quest for modernity destroyed. Nothing else could better advance life than the community, and the church community for that matter. Rasmussen (1993:31) affirms

It is a search for an alternative that does not destroy the (global) village it wishes to save, a search for practical wisdom rooted in ecological sanity and meaningful human participation in the unfolding story of the Earth community and the universe .... ours is a time dogged by a worldwide spiritual quest and a desperate search for viable community and social and political arrangements.

The issue of building community is of primary concern. Modernity is killing the people who invented it. The reality of crime, fear, and violence (most of the issues congregations in Lilongwe and anywhere else in the African continent are grappling with), the very outcome of modernity itself, haunts almost everyone, of whatever social status or station in the world. Everywhere the researcher goes in the cities of Africa, people are busy building thick brick walls from fear of crime. In the cities of Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu, many congregations are building thick brick walls surrounding both the manse and the church building.

Usually, the cost of such constructions is exorbitant. The budget used for construction work could be better utilized in addressing the needs of the poor and marginalized groups in the cities' shantytowns. The quest for modernity has done more harm than good to people. Rasmussen (1993:21) states "More bluntly stated, my conviction is that modernity, for all its splendid achievements, is killing us. It slowly devours its own children as well as the children of others. Such is the perspective, from a point somewhere near the center of this culture itself ...."

The quest for modernity has been a hard journey and had an uncertain outcome, in that both community and modernity lost. The most serious damage is beyond the mere transformation of certain repugnant vices such as greed, desire, and ambition. But, instead of retaining the

dynamics that erode and threaten to destroy the communities, do moral formation in the first place. The matrix and process of basic moral formation of real people with real histories in real communities with definite moral tasks, are what has been put on church and society. Rasmussen (1993:60) calls this a double loss:

More precisely, the erosion of civil society means a post-public society in which few base communities exist to do moral formation for life together as interdependent strangers – modernity's trademark. Thus far in the battle with modernity, then, community has lost .... But modernity has lost as well. It has lost the wellsprings of the moral character it depends on for its own existence. It has lost its own incubator, laboratory, and training ground.

#### 6.7.4 THE CHURCH, AS A COMMUNITY OF MORAL CONVICTION

Again, this section attests further the fourth hypothesis, i.e. the need for the priesthood of all believers, through empowering local Christians. The designation "church" is often intended as the decisive clue to the missing substance and shape of the community. It is the church that names the community and distinguishes it from other communities. Kalilombe (1999:68) notes "The Church is a community, a Body, and her life and work depend on her living as a concrete community involved as such in the total human community." The community of moral conviction emerged from the impact of Jesus of Nazareth. Rasmussen (1993:14) states

So while designating 'the church' as the 'community of moral conviction' is important (it always matters which community shapes character, conscience, and conviction), more important in fact is judging the community's concrete moral quality itself. Not to do so is a massive moral failure in its own right ....

The quest for modernity brought about some positive results, although not directly as the initiative intended to achieve. Nevertheless, modernity managed to transform traditional behavioral patterns, setting them on a new level of dignity and respect. Rasmussen (1993:72) comments

Modernity's grand moral experiments – market and state as the dominant models for society itself - have extended moral obligation to millions of people in ways local communities could not and cannot. They have also rescued significant populations from the whims and crude injustices of entrenched local ways of life ....

It has to be pointed out that, although modernity achieved this positive moral obligation, it failed on more because its society, as market and state, thinned moral obligation in the effort of extending it, and exhausted large deposits of the moralities they inherited. Rasmussen (1993:73) states

Worse, they undermined the communities that supplied those moralities. For all these reasons, market and state now serve up the urgent requirement to think anew about

how to do moral formation in the modern-postmodern world at the same time that they present a numbering array of social and moral problems to be addressed without delay.

Participation is a very important component of community as, through participation, community members together own moral formation as their explicit moral vocation.

Rasmussen (1993:111) notes

What it [community] does require is that participation contributes to self-identification, that members participate extensively in the decisions by which they are governed, that society as a whole takes responsibility for its members, and that this responsibility includes respect for the diverse individuality of members.

A community can also be defined as one form of group experience underlines shared beliefs, interests, and commitments around a set of varied activities (Rasmussen 1993:113). Community bonds establish a common faith or fate, personal identity, a sense of belonging, and a supportive structure of activities and relationships.

The next sub-topic is on the elements of community.

#### 6.7.4.1 Seven elements of community

At this stage, it is now important to discuss seven elements of community essential to moral well being which emphasize the importance of a holistic ministry model (Rasmussen 1993:114-121).

1. *Historicity*: This aspect points to the shared history and cultural fashion as the strongest community bonds. Rasmussen (1993:114) affirms

Morality that does not account for them, draw from them, and channel their passions, will fail .... We are particular beings rooted in time and place who find our moral identity through narrative understanding of our lives. We express in our very being the history and the communities of which we are a part. Without them we are morally nowhere.

2. *Identity*: Identity formation is largely what moral communities are about. The formed identity is the outcome of socialization, and socialization is largely carried out in, and through, various communities, such as families, schools, and religious communities. The identity element of community is the most interesting element, because it pushes to the fore the moral question of what kinds of persons are being formed by what kinds of communities.

3. *Mutuality*: Community people need one another and this is mutuality in a conclusive sense. Moral community begins with, and is largely supported by, the experience of interdependence and reciprocity. Rasmussen (1993:116) comments "The kind of mutuality, that characterizes moral community is open ended, rather than limited or contractual, obligation, and it takes place within relationships of trust and caring ... as the persons, they are in a web of unfinished, ongoing relationships."
4. *Plurality*: This element points to the fact that community membership is crucial in a variety of groups of reasonable human scale, such as familial, occupational, recreational, ethnic and religious. Rasmussen (1993:117) warns

A totalizing of life at the hands of necessary but impersonal structures of mass governance or at the hands of necessary but impersonal economic forces may secure some essential social outcomes .... But this totalizing is a dead end as a substitute for moral community. Moral well-being is not guaranteed by the sheer existence of plural intermediate communities of course.

5. *Autonomy*: Personal autonomy is a further mark of a normative moral community. It guards against pluralist groups that can be as oppressive as the state and as brutal as the free market. Personal autonomy does not mean unconditional opportunity and choice. Rather, it means that, within the complex of relationships, self-directed moral agency is cherished and the community itself is measured by its contribution to the flourishing of unique and responsible persons. Genuine autonomy is the responsible self-direction of the person as a social self and community member.
6. *Participation*: This is the element through which personal autonomy and moral agency can be realized. Social participation is noted or realized through rudimentary and essential activities that have to do with life's basic continuities such as child rearing, work, kinship and friendship relations. Rasmussen (1993:118 -119) comments "Core participation belongs in the first place to the primary groups and intimate associations that do the chief work of socialization and from which we draw throughout life."

Segmental participation facilitates cooperation with modernity's mass of interdependent strangers. However, there is a danger, particularly in urban communities. Rasmussen (1993:121) warns

In societies driven by urbanization, industrialization and technological development, segmental participation easily becomes the dominant mode, to

the undoing of more person-centered, caring, spontaneous, communitarian relationships .... In the process it yields people who from psychological and moral point of view are largely uncommitted.

7. *Integration*: This element harmonizes the first six elements together. It is that moral quality of community which displays the community's capacity to maintain its chief values by keeping them in working tension and balance and encouraging their development and interchange.

The discussed community elements are critical to a holistic approach to ministry. It underlines, once again, the hypotheses of this research. They largely aim at identity formation of people. Moral identity itself begins when attended: the texture of life is present to us in the form of our very first companions. In short, we are not adults when born.

The next sub-topic is on the nature of communities.

#### 6.7.5 THE NATURE OF COMMUNITIES FOR EFFECTIVE MISSION

This section discusses the nature of the communities now required to do the moral formation and to fashion morality inspired neither by a rational quest after self-interest, nor by a fear of coercive external authority. This is the morality that allows institutions at all levels to work holistically, in the first place. They work only because people by and large trust one another, that is they take one another at their word, and keep it.

Eight elements of the nature of community important to the developed ministry theory, and strategic for morality formation, are now attended to (Rasmussen 1993:127-130).

1. *Multi-layered interaction*: The communities are places of multi-layered interaction among human beings - places where traditions and rituals are developed and preserved, skills are learned and utilized, discipline is expected and nurtured and finally, fidelity and accountability to community members is practiced.
2. *Places of memory and hope*: The communities of civil society are places of memory and hope. Rasmussen (1993:127) notes "Retelling the stories of beginnings and survival is especially important, not least because it fuels present hope. This hope not only energizes the present generation, however; it extends its circle of care to generations yet unborn and to their requirements of life."

3. *Varied membership*: The communities of moral values are important as they foster a membership that, in a contradicting world, cuts across society's clusters of varied citizens. As such, they enjoy the mix in ways that contribute both to the life of individual communities and the wider public. Their morality is that of small 'publics' contributing their part as specialized, complex cells of the body politic.
4. *Other-regarding*: The communities of morals cultivate a sense of self that knows its well-being, resides in the well-being of others, and theirs in its. Against the ethos of modernity and postmodernity, these communities understand that genuine morality is other-regarding, self-engaging, community oriented, public, and reciprocal.
5. *Place and travel*: For moral communities to be effective, they also require combining an element of associational ties. Many communities of civil society should have dimensions of belonging and strong group loyalty. At the same time they gather and send forth members with some ease. Rasmussen (1993:128) advises "These communities should also be able to make alliances and join, movement fashion, in making common cause for the common good. The ecclesiology, then, is a cell-and-movement ecclesiology, with communitarian and associational dimensions throughout."
6. *"I-you" benefit*: The associational ties in view here are I-you connections. This means that the people are genuinely connected and the purpose of their association together is to contribute both to one another's welfare and the wider society's. Such a kind of association can also be formed with other people in another community. All people must benefit in the process, not only one group. If so, then it turns into oppression.
7. *Community of interest, purpose and focus*: In the modern-postmodern world, a community of interests of some kind is without doubt needed for the community itself. By way of definition: community involves joining with others, sharing some common purposes, and undertaking some common actions to achieve them. Rasmussen (1993:129) notes

Open response and responsibility does not mean vague and undirected. Healthy communities draw boundaries and make focal points and practices clear .... Group identity depends on closure, though not rigidity. Amid the

turmoil of modernity, the more elusive the boundaries, the more likely community is not community at all, but random association headed for identity confusion and dissipation.

8. *Community with boundaries*: Effective boundaries themselves require tolerance, loyalty, and respect. Tolerance is a chief liberal virtue and a precious one. Loyalty is faithfulness and a studied commitment to take others seriously in season and out. And respect, as the ground loyalty, is more bestowed or granted than earned. Rasmussen (1993:130) laments

.... the modern loss of such unconditioned respect and the substitute for it or the conviction that respect is due only where and when we fasten on some quality or accomplishment we admire or esteem. This constitutes a clear symptom of the increasing depersonalization of public and social life. Boundaries defined by this respect and loyalties are genuine boundaries. They include but they also exclude.

In order to ensure community viability that combines associational and communitarian elements, much more attention should first be given to communities of intimacy, especially the family. Families, villages, and religious communities are the social creatures most neglected in modernity's considerations of the good life. The virtues, values, obligations, and vision first learned in families is what goes public as our circles expand.

#### 6.7.6 MISSION IN THE AFRICAN URBAN COMMUNITIES

The urban community is constantly changing. People move, highways wipe out a small neighbourhood, buildings are erected, then torn down. This phenomenon makes it difficult for stable relationships essential to support and encourage mature Christian living. As a result, alternative inter-church support systems need to be developed. Ellison (1974:134) observes "It is imperative for the urban 'missionary' to understand the urban community ... its characteristics as he considers differences in the conceptions of time, the nature of the family, and the transience of urban community." Brueggemann (1989:20) confirms "A community of nurture and socialization does not simply socialize into religious practices. Rather, it engages in the construction of a world, the formation of a system of values and symbols, of oughts and mays, of requirements and permissions, of power configurations."

Aware of the people's situations, a community of interdependent, loving, communicating, caring Christians can be one of the most attractive places in the city for the people who feel isolated through urban life. Ellison (1974:135) notes "The urban church is a place where the individual must be important. In the midst of anonymity and fragmentation and

powerlessness, the urban church has the ministry to provide a place of belonging and importance.”

Understanding these features of urban life, and in providing a many-faceted witness for Christ through the ministry of compassion, the urban church will be looked to for leadership by the urban community. If can truly become a provider of life, both in the directions it charts for the community and in its sharing of Christ with individuals. Banks (1994:6) notes “Paul’s understanding of community is never static or frozen into a theological system. It is a living thing, always open to development and in touch with the practicalities of the moment.”

Paul frequently used many metaphors applied to the Christian community. In describing membership, Paul used the family metaphor. Banks (1994:49) comments “Christians are to see themselves as members of a divine family; already in his earliest letters Paul regards the head of the family as being God the Father.” It is in the context of community as a family that the centrality of love emerges.

#### **6.7.6.1 Community as a functional body**

Members of the community need to recognize their unity and receive one another. It follows that rich and poor members in urban centers should work and assist each other, as people of the same community. The appropriate way of emphasizing unity of people and God, is through the unity of members with one another, and through that their unity with Christ. Banks (1994:59) narrates “The fact that there are many members of the community should lead not to the assertion of individualistic attitudes, nor to the formation of cliques within it, but instead to a continuing affirmation of its solidarity.” Snyder (1991:155) comments “God equips the Christian community with gifts of the Spirit that it may carry out its ministry of worship and witness with supernatural results.”

The five aspects regarding the community as a functional body (Banks 1994:59) are now attended to.

1. *The community at Corinth* is described as the body of Christ. “You are the body of Christ,” insists Paul, “and individual members of it” (1Cor.12:27 RSV). Banks (1994:59) notes “The ‘body’ most clearly and fully finds expression as ‘church,’ even if it is also visible when it does not assemble.”

2. *Each member has a ministry*: Every community member is granted a ministry to other members of the community. This means that no person, or group of persons, can discount other contributions to the 'body' or impose a uniform way of operating. Banks (1994:60) affirms "God has so designed things that the involvement of every person is necessary for the proper functioning of the community."
3. *Less service, yet greater respect*: This alludes to the fact that those members, who render the less obviously spectacular services, should be accorded the greatest respect. Care must therefore be exercised in assessing the importance of certain gifts.
4. *What affects one affects all*: With the community members so closely linked, what affects one, necessarily affects all. Here the gifts are so shared whether consciously experienced or not.
5. *Close relationship with Christ*: The community has a close relationship with Christ. Banks (1994:60) comments "Paul states ... Christ is united to the community through the Spirit and the relations between the members themselves are said to take place through the same agency."

Paul connected the Gospel closely to the community. Banks (1994:26) notes

He [Paul] not only proclaimed the message about Christ and brought people into an intimate relationship with God, but he also explained the consequences of the message for the life of his converts and led them into a personal relationship with one another. For Paul, the Gospel bound believers to one another, as well as to God. Here the term "community" is most crucial. Thus, Christians or believers live in a community and in union with each other.

Banks (1994:26) notes "... union in the Spirit involved union with one another, for the Spirit was primarily a shared, not individual, experience. The Gospel is not a purely personal matter. It has a social dimension. It is a communal affair." To embrace the Gospel, then, is to enter into community. As a result of this fact, Christians are a community; the church used to meet in homes. In Romans 16:23, Paul makes mention of Gaius who was probably one of the more eminent men in the city. Banks (1994:32) comments "It is not surprising that his home

should be used for a gathering of the whole Christian community. Ample space would be required for such a meeting and it is precisely this that a man of Gaius' status could provide."

#### **6.7.6.2 Community formation: modeling the early church**

Urban congregations in Lilongwe should learn from the approaches and processes of early church ministry. The early church realized the need to intensify more sharply to determine its own identity as a group. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:11) stated two fundamental responses that were essential for community development: Language and vision, and communal life.

The early church had a vision and a supporting language, the tools that enabled the church to manage the ministry even during the most trying moments of the day. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:23) comment "In contrast to many churches of our time and in the midst of even more radical social diversity, the early church developed a compelling vision and supporting language. In faith they made it real, and in action it made them strong."

Christians in urban Malawi are mobile in various ways: They come to urban centers from all parts of the country seeking employment. Many of them end up jobless and therefore join the informal economic sector as an option. Those employed are transferred to or from different cities. Just as was the case with early church, the Malawian urban church needs to develop a compelling vision. It is sad and pathetic to note that the Synod continues to implement the vision that missionaries developed long ago.

As a result of peoples' mobility, congregations every Sunday receive many new members coming in with certificates. In such instances, it is difficult to build a community with such a moral and social diversity. It is encouraging, however, that the early church built community through social relationships. This was possible with language and vision. Not all was well in the early church though. We learn of struggles that the church experienced with organizational problems as it spread the Gospel. Dudley and Hilgert (1987: 23) note "Many of the tensions in the early church were created by its effort to combine intimacy of warm relationships with clarity of organizational structures." The Malawian church should try to balance intimacy relationships and organizational structure. Most of the members coming from other churches or congregations should not automatically become members of the church without their Christian stand and level of faith commitment being checked.

The ministry in urban Malawi is faced with challenges of intimate groups (Pentecostal and Fellowships). These groups pose a great concern for the ministry. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:31) pose the same sentiment: "Parish leadership is confronted in every dimension of congregational program with tensions between intimate groups and structured organizations. Should worship be more structured or more informal? How can we help the fellowship hour after worship to be less cliquish and more inclusive?"

As the result of tensions between Reformed communities and Pentecostal churches in Malawi, many members are being disciplined and others end up losing their membership. The issue at stake is the inability of church leadership, on both sides, to understand that intimate and institutional styles complement each other. Dudley and Hilgert (1987:37) advise "... the healthy church must weave these themes together .... The tension between these two poles can be complementary and creative for the life of the congregation ... each needs and supports the other .... These two pairs of concepts are foundational for the development of a Christian, then or now."

The process of transforming communities requires an effective leadership. The next sub-topic is a discussion of the kind of leadership that is needed for community ministries. The purpose is to ensure that a well-trained leadership is in the mission frontier.

#### **6.7.7 TO BECOME AN APOSTOLIC PEOPLE OF GOD**

The work of Mead, *The once and a future church*, (as introduced and discussed in the pillar on: ministry in a new era and context), is further examined in this section.

The Malawian urban congregations must be an apostolic people, not an apostolic institution or hierarchy. And each member of the church must see him- or herself as being an apostle.

Kalilombe (1999:48) notes

No member of the Church is a merely passive one, but all are called to be the instruments of Christ's salvific work in the world. The Church is thus not just a community where people come to find their own salvation. It is above all the instrument whereby God is at work bringing salvation to the world.

The central business of the church is to go, to be sent, to make disciples across the world. The early church had this sense of mission, of reaching out, of crossing boundaries. Mead (1996:70) comments

Two themes dominated Jesus' message to his followers about that mission: (1) that every follower of Jesus was called to reach out as a caring servant of others, like Jesus himself; and (2) that the church itself was to be a community that expanded to the ends of the earth, bringing all manner of people into its life and embrace; the church was to encompass the world.

Also, the early church respected the servant role as genuine, in her mission to the world.

Christians do well to remember that mission belongs to God; therefore, every person must be an apostle. In God's mission the church has a role to play, as does each of us. In such a view, many who are not of the church, are part of God's mission. Mead (1996:73) states

We no longer look at the world for the gaps, so that we in mission, can take God to where God is not now. Instead, we look at the world as the arena in which God's care and love are already, everywhere, at work. We do not take mission out; we go out to meet the mission already there. We look for the places to which we are called to take our place in that larger, ongoing mission."

The apostolic people require the understanding that God has freed them from political and social bondage. They are no longer oppressed and colonized. Mead (1996:74) comments "... I see God reaching out in mission .... A power seems loose in the world, a power that does not condone slavery and repression simply because one group is stronger or richer than another." It is sad to note that in many places and cases the throwing off of colonial oppression has led to another kinds of oppression and subjugation. Mead (1996:75) advises

In short, these diverse movements to overthrow oppression seem to bear the mark of something God is doing in our world. That is where the initiative for mission is and always has been. If the Church as an institution wants to be engaged in mission; this is a place to connect with what God is doing.

The CCAP should also see the need to do human empowerment for missions. Many opportunities for missions came, and continue coming, but the Synod is unable to take the initiative for mission. Usually, the Synod says: *Pakadali pano zikhale monga zililimu* (meaning: as of now let us not bother with the prevailing situation at hand, leave it alone. Let's continue doing things as usual). In so doing, the church is unable to see what God is doing in the world. Mead (1996:76) states "The struggle for empowerment is against the structures - many of them church structures or structures in which church systems have colluded - that would deny women their full humanness. God's mission appears to be an affirmation of the integrity and value of every human voice."

The mission of God is a continued business to reach out to the world in all its spheres, seeking to touch and heal all its hurts. As such, it is connected to God's heart and passion for

the world and all its inhabitants, the mission interested in freedom movements of people, the new awareness of the environment and the empowerment of human life. Such understanding of mission is then far greater than an institutional vision of mission. Mead (1996:77) comments "The apostolic task of the people of God is to participate in that larger mission of God. Each person is called to hear and respond to God in the here and now. Each is called to be a servant to humankind and to the world, bringing healing and life, joy and peace." The continued practice of worship centered on the clergy, while the congregation merely watches and observes, making of spectators not participants its members is medieval and pre-Reformation. What works in our time is the priesthood of all believers. Webber (1992:133) worries

.... much of our modern worship has drifted back into the pattern of the medieval church. It seems very strange to me that the biblical principle of the priesthood of all believers, which was the hallmark of Reformation Christianity, has now been lost in so much of our Protestant worship.

The mission becomes visible in the actions of people, as servants, in that no pain is unshared, no hurt unnoticed, no hunger untouched, no loss grieved alone, no death unknown, and no joy uncelebrated. Such a people would understand themselves to be apostolic. Their whole life would be sent into God's mission (Mead 1996:78).

#### 6.7.8 THE MISSIONAL ROLE OF CCAP CITY CONGREGATIONS

By "missional" the researcher does not mean sending missionaries to foreign countries and so-called "unreached peoples," but he acknowledges that the identity of the church is missional by its very nature. Hendriks *et al* (2001:78) describe missional as, "God's mandate and involvement cannot be limited exclusively to the church. He has power and jurisdiction to extend His mission as He pleases, although Scripture leaves no doubt that, in this, the church plays a fundamental role."

The holistic model implements four missional roles (Mead 1996:78-80) for urban congregations in Malawi.

1. *Receiving*: In order to support the apostolic people, the urban congregations must learn to believe what God is doing in his people. This can be done by way of opening all the pores of the congregation's being to the miracles that God is doing through the apostolic people. Mead (1996: 78) affirms "Institutionally the church is called to open itself to watch and listen for signs of God's mission. This involves keeping the story

alive, continuing to hear and study the great works of God in the past so we are better able to recognize God's appearance today."

2. *Offering*: All the realities people live with are received and then made part of the people's conversation with God; they are offered up in celebration. The life of people becomes the beginning of prayer. As the church takes bread and wine to its altars and holy tables, the church at the same time is called to present to God the servant life of its people. Mead (1996:79) notes "I use the term offering to mean that the whole experience of the apostolic people is received and becomes that which the church places before God. The offering is celebrated and blessed."
  
3. *Identifying*: The urban congregations in Lilongwe need to identify themselves with the suffering of the people in the shantytowns surrounding the city that creeps into every life, every home, and every community. When people come for service, they bring the pain of brokenness experienced while implementing God's mission of care. Mead (1996:79) notes "Identification with the pain of the world is the third pattern the church as an institution is to live out."
  
4. *Serving*: Having experienced all realities of human life, the people are now better equipped for God's ministry and are now released for service. Mead (1996:80) advises "An apostolic people needs a church that supports apostolicity but does not seek to define and control mission. An apostolic people see its task as that of being servants of humanity and the world. An apostolic people understands mission to be participation in God's mission." Webber (1992:134) echoes "Recovering the priesthood of all believers does not mean asking a few people to do something during worship. It means that everyone becomes so involved in worship that the whole community worship together as a body."

The congregations, which built urban communities, can make a huge difference in the lives of people in Lilongwe city. The time is ripe; the methods are clear. The challenge is ours. Ministry is not for the trained clergy only; rather it is a task and a responsibility of every believer. For this to happen, the church ought to equip both ministers and the laity. In the process of this pillar hypothesis 4 that states the need to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry has been confirmed again and again.

## 6.8 ORIENTATING CLERGY AND THE LAITY ON URBAN MINISTRY

The fourth study hypothesis is the background to the eighth pillar. It states:

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within the hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

Pillar 8 takes and discusses further the definition of mission as documented in pillar 5, section 6.5.1 which states:

Mission denotes the total task God has set the church for the salvation of the world, but always related to a specific context of evil, despair, and lostness as Jesus defined his mission according to Luke 4:18f ... It embraces all activities that serve to liberate man from his slavery in the presence of the coming God, slavery which extends from economic necessity to Godforsakenness ... Mission is the church sent into the world, to love, to serve, to preach, to teach, to heal, to liberate.

Hedlund (1991:73) comments "Mission is from God. It is God who works in and through Israel for the salvation of the nations. This concern, which runs through Scripture, derives from God. To speak of mission in this way places the focus upon God." Orientating the clergy and laity on urban ministry is an important step towards constructing local theologies. This process realizes the importance of the professional theologian, as well as the community's role to clarify its experience. Schreiter (1995:18) community's comments "In the development of local theologies, the professional theologian serves an important resource, helping the community to clarify its own experience and to relate it to the experience of other communities past and present."

Pillar eight addresses these issues positively:

- New roles for the CCAP ministry management
- Contextualizing theological education
- Leadership for urban ministries
- Theological training integrated with the city's realities.

In the Christendom paradigm, the clergy were the ministry, they carried authority and no one in the church would dare to question their high-status role. In this paradigm, the clergy were holding all key positions in the church, they were chaplains and guarantors of community life, with power beyond the walls of the church. Such practice of power continues, in some degree, in the CCAP church even today. This is not desirable. Ordinary Christians are not given the opportunity for participating in church affairs. This was also the case in the Christendom paradigm. Mead (1991:33) comments "The fossils of that hegemony from the Christendom Paradigm make up much of the power system that rules religious institutions

today, making change very difficult to effect. Its name is clericalism. Clericalism - like sin - is carrying a good thing too far."

### **6.8.1 NEW ROLES FOR THE CCAP MINISTRY MANAGEMENT**

The developed holistic ministry approach will assist to address the cracks of the CCAP ministry, which have come about as a result of internal and external tensions and pressures leading to dramatic, surprising changes. The laity in Malawi continue to question why ministers monopolize the ministry without giving the laity an opportunity for participation. Bosch (1991:467) supports the involvement of the laity in doing theology as he notes "Christian theology ... will no longer be simply a theology for priests and pastors, but also a theology for the laity in their callings in the world."

There are four areas that the CCAP needs to address urgently.

#### **6.8.1.1 The role of clergy needs to change**

The ministers in Malawi continue to see themselves as holding authority and high-status roles. They see themselves as a "ministry." They feel they can do anything that they want without any objection from the laity. One negative practice, which the clergy needs to observe, is the issue of handover. A situation has developed that ministers do not handover congregational management plans and financial records to the successor when they have accepted a call to a new congregation.

This is not in line with the accountability procedures, as some congregational material gets lost in the process. In commenting on the power system that the clergy developed in the Christendom paradigm, Mead (1991:33) narrates "The network of clergy, operating within their strong, clear role at the center of the church's institutional life, built a formidable power system, designed to provide strong and consistent leadership of the institution for its mission."

The CCAP ministers must assume new roles. It is indeed understood that the paradigm shift will bring some frustrations for ministers, because they were used to being "masters" rather than servants. But the truth of the matter is that, like the laity, the ministers are also called to serve the Lord, not to serve themselves. Mead (1991:34) comments "The loss of power and role clarity sometimes causes depression, anger, and grief among clergy, making them more

likely to seek scape-goats in the seminaries ... Many clergy I know are bitter and angry at how the church has misused them, as they see it.”

The ministers need not be depressed as a result of the paradigm shift. They need to understand the importance of the “priesthood of all believers.” As a trained leadership, ministers can become mentors for the laity (in order to ensure smooth management of church activities), community organizers, educators or counselors. Mead (1991:34) comments “The clergy, as manager-leaders of the institution, badly need laity to help lead and support the institution, raise money, lead program, etc.”

Another important point is that congregations are experiencing financial difficulties. As a result, the few congregations who can afford to pay their ministers living wages have declined. It is therefore important for ministers to train and support their congregations. Mead (1991:53) observes “In the next generation we must produce clergy who can support the ministry of others and train them, rather than act out of a need to control their ministries.”

#### **6.8.1.2 The participation of laity in church management**

In the past, the laity were expected to handle roles like backing up the clergy, making sure that the congregation budgets and the finances are balanced, follow up issues regarding new couples and marriages, discipline Christians who default, and others. But never were they allowed to make decisions on matters affecting the church.

Mead (1991:34) notes “The reappearance of the frontier of mission on the church’s doorstep has shifted mission responsibility more and more onto the shoulders of the laity, bringing their role to new prominence and power ... this shift has undercut the previously accepted role of the clergy.” The researcher agrees fully with Kalilombe's point of building up a committed laity by de-clericalizing the Church. Kalilombe (1999:64) states

If we really want to realize what has been described, then there is a condition: our Church must be de-clericalized .... What I mean is that the vision of the Church presented here cannot materialize unless we arrive at building up a Committed Laity. As you can see, the essential in this plan depends on the involvement of the lay people. And that is just as it should be.

But now the laity must take part in the management of church activities at all levels, beginning with needs assessment (research), planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation processes. In fact, the laity should be in the forefront of the frontier of mission

because they are the citizens of that particular community. Ministers are called from time to time to serve other congregations. The laity continues with the same congregation for a long time. It would, therefore, be helpful to allow and train the laity to manage churches. Mead (1991:49) advises "... the future church will have to be even more intentional in formation of its laity. Living in the world's ambiguous environment and attempting to act faithfully there, every church member is on the front line, frequently alone."

### **6.8.1.3 The supportive role of a General Secretary**

In the process of a paradigm shift regarding the roles of the laity and clergy, the role of the General Secretary is fast changing to become one of co-ordination, thus providing a wider view of mission, offering an important challenge and support, providing connections to resources, and making technical assistance available for launching new ventures.

The role of the General Secretary must change from being autocratic to supportive. The new role should include provision of a stable back-up system, and should be available to congregations whenever the need occurs. Previously, the role of the General Secretary was very powerful, equal to that of the Bishop in other quarters. He had powers to make independent decisions, without referring to any person in the church. This brought about much dissatisfaction amongst fellow ministers, let alone congregations at large.

If any minister had some misunderstandings with the General Secretary, that particular minister could suffer in various ways until the General Secretary retired from the position. Commenting on the situation of the church's executive role in the Christendom paradigm, Mead (1991:37) affirms

Few executives and bishops are aware that the new paradigm is threatening to marginalize further the role they played in the past. They have such increasing demands on them amid continually decreasing resources .... As the old story tells it, it is hard to drain the swamp when you are surrounded by alligators nipping at you.

### **6.8.1.4 The new focus for urban congregations**

Today, situations have changed drastically in comparison to the time missionaries brought the Gospel to Malawi. The congregational financial system is overwhelmed by rising costs. The congregations have overwhelmingly difficult financial tasks to manage the congregational activities, let alone the demands of the Synod. Another challenging factor is that today the

congregations face more caring ministries. There are increasing human needs for the ministry on the congregations' doorsteps.

Whatever the case may be, congregations have more new tasks that require their urgent attention, than before. The role and work of the congregation then focus more on issues affecting its presence, than those of the far distant Synod Office. Mead (1991:42) notes

The church - its laity, clergy, congregations, executives, and bishops – has organized and structured itself for one mission. We have awakened to a world in which the mission frontier has changed. The organization and the structures of church life, formed for that one mission, now need to be reoriented to face the new frontier. The task ahead is the reinvention of the church.

Therefore each congregation must rethink all of its ministries to take on the character of training for formation in ministry. Local congregations need to discover a system that suits their own situation. Life-crisis ministry for the future church is seen as opportunities for the formation of the laity.

### **6.8.2 CONTEXTUALIZING CHRISTIAN FAITH EDUCATION**

This section further examines chapter 1, section 1. 8, on “Ministry as a hermeneutical exegesis of word and context,” and section 1.8.3.2 on "Preparation for the ministry and education."

The reason for equipping ministers and the laity for urban mission becomes essential in order to ensure the implementation of holistic ministry. Ministry in urban Malawi cannot be left in the hands of one group alone (the clergy), as the task is enormous and taxing. Meyers (1992:350) comments “The problem, unstated, till now, is how to live in a damaged body in a world where pain is meant to be gagged uncured un-grieved-over. The problem is to connect, without hysteria, the pain of any one’s body with the pain of the body’s world.”

The necessity for equipping ministers and the laity is in response to the problem of the urban context, the method, the ministerial competence, the social and political engagement of the church. The new urban context requires the church to study its environment in order to effect a well-informed theological education. Miller and Jackson (1995:17) state " ... the challenge is to arrive at a holistic understanding that incorporates both the pastoral context and current knowledge regarding human problems and their proper treatment." The sources of

dissatisfaction and the solutions thereof form initial assumptions about the meaning and task of theological education. Meyers (1992:351) comments

If a central task of theological education is to bring about an understanding of the relatedness of suffering, we are required to engage in communal dialogue and actions that shape and are shaped by our faith commitments. An educational approach such as this requires that teachers and learners be specific about our social location and think critically about experiences that inform our worldviews.

Freire (1987:175) echoes "Liberating education can change our understanding of reality .... Only political action in society can make social transformation, not critical study in the classroom. The structures of society, like the capitalist mode of production, have to be changed for society to be transformed."

The holistic model has a set of eight common strategies (Meyers 1992:353) emanating from the theological education of the poor, and marginalized. These strategies are crucial in the process of equipping leaders for the urban mission. The strategies now follow:

- Preparing people for collaborative styles of ministry;
- Developing a diversity of methodologies to increase flexibility in meeting different contexts;
- Focusing intentionally on supervisory processes that help students to learn community development and empowerment ministries;
- Emphasizing the political nature of ministry in which confrontation and conflict are expected;
- Learning how to help faculty teach out of a praxis-based context;
- Developing accountability to specific contexts of ministry for what goes on in the classroom;
- Encouraging students and the faculty to encounter their own boundary experiences and to be exposed to diversity;
- Exploring the relationships between spiritual development, ritual, worship, and classroom study (Meyers 1992:353).

Leaders for urban mission in Malawian urban centers should be trained according to the above strategies in order to ensure meaningful and effective ministry. Leaders for urban mission should not just be chosen and begin ministering straight away without first being equipped. This applies to both ministers and the laity.

Further to the above strategies, the leaders must also be trained on the importance of power and economic analyses. The urban theological education cannot miss the issues of power and economics simply because urban communities are struggling for self-understanding and empowerment. Meyers (1992:354) notes "Analyses of these relationships are often most revealing because we are faced with our own complicities, paradoxes, and conflicts. These analyses provide an important context for biblical and historical study and spiritual discernment, formation, and discipline."

In Africa, there are few resource people at the moment because the cities are relatively young and, as such, the church has not yet taken strong decisions to focus effectively on cities as ministry direction for the 21st century. However, African ministers have the opportunity to learn from other cities dealing with similar situations. Meyers (1992:354) reveals

One alternative program of theological education, The Urban Training Organization in Atlanta, deals with these issues through its focus on community organizing, addressing the relationship between government, church, and economic systems in its analysis of the communities in which it works.

The process of engaging in dialogue with the communities' members has another helpful dimension: training the leaders to develop the art of listening. Through dialogue more and more urban issues surface and these become resources for further learning. Meyers (1992:355) advises "A biblical expert who really listens to what people have to say in this situation begins to understand how his or her particular training and expertise are resources beyond the seminary context and begins to be a learner as well as a teacher." Freire (1996:61) affirms "The teacher is no longer merely the one-who-teaches, but one who is himself taught in dialogue with the students, who in turn while taught also teach. They become jointly responsible for a process in which all grow."

The process of equipping ministers and the laity for urban mission is an indication of taking urban churches and communities seriously. Unless these leaders learn to work collaboratively with urban dwellers, they will not succeed. The urban context requires a different leadership for different responsibilities and different social transformation processes. Meyers (1992:358) comments "This means that educational programs cannot settle for a uniform understanding of ministry. Rather, they must be designed to enable students to learn how to assess a situation, know themselves, deal with conflict, and develop flexibility."

The team of ministers and the laity for urban mission must realize at the onset that the type of ministry, that they are called for, is a serious business. A serious business in that it is to proclaim the good news to both the rich and the poor at the same time, but siding with the poor through advocating for their cause. Obeng in Waruta and Kinoti (2000:16) is of the opinion that the church does not influence the African communities in the same way as the traditional religion previously did, when he notes "In terms of numbers, Christianity is spreading, but so do injustice, corruption, theft and other social vices, previously unknown in our communities, continue to rise. All these call into question the effectiveness of the Church in Africa." Usually, siding with the poor is a threat to the powerful and the rich who benefit from the poor's predicament and, as such, they oppose any transformation process for the poor. Meyers (1992:186) warns

We have been called not to swim away from the beautiful, battered ships of our cities but to stay with them and to look for the presence of God in them at all times and in all places. It requires a certain detachment ... independence from all the perils ... But above all it requires a certain freedom from our own hopes and wants, however noble they may be. 'You did not recognize God's moment when it came' .... Jesus says to Jerusalem ... but it is hard to recognize God's moment while we are consumed with making the most of our own.

To equip the leaders for urban mission it is important to realize the possibility of burnout. Burnout is one of the major challenges of the urban mission. The leaders may begin the mission enthusiastically, but, before long, the team find themselves facing a creeping deadness of their souls and they miss the vision of ministry, through stress. One element of burnout in urban congregations in Malawi is that ministers do not take annual leave, even when it is provided. Some areas causing burnout include the following:

- i. Our jobs are never done;
- ii. Our results are hard to measure;
- iii. Our expectations are high – not to mention the expectations that others have on us;
- iv. Most of us do not get to choose whom, or even how, we will serve. (Meyers 1992:186).

#### **6.8.2.1 Urban ministry outreach programming**

The urban mission requires outreach programming to ensure effective citywide ministry. The holistic approach has eight outreach aspects (Meyers 1992:331-332) useful in outreach programming.

1. An extensive pastoral-care support ministry for people with HIV/AIDS.

2. With women emerging, an outreach and support group for prostitutes.
3. A program to help low-income people obtain stable and decent housing and daily needs.
4. A strategy program focusing on the immigrants as there are many immigrants in Lilongwe from surrounding countries. The church should plan a ministry for such groupings.
5. A community church which meets weekly for prayer and Bible study. This is important in that people are able to experience different types of worship.
6. A monthly publication, a network journal to mobilize citywide church-related activities. To stimulate the theological thinking of both the laity and the ministers.
7. A youth ministry focusing on the needs of the city's youth.
8. A network center for the study of Christian ministry in each Malawian city.

### 6.8.3 LEADERSHIP FOR URBAN MINISTRIES

This section reflects further the challenges of the Malawian urban context, as described in chapter 1, section 1.5, "The formation of the Malawian cities as a challenge to ministry." It also confirms the need for ministry preparation and education as discussed in section 1.8.3.2. In this section 1.5 it was noted that a missionary with rural experience quickly finds that rural methods and routines do not work in the urban situations of African townspeople. It is this understanding of the context that results in effective leadership.

The ministers in urban congregations need to learn the skills of public action for change – to attain deepening leadership qualities with the help of a professional community organizer. Meyers (1992:65) advises "While concepts and programs abound for renewing the urban church, the assumption here is that nothing can be more crucial than the training and retraining of pastors, for they are the key to translating what is learned through community organization into the internal life of their congregation."

*African urban clergy: hearts and faith, but no method:* The need to train the ministers presently working in the urban congregations in Malawian cities is critical.

The challenge today is that ministers leave the seminary with clear visions for change. They enter urban struggling churches, eager to bring renewal, growth, and relevance. What they soon discover is that they lack an effective method. They come up against their own feelings of powerlessness. They need skills, insights and, above all, a method for action. This is not only a Malawian or an African problem; rather, it is a worldwide challenge. Meyers (1992:67) affirms

Clergy are drowning in the therapeutic methods of counseling - we keep trying to heal rather than change. We privatize problems and scratch our heads when that doesn't work. Seminaries don't teach us a method for social analysis or social change. Instead, they send us out with fuzzy therapeutic notions stamped on our brains by the marvelous organizing job done by clinical psychological education on the seminaries.

In order to be relevant in urban ministry, the ministers need to be equipped with the reliable, theoretical models of their craft, thus, the practical tools for preaching, spiritual guidance, congregational leadership, and pastoral care that connect effectively with the realities of urban life in the cities of Malawi.

The approach to holistic hermeneutical practical theology has four critical skills (Meyers 1992:68-69) for the development of strong leadership namely:

*Accountability:* Accountability requires members of the church community to act in accordance with their faith. It is expected that one should carry out and do what he or she has agreed to do. However, it is more than meeting expectations, it is an agreement to both support and challenge one another in the community.

*Evaluation:* Evaluation is a process of learning after action, even after worship is done. It is a time set aside for analysis, growth, and a time for determining why a particular action succeeded, or why it failed. The purpose is to discover who did or who did not accomplish an assigned task. It is a special time for a minister to give direct feedback to church leaders about what they did well and what areas require further growth (Meyers 1992:68).

*Relationship-building:* A form of teaching by example, good listening, authentic sharing, and learning to communicate. When relationships deepens, leaders learn to risk challenging people. The heart of a minister's approach to relationship building lies in understanding self-interest. In good relationships, priorities are challenged.

*Mentoring:* It is an extension of the one-to-one relationship for the purpose of intentionally developing a few key leaders. The purpose of mentoring is to consciously develop leadership skills and qualities. The mentor requires a special investment of time and reflection, a willingness to be more open, even vulnerable. If the time is well spent, new leaders will develop and move into primary roles in the church (Meyers 1992: 69).

The contemporary church can learn from biblical examples regarding leadership orientation and mentorship. Jesus trained the disciples for ministry. A remarkable passage is Luke 9:1-17 which documents how Jesus prepared his disciples to be sent out for service. Bruwer (1994:91) comments "He takes them through three stages: a plunge into the community, time for reflection, and learning through doing." These three stages are now briefly discussed.

#### **6.8.3.1 A plunge into the city**

Before sending the disciples into ministry, Jesus made sure that they had nothing visible to offer or with which to defend themselves. In so doing, the team became dependent on the community to whom they were to minister. Ministry in the community can make the desired difference if a person displays his or her own abilities and independence. Bruwer (1994:92) narrates "They became guests in humble peasant homes. If friendship did not develop out of this human contact, they had to leave. Human relationship, built on human values, became the bridge to carry substance of the kingdom to people."

The importance of going to the community empty-handed emphasizes the need to make sharing easier. In the process, the team had to learn what it means to be without the luxuries of life, and how to accept the humble gifts of ordinary members of the community. Bruwer (1994:92) warns

You will never know how it feels, and never understand the language of the poor, if you are not prepared to lay aside your stuff, bag, bread, money, and extra tunic, and feel with them what it means to be powerless and without anything extra. Disciples of Christ must learn to stand in the shoes of the needy, and become their friends and brothers and sisters, prepared to share a common history.

Plunging into the community strategy is an effort of studying and understanding the local community's available resources. This is also in recognition of the fact that charitable service done from a distance may meet urgent needs, but it creates as many problems as it solves. When Jesus sent his unprepared and vulnerable disciples to the communities, it was a way of breaking down the barriers between them, as future leaders, and the people.

### 6.8.3.2 Time for reflection

After sending the disciples into the communities of Galilee, the team had a time of reflection with Jesus. This was when the disciples reported to Jesus what they had experienced in the communities. An interruption for reflection is very important, because understanding is more important than acting. Understanding a task is not the same as having academic knowledge about it. Bruwer (1994:93) states

Through understanding we become part and parcel of what we are doing. We need a vision that goes beyond knowledge. We have to believe in what we are doing. Without this kind of understanding, involvement with the poor can turn into a desperate struggle nowhere .... Jesus took the disciples for a time of necessary reflection .... People are always more important than programmes.

### 6.8.3.3 Leadership through experience

Jesus took the disciples through a process of learning as follows:

- i. He sent them to do holistic ministry (no dichotomy between the spiritual and material) but to deal with people in their totality.
- ii. He put them on the receiving end of hospitality, to learn to build relations - not through power, but through weakness.
- iii. They took time for reporting and reflection.
- iv. Learning through action in a specific situation, e.g. when he fed the crowd.

We learn that, before long, thousands of people came to Jesus in the desert. The disciples requested Jesus to send the multitudes away to search for food for themselves, to which the disciples received a rebuke from Jesus. Bruwer (1994:94) comments "How unkind of them. They forgot that a few days ago they were still the guests of these people, and now they were calling on Jesus to send them away!"

Jesus taught by example. In the school of discipleship one has to go through the experience of being without rights or authority, someone who merely serves, in order to allow Jesus to do his work. Poor people may be uneducated, but they know life and know how to live, and their leaders have to share this experience. The right person has to accompany the students towards leadership for transformation. To become a leader for transformation is not an academic experience, but an experience with people (Bruwer 1994:97).

#### 6.8.3.4 Urban awareness

For knowledge about the city's dynamics and how to interact with urban people, communication and the media are critical for a well-defined plan, as the advancement of mission in the city begins with influencing the citizens. This approach paves the way for the integral inclusion of urban programs in Christian education and prophetic voices. Ellison (1974:80) comments "The development of evangelical urban leadership, minority and majority, must involve direct exposure to the conditions and people of the city, as well as the opportunity for interracial inter-ethnic, and intercultural exchange."

There are numerous needs of urban people, or those in the society, who suffer oppression. The mission must aim to address these issues, not leave them unattended to. Ellison (1974:80) notes "Instead of seeing these needs as a matter of basic Christian moral concern, preachers often regard them as political matters. So they go back to preaching frequently tepid, socially irrelevant, and almost totally inner-directed sermons."

Ministers and the laity, expected to do urban mission, must, through Christian education become conscious of the city and its specific needs. The process should involve direct experience with the city and its life, as well as reflective study. Ellison (1974:81) affirms

If the Gospel is to be perceived as relevant by the cosmopolitan contemporary urban world, seminaries must provide the systematic opportunity for their students to deal with people from different classes, races, and economic backgrounds. They must learn more than theology in an elitist Institution. They must learn to take the other person's point of view .... to understand and appreciate those outside of their own cultural background.

#### 6.8.4 AN INTEGRATION OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION WITH URBAN REALITIES

Equipping leaders for urban mission is a task of the church and the Scriptures back it. Ellison (1974:115) notes

It is clear from the Scriptures that the church has a special mission of proclamation and service to the poor and the oppressed. This concern is evident throughout the Bible, but particularly in the Psalms, the Prophets, and the Gospels .... It is in the cities that the poor and the oppressed are found in the greatest concentration.

As we have noted from Ellison's comments, the Bible is well oriented to cities. The quantity and intensity of modern industrialized urban problems the may be different from those in the cities of olden biblical times. Nevertheless, the issues affecting the underprivileged continue to exist. Ellison (1974:115) states

Early Christianity was in many ways an urban phenomenon. Under Paul's leadership Christianity took its first roots in the great urban centers of the Roman Empire. Paul's epistles reveal that the world with which he dealt had striking parallels to our own in terms of pluralism, breakdown of morality and established patterns of life, skepticism syncretism, and the like.

Strategic urban mission requires a strong urban consciousness in the seminaries (thus both at Nkhoma and Zomba Theological Colleges). Without such a move, seminary students are often the product of very narrow urban experiences. The reason being that they have been carefully sheltered and nurtured in the church whose teachings have obviously addressed denominational issues but has shielded them from the urban culture and its problems. Ellison (1974:116) regrets

Unfortunately, strong psychological and sociological forces militate against the seminary's efforts to meet today's challenges. Seminaries, like church-related colleges, have often been founded in rural locations precisely to avoid the city and its problems. Those that have an urban location are often anxious to escape to more desirable surroundings.

Churches have the fear that adequate attention to the demands of urban mission will alter the curriculum of most seminaries. But, what is forgotten is that theological students need to understand the forces of urbanization and industrialization that shape the society in which we serve. Ellison (1974:118) notes "Students must learn to do theology – to be able to think theologically not only about themselves, but also about the variety of other persons and situations that they will encounter in today's changing and culturally diverse urbanized world."

The urban congregations in Malawi require a team of trained ministers and laity that will apply themselves in urban settings that are being victimized by evil, besides involving themselves in church services and personal evangelism. Kalilombe (1999:169) says "Doing theology demands encouraging and giving room for, the constant look at and careful study of the situation within which the theologizing communities are immersed." This urban team calls for the repentance of those involved in gross forms of evil, as well as that of the multitudes who simply have not allowed God to take over their lives.

It is encouraging to realize that we are not alone in this difficult task. Jesus has already gone ahead of us, as our model. Ellison (1974:17) affirms "Christ himself took the first huge step of making God's love concrete. He took spiritual experience out of the abstract realms of philosophy and religious form and made it real 'Phil. 2: 5-8.' He did not just speak. He acted

sacrificially .... We who are called Christians must be willing to incarnate Christ." Training will assist the team to exercise love and passion to all needy persons in the city as they execute the mission. Meyers (1992:273) states "Christians, believing in the uniqueness of each person created by God as worthy of respect, will not allow the systems of the world to rob any class of people, particularly the poor, of dignity and personhood."

Equipping ministers and the laity for urban mission is an essential process. It enables them to identify sufficiently with urban people to understand their needs and to communicate in ways that speak to them. Ellison (1974:135) notes "In its concern for ministering to the whole person, the urban, church must not over look its responsibility to face people directly with their spiritual destiny." Bradshaw (1993:88) states "Holistic Christian education further assumes that God reveals truth through his revealed word and his creation. The journey is through the Bible and through the environments in which we live."

In concluding this section, it is important to note that the theological claim that the earth is God's and all in it, the world and those who live in it call God's people to face honestly the systemic structures that do violence to oppressed communities, that create and sustain the pain of the body's world, and to stand with tenacity against the forces of destruction and for transformation.

## 6.9 TOWARDS ECUMENICAL ALLIANCES IN URBAN AFRICA

The third hypothesis guides the development of this pillar. The hypothesis states:

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems.

Pillar nine discusses six issues positively.

- Concern for ecumenical alliances
- Ecumenism in the African town
- Some ecumenical limitations
- Negative ecumenical effects that Independent Churches have faced
- The inclusion of Pentecostal Churches
- The value of ecumenically organized ministries.

Building alliances emerges from the premises: to bear one another's burdens and to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and weep with those who weep. Finke and Stark (1992:201) comment

Basically, Christian unity is a given fact derived from a common belief in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour .... Christ prayed for his followers of all time that they all may be one. The ecumenical movement is essentially an expression of conviction, a matter of faith derived from biblical and theological authority.

On the other hand, there is a need to form urban joint forums in Malawi for development with government service providers, in order to maximize resources and avoid duplication of efforts as well as unnecessary competition. Pretorius *et al* (1996:163) note

The concept "ecumenical" refers to the biblical idea of the unity of the church in the whole inhabited world .... Applied in modern times, it refers to the movement in many churches, which seeks the unity, renewal and the extension of the church through the coming together of the churches in discussion, prayer and common actions.

The stresses of urbanization and industrialization require joint coordinated efforts for development.

Greenway (1979:63) notes "No single pattern of witness and ministry will be adequate to the challenge of the modern metropolis. The hope lies in a diversity of approaches that, under the sovereign grace of the spirit, will be held together in basic unity and mutual complementarity." Ellison (1974:169) echoes

Facing the broad problems of our cities requires resources beyond those of a single evangelical congregation. The collectivization of efforts is required among evangelical churches and groups of churches. This development is seen in its embryonic stage in the Book of Acts. Paul's collection of money from churches in Greece and Turkey for the needful saints was in effect collectivization of social concern within the church of Christ.

Many developing agencies simply address the physical needs of people while neglecting their spiritual needs. Such agencies should begin to reflect and develop appropriate tools for holistic ministry. This holisticity is the realization that, unless the needs of the total human being are addressed, then development is not on the right footing and direction. Ellison (1974:170) comments

Although the physical needs of the disadvantaged and the economic needs of marginal groups demand the attention of the Christian, by far the greatest crises in the experience of many city-dwellers are their spiritual, emotional, and psychological struggles. There are staggering numbers at the lower social strata who are not able to cope with change in their urban surroundings.

In order to heal the cities of Africa and ensure transformational development, we need totally coordinated church-based programs. Ecumenical alliance is not a new or recent concept. New Testament people recognized the importance of this concept and implemented it. Ellison (1974:90) affirms

Following the New Testament pattern, they meet together often (nearly every day) to talk about their problems, to encourage each other, to share what they discover about God, and to pray .... They like each other enough to give each other a sense of security, which makes them more able to face bad things about themselves, to change, and to act on the awareness.

Ecumenical alliances do not mean that churches will cease to be what they used to be in terms of doctrinal differences, far from that. The issue at heart here, is unity in diversity. The doctrinal differences, or traditions, will continue to exist, but churches will agree to mission, responding to the Great Commission – Go and make disciples, teach them to keep God's commandments. Ellison (1974:210) narrates

To talk of urban alliances is in no sense to suggest that we abolish the local church. As a body it may have a unique ministry as well as providing spiritual support to its members. It is doubtful that any one church will have sufficient resources for the many and complex needs around it. Individuals from several evangelical churches working together may be able to face a specific need for which those from one church could not marshal enough manpower or interest.

Alliances could be formed in cooperative efforts in sub-regions of the city, an alliance at regional and at the national level. The church can take encouragement from current times, as

we now have a model for collective action in the medical, agricultural, communication, literature, and educational programs.

The next topic is on challenges on ecumenical alliances.

### 6.9.1 CONCERNS FOR ECUMENICAL ALLIANCES

In this section, six ecumenical concerns are discussed (Ellison 1974:212-213).

1. *Organizational oppression*: Careful structures and strategic planning are crucial to avoid bias. Ellison (1974:212) notes "The kind of the voluntary association called for in entire cities and areas within them would seem to hold a great deal of promise for lightening everyone's load. Wise strategy and common efforts can conserve energy while increasing output."
2. *The local church*: The value of the local church is critical and will not change the ecumenical concern for focusing widely before beginning institutional projects and research processes. Leadership needs to work together and emphasize collaboration.
3. *White intrusion*: A critical concern of many black Christians in Africa today is that such alliances, as well as the general call to urban ministry among churches, can only result in an unwanted influx of white personnel. This could be repeating a scenario of missionaries, as was the case in the past. Such alliance should rather be an opportunity to continue dialogue at national and local levels with the leadership of different denominations. Ellison (1974:213) narrates
 

Those most affected by the city are those who live there. They must be in direction of evangelical [alliance] urban efforts .... Black Christians also have a responsibility to help create an atmosphere where such learning and exchange can take place.
4. *Representative leadership*: The alliance must integrate the leadership from all the churches, but also with the laity and ministers. This will include businessmen, educators, community representatives, politicians, medical people in all key areas.
5. *Tolerance*: A great deal of understanding is needed for better and effective alliances. Ellison (1974:213) notes "Effective ministry in the city, however, will require stretching, listening to others, and loving each other."

6. *An adequate concept of ministry*: There is a need for a total ministry that includes proclamation of the Gospel and people's physical needs. God created us to be integrated beings and has bestowed a variety of gifts on believers.

It is not easy for people to implement the concept of ecumenical alliance without help. A new sense of vision, inspired by God's Spirit, will be necessary if such alliances are to be formed and sustained productively. There will have to be persons at the various levels who could visualize the potential benefit. Ellison (1974:217) comments "The scriptural concept of the Body of Christ bears directly on this question of poverty and need. The Body of Christ is one body, urban and suburban together, dependent on each other whether we realize it or not, responsible for each other's welfare." What is required is for the church to work together in response to God's common vision for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Kritzinger *et al* (1994:36) note "The Christian mission is a comprehensive ministry with various dimensions which can be distinguished, but never separated. We believe, therefore, that the goal of mission can only be accomplished through a holistic approach."

#### 6.9.2 ECUMENISM IN THE AFRICAN CITIES

In Africa, the missionaries traditionally operated out of rural-based headquarters, and this is true of Nkhoma Synod's ministry. At a later stage, the ministry was introduced to Lilongwe city. The ministry found itself in unaccustomed proximity to the negative effects of urbanization, which proved to be a major challenge to ministry. Shorter (1991:124) notes

This is especially true of the shantytowns where as many as thirty or forty denominations worship and witness in isolation from one another, and carry on in every respect as if the others did not exist. If the churches were genuinely committed to Christian unity, they would regard the urban presence of numerous denominations as a heaven sent opportunity. Such, alas, is not the case.

The urban situation presents the churches with opportunities for learning about one another and for sharing in worship and witness. Shorter (1991:125) comments

The proximity of the various denominations makes ecumenical understanding and co-operation much easier, but this very facility appears to some, particularly those whose members are insufficiently instructed. The churches on the whole remain authoritarian and tightly controlled and this severely inhibits their promotion of Christian unity.

### 6.9.3 SOME ECUMENICAL LIMITATIONS

A holistic approach acknowledges some limitations for ecumenical alliances. The limitations particularly concern the Catholics and the conservative Evangelicals. While the Catholics feel they have a large following who may be snatched away through the process of ecumenical alliance; the Evangelicals feel the priority is to safeguard the purity of the biblical Christianity they profess contra to other denominations. On the other hand, the Indigenous movement or Independent Churches have less important structures, as a result they have little in common with the mainline churches. Shorter (1991:126) notes "It is obvious that the Churches have much to learn from one another in addressing the problems of urban dwellers, and although associations of Independent Churches are coming into being, it may not always be through inter-Church councils that co-operation is best articulated."

The mainline and indigenous Churches differ in many ways. The doctrine of the Independent religious movements is often at variance with that of mainline Christianity. The former place greater emphasis on the Old Testament and hold a weak and sometimes ambiguous Christology. The mainline Churches are burdened with monolithic structures and ecclesiastical bureaucracy. The question in the face of this situation could be, is there any hope for ecumenical alliance among these churches given their difference in focus? Shorter (1991:127) responds "Once again, it seems that the ecumenical road lies in joint social action. There is ultimately no substitute for personal contacts among leaders, for consultation and shared strategies to alleviate the condition of the urban poor."

The negative effects that Independent Churches members experienced in Mainline denominations or another barrier against ecumenical alliances.

### 6.9.4 THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS INDEPENDENT CHURCHES FACED

This sub-section is about negative effects that Independent Churches have experienced. These must be addressed in order to pave the way for mutual implementation of a theory for developed ministry. The lack of ecumenical alliances is detrimental to the proclamation of the Gospel. The African Independent Churches experienced nine (Daneel 1991:76-88) ecumenical challenges, which resulted in various negative effects.

The effects are now discussed.

1. *Poor communication*: If there is a need for an ecumenical alliance, communication must be improved. Daneel (1991:76) notes "Bosch cites poor communication as a cardinal cause of church schism. He argues thus ... Until well into the twentieth century Western missionaries still did not generally accept that Christianity in Africa would have to be different from Christianity in Europe."

2. *White missionaries often proclaimed a superficial, impoverished Gospel*: The preaching of the Word and the catechesis were often extremely superficial and did not even touch on many facets of the life or struggle of the African. Daneel (1991:78) comments

The basic cause of this was the impoverished Gospel which the missionaries brought to Africa. The majority of them were products of the Pietistic revival in Europe and America, and/or of Puritanism. Hence to them salvation meant saving souls .... There were few attempts to show people that one's daily work is also a form of worship .... He could proclaim a Gospel of the soul's salvation, but not of the salvation of the entire man.

3. *The phenomenon of rapid social change, industrialization, urbanization, and the secularism that accompany these changes*: Urbanization brought a different way of life. While Africans favor a communal type of community, urbanization forces them to break away from the traditional way of life. Industrialization accepts people living in small groups away from their original homes. Much as this may seem of little consequence, this in fact has a fundamental bearing on the people's worldviews. Daneel (1991:79) narrates

The situation is naturally aggravated by such contributory factors as migratory labor and herding people together in large, impersonal housing units. In such circumstances, where people are far away from their homes (the natural surrounding in which they practiced their traditional religion), they begin to seek new anchors.

4. *The relationship between Black and White*: A difference in status between the Black and White, which permeated throughout African colonialism, is another obstructing factor for ecumenism. Residential segregation in all African cities and large towns before independence alludes to this factor. Daneel (1991:81), commenting on South Africa's situation, states,

The bulk of the country's area eventually came into the hands of the Whites, and Bantu in these 'White' areas were regarded as aliens and temporary workers. Factors such as job reservation, and the scant opportunity for advancement (political, economic and even ecclesiastic) for the Bantu made the situation even more critical.

5. *Precipitating factors*: In addition to the above-mentioned four factors, there were also some factors that emerged and gave birth to independent movements. Commenting on the precipitating factors, Daneel (1991:81) narrates

By this we mean that in a particular situation the 'climate' has already been prepared - inter alia by the aforementioned factors - where upon certain things happen which, in this pregnant atmosphere, give birth to independent movements. Such precipitating factors may be a personal crisis such as the sudden demise....

6. *Disillusionment as a factor*: This factor points to the fact of the tribal population who turned away from tribal religion, leading to the establishment of new church groups. Daneel (1991:82) comments "Disillusionment may also ensue when the Bible is eventually translated into the vernacular, and it then appears that this book does not, after all, reveal all the secrets of the Westerner's power and success."

7. *Western denominationalism*: This factor points out that the multiplicity of Protestant missions had a detrimental effect on Christianity in Africa. In this respect, South Africa is a vivid example, for nowhere else on the entire continent are there so many missionary groups concentrated on a single territory. Daneel (1991:83-84) confirms

As a matter of fact, there are few missionary bodies in the Western world which do not have a mission in South Africa .... It happened in other countries as well, though not to the same extent. Wislade reports, for example, that in one district in Malawi - Mulanje - no fewer than eleven separate White missions were active when he was engaged in research there.

8. *The translation of the Bible into the tribal vernacular*: The translation of the Bible into the tribal vernacular also advanced the birth of independent movements. It was an opportunity for people to read the Bible for themselves and understand the Scriptures independent of the missionaries. Daneel (1991:84) reports

The appearance of the first portions of Scripture in the vernacular heralded another significant change: now, for the first time, it was possible to distinguish between the missionary and Scripture .... Particularly striking was the agreement between the African worldview and that of the Old Testament .... The translation of the Bible into the vernacular is also a factor in a new process of growing self-awareness.

9. *Different traditional structures*: The traditional structure of a particular people may be of such a nature that it encourages or discourages the formation of Independent Churches.

The missionaries did not respect the African cultures and this was another obstructing factor. Daneel (1991:94) notes "When it came to traditional marriage customs the DR Mission Church had great reservations about the *roora* (bride-price) and in terms of canon law categorically rejected the traditional elopements, levirate customs, substitutory measures in cases of barrenness and the like. These were all rejected as forms of immorality." Inculturation never took place.

There is a need to mention that the Independent Churches' real attraction for members and growth derives from their original, creative attempts to relate the good news of the Gospel in a meaningful and symbolically intelligible way to the innermost needs of Africa. In doing so, they are in a process of, and have to a large extent already succeeded in, creating truly African havens of belonging.

Nevertheless, acknowledging that Independent churches faced negative realities, there still is in urban ministry a great need of ecumenical alliances for the smooth proclamation of the Good News to all city dwellers, without which the ministry faces many challenges in its mission. Greenway (1979:201) warns "The disunity of the people of God makes it difficult to mobilize the sub communities for effective prophetic, converting, and healing roles in the city. These groups, to fulfill the church's ministry to the city, must cooperate if the city is to find the Christian witness credible."

#### 6.9.5 THE INCLUSION OF PENTECOSTAL CHURCHES

This section examines further chapter 1, section 1.5.4, concerning the fact that cities attract various world religions. Cities are administrative and business centers that attract residents from other parts of the world and who bring their faiths with them.

The ecumenical alliances, by necessity, should include the Pentecostal Churches who have many followers in African cities and major urban centers. Stumme (1991:34) notes "The destruction and exploitation in the city and the cultural development and religious expression that seek to save the city are always in conflict ... No one style of ministry or theology, therefore, can provide a final definition of urban ministry now or in the future." There are many differences between the Mainline Churches and the Pentecostal Church and they include ecstatic speech and bodily movement. Cox (1995:15) comments "The difference is that while the beliefs of the fundamentalists, and of many other religious groups, are

enshrined in formal theological systems, those of Pentecostalism are imbedded in testimonies, ecstatic speech, and bodily movement.”

If studied well and thoroughly, Pentecostalism, as a Christian tradition, has spread over the world and acts in some circles as a kind of ecumenical movement for the believers. Cox (1995:16) affirms “Pentecostalism, while it looks to many like a narrow cult, is actually a kind of ecumenical movement, an original – and highly successful – synthesis of elements from a number of other sources, and not all of them Christian.” The Pentecostal movement originated in the USA in 1906 by William Joseph Seymour amid unpromising circumstances in a run-down section of Los Angeles.

They started out in a faith; they brought hope to society’s losers and rejected. Today, some of their most visible representatives have become ostentatiously rich, and some even preach a Gospel of wealth. Cox (1995:24) narrates

Led by an African-American preacher with no theological education, its adherents were poor domestic servants, janitors, and day workers - black and white - who had the audacity to claim that a new Pentecost was happening, the New Jerusalem was coming soon, and that they were its designated heralds and grateful first fruits.

The Pentecostal movement, in a way, communicates that something is not right with the Mainline Churches. Two of the challenges against the Mainline Churches are their coldness and empty formality.

To make an alliance with a Pentecostal movement would be beneficial to the Mainline Churches. Cox (1995:73) relates how a Church General Overseer suddenly received the Pentecostal blessing after crumpling down in a service:

A.I. Tomlison the General Overseer - the highest officer of the church - who was seated on the stage near the speaker, was listening with rapt attention. Suddenly, to everyone’s amazement, Tomlison fell out his chair and crumpled in a heap on the rostrum at .... Cashwell’s feet. While he lay there Tomlison received the Pentecostal blessing and, according to his own later testimony, spoke in ten different languages. This opened the door. The entire Church of God and all its branches, with only a few congregations dissenting, became Pentecostal within a few years.

In commenting on the importance of bridging the gap between traditional and charismatic spirituality, Mead (1996:36) notes

I propose that ... the churches must meet to build a church for the future ... find ways to bring this charismatic expression of spirituality into the heart of the Christian experience and bind it fully into the very structures and systems of the religious world

of the churches. This will not be easy. Both “parties” seem to generate an allergic reaction in the other. Each acts as if the other is an essential threat.

In Africa, the Pentecostal movement is spreading rapidly – particularly in the cities and large towns of the continents. It is no longer a cult; it is a fast-growing Christian force to reckon with, otherwise it has the capacity to override the Mainline Churches. Cox (1995:77) comments

The most amazing thing about the runaway divisiveness in the young Pentecostal movement is that while the spats and squabbles continued, so did it spread. The more the Pentecostals fought, the more they multiplied .... Wherever Pentecostalism goes it evokes both joy and anger, gratitude and rejection, polemic and schism.

#### **6.9.5.1 The rapid growth of the Pentecostal movement**

The Pentecostal movement grew rapidly due to three aspects of its spirituality. The movement succeeded because it spoke to the spiritual emptiness of our time by reaching beyond the levels of creed and ceremony into the core of human religiousness, into what might be called. Cox (1995:81-82) states

My own conviction is that Pentecostals have touched so many people because they have indeed restored something. But they have done it in a very particular way. They have enabled countless people to recover, on a quite personal level, three dimensions of this elemental spirituality that I call ‘primal speech,’ ‘primal piety,’ and ‘primal hope.

*Primal speech:* ecstatic utterance or glossolalia, also called “speaking in tongues.” The first Pentecostal learned to speak and their successors still speak with another voice, a language of the heart.

*Primal piety:* touches on the resurgence of trance, vision, healing, dreams, dance, and other archetypal religious expressions in Pentecostalism.

*Primal hope:* points to Pentecostalism’s millennial outlook – its insistence that a radically new world age is about to dawn. Pentecostalism has become a global vehicle for the restoration of primal hope.

In all its myriad forms, Pentecostalism has become the most rapidly expanding religion of our times for three basic reasons: the language of the heart, by embracing ecstatic praise, visions, healing and bodily language, and primal hope.

The fourth aspect is that of music, which also plays a very important role in worship. Cox (1995:139) confesses

I arrived at the Fellowship Pentecostal Temple in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, and for the first time in my life I played my instrument for the Lord .... Knowing what I do know about Pentecostal churches, I am sorry it took me so long to discover that I had lived for too many years with unnecessary disjunction in my life. Most Pentecostals gladly welcome any instrument you can blow, pluck, bow bang, scrape, or rattle in the praise of God.

Ecumenical alliance is the key to addressing the needs of the total human being not only for spiritual needs. Meyers shares a story on how 100 people from local churches, community groups, and the local service employees union met for a noontime prayer service in downtown Seattle. The issue that brought this group together was economic justice. The companies were attempting to force 1500 janitors to accept a new labor contract with significant wage and benefit cuts. The ecumenical alliance intervened in the situation and the contract issue was settled favorably for the janitors. Meyers (1992:309) reports

The president of the service employees union, in thanking the churches, spoke of the effectiveness of their ecumenical effort: The religious community was an essential of our success. By defining the building owners' efforts to impoverish local janitors as a moral issue, and one of concern to the community as a whole, Seattle's religious community sent the building owners a message that their efforts were an attack on the community as a whole and its moral standards.

This was not the only issue that the ecumenical alliances in Seattle addressed on behalf of the poor and marginalized. There are a number of cases for which we do not have the time to share. Meyers (1992:309) notes "Another example of ecumenical activity has been the growth of community-based ministries that have been organized to provide emergency relief through feeding programs, shelters for the homeless, and financial assistance for the rent and utility bills to out-of-work or underemployed families."

The next topic is on the seven benefits for ecumenical alliance.

### 6.9.6 THE VALUE OF ECUMENICAL ORGANIZED MINISTRIES

The ecumenical alliance has a number of benefits (Meyers 1992:310), of which seven are noted.

- It provides a more diverse and comprehensive forum for the identification of critical community concerns.
- It provides a broader base and an important catalyst for organizing around those concerns.
- It draws on the numerical strength and collective wisdom and experience of several congregations at once.
- It increases the opportunities for church members and neighborhood residents to experience the reality of community.
- It empowers people at the local level to take responsibility for the issues that directly affect their lives and the lives of their neighbors.
- It provides a broader platform from which to set forth God's vision of justice for the poor, the alienated, and the dispossessed.
- It gives visible and tangible expression to the unity of the church.

The cities continue to experience increasing pressure and problems of urban poverty. The issues are many and complex: resurgence of racial injustice, the destruction of low income communities to make way for urban re-development, the attacks on low income groups in service-related issues, and many other pressing issues confront our cities. Meyers (1995:310) exhorts "It is into this arena that the urban church is called to proclaim God's vision for the city as a just, inclusive, and peaceful community. We shall express that vision most authentically and powerfully when we engage in this ministry ecumenically." Ellison (1974:147) advises

In our pursuit for unity, I believe there is a critical fact that must be faced: people are different. We have different physical appearances, different conceptions of reality, and different values, mores, and cultures to guide our lives. Much of our personal identity is based on that which makes us different. Consequently, to minister to real people is to minister to people who are different.

The discussion on ecumenical alliances has now been concluded. The third hypothesis which describes the need for joint forums for development to address urban challenges has been confirmed. The last pillar of holistic hermeneutical ministry model called, "Congregational study," will now be attended to.

## 6.10 CONGREGATIONAL RESEARCH, MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The second hypothesis guides further the last pillar of a holistic hermeneutical practical theology model. The hypothesis states:

- Urban ministry can be successful if ordinary people participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry activities.

The pillar takes and discusses chapter 1: sections 1.8.4 and 6.4.5 further.

The pillar addresses three major sections:

- The necessity of congregational studies
- The focus of congregational studies
- The methods of congregational studies

The main purpose of congregational research and evaluation is to gauge the ministry impact, after implementing all of the nine pillars of the approach. In the event of no ministry impact, the research and evaluation process will be further used for planning purposes.

The main objective of this type of research is to solve a problem or answer an important question regarding the future direction of a congregation or any organization in which the research is conducted. It is an inquiry seeking to understand the surroundings of a congregation and, to do so, information must constantly be gathered, processed and analyzed, for the eventual drawing of conclusions. Research is not simply a matter of collecting and analyzing information. It is a process that should proceed through a series of well-defined steps, which usually end in a set of recommendations for action and often in the need of further research.

God urges congregations into action as agents of evangelization and social transformation. Problems arise and, indeed, continue arising because the people, responsible for directing the congregational paths, have done so without a sensitive understanding of the congregation's inner life and resources, or the possibilities, as well as the limits placed on congregations by the context in which God has called it into being (Carroll *et al* 1989:7).

Against this background, a need arises to conduct congregational research and evaluation. Through disciplined processes, the objective is to seriously and appreciatively understand the present being and precious qualities that are within the congregations. The fact that they are

central vehicles for the knowledge and service of God, makes it even more important to understand them in their present being and for their becoming in future. Some of the interesting areas are: how the congregations have supported and challenged communities, and how they manage educational programs of faith transmission as well as life values and the promotion of community solidarity. Studying congregations is a very crucial exercise as it provides ways of understanding Christian existence better and helps leaders and members to make faithful decisions about their ministry and mission. Carroll *et al* (1989:8) note "We also hope to enable discovery of those opportunities for ministry open to it in the place in which God has called it into being. In these discoveries lies the hope of preserving beauty, goodness, truth, and faithful witness in congregational life and mission."

#### 6.10.1 THE NECESSITY FOR CONGREGATIONAL STUDIES

A holistic model has four important factors that make congregational studies crucial. These factors now receive attention, namely:

*Congregational studies can confer a balance and sense of proportion:* From the spontaneous self-descriptions of congregations, this often happens. Carroll *et al* (1989:8) advise "Small groups with strong views can, of course, be powerfully influential in a congregation; but a carefully conducted study can give less vocal members their legitimate voice in making a decision or in some other important congregational negotiations."

*Congregational studies can help congregations with problems:* By uncovering structures or patterns in the apparent confusion, solutions can be sought for multiple, seemingly unrelated, problems. Carroll *et al* (1989:8) state "The tracing of patterns can also benefit churches that are not in trouble but that face the happy albeit confusing prospect of having to choose among opportunities for program and service."

*Congregational studies can be helpful in the long run* depending on the way in which such a study reveals what a congregation does not want. Carroll *et al* (1989:9) comment "An analysis of decision making patterns may reveal considerable frustration with the essentially authoritarian and 'top-down' style of the pastor or key lay officials."

*Congregational study contributes to the private and personal life of the congregation:* This last contribution towards holistic congregational studies may be most helpful in a number of

congregational concerns. Through informal, intuitive, and unsystematic methods, the research can reveal key congregational growing points. These methods favor collecting individual responses, or an informal gathering around a table where impressions are shared. An informal gathering encourages people to share their innermost impressions of the realities. Carroll et al (1989:9) note "... congregational studies open the quest for congregational self – understanding to corporate participation." Shorter (1994:64) affirms "Social analysis also reveals those human contexts which are as yet unevangelized and which are likely to be receptive to the Gospel. These may be minority groups or categories that are imperfectly assimilated."

The above four reasons emphasize the importance of congregational studies. Through congregational studies, people have a way to confess corporately what God has done in the congregation's midst and how the congregation has, or has not, responded to God's gifts.

The next sub section is on the study's congregational approach.

#### 6.10.2 THE FOCUS OF CONGREGATIONAL STUDIES

When conducting a congregational analysis, the focus is on four dimensions, namely:

- Identity
- Process
- Context
- Program.

These are not discreet categories, but overlap one other. Yet, there is a constant interaction among them, reflecting the systematic character of a congregation to which we have access for our study. It must be understood that each of the four dimensions is only one facet of a social, cultural and religious reality of a congregation. Carroll *et al* (1989:15) states

The four dimensions of congregations - program, process, context and identity - offer one way of beginning to clarify and define the problems underlying the mess a congregation may be experiencing. Using the four categories as a sort of map or guidebook points to different areas of congregational life that need to be explored in clarifying what the focus of the discipline study will be.

The four overlapping dimensions of the study are now described.

### 6.10.2.1 A congregational identity

In discussing the identity of a congregation, members, people, themselves, will be at issue. They are the people, as individuals, that identify themselves as Christians but have unique personalities. Yet, in the end, this becomes the singular corporate character of a congregation.

Carroll *et al* (1989: 21) defines

... the identity of a congregation is the persistent set of beliefs, values, patterns, symbols, stories, and style that makes a congregation distinctive. A congregation's identity is a result of the elaborate communication among its members through which they share perceptions of themselves, their church, and the world ... by which they engage in corporate recollection, action, and anticipation.

Therefore, the identity of a congregation is the perception of its culture by either an observer or the congregation itself.

There are three elements of congregational identities namely (Carroll *et al* 1989:22-23):

- *Identity often opposes despair:* Without self-awareness and meaning that identity gives or attaches to a congregation, that congregation drifts without direction. The identity enables a congregation to discover and affirm its particularity, and prevents it from drifting without definition.
- *Identity has a number of dimensions:* It has a group history, congregational heritage, a grasp of group character, a perception of world views, use of symbols and a practice of group ritual, to mention but a few.
- *Identity must bear an integrative function of being:* It is a core human function of being in the present and the transformative function of its becoming, as it moves into the future. Carroll *et al* (1989:23) note "Gaining appreciation of heritage is not merely to enhance the sense of its present state of being; it is also ... an accrued confidence, a dimension that enables members to transform even their own future in future liberation."

When studying a congregation, an important question regards its theological identity. This is the task of biblical reflection; the process is called "transforming Bible study." Here the text is examined in its literary, historical context and also the method of questioning. Furthermore, in the process, the method of theological reflection is important. Carroll *et al* (1989:31) comment "The method involves bringing to bear three sources of information in reflecting on

issues in the ministry of the church: the Christian tradition ... personal experience ... and cultural information.”

### **6.10.2.2 A congregational context**

Congregations are shaped by a myriad of social influences. Their human qualities make them effective in carrying out their mission in different circumstances. The context of a church changes every time as it seeks its capacity to adapt to new surroundings in order to find colors that fit into various environments. Since a congregation is an adapting organization, it is important to see it in relation to its social context: the setting, local and global, in which a congregation finds itself, and to which it responds.

Implicit here, is a view of the congregation as constantly in a state of flux and adaptation. For its own survival, an institution must come to terms with a changing context. But also, an open system implies that the congregation interacts with its environment. Carroll *et al* (1989:48) observe

The two-way, interactive process can be stated as follows: A congregation – its theology and ethics, its worship, its style of operation, and what it does or does not do with reference to mission - is profoundly shaped by its social context. A congregation, by virtue of its relationship to a religious or faith tradition, has the capacity ... to transcend the determinative power of the social context so that it influences the context as it is being influenced by it.

Open systems have the capacity for self-renewal, based on feedback and insight, or at least some power to transform the world around them. Understanding the context in this way, signifies that the local congregation is an agent of God’s larger purposes, equipped for its mission both by its participation in God’s larger design and by its human character.

### **6.10.2.3 A congregational process**

A “congregational process” refers to the dynamic interaction between values and events. The primary task of a church is to move the individual from a faith dependent upon others, through a process of personal search and exploration, to a faith that is owned integral to self-identity and freely chosen personal values. Carroll *et al* (1989:81) comment

Process is not what happens, but how it happens. It is the link between the identity, values, and commitment of members, and the specific programs which the members attend and support. In defining process, writers in organizational studies usually differentiate between task, structure and process.

While the task has to do with the purpose, the process has to do with the way the goals are accomplished.

The holistic model has several aspects of processes of which some are: planning, role clarification, training, support giving, crisis management, and problem solving. In each execution of a process there are two aspects, namely formal and informal. Understanding the tension between a formal and an informal process is essential in holistic congregational studies. Carroll *et al* (1989:81) note

Formal process, or structure refers to the formal agreed upon, and usually written understandings that the members of a congregation have about congregational procedures .... Informal process ... has to do with procedures that people actually follow, which may be different from what they are authorized to do in the congregation.

It is important to note that when the formal and informal processes challenge one another, the informal is likely to win, because this is the one the members of the congregation understand, are familiar with, and intuitively know how it works. When gathering congregational data, the researchers are concerned with the application of those methods that grant a unique insight into church processes, such as observation, document study, analysis group discussion, semi-structured interviews, and ranking.

#### **6.10.2.4 A congregational program**

The purpose of this section is to discuss the relationship between the program and the other three dimensions of congregational studies. A program is the plan of action, what a congregation does. In a program, a congregation gives concrete expression to beliefs and norms held by members, present and past, and carries the values to which members are committed. Carroll *et al* (1989:120) note "Program ... consists of those organizational structures, plans, and activities through which a congregation expresses its mission and ministry both to itself - its own members - and to those outside."

Congregational programs can be studied in various ways. Thus, the following steps must be taken: assessment-identification of congregational issues and needs, planning a program designed on the basis of the needs identified, steps to be implemented for addressing the congregational needs, follow-up monitoring to ascertain whether the steps taken actually do address the needs, re-designing the steps to be relevant to the program, and evaluation of the

impact of the program (Theis & Grady 1991:39). Each and every stage of the program is unique and critical for the life of the congregation.

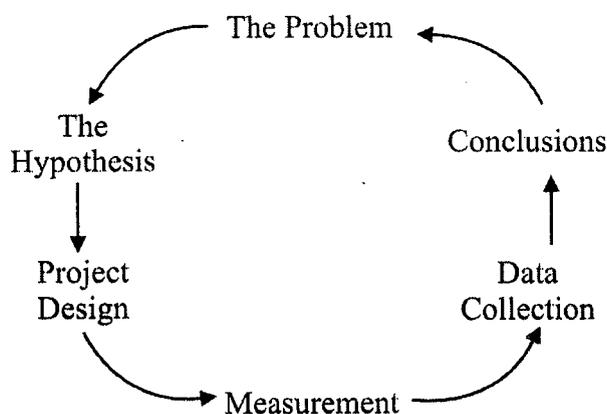
### 6.10.3 THE METHODS OF CONGREGATIONAL STUDIES

A research is about an inquiry. Actually, all contribute to the research, that is the process of gathering information, and act in an appropriate way. In fact, it should be clear that a complete investigation of any question or problem normally requires a variety of complementary research techniques. Mouton (1996:7) notes

Each of the worlds that we live in requires a different kind of knowledge .... This is so because knowledge has numerous functions; it enriches our lives in various ways, it broadens our horizons and enables us to understand our world. It helps us to make better-informed decisions and cope more effectively with daily challenges.

#### **The Cyclical Research process:**

Research is not simply a matter of collecting and analyzing data. It is a circular process that moves through a series of well defined steps. The chart below indicates the research process.



***The problem:*** The starting point for any research project is the statement of the problem or the research question.

***The hypothesis:*** Essentially, it is an informed expectation that helps to focus research on issues central to the research question.

***Project design:*** There are several basic research designs that need analysis, case study, feasibility studies and programme evaluations.

- Measurement:** The design of questions which will measure impact of the project and any other form of instrument for data collection.
- Data collection:** This is the process of information gathering and can be in the form of interviews, direct observation, and the analysis of documents.
- Conclusions:** This captures the end result of the research process. It answers whether the hypotheses were confirmed or incorrect.

### 6.10.3.1 Participatory and qualitative researches

This section takes and describes the definition of participatory research documented in section 3.0 further. The purpose of this sub-section is to document that participatory research is a key to congregational information gathering. Every member of the church can contribute valuable information regarding that particular congregation. In a way, the process also acknowledges the importance of the priesthood of all believers. Allowing only the church leader to monopolize the research process, the chance is that the end result may not reflect the actual issues that the congregation experiences.

Everyone does research in order to meet daily challenges. This fact alludes to the importance of participatory research. Participatory research acknowledges the fact that the process of acquiring information is not restricted to those few individuals who have the capacity to conduct research and analyze the data scientifically. By accepting this implies that research can be conducted by using only a formal process. But, as already noted, this is not the best way of information acquisition, because it does not recognize the importance of the informal process, which too has the capacity to articulate and reveal valuable congregational issues.

Therefore, participatory research is an intentional process to include congregational members, as well as those outside the congregation, to take part in the research process. Doing research in this way allows the integration of formal and informal processes and reveals all issues affecting the life of the congregation. The informal process is crucial to congregational building. Carroll *et al* (1989:82) state

Many informal processes are adequate, sometimes ingenious. Changing what is functioning may waste time at best, or replace a functional process with one that is dysfunctional, increasing frustration and perhaps getting in the way of smooth running organization. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Browning (1991:2) affirms "This is the tradition of practical wisdom or practical reason ... It is not surprising that they help us understand how churches and religious communities are simultaneously communities of memory and communities of practical reason." Congregational research can use either qualitative or quantitative research paradigms. The researcher favors the qualitative approach. However, he is aware of the fact that the term "qualitative research" can mean different things to different people and, therefore, it is difficult to describe it in a way that will satisfy everybody.

The researcher agrees with the definition of De Vos (1998:240) on qualitative research who notes "... qualitative research is defined as a multiperspective approach (utilizing different qualitative techniques and data collection methods) to social interaction, aimed at describing, making sense of, interpreting or reconstructing this interaction in terms of the meanings that the subjects attach to it." It is the social interaction and the interpretation parts of qualitative approach that make the approach holistic.

Qualitative research uses terms like "field research" or "fieldwork." This is indicative of the fact that the process is undertaken within the habitat of the people themselves and is closely related to the term "naturalist" as used in the field of biology. Qualitative research is an interactive process. De Vos (1998:240) comments "The term 'interactive' refers to the fact that the aim of (qualitative) research is not to explain human behavior in terms of universally valid laws or generalization, but rather to understand and interpret the meanings and intentions that underlie everyday human action."

A brief description, by way of comparing qualitative and quantitative research processes, is critical at this point. The quantitative paradigm is based on positivism, which takes scientific explanation to be homothetic (i.e. based on universal laws). Its main aims are to measure the social world objectively, to test hypotheses and to predict and control human behavior. In contrast, the qualitative paradigm stems from an antipositivistic, interpretative approach, is idiographic, thus holistic in nature, and the main aim is to understand social life and the meaning attached to everyday life (De Vos 1998:241). In terms of methodology, the quantitative paradigm emulates the physical sciences in that questions or hypotheses are stated and subjected to empirical testing to verify them. In contrast, qualitative methodology is dialectical and interpretative.

As a result, a qualitative researcher is concerned with three aspects namely:

- Understanding, rather than explanation
- Naturalistic observation, rather than controlled measurement
- The subjective exploration of reality from the perspective of an insider, as opposed to the outsider perspective that is predominant in the quantitative paradigm.

## 6.11 CONCLUDING REMARKS

In chapter six a theory for doing urban ministry called “holistic hermeneutical practical theology” has been applied in order to develop a model for urban ministry. In the process of describing and developing the model, the four hypotheses served as orientation markers pointing the CCAP towards its future role in urban ministry. The theory has juxtapositioned the four hypotheses to a number of approaches called pillars. The pillars will lead to a practical ecclesiology in Malawian cities.

### *Pillar 1: The ministry in a new era and context*

Ministry in Africa originated in the rural areas and was designed taking into consideration the rural context. At the time the missionaries brought the Gospel to Malawi, there were no cities as known today. As a result of the effects of urbanization, the traditional and rural ministry ethos poses a problem for doing theology in urban centers. Its rural background prevents the CCAP from developing an effective and faithful urban ministry that addresses the city’s problems amicably. The first pillar attempted to refocus the church’s ministry to the needs of the poor. African cities are mission areas necessitated by the new urban context.

This pillar addresses the issue raised by hypothesis 1, which states: "Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor." Pillar one asks for the transformation needed in a new era and context. This pillar also addresses the issue raised by hypothesis four: "At present, the ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry." It asked for a transferal of the ownership of the church, to empower laity to play their God - ordained role in ministry.

*Pillar 2: Urban ministry among the poor requires community participation*

The church must seek to work in partnership with the poor. This pillar emphasized the need to develop new skills and knowledge through informal educational experiences in which the poor actively participate as subjects, instead of remaining passive objects. This must be done in respect of steps towards empowering people to assume a status of partnership with churches, governments and other agencies. In order to implement this pillar, the church must develop community participation through the processes of: developing principles of self-reliant approaches, conscientization, partnering with the poor in all stages of development, and a process of replicating biblical examples of empowerment.

As such the pillar links to hypothesis 2: "Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry." Through community participation, people gain confidence in their own knowledge and skills, in their ability to identify problems and to find solutions in order to improve their own lives.

*Pillar 3: Proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas*

The need for relevant preaching by taking into consideration the prevailing situations of city realities has been emphasized and documented in this pillar. The church's role of advocacy for the poor and economic development has been emphasized. The church is called to name all that is evil and dark about the city, and particularly to confront urban systems and structures when they act in exploitative and oppressive ways. Pillar three is therefore a reaction to hypothesis 3 "A holistic approach to ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban poverty problems."

*Pillar 4: Christian faith development*

Spiritual development is an integral part of transformational development among urban communities. For this reason, the understanding of sustainability as a process should include the spiritual, physical, mental and social dimensions. The main purpose of Christian faith development is to provide a communicative praxis, which is crucial in the holistic hermeneutical practical theology theory. It relates primarily to the Gospel in relationship to life issues, values, priorities and ordering relationships. The proclamation of the Gospel mostly focuses on a single text and this limits communicating the biblical story as a whole. Christian faith is the beginning of transformation. By sharing God's news with people, we

offer the start of the process of recovering identity and vocation. Hypothesis three calls for a holistic approach to urban ministry. This pillar explains how a specific aspect, Christian faith development, should be addressed in urban ministry.

*Pillar 5: Urban evangelism*

The researcher defined *Evangelism* to mean the verbal sharing of Jesus Christ's Good News and his offer to fallen human beings. In this instance, a "human being" is a totality of spiritual and physical needs that requires renewal and transformation. It is the Gospel's invitation to a relationship, not a mere intellectual assessment or agreement to a set of ideas. In this sense, the Gospel is not in conflict with other religions; it is simply the truth. Understanding evangelism in this way means that it is a process of doing justice and preaching grace. Therefore, evangelism is not simply speaking about something that we believe or that we feel compelled to share. It announces something that has happened in the world, about which everyone has the right to know.

This being the case, all God's people (irrespective whether of the clergy or the laity) have the right and duty to transmit the Gospel to others. All have received the spiritual gifts from one Spirit for the edification of the church. Pillar five implements what hypotheses 2 and 4 called for: involving the poor in all the aspects of urban ministry and empowering them to be able to participate.

*Pillar 6: A city mission requires effective pastoral care*

Urban mission is a valuable opportunity for pastoral care. The urban church that does not identify with suffering is biblically out of touch with life's realities. Intense pain creates the impression that God is absent. Therefore, the ministers' knowledge of the use of lament during the period of suffering may encourage the people to communicate their pain by lamenting to God. God reveals his compassion for suffering humankind in Christ's faithfulness of God: I will ... be your God (Gen. 17:7).

Youth ministry is one of the most challenging areas in the cities, yet the most rewarding ministry in the church. In this pillar, suggestions were made to involve and under-gird urban nuclear families with the support of extended Christian families. Families should work together in leading the young people towards mature Christian adulthood. Pillar 6 is called for by hypotheses 2, 3, and 4. Urban members should be doing this pastoral ministry. They know

and understand the realities of suffering. Equipping the laity to be involved (hypothesis 4) is part of a holistic ministry (hypothesis 3).

*Pillar 7: Building urban faith communities*

The seventh pillar of urban ministry documented ways in which the urban congregation can become a community of moral conviction. It can act as a generator of faith communities with the emphasis on the family as a nuclear support system. It is a well-known fact that the quest for modernity has done great damage to the whole world by destroying community. Community is not only a backbone for moral teaching, but also the incubator of conscience and conviction. A community is most fundamental and far reaching for all people. Through their membership, people share the primary good with one another; people without community membership are stateless persons.

The destruction of the community is more visible in the cities of Africa than in the rural sector. Modernity is killing the people who invented it. The reality of crime, fear, and violence – most of which urban congregations are grappling with - the very outcome of modernity itself, haunts almost everyone, of whatever social status in the world. The congregations, which built urban communities, can make a huge difference in the lives of people in African cities. The time is ripe, the methods are clear. The challenge is ours. Hypothesis 4 called for equipping people to raise to this challenge.

*Pillar 8: Orientation in urban ministry*

The eighth pillar described the process of orientation, training and equipping of both ministers and the laity for urban mission. This is what hypothesis 4 implied should be done. The reason for equipping ministers and the laity for urban mission becomes essential in order to ensure the implementation of holistic ministry. Ministry in urban Malawi cannot be left in the hands of one group alone (the clergy), as the task is enormous and taxing. The training should focus on biblical examples of leadership, the integration of Christian faith education with prevailing city realities, dealing with crises (e.g. HIV/AIDS), formulating new roles for the laity, ministers and church personnel holding church management positions (e.g.: Moderators and General Secretaries).

*Pillar 9: The critical need for ecumenical alliances in African cities*

Building alliances emerges from the premises: to bear one another's burdens and to rejoice with those who are rejoicing and weep with those who weep. In addition, there is a need to form urban joint forums for development with government service providers, in order to maximize resources and avoid duplication of efforts as well as unnecessary competition.

A collectivization of efforts is required among evangelical churches and groups of churches. This is a result of the realization that no single pattern of witness and ministry will be adequate for the challenge and needs of modern African cities. The alliances could be formed in the areas of cooperative efforts in urban sub-regions, at regional level, and at national level. As such pillar 9 is implementing hypothesis 3's call for a holistic approach ecumenically.

*Pillar 10: The importance of congregational study*

The purpose of this pillar is to gauge the impact of ministry after implementing all the other nine pillars of the approach. This pillar refers to a methodology that can help to solve a problem, or answer an important question regarding the future direction of a congregation or any organization in which research is conducted. In its effort to acquire an understanding of the surroundings of a congregation, there is the need to constantly gather, process and analyze information to ultimately draw conclusions. Congregational studies methodology supplies the infrastructure necessary for implementing hypothesis 2 that calls for the involvement and participation of urban residents in the process of developing urban ministry.

## Chapter 7

### Summary and conclusion

#### 7.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the:

- The role that the four hypotheses played
- Congregational study methods used in each chapter
- The study's path and results (summary of the chapters)
- The contribution that the study has made to the already existing knowledge, and
- Concluding remarks.

#### 7.1 THE ROLE THAT THE FOUR HYPOTHESES PLAYED

The purpose of this study was to develop a holistic hermeneutical practical theology, a theory of doing ministry in urban centres of African countries in general and in Malawi in particular. What necessitated the development of this theory is that, in Africa, the origin of ministry is rural, and its strategy and theology are inadequate to face the booming urban situations. The rural setting differs from the urban context and, as such, a rural-oriented approach cannot address the life in urban cities.

##### *The usefulness of the study's four relational hypotheses*

All of the four hypotheses have been very helpful in the research process for this study. A few of the sections have been documented to illustrate how the hypotheses have guided and assisted in both describing and documenting this dissertation.

##### *Hypothesis 1:*

- Its rural background and theory of ministry prevent the CCAP from developing an effective urban ministry that adequately addresses the problems of the poor.

This hypothesis has been useful in guiding the research in the following areas:

*Chapter 1.8 Ministry: A hermeneutical exegesis of word and context:* The rural background of ministry theory prevents the CCAP from developing effective ministry in the cities

because it is not hermeneutically sensitive. It focuses only on the preaching of the Gospel without checking on the physical needs of the poor in both rural and urban areas. The need to view Word and context as inseparable elements of doing theology has been emphasized repeatedly in this section.

*Chapter 2.1 The multiple ministry approach in the work of mission and church:* The multiple approaches that the missionaries implemented in Malawi would make a difference if they were continued. The problem arose when, in the process of transferring power to indigenous leaders, the emphasis was placed on “soul care” only. A “soul care only” approach in the urban settings is suicide to the Gospel.

*Chapter 2.4 The legitimization of the political order:* The legitimization of the political order would have had less of an impact on the lives of Malawians if the church had implemented a holistic ministry theory, as developed. To ensure that this negative experience does not happen again, the church must adopt a prophetic ministry.

The church must take the responsibility of holding the government accountable. In order to enhance its role as a watchdog of the political order, the church seeks to deliver its Christian witness holistically. It must proclaim the Gospel and, simultaneously, ensure the implementation of the Gospel by means of physically liberating its people. The church is now interested in people’s day-to-day realities; it is holding the principal political actors accountable, in addition to proclaiming the Gospel. This is no small commitment to the discipleship commission and, as such, it is a brave step forward.

*Chapter 3:* In this chapter hypothesis 1 was proved by asserting the absence of any meaningful contact between church and government with regards to the ministry and poverty issues faced in Lilongwe.

*Chapter 6.1 The ministry in a new era and context:* The hypothesis has further assisted in both reflection and the process of redesigning the holistic theory for doing ministry in a new era and context in urban Malawi. The differing urban context calls for the church in Malawi to engage itself in a fourfold process to:

- Redesign the ministry,
- Focus on urban challenges currently facing the church,

- Engage in the process of searching for the unchurched, and
- Work towards a priesthood for all believers as “people of the way.”

The hypothesis also guided the development of section 6.5.5 “Theological premises for urban evangelism.”

***Hypothesis 2:***

- Urban ministry in the shantytowns and slums can only be successful if the residents participate in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the ministry.

The second hypothesis has been helpful in documenting the following sections:

**Chapter 2:** The second hypothesis has assisted in the development of two sections: Limitation of the Reformed model and on the role of women in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod.

**Chapter 3: *Two South African poverty situations:*** The people in Soweto and in the Cape Peninsula are struggling to meet their daily needs for life. Through this hypothesis it has been documented that the poor can make a difference if allowed to participate in all stages of the process of development. The unemployed, standing at the side of the road (at traffic lights) in the Cape Peninsula, are implementing various activities with the assistance of the Catholic Welfare and Development (CWD) Organization. The urban poor in Soweto are working in partnership with World Vision of South Africa. By involving them in the quest for solutions, problems were solved. If it can be done in South Africa, it can also be done in Malawi.

**Chapter 5:4: *A church in solidarity with the poor:*** This section relates how the hypothesis continued to be helpful. Among other important factors, it enabled the researcher to document the actions that the church can take in working with the oppressed.

**Chapter 6:** In this chapter the second hypothesis was the background to the development of four subsections and three pillars.

The four subsections were: How to develop community participation, the role of the church in the city, the involvement of the laity in city mission, and the congregational care of the urban

church. The three pillars were: Urban ministry among the poor needs community participation, the city mission requires effective pastoral care, and the need for congregational study.

***Hypothesis 3:***

- A holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development is needed to address urban problems of poverty.

The third hypothesis was helpful as it guided the research work and documentation of the following chapters and sections:

In chapter 2: The third hypothesis has guided the work of two sections: Blending the missionary approach into a Chewa context, and on the influence of the Pentecostal movements.

*In chapter 3:* The hypothesis proved effective in developing two sections of the chapter. The first section is the government's effort to arrest the urban challenges through services provision entities. The government can make a huge difference if the local authority's laws and regulations could allow the urban poor to participate in legitimizing activities. In addition, the government could support and encourage informal businesses by setting up credit systems and disbursing the loans through groups.

The hypothesis has proved the validity of another sections concerning the urban mission of the CCAP ministry. Almost all urban congregations in Lilongwe have substantial prayer houses in the shantytowns and slums. Most Christians from these areas are poor and unemployed. The congregations could step in and improve the transforming activities that *Chigwilizano cha Amai* are currently implementing. Each congregation could challenge rich Christians to assist with funds for the poor to initiate income activities. The ideal situation is for the Church and the government to create joint forums to address the urban challenges jointly.

*In chapter 4:* Poverty wraps the poor in restrictions and limits them in four areas of life: physical, material, social and spiritual. In order to bring about the desired change, the poor themselves must take part in the development processes. This is crucial because the people who are most capable of solving the problems of the city are those who are most affected by

the oppressing circumstances. Hypothesis 3 asks for a holistic approach to urban ministry with joint forums for development to address urban challenges. Furthermore, the participation of the poor is a step ahead for ministry sustainability.

*In chapter 5:* The hypothesis has guided the discussion of the liberation model (section 5.3.1.4). The lack of concern of liberation leadership for dialogue with other Christian churches is detrimental to addressing urban challenges amicably. This lack is well noted in the violence of the liberation approach. The chapter asks for a holistic approach to address urban ministry problems.

*In chapter 6:* The hypothesis was background to the formulation of the five pillars: Proclaiming the Gospel in word and deed in urban areas; Christian faith development; Urban evangelism; The city mission is a rare opportunity for pastoral care; and Towards ecumenical urban alliances. All the pillars emphasized the need for a holistic approach to urban ministry in order to address the challenges the CCAP is faced with.

***Hypothesis 4:***

- At present, ministry in the CCAP operates within a hierarchical, clerical paradigm and, as such, is unable to equip and empower the laity to address the problems and challenges of urban ministry.

This fourth hypothesis guided the research of six sections in different chapters:

*Chapter 1.9: Ministry as a servant of the Kingdom of God:* The task to proclaim the coming Kingdom of God belongs to all believers, both clergy and the laity. The church is sent by God to preach the coming of the Kingdom to the whole world. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." And with that He breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 20:21-22).

*In chapter 2:* The hypothesis guided two sections: The need to ordain women and the challenges that Pentecostal movements are facing in urban Malawi as a result of the CCAP's focus only on "soul care." In the CCAP women play key roles in the advancement of the Gospel through the Women's Guild, despite being denied the opportunity of full participation at church leadership level. In the area of the "influence of the Pentecostal movements," it was

noted in section 2.6 that the youth, who professed the Reformed faith, have withdrawn their membership from the CCAP and joined Pentecostal movements due to the CCAP's legalist leadership, which does not want to involve the youth in its implementation of the ministry.

*In chapter 3:* The fourth hypothesis was background work to the development of the section on urban mission of CCAP ministry. In order to address the calamities affecting the urban dwellers, the church must implement the paradigm of priesthood of all believers. The clergy alone cannot appropriately manage a successful urban ministry.

*In chapter 4:* The hypothesis has guided the development of the section: "Who are the poor?" It was documented under this section (4.2) that the poor are equal to the rich before God. Both were created in the image of God, both experienced the consequences of the fall, and both are the focus of God's redemptive work. Therefore, the clerical paradigm should give way to the process of equipping and empowering the laity to address the problems and challenges of the urban ministry.

*In chapter 5:* The hypothesis was effective in guiding section 5.1.2: "Community organization as an approach to urban ministry in poverty areas." It was noted that the community organization approach lies in its empowering the poor to determine, for themselves, the actions they intend to take in order to deal with the essential forces that are destroying their community and that are consequently causing their powerlessness.

*In chapter 6:* The fourth hypothesis continued to affirm its validity in the process of developing four sections and five pillars:

The four sections are: Transferring the ownership of the church, a people of the way, the biblical example of empowerment, and the church as a community of moral conviction.

The five pillars are: Christian faith development, urban evangelism, the effective pastoral care, building urban faith communities, and orientation and training of the clergy and laity for urban mission.

Through the participatory research conducted in two Malawi areas (Nkhata Bay and Lilongwe city) and also in two South African areas (Soweto and the Cape Peninsula), the researcher had the privilege to affirm the validity of the hypotheses.

The hypotheses were helpful in guiding the attempts of the research in the process of theory development that empowers the church to address the problems of urban dwellers in a hermeneutical, holistic and practical way. Doing theology in this way brings the practice of ministry in touch with the real life issues of people, as well as with the Bible and the Christian tradition.

## **7.2 STUDY METHODOLOGY**

This section refers back to chapter 1, section 1.10. Different research methods (techniques) were used in the process of doing this research. Each chapter used a research method or methods. They focused on a particular unit of analysis and gathered empirical information. The purpose of this section is to document the study's methodology.

### **7.2.1 DIRECT OBSERVATION**

Direct observation, as a research method, is generally used to collect data in the category of human behaviour, social interaction; including observable characteristics such as physical locality, non-verbal behaviour and stature (Mouton 1996:142).

This method was used to collect data during the research conducted in Lilongwe's urban congregations. By means of this method the category of human behaviour, social interaction, including observable characteristics such as physical locality, non-verbal behaviour and stature were gathered. It became a useful information-gathering tool for understanding congregational dynamics.

The method brought the researcher in touch with all of what it means to be part of a congregation: its smells, physical impressions, sounds, sights, and emotional sensations. These informed the researcher about the essence of a community of believers (Mouton 1996:142). Direct observation, as a research tool, enabled the researcher to crosscheck the respondents' responses during semi-structured interviews.

The information gathered by means of this research method was used in documenting chapters 3, 4, and 5.

### 7.2.2 PARTICIPATORY RESEARCH: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWING

Interviewing was another method used for congregational study in Lilongwe's urban congregations. This method was used in order to correct the inadequacies of observation. The method proved to be an effective method for information gathering. Different church groups, including: ministers, their wives, Sunday school and Catechumen teachers, church elders, volunteers, members of the choir and the women's guild, took part in the participatory interviewing process.

This was a powerful process due to the different types of semi-structured interviewing: individual interviews, key informant interviews, group interviews, and focused group discussion (Theis & Grady 1991:52-53). Through these types of semi-structured interviews for research, respondents were free to participate in all discussions regarding their understanding of congregations. As a result, data was gathered on the norms and status of ministry procedures and implementation of church activities in Lilongwe city. Information collected via this method was useful in chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6.

### 7.2.3 ARCHIVAL DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

Extensive collections of records, documents, and library collections were attended to. These also include census data, demographic data, life statistics, and newspaper reports (Mouton 1996:142). This method is also called content analysis (Van der Ven 1998:128). Through this process of research, documents were researched at Nkhoma Mission, the National Archive and National Statistics Office in Zomba. In addition, various books on different approaches to urban ministry in poverty areas were researched.

Archival document analysis was used in the four sampled congregations (Lilongwe, Msonkhamanja, Masintha, and Kafita) as well as at the National Archive and National Statistics Office in Zomba. By means of this method the congregation's history, processes, demographic data, and resources were uncovered. The method also worked well as it included evaluation through historical and symbolic interactional research methods (Mouton 1996:142; Van der Ven 1998:128). The information was used for documenting chapters 1, 2, 4 and 5.

#### 7.2.4 ANALYSIS OF VALUABLE INFORMATION

The analysis of valuable information, as a research tool, was used in the process of analysing the situations in the shantytowns and slums of Malawian and South African scenarios. The analysis was the result of the participatory researches conducted in the concerned communities.

The literature and documentary reports by Lilongwe, Blantyre and Mzuzu Assemblies (Municipality Councils) were analysed. Such reports included health, economic, and census documents of the three cities and the researched communities as well as documents of other development agencies dealing with situations of people in squatter settlements. The Nkhoma Synod documents and theological literature were among the researched materials. The researched case studies involve field realities in which situations and processes were carried out by means of participatory perception and qualitative methods (Van der Ven 1998:128). The research method assisted in the documentation of chapter 3 of this dissertation.

#### 7.2.5 MINISTERS' WORKSHOP AT THE DZENZA CCAP

A workshop with four Lilongwe congregations created an opportunity to gather important information. This was used in chapter 3, sections 3.5.7 and 3.5.8. The information was used for chapters 3, 4 and 6 of this dissertation.

Another two-day workshop with all the Lilongwe city ministers was held at the Dzenza CCAP in Lilongwe. The researcher presented a research findings report on the four sampled congregations. It explained the relationship between the findings and the issues at stake. In the report, the research team proposed possible paths of scenarios, or actions for moving forward. The researcher benefited greatly as, in the process of research and when compiling a final report, he became both a descriptive researcher and a visionary theologian. This was participatory research at its best.

Each minister was allocated time to present a historical background, the impact achieved by way of positive or negative experiences, and future plans for the concerned congregation. Via this process, the ministers learnt from each other about the urban congregational challenges. Thereafter, they worked out strategies to address the problems. The following are the strategies that the team agreed to implement in order to turn the situation around:

- Define the roles of the church and what different development practitioners can bring about to address the slum problems.
- Enhance local community members' commitment to participate and work on their development.
- Promote effective collaboration and ensure wider participation of various actors in township development activities.
- Clarify roles and build better networking relationships in addressing urban needs amongst various actors.
- Share the experience for mutual learning, and provide a basis for better programme redesigning, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Obtain a commitment to the needs of the urban areas from all key players, i.e. the government, NGOs, local leaders, churches, the police, prison services, city councils, education, medical, housing and water authorities.

### **7.3 THE STUDY PATH AND RESULTS: SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTERS**

The study commenced with *chapter one* describing the urban context of Malawi. This is the context in which the developed ministry theory is to be tested. The effects of urbanization: secularization, disorientation, poverty and pollution routinely hamper ministry in the main centres of Malawi. The high rate of urbanization poses a continuous challenge to the church. Its ministry and approach to the urban context and the needs of urbanized people necessitated the developed theory as a way of redefining the church's role and methods, so as to adapt its ministry to a new and challenging situation. The theory was developed, taking into consideration urbanization and all the socio-economic influences that affect it, globalization and trends concomitant with modernization, secularization, and shifts in religious inclination and orientation.

The *second chapter* reviewed and examined the present existing practice of ministry. The process revealed the inadequacy of the traditional and rural approach to ministry to address the effects of urbanization. The rural approach failed drastically to address the impact of secularization, which is a major cause for concern for the urban church. As a matter of fact, secularization is a virus carried by urbanization and it brings religious indifference, a loss of awareness of God and of the sense of sin. Moral disorientation that accompanies cultural alienation results in bad habits often learned and usually practised to the detriment of the

urban poor. Due to increased poverty, the urban poor are forced into illegal activities for their survival, as well as short-lived pleasures to ameliorate the miseries of their daily predicaments. The fact that cities attract various world beliefs, convictions and faiths, poses an added challenge to the ministry.

The inability of the present ministry theory was regrettably noted when the church legitimized the political order. As a result of the traditional rural ministry, the church concerned herself only with Gospel proclamation, to the neglect of the defenceless and poverty-stricken people. The church had forgotten her task of acting to check and balance the political administration – being accountable to God, rather than to a government. Yet, the church needs to be prophetic, both in the proclamation of the Gospel and in addressing life's issues.

From these facts and trends, the church was motivated to come to the conclusion that urban ministry is an urgent pastoral priority in Malawi, as well as in Africa as a whole. It is, therefore, with this background that a holistic hermeneutical practical theology ministry theory has been developed.

The *third chapter* documented the various case studies of scenarios of the present situation in urban poverty-afflicted areas. They revealed the efforts of churches, government developing entities, and those of other agencies. Through the recent research conducted in Lilongwe, it was noted that developmental gaps do exist between the government, churches, non-governmental agencies and the affected people themselves. In most cases, the developmental agencies do not involve the concerned people in the process of addressing the urban challenges. This results in failure and/or inadequacy in transforming the lives of urban dwellers. The development agencies should involve the urban poor as the major partner in development. Such a move is strategic and desirable to ensure sustainable development. The church can and should be the facilitating network agent to get this done.

At the ministers' workshop conducted in Lilongwe, it was further noted that churches could be instrumental in making a difference in the lives of people if the ministers themselves are oriented in urban ministry strategies. The challenge at hand is that, when ministers leave the seminary, they have clear visions for change. But, when they come to urban congregations, they soon discover that they lack a method that will take the holistic physical and spiritual needs of people into consideration. The developed theory has four built-in critical skills to

ensure strong ministerial leadership. Therefore, it is hoped that the ministers will concern themselves about a form of evangelism regarding the people's eternal destiny but will be equally concerned about their earthly experience.

*Chapter four* attempted to describe the magnitude of urban poverty and the situation of the poor. This chapter addressed a fundamental premise that the poor are people created in the image of God and that they are whole, living human beings - indivisible in body, soul, mind and heart. God has given gifts, skills, and potentials to the poor (and to the rich) for them to become heirs of the Kingdom. The biblical narrative communicates clearly that all people were created in the image of God, all experienced the consequences of the fall, and all are the focus of God's redemptive work.

Understanding the poor in this way is critical for knowledge of urban poverty and its causes. In this chapter, several causes for poverty have been documented, namely: social, mental, spiritual, physical and through exploitation. Due to continual high unemployment rates, urban informal economies were viewed as one option in the way forward between poverty and growth. The developed theory is crucial for the church to determine and identify the physical and spiritual needs of people through the theory's communicative-hermeneutical process. The church could address the predicaments of the poor meaningfully, if the poor were allowed to participate in the management of church activities and were enabled to implement advocacy that focuses on challenging social injustices.

*Chapter five* describes four different approaches to urban ministry and poverty. The approaches are discussed: community organization, effective congregational-based advocacy ministries, liberation model, and a church in solidarity with the poor and the oppressed. A community organizational approach primarily sees part of the staff's responsibility as awakening, developing and training the natural leaders of the community to assume effective leadership of the community. By doing this, the approach acts from the value-based rather than issue-based standpoint of faith, vision and conviction in its commitment to that community.

Advocacy uses both love and power to seek justice in society. Martin Luther King Jr. frequently said that power without love is dangerous, while love without power is insipid; together power and love produce justice. The church must empower people to take charge of

their situations. The Marxist approach is important in this regard. While its social analysis is very strategic as it focuses on the needs of disadvantaged people, the church, however, must be aware of possible dangers and temptations facing the liberation approach. The CCAP must transform the lives of its members. To do this, it must discontinue operating within a hierarchical paradigm. The Church cannot choose to play safe by adopting policies of neutrality. It must not ally itself with the powerful when the well-being of the poor is at stake. When the church works in solidarity with the oppressed, it is with the realization that the process of impoverishment is not accidental; it is the result of choices and decisions made by those who have the power and use it for selfish purposes and for the accumulation of resources.

*Chapter six* was dedicated to developing a model for urban ministry in Malawi as well as in all other African countries. A ministry model with ten pillars based on the principles of an, "Holistic Hermeneutical Practical Theology," has been developed. The model focuses on the human being as an indivisible entity - soul and body forming a unity out of the diversity. The holistic model views practical theology as a process, which opposes docetic theologies that compartmentalize the spiritual and the physical, thus shrinking the concerns of the church to the private spiritual needs of its members.

Its hermeneutical concern enables the theory to connote both the search for meaning in a text or tradition as well as the explanation of the result of the discovery. Most importantly, the hermeneutic process seeks the construction of a bridge between the past, where the text was formulated, and the present situation. When bridging the contextual setting, the theory does not claim an absolute final, fault-free position, but invites a dialogue, since it recognizes the limitations inherent in all human endeavours. But, last of all, it is a theology theory, which takes seriously the context of people. As such, the process moves from life to faith, then back to life (practice → theory → practice).

Throughout the dissertation, it has been emphasized repeatedly that the model developed by implementing the theory requires the full participation of the people to evaluate the results when they apply their insights into action, returning to the Bible and Christian tradition, to once again reshape and work on their answers.

## 7.4 THE STUDY'S CONTRIBUTION

The study has contributed a number of insights to the present existing knowledge. The researcher regards the following as the most crucial:

1. *The second pillar of holistic theory (Chapter 6) "Urban ministry among the poor needs community participation."*

The researcher argues that, in order for the church to make a desirable impact in urban centres, it must seek to work in partnership with the urban poor. In so doing, the church is able to implement development, which involves the awareness, motivation and behaviour of individuals, and the relations between people as well as groups within a society. In the process of working with the poor, the church must aim at enabling the poor to transform the structures, so that they can better serve their interests and enable them to improve the lives and conditions around them. As a result of transforming the structures, social development activities have firm economic and political bases leading to sustainability.

Working with the poor is not just lip service. It means full participation of the poor in all stages of development. To such an extent, that no development activities should be attempted until research into participatory action has been carried out and the socio-economic factors affecting a situation are well understood by the people themselves as well as the agents for change. It is important in this endeavour that new skills and knowledge be developed through informal educational experiences in which the poor are actively involved as subjects, and do not remain passive objects.

2. *In the fourth pillar (chapter 6) "Christian faith development."*

The researcher has documented the need and ways to ensure spiritual development of urban dwellers. In order to ensure effective urban ministry, Christian faith development is critical. The strategy providing a communicative praxis to the holistic approach to ministry is another contribution made by way of this study. The holistic model favours a Christian witness strategy in addition to the traditional Gospel proclamation. The need for such a strategy emerged from the fact that Christian faith leads to transformation. In most cases, the Gospel proclamation focuses on a single text and this limits communicating the Bible in such a way that it permeates all realities of life. A Christian witness strategy becomes fundamental, in

that it verbalizes the Gospel with the motive to invite people to faith in Christ, so that people should hear and know the Good News, live it and become signs of the Kingdom of God.

Any Christian can witness the Gospel to another, while proclamation is often limited to the clergy and then usually only on Sundays. Christian witness enables Christians to continuously check their words, deeds and attitudes so that they may further the course of the Gospel instead of hindering it. The hermeneutic praxis of a holistic model is a step ahead in that it effectively assists people who are faced with traumatic change in their lives. During faith crises, Christian witness is a powerful tool to console, encourage and to build people's faith in God. The developed approach to ministry is well positioned to turn around the impoverished urban situations in Lilongwe.

3. *The tenth pillar (Chapter 6) "Congregational research, monitoring and evaluation."*

Another contribution that the holistic model has made is in the field of congregational research and evaluations. The holistic model views congregational research and evaluation as a critical ministry component. Without research and evaluation, people find it difficult to know whether the church is making an impact, or not. Studying congregations is a very important exercise, because it provides a means of promoting an understanding the Christian existence and, at the same time, it helps church leaders and members to make faithful decisions about their ministry and mission.

Congregational research causes Christians to focus on God and on the world and to discern what God wants them to be and do in this world. Congregational studies enable the discovery of open opportunities for mission and/or challenges that the mission continues to experience. The challenges are, therefore, a further focus of mission in order to ensure that people are encouraged to deepen their faith in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour.

4. *The seventh pillar of holistic theory (Chapter 6) "Building urban faith communities."*

The holistic approach to ministry recognizes the challenge that the quest for modernity has destroyed the community, which is the incubator of moral values and conscience. As a result, the rebuilding of faith communities is the task of urban congregations. For the church to make the desired difference, as God intended it be, it is important to build faith communities. The communities are responsible for stimulating the faith development of its members. In this

regard, the Lilongwe urban congregations should become generators of community formation and, as such, be agents for transformation and islands of hope.

The issue of building faith communities is of primary concern. Modernity is killing the very people who invented it. The reality of crime, fear and violence – most of the issues with which congregations in Lilongwe and anywhere else in the African continent are grappling - the very outcome of modernity itself, haunts almost everyone, of whatever social status or station in the world. A congregation has the function of being a generator of community – an institution that seeks by its activities to stimulate opportunities for people to find the community of others. A family unit is also critical in community formation despite the breakdown in family life, so deplored by society's leaders. It is in families that most people find that sense of closeness that fosters the growth of identity. Most people go to the family when hurt or damaged by life's experiences.

The congregations are also helpful in areas of supporting people to look beyond their own personal life or even family life and also to support community by challenging people towards generosity and becoming experts in their own family and congregational life. The congregation is one of the new family back-up systems in the society. Simply being available at the critical events that make and shape families is a central function of congregations, the bonding of two people, the birth or adoption of children and during any uncertainties of new challenges, even at the farewells of death.

In view of this, it has to be understood that, by building faith communities, the church is in search of an alternative that does not destroy the global village, a search for practical wisdom rooted in ecological sanity and meaningful human participation, thus a worldwide spiritual quest and a desperate search for viable community and social and political arrangements. The building of viable communities can happen if the church recognizes that it requires participation of all its members. Community building can only take place if a participatory methodology is followed.

5. *The ninth pillar (chapter 6) "Towards ecumenical urban alliances."*

This model acknowledges the importance of the church's unity, renewal and extension in Gospel proclamation and Christian witness. The collectivization of efforts is crucial among all the churches and denominations. The ecumenical alliances of churches dates back to the

embryonic stage in the Book of Acts, whereby Paul collected money from different churches in the world with a view to assist needful people of social concern in other churches. Today, many developing agencies have emphasized unity and, through it, they are able to address people's physical needs. The church can also unite for the good cause of not only addressing the spiritual needs, but also the social needs of people.

The need for urban alliances does not imply the abolishment of the local churches or denominations. Churches will continue to operate as independent units. But, when it comes to development issues, then churches ought to work together. The fact that in shantytowns of Africa there are numerous denominations is a strength for ecumenical alliances. But the challenge at hand is that numerous denominations worship and witness in isolation from one another, and carry on in every respect as if the others did not exist.

The proximity of the various denominations makes ecumenical understanding and co-operation much easier. There are several values and challenges for the ecumenical alliances that have been documented in this dissertation. Suffice to mention that ecumenical activities have initiated the growth of many community-based ministries that then organized to provide emergency relief through feeding programs, shelters for the homeless and financial assistance for many people who have experienced massive human challenges.

6. *The eighth pillar (chapter 6) "Orientating ministers and the laity on urban ministry."*

That the holistic model recognizes the involvement of the laity in urban mission is crucial for the future of the urban church. The laity is a strategic team, because they reside with the people, therefore they are knowledgeable about the people's daily needs. This is important in that a biblical expert who really listens to what people say in their situation begins to understand how this particular training and expertise now are resources beyond the seminary context and, as such, he/she becomes a learner as well as a teacher.

The role of the laity in urban mission is most critical because there are few ordained ministers and, as such, they cannot possibly manage to do all of what is required. If the church is to succeed in the city mission, it must strongly emphasize the mobilization of the laity for mission work. For this to happen requires intensive training of all believers in the techniques and practice of witnessing. Such training must be based upon the urban context and a

theology that moves beyond a pietistic retreat. It must include training for multiple ministries, for integral ministries, and informed ministries.

7. *The first pillar (Chapter 6) "Ministry in a new era and context."*

The CCAP's traditional ethos, which was developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, taking the rural context into consideration, is no longer viable in the urban context of Malawi. The high rate of urbanization in Malawi and elsewhere in the continent poses a continued challenge to the Church. In its ministry and approach to the urban context and the needs of urbanized people, the Church has to redefine its role and methods and adapt its ministry to a new and changing situation. The developed holistic hermeneutical practical theology model is designed out of this need. The new urban context, effected as a result of urbanization, is a worldwide phenomenon. Today, the world is increasingly becoming a global village.

While the CCAP's present ministry approaches do not focus on the needs of the poor, the ministry in a new era and context should see the needs of the disadvantaged poor as a mission area not as far afield as was the case with the missionaries. The CCAP must now assume that the front door of the church is a door into mission territory, not just a door to the outside. The change of the mission field does not affect only the CCAP, but also all the churches on the continent and the globe.

The Church must realize that, with the new urban context and doing ministry in a new era, we are at the forefront of the greatest transformation of the Church that has occurred in many years. It is by far the greatest change that the Church has ever experienced. The transformation is occurring because of the persistent call of God that our whole world be made anew, and that the Church's mission in the world be itself transformed in new patterns of reconciling the world to God Himself.

As a result of this, many kinds of structures are needed to carry any movement from one generation to the next, and the Church is no exception to this. The Church must find organizational structures and structures of community that can enhance communication with the new generation to ensure effective ministry in a new era and context. If the urban church understands this change, then it acknowledges the fact that a Reformed Church is continually in need of further Reformation, sparked by returning to its sources with new eyes, thereby

paying attention to communal enclaves of a certain kind. Such an approach results in anticipatory communities who socialize their members into distinctive, observable ways of life.

## 7.5 CONCLUSION OF THE DISSERTATION

The church in Africa and in Malawi, in particular, needs to adapt to the context of globalized life and circumstances in which people try to survive in slums and shantytowns. The needs of the African cities are urgent, and the time is *now*. The church cannot abandon the cities without abandoning its call to be the faithful church. We must embark on this uncharted journey with courage, knowledge, determination, celebration, and faith. This must be an urgent concern for the church. The same concern which caused the church to write the Pastoral Letters, pointing out the shortcomings of the political order during the democratization era (1994), should also cause the Malawian church to address the needs of the urban poor which are hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God.

In order to do this, the Church is required to do unusual business, to which end the holistic model has re-designed the ethos and approaches in order to appropriate quality ministry. The developed theory seeks to address this challenge. Facing the broad problems of our cities requires resources beyond those of the single evangelical congregation. A collective effort by all churches and groups is required. This process is seen in its embryonic stage in the Book of Acts. Paul's collection of money from churches in Greece and Turkey for the needful saints was, in effect, a collectivization of social concern within the church of Christ. Modern cities are the centres of both great power and utter powerlessness, of absolute poverty and corrupt wealth. The Church makes its home in the midst of such power and wealth, vulnerability and poverty.

Urbanization, indeed, is Africa's missionary reality for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In the urban context secularism has made deep inroads. Throughout the church, there is a deep crisis of faith in God. While God receives much lip service, the decisions of most Christians and of the church are influenced far more by social and economic considerations, than by a deep sense of God's sovereignty. Money, technology, political considerations, and social class have more influence than the teachings of Christ. Africa is rapidly being urbanized through a process of mushrooming city development. The fact that the world of Africa is increasingly converging on the cities is clear enough to warn the church not to lag behind in the process.

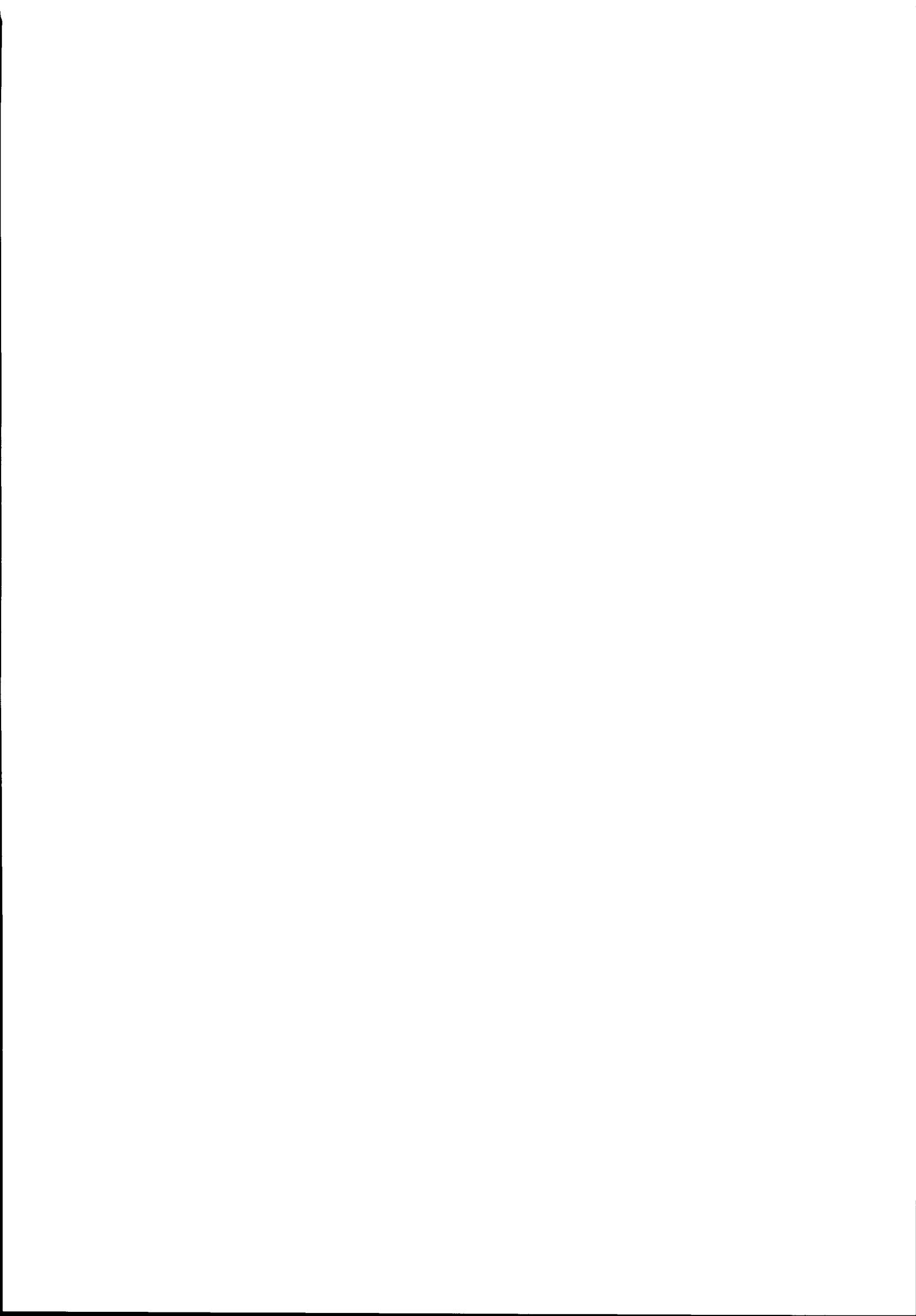
The Christian task in Africa should be the mission of the continent, which is in the process of rapid urbanization. The transience of great numbers of people in any large city is one of the most difficult problems for the urban church to solve. It is extremely difficult to build a stable ministry around people who are constantly moving. The developed ministry theory seeks to build communities of faith in the cities for the formation of moral values and character. If the gospel of Christ is to make a lasting impact in Africa, it will be because it has helped the urban process to become less invidious and less unjust, more human and more enduringly creative. It will have given the African city a soul.

If the church delays in adapting to the urban context, whose ideologies are changing constantly, it will forsake her strategic position of being a foreign body in the world, where the old and the new overlap in her, rendering her too early for heaven and too late for the earth (Bosch 1978:22). This central position is a gracious opportunity for holistic proclamation of the Bible message. The church should always remember that it is her responsibility to give direction to the world, recognizing clearly that as a Christian community, guided by the Holy Spirit, she becomes a guideline for decision-making. At the same time, she needs to be aware that without the religious element, life is like an engine running without oil - it seizes up; and when religion falls apart or dies, not only do people suffer meaninglessly, but civilization crumbles.

The urban church must cope with new family patterns in the cities of Africa. If the church is to cope successfully with new families patterns, it must seek to work in partnership with the poor, the deserted, divorced, widowhood, and abandoned. The theological claim that the earth is God's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it (Ps 24:1) calls God's people to face honestly the systemic structures that violate oppressed communities, that create and sustain the pain of the body's world, and to stand with tenacity against the forces of destruction and for transformation.

The model developed for ministry enables the church to focus on the human being as an indivisible entity. It views the cross of Jesus Christ as a transformational point where spirituality and development meet for the re-orientation of the human heart. Doing practical theology today is unusual business. The holistic model is the effort to enable theology to move from life to faith and then back to life. Practical theology demands that the point of

inception is to describe the situation of the congregation, and then correlate that situation with the faith and belief of the congregation by focusing on God and his word. This situation creates and prepares an opportunity for a holistic hermeneutical practical approach to urban ministry.



**A PASTORAL LETTER OF THE CCAP GENERAL SYNOD**

The researcher was in Malawi recently (April-June 2001) conducting research. During a Sunday church service, the minister unexpectedly read a pastoral letter written by the General Synod of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian. The contents of the letter described the threats to Malawi's young democracy. The pastoral letter titled: "Some worrisome trends which undermine the nurturing of our young democratic culture" sold like hot cakes in all the CCAP congregations in the country, particularly those in the urban centres.

In this letter, the leadership of the Reformed Church in Malawi expressed their deep concern about some current developments, which are seriously jeopardising the development of a democratic culture in Malawi. The concern, which focused on two areas, political and socio-economic, was rooted in genuine patriotism, characterized by a Christian love for the people of Malawi. The Reformed leadership is fearful that if these trends are not arrested now, Malawians may stand to lose the achievements gained since the dawn of the new democratic era in 1993. At a political level, the Church noted that those in power today did not view it their enormous responsibility to lead or guide the nation into the new, democratic dispensation. As a result, they are free to change or manipulate the rules for their own benefit or the benefit of those close to them.

The democracy in Malawi is still very young and is in desperate need of nurturing and consolidation. While the political leaders want to make constitutional amendments, the Reformed Church in Malawi deems it premature to amend provisions of the constitution before their workings have been explained to the people whose interests the constitution is meant to serve. The Church reminded the politicians that in a democracy there are no permanent winners just as there are no permanent losers. The Church felt that changing the constitution would question the integrity of the political leadership. The Church feels that what is required, is to give the constitution a trial run for a period of at least ten years, and then subject it to a comprehensive review by a nationally represented review commission.

On proposed and projected constitutional amendments, the pastoral letter stated:

We feel concerned about moves that are being taken to amend the constitution of Malawi, (the Supreme Law of the Land) as put in place during 1994/95, in the short-term interest of those currently in power. The following are some of the amendments that are being proposed or only talked about informally:

- The amendment to abolish the Senate or second house of Parliament (already passed by Parliament).
- The amendment to bring Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) under greater governmental control than has been the case so far (already passed by Parliament).
- The proposal to allow the current State President to run for a Third Term (over and above the two terms in office provided for in the Constitution as it now stands).
- The proposal to equip the State President with the power to appoint up to 20 Members of Parliament (MPs) as is the case in neighbouring Zimbabwe.

In raising concern about these proposed and projected constitutional amendments, we feel that there is a need for us, as a nation, to build not just for today but also for tomorrow. We are especially concerned that the proposed amendments are, in the main, directed at extending the rights of those in power rather than those of the people who should be the ultimate beneficiaries of any genuine democratic dispensation.

The Church's concern regarding the proposal to allow the current State President to run for a third term is as follows: in Africa this tends to lead to autocratic rule; Malawi as a nation may lose its reputation as a shining example of democracy in Africa; every person has a blind spot; personality cult syndrome is dangerous; constitutions should generally not be changed to suit an individual; other people with potential leadership will be denied a chance.

The other area addressed in the pastoral letter is the socio-economic concern. Health studies in Malawi show that the incidence of disease is very high, as is evident in health care facility reports. Malaria, malnutrition, upper respiratory tract infections and (in some areas of Malawi) bilharzias, are the most prevalent diseases. Various indicators of malnutrition among the under-five years age group show that as many as 60% of children are malnourished.

HIV/AIDS has raised its own spectre and continues to create social and economic problems in the country, the most important of which are orphans and depletion of the young work force. Life expectancy is 36, down from 42 in 1994. Literacy rates are 40% for women and 71.7% for men. Poverty and food insecurity in Malawi are on the increase. It is estimated that as many as 50% of the households in Malawi are insecure as regards food. The main cause of food insecurity is poverty: inadequate household income or purchasing power, the lack of resources, which includes access to arable land, other forms of employment, lack of knowledge and education, technology, access to preventive and curative health care.

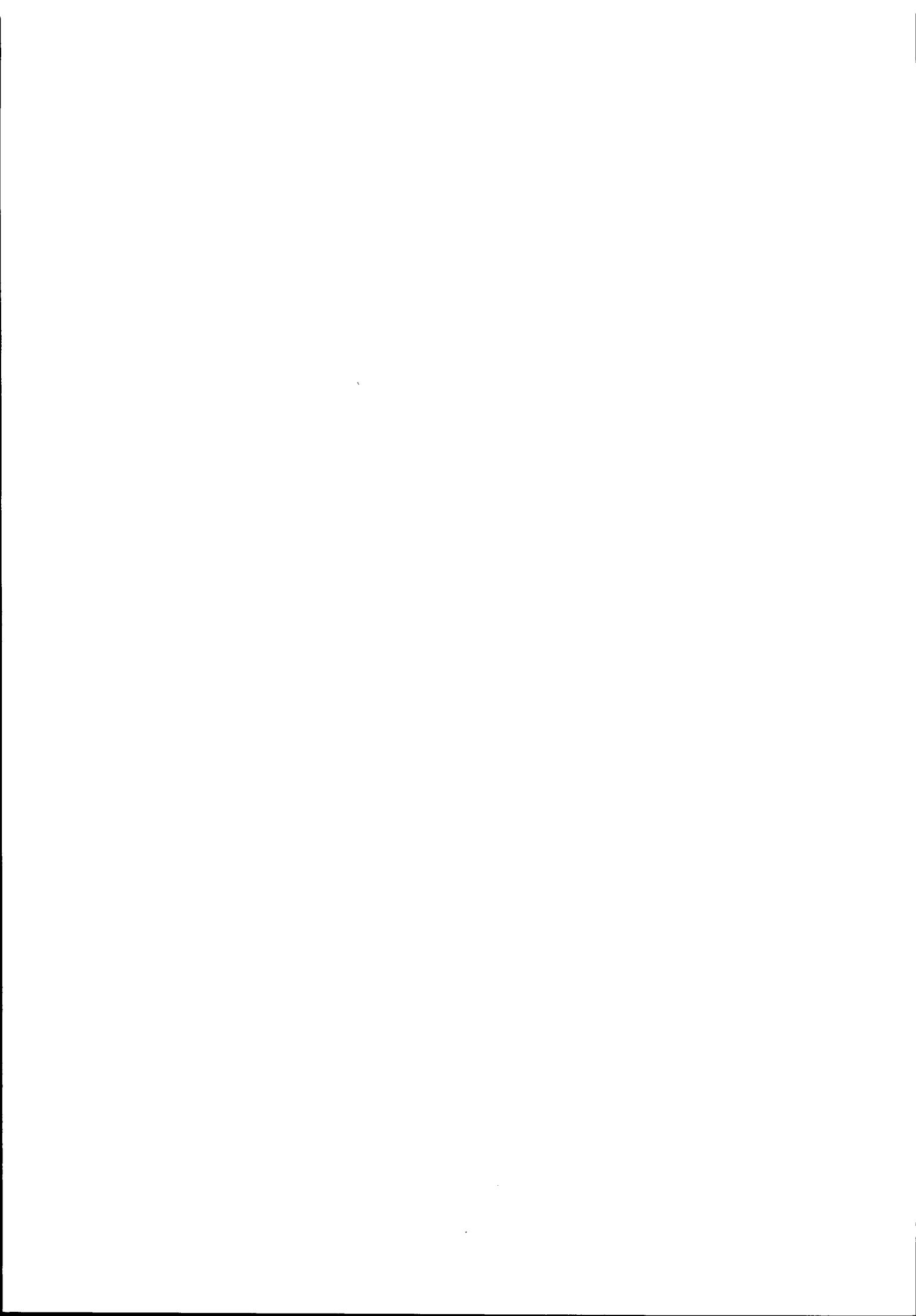
Another socio-economic challenge is ineffective social expenditure. Government budgets are ineffective in solving the problems of the poor because the allowances do not reach them. This is related to lack of accountability and transparency. Macro-economic management is

also inadequate. Due to a combination of poor budgeting and lax expenditure control, Malawians unjustly suffer from poor program delivery, the negative monetary effects of the government's borrowing to finance deficits, and the negative impact on economic growth (hence job creation) of the crowding-out of private sector investment. In the short term, the policy advice of the World Bank and the IMF has impacted badly on the poor. The poor have suffered because of the marginalization of social services, the inflationary impact of currency devaluation, and the way agricultural marketing led to uncertainty in food markets. Privatization and retrenchment of workers in the parastatal and civil service were not matched with adequate planning concerning the welfare of those retrenched.

**Against this socio-economic background the pastoral letter stated**

Our concern here is based on the constitution of Malawi, which in chapter 3 and 4 commits the state to provide social services to the people, and also on the Vision 2020 which records the aspiration of Malawians to be a self-reliant country with sustainable growth and development, and attain a middle income status with per capita income of US\$1,000, with all people having access to social services, and also have a vibrant cultural and religious values, by the year 2020. Our major concern is that the social condition and security of Malawians is far from satisfactory. The reasons for this include the fact that government programs, many of which are donor funded, do not meet the income, food security, health, education and security needs of Malawians.

No response by the government to the Reformed pastoral letter was forthcoming. The politicians have since threatened to imprison some Church leaders instrumental in writing the letter, but without success. It is hoped that the political structures will not implement the proposed constitutional amendments. The Reformed Church in Malawi serves as the voice of the Malawians in addressing the injustices of selfish politicians.



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