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**INTERCULTURALISATION AS TRANSFORMING PRACTICE:
THE CASE OF
THE CHURCH OF CENTRAL AFRICA PRESBYTERIAN BLANTYRE SYNOD
URBAN MINISTRY**

BY

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DECLARATION

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

Signature

Date.....March 2011

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ABSTRACT

From within the epistemological framework of missional praxis in Participatory Development Theology, the researcher addresses ethnocentrism, poverty and regionalism in the historical contexts of the CCAP Blantyre Synod and Malawi. Over-against this condition, he advocates for a change in mindset to a hermeneutic of hospitality, respect and caring based on the construct of Interculturalisation in Development Theology. In accordance with his contextual and identity analyses' and in line with participatory development challenges, he succeeds in designing a model for an intercultural missional approach which he argues would assist the CCAP Blantyre Synod to affect its calling and being as liberating, reconciling and transforming public entity.

The thesis also includes thorough background information about Malawi such as of the early history, the geography and aspects of the economy. The role of the missionaries and the colonial administration is highlighted and there is a description of all the churches active in Malawi.

'Interculturalisation' has the potential to provide a forum where people of different ethnic, regional, denominational, cultural, national, religious and ideological backgrounds can meet and engage in a respectful intercultural dialogue because of its emphasis on hospitality and interdependence based on the Biblical anthropological principles and Kingdom values of acknowledging the other and the dignity of all human beings. Through intercultural-dialogue they can come to an understanding about the meaning of development as transformation, globally as well as locally. Interculturalisation therefore serves to facilitate and strengthen ecumenical formation and to nurture ecumenical consciousness. This mission model will enable people to concentrate on things that unite them rather than on those that divide them. Our submission here is that it is only with a united voice that other development partners can take the Church seriously.

At present, however, the CCAP Blantyre Synod struggles with these issues because of the ongoing divisions among churches (particularly within the CCAP family) and churches not doing mission in unity. The result is that ecumenical work and addressing issues like poverty is difficult because there is no cooperation between denominations. The human dignity of all parties suffers and the gospel is neutralized. Ecumenism does not



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necessarily focus on individual development. The Church is both social and sacred; it is influenced by what happens outside as well as inside (cf. Heitink 1999: 9). We now live in a globalized world. The CCAP's social task therefore is to be a missional transformation church – a church for all peoples regardless of class, race, ethnicity or culture. When she does that she will not need to have another social ethic because, by her life and witness, it will be clear that she is already that (Hauerwas 1983:104).

White and black missionaries who established Blantyre Mission worked together – when working together, there was real progress, when not working together, there was no tangible progress. So let us also learn to live and work together as brothers and sisters created in the image of God and called into the kingdom of God, who should find our first and primary identity through our baptism into the one body of Christ (Ephesians 4:4-6).

The “scandal of the disunity of the CCAP” family is very painful when we consider the church's social task. This disunity exists in our time in the face of the alarmingly ever-increasing proportions of unemployment, poverty, inequality, HIV/ Aids, hunger, nepotism, corruption, women and child abuse, property-grabbing and lack of moral fibre adversely affecting the Church and society at large in Malawi. ***How can we justify the situation in which we who have been called to be the forerunners of God's peaceable kingdom cannot, it seems, maintain unity among ourselves?***

Schreier (1985:29) argues that, “if Christianity is alive at all in a situation, it will certainly change things about the culture. The Christian message, after all, is about change: repentance, salvation, and an eschatological reality to be realized. Therefore, to think that Christianity will not change the situation [in Malawi] is to rob the Christian message of its most important part”. The researcher refers to the fact that some of the earliest Scottish missionaries were culturally sensitive and respected all people. Everybody was treated with dignity. Where and when this was practiced, ethnocentrism did not take hold and the gospel reached across all boundaries. The church should follow this example. As brothers and sisters created in the image of God, we should find our first and primary identity through our baptism into the one body of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 4:4-6; cf. Ephesians 2:14).



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OPSOMMING

Die navorser spreek etnosentrisme and armoede in Malawe aan vanuit die epistemologiese raamwerk van die sending benadering. Die navorser pleit vir 'n verandering in denke en houding, en vir 'n nuwe benadering baseer op gasvryheid, respek, besorgheid, meedeelsaamheid, verantwoordelikheid en deelname in vennootskappe vir die behoud en bevryding van mense, in die Afrika gees van “ubuntu”.

Die tesis sluit ook agtergronds inligting om trent Malawi soos die vroeë geskiedenis, geografie en aspekte van die ekonomie in. Daar word gefokus op die rol van die sendlinge en daar is 'n beskrywing van al die kerke wat in Malawi aktief is.

Interkulturele samewerking het die potensiaal om 'n forum te skep waar mense van verskillende streke en etniese, kerklike, kulturele, nasionale, godsdienstige en ideologiese agtergronde mekaar kan ontmoet en deel neem aan dialoog. Dit kan gebeur as gevolg van die klem op gasvryheid en onderafhanklikheid wat baseer is op Bybelse antropologiese beginsels en Koniinkryk waardes waar die belangrikheid van ander mense asook die waardigheid van alle menslike wesens erken word.

Dialoog tussen lede van verskillende kulturele groepe kan lei tot 'n begrip van die betekenis van ontwikkeling as transformasie, globaal sowel as plaaslik. Interekulturele gespreke fasiliteer en versterk dus ekumeniese formasie en ekumeniese bewustheid. Hierdie model sal mense help om te fokus op dit wat hulle verenig in plaas van op dit wat hulle skei. Dit is net as die Kerk met een stem praat, dat die ander ontwikkelingsvennote die Kerk ernstig sal opneem.

Tans egter sukkel die CCAP Blantyre Sinode met hierdie kwessies van langdurige divisies tussen kerke (veral in die CCAP familie) en dat die kerke NIE saam sending werk doen nie. (CCAP staan vir Die Kerk van Sentraal Afrika Prebiteriaans) Die gevolg is die ekumeniese werk en die aanspreek van kwessies soos armoede bemoedlik word om dat daar nie samewerking is tussen die denominasies nie. Die



menslike waardigheid van al die partye ly skade en die evangelie word geneutraliseer.

Die “skandaal” van die onenigheid in die CCA P familie is pynlik, veral as ons die Kerk se sosiale taak in ag neem. Hierdie onenigheid bestaan in „n tyd van die groeiende armoede, ongelykheid, werkloosheid, MIV/VIGS, gebrek aan morele waardes, die gryp van eiendom, nepotisme en korrupsie wat alreeds die Kerk en die gemeenskap negatief affekteer. ***Hoe kan ons hierdie situasie regverdig as ons wat geroepe is om die verteenwoordigers te wees van God se vredesame koninkryk, nie eers onderling kan verening nie?***

Schreiter (1985:29) stel dit so: “as die Christendom enigszins lewendig is in hierdie situasie, sal dit sekerlik ’n verskil in die kultuur kan aanbring.. Die Christelike boodskap is per slot van sake ’n boodskap van verandering: bekering, redding en eskatologiese realiteit. Om dus te dink dat die Christelike boodskap nie ’n verskil kan maak aan die situasie [in Malawi] nie, is om ’n belangrike deel van die boodskap mis te kyk.

Die navorser verwys na die feit dat sommige van die vroeë Skotse sendelinge kultureel sensitief was en aan alle mensense respek bewys het. Almal is met waardigheid behandel. Waar dit die geval was, het etnosentrisme nie wortel geskiet nie en het die evangelie alle grense oorgesteek. Die Kerk moet hierdie voorbeeld volg. Ons as broeders en susters wat geskep is na die Beeld van God moet ons eerste en primêre identiteit vind in die doop en in ons deel aan die een liggaam van Christus (Efesiërs 4: 4-6).



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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beloved wife, Constance Abale-Phiri and our children Mphatso, Unikani, Akonda, Emmanuel and Isaac, and posthumously to late Mary (Mami) Abale-Phiri, who died on the 14th of April 1994 while I was pursuing my theological training at Zomba Theological College (ZTC). I thank you all for your cherished love and untiring support.



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“*Rume Rimwe Harikombi Churu*”- Shona Proverb

“*Akukho mntu ophila yedwa, sonke siyancedana.*” – Xhosa proverb

“*Abantu bayasizana, akekho ongazenzela konke ngokwakhe.*” – Zulu proverb

“*One dog cannot kill an elephant and one finger cannot squash a flea*” - **Yao Proverb**

The African proverbs above which mean – *people need to work together, there is no one who can achieve everything alone* – capture the essence of these acknowledgements. Thus, anything of value in this study project owes a great deal to many other people.

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*I will give you shepherds after my own heart,
who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.*

(Jeremiah 3:15).



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AACC	All	Africa Council of Churches
ACEM	Association	of Christian Education in Malawi
BSDC		Blantyre Synod Development Commission
CADECOM		Catholic Development Commission
CCAP	Church	of Central Africa Presbyterian
CHAM		Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi
CLAIM		Christian Literature Association in Malawi
CCAPSO		Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Student Organisation
CWC	Chigodi	Women's Centre
CARD		Churches Action in Relief Development
CSC		Christian Council of Malawi
CWS	Church	World Service
DCA	Dan	Church Aid
DRC	Dutch	Reformed Church
ECC	Ecum	enical Counselling Centre
ECLOF		Ecumenical Loan Fund
ECM	Evangelical	Council of Malawi
GAC	General	Administration Committee
GBCC		Grace Bandawe Conference Centre
HHI	Henry	Henderson Institute
MIAA	Malawi	Interfaith Aids Association
MEET		Malawi Environment Endowment Trust
MCC		Malawi Council of Churches
MSCE		Malawi School Certificate of Education
MWA	Ministers	Wives Association
NAC	National	Aids Commission
NBI	Nehe	miah Bible Institute
NTB	Native	Tobacco Board
PAC	Public	Affairs Committee
PCA	Presbyterian	Church in Australia
PCC	Presbyterian	Church in Canada
PCEA		Presbyterian Church in East Africa
PCI		Presbyterian Church in Ireland
PCM	Presbyterian	Church in Mozambique
PCUSA		Presbyterian Church in United States of American
PWC	Presbytery	Women's Coordinator
QECH		Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital
RML		Reformed Mission League of Netherlands
SADC		Southern Africa Development Commission
TEEM		Theological Education by Extension in Malawi
TRC		Truth and Reconciliation Commission
UPCSA		United Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa
WARC		World Alliance of Reformed Churches
WCC		World Council of Churches
ZTC	Zom	ba Theological College



MAPS

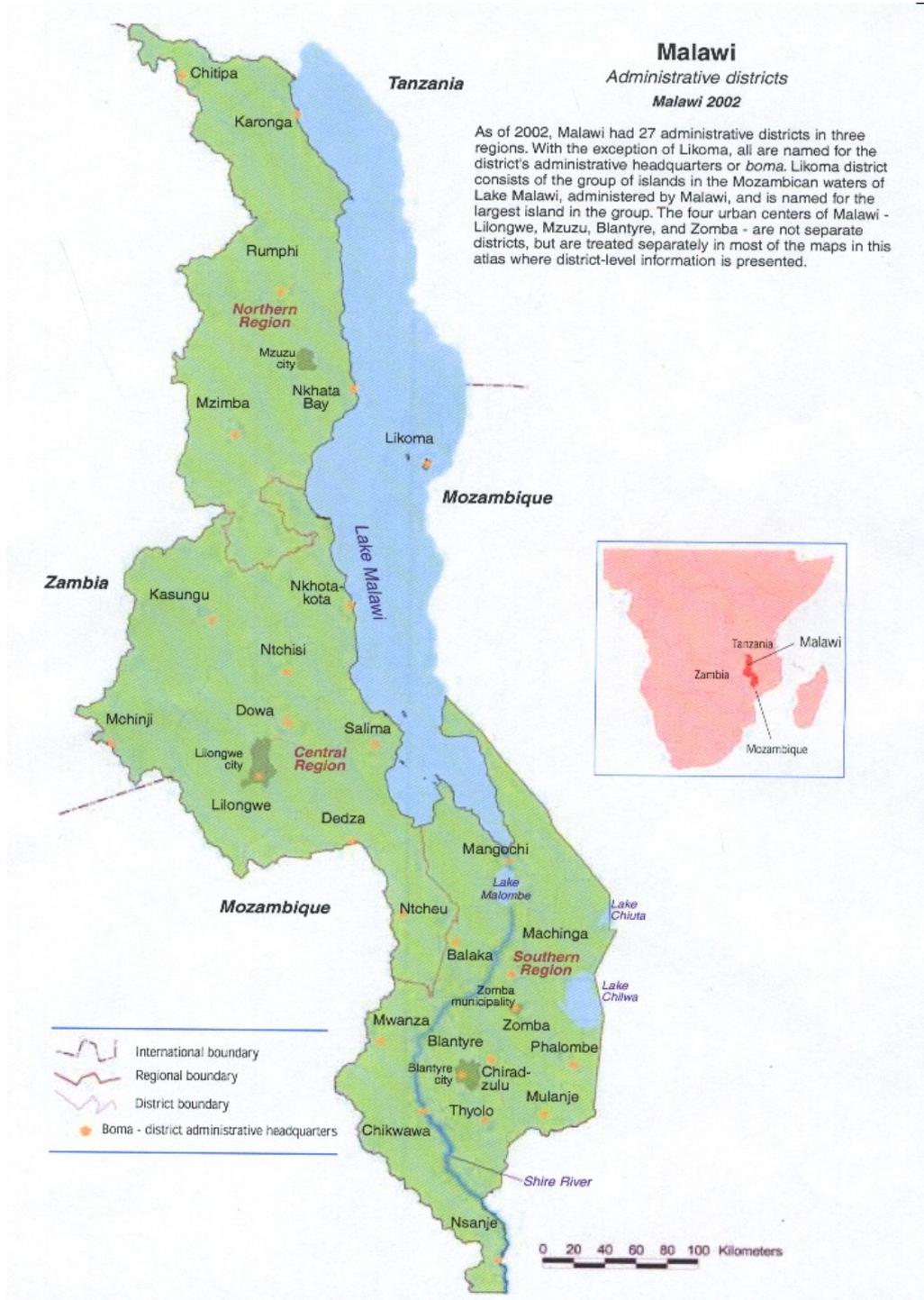


Fig.1: Map of the Republic of Malawi showing the three Regions (North, Centre and South) and the 27 administrative Districts.

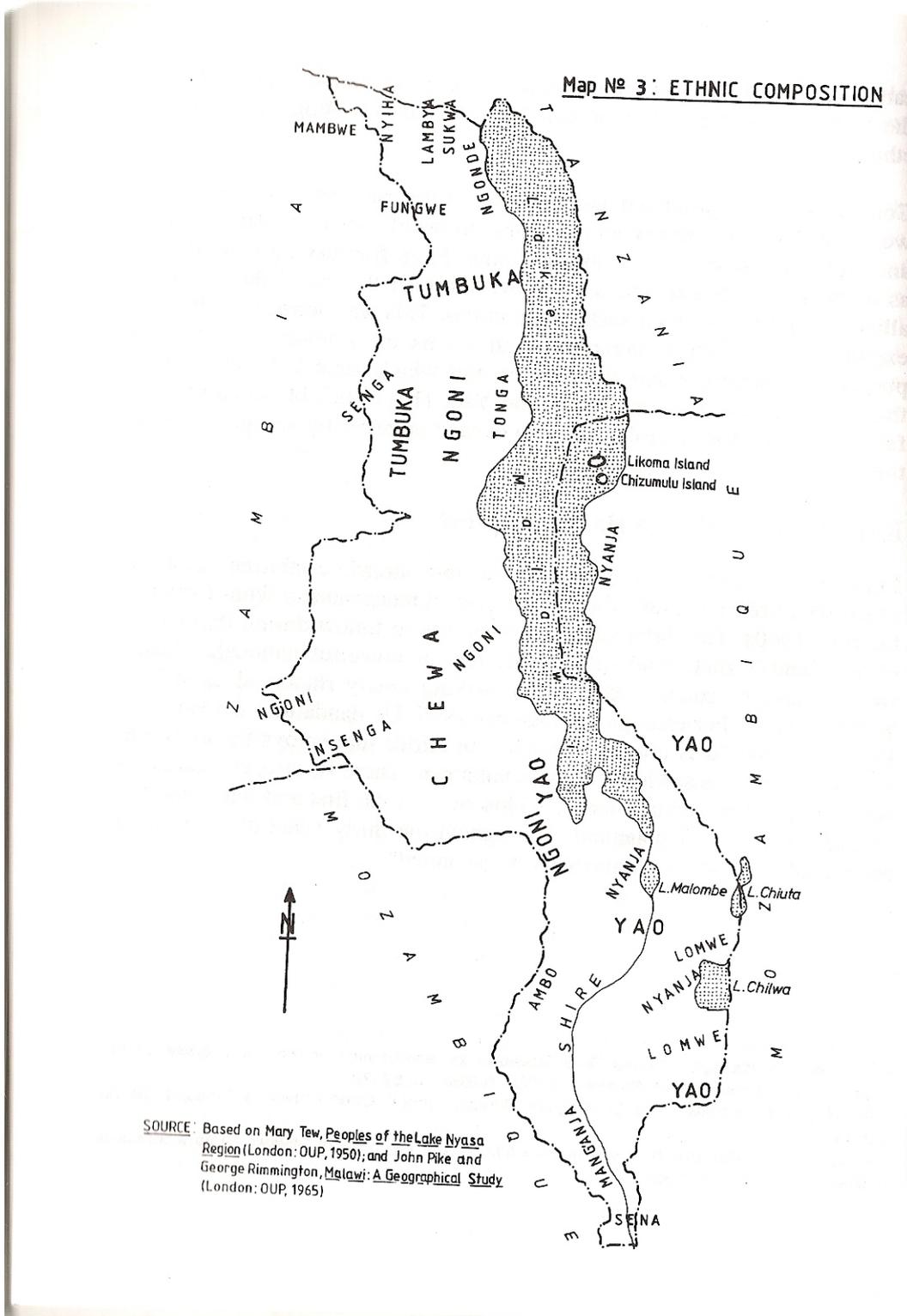


Fig. 2: Ethnic Composition in Malawi

Source: Kings M. Phiri & Kenneth R. Ross 1998:58. Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking.

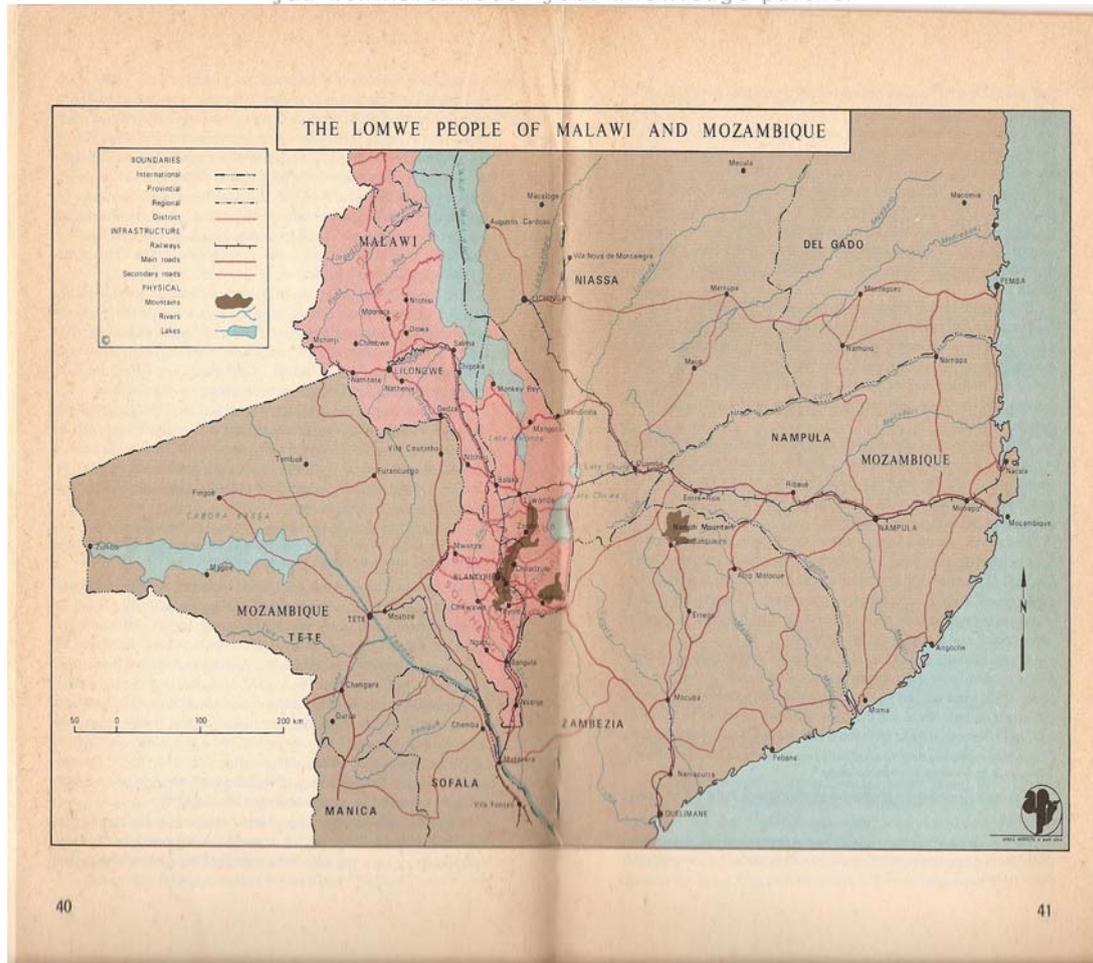


Fig. 3: The Lomwe People of Malawi and Mozambique

Source: Boeder 1984:40-41.



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Fig. 4: The Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod: St. Michael and All Angels Cathedral (Taken from the website of the CCAP Blantyre Synod).

Here stands the headquarters of the CCAP Blantyre Synod founded on the 23rd of October 1876 by the Scottish missionaries of the Established Church of Scotland. This extraordinary cathedral, the St. Michael and All Angels, the stately Church, with massive pillars, Gothic arches, stained glass windows, an altar, and all the appurtenances of an English or Scottish minister.

Why was so costly a place of worship erected in the heartland of heathendom? Asked Du Plessis. The answer given by the Reverend Dr. Alexander Hetherwick was, “as a means of educating the native mind to realize the solemnity and sublimity of religion (Du Plessis 1905:38).



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Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The Case of the CCAP Blantyre Synod Urban Ministry

CHAPTER 1

RESEARCH FOCUS AND OUTLINE

For Christ himself has brought us peace
by making Jews and Gentiles one people.
With his own body he broke down the wall
that separated them and kept them enemies
(Ephesians 2:14 -GNB).

“Coming together is a blessing; keeping together is progress,
But it is working together that brings success.” – **Winston Jackson.**

“If we do not learn to live together as brothers and sisters,
We will perish together as fools.”- **Martin Luther King Jr.**

1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this study, research is done on ‘Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The case of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian Blantyre Synod Urban Ministry’ (hereinafter referred to as the CCAP Blantyre Synod¹). This chapter is an introductory section stating the general background to the research. Therefore, the researcher highlights the introduction. Linked to the introduction is a critical discussion of the problem statement which prompted the research project. In presenting the hypothesis which gives provisional answers to the problem statement, the aim of the research is stated, and then the research motivation is highlighted. Linked to the motivation is the possible contribution of the research, and then the methodology employed in conducting the research is described. Attention is then paid to the chapter outline to provide an overview of the arrangement of chapters. The chapter ends with a summative conclusion (Mouton 2001:47-48).

¹ Due to time and space constraints, we will not be able to discuss the origin and development of the CCAP Blantyre Synod in detail here, that will be done in chapter 2, for the purpose here is to give the general contextual background to the research study.



1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM / QUESTION

“The influence of ethnocentrism, poverty and regionalism on the Church in Malawi”. In dealing with this problem in this project, the following questions need to be addressed:

- To what extent have ethnocentrism, poverty and regionalism been used to define people’s roles in Church and society in Malawi?
- How can the CCAP Blantyre Synod as a transforming public entity genuinely become a truly reconciling change agent among the various ethnic groups in church and society?
- In terms of people’s roles in church and society, how can interculturalisation become a missional model to bond people of various ethnic groups?

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The invaluable work done by the CCAP Blantyre Synod can hardly be denied. Through her ministry, more than two million people have become Christians and were helped by her education, medical and industrial services. However, much as the people owe respect and appreciation to the CCAP Blantyre Synod because of her mission work, our ethnic diversities and regional boundaries as well as ideological persuasions have remained our source of social disintegration rather than strength and growth. The Church in Malawi does not seem to have been a strong cohesive force among the various ethnic groups within the parameters of her membership, let alone those outside the fold.

This situation is traceable to the Scottish missionary paradigm which resulted in a distorted ecclesiology (Ross, AC 1996:20, 39-44). The mission then was concentrated on particular ethnic groups and ethnic boundaries. Concentration of mission based on cultural/ethnic differentiation was as follows: the Established Church of Scotland founded the Blantyre Mission and concentrated their mission among the Yao and Nyanja people in the Southern Region of Malawi, the Dutch missionaries from the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa founded the Nkhoma Synod and



concentrated their mission enterprise among the Chewa people in the Central Region of Malawi, and the Free Church of Scotland founded the Livingstonia Synod and concentrated their mission work among the Tonga, Tumbuka and Ngoni peoples in the Northern Region of Malawi. It must be noted that some of the earliest Scottish missionaries were not culturally sensitive and had no respect for African people (Mufuka 1997:7; Ross, KR 1996:81, Ross, AC 1996:20, 39-44). It must also be noted that Christianity came to Malawi during the heyday of Western imperialism, a period of industrialization of Europe and the colonization of non-European peoples in the 18th century, when there was rapid scientific and technological development. There was a powerful tendency then, to consider the ways and cultures of indigenous peoples (African) to be primitive and backward/inferior to those of the white explorers and colonizers, and that they were therefore exploitable² (Mufuka 1997:7; Ross, KR 1996:81; Magesa 2004:14).

Thus, the early missionary strategies became a harbinger to the prevailing identity and the ethnic problem in the church compounding what is already a problem in the larger society. That ethnocentrism and religious bigotry are social cankerworms sapping the soul of the Malawian nation should not be news to anyone who is conversant with the nation's affairs (Cf. PAC 2010:2). However, when and where cultural sensitivity and respect for people were practised, ethnocentrism did not hold and the gospel reached across all boundaries (Ross, AC 1996:63, 185).

At present, the CCAP family is at a critical point in her history for being involved in partisan-party politics and ethnic conceit in the face of ever-increasing poverty in the country (Chisambo 2010: 27, Malawi News/Features/ January 2-8, 2010/27); Phiri, KM *et al* 2006). There is also an ongoing division among the churches and churches not doing mission in unity. The result is that ecumenical work and addressing issues like poverty, regionalism and inequality is difficult because there is no cooperation within and between denominations. The human dignity of *all* parties and people suffers and the gospel is neutralized. Hence, our call for interculturalisation.

² Bosch's (1991:518) observes that, "the entire modern missionary enterprise is so polluted by its origins in and close association with Western colonialism that is irredeemable; we have to find an entirely new image today."



1.4 HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis of this project holds that ethnocentrism and regionalism that portrays one's ethnic group, culture, or geographical location as superior to others and the tendency of favouring one's ethnic group at the expense of others has to give way to a change of mindset to move from ethnocentrism to an interdependence of various ethnic groups/races and their cultures, interculturalisation.

Only interculturalisation as a missional model marked by Kingdom values (*shalom*), amongst others: justice, peace, unity, reconciliation, love and special care for the marginalised and being a missional church (synod) as part of development as transformation and doing interculturalisation theology can liberate the people from the chains that enslave them. Thus, interculturalisation can restore the fractured human dignity of *all* people in church and society in Malawi.

Interculturalisation as a mission model calls on *all* people to concentrate on things that unite them rather than on those that divide them. The CCAP Blantyre Synod as a transforming *public entity* and her membership must realise that *public entity* goes beyond ethnocentrism and regionalism because a public institution is not based to provide service to only one race or ethnic group (cf. Guder 1998:11-12).

If the CCAP Blantyre Synod is to recover its missional identity and be a truly reconciling change agent among the various ethnic groups in Malawi, there is a need to adopt interculturalisation as a missional model. Interculturalisation's emphasis is hospitality, interdependence, respectful dialogue, reconciliation, being more-inclusive and and being missional (August 2006:4; Bosch 1991:28). It is a missional model that provides a means for Theology to influence transformation with its *Kingdom values* and its Biblical anthropological principles of acknowledgement of the other and dignity of *all* human beings. In Luke (4: 16-21), Jesus describes his mission as bringing the *good news* of the Lord to people; to proclaim; to liberate; to release etc. Thus, Jesus' mission is to liberate *all* people from the chains that enslave them, and restore their interrelatedness. The Christian duty is not only to be a proclaimer of the



good news, but also a practical witness to the good news; to deliver what one believes, “to love thy neighbour as thyself”. This is because a neighbour is the one *in need, need of the good news, in need of our love: “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly”* (John 10:10). In our case, the good news should be the restoration of our fractured interconnectedness, the need for an interdependence of people and their cultures. If this is the commandment of Jesus, “to love thy neighbour as thyself”, then it obligates a Christian to be reconciled to God and reconciled to one another. This is God’s mission. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is the fountain of sending love (Bosch 1991:390). In fact it is only if we do this that we can speak of truly bearing the *imago Dei*?

Mission (singular) refers primarily to *missio Dei*, God’s mission. Mission is God’s mission not ours, because in doing mission, the Church ought to rely on God and His strength. The church is only a participant and never the owner of mission. The mission of the Church has nothing to do with itself, but with the Kingdom of God. The New Testament concept of Kingdom is that of *shalom* bearing the marks of: harmony, peace, unity, and justice reign under the Lordship of Christ. Here, sin is viewed as that which has distorted God’s perfect intention, leading to oppression, ethnocentrism, poverty, regionalism, injustice, and the alienation of individuals, communities and nations (August 2010:36).

The concept of interculturalisation challenges the CCAP Blantyre Synod to focus on the concepts of interdependence, hospitality, respectful dialogue and reconciliation. These are foundations and pillars upon which true interculturalisation can thrive. They are vital for greater social well being, transformation of the lives of the poor and addressing of the injustices that perpetuate most of our personal and communal conflicts. When we live a life of interdependence, respectful dialogue and hospitality, we affirm that: We are made for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made to tell the world that there are *no outsiders*. *All* are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, south, north, east or west, *all* to belong to this family, human family, and God’s family (Tutu 2001: xiii). Is this not what it means to be truly bearing the *imago Dei*?



1.5 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

In this this research, the aim is to investigate the influence of ethnocentrism and poverty and regionalism on the church in Africa with specific reference to mission and development within the CCAP Blantyre Synod. The researcher also aims to establish as a mission model, the use of respectful intercultural dialogue that enables the Church to advocate for a spirit of interdependence of people (ethnic groups) and their cultures which will better facilitate a move from ethnocentrism to interculturalisation in Malawi.

As a member of the faith communities in Malawi, the researcher believes that he should faithfully participate in striving to theorise a missional model that unlocks the potential for the establishment of empowered and interdependent faith communities that are able to address their many and complex needs and challenges which manifest themselves in different forms. In the case of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, these take the form of ethnocentrism and poverty and regionalism. In our Malawian context, our effort to address the complex needs and challenges faced by the marginalised poor people, women and children, is distracted and undermined by our disunity.

Therefore, the researcher wants to conscientise the CCAP Blantyre Synod to put the process of ‘interculturalisation’ as missional model in motion. This will enable the church to address the ever-increasing challenges of ethnocentrism and poverty within her membership in particular and among other ethnic groups in Malawi as her contribution to the promotion of the dignity and self-worth of *all* human beings.

Interculturalisation as transformation praxis therefore endeavours to influence the CCAP Blantyre Synod as a transforming public entity to be a church for *all* peoples regardless of class, race, ethnicity or culture. When she does that she will not need to have another social ethic because, by her life and witness, it will have been clear that she is already that (Hauerwas 1983:99-104). Hence, it is the aim and hope of this researcher that this project will serve as a catalyst or ferment for respectful intercultural dialogue amongst the uniquely valuable cultures in Africa.



1.6 RESEARCH MOTIVATION

Motivation for this research springs mainly from the following factors: First, the experiences of my own life as an ordained Malawian Presbyterian minister, a converted Muslim from the Yao tribe, a tribe that is predominantly Muslim. Thus, my long and tortuous walk to Presbyterian Christianity is not by birth, but by conviction. I was educated in mission schools and after my schooling; I got married to a Yao Muslim lady who also converted to Presbyterian Christianity.

When I received the call to the ordained ministry of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, I was privileged to be trained at an ecumenical seminary, Zomba Theological College (ZTC). This seminary was jointly owned and administered by the CCAP Synods of Blantyre, Livingstonia, Nkhoma, Zambia, and Harare, including the Anglicans and Churches of Christ, from 1976 till 2003 when the Anglicans chose to pull out of Zomba Theological College. Being in this college was really transformative for me, not only in terms of the sound theological training it offered but also because of the privilege of knowing and interacting with Presbyterians and Christians other than those of the CCAP Blantyre Synod extraction.

As Secretary of the Zomba Theological College Students' Union Mature Course then, I still remember how, after settling our inter-denominational conflicts with others, we would come to have our own intra-denominational conflicts. It is still a great privilege for me to remember also how many of those conflicts were resolved and reconciliation reached through the process of intercultural dialogue.

Engaging in a missionary partnership excursion to Pittsburgh, USA, under the auspices of the Pittsburgh Presbytery of the PCUSA in May 1998, also contributed largely in exposing me to the daunting challenge of communicating the gospel across cultures using intercultural hermeneutics. That personal experience really shaped and led me to a new worldview that the church has much to offer the communities within its bounds and even beyond (Hastings 2007:31-33). The experience had an indelible impact on my life and future ministry.



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Later in life, the researcher enjoyed interaction during his further ministerial studies at the Bible Institute of South Africa (studying Linguistics, Social Linguistics and Bible Translation) and his undergraduate and postgraduate studies at the University of Stellenbosch. Life at these outstanding academic institutions strongly continued to motivate the researcher to undertake this research project.

This research also derives its motivation from the fact that theology and development in relation to interculturalisation as paradigm of mission is both relevant and possible today. Since the Church as an organism and organisation is the only institution in the world that does its business with God as the principal partner and mission is God's main business, it is therefore imperative for her to know how to make this mission realizable in every context. In this study the researcher will continuously press for interculturalisation as a new missional model and as one of the essential goals of the *missio Dei*.

The CCAP Blantyre Synod therefore needs a theologising approach that will empower both Christians and non-Christians in her spheres of influence to address the most urgent needs in all aspects of the human life without dichotomising. In view of the above, the need for transforming praxis in theology and development is unquestionable.

The Church has the potential to bring or tear down all the walls of hostility among the various ethnic groups, between men and women, youth and the elderly, the ultra-poor and the mega-rich and replace all that with equality, inclusivity, interdependence, hospitality, reconciliation, and dignity of *all* human beings so as to foster genuine transformation in theology and development. If the church does this, addressing issues like ethnocentrism and poverty will not suffer. The CCAP Blantyre Synod should be a catalyst in bringing the Kingdom of God to her ministry of mission and development as transformation.



1.7 POSSIBLE CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH

The final product of this research project is expected to make an important contribution to issues of ethnicity, poverty, equality, reconciliation, ecumenism, peace, justice, unity, diversity and inclusivity in mission and development in the church and academy, particularly missiology and practical theology in Africa.

Ethnicity and ethnic diversity are issues not only in Malawi but also virtually everywhere in the world. While such issues are more visible and audible in the political theatre, the ecclesiastical arena is not exempted. Differences could be the cause for celebration of our diversity with a common humanity under God's reign. On the contrary, in our contemporary Malawian context, ethnicity, poverty and regionalism have been manipulated to produce enduring envy and hatred and monumental backwardness in the church's mission and development. This is why interculturalisation is being proposed as a missional model which enables the church to be more creative and productive in addressing challenges posed by ethnocentrism and poverty.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to investigate the topic is the literary study which will investigate some of the principal questions concerning a clear understanding of the dynamics of interculturalisation within mission and development and the Church's role in the process.

During the study, the researcher will make use of the available relevant literature such as: minutes of the CCAP General Assembly, the CCAP Blantyre Synod's General Administrators' Committees (GAC) and Blantyre Synod Bi-annual Conferences. Other Primary sources include the CCAP Blantyre Synod's minutes and letters. In addition, relevant materials from the University of Stellenbosch and University of Malawi have been found to contain enough sources on the issue of



interculturalisation³, mission and development. In the process, the researcher will focus on the historical, descriptive, critical and contextual aspects of the missionary activities of the Church of Scotland, Blantyre Mission to establish contributing factors that have shaped the identity of the CCAP Blantyre Synod.

The historical aspect refers to the chronological approach to be used in the presentation of the story of the CCAP Blantyre Synod mission work. Hence, for us to develop a new self-understanding and missional identity, it is important to investigate the ecclesiological history of this church as a public entity and change agent in addressing social challenges. Therefore, the history of the Christian communities will be used as a guideline for the formulation of interculturalisation as missional model of theology and development.

³ There are vast materials on ethnicity, intercultural dialogue, mission and development in the University of Stellenbosch library, however, not all of them are relevant to the context under research. This researcher found the following relevant materials useful amongst others: Saayman, Willem. 2007. *Being Missionary – Being Human: An Overview of Dutch Reformed Mission*; Bosch, D.J. 1991. *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of mission*; Atkinson, Ronald R. 1999. The (Re)Construction of Ethnicity in Africa: Extending the Chronology, Conceptualisation and Discourse. In: *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Constructivist Reflections and Contemporary Politics*. Yeros, Paris (ed.); Tschuy, Theo. c1997. *Ethnic Conflict and Religion: Challenge to the Churches*; Van der Walt, B.J. 2006. *When African and Western Cultures Meet: From Confrontation to Appreciation*; Chirwa, Wiseman C. 1998. Democracy, Ethnicity and Regionalism: The Malawian Experience, 1992-1996, in: Phiri, Kings M. & Ross, K (eds.) *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*; Ncozana, August, KTh. 2001. Ethnicity and Nation Building: A South African Faith Perspective from Below”; August, KTh. 2006. *The Nature of Interculturality in Development: A Theological Perspective of Relationality*; Banks, Marcus. 1996. *Ethnicity: Anthropological Constructions*; Burkey, S. 1993. *People First. London*; Hastings, Thomas John. 2007. *Practical Theology and the One Body of Christ: Toward a Missional-Ecumenical Model*; Silas S. 1996. *Sangaya: A Leader of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian*; Boeder, Robert B. 1984. *Silent Majority: A History of the Lomwe in Malawi*; Vail, L. & White, L. 1989. “Tribalism in the Political History of Malawi”, in: Vail, Leroy (ed.), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*.



The descriptive aspect of the study will investigate the nature and praxis of the former and current mission activities in the CCAP Blantyre Synod. A critical examination is needed to find an answer to our social disintegration. The critical aspect will question the mission activities of the CCAP Blantyre Synod. The method of critical analysis and logical arguments will be applied in order to understand the dynamics of what interculturalisation entails and how it can be facilitated to overcome ethnocentrism. The researcher will analyse the Church's mission and ministry concerning interculturalisation as transforming praxis in theology and development and argue the hypothesis.

The contextual aspect points to the need for and responsibility of Christians to make their response to the gospel as concrete and as lively as possible (Schreiter 1985:1). It is the process whereby the Christian faith is made relevant and meaningful in a given cultural context. It is bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our context. Regarding this, Guder (1998:1-12) observes that, "for the church to be faithful to her calling, she must be contextual, that is, she must be culturally relevant within a specific situation setting". It is, therefore, vital for the church of Jesus Christ to study her context carefully and to understand it, and that is contextualisation (Guder 1998:18). Bosch's basic argument in his book 'Transforming mission' is that, from the very beginning, the missionary message of the Christian church incarnated in the life and world of those who embraced it.

It is, however, only recently that this essentially contextual nature of the faith has been recognised (Bosch 1991:421). Context influences and even determines our doing of theology. A contextual model starts its reflection with the social and cultural context (Schreiter 1985:12). The role of cultural, political, and economical factors in the faith must be essentially recognised, if we are to be faithful in our mission. The CCAP Blantyre Synod's current situation is influenced by the wider contexts of the country and the world. Thus, in order to appreciate the current situation, needs and challenges of the Christians in the CCAP Blantyre Synod, global contexts need also to be analysed.



1.9 CHAPTER OUTLINE

This thesis comprises of seven chapters: **The first chapter** is an introductory section stating the general background to the research. It comprises the following:

CHAPTER 1

- ❖ The introduction
- ❖ Research Problem/Question
- ❖ Problem Statement
- ❖ Research Hypothesis
- ❖ Aim of the research
- ❖ Research Motivation
- ❖ Research Methodology
- ❖ The Chapter Outline and
- ❖ Summative Conclusion.

CHAPTER 2

In the second chapter, the descriptive, historical and contextual analysis of the CCAP Blantyre Synod is discussed. The researcher traces the origin and development of the CCAP Blantyre Synod against the background of the general history of Malawi, and mission history. The researcher also introduces problems of slavery, ethnicity, language, national and identity of the church. This chapter ends with a summative conclusion.

CHAPTER 3

In the third chapter, the researcher expands some of the issues discussed in chapter 2, especially issues of ethnicity. However, in this chapter, the researcher analyses the concept of ethnicity and gives an overview of the anthropological and theological discourses on it and brings them to bear on the Malawian context which falls under



the identity of the church. It is the researcher's conviction that the identity of the church ought to be missional in its very nature and being. What happens when the Church loses that sense of mission in its nature and identity is that it becomes captive to the socio-cultural trappings of its environment (e.g. ethnocentrism). Only a missional ecclesiological praxis marked by amongst others: a respectful dialogue, unity, diversity and inclusivity, ecumenism, hospitality, interdependence, reconciliation and being a missional church (synod) as part of development as transformation and doing interculturalisation theology can liberate the people from the chains that enslave them. It can restore the fractured human dignity of people in church and society. This chapter ends with a summative conclusion.

CHAPTER 4

In the fourth chapter, the researcher investigates on the influence of ethnocentrism on mission. Firstly, a critical examination of the proper definition of mission is conducted. Then a critical discussion concerning the broader picture of ethnic segmentation, particularly the challenges of ethnocentrism on mission at macro-level and their influence on the Malawian society is imperative to unravel factors that have shaped the CCAP Blantyre Synod's identity. Some of these macro changes carry with them seeds that eventually sprout to grow into ethnic segmentation. The question is: To what extent has ethnocentrism been used to define people's roles in the Church's mission in Malawi? This chapter ends with a summative conclusion.

CHAPTER 5

In the fifth Chapter, the researcher investigates on the influence of ethnocentrism on development. First, the definition of development is given, and issues related to self-reliance, community participation and community development is also discussed. This chapter attempts to address the question: To what extent has ethnocentrism been used to define people's roles in development in Malawi? In addressing this question, we will assist able to establish how the CCAP Blantyre synod can continue to be faithful to the call of mission, especially in development as transformation in the context of



ethnocentrism and regionalism without becoming captive to the socio-cultural trappings of its environment (ethnocentrism in this context) and losing her sense of transformational development in the process. This section ends with a summative conclusion.

CHAPTER 6

In Chapter six, the researcher analyses the concept of interculturalisation. In the same process, he will attempt to discuss interculturalisation in a way that enlightens the reader to be able to distinguish interculturalisation from ethnocentrism. The missionary enterprise needs to understand that changing times demand that we re-orientate regarding the manner we do mission and development. The challenge here is for the CCAP Blantyre Synod to recover its missional identity. This chapter ends with a summative conclusion.

CHAPTER 7

In Chapter seven there are two parts: In the first part the researcher summarizes the arguments of this research and outlines the findings. In the second part he makes recommendations on the issues raised and discussed on the research problem and hypothesis. In other words, because this is the last chapter, a summary of the entire work is given, suggestions offered, and conclusion drawn. The researcher's endeavour here is to address the questions: How can the CCAP Blantyre Synod as a transforming public entity genuinely become a truly reconciling change agent among the various ethnic groups in church and society? How can interculturalisation become a missional model to bond people of various ethnic groups?

Therefore, a summary of the entire work is given in order to proceed to the concluding missional model and guidelines as recommendations to the CCAP Blantyre Synod in her engagement in mission and development. The recommendations propose the adoption of 'interculturalisation as transforming



praxis'. The recommendations ask the church to adopt this missional model that will help in her endeavour to be a transformational Church. In the concluding remarks and recommendations, the researcher proposes how the move from ethnocentrism to interculturalisation could be facilitated within the CCAP Blantyre Synod.

The researcher advocates for an interdependence of the various ethnic groups and their cultures so as to better facilitate a move from ethnocentrism to interculturalisation in church and society in Malawi. Hence, he calls for a change in mind-set, and a hermeneutic of hospitality, interdependence, mutual respect, reconciliation, caring, sharing, preserving and liberating in order to overcome ethnocentrism, thereby restoring the fractured human dignity in Malawi. This chapter ends with a final conclusion of this research study project.

1.10 SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

This chapter was an introduction to this study. In the following chapter, the origin and development of the CCAP Blantyre Synod will be discussed. The missionary era will be investigated critically to find out what the former missionaries contributed to intercultural dialogue; and how they related first with African people and secondly amongst themselves.



CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CCAP BLANTYRE SYNOD

“Never doubt that
a small group of thoughtful committed citizens
can change the world.

Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has!” – **Margaret Mead (Julie 2007:184).**

“What you do today
will determine who you become tomorrow!
So, what is your life plan?” – **Frank Julie (2007:184)**

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous introductory chapter, a brief research focus and outline of this study project has been presented. In this Chapter, the researcher traces the origin and development of the CCAP Blantyre Synod against the background of the general history of Malawi, and mission history. He also introduces problems of slavery, ethnicity, language, national and identity of the church. Some of these themes (e.g. ethnicity) in this chapter are expanded in chapter 3. The researcher does this with the conviction that context is very important when doing theology (Guder 1998:18; Schreiter 1985:12) for us to understand factors that have contributed in shaping the identity of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, then and now/ past and present (cf. Hendriks 2004:228).

2.2 THE PRE-COLONIAL ERA

2.2.1 Geography of Malawi: The Bright Haze

Malawi is the new name for what was called Nyasaland during colonial times. This is the country of the culturally homogeneous peoples known as far back as the sixth century as the Amaravi (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:14; Randall 1971:51). The spelling of ‘Malawi’ used in ancient times before colonialism, was “Maravi” and it used to describe a large area in Central Africa and the people (Amaravi) whose home it was.



The word ‘Maravi’ means reflected light or *bright haze* that looks like *flames of fire*, an obvious association with the blaze of sunlight on Lake Malawi⁴ (Pike & Rimmington 1965: vii; Malawi Government Department of Information, July 1966: vii; Pike 1968:43; Schoffeleers, in Pachai 1972: 91-101; McCracken 2000:29).

Malawi is a long, landlocked country along a narrow strip of land in Central Africa, south of the equator in the sub-Saharan Africa. It is bounded by Tanzania to the North, Mozambique to the South and Zambia to the West. Malawi covers a total area of 118,484 square kilometres. To the East of the country lies Lake Malawi, the third largest lake in Africa, and ranks the twelfth in the world (Pike 1968:11; Randall 1971:17). Lake Malawi has one main outlet, the Shire River from which Malawi generates its hydroelectric power. The Shire River flows from the southern end of Lake Malawi through Lake Malombe; it follows the boundary curve of the highlands, round the back of Zomba Mountain, behind the hills to the west, before flowing directly south into Mozambique, joining the Zambezi River (White 1987:4; Randall 1871:17-21).

Malawi is a very beautiful country, with much high and steep land, especially the Mulanje Plateau in the southeast and the Zomba Plateau in the central south region, and the Nyika Plateau in the north. The country is sometimes dubbed, “the warm heart of Africa⁵”, a distinction earned both from its friendly people and its gorgeous landscapes. Ross, AC (1996:14) alludes to this when he acutely remarks that,

When David Livingstone first visited the area in 1859 he found a peaceful and homogeneous society, which, together with the favourable climate and topography, convinced him that he had found a place suitable for European settlement and for development as a base to combat the slave trade and preach the Christian message.

⁴ Phiri, DD (2004:13-14) argues that, “It was when the Phiri clan of the Bantu people approached the lands now part of Malawi, Northwest Mozambique and eastern Zambia, that they saw at a distance flames of fire, or what looked like fire. These flames or apparent flames made a vivid impression on the people’s minds. Consequently, they called the land Maravi or land of flames. The big lake they saw ahead of them they called Nyanja ya Nyenyezi, the lake of stars because of the twinkling of the water, the bright haze” (cf. Pike & Rimmington 1965:vii; McCracken 2000:29).

⁵ Malawi’s heritage dates back to the Maravi confederacy whose sovereignty was characterised by a period of peace and prosperity that prompted the 17th Century Portuguese Chroniclers to mention the well-ordered Maravi Empire with respect (Randall 1971:56).



David Livingstone found the Nyanja, branches of the once famous Maravi people as the original inhabitants of southern Malawi from which the CCAP Blantyre originated. However, during the nineteenth century the Nyanja people were disturbed by the invasions of some warlike groups - the Yao who came from Mozambique. David Livingstone⁶ also found out that although the Nyanja were the original inhabitants of the area, the majority inhabitants and rulers of the southern lake shore area at the time were the Yao people (White 1987:45-46).

Malawi is divided into three administrative regions: the Southern Region, Central Region and Northern Region. It must be noted that in Malawi, the missionaries preceded the British colonial administration (Debenham 1955:130). These missionaries demarcated their mission fields based on the major ethnic groups living in the respective three regions.

Years later when the British colonial administration was established, one of the administration's early acts was to officially divide the country into provinces/regions and further administrative units called districts (Kalinga 1985:60). The colonial administration took advantage of the three ecclesiastical regions and missionary borders of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia and the CCAP Nkhoma Synod to officially divide the regions based on linguistic and cultural aspects. The British colonial administration divided these regions in 1921 and each region used to have a Provincial Commissioner (Murray 1932:57).

The three regions are further divided into 28 administrative units called districts. The Southern Region has thirteen districts, the Central Region has nine districts, and the Northern Region has six of them. The districts are further subdivided into 137

⁶ When Livingstone discovered Lake Malawi, he asked a Yao person what the name of the lake was to which the person replied "Nyasa" which means "lake" in Yao language. Then he called the lake 'Lake Nyasa' which would literally mean in Yao 'Lake Lake' and the country 'Nyasaland' which also would literally mean 'Lakeland' (Boeder 1984:1; Phiri, KM 1984:157; Ross, AC 1996:14).



Traditional Authorities (TAs) and 68 Sub-chiefdoms presided over by chiefs and sub-chiefs. Each Traditional Authority (TA) or Sub-Traditional Authority is composed of villages, which are the smallest administrative units and are presided over by village headmen/headwomen. The twenty-eight (28) districts in the three regions stated above are listed below in alphabetical order per region:

Southern Region

1. Balaka
2. Blantyre
3. Chikwawa
4. Chiradzulu
5. Machinga
6. Mangochi
7. Mulanje
8. Mwanza
9. Neno
10. Nsanje
11. Phalombe
12. Thyolo
13. Zomba

Central Region

14. Dedza
15. Dowa
16. Kasungu
17. Lilongwe
18. Mchinji
19. Nkhota-kota
20. Ntcheu
21. Ntchisi
22. Salima

Northern Region

23. Chitipa
24. Karonga
25. Likoma
26. Mzimba
27. Nkhata Bay
28. Rumphi

During the post-colonial period in Dr. Banda's time, he maintained the colonial/missionary regional boundaries but changed the title of the Provincial Commissioner to Regional Minister and later to Regional Chairman. Since the advent of multiparty democracy in 1994, we now have Regional Governors in all three regions.

2.2.2 The People of Malawi: Histories and Settlements

The earliest people to occupy Malawi were the pygmy Akafula who arrived long before the birth of Christ and lived on the shores of Lake Malawi for centuries (Randall 1971:55). The Akafula made their living by fishing and hunting with bows and arrows in the forests. Due to the mass migration of the Bantu-speaking people in



the 16th century, the Akafula were finally overrun by the Amaravi from Katanga who spread out along the southern lakeshore and highlands. The conquerors established a complete ascendancy over the other inhabitants, and gradually extended their rule to most of the lake country and large areas of what today are Zambia and Mozambique (Randall 1971:55). Their tribal confederacy was named Maravi.

The Maravi people were skilled ironworkers, porters and agriculturalists and during their sovereignty, there was a period of peace and prosperity (Randall 1971:56). Little did the new masters of the lake know that their tribal empire would lose cohesion in the 18th century under the impact of the British through Arab slave traders⁷ arriving from the coast.

Local chieftains of the Maravi people then made their own competitive arrangements in the rapidly developing trade in ivory. The Yao people, living south and east of Lake Malawi began to rival the Maravi as middlemen between the interior and the markets on the coast (Boeder 1984:1). Phiri, DD (2004:13-14) argues that the Bantu people, from which the Maravi people trace their roots all originated in the Cameroons and Lower Niger. From there some of the Bantu clans migrated towards the centre of Africa and settled within the Congo Basin (Pike 1968:27-28, 39-44). It was in the Congo Basin that Bantu Tribes multiplied.

Due to population pressure and wars, some of them moved on to the Northeast and Southern Africa (Randall 1971:55). Some of these people migrated to what is now Malawi. The Bantu people are said to have set out in different clan groups at different times from about the fifteenth century. However, modern Malawians are mostly descendants of the Bantu people who moved into the area of Lake Malawi in the

⁷ As the saying goes, 'what goes around, comes around' - the seeds of destruction were planted by the Maravi people hundreds of years earlier when they overran the pygmy Akafula people, the original inhabitants of the shores of Lake Malawi, and now they were in danger of the horror of slave trade, as the British, through Arab slave traders marched away thousands of African men, women and children to work in their plantations in Jamaica, an Island in the Caribbean Sea (Randall 1971:56).



seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Matrilineal and patrilineal ethnic groups have inhabited the area since pre-colonial times (Pike 1968:27-61). This ancient land called Malawi, formerly known as Nyasaland, became well known in the West through the missionary enterprise of Dr. David Livingstone.

2.2.3 The Ethnic Groupings in Malawi

2.2.3.1 The Chewa People

The main clan groups of the Maravi people who migrated to what is now Malawi were the Banda, Phiri, Mwale and Nkhoma (Pachai in Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42; Schoffeleers in Pachai 1972:91-1001; cf. Andrew Ross 1996:14). The important halting places were at Choma in Zambia and at Kaphirintiwa in the Dzalanyama ranges in Lilongwe (of central Malawi).

From here the main party led by the Kalonga moved on to Msinja and finally to a place called Malawi near the south-western lakeshore (Mpinganjira in Mangochi). From one or more of the three main halting places in Malawi splinter groups broke away from the main host. Undi settled at Mano on the headwaters of the Kapoche River; Kaphwiti on the banks of the Wankurumadzi River; Lundu⁸ at Mbewe-wa-Mitengo some fifteen miles south of Chikwawa. In the Central Region of Malawi, Mkanda, Chulu and Mwase of Kasungu led the three important splinter groups.

At one time around the seventeenth century, the Maravi political structure was a powerful one under the Kalonga whose influence extended from the Luangwa valley to the Indian Ocean. However, the Maravi community split up and came to be known by different names such as Chewa, Nyanja, Mang'anja, Ntumba, Mbo, Chipeta, Zimba, and Nsenga, but the Chewa have always been the largest single group of the former Maravi host (Paas 2006:33).

⁸ The Makololo porters of Dr. David Livingstone deposed chief Lundu, killed him and several of the indigenous Mang'anja chiefs and incorporated their people into the new Makololo chiefdoms. It was a century after the last Lundu had been dispossessed by the Makololo that president Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda reinstated the chieftaincy/paramountcy in 1969 (Vail & White 1991:166-184).



2.2.3.2 The Yao People

The Yao claim that their original homeland was between the Lujenda and Ruvuma Rivers in northern Mozambique, east of Lake Malawi (Abdallah 1919:7; Murray 1932:45-97). The Yao moved into what is now the southern region of Malawi around the 1830's and 1840s (Phiri, KM 1984:157), but the major migration took place in the years round about 1850s when they were active as slave traders for the Swahili Arab⁹ slave traders on the coast of Mozambique. These people who are now settled in an area stretching from Mangochi, Machinga, Balaka, Dedza, Zomba, and Chiradzulu to Blantyre entered Malawi from the East African region where they had trade associations with the Arabs (Sanderson 1973:7-8; Pachai 1972:168-178; cf. Boeder 1984:5).

Pachai (in Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42) argues that between 1850 and 1870 the Yao were attacked by the Makua, the Lomwe and the Ngoni, and that was the main reason for their migration from Yaoland in Mozambique, not slave trading as alleged by some ethnic propagandists (cf. Boeder 1984:1). Thus, the issue of Yaos being notorious slave traders has been exaggerated by interest groups.

When Dr. David Livingstone and Bishop Mackenzie of the UMCA freed some slaves at Mbame in Blantyre, they learnt something about the people they regarded as their enemy, the Yao people. White (1987:48) states that, “they had discovered that within a fortnight of settling at Magomero, a number of the men and women they had released at Mbame were actually Yao. Yaos, too, were victims of slave trade”, they were enslaved by Nyanja and Mang’anja people, and chiefs Chigunda and Mankhokwe to mention but a few (cf. Boeder 1984:1; White 1987:48). Pachai (1972:42) states that the following four Yao groups moved into what is now Southern Region of Malawi:

- i) The Amasanninga Yao whose descendance now live in Mangochi

⁹ In fact it was the British through Arab slave traders that were involved in slave trade. The local people social cohesion was disrupted and people were then in danger of the horror of slave trade, as the British slave traders through Arabs marched away thousands of Africans to work in their plantations in Jamaica, an Island in the Caribbean Sea (Randall 1971:56).



- ii) The Amachinga Yao who settled in four parties in Mangochi, Domasi (Zomba) and Liwonde (Machinga)
- iii) The Amangochi Yao who constitute more than half of the present Yao population in Malawi and are settled in the Mangochi, Chiradzulu, and Blantyre districts in the Southern Region of Malawi, and also in the Dedza district in the Central Region of Malawi (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42; Alpers in Pachai 1972: 168-178; Pachai 1973:53-60), and
- iv) The Achisi Yao.

Phiri, KM (1984:157) makes an acute observation that, “The Yao...combined commercial and military skills to establish political hegemony over the Nyanja”.

The Yao are rich in culture, tradition and music. To substantiate this, one Scottish missionary of the Blantyre Mission, Dr. Alexander Hetherwick (1902: vi-vii in Thorod, A 2005:6) commented that the Yao are, “... a race physically and intellectually the most powerful in East Central Africa...” In addition, Phiri, KM (1984:157) also observes that “...the early colonialists described them [Yaos] as virile and capable of holding their own, just as the Nyanja were seen as effeminate and cowardly or the Lomwe as poverty-stricken and uncouth”.

Vail & White (1989:170) claim that, “the Yao...are ‘intelligent and quick’, making, ‘excellent servants’ while ‘as soldiers they proved of inestimable value’. They also speak ‘perhaps the finest of all Central African languages’. The Yao are seen as being more like Europeans than any other people of the Southern Region. They live in ‘square houses’ and cultivate habits of ‘personal cleanliness’...they understand a certain man-to-man equality of address” (cf. Murray 1932:39-87). Emily, daughter to Joseph Booth, John Chilembwe’s mentor, had her conceptions of the profiles of the Yao people not different from the one above as can be seen from her account about John Chilembwe, a Yao, in the following lines,

Father was despairing of ever being able to find a dependable boy, when out of heaven’s blue the right boy came to find us. His name was John. He had a gleaming smile...and had a great desire to learn and write, and to gain the truth of Christianity... Our black boy was Yao. *He*



was the product of a strong and aggressive race who knew what they wanted and went after it. He knew his own mind and was not easily turned from his purpose. But somewhere there must have been a strain of the gentle Mang'anja in John. He was so kind and true—so thoughtful and unselfish” (Shepperson & Price 1958:37-38. Italicized for my emphasis).

The Yao are predominantly Muslim, and count among their famous progeny the First Democratic President of the Republic of Malawi, Dr. Bakili Muluzi; Rev. John Chilembwe¹⁰ and Rev. Harry Kambwiri Matecheta. Ross, AC (1996:42) describes the first African to be ordained in the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission the Reverend Harry Kambwiri Matecheta¹¹ as, “the Yao evangelist of the Ngoni”. He was the evangelist to open the first Blantyre mission station in Ntcheu, an area dominated by the Maseko Ngoni tribe. He was the first African to have ably headed a Mission Station having white Scottish missionaries serving under his leadership.

Rev. Harry Matecheta later headed Mulanje Mission station. He was ordained in 1911 and became the first Malawian to be ordained as Presbyterian minister. The First African to be ordained as Priest in the Anglican Church (UMCA) in Malawi was the Rev. Fr. Yohanna Abdallah, also a Yao (Pachai 1972; 412; Ross, AC. 1996:152, 200). And the first graduate, first degree holder in Malawi was the Rev. John Chilembwe, while the first PhD holder in the country was the Rev. Dr. Daniel Malikebu. All these from the Southern Region of Malawi.

¹⁰ Reverend John Chilembwe was a product of Blantyre Mission who later joined Joseph Booth's Baptist Church. Years later, John Chilembwe founded the first Malawian African independent church called Providence Industrial Mission. He also led the first opposition against the British rule in Malawi in 1915, popularly known today as the 'Chilembwe Rising'. He was a Yao from the Chiradzulu district (Shepperson & Price 1958:39). Even after leaving Blantyre Mission and founding his church, the Providence Industrial Mission (PIM), Chilembwe still kept contact with Blantyre Mission ministers asking for counsel concerning doctrinal issues and politely addressing Blantyre Mission ministers as 'father in Christ' and describing himself as 'son in Christ' (Ross, AC 1996:181). He was the first Malawian graduate in our country. Dr. Daniel Malikebu, first Malawian PhD holder, succeeded John Chilembwe.

¹¹ Harry Matecheta and John Chilembwe were at school together and Matecheta was in the senior class (Pachai 1972:412). Matecheta had also known Chilembwe's mentor, Joseph Booth, and he had seen Chilembwe return from America and had preached in Chilembwe's church (PIM) in its early days (Pachai 1972:413; cf. page 10 footnote). What a transforming interculturalisation!



2.2.3.3 The Lomwe People

The last tribal group to enter Malawi were the Lomwe whose traditional home is stated to be Namuli Hill in the North West of Mozambique, east of Lake Chilwa. Between about 1897 and 1907, following the extension of the Portuguese administration into the country occupied by the Lomwe, thousands of these people left their homeland for Malawi. The numbers of Lomwes in our country have been increasing ever since, particularly in the districts of Mulanje and Thyolo which are now the most densely populated areas of the country. The Lomwe are hard working people in whatever sector of public life they are found; yet some people are prejudiced against them. The researcher grew up hearing some of his Yao people calling the Lomwe, ‘Angulu’, ‘Alolo’, ‘wākulya majoka ni mapuku (snake and mice-eaters), ‘wāusakwa’ (dirty-stinking), and ‘wāngambala/asongolo’ (and uncircumcised people)’ with overtones of disparagement.

Even Phiri, KM (1984:157) states that “...the early colonialists described...the Lomwe as poverty-stricken and uncouth”. In addition, the Lomwe, Murray (1932:97) claims, “Are represented among the idle and criminal classes to a disproportionate extent”¹² (cf. Vail & White 1989:170).

Phiri, DD (2004:102) argues that it was for this reason of calling the Lomwe, Nguru (Angulu in Yao) that “the leading Lomwe men (e.g. Lewis Bandawe) persuaded the Government of the day to outlaw the name Nguru. Mr. Bandawe, a leading member of the Lomwe Tribal Association, a product of the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission, tabled a resolution at a meeting of the Southern Provincial Council in May 1945 that the name ‘Nguru’ be replaced by the name ‘Lomwe’. Yao and Nyanja members unanimously supported Mr. Bandawe. This shows that there has been a sort of unity between the Yao and Lomwe tribes for a long time and that the colonial

¹² The British colonial officials in pursuit of control of Malawi, then called Nyasaland embarked on a divide-and-rule policies invoking ethnic categories and stereotypes that existed only in their own minds (Vail & White 1989:169). The Lomwes are good people just as any other tribe, in fact in any tribe/race or community in the world you can find good and bad people.



settlers sometimes exaggerate tribal rivalries in their time. To substantiate this, Phiri, DD (2004:101) further states that,

One of the first to recognise the potential of the Lomwe was John Chilembwe, founder of the Providence Industrial Mission (PIM). During the Chilembwe rising (1915), most of his supporters were Lomwe. They did most of the fighting and the dying.

Yet John Chilembwe was a Yao, son of Che Kaundama, also educated by the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission and baptised on 19 June 1881 (Shepperson & Price 1958:39) before his further education in America. Much as we would like to trace the origin of the name Lomwe and Nguru and the Lomwe sub-tribes, we have to leave it at this, due to space and time constraints.

2.2.3.4 The Tumbuka/Kamanga People

The part of Malawi, which lies north of the Dwangwa River, was occupied by the Tumbuka-Kamanga peoples. The Tumbuka-Kamanga were originally a closely related group, if not a single people but, like the Maravi, they later subdivided into a number of groups of which the most important were the Tumbuka, Kamanga, Henga, Tonga, and Siska (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42; Ncozana 2002:43-59; Vail, in Pachai 1972:148-163; Vail 1991:156; Young 1932:30-89). The Tumbuka first occupied the area bounded by the Bua River in the south, the Songwe River in the north, Lake Malawi in the east, and the Luangwa River in the west.

The Tonga, as a subsection of the Tumbuka-Kamanga cluster, seem to have been an amalgam of at least four different groups—the Nyaliwanga, Kapunda Banda, Kabunduli and Mankhambira. With regard to the relationship between the Tonga and Tumbuka, one Tonga view is that Tonga was only the name of the country occupied by them, as Maravi was the name of the country of the Chewa. The Nyakyusa-Ngonde, the Hehe-Bena, the Nyiha and the Tumbuka inhabit northernmost Malawi and parts of neighbouring Tanzania (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42).



2.2.3.5 The Ngoni People

The Ngoni¹³ warrior pastoralists entered Malawi from the South. They were driven from their home areas (SA) by the wars and disturbances (Mfecane), which accompanied the rise of the Zulu (Palmer in Pachai 1972:296-297; cf. Phiri, KM 1984:157).

The Jere clan of the Ngoni, led by Zwangendaba, crossed the Zambezi near Zumbo in 1835 and continued north-eastwards, stopping at Mkoko near present Petauke and at Mawiri and near Loudon and then, passing near Lake Kazuni, reached Mapupu in Tanzania. At about the same time a second clan of the Ngoni, led by Ngwane Maseko, crossed the Zambezi farther downstream than Zwangendaba had made his crossing, and continued eastwards past Dzonze Hill in the Kirk Range, near the present Dedza, and round the south of Lake Malawi and then northwards to Songea. When Zwangendaba died in 1848, the Northern Ngoni host broke up into a number of splinter groups.

The Ntabeni group moved north to the shores of Lake Victoria. The Zulu Gama group joined the Ngwane Maseko group being driven southward until it reached Domwe under Chidyaonga around 1871. One Jere group moved into the Henga valley where in 1855 M'mbelwa was installed paramount chief in succession to Zwangendaba. Another group under Ntuto or Mpezeni migrated into what is now Zambia (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42-43; cf. McCracken, in Pachai 1972:215-236; Linden, in Pachai 1972:237-262; Pachai 1972:179-214; Palmer in Pachai 1972:298-299).

2.2.3.6 The Sena People

After the 1880s, the Sena people emigrated peacefully from Mozambique into Malawi. They infiltrated from the Zambezi area in Mozambique into the Nsanje district of the lower Shire River in Malawi (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42; Boeder 1984:1).

¹³ The spelling of the tribal group 'Ngoni' in Malawi is different in their original (former) homeland, South Africa, where it is spelt 'Nguni'. It might have been corrupted on their way from South Africa through Mozambique to Malawi as a result of the Mfecane wars.



There are also some other minor tribes in Malawi that have not been discussed here for this is obviously not the place for a sustained discussion of the history of all the tribes in Malawi. The humble aim in this study is rather to give the reader the impression that, “by the time mission became fully established in the 1890s, it was catering for an ethnically diverse African population amongst whom the Christian Gospel became a common denominator (Ross, AC 1996:15). However, this was not the case in all circumstances for in some, as will be discussed fully in the following sections, there was a “delicate relationship between the earlier Bantu-speaking settlers on the one hand and the recent immigrants who occupied the region in the 19th century as a result of the Mfecane (Phiri, KM 1984:157).

2.3 THE MISSIONARY ERA

2.3.1 Profile of the CCAP Family

The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod is a member of the wider family of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) General Assembly¹⁴. The CCAP General Assembly is a result of different missionary activities in the 19th Century of the Reformed/ Presbyterian mission in Central Africa. These included:

- (i) The established Church of Scotland which established the Blantyre Mission in 1876 (Ross, AC 1996:43) in the southern region of Malawi but then extended her work to the northwest part of Mozambique (Mihekani) in 1894 (Bandawe in Ross, KR 1996:35). The Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland is the current CCAP Blantyre Synod. This church is ethnically composed of predominantly Yao and Nyanja/Mang'anja (Ross, KR 2003:147). The CCAP Blantyre Synod's headquarters is in Blantyre, Malawi's Commercial Capital.

¹⁴ The origin and development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) is a result of the work of different dedicated Scottish missionaries and African men and women committed to mission work: evangelism, education, and a scheme of concentration on industrial and all the branches of technical, commercial and medical training.



- (ii) The Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland which established the Livingstonia Mission in 1875 first at Cape Maclear in Mangochi District in the southern Malawi before moving to the northern region of Malawi and then extended her work to some parts of Zambia. The Livingstonia Synod is ethnically composed of predominantly Tumbuka and Ngoni (Ross, KR 2003:147). The CCAP Livingstonia Synod's headquarters is currently in Mzuzu.

- (iii) The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) was first established in South Africa in 1652 as a colonial branch, and she obtained her autonomy in 1824 (Pauw 1980:44). In 1888, The DRC established the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in the Central Region of Malawi giving birth to the CCAP Nkhoma Synod. Nkhoma Synod is ethnically composed of predominantly Chewa (Ross, KR 2003). The CCAP Nkhoma Synod's headquarters is currently at Nkhoma on the outskirts of Lilongwe, Malawi's Capital City. However, plans are underway to move the synod's headquarters into the City of Lilongwe.

The Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) was formed on the 17th of September 1924 by the two Scottish Presbyteries of Livingstonia and Blantyre and consolidated by the joining of the Nkhoma Presbytery of the Dutch Reformed Mission in 1926 (CCAP - extracts of minutes of the Synod¹⁵ 1924-1945:1-8; The CCAP Minutes of the General Synod and Constitution 1990:1-2) The CCAP General Synod is now comprised of five CCAP Synods in Central Africa; the composition includes: the CCAP Blantyre Synod, The CCAP Livingstonia Synod, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, the CCAP Harare Synod, and the CCAP Zambia Synod. However, each Synod has the power to make its own constitution even though it waits on the approval of the General Assembly. (The constitution of the CCAP General Assembly adopted in Lilongwe on the 8th of December 2002:15-22).

¹⁵ It is of paramount importance to mention that I got twenty (20) copies of these minutes on the 17th of May 2008 from Professor emeritus Martin Pauw of the University of Stellenbosch who once served as the Dutch Reformed Church missionary in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod in Malawi.



The CCAP General Assembly's headquarters is in Lilongwe – Malawi. The Assembly is headed by the moderator who is assisted by the vice moderator. In its office structure the assembly has a full time Secretary General who has executive powers. Two Deputy Secretary Generals assist him. There is the Deputy Secretary General in charge of development. S/he is responsible for education, administration, relief and development, health, communication and advocacy. The other Deputy Secretary General is in charge of ministry work. S/he is responsible for mission/evangelism Interfaith, women, men, youth, Church and society within the jurisdiction of the General Assembly. The General Assembly also has the General Treasurer responsible for the General Assembly's finances (The Constitution of the CCAP General Assembly 2002:1-11; The constitution of the CCAP 1956 and 1958:4-5).

2.3.2 The First Missionary Outreach in Malawi

It must be pointed out that although the Portuguese¹⁶ made the first contact with Malawi in the sixteenth century (Pike 1968:45), they did not remain nor send permanent missionaries. It is therefore interesting to note that the first missionary outreach began with the arrival of the missionary-turned explorer Dr. David Livingstone in 1859 (Pachai 1972: xv-xxix, 93; Randall 1971:57; Young 1932:15-25).

In 1861 Malawi received the first bunch of missionaries from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge under the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) headed by Bishop Fredrick Mackenzie¹⁷ while Dr. David Livingstone was still on the Zambezi (Debenham 1955:130). The UMCA missionaries chose Magomero in Zomba

¹⁶ The first European to lay eyes on Lake Malawi was a Portuguese Zambezi trader, Gasper Bocaro, who skirted its shores in 1616. However, his findings were not widely publicised outside Lisbon (Randall 1971:57).

¹⁷ The Universities' Mission to Central Africa's (UMCA) origin lay in Dr. David Livingstone's triumphal tour of Britain in 1857 when, in lectures at Oxford and Cambridge universities, he appealed to young men to devote themselves to a life time of service in Africa. Backed by the universities of Oxford, Cambridge, Durham and Dublin, Bishop Mackenzie, guided by Dr. David Livingstone, established the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in the neighbourhood of Lake Malawi and Shire River at a place called Magomero in Southern Malawi. Mackenzie had his consecration as the Church of England's first missionary bishop disputed. The argument was: could there be a Bishop without a See? What was the relationship between Church and State where there was no State? Yet as controversial as it was, his consecration took place in Cape Town with the mission's destination fixed as the neighbourhood of Lake Malawi (then called Lake Nyasa) and the Shire River (White 1987:12).



as their mission headquarters. However, the mission quickly collapsed due to cultural conflicts between the missionaries and the local people¹⁸ (White 1987:28, 50-53; Randall 1971:61). Deaths from diarrhoea and fever and the difficulty of getting supplies/essentials through from the coast also caused the early retirement of the UMCA from Malawi in 1862 (Debenham 1955:130; White 1987:23, 55-61).

2.3.3 The Scottish Presbyterian Ecclesiastical Dimension

The Christian mission enthusiasm in Scotland for a mission to Malawi was triggered off by the drama of Dr. David Livingstone's lonely death and the return of his body to Scotland in 1874 (Randall 1971:63-65; Ross, AC 1996:17-18).

The missionary endeavour was unique to the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland in so far as White missionaries from Scotland and Black Missionaries from Lovedale, South Africa (e.g. Rev. William Koyi), under the guidance of the Holy Spirit worked together to establish the first Church in Malawi (Paas 2006:192).

Initially, Dr. Macrae of Hawick undertook the initiative to arouse the Church in Scotland to take the task of establishing a mission in Central Africa in honour of David Livingstone. Dr. Macrae presented an overture from his Presbytery of Jedburgh to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in May 1874, calling for the establishment of the mission (Ross, AC 1996:17-18, 39). The Assembly accepted the petition and the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC) were instructed to undertake the preparations and carry out the mission. The FMC set up a sub-committee with Dr. Macrae as convener whose main task was to supervise both the setting up and carrying out of the mission (Ross, AC 1996:39). In the Old Testament Book of Isaiah 6:8, the prophet narrates the Lord's quest for missionaries in the question, "*Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?*" Ironically, none of the 1,300 ordained ministers

¹⁸ The UMCA missionaries took sides in the local ethnic conflicts. They sided with the Mang'anja against the Yao to the extent of Bishop Mackenzie himself taking a gun and leading a war-party to attack an the Yao village at Sadzi in Zomba (White 1987:28).



in the Church of Scotland volunteered to serve in the new mission venture in Malawi (Ross, Ac 1996:21).

There were some difficulties in the Church of Scotland. Disunity prevailed in Dr. Macrae's sub-committee of the Established Church of Scotland right from the beginning of the committee's formation. Ross, AC (1996:39-41) observes that the "...sub-committee was never united. Individuals, particularly Dr. Macrae, appeared to do things on their own without the knowledge or understanding of the rest of the members of the sub-committee". However, despite the problems of lack of unity, Dr. Macrae approached Lt E.D. Young who had been to Africa before with Dr. David Livingstone, asking him to lead the expedition to Central Africa (Ross, AC 1996:18). The Free Church of Scotland also approached Young for the same cause. Young proposed to the two Churches, the Established Church of Scotland on whose behalf Dr. Macrae acted, and the Free Church of Scotland that they should form a joint venture by forming a Scottish National Mission. But the Foreign Mission Committees from both Churches rejected that idea. Ross, AC (1996:40) quotes Duff MacDonald reporting of the FMC¹⁹ of the Church of Scotland's position as saying,

As the slave hunting region round Lake Nyasa is so large and populous as to afford abundant scope for many missions, it is expedient, under present circumstances, that each Church should appoint its own body of management at home, send out its own staff of agents and have its own stores and supplies as well as its distinct settlement and field of labour. The settlements, however, should not be so far from each other as to render easy intercourse at all difficult, it being most desirable that they should render each other all possible assistance.

Young agreed to go with the Free Church of Scotland for they were prepared with both human resources as well as financial resources while Dr. Macrae's committee was not (Ross, AC 1996:18-19). As noted earlier on, the Established Church of Scotland had problems in finding candidates for mission work in Malawi for none of the ordained ministers volunteered. In addition, there were problems of disunity in Dr. Macrae's committee. It was later that Henry Henderson, a graduate of Aberdeen University, but a layman, volunteered for the work.

¹⁹ See list of abbreviations/acronyms in chapter 1 in the section after table of contents on page xvi



2.3.4 The Origin and Development of Blantyre Mission: Pioneer Work

In 1875, the Church of Scotland sent Henry Henderson as a pioneer to go with the Free Church of Scotland party. His main task was to find a suitable site for the mission of the Church of Scotland. Henderson and the Free Church party set out and reached Cape Maclear in the Mangochi district in the southern Malawi on 11th October 1875 (Ross, AC 1996:41).

Henderson circumnavigated the whole Lake Malawi area, but he did not find a suitable site for mission. He decided to go back up the Shire Highlands, a densely populated area he had seen earlier on his way from the Zambezi to Cape Maclear. The Livingstonia Mission assisted Henderson by lending him an interpreter, Tom Bokwito without whose effort, Henderson's effort to establish Blantyre Mission would not have materialised (Paas 2006:193; Ross, AC 1996:41).

Bokwito was one of the slaves²⁰ freed by Livingstone. He was educated at Lovedale Institution in the Cape Colony and was one of the three graduates from that institution who had volunteered to serve with the Livingstonia mission. This was because Dr. Stewart²¹ who was with Dr. Laws in the establishment of the Livingstonia mission had previously headed the Lovedale institution (Ross, AC 1996:41).

Henderson together with Tom Bokwito set out from Cape Maclear downstream on the Shire to Liwonde then struck off into the Highlands through Machinga and arrived in the Yao Chief Malemia's territory where he stayed for a while. From there he set out and travelled through another Yao territory of CheLosa in Chiradzulu district (Ross, AC 1996:42).

²⁰ The British used slaves from Africa to work in their plantations in Jamaica; an Island in the Caribbean Sea.

²¹ Stewart had previously travelled with Livingstone to Central Africa and gave a negative report about the necessity of establishing a mission. He headed the Lovedale institution and it was during his fundraising visit to England that he attended Livingstone's funeral. It was from there that his mindset for the necessity of setting up a mission in Central Africa changed, so he campaigned for the establishment of a mission in Central Africa, and finally came to Central Africa with Dr. Laws in 1875 (Ross, Ac 1996:41).



It was in CheLosa's village in Chiradzulu district that Henderson first met a young man Harry Kambwiri Matecheta, who grew up to become the first ordained Presbyterian African minister of the CCAP Blantyre Synod (ordained in 1911) and Malawi (Ross, AC 1996:42,152,200).

From Chiradzulu, Henderson and his interpreter Tom Bokwito who knew the area very well, set out to Kabula (now Blantyre), in another Yao territory whose chief was called Kapeni. It was in this Yao chief Kapeni's territory that he saw as suitable for the establishment of mission. The suitable place he found, he named Blantyre, in memory of the birthplace of Dr. David Livingstone (Randall 1971:65; Ross, Ac 1996:43; Joda-Mbewe 2002:12). It was Henderson²² who negotiated with chief Kapeni for permission to set up the mission station at this site.

The first missionary group from the Church of Scotland to join Henry Henderson arrived in Chief Kapeni's area on Nyambadwe Hill on 23rd October 1876. The group comprised of theological-non-professionals, not even a single ordained minister was amongst them. Dr. T. Thornton Macklin, a physician, headed the group. The others were John Buchanan, a farmer, George Fenwick, John Walker, Jonathan Duncan and William Milne. All of them were artisans. Because Henderson's task was to look for a suitable site for the Church of Scotland mission work, it seemed his mission had then been accomplished by the arrival of this missionary group.

However, it did not take long before the Blantyre Mission experienced a crisis due to the lack of the right personnel, cultural conflicts, wrong mission strategies and

²² Henderson described the finding of the place, a chance, because he only stopped at this place because his colleague, Tom Bokwito (Henderson's interpreter) was sick and that necessitated them to stay on at one place and in that process, they discovered this place (Ross, AC 1996:43). Though the founding and establishment of Blantyre Mission was through the collective missionary efforts and labour of Scottish and local African missionaries not much is celebrated about the local African missionaries' contributions in the CCAP Blantyre Synod. The researcher is very much concerned about this trend because most of the younger generation in the Church do not know about this important aspect of our ecclesiastical history, the interculturalisation of the gospel and Western culture in Malawi. The researcher, therefore, believe that it is now time to tell the full story especially as much 'rhetoric' is now being made about an 'African Renaissance'.



immature Christianity on the part of the first Scottish missionary group of 1876 headed by Dr. Macklin. They were all laymen without any theological training (Ross, AC 1996:47-48). This first group of missionaries occupied themselves more with commerce and colonial matters (Ross, AC 1996:20,177,178,188) although the aim of the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission was the proclamation of the Gospel to the Africans and closely connected to this aim was the goal of establishing Churches which could become completely autonomous (Ross, AC 1996:47-48).

Henry Henderson, sensing the possible collapse of the Blantyre mission, was not ashamed to approach Dr. Robert Laws of the Livingstonia mission, asking him to come or to send somebody to assist the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission. Henderson (quoted in Ross, AC 1996:44) wrote,

Dear Doctor, - "come over and help us." In other words, can you and will you come and take charge of this mission, at all events till next July or August; but I hope that you might be willing to stay here permanently, as the site is a good one in almost every way you look at it, and a good head is required. I am not able, neither am I fitted to carry the work on. I should be perfectly willing to stay on as long as you wished, as it is no wish to bolt that makes me ask you to come, but the conviction that someone better qualified than myself is much required here at this outset....Let someone have pity on the Auld Kirk. Seriously, I do hope that someone with vigour and earnestness and practical knowledge will be here very soon, as it would be a sad matter to have a second failure on these highlands....Hoping to see you soon.

Ross, AC (1996:45) states that Dr. Robert Laws responded to Henderson's request. He sent James Stewart, who upon his arrival, acted as head of station of the Blantyre Mission. Stewart continued in this position until the Established Church of Scotland responded sometime later by sending the first ordained Scottish missionary minister to Blantyre Mission in 1878. He was the Reverend Duff MacDonald, a graduate of Aberdeen University (Selfridge 1976:34). He came to Malawi after the mission had almost collapsed. Ross, AC (1996:47-48) tells us about the Rev. Duff MacDonald and his pastoral duties in the following submission,

On arrival, MacDonald immediately plunged into the work he felt he was sent out to do: learning the language, getting to know the people and working at developing the school.



William Koyi had conducted the school. MacDonald worked hard in the school and at learning the language and soon became a fluent speaker of Yao. As a result, he was able to wander into the nearby villages and make real contact with ordinary villagers. He was able to preach and teach as none of the Blantyre staff had been able to do hitherto... MacDonald had also begun the translation of the New Testament into Yao as well as *Pilgrim's Progress*... Buchanan could also speak Yao...within weeks of being established at Zomba he was preaching in Yao to a sizeable congregations, a marked contrast to what had happened at Blantyre where months had passed before at any attempt at the communication of the Gospel to local people had taken place.

This policy had a lasting effect upon the Church of Scotland's missionary planning and has continued to influence the building and the growth of the indigenous Christians in the CCAP Blantyre Synod.

2.3.5 The Scottish Missionary Methods

The Established Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission used a comprehensive or multiple mission model approach as a method of mission consisting of: (i) Evangelism, (ii) Education, (iii) Medical work, and (iv) Industrial work. They applied the policy of studying and using the language of the people whom one is working with, translating the Bible and encouraging the writing of literature.

2.3.5.1 Education

The educational and intellectual legacy of the Scottish missionary labour can be found in the prominence they gave to the development of education. By 1900, the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission had expanded considerably. They had established many satellite mission stations. Schools were opened at almost every mission station. This was no small contribution to the advancement of the cause of the general human resource development.

A teachers' training college was started by the Blantyre Mission in 1908—placing much emphasis on religious instruction, hygiene and English (Chincen 2001:31). Thus, teachers were to be evangelistic teachers. By 1908, the Blantyre Mission had over fifty schools and the Nyasaland Protectorate Government used to give an annual grant of £1,000 to the missions to help them with education (Ross, AC 1996:142).



By 1909, the Blantyre Mission under another inspirational leader the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, had established the Henry Henderson Institute²³ (HHI), named after the Blantyre Mission's founder, Henry Henderson (Bandawe in Ross, KR 1996:37). It was established to provide general education and skills training to Africans. By 1910, Blantyre Mission had become the country's centre of education and industry. The HHI produced many educated people who took up skilled jobs on the plantations, in civil service and in neighbouring countries. Some mission educated Africans such as John Chilembwe and Mungo Murray Chisuse had already gone overseas. Chilembwe went to study theology in the USA and Chisuse went to study printing in Scotland.

In 1940, Blantyre Mission opened the first Secondary School in Malawi, the Henry Henderson Institute (HHI), named after the mission's founder, Henry Henderson (Chincen 2001:31). Today, the Henry Henderson Institute (HHI) is still perceived as one of the best Secondary Schools in the country. Most of the first converts attended school, as the youngsters at school were more receptive to the Christian message than adults. It is encouraging to observe that the church is still putting much emphasis on reaching out to the youth especially the college and university students through a students' organisation called Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Students' Organisation (CCAPSO). However, there is need to have people better equipped to minister in these specific places and situations in a way that takes cognisance of the modern trends in these institutions of higher learning. An educated person usually makes an informed decision or choice.

It should be noted with appreciation that some of those who embraced Christianity and Scottish education with the entire sacrificial price they had to pay later became the pioneers of Malawian Nationalism as well as exponents of liberation theology (cf. Ross, AC 1996:11, 13, 74, 181). Unfortunately, there are also many of those who passed through mission schools that hardly attend Church services today. Some who

²³ According to Bandawe's and Matecheta's memoirs, education at Secondary school level was carried out from about 1892 or 1893 until just before the First World War. This was begun with Scot's deacons, then with trainee-teachers, then trainee-hospital-assistants, but the school was never an official high school as such. This sort of instruction did not appear until 1940 when a high school was officially opened (Ross, AC 1996:167).



still care about the faith have left mainline churches to found their own churches or simply joined new churches leaving mainline ones. Only few of these missionary beneficiaries are with the church today. There are many reasons for this situation and it requires transforming interculturalisation on the part of CCAP Blantyre Synod to address this scenario.

2.3.5.2 Evangelism

The Rev. Duff MacDonald, a graduate of Aberdeen University (Selfridge 1976:34), and the first ordained minister who in 1878 came to join the pioneer group of missionaries at Blantyre mission, had a lifelong passion also for the evangelisation of those who did not yet know Christ, to such an extent that he learnt Yao and could fluently preach in Yao (Ross, 1996:47).

Through different missionary services of the Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission (CSBM), the message of Jesus Christ and the Kingdom of God was communicated through acts of service constrained by love. These acts of service were taken to be part of a comprehensive programme of Christian witness of which *evangelism* was an integral and basic part.

The Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission cooperated with the Free Church of Scotland Livingstonia Mission in evangelism. This can be evidenced first by the lending of an interpreter; Tom Bokwito, to Henry Henderson, the pioneer missionary of Blantyre Mission, without whom, his ministry would not have been effective. Bokwito was not only an interpreter, but also an intermediary, for he was the one who knew most of the places and the people since he had been in some of those places since his boyhood.

However, the Rev. Duff MacDonald's evangelism enthusiasm and efforts were undermined and harmed by some members of the pioneer mission group who concerned themselves more with commerce and colonial matters than with evangelism or education. These distractions led to the infamous crisis of the Blantyre



Mission in the initial years of her establishment since these mission authorities were somewhat responsible for civil jurisdiction that resulted in intercultural conflict and in the death (execution) of two Malawians (Ross, AC. 1996:20).

The Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland recognised the dangers of being perceived as a colony instead of a mission station and instructed the mission's leaders not to involve themselves in civil or legal matters. Because of the above stated scenario, for evangelism's sake, the Church of Scotland dissolved the mission, withdrew all the missionaries from the field, and re-started it later under the able leadership of the Rev. David Scot.

The Rev. Duff MacDonald was sent in 1878, the Rev. D.C. Scot was sent in 1881, to re-organise the mission work and take over the leadership of the mission station. Before his departure, the General Assembly of the Established Church of Scotland instructed Scott on how to deal with the freed slave villages and told him that he was not to exercise magisterial functions as his predecessors (Duff MacDonald) had done (Ross, AC. 1996:68).

Before Rev. Scott came to the mission station in 1881, the spiritual life at the Blantyre Mission had deteriorated (1878-1881). Although the Rev. Duff MacDonald was good at learning the vernacular Yao language and could preach in Yao, he left no Church building at the mission station. His achievements could fairly be said to be the translation of the New Testament Bible and the book, *Pilgrims Progress*, into Yao.

However, the Rev. D.C. Scott had an extraordinary passion for the evangelism work. He focussed the mission's attention on four fields: education, evangelism, agriculture, and simple industry (Ross, AC 1996:63-84; Selfridge 1976:44-48). He was indeed a practitioner of a comprehensive-mission-model approach who felt that the revival of the religious teaching of the mission was his main task. Scott was a missionary who believed that the gospel message was about reconciliation and forgiveness. Therefore, when he arrived at the mission station, he began by making it known in the surrounding area that all who had any claim to any of the runaway slaves who then



lived at the mission station and the mission villages, should come to see him for compensation after substantiating their claims. Also just after his arrival, Scott had tried his level best to maintain the intercultural close relations that his predecessor, the Rev. Duff MacDonald, had built up with Chief Mpama of Chiradzulu district and Chief Kapeni in Blantyre district. These chiefs were all Yao and they acted as ‘go-betweens’ in Scott’s future reconciliatory dialogues with other chiefs (Ross, AC 1996:69-70).

Scott had very good relations with the Yao chiefs because of his insistence on no longer accepting runaway slaves at the mission station. It was a difficult decision to make but it yielded good fruits because the Yao chiefs had previously perceived the missionaries as slave beneficiaries for the slaves now worked at the mission station doing a lot of manual work. The bad treatment that some missionaries meted out to the freed slaves was not different from that of their former slave masters. Even the relation culture that was built between the freed slaves and the missionaries was still that of master-slave relationship not partners, as Duff MacDonald (Ross, AC. 1996:20) once observed,

Many of the artisans did not wish to continue in the service of the mission, believing that they would find it better to *become traders and chiefs among the natives....It was no uncommon thing for an artisan to threaten to shoot his fellow labourers*, and to send them letters challenging them to deadly combat (Italicized for my emphasis).

Some years later, Rev. Duff MacDonald’s successor, Rev. David Scot (Ross, AC 1996:21) wrote, “The men chosen for mission work were unfit, without profession of Christian life or missionary spirit, and not even good workers.” Scott’s Christian wisdom and integrity manifested in his intercultural dialogue and good public relation skills creating an enabling environment for the success of his evangelistic passion. It was in his time that the first “mud and wattle” church was built and opened because of his emphasis and the prominence he gave to evangelism. When he arrived at the mission station in 1881, Scot found no Church building (Ross, AC 1996:68).



It was in Scott's time that daily prayer services were introduced at the mission station. This shows that Scot's primary concern was for the Christian mission, and it was a passion that was later shared by the missionary team under his inspirational leadership (Selfridge 1976:46-47). Scot believed in evangelisation in depth. Evangelisation was undertaken in an atmosphere of prayer. That is why one of his mission strategies was to establish a network of mission outposts. Rev. Scot did not just wait for people to come to him to listen to the word of God at the mission station, but together with his team, they followed church members wherever they were to provide for their spiritual needs and through this process/approach, congregations were established. Selfridge (1976:46) rightly observes in the following submission:

On Sundays at dawn, a bugle called those living on the station, and those in the surrounding villages, to come to the service. In the afternoon on Sundays, a Bible class was held, and after that, the whole mission community went out to some of the villages to preach and sing.

That is how Scottish mission work spread to other districts such as:

- (i) Blantyre Mission founded on 23rd October 1876
- (ii) Domasi Mission station in Zomba founded in 1885,
- (iii) Zomba Mission station in Zomba founded in 1885,
- (iv) Chiradzulu (Mitochi) Mission station in Chiradzulu founded in 1887,
- (v) Mulanje Mission station in Mulanje founded in 1890,
- (vi) Ntcheu Mission station (Bemvu) founded in 1893.
- (vii) Bamba Church in Machinga (an out station of Domasi Mission) 1894.

Blantyre Mission as the first mission station thrived evangelistically under Rev. D.C. Scot (Ross, AC 1996:79-81). The Rev. Scott went further in his comprehensive-mission- model approach by installing the first printing press at Blantyre Mission as evangelism vehicle to enable the church to provide literature in Yao and Chinyanja. Ross, AC (1996:74) states that, "Scot himself began work as an industrial missionary when he established the printing press, which he felt to be essential to the development of both evangelism and education."



Scott used this printing press to create the first newspaper in Central Africa. Later in 1888, he began the production of a monthly news magazine called 'Life and Work', which later became known as 'Life and Work in British Central Africa' (LWBCA). The Rev. Dr. D.C. Scot resigned from Blantyre Mission on health grounds, and in January 1898, he left Blantyre for good after serving the mission for seventeen (17) years (1881-1898).

In actual fact, the resignation was due to some misunderstandings with his fellow Scottish missionaries who accused him of favouring Africans, especially his support for African leadership development, which some whites hated so much. They found fault with him. Ross²⁴, AC (1996:166) makes the following observation, "Rev. Dr. D.C. Scot was now to face the extreme humiliation of detailed criticism on how, and even what, he was to preach from his pulpit in Blantyre". However, since the time of Scott, the CCAP Blantyre Mission has not yet decided to use other more modern methods for spreading the Gospel like Sound films, audiotapes and radio or television broadcasting as a means of communicating the Gospel.

To summarise on evangelism, it is noteworthy to remember that the Church of Scotland's first mission station in Malawi was founded in 1876 and was named Blantyre, in memory of Livingstone's birthplace in Scotland. This reveals that to some extent there was interculturalisation not only of the gospel but also Western culture in Africa, Malawi in particular.

The naming of a particular place like Blantyre unveils a colonial phenomenon as can be seen almost everywhere in the majority world (two thirds world). In our case, most of the districts in Malawi were named after the first colonial governors or commissioners, e.g. Fort Johnstone named after the first British Consul General, Sir Harry Hamilton Johnstone, when Malawi (then called Nyasaland) was declared a

²⁴ Ross, AC's (1996:166) observation clearly tells us that Scott was faulted simply because of his views on Africans as he, Scot would express them: 'This is the attitude that we've already seen ...that of not liking Africans, but staying on to 'convert' them- to be anti-African was to be anti-Christian and anti-mission in his understanding of Christianity'.



British Protectorate in 1891. Fort Johnstone was renamed Mangochi after Malawi attained her independence in 1964, a proof that the nationalists viewed the renaming of African places with Western names as a colonial phenomenon.

In South Africa, the issue of renaming places viewed as colonial phenomenon and symbolism of apartheid is a contentious issue. For instance, Jan Smut's International Airport was renamed Johannesburg International Airport. However, some of the nationalists still felt Johannesburg was not sufficiently African, and they renamed it again Oliver Tambo International Airport (OR Tambo International Airport). Pretoria has been renamed Tswane, while Petersburg has been renamed Polokwane. The researcher noted the renaming changes when he flew to Malawi on 15th September 2007, and when he travelled by coach to South Africa through Beit Bridge on 17th December 2007. There are so many places, but due to time and space constraints we will have to stop at these.

In view of the above, the CCAP Blantyre Synod can be commended for keeping the name 'Blantyre' for hisistorical reasons. It is advisable that the church in Malawi should not just copy everything and anything, for there is a possibility that various cultures can enrich one another. However, what is most disturbing is the fact that the West is no longer the Christian West for Christianity in the West is in crisis. It very disturbing to note that virtually every institution that is associated with Christianity in the West is almost in ruins now. Andrew Walls (2001:48) rightly makes the following observation,

We need a cleansing of the theological scholarship, a reorientation of academic theology to Christian mission, a return to the ideal of scholarship to the glory of God, a return to the ideal of academic life as a liberating search for truth. How can this come about? The Western academy is corrupted; in some areas, absolutely corrupted. Perhaps it will be in the non-Western world that the scholarly vocation will begin anew, and a new breed of scholars arise who, working in the community, will break the chains of Mammon and throw off the impediment of careerism.



Can the CCAP Blantyre Synod really rise to the challenge posed to us by Walls by raising a new brand of Christians and Christianity that can speak to our generation in a transforming nature to foster interculturalisation? She needs this new brand of Christians and Christianity. The CCAP Blantyre Synod can participate in the raising of a new breed of scholars by taking heed of what Dr. James Emman Kwegyir Aggrey (Vestraelen-Gilhuis 1992:51) advocated when he made the following argument,

The man who is to be leader, must be given the best possible education, and needs a better education than is given to the people here as he has greater difficulties to contend with. If he is a theologian, he must have the best possible education because Africa has a contribution to Christian thought to make. ... People of Africa, we were created in the image of God, but men have made us to think that we are chickens, and we still think we are, but we are eagles. Stretch forth your wings and fly! Don't be content with the food of chickens.

In addition, by drawing from the rich resources of Scripture, tradition, the wider ecumenical and academic faith-based institutions – the CCAP Blantyre Synod can be an instrument of interculturalisation.

2.3.5.3 Medical Work

Medical work as mission practice started at Blantyre Mission right from the beginning of her establishment under Dr. Macklin who was a physician himself. Some years later, Dr. Norris, also a medical missionary joined Blantyre Mission. Through her medical services, Blantyre Mission trained John Gray Kufa, the first African in Zambezia to be trained as a hospital assistant (Du Plessis 1905:37-38; Ross²⁵, AC. 1996:19-21, 167).

In rendering medical service, the medical personnel of Blantyre Mission also witnessed for Christ and proclaimed the Gospel wherever opportunities arose. This was the healing²⁶ ministry of the church. Hence, the Blantyre Mission medical services catered for not only the membership of the Blantyre Mission but also for

²⁵ Initials are used in this text because we have two authors named Ross, Andrew and Ross, Kenneth, whose works were both published in the same year in 1996. Both authors once served the CCAP Blantyre Synod as Scottish missionaries.

¹⁹ However, one aspect of the healing ministry that was not conceptually addressed adequately in the context of the indigenous peoples in Malawi was the relationship between illness/death and evil forces. Most of the people still do not believe in natural death or illness or even prosperity. They still believe there must be something from the evil forces/witchcraft that caused it.



those from outside. For instance, the Rev. John Chilembwe, father and founder of the Providence Industrial Mission (PIM) when he was unwell with some persistent eye trouble used to go to Domasi Mission Hospital of Blantyre Mission for treatment (Ross, AC 1996:181). Du Plessis²⁷ (1905:38-39) has this to say about Blantyre Mission medical services,

“...Under the guidance of Dr. Norris, the medical missionary, we also visited the *Blantyre Hospital* – several roomy, lofty buildings – where *scores of patients are treated daily*, and *thousands* annually (Italicized for my emphasis).

The Blantyre Mission Hospital was later moved to the Mulanje District when the Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital, Malawi’s biggest hospital, was built in Blantyre. The Blantyre Mission Hospital was then renamed Mulanje Mission Hospital, for it was in the Mulanje District. The Mulanje Mission Hospital caters for not only the Malawian population but even those from neighbouring Mozambique (especially those in Milanje in Zambezia Province). The Blantyre Mission through her indigenous missionary, John Gray Kufa, also opened a mission dispensary in Mozambique at a place called Mihekani in Mozambique’s Zambezia Province.

2.3.5.4 Industrial Work

The Blantyre Mission also used industrial work as one of the vehicles to propagate the Gospel of Jesus. Industrial aspects of mission were the product of the conviction in certain circles that missions should not only be self-propagating and self-governing but also self-supportive. Thus, the missionaries were sent under these principles to work, which was to be conducted, based on the view that the Gospel could best be brought to the people by men and women who could teach the natives industrial skills (Ross, AC 1996:72-74).

It was the Blantyre Mission policy to give instructions in agriculture as part of the curriculum of the schools run by the mission. Bananas and other trees were planted at

²⁷ Du Plessis made this observation during his missionary excursion to Blantyre Mission then as the General Mission Secretary of his Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa that had started mission work (today’s CCAP Nkhoma Synod) in the Central Region of Malawi in 1889 (cf. Du Plessis 1905:3).



the mission station and a workshop was started to train artisans. Du Plessis (1905:38-39) has this to say about Blantyre Mission's industrial work,

Dr. Hetherwick (missionary-in-charge at Blantyre), in the limited time we could give to the Blantyre work, kindly introduced us to his *schools*, where an education is given which for Central Africa may fairly be called advanced. Next he took us through the *workshops*, and showed us his boys making most excellent furniture, which is bought up readily by the European inhabitants of the place. He showed us, too, his printing-press, whence issues publications religious, educational, commercial and political.

Besides agriculture and carpentry work, the Rev. Scott went further to install a printing press at to enable the church to provide literature in Yao and Chinyanja. Ross, AC (1996:74) observes that, "Scott himself began work as an industrial missionary when the press was installed, which he felt to be essential to the development of both evangelism and education". The industrial work as a vehicle for both evangelism and education greatly contributed to the intercultural dialogue between different ethnic groups and races both within and outside Blantyre Mission station (Du Plessis 1905:38-39).

2.3.6 Strengths²⁸ of the Missionary Enterprise

2.3.6.1 The Abolishment of the Slave Trade

Missionaries preceded the white colonial settlers (Mufuka 1977: iii), however, they both entered Malawi from the southern region. They penetrated up the Zambezi and Shire Rivers in the wake of missionary-turned-explorer Dr. David Livingstone, who made the first Western contact with Malawi in 1859 (Ross, AC 1996:17; Agnew & Stubbs 1972:14). The Scottish missions came after Dr. David Livingstone. The end of slave trading was one of their main objectives, but it continued until nearly the close of the nineteenth century.

²⁸ Weaknesses of missionaries will be discussed in chapter 4 (the influence of ethnocentrism on mission).



2.3.6.2 Development of Vernacular Languages

Ross, AC (1996:47-48) tells us of the use and development of mother tongue or vernacular language as a means of communication in evangelism, and about the translation of the New Testament (NT) and the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, into Yao²⁹. Du Plessis (1905:37-38) also alludes to the missionary enterprise's development of vernacular languages in the following lines that he wrote as a record of his missionary excursion to Malawi (then called Nyasaland),

“Dr. Clement Scott's monumental *Mang'anja Dictionary* remains the one book which the student of the Lake languages must have always at his elbow. Dr. Affleck Scott's translation of the *Pilgrim's Progress* has been for years a favourite school reader. Dr. Hetherwick, the present missionary-in-charge at Blantyre, has given us a *Handbook of the Yao Language*, and more recently, *A Manual of the Nyanja Language*, which has at once taken its place as the standard grammar of Chinyanja”.

Through the above stated submissions, one can note that the importance that Christian missionaries attached to mother tongues like the Chiyao and Chinyanja languages was no small contribution to the advancement of the cause of the general human development enterprise. And according to Sanneh (1993:77),

Mother tongue particularity was a direct consequence of mission's careful development and promotion of vernacular languages in Africa, and from that we come upon the springs of cultural particularity and renewal, the very bases on which significant literary and artistic creation in Africa has gone forward and entered the wide stream of world history. Therefore, we owe these linguistic pioneers, missionary as well as African, an incalculable debts for being the architects of the new consciousness, which a maturing humanity ranks among its most prized possessions.

We must however, point out that if some missionaries saw and welcomed the liberating and renovating effect of vernacular literacy, there were also others who saw

²⁹ It was the Rev. Duff MacDonald, the first ordained Scottish missionary to Blantyre Mission who did these translations. He was a fluent speaker of Yao language (Ross, Ac 1996:47-48). By January 1891, Blantyre Mission had produced the first edition of the Gospels in Yao and hymnal in Nyanja, circulated around Blantyre, Domasi and Chiradzulu (Ross, AC 1996:148). Blantyre Mission's mission outreach at Mihekani in Zambezia Province in Mozambique through her local African missionary, Mr Louis Bandawe, also translated the New Testament into Lomwe (Eshirima dialect) (Ross, KR 1996:41-43).



and feared it (Sanneh 1993:114-115). For instance, in much of French and Portuguese speaking Africa, vernacular Scriptural translation was discouraged in large part because the authorities suspected it of fomenting the nationalism they abhorred (Sanneh 1993:77). However, on a positive note, the educational and intellectual legacy of the Scottish missionary labour can be found in the prominence they gave to the development of the vernacular languages.

2.3.6.3 Training of African Christian Leadership

African leaders of integrity also rose from the ranks of the CCAP Blantyre Synod in the course of history. Ross, AC (1996:63) observes that the Rev. Scott attached paramount importance to the training and appointment of African church leaders based on two convictions:

- First, that Africans were human beings, essentially no different from Europeans.
- Secondly, that they were ready for responsibility, both in the Church and in the society.

Right from the time of his arrival in 1881, replacing the Reverend Duff MacDonald (1878-1881), Rev. Scott worked closely with Africans who had already been attracted to the Mission in Duff MacDonald's time and had stayed on. Notable among the group were Joseph Bismarck, Rondau Kaferanjila and Donald Malota (Andrew Ross, AC 1996:68). Scott's attitude towards Africans can be noted in the following observation,

People will not believe how much the African is capable of until they have tried. Our aim is always to teach responsibility, and at the proper time to lay it on those who have to bear it. In many ways the time has now come. It is a fatal mistake to keep the African in leading strings. We cannot too soon teach him to realise he has a part to play in the education and life of Christ's Church and Kingdom. The more he realises this, the greater his progress will be (Ross, AC 1996:63).

Although some Western mission historians, especially among those who at one time worked in Malawi, tend to give much credit only to the Western missionaries as if the local missionaries contributed nothing, Scott's mindset and attitude towards African



people was different. Rev. Scott regarded people who left their beautiful villages to work at the Blantyre Mission as missionaries in their own right for it was these indigenous missionaries that spearheaded many of the Mission's early advances (cf. Ross, AC. 1996: 46).

Through his ability and sincerity in intercultural dialogue, Rev. Scott created an enabling environment that encouraged the Africans to bring out their potential in them. His firm trust in Africans instilled in them a sense of *dignity* and *self-worth* as he worked very hard in *empowering* the Africans and ensured there was *equity* through the creation of an enabling environment that allowed the Africans to *participate* in the development of their own lives, families, church as well as their country. Scott used comprehensive-mission-model practice.

In 1891 at the third Mission council, Dr. Willie Scott proposed the selection of African men to be trained as ministers and he offered himself as their tutor. It was in 1892 that the Reverend D.C. Scott responded to the proposal made by his brother Dr. Scott at the Mission council by selecting seven African men to be the first deacons.

These men included: Harry Kambwiri Matecheta, Mungo Murry Chisuse, John Gray Kufa, John Macrae Chipuliko, Thomas Mpeni³⁰, James Gray Kamlinje, and James Auldearn Mwembe (Ross, KR 1996:87; Ross, AC 1996:152). Ross, AC (1996:151) describes these men³¹ as, “men of proven worth and experience from among the mission teachers and evangelists”.

D.C. Scott then established a formal training of these Malawian Christian leaders devoted to service. Their class met every morning at 7 o'clock. They took a lively interest in Biblical Criticism, Theology, Church History, Liturgics and Geography. These seven men were ordained in November 1894. The Reverend D.C. Scott ‘ordained’ them as deacons and took it as the first step towards a full ordination to the

³⁰ Son of the Makololo chief, Masea (Ross, Ac 1996:152).

³¹ These men had to undergo two years’ training (1892-1894) before they were to be ordained as deacons (Ross, AC 1996:151-2).



ministry of Word and Sacrament. After the ordination of these first seven deacons, another seven began training.

These ordained deacons were at the heart of the work of the Mission and were entrusted with major responsibilities. For instance, when a new mission station was opened in Ntcheu in 1893, it was Harry Matecheta who was chosen to lead the work. In September of that year, two female foreign missionaries, Miss Bell and Miss Alice Werner were sent to join and work with Harry Matecheta (Ross, AC 1996:150). This was indeed a confirmation of Rev. D.C. Scott's confidence and trust in Black leadership and integrity that he could send two white girls to work under a Black man at that time when racial feelings in Scotland were so strong.

The confidence in African leadership, which D.C. Scott displayed, has characterised the Blantyre Mission from those early days. This has inevitably formed a stark contrast to the racist attitudes³² of some of the pioneer missionary staff and later the British Administration colonial settlers who arrived in increasing numbers after the establishment of the British Protectorate in 1891. More interestingly, even the Foreign Mission Committee in Scotland had a racist attitude amongst her members as can be observed following submission,

The foreign Mission committee was unhappy about their women being in the care of an African.... The Women's Committee for Foreign Mission, whose servants the women were, had already insisted that they should not serve anywhere except where they would be under the care of an ordained or medical missionary. The good women of the committee objected to ... African evangelists, as companions for their staff (Ross, AC 1996:150-151).

Insisting that the white girls should only work under an ordained missionary obviously meant a White missionary for there was no ordained African by 1893 until March 1911 when the Rev. Harry Matecheta was ordained. But D.C. Scott was not deterred by these racist attitudes of his fellow white people, he went on to give the

³² Some whites were culturally sensitive and treated Africans with respect (Joseph Booth in Ross, AC 1996:148; cf. Ross, KR 1996:186-1870).



African circle a strong sense of self-worth and dignity just at the time when some white people began to tell them that they were worthless.

The negative attitude towards Africans was present even amongst the respected missionaries (cf. Mufuka 1977: iii-iv). Africans could hardly mistake the contrast between the values, which guided their church life, and those, which prevailed among some of the racist white missionaries and the colonial settlers. Ross, AC (1996:122,141) underlines the contrast between the Rev. D.C. Scott and his successor, the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, on the issues of respect for the dignity of all human beings, questions of land, forced labour and the role of a white man in Malawi in the following quotations, the first from Scot, and then the second one from Hetherwick³³,

Our contention is that if the Europeans take the land they practically enslave the native population. There is no law to help the native in his distress; but there is power to put into the European's hands to force the native to work ... we uphold that no civilised power can come into a country more especially under Christian promises, and turn the natives into slaves in their own holdings.... (Scott: LWBCA, December 1894). Africa for Africans has been our policy from the first, and we believe that God has given us this country into our hands that we may train its people how to develop its marvellous resources for themselves (Scott: LWBCA, January 1895 – Italicized for my emphasis).

While Hetherwick says,

Central Africa ... is the home of the black man and the black man alone. He alone can develop its resources under the guidance of the European ... this is his sphere. Ours is to govern and to teach him till he sees that his lot is in his own home and on his own soil and not in the mines of Kimberly or the Transvaal [in South Africa]" (Hetherwick: LWBCA, August 1902 – Italicized for my emphasis).

Ever since D.C. Scott initiated and established the formal training of Christian Church leaders, the CCAP Blantyre Synod has continued with the programme, training

³³ The Rev. Alexander Hetherwick was Missionary-in-charge of Blantyre Mission and Minister-in-charge of the St. Michael and All Angels Cathedral of the CCAP Blantyre Synod. He was also a nominated member of the Legislative Council which had European members only. In the Legislative Council, Hetherwick represented the interests of the Africans. Hetherwick campaigned for the white planters to get the Africans labour force to work on their tea and coffee plantations (Pachai 1973:84).



ministers, evangelists and youth leaders/counsellors. However, there is no special and formal training by the Church for police, army, prison and hospital chaplains, although she has her representation in these institutions.

2.4 THE COLONIAL ERA

2.4.1 The Introduction of Colonial Rule in Nyasaland

Missionaries preceded the white colonial settlers, as observed by Debenham (1955:130), “In Nyasaland...the sequence was rather that the missionaries led the way; they enlisted the association of trade to help in undermining slavery and the flag only followed when it was shamed into doing so”, however, they both entered Malawi from the southern region. They penetrated up the Zambezi and Shire Rivers in the wake of missionary-turned-explorer Dr. David Livingstone, who made the first Western contact with Malawi in 1859 (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:14; Randal 1971:59-63; Ross, AC 1996:17). A central plank of Livingstone’s policy was that legitimate trade must be provided to replace the local profit deriving from slaves.

An African Lakes Company (ALC), financed in Scotland, soon followed the Scottish missionaries. However, after the abolishment of slave trade, the Portuguese continued to be a threat to the Scottish missionaries and traders as well as to the spread of Christianity (Andrew Ross 1996:14, 89, 91,102-103; cf. Muluzi et al. 1999:3-4). Besides the Portuguese threats, both the Scottish missionaries and the African Lakes Company's (ALC) employees found themselves in frequent conflict with the indigenous people (Ross, AC 1996:20, 77-78).

This prompted the Scottish missionaries to call the British Administration for civil jurisdiction and protection from the Portuguese (Andrew Ross 1996:85,105), to which the British responded. The Scottish missionaries worked as partners with the British consuls in Nyasaland to such an extent that even the Union Jack flag was made right in the manse at Blantyre mission station and was flown right at the Synod’s offices in 1889 (Ross, AC 1996:108,114; Muluzi *et al.* 1999:6-7). Pachai (1973:84) makes the



following observation concerning the Scottish missionaries and the colonial government in Malawi:

The Legislative Council³⁴ was made up of the Governor, three *ex-officio* members of the Executive Council together with three nominated members, who until 1949 were all European members and were usually drawn from among the planters, traders and missionaries. African interests were deemed to be represented by the missionary members. The first such member was the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick of the Blantyre Mission (cf. Ross, AC 1996:129).

However, it was not long before some Scottish missionaries realised that things did not work out as they had hoped (Shepperson & Price 1958:39; Ross, AC 1996:92; cf. Pachai 1973:84-85). Thus, when the British Administration consuls came into the country, instead of giving the protection that was asked for, they began pouncing on the Yao³⁵ and Ngoni chiefs with the same hypocritical devices of which they had accused the Germans (Ross, AC 1996:105-119, 122; cf. White 1987:14, 28).

This was unmistakable in the Mission's appraisal of the conduct of the British administration. As things increasingly unfolded, Blantyre missionaries became intensely suspicious of Sir Harry Johnston, the pioneering British Consul and an associate of Cecil Rhodes. They feared that Johnston was planning to allow the Protectorate to fall under the control of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) owned by Cecil John Rhodes (Ross, AC 1996:85, 106-107, 113-114, 123).

On issues such as land, labour, taxation and military actions against local chiefs, the Scottish missionaries of Blantyre Mission strongly and repeatedly felt let down and betrayed by the British administration in Malawi. Over the next half century, Nyasaland barely prospered. With work in short supply for the African population,

³⁴ The first parliament (then known as Legislative Council – LEGICO) was opened in 1907 by the Nyasaland Order in Council of that year (Pachai 1973:84). And in 1908, the country's Governor, Sir Alfred Sharpe, appointed the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, Senior Minister of Blantyre Mission, as Member of Parliament (Pachai 1973:84; Ross, AC. 1996:129).

³⁵ Bishop Mackenzie (of the UMCA) himself led the war-party to attack the Yao chiefs and their villagers at Sazi in Zomba in favour of the Mang'anja chiefs and Mang'anja people (White 1987:28-29). The UMCA missionaries engendered horrifying animosity among communities and families formerly at peace with one another. It is such cases that make many of the African nationalists to view or perceive the Christian missionaries as precursors and later faithful allies of the imperial powers (Mufuka 1977: iii).



many moved to neighbouring countries in search of employment (Ross, AC 1996:85, 130-135, 139; Vail & White, in Vail 1991:158). People needed money to pay the imposed hut-tax, missionaries also introduced a substantial amount of school fees, and people needed money for their discretionary wants such as clothing, salt, tools etc.

The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was as a result of a view developed in government circles that Nyasaland's economy could only thrive in some form of closer union with its two colonial neighbours (Vail & White 1991:157-158). By the 1950s, the political future of these neighbouring African colonies was under intense discussion. The Europeans of Rhodesia and Northern Rhodesia assumed that eventually they would merge to form a single independent nation. From the British government's point of view, geography and economics alike suggested that Nyasaland was also to be involved.

However, the Africans, particularly in Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland with their small European populations, resisted any such policy. To Africans in Nyasaland the danger of the union was obvious. They would be overshadowed by the strong European culture of Rhodesia, postponing perhaps indefinitely the ideal of independence under black majority rule.

2.4.2 Development of Nationalism and the Identity of the Church

The urge of the CCAP Blantyre Synod towards a greater self-realisation was partly stimulated by the rising tide of African nationalism. The Nyasaland African National Congress (NAC) that was formed in 1944 had grown to maturity and this brought a great self-realisation to the Church.

The years immediately before federation, saw the first stirrings of African nationalism in Nyasaland. A group of politicians, among them a doctor, Hastings Kamuzu Banda³⁶, spoke out against the proposed linking of the three colonies. Thus,

³⁶ Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda was born in 1902. A son of peasants, he received a medical degree in the United States and after World War II established a practice in London, where his office became a meeting place for exiled African leaders. He returned to Africa (1953), then to his homeland, Nyasaland (1958), to campaign against the federation of Nyasaland with Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe and Zambia). In 1961 Banda's Malawi Congress party won a sweeping election victory. Nyasaland, which he led as prime minister, became independent as Malawi in



mistreatment of Africans by Europeans and the proposed imposition of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland triggered the birth of nationalism in Malawi. There was ethnic mobilisation by African leaders among all the various ethnic groups in all the three regions of the country to unite and fight racism/colonialism as well as the proposed imposition of the federation. This resulted into the formation of the Nyasaland African Congress (NAC) in 1944 (Bandawe in Ross, AC 1996:45-47).

2.4.3 The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland

Confronted with conflicting demands, and aware of its responsibilities for Nyasaland as well as Northern and Southern Rhodesians, the British colonial government had imposed on the African people an awkward compromise in the form of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland on 1st August 1953 (Mgawi 2005:33; Pachai 1973:239). This was to be a self-governing colony, with its own assembly and Prime Minister (first Lord Malvern, and from 1956 Sir Roy Welensky).

The intention was to derive the greatest economic benefit from the larger unit while minimizing political tension between the three parts of the federation, each of which retained its existing local government. The federated colonies were at differing stages in their political development. All they had in common was an almost complete absence of any African voice in the political process.

Rhodesia had been a self-governing colony for three decades, but with no African suffrage (a tiny 'B roll' of African voters was added to the electorate in 1957). Northern Rhodesia had a legislative council with, since 1948, two seats reserved for African members. At the time of federation, there were no Africans on Nyasaland's legislative council. Two years later, in 1955, places were found for five members. However, the Federation was bitterly resented practically by the whole African

1964. Under a new constitution, Banda became president in 1966. Increasingly autocratic, he made himself president for life in 1971, the year he became the first African leader to visit South Africa. Opponents were routinely jailed and some killed, while Banda lived in luxury. Following antigovernment rioting and suspension of Western aid in 1992, Banda was forced to abandon one-party rule and the life presidency in 1993. In democratic elections held in 1994. In 1995 Dr. Banda was acquitted of charges in the 1983 assassination of four political opponents. He died in November 1997. He was a Chewa from Kasungu District (cf. Mgawi 2005:8, 57).



population of Nyasaland. Hostility heightened in 1958 when the Federal Legislature introduced measures to reduce the very limited political representation, which it accorded to the African population (Pachai 1973:240-241; cf. Palmer in Pachai 1972:293-315).

2.4.4 Blantyre Mission: A Critique to the British Administration

Long before these events, the Blantyre missionaries had started to criticise the actions of the British Administration, which they judged to be harmful to the interests of the African population. Notable among such missionaries were David Clement Scott and Alexander Hetherwick.

Alfred Sharpe, the Acting Commissioner in 1894 who wrote to the British Foreign Office concerning the criticism of Blantyre missionaries, concluded that there would be no permanent and satisfactory state of things with regard to this Mission until two missionaries, the Rev D.C. Scott and the Rev Alexander Hetherwick, were removed from the country. He claimed that the missionaries were taking a course that made them appear in the eyes of the natives of the Protectorate as an Opposition Party to Her Majesty's Administration³⁷ (British colonial government).

According to him, the missionaries were providing the African people with an incipient critique of colonialism, one that depended not on the spear or the gun but on the power of reasoned argument. Thus, Alfred Sharp wrote,

Mr Commissioner Johnstone in his dispatches advised that there would be no permanent and satisfactory state of things with regard to this mission until two missionaries, the Rev. D.C. Scott and the Rev. Alexander Hetherwick were removed from the country ... I am sorry to say that this mission has entirely returned to its old practices ... the missionaries are taking a course that makes them appear in the eyes of the natives of this protectorate as an Opposition Party to H.M. Administration (Ross, AC 1996:114)

³⁷ Her Majesty's Administration for Nyasaland was a British Protectorate and it was Her Majesty the Queen who, despite the African opposition, asserted the Federal Constitutional bill on 1st August 1953 (Muluzi *et al.* 1999:60).



The other letter written by Harry Johnston to Cecil John Rhodes about the Blantyre missionaries is ethnically antagonising Johnston (quoted in Ross, AC 1996:115-116) wrote to Rhodes,

I do not think you have realised the bitter hatred borne you by these Scotch missionaries of Blantyre. They hate you because you are an Englishman, because you threaten to overshadow their own petty meddling and muddling with grander schemes that will outshine mission work in popular favour. ... A reconciliation with Scott and Co. is hopeless. From December to March, I tried every means of making friends with him and Hetherwick, but it was all of no avail and they are now worse than ever... I must propose to meet the hostility of Blantyre missionaries ... I intend to fight them in two ways: by starting my own newspaper *The British Central Africa Gazette* (not ostensibly a Government organ but used as the drain for all Government communications) and by affecting a religious cleavage at Blantyre.

Such hostility indeed existed between some missionaries who were pro-African and those colonial settlers whom they had invited to protect them from the threat of Portuguese annexation of Malawi. The local chiefs also felt betrayed by the Scotch missionaries for they had facilitated both the production and distribution of the Union Jack to the local chiefs promising them protection and prosperity.

This feeling of betrayal led to the strong critique of the white settler and was later exploited to the devastating effect by nationalist leaders in the struggle for independence. The nationalist leaders saw the intertwinement of mission and colonialism at its best (cf. Bosch 1991:303-3130. Most of these nationalist leaders were a product of the Blantyre mission (Ross, AC 1996:11-14). For the Blantyre Mission, this had marked out the self-realization and identity of the church as being at odds, at least in some important respects, with the conquest to which the African people of Malawi found themselves being subjected to.

When the British Administration imposed the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, it was bitterly resented practically by the whole African population of Nyasaland (Mgawi 2005:33; Muluze 1999:62-66). Racial hostility heightened in 1958 when the Federal Legislature introduced measures to reduce the very limited political representation, which it had accorded to the African population. The Blantyre Synod



could speak against the colonial administration as a Synod whose affairs to a large extent by then were in mainly African hands (Ross, AC 1996:200-201).

The difference between, on the one hand, belonging to a church which had grown out of the soil of Africa and which was led by her own African local missionaries of great stature and, on the other hand, being forced to belong to a political unit which aimed to entrench white supremacy, was so marked that it was unsurprising that the members of the Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods were practically unanimous in their determination to end the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. All this came into remarkably sharp focus in the crisis provoked by the state of emergency in 1959 when hundreds of nationalist leaders were summarily detained and the CCAP Blantyre Synod stood by them (Ross, AC 1996:11).

2.4.5 Steps towards Independence

When it nevertheless happened, that the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was imposed in 1953, Dr. Banda, a Church elder of the Church of Scotland by then, left Britain and went abroad to practise medicine in Ghana. However, his colleagues pressurised him to return to Malawi. The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was dissolved on 31st December 1963 (Muluzi 1999:66). Nyasaland became independent on 6th July 1964, and took the name Malawi. Dr. Banda retained his post as Prime Minister until on 6th July 1966 when the country became a Republic within the Commonwealth and Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda became Malawi's first State President (Mgawi 2005:44; Pachai 1973:244).

The CCAP Blantyre Synod played a major role indeed in the making of the modern Malawi as she could speak strongly against the British colonial administration as a Synod whose affairs to a large extent by then were mainly in African hands. It must be noted that way back in 1962, before Malawi became independent, the CCAP Blantyre Synod had its first Malawian General Secretary, the Very Rev. J.D. Sangaya (Ross, AC 1996:200-201; Ncozana 1996:15).



2.5 THE INDEPENDENCE ERA/ POST-COLONIAL ERA

2.5.1 The Creation of One Party Autocratic Rule

From the start of what turned out to be a 30-year rule under the Malawi congress Party (MCP) in Malawi, Dr. Banda followed policies, which were at odds with the policies of other African leaders in the newly independent nations. He maintained cordial relations the repressive white-supremacist regimes of apartheid South Africa, and the Portuguese administration in neighbouring Mozambique (Muluzi *et al.* 1999:82-87).

Within months of independence, several members of his cabinet resigned - partly on this issue and partly in protest to the autocratic style of government, which Dr. Banda adopted right from the start. Little would change over the years in either respect (Muluzi 1999:81-89).

In 1965, two of Dr. Banda's ex-ministers led a rebellion against him (Muluzi 1999:87-88). The rebellion was unsuccessful, and in the following year, Dr. Banda transformed Malawi into a republic with himself as State President. In 1971, the Malawi parliament passed a law that made Dr. Banda the Life President of the Republic of Malawi. With such powers; Dr. Banda administered the country as a one-party state, with ferocious persecution of anyone showing signs of disagreement with his policies.

Members of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP) stood for parliament in periodic elections, but under a 1981 amendment to the constitution the president was empowered to nominate as many members of parliament as he wished (Muluzi 1999:90). An exceptionally low turnout for elections in 1992 coincided with pressure for the introduction of multiparty democracy from the international aid (donor) agencies. The eventual result, after strong opposition from Dr. Banda and his MCP, was to call for a national referendum in 1993 and new multi-party democratic elections in 1994.



2.5.2 The Social Task of the Church during the One Party Era

For many years, the CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi appeared to be ideologically captive to Dr. Banda and his single party regime. Her ministers were often called upon to officiate at state functions. More interestingly, the CCAP Synod of Blantyre's first indigenous General Secretary; the Very Reverend Jonathan Sangaya, acted as an unofficial court chaplain to President Banda and his inner circle. So far did the church appear to have compromised with the regime that many began to doubt whether it was anything more than the creature of Dr. Banda. The Church acted in the manner that saw the Dr Banda as "Messiah", a repetition of what Blantyre Mission did in support of the British Administration in its initial stages in the 1880s.

2.5.3 The Social Task of the Church during the Post-Independence Era

2.5.3.1 The Roman Catholic Pastoral Letter

Although for a long time the CCAP Blantyre Synod in Malawi appeared to be ideologically captive to Dr. Banda and his single party regime, things took a different turn on the 8th of March 1992. The One-Party government under Dr. Banda was exposed to unprecedented opposition from the influential Roman Catholic Church in Malawi, with the publication by its bishops of an open letter (Pastoral Letter) titled, "Living our Faith" criticizing the state's alleged abuses of human rights. The Pastoral letter had an immediate explosive effect on the life of the nation. It rekindled the painful memories of oppression, dispossession and exploitation. The then ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) Government's response was a declaration that possession of the Lenten letter was an act of sedition, punishable by severe penalties. Despite the fact that Dr. Banda was a Presbyterian, his party and government went further attempting to kill the Catholic Bishops.

The unrestrained calls to kill the Catholic bishops were made at the MCP annual convention (Ross, AC 1996:22). Schoffeleers (1999:132-133) gives us extracts of



some of the statements made by delegates, recorded by the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC):

Mr. John Tembo: “We have to find out who is behind the Bishops, who is their candidate...because this is a very delicate issue. ... The Bishops did wrong to write the pastoral letter. ...The Bishops have houses; they have fields; they have wealth, and on top of that they go around fooling with different women, and if they have problems members of the Party protect them. I won’t say more because these Catholics Bishops might put a curse on me. But we as a party are very annoyed with the whole thing.”

Ms Margaret Chiponda (Secretary Lilongwe MCP Women’s League): “I, as a Catholic, am very angry with these bishops. We have freedom of worship in this country because of the President, so how dare these Bishops write ill about him? The bishops’ intention is to confuse the people. I, as an individual, am proposing that the Catholic Church should be abolished in this country. These bishops should not be allowed to preach anymore. Actually, to make things easier we just have to kill these Bishops.”

The CCAP Blantyre Synod were the first at a local level to take an initiative to rekindle the fire of the pastoral letter by contacting the leadership of other churches in the country and outside the country to discuss the way forward. It was not easy because by then, somehow, Dr. Banda had already managed to divide the CCAP’s wider family in Malawi. For instance, the Zomba Protestant students were generally supportive of the bishops’ pastoral letter, but those from the CCAP Nkhoma Synod were cautious and evangelicals were reticent (Schoffeleers 1999:146). Schoffeleers (1999:190) further observes that,

Within the CCAP there was a difference of opinion between Nkhoma and its two sister synods. Apparently, in Nkhoma Synod, there was some strong opposition against the bishops’ letter. It was even alleged that officers of the synod had shown the police a letter inviting them to the General Synod in order to determine the CCAP’s position on the pastoral letter. This difference of opinion between the synods made a formal official position of the CCAP on the bishops’ letter impossible.

The challenges stated above, brought a sense of unity and reconciliation among faith communities as they realised their self-understanding and the need to work together in unity to fight the autocratic rule in Malawi.



2.5.3.2 The Formation of the Public Affairs Committee (PAC)

At a local level, the CCAP Blantyre Synod can look back with a sense of pride on a history of courageous resistance against the British colonial administration and the one-time Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Though things were tough, the CCAP Blantyre Synod took an initiative and leading role to convene a meeting with representatives of the CCAP Blantyre Synod united with the leadership of the CCAP Livingstonia Synod and the Anglican Church. They met for the first time on 27th March 1992, to discuss what to do with the political crisis that engulfed the nation at the time (Schoffeleers 1999:83).

It is strange but interesting to note that among the wider family of the CCAP in Malawi, only Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods were present. The CCAP Synod of Nkhoma preferred not to come. The CCAP Nkhoma Synod preferred to align itself with the ethnic ties than the ecclesiastical one, since Dr. Banda was Chewa, one of their own from Central Region. To the other two sister Synods, the nature of Nkhoma Synod's self-understanding or her understanding of the interpretation of what the Church is, was questionable. On the 4th of June 1992, the CCAP Blantyre Synod under the leadership of the former General Secretary, the Very Reverend Dr. Silas S. Ncozana, engaged a new gear that witnessed the re-engagement of her prophetic role. It was on this day that the CCAP/WARC delegation presented an open letter dated 2nd June 1992 to the Life President Ngwazi Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda titled "The Nation of Malawi in Crisis: The Church's Concern (Andrew Ross 1996:27). In the letter, the delegation called on Dr. Banda to appoint a broadly based Commission, which would have some of the following mandates:

- I) Make specific proposals for structural reform towards a political system with sufficient checks and balances on the use of power, and guarantees of accountability at all levels of government;
- II) Review the judicial system, in line with the rule of law;
- III) Look into the distribution of income and wealth required by the demands of social justice. (Schoffeleers 1999:2007; WARC 1992:2)



The CCAP Blantyre Synod's letter of 4th June 1992 to Dr. Banda triggered the necessity of forming Para-church organisations such as the National Affairs Committee that later became the Public Affairs Committee (PAC). Schoffeleers (1999:246) records that it was on the 26th of August 1992, at the opening of the annual convention of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), that Dr. Banda announced the formation of the Presidential Committee on Dialogue (PCD) chaired by the late Mr. Bester Bisani. Other members of the PCD were Mr. John Tembo, late Mr. Wadson Deleza, and Mr. Hetherwick Ntaba.

At that convention, Dr. Banda told his audience that the problem was resolvable if people were willing to sit down and engage in constructive discussions using existing forums. PCD represented both the government and the Party, and the National Affairs Committee (NAC) which later came to be known as the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) representing the faith community and the civil society. This was the *first time* that Muslims had *worked together* with Christians in addressing issues of social justice in Malawi.

The negotiation process and the willingness of all the parties involved to succeed in creating a new democratic society and a constitution fit for this society established a new spirit of hope and willingness to proceed. Eventually, PAC met the PCD on 19th October 1992 where they called for a national referendum for the introduction of a multiparty system of Government. To the people's surprise, on the 18th of October 1992 the Life President Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda announced the government's intention to hold such a referendum.

2.5.3.3 The Referendum and the Democratic General Elections

With the gradual re-opening of a critical distance between church and state, the question of self-understanding clearly continued to come to the surface within the CCAP Synod of Blantyre. When the Synod Administrators' Committee (GAC) issued a "Statement on the Role of the Church in the Transformation of Malawi in the



Context of Justice and Peace" in January 1993, they began by asking the question "What is the Church?" Amongst the answers they offered were:

The Church³⁸ is people and must be concerned with the well-being of people. The Church is Christ together with his people – one family under God, whose purpose is to unite all people in Jesus Christ. The Church is both a local Church and a universal Church and is not limited by country, continents, race or gender. The Church is a unique wonder of the presence of God in a broken world. The nature of the Church is not determined by people but is determined by God himself (Ross, AC 1996:217-222).

This apparently straightforward explanations of the nature of the Church, in the particular context of the political crisis engulfing Malawi at that time, had the kind of profound application to national affairs which was classically exemplified by the Barmen Declaration in Germany in the 1930s (Villa- Vicencio 1986:89-98). Once again, in a moment of crisis the identity of the CCAP Blantyre Synod became clear.

On 14 June 1993 Malawi held a referendum to choose whether they wanted to continue with the One Party System of Government or to introduce a Multiparty Democratic System of Government. In spite of reported violence and intimidation by the MCP, the opposing pressure groups, which campaigned for the introduction of multiparty democracy that was symbolised by a lighted lamp, achieved a decisive victory with 63% of voters demanding an end to single-party rule.

Dr. Banda's domination of the country finally ended with the first multi-party democratic general elections held on 20 May 1994, under a provisional constitution, which came into full effect in 1995. Dr. Banda surprised the nation and the international community when he conceded defeat before the final count of the votes and was the first to congratulate his successor, Dr. Bakili Muluzi and call for reconciliation. Dr. Bakili Muluzi was sworn in as president on 21 May 1994.

³⁸ August (2006:xxiv) defines the church's nature as the people called and sent by God in the world for his mission with the world according to the principles and values of the Reign of God.



Consequently, just after the inaugural ceremony, Muluzi declared his intention to uphold democratic reforms and work for political reconciliation as well as alleviate poverty. Muluzi formed a coalition cabinet with members from his UDF and the rival Alliance for Democracy (AFORD), unfortunately, leaving the main opposition Malawi Congress party out³⁹. This action caused ethnic and political tension in the country. The MCP which was identified with the Centre felt alienated. The reason one would understand that soon after the formation of the coalition cabinet, Dr. Muluzi was refused an audience with the former president, Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda. The MCP blocked the meeting which which might have been the beginning of a reconciliation process in our country.

Thus, the post-94 regimes in Malawi have missed the opportunity to learn from South Africa's Nelson Mandela who upon establishing a new democratic South Africa in 1994, regarded national reconciliation as a priority. It is an indisputable fact that Mr. Mandela was the driving force behind the reconciliation development in South Africa and he succeeded in inspiring both Black and White to become involved in creating visible signs of a new emerging rainbow nation with a common loyalty. Regarding this, Vorster (2005:12) observes that Mr. Mandela,

engaged himself in many small but meaningful reconciliatory acts such as having tea with all the wives of previous South African heads of state in the Apartheid era. He visited Ms Verwoerd, the widow of Mr. Verwoerd who was regarded as the architect of the homeland policy in the previous dispensation. ... He invited Afrikaner cultural bodies for discussions about the maintenance of the cultural values and languages of minority groups. These actions may seem insignificant but they had a tremendous impact on the building of trust. Due to the initial emphasis on reconciliation, most public institutions and sports bodies experienced a gradual change of character from separationist communities to integrated communities and the daily interaction between people of different races had been transformed from a tendency of alienation to a purposeful search for contact and dialogue. The tendency was strong especially among the youth.

³⁹ The Chewa people, a majority ethnic group in Malawi situated in the central region of the country, felt left out and discriminated against for most of them identify themselves with the MCP, which has its stronghold in the Central Region, while the UDF's stronghold is believed to be in the Southern Region and AFORD in the Northern Region. Therefore, the President was seen to be ethnically biased.



Because of Mr. Mandela's visionary pragmatic leadership in laying a solid foundation for transforming interculturalisation for community building after the oppressive apartheid regime, former president De Klerk had this to say about Mandela's character,

As an individual and symbol of those who have suffered under the hands of an oppressing government, he showed that retaliation is not the key to the process. Reconciliation is what will allow life to continue. Because of his exemplary life, everyone will know that reconciliation does work. He exhibits some rare attributes such as doggedness for a just cause, self-denial, vision and forgiveness based on justice. His task of reconciliation remains incomplete, but by leading by example, he has laid a foundation for the rest to build upon (Vorster 2005:13).

Unfortunately, such a process lost impetus in Malawi during the past sixteen years. This can be ascribed to the leadership's ethnic conceit and despotism under the hypocritical device of fighting corruption at the expense of social transformation. Not all the post-94 regimes have taken reconciliation as a priority for the new democratic Malawi. This does not mean that Dr. Banda laid a good foundation for reconciliation in the country. For instance, on ethnic prejudice in the post-colonial era, Chirwa (1998:59) points out that,

The Banda regime survived on regional and ethnic divisions. Chewa aspirations and interests or the aspirations of the Central Region were consolidated or pressed for, at the expense of those of other ethnic groups or regions, notably those of the Tumbuka of the North and to a lesser extent those of the Yao or the South. Indeed, Dr. Banda's own home region, the Central part of the country, was singled out for favoured status and treatment, allegedly because the colonialists and Christian missionaries had neglected it the most educationally and socially. Under Dr. Banda, it became the focus of national development and the recipient of massive financial and technical aid, at the expense of the other [two] regions.

Dr. Banda's regime fought very hard to erase all those parties that competed with him at the general election. Everyone who differed with him in cabinet or anywhere in the country was detained or mysteriously killed. He introduced a language policy in 1968 that saw the banning of Tumbuka as one of the national languages. He promoted the Chewa interests at the expense of other ethnic groups. Malawians lived in fear and



distrust of each other until 1994 (Schoffeleers 1999:31-58, 91). The Rev. Misanjo Kansilanga, the former General Secretary of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, had this to say about his own experience with Dr. Banda's oppressive regime,

MCP top brass went to our home areas and informed our relatives that we were not good people. We had become rebels. They were enticing people in our home areas to bash our cars, to burn our property and all sorts of things. I lost a whole granary in my home area and my two houses were burnt down during the referendum campaign period. ... My car was stoned and I was followed on several occasions – a car following me wherever I went. So we knew that we were in danger (Ross, AC 1996:30).

Interculturalisation, which is such an important ingredient for community building, lost impetus and motivation during the missionary/colonial era, the independence and Post-Independence eras and continues to do so unfortunately, in the multi-party democratic era.

2.6 SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher traced the origin and development of the CCAP Blantyre Synod against the background of the general history of Malawi, and mission history. He also introduced problems of slavery, ethnicity, language, national and identity of the church in order to understand how that history shaped the CCAP Blantyre Synod's identity. It emerged from our investigation in this chapter, that the CCAP Blantyre Synod has gone through many turbulent times, and at one point in time the mission nearly collapsed from 1876 to 1881. However, it has always been that in a particular moment or context of socio-political crisis, that the identity of the CCAP Blantyre synod has become clear. Thus, the CCAP Blantyre Synod was founded in a context that influenced, and continued to influence, her identity. Therefore, the core argument and conclusion drawn from this chapter may be expressed as follows:

- ❖ The CCAP Blantyre Synod was born in a context that influenced, and has continued to influence, her identity.
- ❖ The local contextual factors as well as the the socio-political and religious events in Scotland, which happened to be the main source of Presbyterianism in Malawi, have been equally important and critical in shaping the identity of the Blantyre Synod.



- ❖ Some of the challenges impinging on the mission field of the Blantyre Mission was the fraught racial interaction between the Scots and the English people, most of whom served in the British colonial administration in Malawi. This may rightly be described as the precursor to ethnocentrism in the CCAP Blantyre Synod, which has increased the already endemic problem in the Malawian society.

It is equally important to note that the Western missionaries founded the congregations in rural areas where they were dependent upon local people for hospitality. Their earliest preaching stations were in the vicinity of the chief's villages and they had to engage in intercultural dialogue to get the chief's permission (Joda-Mbewe 2002:7; Ross, AC 1996:44). However, interculturalisation was fractured when freed slaves were forced to stay and work at the mission station where they often got treatment not different from that of their former slave masters.

African communities were always confronted with such questions as to why the privileged whites could not live up to their professed Christian creed and democratic convictions and do justice to men and women sharing their culture and beliefs. They could not understand why the white European-missionary who sought to convert and civilize them, could treat them worse than the slave masters, why the white European trader often debauched them, why the white European government official often tried to fit them into their "proper place in an ordered society, and why the farmer-colonist often wanted their land and their labour. In view of the above, for the bright future of the Church and the Church of the future, the CCAP Blantyre Synod needs to guard against any element of ethnocentrism that knowingly or unknowingly crept into the ecclesiastical polity before it completely distorts the Church's participation in the *missio Dei*. This brings us to the question: What is ethnicity or ethnocentrism? We shall take up this matter in the chapter three.



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Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The Case of the CCAP Blantyre Synod Urban Ministry

CHAPTER 3

ETHNICITY AND REGIONALISM: A CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH IN MALAWI

“So far as I am concerned,
there is no Yao in this country;
no Lomwe; no Sena; no Chewa;
no Ngoni; no Nyakyusa; no Tonga;
there are only ‘Malawians’. That is all⁴⁰.”
“I am a Chewa⁴¹”. **Dr. H.K. Banda.**

We accused whites of discrimination on grounds of colour
and yet we have discriminated on political and ethnic grounds.

Mr. Joshua Mkombozi Zimbabwe (in Meredith 2007:72-73)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In chapter 2, the researcher gave an overview of the history of the CCAP Blantyre Synod. In the process, he traced the origin and development of this church against the background of the general history of Malawi, mission and history. The researcher also introduced the problems of slavery, racism/ethnicity, language, national and identity of the church and how the early missionary strategies became a harbinger to the prevailing identity and ethnic problem in the church exacerbating what is already a problem in the society at large.

In this chapter, therefore, the researcher expands some of the issues discussed in chapter 2, especially issues of ethnicity. He analyses the concept of ethnicity and gives an overview of the anthropological and theological discourses on it and brings them to bear on the Malawian context which falls under the identity of the church. Thus, a detailed discussion of the church and society in Malawi requires a working

⁴⁰ Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda speaking to the Women’s League at State House in Blantyre on 1st January, 1970, cyclostyled speech issued by the Malawi Government’s Department of Information, Blantyre, 1970 (Vail and White 1989:151, 180; cf. Ross, KR 2003: 145).

⁴¹ Dr. Banda speaking at the installation of Chief Lundu in Chikwawa on 5 July, 1969 (Vail and White 1989:151). Thus, Dr. Banda used to urge Malawians not to think in terms of their regions or tribes but in the same breath never failed to remind his audience that he was a Chewa from Kasungu.



understanding of what ethnicity really means. Through this process, the identity of the both the church and the nation will become clearer. In fact, the identity of the church ought to be missional in its very nature and being. What happens when the Church loses that sense of mission in its nature and identity is that it becomes captive to the socio-cultural trappings of its environment, e.g. ethnocentrism.

Ethnicity⁴² and regionalism have become phenomena that are visible and audible in church and society in our time and have attracted academic interest in many fields. That ethnocentrism and regionalism are social cankerworms sapping the soul of the African continent should not be news to anyone conversant with Africa's affairs. In fact, August (2001:287) acutely observes that,

The problem of race, ethnicity and multiculturalism is one critical issue the twentieth century failed to resolve. It plagues rich and poor nations. It simmers and erupts in the United States, the European nations, Latin American countries, Australia, Asia and Africa. *No country*, be it capitalist, or socialist, developed or developing, has yet produced an enduring response (Italics mine for emphasis).

On the African continent, the following events are worth commenting: In 1985 there was an expulsion of the Tumbuka speaking peoples from the central and southern regions of Malawi. In our neighbouring Zambia in the 1990s, the then President Fredrick Chiluba tried to bar political opponents, former president Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda⁴³ from standing for the office of the president on the grounds that his parents were missionaries from Malawi and therefore he was adjudged not to be fully a Zambian citizen. The Zambian Government then, wanted to deport Dr. Kaunda to Malawi, but the Malawi Government then, under President Dr. Bakili Muluzi, refused, arguing that Dr. Kenneth Kaunda was not a Malawi. Thus, there was a point

⁴² In order to understand 'interculturalisation' in this study, it is necessary to investigate ethnicity which is a cultural issue tied to people's worldview. It is in our culture that we forge our identities (Jacobs 1999:4; cf. Hendriks 2004: 105).

⁴³ Dr. Kaunda was the first president of Zambia who led his countrymen to independence in 1964. Dr. Kaunda was born in 1924 at Lubwa in the hills of the watershed between the Luangwa and Chambeshi Rivers. At his birth, he was given the name "Buchizya" meaning the "unexpected one", for he was born in the twentieth year of the marriage of his parents. His father, the late Mr. David Kaunda, was the first African missionary to be sent by the CCAP Livingstonia Synod in 1924 to the Bemba speaking people of the Chinsali District of Zambia (then known as Northern Rhodesia) (Ranganathan 1986:9).



in time where Dr. Kaunda was stateless. This again was a clear case of ethnicity being used as a political tool. In addition, the xenophobic violence on foreigners in South Africa in June 2008 and November 2009 show that issues of ethnicity are increasingly gaining currency not only in Malawi but also worldwide as they keep cropping up in the press, in TV news, in the political and religious programmes and in casual conversations.

In view of the forgoing, a detailed discussion of the church and society in Malawi requires a working understanding of what ethnicity really means. This will equip us in the final analysis to make intelligent recommendations on what the CCAP Blantyre Synod ought to do to recover her missional identity.

3.2 TOWARDS DEFINING CULTURE

As ministers of religion and change agents, our work is always with human beings, and for us to prepare for ministry we need to have some insights into the human sciences, including culture and ethnicity. Culture⁴⁴ plays a very important role in analysing the national and identity of the church. What is embedded in it, social practices, language, belief systems, values, customs and traditions, is what makes people who they are. In fact people have equated a nation or communities without a culture to a tree without roots.

There has been a remarkable escalation in the use of the word “culture” in that it has become public property and always has been a highly contested area in the development debate as well as in missionary enterprise. Fuglesang (1982), in Burkey (1993:45) arguably states that, “Culture is how people structure their experience conceptually so that it can be transmitted as knowledge (information) from person to person and from generation to generation”.

⁴⁴ Culture is so important that in section 26 of the Malawi constitution, it has been associated with social justice/human rights. The section read: “Every person shall have the right to use the language and to participate in the *cultural life* of his or her choice” (emphasis mine).



Culture⁴⁵ is very much associated with such concepts as a set of *knowledge, values, language, beliefs, norms, traditions, customs, or practices*, material objects passed from one generation to the next. It is belief and value systems that are held by a particular social group and handed down from generation to generation. These values or virtues and beliefs are learned and shared. They guide one's thinking, decisions, and actions in a patterned way. Each one of us is very much defined by our social relationships and our cultural traditions.

In many African societies, social relationships are rigidly defined and cultural traditions strong and relatively static. The individual is an integral part of the society, and may not even perceive himself or herself as an individual in the Western sense. In African societies, freedom of the individual is clearly subordinate to the interests of the family, the clan and the community. Thus, in African societies, the family or community is more important than the individual identity. Isabel Phiri (1996:12) has made an acute observation that,

It has long been accepted that one can not talk about African culture in the singular because of the diversity found among African peoples. However, there are major similarities in the cultures of Africa that make it possible for one to talk about African culture in singular...culture in this context is defined as the people's expression of their behaviour towards one another, religious belief systems and practices, language, symbols, customs, art, music etc...Culture is dynamic; it changes as a result of contacts with other cultures as well as circumstances that the people encounter.

Social anthropologists have classified African peoples into patrilineal and matrilineal societies (Phiri 1996:12). The patrilineal societies trace their descent through the father while in the case of matrilineal societies to which this researcher belongs; descent is traced through the mother. Phiri (1996:12) further argues that, "It is very important to make it clear that matrilineal societies are not matriarchal, although one finds more women with power and authority and more aspects that dignify women in matrilineal society than in a patrilineal one". There are more patrilineal societies in

⁴⁵ There is also subculture: it is made up of people with a distinct identity, but who have certain ethnic, occupational or physical characteristics that are found in the larger culture. The 'dominant group' is the group within the culture that has the authority to control the value system. The 'Minority group' usually has some physical or cultural characteristics that identifies the people within it as different.



Africa than matrilineal ones. Many matrilineal societies are found in Central Africa: the Yao (to which the researcher belongs), Chewa, Lomwe of Malawi and Mozambique; the Bemba and Nyanja of Zambia. In West Africa, the Akan of Ghana are also matrilineal (Phiri 1996:12).

In the matrilineal Yao communities of Malawi, there is no room for individualism. The community is the custodian of the individual. Thus, the Yao have a strong value system of relatedness. All relatives are treated as ‘brothers’ and ‘sisters’. I can be related to my first cousin because my father is his uncle, but by the cultural implication of this relatedness he is not just my cousin but my brother. Brotherhood/sisterhood affords a more intimate relationship than cousinship in the context of an African sense of relationships within the community. The Yao culture of Malawi with its strong value system of relatedness and interdependence encourages all people to embrace others as brothers/sisters. Everybody is encouraged to embrace the other as brothers and sisters, especially when they are from outside their cultural areas or abroad.

The researcher remembers very well his father and elder brother, who were chiefs at the time of his conversion, being called names as irresponsible parents who allowed their child to join the religion of ‘wangaumbala’ (uncircumcised people), wākulya mapuku (mice-eaters), wāusakwa (dirty-stinking people). With such overtones of disparagement heaped upon the ‘new community’ which this researcher had joined, my parents were encouraged to disown and throw me out of the community because I had not only rebelled against my parents but also against the community. Thus, my conversion was not regarded as a personal issue but a community concern.

In the Yao communities of Malawi, there is no room for individualism. The community is the custodian of the individual, who must go where the community goes. The Yao ‘we ethos’ (communalism) is the ideal world-view, not the unholy



egocentric trinity of 'I...me & myself' (individualism/egocentricism). The egocentric unholy trinity of 'I, myself and me' has no meaning in the Yao society if it is done in isolation of the 'we ethos' because my full humanity is not in me but externalised by the existence of the other (communalism). Offences committed against one another are viewed as committed against the whole community of the 'living and the living dead', and by implication against '*Amanani/Chechipinga/Mlungu*' (God) who is the central axis (centre of operation) in the community relatedness and interconnectedness. We do not exist as individuals but as a community of acceptance of being all in the same values of the greater '*Amanani*' (God) who created us in fellowship of one another and in his own image (cf. Gen.2:18; 1:26).

A biblical anthropological view of community begins with the Genesis account of God's provision of human companionship when God, said, '*It is not good for the man to be alone*' (Genesis 2:18). From a theological perspective, human identity is bound up in relationships and interconnectedness/interdependence. The Yao have a saying that expresses the same sentiments, '*ujika wangalikunda kunyuma*' (In typical Yao context we would say, 'you cannot see your own sore on the anus, you need the other', but in terms of respect and figuratively we would say, 'you cannot scratch your own back, you need the other').

In view of the above, the Christian concept of 'trinity' would fit well with the African concept of 'interdependence/interconnectedness', the 'we ethos', Father, Son, Holy Spirit interconnected. Infact, you cannot become a Christian without being initiated into a community believing in God without accepting the incarnation of the Lord Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Thus, from a theological perspective, human identity is bound up in relationships and interconnectedness/interdependence, and we are, therefore, impoverished if we do not belong to a community where we can be accepted and grow in self-understanding through others. We are whole people through whole communities, and therefore mission is concerned with crossing frontiers for the restoration of the 'Trinitarian fellowship' with the healing of broken relatedness.



In addition, the concept of *'luwala'* (mphala in Chichewa) in the Yao culture where all families would bring food together and eat together has an element of biblical anthropological principles of hospitality, interdependence, acknowledgement of the other, willingness to embrace the other as brother/sister for the common good or communal oneness. In this practice even if you had no food you were assured of being taken care of for the Yao of Malawi believe that sharing is caring and a communal obligation. It is in this context that the Yao would proverbially say, 'one dog cannot kill an elephant and one finger cannot squash a flea', just to encourage oneness in the community

The biblical account of human companionship moves from the companionship of two people (Genesis 2:18) to the families of Noah and Abraham, although these families soon became fractured by sin. In Genesis 12, the blessings of Abraham were for communal benefits; therefore we are called and blessed to be a blessing to others. It is through Abraham and later the Exodus that another dimension is added: the covenant relationship through which God constitutes a whole nation as a community called a 'kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Exodus 19:6), bound together by God's gracious commitment to them as his treasured possession.

Even the Christian baptism must be understood in the concept of the fellowship of the community of faith. It is not an individual initiation, but a pleading with the community to be accepted by them; hence it is done in the presence of an already established Church (public). In fact it is the public which motivates the minister to stand on behalf of the baptisee to plead with the 'public' to accept the 'baptisee' as a new member in the new community. Baptism is therefore an initiation into the new community of faith, the body of Christ with different parts working together for the common good, interdependence *per excellence*. An injury to one is an injury to all in this community. However, Burkey (1993:45) claims that, "in Western societies, and to an increasing extent in the urban centre of the Third World, the individual functions as a separate member of society". In such societies, a person has greater freedom to choose his her social relationships and to participate or not in cultural traditions.



The behaviour of individuals and groups and their response to external impulses cannot be understood completely without an intimate understanding of their social relationships and their cultural traditions. Societies use these relationships and traditions to minimise conflicts. No matter how competent or intelligent a pastor or a missionary is, if he or she is not *culturally* sensitive, he or she might not succeed to deliver. West (1994:232) alludes to this when he argues that, “Despite being technically competent, a nurse can be incompetent, formulating unworkable interventions because of an unwillingness or inability to understand the culturally different client.” Likewise, Stan Burkey (1993:46) points out that,

Development workers must be intimately familiar with the *social and cultural systems* in which they are working in order to successfully promote change. New ideas and new activities will only be adopted if they do not create more conflict with accepted beliefs and traditions than is tolerable. If new ideas are presented in terms which are familiar and recognizable to the existing system, they will more easily be identified as useful and acceptable. Development workers should be aware that their work among the poor will undoubtedly lead to *changes in social relations and cultural traditions* (Italics mine).

In the words of Madeleine Leininger (in West 1994:232), “having knowledge of a *culture* before trying to help a client and family is analogous to a nurse or physician having basic knowledge of anatomy and physiology before doing physical assessment or attempting to meet a patient’s physical needs”. Again in our case, no matter how competent or intelligent a pastor or a missionary is, if he or she is not *culturally* sensitive, he or she might not succeed to deliver.

It is also good to know that culture has two faces – the humanizing face and the dehumanizing face. The humanizing face is a positive one, while the dehumanizing face is a negative one, it is destructive.

First, in humanizing face, we find that culture plays some positive roles in human society. Cultures enable us to survive. They protect us when we are the most vulnerable, in the formative years. Second, our cultures give us a specific view of reality. Within our cultural worldviews we classify, we sort out, and reflect on events that affect us. Hopefully we learn and therefore we direct our behaviour to enhance our well-being.



Third, it is in our culture that we forge our identities. Regarding this, Castells (1997:6) argues that, “Identity is a socially constructed sense of belonging for people which is characterized by sharing similar cultural norms and values. It gives one a sense of belonging to know who you are and where you come from”. Furthermore, identity refers to how people see themselves in relation to others and how they are seen by them. Identity is people’s source of meaning and experience. In Malawi identity has generally been described in terms of tribe, ethnicity, and region. Identity has been a contentious issue in Malawi for many years. This created many problems including, among others, discrimination against people on the basis of tribe, race, region (geographical location) or gender. An acknowledgement of the diversity of the population is now one of the distinctive features of Malawian society. However, identity politics of ethnocentrism and regionalism has been the practice.

Fourth, culture defines what is virtuous and what is evil. It rewards those who embrace the cultural “good” and punishes those who flout it. Fifth, it is in our mother culture that we are given a place to belong. Sixth, cultures define the rites of passage from conception to death and sometimes even after death. Seventh, in our cultures we are taught the basic humanizing lessons of privilege and obligation. Eighth, our cultures also enable us to view others as similar human beings, with their cultures (Jacobs 1999:4-5).

The second face of culture is the dehumanizing face. We find that culture plays negative roles in human society. Thus, some cultural practices are harmful to human society. For instance, cultural practices such as the belief that one’s ethnic group or culture is superior to other (ethnocentrism/racism, tribalism) or corruption, infringe upon rights of vulnerable groups of society. Thus, ethnocentrism/racism presents another face of culture; it has some fearsome and destructive potential within any given society. With culture being the driver of such practices, it becomes important that we must have some insights about them. This brings us to the question: what is ethnicity or ethnocentrism?



3.3 TOWARDS THE DEFINITION OF ETHNICITY

Ethnicity is an anthropological term that came into conventional usage in the 1960s to refer to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as *culturally* distinctive. It is concerned with the sense of belonging or affiliation to a cultural-linguistic group and the uniqueness of such a group.

The term ‘ethnicity’ denotes a social identity which is both collective and individual, externalised in social interactions, internalised in personal self-awareness, and publicly expressed (Mompoti & Prinsen in Eade 2002:93; Jenkins 1999). The Chambers Dictionary (2007:395) defines ethnicity as relating to or having a common tribe/race or cultural tradition. Tschuy (1997: xi) states that, “the term ‘ethnicity’ comes from the Greek *ethnos* (people or nation). It is used today to designate a group of persons of similar language, culture and often (but not always) religion. Ethnicity distinguishes groupings of people who, for historical reasons, have come to be seen as distinctive – by themselves and others – on the basis of geographical locations of origin, and a series of other cultural markers. Ethnicities are often, but not necessarily, identical with the population inhabiting a specific nation-state”. Tschuy (1997: xi-xii) further observes that,

...it is not clear that the terms tribe, race, and ethnicity can be effectively distinguished. The English word “race” is derived from the Latin *ratio* (reason or understanding) which became part of European scientific language during the 16th Century, when it was first used to classify plant and animal species. During the 19th Century the term was subverted, with the help of social Darwinism, to justify the power and domination of white Europeans over non-white colonised peoples. This classification was not used to establish scientific anthropological categories but simply to “prove” white “superiority”; and such pseudo-scientific abuse became known as “racism”.

In view of the above, it would be vital to quote in context the South African scenario under apartheid where a white minority in power used to oppress the black majority. The separation of amenities during apartheid was the clear indication of the myth or misconception that “whites” are superior to blacks; hence it was an abuse of *cultural identity*. To substantiate this, Phillip Kridiots (in Maclennan 1990:36) will come to our aid when submits, “It is true that they (white people) do not allow black people



into their stores”. He made this statement while commenting on a complaint by a wife of a Bloemfontein physician that his recently-opened branch then, in a new multi-million complex in Bloemfontein, allowed her dog but refused her African maid permission to enter its supermarket (Cape Times 1971 in Maclennan 1990:36). Perhaps Tschuy’s (1997: xi-xii) observation is helpful in this context when he further argues that,

The fact that certain ethnic groups feel superior to others and engage in warfare to subdue or even exterminate them places ethnocentrism in the same category as racism, even though the term sounds less aggressive. A consultant at a 1994 World Council of Churches meeting on racism, ethnicity and indigenous peoples offered a shorthand definition: racism is based on power and privilege, while ethnicity derives from blood and belonging.

In view of the above story (Phillip Kridiots’ story), it is very difficult to understand why in the mind of *some* white men a dog would be more privileged than a human being who happened to be black. It is difficult to understand especially when some of those white South African men then belonged to a Church called ‘Dutch Reformed Church’ (DRC). What was it that was ‘reformed’ in this church, was it their theology or the people? Of course, this is one the abiding paradoxes and ironies of human life. Indeed, ethnocentrism, which is a twin of racism, has since become part of the distorted perfect intention of God. It is a distorted ecclesiological identity of many churches in Africa. It has indeed become a cancer sapping the soul and body of the Church in Africa. But what is really ethnicity? Tschuy (1997: x-xi) attempts to answer this question when he gives us the origin of the term ‘nation’ as follows:

...The root of the term “nation” is the Latin *natio* (those *born* from a common ancestry). Originally equivalent of the Greek *ethnos*, people, it took on different connotations during the course of history. At the time of the French Revolution, *la nation*, the people stood in opposition to the declining monarchy and the nobility. Soon the expression began to be used for all the inhabitants of a country who lived within the frontiers, which were controlled by their (presumably democratic) government. From there it was a short step to insisting on one common language, uniform administrative structures, fixed boundaries, armies and if possible an identical ideology for all.



It is evident from the definition stated above that the meaning of ethnicity is so ambiguous that it is often interchangeably used with the other terms, tribe, race and nationalism (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tribe> - Accessed on 06/10/2008).

Banks (1996: i) observes that,

ethnicity has been a key concept in anthropology and sociology for many years, yet many people still seem uncertain as to its meaning, relevance and its relationship to other concepts such as 'tribe', 'race', and 'nationalism', ...The term 'ethnicity' has been used to describe human social interaction, particularly in relation to groups that would previously have been described as 'tribes', and to minority migrant groups and their 'host' societies.

The fact still remains that, "while ethnicity has become an over-used concept in the anthropological vocabulary, it is finding an increasing use (or even misuse) in public language and thought" (Banks (1996: i). So, why is the term still used? What does it mean to humanity?

There are different schools of thought about what ethnicity really means to humanity depending on whom you are talking to, and their 'world view'. A necessary accompaniment of 'ethnicity' is some consciousness of kind among members of an 'ethnic group', which can be defined as a subsection or subsystem more or less distinct from the rest of the population, and is based on membership defined by a sense of common historical origin, shared culture, language, value orientation, shared social norms, and sometimes religion (Banks 1996: i, cf. page 129 of this thesis).

Thus, ethnicity:

- Gives people a sense of belonging
- Provides an economy of affection especially in the traditional societies where, for example, payment of bride price or wealth involves the interaction of different ethnic groups, and
- Enhances socialization of norms and values, e.g. honesty and hard work within various ethnic groups (Tschuy 1997:160).

The term 'ethnic group' is a useful concept in our missiological discourse and yet its actual meaning also depends on whom one is talking to, and their world view. Berry



and Tischler (1978:41) state that,

An ethnic group is a human group bound together by ties of cultural homogeneity. Complete uniformity, of course, is not essential; but there does prevail in an ethnic group a high degree of loyalty and adherence to certain basic institutions such as family patterns, religion and language. The ethnic group often possesses distinctive folkways and mores; customs of dress, art and ornamentation; moral codes and value systems, and patterns of recreation. There is usually some sort of object to which the group manifests allegiance, such as a monarch, a religion, a language, or a territory. Above all, there is a consciousness of kind, feeling of association.

Tischler (1978:41) further observes that, “An ethnic group may even regard itself as a race, a people with common ancestry, but the fact of such common descent is of much less significant than the assumption that there is a blood relationship, and the myths that the group develops to substantiate such an assumption”. In connection with this definition, there is a devastating story about Sandra Laing, a black ‘Afrikaner’ girl who was born in 1955 to white Afrikaner parents in South Africa back in the days of white rule and apartheid.

It is alleged that although Sandra was black, medical results proved that her white father was her true father: blood tests showed that his blood matched hers. Sandra also looked much like her brother Adrian, who was white. But the trouble started when she went to school. The white children called her names, like “blackie” and “frizzhead”. They hit her. The school did nothing to stop them; it saw her as the cause of the trouble, why was she born with a dark skin in a white family? For four years white parents and white teachers of the school pushed to have her kicked out. Then finally on the 10th of March, 1966, the police came and took Sandra Laing out of the school: the government said she was no longer white in the eyes of the law but ‘coloured’.

Mr and Mrs Laing fought for two years to have their daughter changed back to white community and to be allowed in a white school, taking it all the way to the Supreme Court of South Africa. They won the case. But it did little good: few white schools would take her. Nine said no. Only a Roman Catholic school far away said yes. By then Sandra Laing had fallen too far behind in her studies and never caught up. Very few whites would befriend her. Nearly all her friends were black. She felt more



comfortable with blacks than with whites who called her names and stereotypes. Information available at: <<http://abagond.wordpress.com/2009/05/13/sandra-laing-a-black-girl-born-to-white-parents/>> (accessed on: 01/04/2010).

In view of the foregoing, one would wonder if ethnicity is a blessing or a curse. The researcher's opinion is that it all depends on the context because, for instance, Sandra's scenario described above would not be described as a blessing. In Africa, we have a popular saying that '*one who laughs at a pot, is actually laughing at the potter*'. To alienate or discriminate against somebody because of his or her ethnic group or race is just exposing how undeveloped attitudes of such people are. Ethnic diversities needs to be appreciated and celebrated. Regarding this, Tischler (1978:41) further argues that,

Ethnic groups, of course, are not all alike, and none would embody all the features we have enumerated. Some will emphasize some of these characteristics to the exclusion of others. Religion may serve as an important object of allegiance to one and be of little importance to another. Furthermore, ethnic groups are dynamic. The folkways may change, the institutions become radically altered, and the object of allegiance shifts from one trait to another, but the sentiment of loyalty to the group and the consciousness of belonging remain as long as the group exists. An ethnic group may or may not have its own political unit; it may have had one in the past, it may aspire to have one in the future, or its members may be scattered through existing states. Political unification is not an essential feature of the group.

The meaning of ethnicity is indeed ambiguous and its relevance so ambivalent that some people in the missiological domain have often wondered whether it is a blessing or a curse to humanity. Jacobs (1999:4) alludes to this when he argues that,

Modern missions do not take ethnicity very seriously and their work is not always understood or appreciated. Those who translate the Scriptures into the vernacular are often criticized for fostering ethnicity. On the other hand, the general opinion in academia is that missions have destroyed cultures. The view is mixed. One modern proponent of mission is Donald McGavran who, with his colleagues, emphasize the "homogeneous principle" which is that the gospel spreads most readily in a horizontal direction, that is, within ethnic groups. They advocate an ethnic evangelism which produces ethnic churches. Yet some missiologists fear the spectre of ecclesiastical apartheid if Christians embrace ethnicity. In summary, missiologists do not know what to think about ethnicity.



But whether one knows or does not know what to think about ethnicity, the fact still remains that ethnicity and racism “bear an enormous emotional content. Stereotyping, fear, chauvinism and, above all, hatred⁴⁶ animate these issues” (August 2001:287).

Three incidents in the researcher’s own life can bear witness to the foregoing:

Firstly, the researcher’s involvement with the Bible Society of Malawi (BISOMA) was often misunderstood by the parishioners and fellow clergymen as being tribalistic. This was simply because we were translating the Scriptures into Chiyao, the researcher’s mother tongue. Secondly, decades ago when this researcher was registering for Form One (Grade Nine) at a government secondary school in Malawi, the registration form had an entry for tribe. I promptly filled in Yao. The form teacher looked at me with an attitude and remarked that he thought I was a Chewa because of my last name and my accent. He forgot that the clan name ‘Phiri’ is shared among all the tribes of all the three regions of our country.

Thirdly, some years ago, when I was registering for work in South Africa, the employment registration form also had an entry for ‘population group’: White, Coloured, Indian, Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa, Tswana and the ‘other’ - specify’. When I filled in ‘black’, the white registration officer was furious and told me in no uncertain terms that black was not a tribe. I could not understand why blacks had to specify their particular ethnic group while the whites could simply fill in ‘white’ and not

⁴⁶ Ethnicity has also been exploited by the post-independence era. For instance Dr. Banda used to urge Malawians not to think in terms of their regions or tribes but in the same breath never failed to remind his audience that he was a Chewa from Kasungu. During his time he promoted Chewa ethnicity symbolised by making Chichewa the national language of Malawi, discarding Chinyanja which was the official languages during the colonial era besides English. Years later, after Dr. Muluzi, came Dr. Mutharika, a Lomwe, who rose to promote an awareness of Lomwe cultural identity by promoting his fellow Lomwes to key state, legal, education and media institutional posts. For instance, he appointed a Lomwe chief justice, a Lomwe Constitutional Affairs Minister and Attorney General, a Lomwe Minister of Education, a Lomwe Inspector General of Police, a Lomwe Immigration Officer, a Lomwe Reserve Bank Governor, a Lomwe Director General of the Treasury, a Lomwe Director of the Public Prosecution, a Lomwe Director of the Anti Corruption Bureau, a Lomwe Director of Television Malawi (TVM) and a Lomwe Director of Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) etc. On October 25, 2008, Dr. Mutharika established a Lomwe foundation called ‘Mulhakho wa Alomwe’ Foundation with himself as its patron to promote Lomwe culture. He went further to promote for the first time, a Lomwe Paramount chief. Dr. Chakufwa Chihana, the Second Vice President during Dr. Muluzi’s time was also alleged to have packed the Ministry of Water Development with fellow Northerners. The motive was to garner tribal support (Kishindo 2005:21). Therefore, interculturalisation as missional model advocates change of mindset to help promote cultural interdependence as a people under the reign of God.



Afrikaner, Dutch, Irish, Welsh, Scottish, or English. One wonders why the issue of ethnicity is often emotionally charged and manipulative.

Ethnicity and identity have really become a problem for the people in church and society in our time, and many do not know what to think about it. Right now in Malawi and most parts of Africa, ethnicity is escalating. Each ethnic group wants its rightful place in the sun and each resists “strangers” settling among them⁴⁷. There is indeed a relationship between ethnicity and identity. In fact, ethnic affiliations, in most cases, determine the political as well as the ecclesiastical landscape and greatly influence the social web in Africa. In the context of Malawi, ethnicity seems to have an unfading influence on the church and the nation because it has formed the people. In Malawi, as in other African countries, ethnicity is ancient and inherent; it is not something that people choose. Admittedly, people do not choose state citizenship, either, but states do not form persons; rather, it is cultures that do so (Jacobs 1999:7).

Therefore, the study of ethnicity has overwhelming implications for the church and the state in Malawi. This is not only crucial to an understanding of the various social identities, but it is also necessary in the critical analysis of the pathologies of the nation. So, to fail to address the issue of ethnicity both in the church and the state can result in political suffocation for our country and spiritual genocide for the church. Put more pointedly, the study of the interaction of ethnicity and theology is a project that can only be neglected at a perilous cost at this moment in history. Braathen, et al (2000:3) acutely argues that,

Obviously, ethnicity plays a role in most conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa, in the sense that ethnic affiliations often structure the composition of groups in conflict. Moreover, there is little doubt that one of the main reasons why people kill each other is who they are and the identities they represent. We are all to some degree still tied to the identities around which ethnic national conflicts are fought. The power that binds us to these

⁴⁷ Nyirongo 2009: Front page of The Nation, Vol. 16 No. 260, Thursday, 31 December 2009 “*Synod Rejects Selection List: Northern Region Sidelined – Livingstonia CCAP Synod*”; Nyirongo 2010: Front page of The Nation Vol. 17 No. 1 Friday, 1 January 2010 “*Police Block Synod [Livingstonia] Demo: We will also Block Students – Mezuwa*”; Msiska 2010 “*Police Block Synod March*” The Daily Times, Friday January 1, 2010: Front page.



identities through a process that Foucault (1982) refers to as *assujettissement*, or subjectification, still operates.

It would be helpful to observe that ethnicity is not an essential attribute to Africans, or Europeans for that matter, but one of several identities. Ethnicity therefore, cannot be discussed outside of its precise historical context (Chabal & Daloz 1999 in Braathen *et al* 2000:4). In addition, ethnicity is neither essentially a primordial carry-over nor the result of a modern conspiracy. Ethnicity has a social history, and it is in continuous process of being made and remade (Mamdani 1996:185). Thus, it should not be used as a static concept. Rather, ethnicity is one part of a complex set of dynamic and interactive identities. We all carry with us a flexible set of identities and the ways in which we define ourselves and others are in accordance with sets of beliefs, values and perceptions that are susceptible to change over time (Braathen, et al. 2000:4-5).

Ethnicity has several faces: Ethnicity does not only humanize people, it also dehumanizes. We are very familiar with this face. This may be illustrated from the many intractable conflicts in the world today that are said to be ethnic in nature. Among the numerous examples of deadly ethnic conflicts in our time are: Arabs against Jews, Hutus against Tutsis, Irish Catholics face off against British Protestants, Basques against Spaniards, Kurds against Iraqis, Croatian Catholics against Serbian Orthodox, Ukrainians against Russians, Tamil Nadir against Sri Lankans, Pakistan Muslims and Indian Hindus just to mention but a few. These catch the headlines almost everyday, yet they are only the tips of the iceberg. Scratch almost any state and just under the surface of virtually any of these states lies, not a seamless cultural fabric, but a heterogeneous (mosaic) mass of groups, tribes, languages and nations. It is trouble waiting to happen (Jacobs 1999:5).

In view of the forgoing, tribal or ethnic feelings run deep not only in Africa but even in the so called developed countries⁴⁸. Jacobs (1999:1) alludes to this when he acutely

⁴⁸ The issue of Democratic Presidential nominee Barak Obama's ethnic identity became a debating



argues that “The “Christian” nations of Europe have been fighting among themselves for centuries. The basis of their conflict is ethnic”. Ethnocentrism is alive. It could well be the dominant social force of the new century” that can be ignored at one’s own peril. To ignore the power of ethnicity is to walk blindly into the future. As populations grow and pollution spoils our planet, every group will fight for its rightful share of the dwindling resources.

However, it is important to emphasize that ethnicity *per se* is not evil; but ethnocentrism⁴⁹ is. There is nothing essentially evil about tribe; but tribalism is malevolent. Ethnicity is the legitimate expression of the origins of an ethnic group, with its revered beliefs, myths, and traditions. It identifies a people. After all, every human being is born into a particular ethnic group and none of us, in fact, chooses the ethnic group into which he/she is born. Ethnic identity gives one a sense of belonging, stability of mind and character (Castells 1997:6).

During the process of socialization, a child is made aware of his or her ethnic identity, and there is nothing intrinsically bad about that. But again, a lot depends on what is being taught by those inside and outside the child’s ethnic group. If during the process of socialization, a child is made to feel that other peoples and their values are primitive and backward/inferior, he/she will grow up believing that such outsiders are primitive and backward/inferior, and less human, and may even find nothing wrong in killing, plundering and enslaving them.

Thus, the person’s sense of judgement becomes distorted by ethnocentrism (or ethnocentricity). This form of ethnicity is not only an ideological tool but something

issue whether America was ready to elect a Black person as its president in November 2008 (3rd Degree Programme on ETV broadcast on Tuesday, June 10th, 2008).

⁴⁹ Ethnocentrism is the policy or practice that holds the belief that one’s own cultural tradition or racial group is superior to others and the policy or practice of being ethnocentric is called ethnocentricity. Some colonialists, missionaries and modernization theorists used to regard African people’s culture as primitive and inferior. They did this by ignoring indigenous culture to a large extent within their paradigm of civilization and sustained economic growth. That attitude was immoral and unacceptable (Paglia 2006:8; August 2006:1). The scientific study of different races and cultural traditions and their relations with each other is called ‘ethnology’ while the detailed description of the culture of a particular society is called ethnography (Chambers Dictionary 2007:396).



dangerous and demonic; its evil consequences have been obvious in many parts of the world, including Africa. If we are to avoid a repeat of the ethnic exploitation or manipulations of the past century with the appalling human destruction that accompanied them, then we need an orientation towards true ethnicity. This orientation should be deeply rooted in critical social anthropological investigation as well as honest biblical and theological reflection.

3.4 ANTHROLOGICAL PRAXIS OF ETHNICITY

Since ethnicity is a cultural issue, it is as such tied to people's worldview. In Africa, each culture has its distinctive worldview that sets it apart. Moreover, it enables people to rationalize life and to control their circumstances. Each tribe, in turn, views itself as an entity, a 'people', that includes "everyone" of them: the living, the departed, and the unborn (Jacobs 1999:5). All of those included in the mystical group, living and dead, are "us"; all others are, "them." Since no tribe can isolate itself, they all have to learn how to inhabit the same geographical area. Each group relates to persons of other groups in ways that are different from their own interaction. So while each is a self-contained universe, it also interacts in some way with neighbours, both hostile and friendly.

This cosmological configuration confounds the Western mind, which has learned to disdain ethnicity as a vestige of the past and view tribalism as something a touch "primitive". Most people in North America have difficulty understanding the power of ethnicity because they constitute an immigrant society which does not anchor its ethnicity in the geographical environment. Therefore, citizens easily transfer their loyalty to the state. In America, rarely do persons perceive of themselves first as Irish, German, Polish, and then as patriots of the state. This also explains why North Americans find it hard to believe that modern Quebec truly wants to secede from Canada (Jacobs 1999:7).



Admittedly, ‘ethnicity’ is a complex issue and our understanding of human beings determines how we treat it. There is an extensive amount of literature⁵⁰ on the subject. The publication of Barth’s work (*Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*) in 1969 was both an indication of, and stimulus to, the increasing importance of ethnicity as an area for academic study, in Africa and elsewhere (Atkinson 1999:21). Since then, much has been written; however, most of the available materials use modes of analysis which reflect more of the Western categories of thinking and interpretation than those of the peoples under review. The scenario seemed to have changed by the end of the 1990s.

From 1989 onwards African scholarship has produced more published work with substantive emphasis on ethnicity⁵¹ than it had during the previous four decades⁵². This may be a fulfilment of Bogumil Jewsiewicki’s prediction at the beginning of the decade that the 1990’s ‘will accord a place – perhaps even a central one – to intellectual history’, history that deals with popular ideologies and ‘conceptual frameworks elaborating on identities’ including clans, ethnicity and nationalism. Certainly with respect to identity in general and ethnicity in particular, this prediction seems to be proving true (Atkinson 1999:21). Even the very research work of this dissertation could be a testimony to that prediction. This is an indication that African voices must be heard on African problems; it is important not only because we Africans know, but also because we understand, where the ethnic identity shoes pinch. We are part of the struggle and we understand the interplay of the various dynamics. Our experience of the impact of ethnicity in Malawi shows that ethnic

⁵⁰ Atkinson (1999:19) arguably states that, “During the decades of the 1970s, six comparative, cross-disciplinary journals devoted extensively to the study of ethnicity were founded (although none were African-focused): *Plural societies* (1970), *Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism* (1973), *Ethnicity* (1974), *Ethnic Groups* (1976), *Ethnic and Racial Studies* (1978), and *Research in Race and Ethnic Relations* (1979)”.

⁵¹ Ethnicity received much more attention as a topic of study in Africa during the 1970s and 1980s than before (Atkinson 1999:20).

⁵² I have looked at many books and titles on ethnicity. A few of these titles have been consulted and are included in the bibliography. These include: Paglia (2006); Tiryak (2004); August (2001); Braathen, et al. (Eds.) (2000); Atkinson (1999); Jacobs (1999); Schipper (1999); Zack 1998); Tschuy (1997); Banks (1996); Stack (1986) Berry & Tischler (c1978).



groups and identities are a product of many factors. For this reason, Atkinson (1999:19) may, perhaps, be right in arguing that,

ethnic groups and identities are not the inevitable outcome of cultural beliefs and practices, but a creation of socio-historical dynamics, politics and ideology. Conceptualizing ethnicity this way has become much more powerful analytically than earlier approaches; it has contributed to the crucial idea that such terms as tribe, ethnic group, and nation are fundamentally constructs of human imagination – rather than entities with a concrete, practical existence in the real world.

In view of the above, this researcher concurs with Atkinson that ethnic groups are a creation of socio-historical dynamics, politics and ideology and not the inevitable outcome of cultural beliefs and practices. Since identity is a socially constructed sense of belonging for people which is characterised by sharing similar cultural norms and values and one's own identity is partly shaped by its recognition or its absence.

Thus, the misrecognition of other groups by one group generates a politics of identity. For instance, the researcher is a Malawian ordained Presbyterian minister studying not at the University of Malawi but at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. For this reason, there will inevitably be what Castells (2006:11, 72) call the 'construction and deconstruction of identity' for the researcher to survive and fit well in the South African context, Stellenbosch University in particular. The researcher's official status in Stellenbosch is that of doctoral candidate and he will have to conduct himself in such a way that fits well with the cultural norms and values of Stellenbosch University, which is not a Malawian University, and not a seminary.

Another example that ethnic groups are the creation of socio-historical dynamics, politics and ideology is the case of what happened in Zimbabwe in the 1980s. While the South African xenophobia in May 2008 was by black South Africans against black foreigners, in Zimbabwean it was Zimbabwean black citizens against fellow black citizens. The Shona ethnic group fought against the Ndebele ethnic group.



Shonas used language to identify who their enemies were, all black non-Shona speakers, but specifically targeting Ndebeles. They would just greet you in Shona, “*Makadini?*” (*How are you?*), and the expected response was, (*Tiripo, makadini*) (*I am fine, how are you?*). If you did not respond appropriately, they would kill you.

At the end of 1982 President Mugabe established a special new army brigade: 5 Brigade which he called ‘*Gukurahundi*, a Shona word defined as meaning the rain that blows away the chaff before the spring rains (Meredith 2007:67). This new brigade was trained by North Koreans and was deployed in Matabeleland. At the end of January 1983, the 5 Brigade (*Gukurahundi*) waged a campaign of beatings, arson, and mass murder deliberately targeted the civilian population of Ndebele and Kalanga ethnic groups. Martin Meredith (2007:67, 75) alludes to this when he observes that,

Villagers were rounded up and marched long distances to a central location, such as a school, where they were harangued and beaten for hours on end. The beatings were often followed by public executions...*Villagers were then forced to sing songs in the Shona language* praising Zanu-PF [Mugabe’s political party] while dancing on the mass graves of their families and fellow villagers killed and buried minutes earlier. Massacres occurred...The impact of *Gukurahundi* on Matabeleland was indelible (Italics mine for emphasis).

To the foregoing, late Joshua Mkombo (in Meredith 2007:72-73) lamented,

We accused and condemned the previous white minority government for creating a police state and yet we exceed them when we create a military state. We accused former colonisers who used detention without trial as well as torture and yet do exactly what they did, if not worse. *We accused whites of discrimination on grounds of colour and yet we have discriminated on political and ethnic grounds* (Italics mine for emphasis).

Because of the catastrophic scenario in which the Ndebele and Kalanga ethnic groups found themselves, the only option for survival was to disown/deconstruct their identity during this period in Zimbabwe. This confirms in what Atkinson (1999:21) says namely that ethnic groups are the creation of socio-historical dynamics, politics and ideology.

Atkinson (1999:21) further states that, “Crawford Young has provided a useful, roughly chronological, and oft-repeated three-part typology of the various approaches



to ethnicity taken by Africanist scholars from the 1950s into the 1990s”. According to Crawford Young (1993:7-8), there are basically three approaches (three-part typology) to the study of ethnicity. These are: Instrumentalism, primordialism and constructivism. Atkinson, no doubt, is of the constructivist school of thought when it comes to ethnicity. This school of thought is one of the approaches that are considered in the following summary:

3.4.1 Instrumentalism

Writing about ethnicity as an instrument employed in pursuit of material gain in the Copperbelt region of Southern Africa, Young (1993:7-8, quoted by Atkinson (1999:21-22) elaborates:

[b]uilding upon the insights of Coleman and others [particularly the Copperbelt studies], its contributors privileged the uses of ethnicity as a weapon in political combat and social competition. Ethnicity was contingent, situational, and circumstantial; it was an available identity in repertoire of social roles for use in the pursuit of material advantage. Such conceptualization beckoned exploration of the political factors that might induce its activation, the cultural entrepreneurs who supplied its doctrines and activist who exploited these solidarities.

This approach was utilized by scholars across disciplines and with a wide range of interests and theoretical perspectives. They included anthropologists concerned with understanding ‘tribal’ Africans in multi-ethnic urban settings; political scientists interested in bringing ethnicity into consideration of contemporary modernization, nationalism, politics and state; and those materialist scholars who paid ethnicity some attention mainly as a form of consciousness to be exploited by members of the political elite for their own class interests. In a sense, ethnicity is seen by the school of instrumentalism as an ideological tool in the hands of both cultural entrepreneurs and political actors (Atkinson 1999:22).

3.4.2 Primordialism

The second approach to ethnicity distinguished by Young is ‘primordialism’. However compelling instrumentalism was, Young (1993:21) argues that,



...in illuminating the contemporary dynamics of cultural competition and conflict, something important was missing in the material focus of instrumentalist. A 'primordialist' school – in reality an older perspective but now renovated by its dialogue with instrumentalism – emerged to explore the psychological and the cultural dimensions necessary to grasp the intensities which might surround ethnic conflict.

Atkinson (1999:22) observes that,

This new primordialism has taken several forms. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz, for instance, argued for the strength of primordialist attachments which are expressed through various cultural forms in places throughout the world. Fellow anthropologist A.L. Epstein followed up his earlier instrumentalist Copperbelt studies with primordialist-oriented work which he found necessary in order to understand the 'powerful emotional charge' of the 'affective dimension' of ethnic behaviour. In more popular realms, journalist-scholar Harold Isaacs wrote in the mid-1970s about the primordial psychological power of what he called a 'basic group identity', which provided at least the promise of emotional security, belongingness, and self-esteem for its members. More recently, politician-scholar Daniel Patrick Moynihan has asserted the essentially primordialist position that ethnicity is 'ascriptive, a consequence of birth'. Finally, some sociobiologists have argued an extreme primordialist interpretation of ethnicity that makes it part of basic instinctual urges or even of the printed genetic codes of human beings.

Despite such extremes, and a steady stream of criticism from those opposed to its fundamentally flawed and dangerous essentialism, Young argues that primordialism can, in a sense, help 'complete' instrumentalism. It can do this, Young writes, 'by explaining the power of the "affective tie" through which interest is pursued' and by capturing 'the passionate dimension latent in ethnic conflict, its capacity to arouse deep fears, anxieties, and insecurities and to trigger collective aggression inexplicable in terms of simple material pursuit of interest' (Atkinson 1999:22).

3.4.3 Constructivism

By the mid to the late 1980s, argues Young (1994:79-80), both earlier positions were being largely superseded by or incorporated into a broadly (and variously) delineated third approach to ethnicity, namely, 'constructivism'. Influenced by the post-



structuralist theoretical discourse in general, and more specifically by Anderson's conceptualization of the nation as an 'imagined community', most constructivists incorporated and built upon insights of the two earlier perspectives while also turning them on their heads. For constructivists, writes Young, 'the essence of the problematic is the creation of ethnicity':

[t]he constructivist inverts the logic of the instrumentalist and primordialist, both of whom presume the existence of communal consciousness, either as a weapon in pursuit of collective advantage or as inner essence. The constructivist sees ethnicity as the product of human agency, a creative social act through which such commonalities as speech code, cultural practice, ecological adaptation, and political organization become woven into a consciousness of shared identity.... The constructivist thus places higher stress on contingency, flux, and change of identity than the other two approaches would concede.

Constructivist approaches move beyond taking the ethnic unit, ethnic identity, or ethnicity for granted or accepting these as givens. Instead, ethnic groups and ethnicity need to be explained and accounted for in dynamic terms. This allows for theorising and reconstructing ethnicity as it evolves, redefines itself, and is redefined by others over time; it invites the consideration of complexity and fluidity, of the multiple (and ever-changing) forces that shape notions of collective identity. These shaping forces are found from within and without, and by both the powerful and the dominated. In short, constructivist notions are – or can certainly be construed to be – fundamentally historical. It is thus hardly surprising that while a wide range of scholars across disciplines have contributed to the constructivist approach to ethnicity, historians, - including, and perhaps especially, historians of Africa – have been influential in this endeavour (Atkinson 1999:23).

On the whole, I find these classifications very fascinating and useful – first, in order to assist in placing one in the ethnic firmament of Malawi; secondly; in order to judge the critics of ethnic nationalism in Malawi and, finally, in order to begin to understand ethnic group dynamics and conflict in Malawi and elsewhere. It is fair, for instance, to expect that those people in Malawi with little or no contact with other ethnic groups are most likely to be "primordialists", and would be too easily dismissed by critics as "primitive". "Epiphenominalist ethnicists would be dismissed as opportunistic by



critics who might consider themselves as “enlightened” and principled. Supporters of the ascriptive approach would be described with an air of disappointment as “enlightened persons who should know better”, or as “closet opportunists with a hidden agenda!” (Atkinson 1999). It is clear that governments that bent on homogenizing a people and making one country out of many ethnic nations, might dismiss every type of ethnicist as undesirable, and hence seek to crush them. This could lead to ethnic-state conflict. One can only hope that it does not happen in Malawi as it will only expose the ignorance of our social engineers and political actors.

What this boils down to is that ethnicity as a cultural anthropological category remains a complex and an ambivalent concept that avoids neat approximations. The paradoxical feature of the phenomenon is rooted in the abiding ambivalence of human nature itself. For people are not only social beings; they are also innately religious, which means we have resist any mono-directional approach to human phenomena like ethnicity.

In order to understand ‘interculturalisation’ in this study which is concerned with dialogue taking place in the missiological enterprise on the role of ethnicity in theology and development, it is now necessary to investigate the biblical anthropological aspects and theological perspective of ethnicity. We do this in order to establish the Biblical anthropological principles and the kingdom of God values that can transform ethnicity for the common good of humankind.

3.5 BIBLICAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL PRAXIS OF ETHNICITY

As Christians, the Bible is our normative document for the study of theological biblical anthropology. A biblical anthropological view of community begins with the Genesis account of God’s provision of human companionship when God, said, ‘*It is not good for the man to be alone*’ (Genesis 2:18). Regarding this, the Yao people of Malawi have a saying that expresses the same sentiments, ‘*ujika wangalikunda kunyuma*’ (you cannot scratch your own back, you need the other’).The biblical



account of human companionship moves from the companionship of two people (Genesis 2:18) to the families of Noah and Abraham, although these families soon became fractured by sin.

Karl Barth's influential but controversial thoughts on contemporary Christian theological anthropology, as documented in Daniel J. Price's *Karl Barth's anthropology* (2002), are relevant here. The salient feature of Barth's anthropology is that it is dynamic⁵³ - not merely in the sense that it indicates raw motion as opposed to static state, but also in the sense that "dynamic" refers to interpersonal relations (Price 2002:97).

In order to understand the relational character of Barth's anthropology, a shift in perspective is required from former categories of Christian anthropology. The relational implications of Barth's anthropology are highlighted by his adoption of the Latin phrase: *Si quis dixerit hominem esse solitarium, anathema sit*. This Latin phrase indicates the social character of Barth's anthropology: to be human is to participate in a shared experience. Therefore, no accurate understanding of the human being can be derived if we look at a person in isolation from God and others (Price 2002:97). This communal aspect of our human 'beinghood' occupies Barth's attention for the first half of his volume on Christian anthropology. The question may be asked: what provided stimulus for Barth's interest in this relational anthropology? According to Price (2002:98), two possible sources come to mind:

Barth cultivated a deep suspicion of Western individualism, perhaps due to his earlier interest in Christian socialism. The influences of Christoph Blumhardt, Herman Kutter, Leonhard Ragaz, and others who thought that socialism was about to deliver a better world quickly come to mind. But in Barth's later thought it is far more likely that his

⁵³ We have to keep in mind that, among other views the Scriptural assessment of human beings is not primarily pessimistic; it does not bind them to their guilt and transience. Neither is the Scripture optimistic; it does not ignore sin, nor does it rely solely on human inner potentials. The biblical view of the human person is realistic. It uses the notions of salvation and empowerment reveal to human beings who they are. Knowledge which emanates from the relationship with God, creates in a person a dynamic ambivalence. A person is a being who can confess: 'I sinned and I trespassed'. But a person is also a being who is liberated and can give thanks to God. A person can profess: 'I believe'. This reality of faith results in thanksgiving and praise (doxology): 'I praise God.' [Therefore], biblical realism is realism of faith (Louw 2000:155).



anthropology grew out of his reading the Bible, especially the Gospel of John, and most especially ... chapter 17.

Thus, Barth founded his anthropology on the human nature of the Christ of the Bible. In doing so, he did not only ‘safeguard theological anthropology against docetism but also concretized theological anthropology’. Louw (2000:150) alludes to this when he elucidates that, “Barth believes that Christology offers understanding of the basic trait of human beings: people in their togetherness with and a focus upon God. This ontological destiny of a person is grounded in the fact that Christ is, a priori, the Fellow-human being of all. Each person is the fellow human being of Christ”. This link between Christology and true humanity (anthropology), gives human existence a symbolic character. This togetherness of people becomes a symbol of the original partnership between God and humankind. This view has also been echoed by Louw (2000:151) when he states that, “This association is truly experienced in human deeds of love. The human person becomes a parable (image of God) and an analogy of the relation God-Christ (the person)”.

3.5.1 Ethnicity in the Bible

Solar Scriptura: As the Bible remains the irreplaceable normative and authoritative document for the faith and life of the Church, its identity and mission, it is imperative that our discussion on the Christian understanding of ethnicity proceeds from here. This normativity of the Bible in relation to ethnic discourse has also been echoed by Brett (2000:5):

There can be no denying that the Bible has had, and continues to have, an influence on many cultures, and a specialist knowledge of this ancient library is something which carries moral and political implications – whether scholars possess particular faith commitment or not. As the discipline of Biblical studies begins to absorb the significance of reader-oriented literary theory, and the “cultural studies” movement, it is becoming yet clear that scholarly discourses themselves have histories and socio-economic locations. Whether we like it or not, we are implicated in contemporary ethnic issues.

As a “library”, the Bible has much to say about humanity and creation. Thus, despite the prevailing onslaught of secularism and secularization, and the apparent



disappearing of Bible-reading culture in many people today, Barzuk (2001:27-28) reminds us that:

The Bible is a whole literature, a library. It is an anthology of poetry and short stories. It teaches history, biography, biology, geography, philosophy, political science, psychology, hygiene, and sociology (statistical at that), in addition to cosmogony, ethics, and theology. What gives the Bible so strong a hold on the minds that once grow familiar with its content is its dramatic reporting of human affairs. For all its piety, it presents a worldly panorama, and with particulars so varied that it is hard to think of a domestic or social situation without a biblical example to match and turn to normal ends.

As many scholars would agree, one of the prominent subjects of the Bible is anthropology, and in biblical anthropology, human identity is found in God, not in race or ethnic group. The author of the Genesis states: “every human being is created in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26-27). The Scriptures also clearly attest: “When the Most High gave nations their inheritance, when he divided all mankind, he set up boundaries for the peoples” (Deuteronomy 32:8). This verse, therefore, reflects the early history of humanity in which different ethnic groups were associated with different territories. And to say that God is sovereign over the nations is but another way of saying that he is Lord of history – a history that starts with the Old Testament.

3.5.2 Ethnicity in the Old Testament

The Old Testament is essentially a story of a small band of people – a people who obviously knew much suffering through conquest by the surrounding tribes. Through the power of a remarkable spiritual determination to forge cohesion and carve a distinctive identity, they succeeded in liberating themselves. They experienced this power as the children of Yahweh, their only God, who was there exclusively for them and was personalized as such. They experienced God primarily through the lens of *communal identity*, so that whatever did not serve this goal was either eliminated from the story or made subservient to it (Cf. Magesa 2004:3). Hence, as Christians,



the Bible remains our normative document for the study of theological biblical anthropology.

Ethnicity in the Bible (Old Testament) is denoted by several words. An investigation of the use of גר (*ger*) in the Hebrew Bible, and a social description of the גרים (*gerim*) and their condition, will help us to understand biblical ideas of ethnicity. In the LXX, εθνος *lethnos* is almost always used to translate גר (*ger*) and λαος *llaos* for עם ('*am*'). In disagreement, however, different scholars give English translations of גר (*ger*) as “sojourner”, “alien” or “immigrant” (Thanzauva & Hnuni 2001:344). Thus, the Hebrew term גר (*ger*) primarily refers to people who are distinct from, and not part of the dominant group. What is important, though, is the fact that whatever meaning may be given to the Hebrew word, they do not signify much apart from their “racialised” marriage policies of Ezra⁵⁴/Nehemiah (Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 13:3, 23-31). Therefore, the Old Testament in various ways denotes ethnicity both as inclusion and as exclusion. For instance when the Jews talk of גוי /goy (nation) or גוים/goyim (nations) thus they talk of the gentile nation or nations, those distinct from the Jewish nation. If they want to talk of the Jewish nation, then they will say, גויקדוש /goy qadosh⁵⁵ (holy nation). To them the ‘holy nation’ only refers to the Israelites/Jews.

But one indisputable claim of the Hebrew Bible is that God is the author and architect of history. The Israelites were aliens (גרים / *gerim*) before their settlement in Canaan. They entered Canaan as שבט /Shevet (clans/tribes), and their experience as aliens (גרים / *gerim*) became the basis for their responsibility to care for people from other ethnic groups. “You shall not oppress a stranger (גר/*ger*), for you were strangers (גרים / *gerim*) in the land of Egypt” (Exodus 23:9).

⁵⁴ Brett (1996:11) argues that Ezra – Nehemiah is an example of a “long heated conversation about how the boundaries of Israelite community are to be constructed and maintained”. He sees the “racialized marriage policies of Ezra-Nehemiah” as an “extreme position” in the “construction” of ethnic boundaries. By “racialized” marriage, Brett (1996:11) alludes the “lineage-based of biological idea inherent in the ‘holy seed’ (Ezra 9)”.

⁵⁵ In Exodus 19:5-6 God promised three things to the Israelites, that if they obeyed him, he would make them: i) am-segullah (special people/treasured possession, ii) mamleketh kohanim (Kingdom of priests) and iii) goy qadosh (holy nation) (Cf. 1 Peter 2:9-10).



For almost four centuries, they managed almost no state apparatus. God seemed pleased with this arrangement and resisted their repeated attempts to become a state. When they finally instituted a monarchy and became a state, the שבט /clan system continued functioning to some degree until the coming of Christ. Anyone reading the Old Testament is made aware of how seriously God takes ethnicity. In the inter-testamental period, the Jews of the Diaspora were busy *proselytising Gentiles*, and absorbing the converts into Jewish culture. And this was the case until the advent of Jesus Christ and the early Church.

3.5.3 Ethnicity in the New Testament and the Early Church

The term *ethnos* and its cognate words, *ethnokos*, and *ethne*, were used for nation, people in general, and for the Gentiles as distinct from Jews and Christians (Thanzauva & Hnuni 2002:344). The use of *ethne* in the New Testament, as a technical term for the Gentiles as distinct from the Jews and Christians, corresponds in some measure to גרים (*gerim*) in the Hebrew Bible.

We may, however, ask the question: what role did ethnicity play in the identity and character of the early Christian movement? In attempting to address this enquiry, one must start from the life and work of Jesus who is the one from whom the Church originated. The first thing which can be said is that the gospel, while critical of ethnic pride and strife, does affirm ethnicity. Its central theme is incarnation – God taking on human “flesh.” The Messiah was a Jew. As the Man of all cultures, Jesus entered a specific culture. He was a descendant of David, raised in a small Galilean village. He accepted a cultural identity. That is consistent with the incarnation. To become human, therefore, is to engage fully in one of humanity’s cultures. In the first few years of the Church, all its members were Jews. At this time the Church included the disciples and the family of Jesus, all Jews by birth, and perhaps another hundred people (cf. Acts 1:15) who must also be reckoned as Jews since Luke refers to them as “Hebrews” (cf. Acts 6:1).



But Paul represents a view that, within the social space defined by Jesus Christ “there is neither Jew nor Greek, male or female, slave or free (Galatians 3:28); Christ has erased the categories of ethnic group, gender and class” (Boyarin 1994:5). Nevertheless, complexities are still manifest within the New Testament material. For if Paul appears to be describing a “new humanity of no difference”, then the wider contours of his argument constitute precisely an ascription of ethnic identity to the Galatians – an identity opposed to the Jewish ethnos. For instance, the picture of Matthew’s community is that of a Torah-centred but messianic Jewish sect, which regards blood-ties and genealogy and the Jewish practice of circumcision as necessary (though not sufficient) for membership in the community. This concept contrasts with the peoplehood advocated by Paul in Galatians 4:29. Matthew falls between these extremes: the physical and the spiritual descent.

It is remarkable how some of these basic conflicts in biblical theology find their parallel in the recent scientific debates about the nature of ethnicity. For instance, *primordialism* presents ethnicity as not just a function of interaction, but as deeply rooted and durable affiliation based on kinship, shared territory, and tradition (Brett 2002:12). On the other hand, constructivism suggests that ethnicity is more manipulatable and variable; the agency of the subjects concerned has a much higher profile. This is evidenced for example, in Fredrik Barth’s (1969) classic introduction to *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*. Over against Ezra/Nehemiah’s primordial nativism, one might be justified in seeing Barth’s volume as kind of Pauline constructivism.

But Bosch (1991:50) argues that, “The community around Jesus was to function as a kind of *pars pro toto*, a community for the sake of all others, a model for others to emulate and be challenged by. Never, however, was this community to sever itself from others”. Yet the book of Acts, in spite of presenting, on the whole, an idealized picture of the primitive Church, does not hide from us some of the tensions, failures and sins of the early Christians, including their racial and ethnic conflicts (cf. Acts



6:1). The Church went through great controversy and conflicts before accepting the Gentiles⁵⁶ into the Christian fold without circumcision.

Moreover, when we read Paul's first letter to the Corinthians and the letters to the seven churches in Asia Minor (Rev 2-3), we realize that the early Christian communities were as far from the ideal as our own churches are today. Interestingly, the Day of Pentecost marked a living spiritual experience with all cultures; no identities were lost, no traditions were devalued (Acts 2:1-40). The Gospel simply permeated each cultural situation. The Pentecost event was not a reversal of Babel. Prior to the tower of Babel (Gen 11:1-10), all of humanity was of one language; in Jerusalem at Pentecost the community spoke many languages (Acts 2). When the spirit comes, all understand each other; yet each speaks his or her own language. Therefore, Pentecost is not a reversion to the unity of cultural uniformity; it is an advance towards harmony of cultural diversity (WARC 1994:4).

Accordingly, Paul thinks that Christ's greatest achievement was to open a pathway to God that transcended national distinction. Hence, the gospel knows no privileged nation. Human beings from every nation can come to God in exactly the same way through Jesus Christ: 'Here [in Christ] there is no Greek, or Jew, circumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all' (Col. 3:11). Paul was vilified by the Jews because he defended the Gentiles against the demands of those Jews who wanted the proselytes to adopt Jewish cultural habits. He insisted that conversion does not catapult a person from one culture to another.

According to Hughes and Bennet (1998:225), Peter picks up this same theme at the beginning of his first letter. He described those to whom he wrote as 'God's elect ... scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia' (1 Peter 1:1).

⁵⁶ According to Bosch (1991:42), "This did not come about without controversy, as is evident from reading of Acts. In order to appreciate something of this controversy and its significance to the early Christian mission, it is necessary to take cognizance of the differences in self-understanding between the *hebraioi* ("Hebrews"), or Aramaic-speaking Jewish-Christians) and the *hellenistai* ("Hellenists" or Greek-speaking Jewish-Christians)."



He describes those who had become Christians from all the nations as ‘a holy nation⁵⁷ ethnos], a people [λαος/ laos] belonging to God.’ ... ‘Once you were not a people [λαος]’ he goes on, ‘but now you are the people [λαος/ laos] of God (1 Peter 2:9-10)’. Peter is clearly saying here that allegiance to Christ defines the most fundamental sense of community for the Christian. Being united in Christ with others from a whole variety of nations brings into being an alternative nation or people. This reconciliation of different ethnic groups within the Church is integral to God’s saving purpose. Ethnic identity, therefore, is made radically relative when a person becomes a member of God’s new ‘nation’ (Hughes and Bennet 1998:225).

What this means is further clearly spelt out by Paul in his address to the intellectuals of Athens: ‘From one man’, Paul states, ‘God made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places they should live’ (Acts 17:26). It follows from Paul’s argument therefore that no nation is inherently superior to another nation because of its origin, in that all nations have the same origin. Similarly no human being is inherently superior to any other human being since they are all created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26), although this image has been universally polluted by the fall (Genesis 3:28). Paul then challenged the Greek idea that they were superior to other people because they had sprouted from places other than Greece.

The fact that Paul was wrestling with this issue means ethnicity was already a problem in the early Church. Even then, the social stratification in the Church had become so pronounced that the believers needed a constant reminder that ‘sex, social status and ethnic identity mean nothing where status before God is concerned’ (Galatians 3:28). By the logic of biblical Christianity, the question of human dignity is therefore a theological one, and derives its very origin from God. Here lies the challenge to both missiologists and missionaries. Missiologists, in particular, must ultimately ponder this issue. And we need to ask: What is our theology of ethnicity? How does ethnicity fit into God’s scheme of things?

⁵⁷ גוי קדוש /goy qadosh in Hebrew (Cf. Exodus 19:5-6).



Obviously, Christians are called into a new nation and a new commonwealth. This calling is a struggling and challenging one. However, the calling does not mean to deny our nationhood, but to sanctify it. Paul's attitude towards his Jewishness is very instructive in treading a path between transcending and owning one's ethnic identity.

On the one hand, Paul, more than any other in the early Church, was responsible for demolishing the idea that there is any such thing as national superiority where relationship with God is concerned. Rather, in the most fundamental area of our being there is complete equality among human beings. Consequently, Paul can hold his Jewish identity very lightly. He reminisces: 'to the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews; to those not having the law I became like one not having the law' (1 Cor. 9:20). On the other hand, it seems that Paul saw no contradiction between his central conviction that relation with Christ entailed a radically new identity, and what was essential to his Jewishness. He had a passion and self-sacrificing love for his own people. 'I have a great sorrow and anguish in heart', he says, 'for I could wish that I myself were cursed and cut off from Christ for the sake of my brothers, those of my race, the people of Israel' (Romans 9:3-4). This is seen clearly in the way he respected his own language and tradition.

It may also be significant that Jesus – himself an Aramaic speaking Jew – chose to address Paul in Aramaic on the road to Damascus. Jesus, like Paul, loved his own people passionately despite his knowledge that his calling was to draw people from all nations to God (Hughes and Bennet 1998:226). Clearly, there is a creative tension between the transcending and the owning of our ethnic identities.

At this point we may have to remind ourselves of the climatic scenes of the Book of Revelation. The apocalyptic writer tells us: 'and they sang a new song: You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased me for God, from every tribe, language, people, and nations' (Rev. 5:9 NIV). The theme is repeated in Revelation 7: 14-15.



The very ethnicity we often deplore takes “centre stage” in the revelation of future events: tribe [φηλε//*phyle*], language [γλωσσα/ *glossa*], people [λαος/*laos*], and nation [εθνος / *ethnos*]. Why this ethnicity in the victory of the lamb? Tribes in heaven? Perhaps, John is emphasizing the scope of the Church, including not only the twelve “tribes” of Israel all tribes on the face of the earth; or, that the gospel is well suited to appeal to persons of all cultures. Or does he see in this vision the levelling of all cultures, when the mighty Romans will come to God in humble submission alongside battered slaves of the empire? John does not tell us. However, it appears that in the *missio Dei*, any contribution that any nation may make in any sphere to the glory of God is not going to be forgotten. As Howard Marshall (1979) expressed in a comment on Revelation 21:12, 26:

Culture is inextricably bound up with people; it is people which form societies, and so if the people move over into the next world, to some extent their societies and thus some aspects of their culture go with them. It can be objected that this is not so, that in heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage, and human society as we know it no longer exists and is replaced by a colossal individualism in which we are all joined to God in fellowship but not to one another, except perhaps in a holistic, undifferentiated way. But to argue this is to imply that the whole human society-formation, blessed in this life by God, passes away and the life of the world to come infinitely poorer than this world. Surely, this is ridiculous conclusion.

Indeed, we must seek to understand the divine counsel in our *ethnie*. For if *ethnie* is part of God’s creation, and then it is willed in heaven. And when we pray, ‘your will be done on earth as it is in hearth’, do we not affirm that ethnicity is part of God’s ‘gracious ordaining’ meant for our grateful living here and now? This was what the early Christians tried to understand and practice. While not denying their ethnic origins, they lived their lives in ways that were both exemplary and challenging. An example is one of the earliest expressions of post-apostolic Christian attitudes in the *Epistle to Diognetus*, an early second-century tract intended to witness to pagan society. The unknown author observes that believers lived lives that were indeed exemplary and peaceful:



For the Christians are distinguished from other men neither by country, nor language, nor the customs which they observed. For neither inhabit cities of their own, nor employ a peculiar form of speech, nor lead a life which is marked out by any singularity ... But, inhabiting Greek as well as Barbarian cities, according as the lot of each of them has determined and following the customs of the natives in respect to clothing, food, and the rest of their ordinary conduct, they display to us their wonderful and confessedly striking method of life (Breckenridge 1995:31).

Such a wonderful display of life has remained a challenge to succeeding generations of Christians including Malawians.

3.6 THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL SYSTEM ON ETHNICITY IN MALAWI

3.6.1 Demarcation of Ethnic Regional Boundaries

When the British colonial administration was established, they took advantage of the missionaries' ethnically divided regions and officially declared them Northern Province, Central Province and Southern Province in 1921 (Murray 1932:57). These divisions reflected not merely administrative convenience, but also different economic, social and intellectual divisions and they provide a framework for a study of the manner in which ethnic politics has varied from area to area and from period to period in our country.

The colonial authorities also imposed from above parameters of political debate that centred upon the assumed reality of the 'tribe' as a taxonomic unit and formulated a policy of indirect rule through the existence of local powers, chiefs and their advisers. A full-blown ethnic identity came into being, however only when and where a group of African intellectuals were available to give specific cultural definition to the supposed 'tribe' and to communicate this vision through education, though it was uneven because of the unavailability of education intellectuals.

3.6.2 The overthrow of Established African Political Systems



The Southern Region of Malawi had experienced, well before the British arrival, the invasion of other African peoples and the overthrow of established political systems. During the 1860s, Yao-speaking people from Mozambique conquered the Shire Highlands, ruling as a group of competing warlords over the Mang'anja-speaking indigenous autochthones/inhabitants.

The Shire valley was also taken over by the Makololo porters of David Livingstone, who ruled from stockades along the riverbanks. The indigenous Mang'anja chiefs, including the Paramount Chief, Lundu, were killed by David Livingstone's porters and their people incorporated into the new Makololo chiefdoms (Vail & White 1989:166).

Years later, local African leaders who opposed social engineering of colonialism made an attempt to mobilize African cultural symbols to formulate a view of the African past in their opposition to British colonialism. In fact, after Malawi's independence in 1964, political leaders appreciated the possibility of the use of a crafted past as a mobilizer of political support, when Dr. Banda added an historical dimension to the Chewa/Mang'anja ethnic political coalition he had built by reviving the defunct Lundu Paramountcy and crowning the new chief with a ceremonial pith helmet (Vail & White 1991:166).

3.6.3 The Cabinet Crisis

Immediately after independence in 1964, the underlying cleavages in the MCP coalition surfaced in the so-called 'Cabinet Crisis' that occurred at the end of the year, in which Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda found himself challenged by a group of young, well-educated cabinet ministers from the Northern and Southern Regions.

Although the Cabinet Crisis has usually been interpreted in terms of ideological or generational conflict, the regional and ethnic dimensions were clearly evident.



Comments made in parliament by Richard Chidzanja, an important Member of Parliament from the Central Region, illustrate this point.

Mr. Chidzanja declared the support of the Chewa people for Dr. Banda and then went on to complain that the educated young politicians from the north and south had long despised the Chewa and their culture and had denied them a fair share of what politics had been meant to achieve (Ross, AC 'The *Crisis in Malawi, 1964-1965*, unpublished essay, 1984).

As the Crisis developed, none of the Cabinet ministers who resigned or who were dismissed were Chewa. Chiefs from both the Northern and Southern Regions, were, however, deposed, while three out of five district councils in the north and six out of ten in the south were dissolved. But no chief or district council was touched in the Central Region (Vail & White 1991:180).

3.6.4 Language Policy and the Struggle for Ethnic Identity

The first, appropriately symbolic signal of Dr. Banda's political influence on ethnicity occurred in mid-1968, when Tumbuka, the symbol of northern regionalism since the early 1930s, was abolished as an official language and Chinyanja language was renamed Chichewa, Dr. Banda's mother tongue, and was made Malawi's sole national language.

No longer could Chinyanja and Tumbuka be used in the press or on the radio, a situation which resulted in bitter resentment throughout the Northern and Southern Regions, a resentment made worse by Chewa-speakers' triumphal assertions that other peoples of the country were cultureless because 'they had no language'.

Soon afterwards, the Parliamentary Secretary for Education announced that all school-children who failed their required examination in the now-required courses in Chichewa would have to re-sit all their examinations. Later in time, the establishment of the Malawi Examinations Board to replace the Cambridge Overseas Examination was followed by a *change in examination grading policy which required both northerners and southerners to obtain considerably higher grades in their school-*



leaving examinations than those in the Central Region if they were to qualify for places in the Secondary schools.

While economic opportunities were channelled to the people of the Central Region, then, school fees throughout the country were raised considerably, making access to education in the *north* and the *south* comparatively more difficult. The University of Malawi, the source of future bureaucrats and teachers, was systematically purged of its *non-Chewa* administrators and faculty in the early 1970s as part of an attempt to make it a secure seat for the elaboration of a Chewa ethos by loyal Chewa-speakers (Vail and White 1991:183).

Finally, to remove non-Chewa officers from the civil service, a mandatory retirement age of fifty was imposed and large numbers of northerners and southerners thereby retired. Non-Chewa-speaking northerners and southerners were also removed from other positions of authority through widespread arbitrary detentions, especially between 1973 and 1976. Such measures are defended within Malawi as attempts to repair regional discrimination that occurred during the colonial period, though which northerners were given unfair advantages. The fact that they are equally directed against the south disproves this point. The south, as it has been seen, and especially those parts most afflicted by the *thangata* system and by over-population, suffered equal or greater deprivation in colonial times.

The official marketing bureaucracy followed pricing policies throughout the 1970s and early 1980s that were barely distinguishable from those of the former Native Tobacco Board and this fact, coupled with the curtailing of opportunities for raising capital through labour migrancy abroad, locked southerners firmly into continuing abject poverty. School fees were beyond the means of most villagers, and they abandoned the belief in education as a route from poverty. The intensifying land shortage, which the abolition of *thangata* produced only a temporary solution, driving more and more young men to work as migrants on the estates and plantations of the Central and Northern Regions, often at rates of pay below the official minimum wage,



and they abandoned their wives and children. Others found a career in the army, which, as part of the alliance with Dr. Banda, continued to be Lomwe-dominated. The plain fact is that, however inappropriate their dream of solving Malawi's problems through control by an educated bureaucracy might have been, the general clamp-down on non-Chewa intellectuals in independent Malawi was profoundly damaging. There was no serious public discussion in Dr. Banda's Malawi of the problems the country had encountered since independence: the impact of the oil crisis; South Africa's policy of regional destabilization; the collapse of the country's economy in the late 1970s and its takeover by the International Monetary Fund; or the exceedingly high rate of population growth in a country of limited resources.

The Cabinet Crisis, despite its central significance to Malawi's history and despite the fact that it occurred well over forty years ago, remained a wholly embargoed topic. The names of those who contributed to the rise of Malawian nationalism in the 1950s could be mentioned only in secret. During the show trial of Orton and Vera Chirwa in 1984, when Vera Chirwa began her testimony with the statement, 'When I founded the Malawi Women's League...' a tremor of excitement ran through the spectators. The simplest historical fact had become subversive. In this closed atmosphere, rumours of ethnic conspiracies abounded. Such rumours served as explanations for people who lacked explanations: they arose when an intellectually closed society turned in on itself in search of scapegoats.

The language of this discourse in rumour largely took the form of crude ethnic stereotypes that derived from the colonial period's experience of uneven development. With meaningful analysis by Malawians of the problems that faced Malawi remaining proscribed, there was the real danger that the ethnic explanations that were then current would be the only ones available for future discussion, a legacy of the past that would increase the likelihood of communal violence in the country at times of political transition.



It is a firm belief that members of the Christian community should be involved in a vocationally based critical and constructive interpretation of their present reality (Bosch 1991: 181; Guder 1998:18). Changing times require that churches be willing to retool and flex where needed (Bosch 1991:181; cf. Guder 1998:18). Therefore, a detailed discussion of ethnicity in the church and society in Malawi requires a theological approach and working understanding of what ethnicity really means. Methodologically we are working on the correlational interplay between the theory of ethnicity and the Malawian reality. Through this process, the contextual identity of both the nation and the church will become clearer. Therefore, let us first probe the conceptualisation of ethnicity before we investigate the ethnic groupings in Malawi.

3.6.5 The Capital City of Malawi Moved From Zomba to Lilongwe

One of the early acts of Dr. Banda's government in post-colonial Malawi was to relocate the Capital City of Malawi from Zomba in the Southern Region to Lilongwe in the Central Region, his home region.

In 1975, Malawi's capital city moved from Zomba in the Southern Region to Lilongwe in the Central Region. The removal of the capital from Zomba was perceived as ethnically-motivated as Lilongwe where the capital moved to, was in the Central Region, where the President, Dr. Banda came from. People from other regions interpreted this move as part of Dr. Banda's continued empowerment of his Chewa ethnic group.

3.6.6 Albert Muwalo Nqumayo and Martin Focus Gwede

It was in 1975 again, that the Secretary General of the Malawi Congress Party then, Albert Muwalo Nqumayo, and the head of the police's Special Branch, Focus Gwede, were arrested allegedly for plotting to assassinate President Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda (Vail & White 1989:151).



These two landmark events were forerunners of the traumatic rearrangement of the Malawian socio-political order that ensued. The language in which the politics of this period was discussed increasingly drew upon a store of ethnic symbols and stereotypes. Vail & White (1989:151) observes that, “the restructuring of the relationships of power that occurred was seen explicitly as a campaign against the Yao speaking-peoples of the Southern Region of the country and all the peoples of the Northern Region”. These attacks were coupled with an affirmation of the special authenticity of the culture of the country’s Chewa speaking people.

3.7 SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the concept of ethnicity and also a cursory investigation on culture. The reason for taking this dimension is that since ethnicity is a cultural issue concerning people’s worldview, both are necessary hermeneutical keys in describing and analysing identity. The researcher attempted, in the chapter, to address the questions: what is ethnicity? What is the Biblical anthropological praxis of ethnicity? Therefore, the whole chapter can be summarised as follows:

We sadly noted that ethnicity distinguishes groupings of people who, for historical reasons, have come to be seen as distinctive – by themselves and others – on the basis of geographical locations of origin, and a series of other cultural markers. Through our consultation with other dialogue partners, anthropologists and sociologists, as part of interculturalisation, it also emerged from the discussion that ethnicity is so ambivalent concept and has so many faces and very difficult to define clearly.

We also learnt that there are three approaches to the study of ethnicity. These are: instrumentalism, primordialism and constructivism. In same the process, it was noted that the paradoxical feature of the phenomenon rooted in the abiding dynamic ambivalence in human nature itself shows that people are not only social beings, but also innately religious. What this implies is that, besides, social anthropology, we also need a biblical anthropology in the study and understanding of ethnicity. As many



scholars would agree, one of the prominent subjects of the Bible is anthropology, and in biblical anthropology, human identity is found in God, not in race or ethnic group.

The author of the Genesis states: “every human being is created in the image and likeness of God” (Genesis 1:26-27). Regarding this, our investigation found that Karl Barth and Daniel Louw have made useful contributions on the reformed understanding of biblical anthropology as the researcher has reflected in this chapter. Findings from our biblical investigation reveal that in most parts of Israelite history, exclusivistic attitude co-existed with idealistic laws about the stranger. In Malawi, there are only three ethnic groups which have attained majority status in their respective regions: the Tumbuka in the north, The Chewa in the Centre, and the Yao in the South. The remainder of the people are of the ethnic minority groups, such as the Ngoni, Tonga, Sena, Lomwe, Senga etc.

In fact, many of our disputes emanate from the tension concerning which group is numerically the strongest in the country. According to the missionaries pattern, missionaries’ concentration in the north was on education, those in the centre were for agriculture, while missionaries in the south emphasised commerce and industry, and the country has remained as such up to this very day.

In view of the foregoing, it will not be overemphasizing to say that power politics play a very significant role in ethnicity in Malawi. Interreligious differences have also remained a major divisive factor. Until we overcome ethnocentrism to its end and until we get the cohort of leaders whose sole mission is to serve the kingdom of God and cater for the welfare of the people, the CCAP Blantyre Synod will continue to be a platform for ethnic politics and individuals driven by egos. This brings us to the question: Is the CCAP Blantyre Synod aware of the reality and influence of ethnicity on her mission and in what ways is this phenomenon manifesting in the life and mission of the church? This is our business in the chapter 4 that follows.



CHAPTER 4

THE MISSIOLOGICAL-THEOLOGICAL ASSESMENT OF ETHNOCENTRISM ON MISSION: THE MALAWIAN SCENARIO

The African native lacks initiative and the gift of leadership

The Kaffer is but a child and has to be treated as a child...

But for how long?

A growing child not gradually receiving greater responsibility
and so learning to think for himself becomes either rebellious
and unmanageable, or dull and dependant.

Du Plessis, the Mission Secretary of DRC (1903-1910) describing an African (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:105-106)

People will not believe how much the African is capable of *until they have tried*.

Our aim is always to teach responsibility,
and at the proper time to lay it on those who have to bear it.

In many ways *the time has now come*.

It is a fatal mistake to keep the African in leading strings.
We cannot too soon teach him to realise he has apart to play
in the education and life of Christ's Church and Kingdom.
The more he realises this, the greater his progress will be.

Rev. David Clement Scott – Head of the Blantyre Mission (1881-1891) (Ross, AC 1996:63).

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we had a discussion on the concept of ethnicity and gave an overview of the anthropological and theological aspects on it; bringing into account the correlational interplay between the theory of ethnicity and the Malawian context. In this chapter, the researcher will firstly define what mission is then conduct an investigation on the influence of ethnicity/ethnocentrism on mission in Malawi. This discussion is concerned with a broader picture of ethnic segmentation, particularly the influence of ethnicity on mission at macro-level and their influence on the Malawian society. Some of these macro changes carry with them seeds that eventually sprout to grow into ethnic segmentation. The question that then arises is, how can the CCAP be faithful to the call of mission in the context of ethnicity? This chapter ends with a summative conclusion.



4.2 TOWARDS DEFINING MISSION

It is important that we define mission before our discussion on the influence of ethnicity on it so that we are clear of what mission is, or not. The concept ‘mission’, has become such public property in our time to and has gained currency even in non-Christian and non-religious vocabularies. Bosch (1991:1) observes that, since the 1950s, there has been a remarkable escalation in the use of the word “mission” among Christians. Hence, in this project, we will make Christian theology our point of departure in defining mission, since the Christian faith is intrinsically missionary (Bosch 1991: 8). John Corrie (2007: xv) concurs with Bosch (1991:8) when he argues that,

Missiology should not be seen merely as an outpost of theological investigation, compartmentalized in the curriculum and tacked alongside biblical theology, hermeneutics, and ecclesiology and so on. It is rather that *all theology is intrinsically missiological since it concerns the God of mission and the mission of God*. This means that all theological categories are inherently missiological and all missionary categories are profoundly missiological. This way of thinking theologically about mission at the same time as thinking missiologically about theology has highlighted the Western theological problem of a failure of integration that arises from an enlightenment preoccupation with categorisation. Too often Western theology has been done with no attempt to relate it to mission, and mission done with no attempt to think through the theological implications. Thankfully *many are now recognizing the need to bring together theology and mission, so that those doing mission are thinking theologically about what they are doing, and those doing theology are thinking missiologically about what they are saying* (Italics mine for emphasis).

Historically, it was in the mid-1500s that Ignatius of Loyola asked the Jesuits to take a vow of mission, *votum mission*. The Jesuits understood this to be a vow of action and sacrifice. David Bosch (1991:1) recognizes the Jesuits to be the first people to use the word “mission” in terms of the spread of the Christian faith among people (including Protestants) who were not members of the Roman Catholic Church. On the surface *mission* might appear a simple and straightforward concept, but at the core it becomes a tangled web of theological, philosophical and anthropological concerns. Because of



several changes in human history, defining mission is by no means easy. So what is mission?

David Bosch (1991:8-11) has endeavoured to come up with thirteen definitions of mission, which he does not claim to be exhaustive at all:

We may... never arrogate it to ourselves to delineate mission too sharply and too self-confidently. Ultimately, mission remains indefinable; it should never be incarcerated in the narrow confines of our predictions. The most we can hope for is to formulate some *approximations* of what mission is all about.

One will never be able to formulate these *approximations* if one does not have an understanding of the realities that are encountered while doing mission. The fact is that the reality on the ground has come to accept a situation where mission means different things to different people and as a result it has been practised in different ways. Charles Van Engen (1996:26) has made a fine effort to produce a concise definition of mission when he states,

Mission is the people of God intentionally crossing barriers from church to nonchurch, faith to nonfaith, to proclaim by word and deed the coming of the kingdom of God's mission of reconciling people to God, to themselves, to each other, and to the world, and gathering them into the church through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ by the work of the Holy Spirit with a view to the transformation of the world as a sign of the coming of the kingdom in Jesus Christ.

Engen's definition is a good one but provokes us to ask, "Is mission only limited to the non-churched people? Does he mean that mission is not needed among Christians? Is it only the nonchurched that need to be reconciled to God, to themselves, to each other, and to the world? Mission ought to be an attitude of the mind, spirituality, a question of faith and the shape taken by faith, a conviction. It is a state of being rather than doing but it must not be forgotten that it cannot be solely being without doing. In other words, in mission one has to be a doer, which to a large extent expresses one's conviction.

Darrell Guder (1998:4) in his book titled, "*Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*" has rightly observed that, "Mission" means "sending" or "being sent" and it is the central biblical theme describing the purpose of



God's action in human history". The Christian usage of the word "mission" can be related to the New Testament Greek word "apostello," which means, "to send". The researcher, therefore, concurs with Guder (1998:4) when he argues that mission is the "central biblical theme describing the purpose of God in human history". The South African missiologist, David Bosch (1991:9) alludes to this also when he states that,

Christian mission gives expression to the dynamic relationship between God and the world, particularly as this was portrayed, first, in the story of the covenant people of Israel and then, supremely, in the birth, life, death and resurrection and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth.

A theological foundation of mission "is only possible if we continually refer back to the ground of our faith: God's self-communication in Jesus Christ" (Kramm 1979:213 quoted in Bosch 1991:9).

4.2.1 Six Characteristics of a Faithfully Missional Ecclesiology

The missional church is the church that gives expression to the link or relationship between God and the world. In this regard, the researcher finds Darrell Guder's (1998:11-12) identification of the characteristics of a faithfully missional ecclesiology to be very helpful in fostering transforming interculturalisation for social transformation in Malawi. Guder mentions the following five characteristics of a faithfully missional ecclesiology:

4.2.1.1 Biblical Ecclesiology

Whatever one believes about the church needs to be found in and based on what the Bible teaches. ... Biblical perspectives need to be made explicit. Biblical witness should be sufficient testimony to God's mission and the formation of God's missionary people as instruments and witnesses of that mission.

4.2.1.2 Historical Ecclesiology

When we shape our ecclesiology for a particular culture, we must take into consideration other ecclesiologies past and present, local and global, as part of our catholicity. For no one is an island. We are guided by the Christian church in all its



cultural expressions, those that precede us and those that are contemporary with us. The Scriptures explicitly states that there is nothing new under the sun (Eccl. 1:9).

4.2.1.3 Contextual Ecclesiology

Mission and theology (ecclesiology) should be developed within a particular cultural context. There is but one way to be the church, and that is being incarnational within specific concrete situations. The gospel is always translated into a culture, and God's people are formed in that culture in response to the translated and Spirit-empowered Word. All theologies function relative to their context. Their truth and faithfulness are related both to the gospel they proclaim and to the witness they foster in every culture. The church must not merely be transplanted from one context to another without adaptations to the local context (cf. Schreiter 1986:2-5; Hendricks 2004:27).

4.2.1.4 Eschatological Ecclesiology

Our doctrine of the church must be developmental and dynamic in nature, if we believe that the church is the work of the creating and inspiring Spirit of God. It should move towards God's promised consummation of all things with strong confidence in Christ who is the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). Neither the Church nor its interpretive doctrine may be static. New biblical insights will convert the church and its theology; new historical challenges will raise questions never before considered; and new cultural contexts will require a witnessing response that redefines how we function and we hope as Christians.

4.2.1.5 Practical Ecclesiology

This means that whatever we believe and teach can be practised. The basic function of theology is to be missional in the sense that it equips the church (God's people) for the *mission Dei* (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). If our calling is fundamentally missional, then what we understand and teach about the church will definitely sharpen God's people for their faithful witness in particular places. A missional ecclesiology, therefore, serves the church's witness as it "makes disciples of all nations [the Church crossing



frontiers- transforming interculturalisation], teaching them to obey everything that I [Jesus] have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

4.2.1.6 Servanthood Ecclesiology

While Darrell Guder (1998:11-12) identifies the five characteristics of a faithfully missional ecclesiology stated above, another South African missiologist, Karel August, has added his voice as to what a faithfully missional ecclesiology should be. He has added one characteristic to Guder’s identification of five characteristics of a missional church. August (2006: xxii) states that,

Missional Theology is about the Church’s *serving function* to the community, these functions viz. mission, proclamation, fellowship, education, growth, habitual change and transformation will be brought to bear on the church’s public image (italics mine for emphasis).

The six features of a faithfully missional ecclesiology stated above are an indisputably helpful checklist and parameter to measure the essential nature and vocation of the CCAP Blantyre Synod as a missional church. This researcher, through personal experience as a member of this church arguably holds the opinion that we are still short of being a truly missional church. It is for this reason that we need to adopt the missional praxis of God, which demands of us our participation in the *missio Dei*.

4.3 BIBLICAL FOUNDATION OF MISSION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The most difficult aspect in developing a comprehensive definition of mission is to establish the historical progression of the term “mission” which is a post-New Testament construct. There is actually no reference to the word “mission” in the Scriptures. David Bosch (1978:11) alludes to this when he argues that,

The tremendous increase in the use of the word ‘mission’ in recent decades, especially in circles close to the World Council of Churches, appraises to be a hindrance rather than a help. The word ‘mission’ was once as rare in the vocabulary of certain churches as it has become commonplace in our time.

The problem with the escalation and over familiarity in the use of the word “*mission*” is that very soon almost everything will be calling itself a mission, and when this



happens, the term becomes meaningless. For even now, the reality on the ground is that mission means different things to different people and as a result, it has been and continues to be practised in different ways.

In the light of the above, it is important first to investigate the origin of the term ‘*mission*’, to determine the parameters of its meaning, and then to establish accuracy by confirming that it is consistent with the methodology of the New Testament church.

From the New Testament perspective, mission can be defined as a call to continue in the mission of Christ. This is clearly depicted in Luke’s (4: 16-21) rendering of Jesus’ sermon in his home synagogue of Nazareth, in which he applied the prophesy of Isaiah 61:1f to himself and his ministry. In fact the incident is recorded, in this form, only in Luke’s gospel, and it is clear from the entire context that it occupies a crucial place here. Bosch (1991:84) argues that, “Luke 4:16-21 has, for all practical purposes, replaced Matthew’s “Great Commission” as the key text not only for understanding Christ’s own mission but also that of the church. Luke (4: 16-21 - NIV) states that,

He [Jesus] went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. And he stood up to read. The scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written: "*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.*" Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him, and he began by saying to them, "*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing*" (Italics mine for emphasis)

In view of the above, it will not be overemphasizing to say that in Luke, Jesus describes his mission as bringing the *good news* of the Lord to people; to proclaim; to liberate; to release etc. It is clear from the above stated periscope that this mission of Christ is based on conviction of a faith in the father; it involves *proclamation of the good news*. Thus, solidarity with the poor is the centrality of mission in Luke’s



missionary paradigm while in Matthew it is disciple making (cf. Bosch 1991:56). In Mat.28:19 we read “*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit*”. Jesus commissions those who believe or have faith in him to go and preach the good news that he has brought. This makes the followers of Christ to carry out this mission which is Christ's till he comes back again. Thus, our first gospel is essentially a missionary text. Bosch (1991:57) argues that, “It was primarily because of his missionary vision that Matthew set out to write his gospel, not to compose a “life of Jesus” but to provide guidance to a community on how it should understand its calling and mission.”

This mission of spreading the good news about God's Kingdom is realized through evangelism⁵⁸. Through evangelism we become the "seed and sign" of the Kingdom of God. The Church can therefore be looked at as the seedbed of the Kingdom of God or God's project which calls for *all* people to be saved, to come and have knowledge of the truth.

4.3.1 The Three Elements of Evangelism

Evangelism by definition is made up of three elements: (I) Proclamation (Kerygma), (II) Praxis and (III) Prayer. At times the three elements of evangelism can be explained as *word, witness* and *worship*.

4.3.1.1 Proclamation

The proclamation aspect (to proclaim - *Kerysso in Gk*) is the spreading of the good news which involves the use of all forms of communication, verbal - (through language) and nonverbal (e.g. dances, songs, etc). Its main purpose is to explain the good news and make people aware of the existence of the Kingdom of God. This is with the hope that the people who are being proclaimed to will understand and reflect

⁵⁸ Evangelism in this study simply means the commission to announce/proclaim *the good news* of salvation through Jesus Christ (Bosch 1991:403). In addition, as far as the concept ‘evangelism’ is concerned, it is worth noting that the Protestant evangelical movement as well as the Roman Catholics appear to prefer ‘evangelization’, whereas Protestant ecumenicals favour ‘evangelism’ (Bosch 1991:409). While it is important to conduct an in-depth definition of the concept ‘evangelism’ however, that is not the focus of this research project. Those with such interest can read Bosch 1991:409-420 where he has given a comprehensive definition of this concept.



on the importance of this good news to them and to the world in general. Proclamation can be done through different methods which involve Sunday schools, catechisms, homily, songs and dance, etc.

4.3.1.2 Praxis

Jesus condemned or criticized the hypocrites, those who only paid lip service to the word. Gutierrez (1988: xxix in Bosch 1991:423) alludes to this when he argues that theology is “critical reflection on Christian praxis in the light of the word of God.” The word cannot just be theory; practice/witness (*marturia*) of this theory is needed. To be a witness (*marturia*) is as important as proclaiming the word of God. Bosch (1991:424-425) makes the following controversial statement,

The emphasis [here] is on doing theology. The universal claim of the hermeneutic of language has to be challenged by a hermeneutic of the deed, since doing is more important than knowing or speaking. In the Scriptures it is the doers who are blessed (cf Miguez Bonino 1975:27-41). There is, in fact, “no knowledge except in action itself, in the process of transforming the world through participation in history” (:88). The traditional sequence, in which *theoria* is elevated over praxis, is here turned upside down. This does not, of course, imply a rejection of *theoria*. Ideally, there should be a dialectic relationship between theory and praxis...The relationship between theory and praxis is not of subject to object, but one of intersubjectivity (cf Nel 1988:184). In the best of contextual theologies it is therefore no longer possible to juxtapose theory and praxis, orthodoxy and orthopraxis: “orthopraxis and orthodoxy need one another, and each is adversely affected when sight is lost of the other” (Gutierrez 1988: xxxiv). Or as Samuel Rayan puts it: “In our methodology, practice and theory, action and reflection, discussion and prayer, movement and silence, social analysis and religious hermeneutics, involvement and contemplation, constitute a single process” (quoted in Fabella and Torres 1983: xvii).

Jesus emphasized to his followers the importance of being doers of the word. Thus, this calls for us to live the gospel, to feed the hungry, to protect the weak and the poor, to help the oppressed etc, remembering that, “*Whatever you do to one of the least of my brothers that you do unto me*” (Matt. 25:40). Despite this, we should not equate the Church to a non-governmental organization. All that the Church (followers) does should only be for the promotion of the Kingdom of God. This is the priority of the Church - first and foremost, as Rutti (1972:240 in Bosch 1991: 425)



rightly observes that, “Faith and the concrete, historical mission of the church are mutually dependent”. However, to be effective in practicing the word in this dynamic world, as human phenomenon is not constant, praxis and social analysis is required as contexts change with time. This is a call for all of us to be witnesses in our own field of work. This can be in economics, politics, computers etc. We must help develop the Christian faith and social teaching of the church so that the gospel may be proclaimed and lived in every context of life.

It is this element of praxis that puts upon the Christian the duty not only to be a proclaimer but also a practical witness to the good news; to deliver what one believes, “to love thy neighbour as thyself”. If this is the commandment of Jesus then it obligates a Christian to be sensitive to issues in the world. This is because a neighbour is the one *in need*, ***need of the good news***: “*I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly*” (John 10:10 – NAB).

The one in need does not only need to hear and see but also to be attended to at times. James (2:14-16 –NIV) alludes to this when he says,

What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?

Thus, commitment to the poor and the marginalized is the point of departure for orthopraxis, not orthodoxy. Lamb (1982:22f in Bosch 1991:424) argues that, orthopraxis

aims at transforming human history, redeeming it through a knowledge born of subject-empowering, life-giving love, which heals the biases needlessly victimizing millions of our brothers and sisters. *Vox victimarum vox Dei*. The cries of the victims are the voice of God. To the extent that those cries are not heard above the din of our political, cultural, economic, social, and ecclesial celebrations or bickerings, we have already begun a descent into hell.



The Church's "option for the poor" derived from Christ himself calls upon Christians to pay greater attention to the poor (*Spiritual Poverty, Material Poverty, Intellectual Poverty etc without dichotomizing*). There are many ways to do this but *Economic Development* is one of them. The activities of trying to alleviate poverty and the sufferings brought about by poverty which includes oppression, hunger, etc. was Jesus', priority. It ought also to be every Christian's priority even if it is by just giving ideas as to the means of ensuring that the oppressed are protected, the sick are attended to, etc. This allows us to bring in Christian ethics into the practice of development.

4.3.1.3 Prayer

As Christians we should always not forget that evangelisation is Christ's work. In prayer we unite with him and with others. It is in communion with the Holy Spirit that our prayers are effective prayer. Therefore, prayer is not an option but an integral part of evangelisation. We need Christ to fulfil that mission as believers and followers and much more as ministers. In the gospels we see that Jesus was a man of prayer. Although he spent a lot of time with the people teaching, healing, advising, etc. he always made time for prayer. He knew that united with the Father and Holy Spirit whatever he came to earth to accomplish - redeem the world - was made possible. Therefore, as Christians we should never forget that in unity with God we will be able to accomplish the mission handed down to us by Jesus.

4.3.2 *Missio Dei*

Missio, which means, "sending", is derived from the Latin phrase, which implies 'one who is sent to do the work of God. *Missio Dei* is then God's mission. David Bosch (1991:10) argues that, "*missio Dei* (God's mission) ... is God's self-revelation as the One who loves the world, and is actively involved in and with the world; it embraces both the church and the world, and the church is privileged to participate in God's mission." Within the ecclesial circles, *missio Dei* is a very important concept that gained a remarkable currency during the Trinitarian discussions.



Karl Barth was one of the first theologians to articulate mission, not in the context of ecclesiology or soteriology, but in the context of the Triune God (Trinity); he used the word *missio Dei*. The missional Triune God is the one who took the initiative in reaching out to this world and continues to reach out to his creation. God is missional God in his very being and is the origin of Christian missions. The researcher agrees with David Bosch (1991:10) who states that, “mission (singular) refers primarily to *missio Dei*, God’s mission. Missions (plural) refer to the *missiones ecclesiae*, participation of the church in the *missio Dei*.”

In the light of the above, it has become clear that the church is only a participant and never the owner of mission. Mission is God’s mission not ours, because in doing mission, the Church ought to rely wholly on God and His strength. The mission of the Church has nothing to do with itself, but with the Kingdom of God. Bosch (1991:390) echoed this view when he said,

Mission' is understood as being derived from the very nature of God. It is thus put in the context of the doctrine of the Trinity, not of 'ecclesiology' or soteriology. The classical doctrine of the *Missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Holy Spirit is expanded to include yet another movement: Thus, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit sending the Church into the world.

To say that mission is to do the work of God – *missio Dei* – would initially imply that God has a purpose for those whom he has chosen to save. In fact, God has a dual purpose for those he elects. Firstly, they are to glorify Him. Secondly, they are to proclaim His salvation.. The second purpose is the natural manifestation of the first. Thus, the ultimate goal is the glory and manifestation of God.

The Church does not exist for its own glory. In addition, important as the church is, it is, argues Bosch (1991:178), not the ultimate aim of mission. The life and work of the Christian community are intimately bound up with the God’s cosmic-historical plan for the redemption of the world. Bosch (1991:519) further argues that, “The *missio Dei* purifies the church. It sets it under the cross – the only place where it is ever safe. The cross is a place of humiliation and judgement, but it is also the place of



refreshment and new birth (Neil 1960:223 in Bosch 1991:519).” The cross is a symbol par excellence of God’s mission to and solidarity with his creation. It affirms that Christ suffered for the sake of this world and in our place, and the New Testament bears witness to this divine act of solidarity. For instance, Jesus Christ was crucified between two thieves and in our remembrance of this, we perceive God’s solidarity with those who are rejected, condemned and finally killed by society. Thus, *missio Dei* does not make allowance for any dichotomy between God and His creation. The incarnation is the clearest expression of this point of the unity between the reality of God and humanity, humanity reconciled to God the creator (2 Corinthians 5:19). Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1955:66) alludes to this when he argues that:

Ethical thinking in terms of the spheres, then, is invalidated by faith in the revelation of the ultimate reality in Jesus Christ, and this means that *there is no real possibility of being Christian outside the reality of the world* and that there is no real worldly existence outside the reality of Jesus Christ. There is no place to which the Christian can withdraw from the world, whether it is outwardly or in the sphere of the inner life. Any attempt to escape from the world must sooner or later be paid for with a sinful surrender to the world (Italics mine for emphasis).

We should therefore, understand the church’s being in this world in the context of *missio Dei*. Mission needs to be understood as the Good news of God’s love incarnated in the witness of a community for the sake of the world (Bosch 1991:519). The CCAP Blantyre Synod needs this understanding in order to play the missional role of the “light and salt” in Malawi.

Thus mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God. It is not the church that has a mission of salvation to fulfil in the world; it is the mission of the Son and the Spirit through the Father that includes the church. Mission is thereby seen as a movement from God to the world; the church is viewed as an instrument for that mission. There is church because there is mission, not vice versa. To participate in mission is to participate in the movement of God’s love toward people, since God is the fountain of sending love (Bosch 1991:390).



4.3.3 *Missio Ecclesia and Missionary Praxis*

According to David Bosch (1991:372), “a church without mission or mission without the church are both contradictions.” By *missio ecclesiae* and missionary praxis we mean the mission of the church and the reflective practice of mission. A theology of mission cannot be other than a theology of the Church (cf. I Peter 2:9).

However, the missionary dimension of a local church’s life manifests itself in other ways when it is truly a worshiping community and it is able to welcome *outsiders* and make them feel at home; it is the church in which the pastor does not have the monopoly and members are not merely objects of pastoral care; its members are equipped for their calling in society; it is structurally pliable and innovative. There is need for diversity and inclusivity here.

It is for this reason that there is an enormous challenge for the CCAP Blantyre Synod to wrestle with issues of formality, liturgy, cultural, socio-political involvement and indeed her entire missionary praxis to ensure that all she does falls under the ambit of the *missio Dei*. The researcher concurs with David Bosch (1991:391) when he argues that,

The primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* (missionary activities of the church) can therefore not simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls; rather, it has to be service to the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany. In its mission, the church witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God’s reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the powers of darkness and evil.

There are two passages from Scripture, which confirm the thesis stated above and which are very important to the understanding of the implications of the *missio Dei*. The first is I Peter 2:3-10, which clearly teaches that, not only are God’s people chosen by Him, but that God has a purpose for those whom he calls. Those who are chosen by God must also serve Him – there is no distinction drawn between salvation and service. The second passage is I John 1:2-4, which confirms what has been said



above. As said earlier on in this chapter, God actually has a dual purpose for those He elects: First, they are to glorify Him, and second, they are to proclaim His salvation. Thus, John declares, “That which we have seen and heard we proclaim unto you, that you also may have fellowship with us” (I John 1:2-4, NASB 1981:1271).

4.3.4 The Eight Features of *Missio Ecclesia* (Missionary Activities)

Missio Dei, then is God’s involvement in and with the world through his chosen people. The following list constitutes ways by which the church can prepare the entire faith community in the promise of God’s reign and the ongoing struggle with the powers of darkness:

- | | |
|---|--|
| i} Proclamation/Preaching (<i>Kerygma</i>); | v} Teaching (<i>Didaskkalia</i>); |
| ii} Witness (<i>Marturia</i>); | vi} Administration (<i>Kubernesis</i>); |
| iii} Communion (<i>Koinonia</i>); | vii} Pastoral care (<i>Paraklesis</i>) and |
| iv} Service (<i>Diakonia</i>); | viii} Ecumenism (<i>Oikonomeo</i>). |

If the church faithfully engages in the above stated missionary activities, she will prove that it is possible for her to be in the world and at the same not be of the world. This is the only way she can be a forerunner of the kingdom of God in the world, and if she fails to be a forerunner of the kingdom of God, then she becomes a countersign. This is critical, because our *missiones ecclesiae* (missionary activities of the church) are empty and meaningless unless they reflect the *missio Dei* (cf. Bosch 1991:391).

Therefore, *missio Dei* can be summed up in the following statement: God’s intention is to use the whole body of believers to accomplish His work (cf. Eph. 4:11-16). Interculturalisation, therefore, is inclusive, willingness to embrace the other, and reconciling the whole human kind to God and to one another.



4.4 THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNICITY AND CULTURE ON THE CHURCH

4.4.1 The Macro-Level Aspects Influencing Malawi

The Presbyterian Christianity in Malawi was brought by the Scottish missionaries who had their own way of life, language, belief systems, values and world view. Different cultures met (African and European) as they endeavoured to communicate with the indigenous Malawians who had their own way of life, belief systems, values, languages and worldview. The first converts to Christianity among the indigenous Africans were very instrumental in the success of the missionary enterprise without which the Scottish missionaries would not have succeeded. They acted as cultural mediators between the missionaries and local Malawi as most of them worked as interpreters. The local Malawian missionaries/evangelists were the ones who were involved in the expansion of mission stations to remotest areas distant from their own home. For instance, evangelists of Blantyre Mission were the indigenous insiders who were effectively engaged in intercultural dialogue within the socio-political context in various communities in our country.

However, a critical observation of the local African missionaries and Western missionaries will reveal to us that Western missionaries endeavoured to impart to the African not only the gospel but also Western culture. John Philip (1828a: ix, quoted in Bosch 1991:305), superintendent of the London Missionary Society at the Cape of Good Hope from 1819 unravels this in the following submission,

Our missionaries ... are everywhere scattering the seeds of civilization, social order, happiness, they are, by the unexceptionable means, extending British interests, British influence, and the British Empire. *Whenever the missionary places his or her standard among savage tribe, their prejudices against the colonial government give way* (Italics mine).

Again, he wrote,

Missionary stations are the most efficient agents, which can be employed to promote the internal strength of our colonies, and the cheapest and best military posts that a wise government can employ to defend its frontier against the predatory incursions of *savage tribes* (Philip 1828b:227 quoted in Bosch 1991:305).



And Lamin Sanneh (2009:153) observes that,

He [Dr. David Livingstone] helped open the way for colonialism in Africa, thrusting Africa into the world economic and political system. In fact he did do that, and perhaps worse. His wish was to see the Zambezi region develop into a successful commercial field⁵⁹ — cultivating and exporting cotton... had in it the seeds of imperial rivalry and expansion. It is important to remember that the first Christian missions in the Zambezi were the Dominicans and the Jesuits, whose evangelistic efforts among the Africans failed. But they had ideas of developing the region into a viable commercial field (see Rea 1976). In a letter to Moffat (April 20, 1860), Livingstone described his worry about increasing Portuguese and French intrusion in the region, with the alarming prospects of restarting the defunct missions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

And David Livingstone in his letter to Moffat is further quoted by Lamin Sanneh (2009:153) as concluding with the following submission,

It is therefore high time for the church to move, and I think that the field that is opened by the Shire [river in Malawi] is glorious one. It opens a cotton country of unlimited extent, and presents features different from any you passed through in the south. It is very beautiful; but the missionaries have a hard task in the reduction of the language, and the people know nothing of their motives. It is, too, the slave market...There is no large confederation of nation to hinder [the missionaries], and the introduction of lawful commerce and the gospel will eat the unlawful traffic out. (Wallis 1945, 91).

In view of the aforesaid, European ethnocentrism was exported on the mission field. Despite their claim to have brought civilization, they did not always live a civilized life themselves. They resorted to dishonest means and deceit to achieve particular goals and were given to persistent propagation of outright falsehoods, using untruths, deliberate falsehoods, entirely false claims, deliberate fabrications, complete fabrications and lies. Lamin Sanneh (2009:153) alludes to this when he observes that, “In a candid expression of his secret strategy, David Livingstone wrote in a confidential letter to Professor Sedgwick of Cambridge that he had a design in mind that he would not divulge in public.” About his secret designs, Livingstone wrote,

That you may have a clear idea of my objects, I may state that they have more in them than meets the eye. They are not merely exploratory, for I go with the intention of benefiting both

⁵⁹ President Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika of Malawi has revived this vision by his ambitious dream of the Nsanje –Zambezi in-land Port which is under construction and to be completed in December 2010.



the African and *my own countrymen*. I take a practical mining geologist to tell us of the mineral resources of the country, an economic botanist to give a full report of the vegetable productions, an artist to give the scenery, and a naval officer to tell of the capacity of river communications, and a moral agent to lay a Christian foundation for anything that may follow. All this machinery has for its ostensible object the development of African trade and the promotion of civilization; *but what I can tell to none but such as you, in whom I have confidence, is this. I hope it may result in an English colony in the healthy high lands of Central Africa.* (Kirk 1965, 1:305 quoted in Sanneh 2009:154 – italics mine for emphasis).

In view of the above, it will not be overemphasizing to state that Livingstone was on an empire building mission for he helped open the way for colonialism in Africa, and Malawi in particular. In addition, he also helped expose European ethnicity as evidenced by his worry about the Portuguese and French missionary activities in the region (cf. Sanneh 2009:153).

Statements of ethnic prejudice such as the ones stated above influenced some Western missionaries to disregard their endeavour to strive to understand the African culture without any prejudice or stereotype as they had their own ulterior motives. Mzee Jomo Kenyatta (quoted in Sanneh: 1993:154), the late former President of Kenya, in his book titled '*Facing Mount Kenya*' spoke of the European missionary presumptuousness and prejudice toward African culture. He argued that missionaries regarded the African 'as a clean slate on which anything could be written'.

Some European missionaries had an intentional unwillingness or inability to understand the culturally different African, yet they expected an African to take wholeheartedly all cultural values and beliefs as religious dogmas and keep them sacred and unchallenged.

According to Lamin Sanneh (1993:152-3), when missionaries sought to transmit the gospel through the mother tongue of Africans, they committed themselves to operating in a medium in which Africans had the first and last advantage, because advancing the project of mission in the mother tongue requires a corresponding



advance in penetrating culture. So Africans learnt enormously from the encounter, but so did the Western missionaries. However, the Western missionaries, coming from a background of a century-old history of slavery and colonialism, came with a cultural superiority mentality; they perceived the African culture as primitive or of backwardness. Although they attempted to go for a cross-cultural acclimatization, they still remained outsiders of the African culture as they considered themselves as insiders of the Christian religion (Sanneh 1993:152-153). They regarded Africans as savages and themselves as custodians of the civilised way of life. Yet the indigenous insiders were Christians and some of them evangelists. To this day, any criticism against the missionaries is perceived by white European missionaries as being anti-missionary and unappreciative.

Western missionary enterprise ignored the indigenous culture within its paradigm of the three 'Cs', (Civilization, Commerce, and Christianity) because of their desire to play referee over the African culture they did not understand. This researcher argued in chapter 2 that tendencies such as those discussed above acted as harbingers to modern ethnocentrism and regionalism within the CCAP family and Malawi at large.

European missionaries claimed to have brought civilization to Africa, but they did not always live in a civilized way themselves. This mission model of cultural superiority and distorted ecclesiology is the one that the autonomous CCAP Synods inherited from the White European missionaries. This mission model is tearing apart the unity of the Church and spirit of ecumenism in Malawi. This is one of the White European missionaries' legacies that we are ashamed to mention, and find very painful to remember. For instance, in chapter 2 we noted that among the events impinging on the mission theatre in the CCAP Blantyre synod was the hostile racial interaction between the Scots and Englishmen, as well as the white European missionaries, planters and colonial administrators and the indigenous inhabitants (Ross, AC 1996:115-116; Ross, KR 1996:182-193).



4.4.2 Ethnicity along Regional⁶⁰ Boundaries

By and large the missionary denominations were mostly established along tribal lines. For instance, the CCAP Blantyre Synod drew its membership from the Southern Region's predominantly Yao and Nyanja speaking people. So 90% of the present day CCAP Blantyre Synod members are from the Southern part of Malawi. This implies that its growth in terms of membership is more biological than theological. The waves of Pentecostalism have taken this position as an opportunity to preach about freedom of membership beyond tribal lines.

4.4.3 Insufficient Understanding of People's Culture

Scottish missionaries' work at Blantyre Mission in Malawi was, however, undermined and harmed by some members of the pioneer mission group who did not understand the African culture but went on to concern themselves more with commerce and colonial matters⁶¹ than with evangelism or education (Ross, AC 1996:20, 131; cf. White 1987:22-29, 50-53). These distractions led to the infamous crisis of the Blantyre Mission in the initial years of her establishment since such mission authorities were somewhat responsible for civil jurisdiction that resulted in the death [execution] of two Malawians (Chinchen 2001:30). As unthinkable as that may sound today, Ross, AC (1996:20) quotes Duff MacDonald as saying,

We arrived at Blantyre at a very critical period of the mission's history.... Many of the artisans did not wish to continue in the service of the mission, believing that they would find it better to become traders and chiefs among the natives ... some were large landed proprietors in their own right (MacDonald, *Africana*, Vol.2, p. 82).

⁶⁰ The concept of region is perhaps the most important in the historical study of ecclesiastical geography in Malawi. Its centrality is due at least in part, to its having been proposed as an organizing principle at the inception of missionary enterprise in our country. Hence, region is the central focus of concern in the study of Presbyterian Christianity in Malawi. Regarding this, you find the existence of persistent religious regions and sub-regions, in each of which certain denominations or important characteristic loom particularly large.

⁶¹ The colonial administration, missionaries and planters, had initially joined hands to run the country. Together, they formulated land and labour policies with the interest of only Europeans in mind (Muluzi et al 1999:69)



This is an occurrence that was inductive of many of the so called missionary aids – busying themselves with self-enrichment and exploitation. These were indeed the building blocks of colonialism. Such were the shameful qualities that some mission staff of the pioneer group from the Church of Scotland to Malawi had, and were indeed a great distraction to MacDonald’s evangelism efforts. Duff MacDonald recorded another devastating story in his journal that Ross, AC (1996:20) also quotes,

June 2nd. – Shortly after my return from Zomba, there occurred a melancholy incident, which illustrates the difficulties, which may flow from sending to Mission men who do not even profess Christianity.... A misunderstanding arose between an artisan and a native headman, and the Lay Superintendent was settling the matter, when the artisan so far lost his temper, as to strike the poor headman a violent blow, which covered his face with blood.... In such cases little can be done. The artisan if dismissed has it in his power to stay in the country and give a good deal of annoyance.... Indeed one often felt the need for a proper government in such a remote place. It was no uncommon thing for an artisan to threaten to shoot his fellow labourers, and to send them letters challenging them to deadly combat (MacDonald, *African*, Vol. 2, pp. 258-9).

Since Dr. David Livingstone⁶² had once acted as a British Consul (Selfridge 1976:17), a post perceived by the natives as a colonial agent, the same dangers faced mission authorities of the Blantyre Mission. Because of these problems, Scott was instructed not to exercise magisterial functions as his predecessors had done. He was to be seen as a missionary and not a colonial agent (Ross, AC 1996:68,131, 166).

4.4.4 Racial and Ethnic Rivalry in the Missionary Theatre

One of the factors that worked against the spread of the gospel by the Scottish missionaries of the Blantyre Mission was racial or ethnic rivalry amongst some whites, and an anti-black attitude. One such dehumanising racial incident that is

⁶² David Livingstone had wrongly assured the first European missionaries of the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) under Bishop Fredrick Mackenzie that the mere show of force would be sufficient to keep the African into subjugation. As a result of this advice, Bishop Mackenzie entered his UMCA diocese in Magomero carrying his shepherd’s crook in one hand and a shotgun in the other (White 1987:15).



worthy of mentioning here is the one that was witnessed by Mr. Lewis Bandawe. He was an eyewitness while teaching as a missionary of the Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland in his homeland at Mihekani Mission Station in Zambezia Province in Mozambique, opened in 1894. Phiri, DD (2004:106) quotes Mr. Bandawe narrating the shameful and degrading treatment of Black Africans by some white missionaries as follows:

A large mahogany tree had been felled with the purpose of making timber to be sawn at the boma itself. A white foreman ordered twenty persons including a pregnant woman to carry the log on their shoulders. They trudged along singing doleful songs with the overseer of capitao perched on the log thereby adding his own weight to that of the log. He was urging the labourers to walk faster, flogging those who dragged their feet. At the boma as the white man was getting off the log the pregnant woman started giving birth to her baby. Men ran away from the scene as if they were fleeing from a marauding beast. The interpreter's wife rushed to the assistance of the poor woman who fortunately delivered a live baby.

This is an example of degrading, dehumanizing and shameful treatment of black Africans by some white European missionaries. In fact, the purpose of the Blantyre Mission was to develop an industrial and evangelical centre that would be reflective of Christian life and civilization, and yet the mission founders concerned themselves more with commerce and colonial matters. As unthinkable as that may sound today, that was the extent of racial or ethnic rivalry⁶³ in the mission theatre in Malawi (cf. Ross, AC 1996:115-116; Ross, KR 1996: 182). Hence, the local chiefs in Malawi felt betrayed by the missionaries for they had initially joined hands with the British colonial administration and the white planters in the running of the country to such an extent that the Scottish missionaries even facilitated both the production and distribution of the Union Jack⁶⁴ to the local chiefs promising them protection and prosperity (cf. Ross, AC 1996:108; Muluze et al. 1999:6).

⁶³ Ethnic hostility also existed between those missionaries who were pro-African and those who were ant-black, pro-colonial settlers (Ross, KR 1996:182- 193).

⁶⁴ The union jack was even erected at Blantyre Mission offices and the pole holding that union jack still stands this day at the Headquarters of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, outside, in front and on top of the roof of the Synod offices. The researcher personally saw this pole that used to hold the Union Jack on 4th July 2008 and interviewed the incumbent Blantyre Synod General Secretary about it on 11th July 2008.



Although slave trading was abolished way back in 1896 in Malawi, Yao chiefs who were ex-slave traders perceived the missionaries as also being slave beneficiaries for the freed slaves now worked at the mission station doing a lot of hard manual work. The bad treatment that some missionaries meted out to the freed slaves was also not different from that of their former slave masters. The interculturality built between the freed slaves and the missionaries was still that of a master-slave relationship not partners. The Home Board of the Established Church of Scotland recognized the dangers of being perceived as a colony instead of a mission station, therefore, they specifically instructed the mission's leaders not to involve themselves in civil or legal matters. In 1881, partially as a result of the above mentioned scenario, the Established Church of Scotland withdrew all their missionaries from the field and sent the Reverend David Clement Scott.

Scott focused the mission's attention on three fields: education, agriculture, and simple industry that could be incorporated in the village setting. Scott's wisdom and integrity manifested in his intercultural dialogue and good public relation skills, which created an enabling environment for the success of his evangelistic passion. It was in his time that the first "mud and wattle" church was built and opened. It must also be reiterated that it was in his time that Blantyre Mission, in 1908, began training her own teachers. By 1910, under Scott's leadership, the Blantyre Mission had become Malawi's axis of education and industry (Banda 1982:116). Thus, Scott opened a new chapter for the Blantyre Mission and because of him, it can be noted that not all white missionaries were racist.

It must be noted that way back in 1962, the CCAP Blantyre Synod had its first Malawian General Secretary, the Very Rev. J.D. Sangaya, making the CCAP Blantyre Synod an autonomous Church (Ross, AC 1996:200-201; Ncozana 1996:15). Then the CCAP Blantyre Synod played a major role indeed in the making of the modern Malawi as she could speak strongly against the British colonial administration as a Synod whose affairs to a large extent by then were mainly in African hands. This will lead us to the next chapter where we will have a critical discussion on the historical-missiological perspective of Church and State in Malawi.



4.4.5 The Chilembwe Rising of 1915

The notions of racism and superiority attitudes of the missionaries brought paternalism into church affairs (Shaw, 1996:236). Because of paternalism in church affairs leadership was not easily shared with Africans. This led to resentment and disappointment of some of the African church leaders. As a result they left the mainline churches and founded the own churches, the African Independent Churches. Most of these churches became very active in issues of social justice, fighting colonialism. The Rev. John Chilembwe is one of them in Malawi.

The advent of the First World War brought a crisis in Malawi in the form of the protest by African Christians, which culminated in the Chilembwe Rising of 1915. The Reverend John Chilembwe was a Yao and leader of the Providence Industrial Mission (PIM), sponsored by the National Baptist Convention Inc. in the USA, with its headquarters at Mbombwe in the Chiradzulu district. Twenty-five years earlier, Yao Chiefs Kawinga, Makanjila, Jalasi and Mponda had taken up arms to resist the advent of European rule in Malawi (Ross, AC 1996:88-92). Thus, the Reverend John Chilembwe as a Yao grew up within a tradition where chiefs had led their people against European colonisation.

Later in life, Chilembwe was outraged both in general, by the demands, which the First World War was making on the African population (Shepperson & Price 1958:235), and, in particular, by the oppression and injustice being perpetrated by the colonial settlers, especially the white management of the nearby Magomero Estates (White 1987:130-140; Ross, KR 1996:149-151) as well as the missionaries' support for the British colonial administration. Other grievances were:

- i) Land: Instead of protecting Africans, missionaries worked in solidarity with the colonial administration, who turned out to be destroyers instead of protectors of social justice. The British waged wars against the unarmed Yao, Ngoni and Makololo chiefs in the Southern region of Malawi by a hypocritical device that they were fighting slave traders (Ross 1996:122).



To substantiate the claim that they were not fighting slave trade but using it as a device, is the fact that after conquering the native chiefs they took the land and sold it to the white planters (Ross, AC 1996:132-135; Pachai 1973:83-84; Ross 1996:14, 122, 132-138; cf. Krishnamurthy in Pachai 1972:384-404). Africans were denied the right to till their own land.

- ii) Thangata or Labour⁶⁵ Rent: Malawians were turned into tenants on their own land and the foreign white settlers with the support of missionaries became landlords. For two months, the tenant was forced to work for the foreign white landlord without pay. For a third month, the tenant worked for the white landlord who paid him what he thought he was worth (cf. Pachai 1973:84-85; Ross, AC 1999:134, 186).
- iii) Taxation with vexation: The British colonial administration in Malawi (then Nyasaland) imposed the hut tax partly to raise revenue and allegedly to finance its operations but many people believe it was chiefly to compel/press the poor Africans to go and work for European estate owners who complained that Africans refused to work on their farms (Vail & White 1991:158). If an African chose to work in his garden and refused to work on the white man's farm, the African's crops in the garden were destroyed in the midst of the heavy round of inflation and doubled tax rate in 1920 (Ross, AC 1996:121-122, 134, 138).
- iv) Restrictions: Once the chief was defeated, his land was confiscated, or he was compelled to sell it for cheap calico or worthless muzzle guns against the wishes of the people who owned the land. It would now be on this land that the people were forbidden to do anything they had been doing before. For example, they were not allowed to cut poles used in building their huts and maize granaries. They were not allowed to hunt for animals or honey

⁶⁵ Land and labour problems were vigorously mentioned by the first ordained African ministers in the CCAP Blantyre Synod, the Revs Harry Matecheta and Stephen Kundercha (Ross, KR 1996: 145-154) as some of the grievances that found their expression in the Chilembwe Rising of 1915 (Pachai 1972:xxvii).



in the bush where they had gone hunting before. The white settler became owners of the land, and the African became a foreigner in his or her own land (Ross, AC 1996:122, 130-139).

- v) Racial/ethnic discrimination and arrogance coupled with name-calling (Pachai 1973:84; Phiri, DD 2004:264; Shepperson 1958:235). For instance, culturally, in those days, the fashion of wearing hats was more popular among Malawians than the wearing of shoes. However, the Europeans demanded and insisted that no Black man should wear a hat in their presence (Phiri, DD 2004:264). At every encounter with a Black man, the white man wanted his supposed superiority to be acknowledged by the African. The whites often called, and unfortunately some continue to call Africans names such as native, nigger, kaffir, bloody-fools. Phiri, DD (2004:264) states that, “take off your hat nyani (ape)” were commands ‘smartly dressed Africans’ heard now and again from many of the white settlers in Malawi then. Muluzi *et al.* (1999:10-11) observes that, Charles Domingo, the most brilliant of Dr. Robert Law’s students, who completed a teacher-training course in 1897 and was the first African to achieve that distinction and who later became the first African Licentiate in Malawi in 1903 (Ross, AC 1996:172) “referred to the missionaries, government and planters as gainers of money and claimed that together they looked down on Africans” (Muluzi 1999:11).
- vi) World War 1: General unhappiness about the service of Africans in the European war and general unhappiness about the status⁶⁶ of the African in his or her own country (Ross, AC 1996:186; Shepperson & Price 1958:234-235; cf. Pachai 1973:84). The effects of the WW1 upon Malawi was very heinous because it caused hunger as thousands of Malawians

⁶⁶ The contentious issue at hand by then was the refusal of the Protectorate authorities to accept African evidence in court as being on par with that given by a European (Ross, AC 1996:186). Besides that, capital punishment could only be carried out on Europeans after the minutes of the trial had been submitted to the Supreme Court which was then in Cape Town, South Africa. But capital punishment on Africans tried in the African courts could be carried out after the minutes of the trial had been submitted to the head of the administration in Zomba, called Commissioner and Consul-General and the first of such Commissioners and Consul-General was Sir. Harry Johnston appointed in 1891 when the country was declared a British Protectorate (cf. Pachai 1973:84).



were marched into Europe as porters in the British Army, leaving women and children without breadwinners (Vail & White 1991:158).

The foregoing are some of the worrisome reasons that made the Reverend John Chilembwe to lead an armed insurrection. Chilembwe and the Malawian community were confronted with what August (2001:287-295) would call,

...the well-nigh impossible task of persuading privileged whites to live up to their professed Christian creed and democratic convictions and do justice to men and women sharing their culture and beliefs. The white European-missionary who sought to convert and civilize them, the trader who often debauched them, the government official who tried to fit them into their “proper place in an ordered society, and the farmer-colonist who wanted their land and their labour.

However, the insurrection was quickly suppressed because the white colonialists were well equipped with guns. Chilembwe himself was shot and killed, many of his followers were also executed⁶⁷ and his church was blown up by the British administration (Phiri, DD 2004:261-275; Ross, AC 1996:145-154; White 1987:144).

The situation in 1915, however, provoked a major crisis for the Blantyre Mission and the churches emerging under her. Most of the so-called “rebels”, not less than 84, had been found to be baptised members of the Blantyre Mission, including Chilembwe's second-in-command John Gray Kufa, one of Clement Scott's first seven deacons and a distinguished leader among the first generation of Blantyre Mission converts (Ross, AC 1996:152, 167, 172). This aroused strong suspicion in the British administration, and especially amongst the white settler community, that the Blantyre Mission's educational policy was directly subversive. In wartime conditions, with the white settler community united in its determination to stamp out any seedbeds of rebellion ruthlessly, the identity of the church was clearly going to be tested. However, this moment of crisis, through God's grace, created an opportunity for the church movement arising out of the Blantyre Mission. It was a moment that gave Blantyre an opportunity to discover her identity.

⁶⁷ White (1987:142-144) has documented the whole story of Chilembwe's execution and has pictures of the arrest and execution of Chilembwe's followers as a revenge by the British administration in Nyasaland.



4.4.6 Nkhoma-Livingstonia Synods Border-Dispute

That intra/inter religious intolerance⁶⁸ based on ethnicity and regionalism are social cankerworms sapping the soul of the Malawian nation should not be news to anyone who is conversant with the nation's affairs⁶⁹. For over five decades the church in Malawi has been engaged in an ongoing rigorous ecclesiastical conflict ranging from synodical border disputes, leadership wrangles, doctrinal and administration issues. The churches that have since been exposed are the CCAP Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods over the Dwangwa border dispute, language and tribalism (Ross, KR 2003:147-155; CCAP General Assembly Report 2006: 7).

In 2005, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia cut its ties with the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, stating that they will no longer recognise boundaries between them. Writing to the CCAP General Assembly on the 30th of April 2005, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia submitted,

The Synod of Livingstonia has *painfully resolved to ignore the boundaries after a century of negotiations over the issue*. ... We do appreciate the reasoning behind Nkhoma Synod's move to build Churches in our territory alluding to the fact that they are following their *Chichewa* speaking communities. We feel it is only fair for us to do likewise to the non-Chewa speakers. ... Further to this, the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia is putting it clearly to you that we are not ready to host the meeting of the General Assembly this year. We will however be willing to attend the meeting wherever it will be held excepting in Nkhoma Synod (Munthali and Banda 2005: Livingstonia Synod Letter).

An incident such as the one described above makes the Christian Churches lose moral credentials to mediate between the warring political leaders in our country. It is also an obstacle in promoting national unity. One wonders why the CCAP Churches

⁶⁸ Churches in conflict outside the CCAP family include: the Anglican Diocese of Lake Malawi's disagreements over the installation of the new bishop, the Seventh Day Adventist Church (SDA) and the Roman Catholic Church (RC) in Blantyre over nepotism, immoral acts and witchcraft accusations on priests/pastors. The Providence Industrial Mission (PIM) and Pentecostal Churches have also not been spared on accusations ranging from misappropriation of donor funds, leadership and doctrinal crisis just to mention but a few. Competition for scarce resources and unsatisfied need seem to be the driving factor in almost all these conflicts which seem to be ethnic in nature but manifesting themselves in different forms. The only difference is that these ethnic tensions are discussed publically in some churches while others chose to keep them in-doors and suffer in silence.

⁶⁹ Chisambo 2010: 27 (Malawi News/Features/ January 2-8, 2010/27).



are busy tearing each other apart, quarrelling over boundaries and the flock instead of uniting in God's mission. Moreover, Chichewa language in the Central Region and chiTumbuka and chiTonga languages in the Northern Region are one of the 'bantu languages' that are closely related. If the Tumbuka and Tonga ethnic groups from the Northern Region living among the Chewa ethnic group in the Central Region can easily learn Chichewa, why should the Chewa ethnic group living among the Tumbuka and Tonga ethnic groups find it impossible to learn their languages?

The CCAP Nkhoma synod also finally gave up over the boundary wrangle with Livingstonia synod in 2009 and said the synods should operate on a no border basis. The CCAP Nkhoma Synod made its position clear at her 33rd Bi-annual General Assembly held at Namoni Katengeza Lay Training Centre in October 2009. As a result, in December 2009, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod issued a pastoral letter signed by the moderator Vasco Kachipapa and senior clerk Rev Kamwendo that was read in all its congregations and prayer houses. The synod also accused the CCAP General assembly for failing to resolve the matter. In a statement the CCAP Nkhoma Synod said,

We have arrived at our decision with great pain following the rather disturbing and worrisome developments that have taken place since the last CCAP General Assembly meeting held in Blantyre from 21st to 24th January 2007, during which, we were in total agreement with the resolution of The CCAP General Assembly, that there be borders between the two Synods. *We acknowledge with gratitude the initiatives taken by The CCAP General Assembly in order to resolve the border conflict, which sad to say, have all been in vain* (Italics mine).

The aforesaid decision which came with some amendments had to maintain some of the synod's rules. Among the notable changes, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod gave freedom to all CCAP members to belong to any congregation under the synod of their choice, so long as they abide by the ruling of the same synod and that when a member of a synod moves to an area where his/her synod does not have a congregation can join the other one upon relinquishing allegiances to the former synod. The CCAP Nkhoma Synod also said that any synod shall be free to construct a prayer house or church anywhere within Malawi and beyond as long as the actions comply with the



national laws and regulations. Above all, each synod shall have the full right to offer its services to its members wherever they may be and in any capacity they may be without any interference from any one, reads the final part of the statement. There have always been accusations and counter-accusations of partisan-political affiliation and ethnic hatred. Regarding this, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod (CCAP Nkhoma Synod Pastoral Letter 2009:2) submits,

We refer with great pain, to the reaction of The Synod of Livingstonia, on their presumed Nkhoma Synod's political affiliation to Dr H Kamuzu Banda's regime, as contained in their report of the same meeting, stating, *"It's true to some extent that political influence plays some significant part in fuelling the dispute. We would love to see that emphasis is also placed on why certain people prefer one party to the other(s). This may include how certain groups of people have been victimized by parties which align themselves with Synods without having these Synods abandon the parties altogether"*. (Synod of Livingstonia's Reaction on the Commission of Inquiry's Report on 27th August 2006)

In view of the above, Englund (2002:23) argues that, "while Christian churches facilitated the advent of multipartyism, the secular domain of politics in Malawi quickly became overshadowed by ethnic and regional antagonisms". To quote a fairly long but useful observation from another renowned scholar, Ross, KR (2003:145-148):

...The Nkhoma Synod of the Central Region took a line which suggested that *its political loyalty came before its ecclesiastical unity* with the other Synods [Blantyre and Livingstonia]. In 1992 when the other church leaders were making their risky and costly prophetic social witness, *the Nkhoma synod acted in solidarity with the MCP government*. The other churches felt betrayed that Nkhoma appeared to be lining up against them in the struggle for justice and truth in Malawi. This led from the Nkhoma Synod being suspended from membership of the Christian Council of Malawi [CCM] in November 1992. Clearly the churches had not been immune from the regional fragmentation which was the legacy of the Banda years... One important crucible in which the attempt to move beyond regionalism might be made is the General Synod of the CCAP. It is more than coincidence that *the Blantyre, Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods are identified with the regional power blocs which have brought a dangerous political fragmentation to Malawian national life*. For reasons of mission history the southern Blantyre Synod is ethnically composed of predominantly Yao and Nyanja, the central Nkhoma Synod is



composed of predominantly Chewa, and the northern Livingstonia Synod is composed of predominantly Ngoni and Tumbuka. Presbyterian Christians have to face the question of how far these tribal and geographical divisions inhibit the development of a real centre of ecclesiastical unity in the General Synod, which is widely considered to be “very ineffective”... It is regrettable to observe, however, that at the very time when inter-region tension is at its height the three member synods of the General Synod are drawing further apart than closer together. The long-drawn out Dwangwa border dispute between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods has flared up to such an extent that Livingstonia has suspended its active participation in the work of the General Synod...The struggle within the CCAP at this point may prove to be the make-or-break of Malawi’s endeavour to sustain a viable sense of national identity and unity (*Italics mine for emphasis*).

The wrangle for boundaries between the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and Livingstonia synod started a decade ago and efforts to resolve the matter have produced no fruits since April 2005 when the CCAP General Assembly first met. Finally, the CCAP Nkhoma Synod (CCAP Nkhoma Synod Pastoral Letter 2009:2-3 sections 2.2 – 2.9) in 2009 issued a Pastoral Letter in which among other issues it submitted,

Realising that the border issue has gone beyond the physical geographical boundary issues to encompass non-ecclesiastical issues, such as language, *ethnicity, politics and economical concerns*;...**Noting** with profound disappointment that The Synod of Livingstonia has already started implementing her “No Border” decision in the Nkhoma Synod jurisdiction, in violation of the CCAP General Assembly ruling, “that there be borders between the two Synods.”...While being...**Assured** of the Great Companionship of our risen Lord Jesus Christ of “*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*”...

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod:

- a) **Fully accepts the decision and actions of The Synod of Livingstonia that there be “No Border” between Nkhoma Synod and Synod of Livingstonia.**
- b) **That such a decision of “No Border” shall apply to all the synods in the CCAP General Assembly.**

It is very unfortunate to note that it has been an age old ferocious ecclesiastical battle of the two CCAP Synods, Livingstonia and Nkhoma. For many years now, they clamoured with uncharacteristic zeal over administrative boundaries for their so called “synod territories.” All manner of weapons: panga-knives, stones, unpalatable



ethnocentric words, “illegal” land occupations, anger, hatred, including (surprisingly) prayers, flew as part of a flurry of strategies intended to resolve the never ending feud.

It is difficult to tell the number of physical and spiritual casualties that have fallen by the way side so far as a result of the battle between the two CCAP Synods but surely there must be some, what with all the burning intensity of the offensive commitment offered by the two feuding combatants. However, the question that has been bothering the researcher’s mind all along is, what and whose war have the two CCAP Synods been fighting? To benefit whom? Have they been trying to help God? Which God? The same loving, caring, patient, forgiving and powerful God we know? Will there be any more energy left for the two Synods to preach the gospel after labouring tirelessly and endlessly in this “holy” war?

Going by recent events, one is relieved to note that the hot air seems to be simmering away, with what the CCAP Nkhoma synod unilaterally declared, “no boundary policy”, not just with their erstwhile “ecclesiastical enemy” but across the country and beyond, meanwhile bringing Blantyre and other international synods (including South Africa) into the fray. However, the question still remains, who has therefore won the battle this far? Is it not surprising that when God desires to promote the gospel, others may have been busy promoting their ethnic/tribal “kingdoms”, leaving the work of God aside. Some of these ethnic “synodical kingdoms” even turned into quasi-ethnic groups promoting their cultural traditions and languages instead of promoting the gospel of truth, which is the very mission of the church.

Who needs any more evidence to show the extent of the increasing hunger for the gospel among God’s people with all the numerous challenges of poverty, nepotism, corruption, marital problems, immorality, hopelessness and hatred inside and outside the church? And if the workers are busy fighting over boundaries, who will do the work of harvesting the crop that Jesus has worked tirelessly to bring to readiness for harvest? There is need for an interdependence of people and their cultures, there is need for tolerance, and there is need for reconciliation, love and hospitality. These are the Christian virtues brought by the Gospel of Jesus Christ in order that the world may



once again become a better place to live in as originally desired by the creator, a world ruled by love, righteousness and heart fellowship. Regarding this, Hendriks (2004:12) states that, “We are united in Christ, the head of the body, his Church and he transforms our diversity from being a source of division and suffering into being a source of creativity, thus one of our richest resources.” The identity of the church is missional in its very nature, but when the Church loses that sense of mission in its nature and identity, then it becomes captive to the social cultural trappings of its environment (e.g. senseless administrative synod boarder disputes, negative ethnicity, nepotism, corruption, hatred etc).

4.5 SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we investigated the influence of ethnocentrism in mission. Hence, after describing and analysing what mission entails, the researcher made an attempt to discuss the influence of ethnicity and regionalism on mission as experienced by the people in Malawi. The chapter can be summarised as follows:

- ❖ It emerged from our discussion that missionaries introduced the germ of ethnicity to the CCAP Christian family in Malawi. Unfortunately, it is also very disturbing to note that indigenous leaders have pampered and kept ethnocentrism alive up to this very day.
- ❖ It must be clarified here that the real problem of the CCAP Blantyre synod is not because the leadership is in the hands of the indigenous; rather, the problem lies in the fact that leadership is being monopolized and manipulated by the rival ethnic groups in the Church. This is the type of ecclesiastical leadership we have, which allows no diversification of ideas from the different ethnic groups of Malawi, except from their own ethnic relations. As a result, other groups have not been contributing to the leadership processes in the CCAP Blantyre Synod because they are yet to be deliberately mainstreamed into the leadership structures of the Church.
- ❖ There is need for visionary leadership with the ability to transform the church



interculturally in addressing the changing Malawian context. Until we get the cohort of leaders whose sole mission is to serve the kingdom of God and cater for the welfare of the people, the CCAP Blantyre Synod will continue to be a platform for ethnic politics and individuals driven by egos.

- ❖ In Malawi, ethnic consciousness aided by ethnocentric stereotypes, combine to create tension and conflicts. Hence stereotyping in Malawi is a very serious and complex social issue with grave socio-political and economic consequences. Each of the main ethnic groups in the country has very disparaging stories and sayings about others that are discussed openly when a foreigner is alone with members of a single ethnic group. This is a common trend even in a church like the CCAP Blantyre Synod.
- ❖ In Malawi, many of our disputes emanate from the tension concerning which group is numerically the strongest in the country. Thus, instead of complementing each other and celebrating our diversity, we are busy competing against each other and destroying one another. There are only three ethnic groups in the country which have attained majority status in their respective regions: the Tumbuka in the north, The Chewa in the Centre, and the Yao in the South. The remainder of the people are of the ethnic minority groups.

In view of the foregoing, this researcher strongly believes that the juxtaposition of the Gospel and intercultural-dialogue for an interdependence of people and their cultures in the only way that can curtail this misfortune of ethnocentrism and achieve tangible development both in our church and nation. This brings us to the question: Is the CCAP Blantyre Synod aware of the reality and influence of ethnicity on development? This is our focus in the next chapter 5.



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Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The Case of the CCAP Blantyre Synod Urban Ministry

CHAPTER 5

A MISSIOLOGICAL-THEOLOGICAL ASSESSEMENT OF THE INFLUENCE OF ETHNOCENTRISM ON DEVELOPMENT IN MALAWI

You [Africans] have boarded a ship going to Joppa instead of Nineveh

You have boarded a ship of Satan

You want money to buy cars *like the whites*

Your God Satan will increase your money

That is why your children have no milk

You Africans are crooked trees

God can never make planks from you.

A palm tree grows straight but you are like bent trees (Italics mine)

*Sermon by the Rev. S. Van Wyk, a Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) of South Africa as preached
from Jonah 1:1-17 (Verstraelen-Gilhuis 1982:278)*

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, we had a discussion on the influence of ethnocentrism on mission as experienced by the people in Malawi. In this chapter there will be a discussion of the influence of ethnocentrism on development.

The influence of ethnocentrism on mission should have some influence also in development. For instance, in Malawi, in the 1970s, the expulsion of the wealthy Asian merchant class from all Malawi's rural areas to urban centres was an example of a situation where ethnocentrism was used as development strategy. There was also in 1970s, an expulsion of the wealthy Asian merchant class in Uganda during the rule of the former President late Idi Amin Dada. The researcher will first attempt to define development and discuss various development theories. This will be followed by our investigation on issues of ethnocentrism in development in Malawi. Again, this brings us to the question: What is development? Is the CCAP Blantyre Synod aware of the reality and influence of ethnocentrism on development?



5.2 TOWARDS DEFINING DEVELOPMENT

There has been a remarkable escalation in the use of the word “development” in that it has become public property. The meaning of the word is always a highly contested area in the development debate as well as in missionary enterprise. The word has many meanings. Govender, Koegelenberg, Wessels and Witbooi (1992:14) argue that, “Development is a political buzzword. It replaces, or is fast replacing, the word liberation...political liberation will prove to be nothing but an empty shell without economic liberation. August (2004: BTh Class lecture) argues that development is a capacity defined by what people can do with whatever they have to improve their quality of life and that of others (cf. August 1999:19-21). Development is a desire, motivation and knowledge for sustainable livelihood.

Hettne (1982 in Burkey 1993:34) observes that development concerns people; it affects their way of life and is influenced by their conceptions of the good life, as determined by their *cultures or ethnicity*. Many governments define development as building new towns, hospitals, clinics, schools, roads, etc. In churches, development is described as anything pertaining to a person's physical and spiritual growth. To some people, development necessarily involves structural transformation, which implies personal, political, social and economic changes.

Development is a change process characterised by increased productivity, equalisation in the distribution of the social product, power, and the emergence of indigenous institutions whose relations with community and the outside world are characterised by equity and equality rather than by dependence or subordination of the developing to the developed. Development is not just a question of infrastructural projects such as schools, clinics, roads and dams as some churches think. Development means a process of enabling people to accomplish things that they could not do before – that is to learn and apply information, attitudes, values and skills previously unavailable to them.

Development is one of the most talked-about objectives of every person and every government or institution. Genuine development, however, is the creation of adequate



capacity (human resources) in every organisation. Development depends a lot on human *knowledge* (mental wealth) and skills, and where this knowledge and these skills are inadequate to the task in hand, social development will be thwarted. The development of human resources must include cognitive and affective development, physical development and the development of suitable attitudes and world-views. It is also a systematic procedure of training and growth in which individuals and other people at large gain and apply knowledge, skills, insights and attitudes to manage work in organisations.

5.2.1 Multiple Lenses on the Definition of Development

Development is a complex issue that can be reflected upon using multiple lenses. Thus, development or lack of it also manifests itself in different dimensions that also need multiple lenses for the relevant assessment of needs of the poor. However, Burkey (1993: 35-39) defines development using four dimensions, namely, human (personal), economic, political and social development:

5.2.1.1 Human (personal) Development

Human (personal) development is a process by which an individual develops self-respect, and becomes more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative and tolerant of others through becoming aware of his/her shortcomings, as well as his/her potential for positive change. This takes place through working with others, acquiring new skills and knowledge, and through active participation in the economic, social and political development of the community.

This shows 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. The individual will remain under the power of others. In his book titled, *"Towards Empowerment for Change: The Recipe for Impactful Living"*, Oyedepo (2005:7) observes that, "Until something changes within you, nothing changes around you. Every change begins from within. Without a change within,



there can never be a change without". For this reason, women⁷⁰ in Africa need personal motivation and courage to acquire change in the church and society to work together with men (Burkey 1993: 35-36).

5.2.1.2 Economic Development

Economic development is a process by which people through their own individual and/or joint efforts boost production for consumption and to have a surplus to sell for cash. This means that the returns to the activity must be greater than the costs: the activity must be profitable. The flipside of production is marketing – there can be no cash profits without available markets. It also means that some of the surplus produced must be reinvested in the same activity or in profitable new activities (Burkey 1993: 36; Deng 1998:67).

5.2.1.3 Political Development

Political development is a process of gradual change over time in which the people increase their awareness of their own capabilities, their rights and their responsibilities and use this knowledge to organise themselves so as to acquire political power in order to:

(1) participate in decision-making at local level and to choose their own leaders and representatives at higher levels of government who are accountable to the people, (2) plan and share power democratically; and (3) create and allocate communal resources equitably (fairly) and efficiently among individual groups. Hence it may be possible to avoid corruption and exploitation, realise social and economic development and political stability and create a politicised population within the context of their own culture and their political system (Burkey 1993: 37; Swart 2003:405).

⁷⁰ This is a very important issue worthy of a paragraph on its own. Therefore, since the focus of this section is not on women, I intend to accord this issue a full paragraph in section 5.4.4 of this chapter.



5.2.1.4 Social⁷¹ Development

Social development is a process of gradual change in which people increase their awareness of their own capabilities and common interests, and use this knowledge to analyse their needs; find solutions; organise themselves for cooperative efforts; and mobilise their human, financial and natural resources to improve, establish and maintain their social services and institutions *within the context of their own culture* and their own political system (Burkey 1993: 39).

The above examples of definitions of personal, economic, political and social development illustrate one way of defining development. Burkey (1993: 38) says,

The relationship between social, economic and political development can be explained as two pillars representing economic and political development and a girder on top of the pillars representing social development where the girder is dependent upon the support of the two pillars which in turn rest upon a foundation of personal development.

Literature on development stresses the truth that it is the people who develop, and that unless there are large numbers of suitably qualified people, development cannot take place even if other factors such as adequate financial investment and adequate material resources are in place. Applied to the aims of this study, development will refer to the ability of the CCAP Blantyre Synod leadership to create new structures that allow people of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds to contribute their gifts to national development through interculturalisation as transforming praxis.

⁷¹ This also and especially includes culture/tradition. For instance, in the development debate there have been concerns that modernisation has neglected indigenous culture. Regarding this, August (2006:1) forcibly argues that “in the process of development as expounded by the developed countries, the agents of development neglected and ignored the culture of the indigenous people in the developing countries”. Thus modernisation as a development construct has ignored indigenous culture within its paradigm of sustained economic growth. The dominant (western) mono-culture of modernisation has led to the developing world or the ‘underdeveloped world’ being continually dependent. The “have-nots” depend on the “haves” instead of being interdependent. This is a very important issue worthy of a paragraph on its own. Therefore, I intend to accord this issue an in-depth discussion in sections 5.2.2.6 and 5.2.3 of this chapter.



5.2.2 Theories of Development

As noted in the foregoing, the notion of development includes, in its broadest sense, both socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects. Seymour-Smith (1986:25) argues that development is, “conceived, quite often, as the process of transition from one type of economic system to another, implying both economic growth (increased production and increased per capita income) and socio-cultural change”.

Bullon (2007:93) argues that the classical discourse on development as promoting the welfare in poor regions, countries or localities had its origins in the Western countries during the late 1940s and was institutionalized in the 1950s and 1960s. This discourse on development included security issues in the context of the Cold War, and viewed global poverty as a threat to the liberal world order. For this reason, an interdisciplinary field of studies emerged, containing a set of theoretical cores with development economics as the leading discipline of the group.

Bullon (2007:93) further states that the most important theoretical schools on the hermeneutics of development until the 1980s have been:

- i) *The Modernisation Development Theory*
- ii) *The Structuralism Development Theory*
- iii) *The Dependency Development Theory* and
- iv) *The Alternative Development Theory.*

There are also two more, namely:

- v) *The Sustainable Development Theory* and
- vi) *The Transformation Development Theory.*

5.2.2.1 Modernisation Development Theory

In the *modernisation theory*, lack of development was defined in terms of differences between rich and poor nations. Development implied the bridging of the gap by the less developed countries imitating and gradually assuming the qualities of the developed; state-led investment, technology and education were critical factors (Bullon 2007:3).



5.2.2.2 Structuralism Development Theory

For *structuralism*, a certain amount of intervention was considered necessary, due to institutional conditions which made growth in the poor areas less automatic than it was assumed to be in the so-called developed countries.

5.2.2.3 Dependency Development Theory

From the late 1960s the modernisation theory and structuralism were confronted by the Latin American *dependencia* school (a neo-Marxist interpretation), which, together with the more global *world system theory*, articulated the weak structural position of Third World countries in the world system. The ‘dependentists’ asked for more radical transformation, emphasizing more ‘autonomy’ by ‘delinking’ their economies from the world market (cf. Schuurman 2001:5).

5.2.2.4 Alternative Development Theory

In contrast, the *alternative development* school tries to emphasize some features which have appeared across history in successful civilizations, as counterpoints to the modernist view. They suggest development should arise from within the context and be *need-oriented*, *self-reliant*, and *ecologically sound* and based on structural transformation. These emphases were proposed to improve the real conditions of people who usually were excluded in the mainstream discourse.

5.2.2.5 Sustainable Development Theory

Along with elevating environmental consciousness a cousin of *alternative development* has appeared on the development arena called *sustainable development*, affecting every policy and understood as the way to fulfil present human needs without endangering the lives and opportunities of future generations (Bullon 2007:94). Quaddus & Mukherjee’s (2004:115) define sustainable development as a process of development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability to meet those of the future. But Elliot (2006:9) defines Sustainable Development as literally referring to maintaining development over time. She further



argues that sustainable development is fundamentally about reconciling development and the environmental resources on which society depends (Elliot 2006:46). Elliot (2006:9) also observes that by the early 1990s, it was suggested that there were more than 70 definitions of sustainable development in circulation.

Rooyen (2002:137) states that during 1992, in Rio de Janeiro, as part of the United Nations conference on Environment and Development, an action plan and blueprint for sustainable development was adopted by more than 178 governments. These governments committed their nations to taking action to facilitate sustainable development and environmental preservation. The action plan was called *Agenda 21*.

Agenda 21 proposes a plan for environmental management and development which provides for a new and integrated policy framework for national and regional action to enhance sustainable development. Agenda 21 includes strategies for good governance, democracy, human rights and an improved quality of life for the current generation and those to come (Rooyen 2002:136; cf. Laffert & Meadowcroft 2000:217;).

Approximately 75 per cent of the world's population live in countries that are developing or underdeveloped. The living conditions amongst the poor and destitute in many of these countries are unacceptable. They often lead to the unacceptable use of natural resources (Rooyen 2002:127). In fact there is widening concern that resource extraction in many parts of the developing world, whilst not fueling full-fledged civil war, is having profound consequences. In many instances, the benefits of logging, mining, etc, go to government elites and foreign investors, whereas the burdens are felt by local people (and more insidiously) in terms of loss of land, environmental devastation, social impacts and the abuse of human rights. One of the most widely known examples in our country is the Kayerekera Uranium Mining Project in Karonga District, in the Northern region of Malawi and on a continental level; we have the Niger Delta of Nigeria.



It must also be noted that economic development processes in the past have been closely associated with rising extraction of the resource stocks of the globe and continue to be so. But the creation of a sustainable society also depends fundamentally on the absence of violent ethnocentrism/racism, yet it is now widely recognized that many human rights abuses, humanitarian disasters and civil wars are closely linked to environmental resources (Elliot 2006:47; cf. Alan Atkisson 2006:231).

Malawi forms part of the developing world. As such it needs to introduce policies that focus on facilitating development which eradicate poverty, enhance economic growth, protect the environment, benefit the local people and address health issues such as HIV/AIDS and educations as well as respect for human dignity. Malawi as one of the global partners in sustainable development should be committed to Agenda 21⁷² as the fundamental programme of action for achieving sustainable development through its ambitious programme, the ‘Malawi Growth and Development Strategy’ (MGDS) action plan initiated in 2006.

5.2.2.6 Transformation Development Theory

At Wheaton in 1983, a new term and concept of development emerged, ‘transformation’, to be understood by evangelicals as a holistic perspective of development (Bullon 2007:96). It is now recognised that social sciences and related disciplines help us understand what is at stake when we talk of ‘social transformation’ and its connectedness with holistic spirituality. Christian development will seek integration at every level. Theorists and practitioners need to understand and recognize that development involves the permanent and existential/continuous relationships between humanity and our natural and social environment.

In view of the above, it is important to remember that implicit in the idea of development is the division that is made between communities or societies or nations that are considered as the most advanced and those which are considered to have not yet undergone the necessary transformation towards prosperity and economic growth.

⁷² Now Millennium Development Goals (MDG).



Countries in the northern hemisphere are considered as “developed” nations while those in the southern hemisphere are considered as “less developed” or “underdeveloped” or “developing nations” (Verhelst & Tyndale 2002:1-2). Most African countries including Malawi fall in the category of “Third World” or “Majority world”.

In view of the above, it must be noted that Christianity came to Malawi during the heyday of Western imperialism, the period of the industrialisation of Europe and the colonisation of African peoples in the 18th Century, when there was rapid scientific and technological development. During this period, there was a powerful tendency to consider the ways and cultures of indigenous (African) people to be primitive and backward compared to that of the white European explorers, colonisers, development workers as well as missionaries and therefore to consider them exploitable (cf. Mufuka 1977:7). Carmen (1996: xi) rightly argues that development ought to be,

The humanisation of the landscape...development, though rooted in economics, is, first and foremost, an act of creation. At its core lies the human capability to create knowledge – again and again, and together with others. In the inside-out world of the school, which has been compared to ‘a train which travels on a single track, bound for one destination, but which ejects most of its passengers, without stopping, at several points along the route...It is demeaning, dehumanising and, therefore, eminently anti-development to define people by what they are not: ignorant, illiterate, poor, powerless. Yet most orthodox development literature starts out precisely from this point: an analysis of poverty, a definition of powerlessness, an ascription of the diseases of ignorance, illiteracy, disability and invisibility.

Carmen (1996: xi) by contrast, believes that, “development starts from the other end: from the power in the powerlessness, from the literacy (and oracy) in the illiteracy, from the ability in the disability, from the formal in what the owners of development refer to as non-formal and informal. In other words, it sets out from where people are”. Regarding this, August (2006:1) forcibly argues that, “in the process of development as expounded by the developed countries, the agents of development neglected and ignored the culture of the indigenous people in the developing countries”.



The former President of Tanzania, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, once said, “The purpose of development is man. It is the creation of conditions, both material and spiritual, which enable man the individual, and man the species, to become his best (Amanze 2006:108; Hastings 1971:37). But the white European explorers and colonizers who claimed to have brought the famous three “Cs” to Malawi, “Christianity, commerce and Civilization” did not always act in a civilised way. August (2006:1) argues that, in the history of development, different frameworks have contributed to the understanding of development of which the Modernisation⁷³ approach is the most dominant contemporary approach that we want to focus on in relation to culture.

Since the modern industrial and technological era ushered in unparalleled economic growth and prosperity for the Northern hemisphere, the idea of making its fruits available to the rest of the world has motivated governments, intergovernmental institutions, and private voluntary organisations. Modernisation theorists sought to spread those fruits by attempting to replicate the Western process of industrialisation and technological growth in other parts of the world. Sachs (1992:1) makes the controversial statement that:

The lighthouse of development was erected right after the Second World War. Following the breakdown of the European colonial powers, the United States found an opportunity to give worldwide dimensions to the mission their founding fathers had bequeathed to them: to be the ‘beacon on the hill’. They launched the idea of development with a call to every nation to follow in their footsteps. Since then, the relations between North and South have been cast in this mould: ‘development’ provided the fundamental frame of reference for that mixture of generosity, bribery and oppression which has characterised the policies towards the South. For almost half a century, good neighbourliness on the planet was conceived in the light of ‘development.

Walt W. Rostow in Bragg (1987:22, 48) saw the process of development as a succession of natural stages from “traditional” to modern, in which societies develop

⁷³ Francois Perroux in Bragg (1987:48) defines Modernisation as the “combination of mutual and social changes of a people which enable them to increase, cumulatively and permanently, their total real production.” Giddens (1991:1) observes that, modernity or modernisation refers to “modes of social life or organisation which emerged in Europe from about the seventeenth century onwards and which subsequently became more or less worldwide in their influence”.



from a backward stage through the evolutionary process until the “take off” into sustained economic growth. This process accelerates, according to the theory, through the transfer of knowledge, technology, and capital from the “advanced” to less-advanced nations... until it reaches the final stages of high production and mass consumption (August 2006:2).

Modernisation as a development construct has ignored indigenous culture within its paradigm of sustained economic growth. He observes that the dominant (western) mono-culture of modernisation has led to the developing world or the ‘underdeveloped world’ being continually dependent. The “have-nots” depend on the “haves” instead of being interdependent (Swart 2003:411-413)

In view of the above, August (2006) makes an acute observation that, “theology values development as long as it is holistic and people-centred,...reflects respect for human dignity and self-worth.” However, the relation between culture and theology will always exhibit a dialectical tension. August then argues for an epistemology of transformation as a Christian framework for looking at human and social change. As a theology of transformation approach to development is better designed to develop an intercultural disposition energised by the kingdom values of God. August’s hypothesis is that the best characteristic of Transformational development Theology is its sense of hospitality – in that it is a theology of generosity which requires a willingness to embrace the other. The researcher believes this is an emancipatory process that should be supported in church and society as it emphasizes non-discriminative cultural reciprocity based on equality and respect for the dignity of *all* human beings.

Whereas many development workers from the West always think of development as “a programme prepared for implementation for the poor”, they have often forgotten that the poor are also human beings with their own thinking abilities and understanding of what they need (cf. Psalm 82).

The tragedy of Western development programmes in which even the Western



churches have participated, is their treatment of people as “objects for compassionate hand-outs” rather than subjects with whom they can work together in synergy to achieve their own destiny. Echoing the above sentiments, August (2006:2-4) observes that,

Human beings are multidimensional with the psychological need for dignity, self-esteem, freedom, and participation. To reduce them to mere producers and consumers is to assume that some basic materialism is the goal of life. Of course, meeting human material needs makes life possible, but as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs shows, it is not sufficient for human self-realisation and actualisation... the loss of traditional values and whole cultures through the cultural imperialism of Westernisation is increasing. Modernisation has provided a radical improvement for one-fourth of the world’s population. But the flaw in Modernization is the assumption that the only way to achieve more satisfying lives for the rest is through the exportation of Western values, goals, and lifestyles. It does not recognize its ethnocentric assumption and deleterious social costs. But perhaps the greatest cost of Modernisation to the rest of the world is that it fosters – perhaps requires – the continued dependency of the modernising on the modernised. That in a word to me is the macro-level of the status quo – the multi-cultural globalised world with the dominant mono-culture of modernisation.

Development is a complex issue and we do not have the space and time to go into all the details. However, we will not fail to point out that though development “necessarily involves structural transformation, which implies political, social and economic transformation, primarily, development should start with where the people are (Burkey 1993:23; Chambers 1997:14,210-220).

Rather than just handing out food to people, our task then is to engage in a process with them to discover the hidden talents and resources that can help them truly realize their full humanity in a sustainable way. This is what the church is supposed to do in line with her calling as agent of the *missio Dei*.

5.2.3 Flaws of Modernisation Development Theory

The Modernisation theory is flawed in several respects. August (2006:2-3; cf. Swart 2003:407) mentions the following three flawed assumptions:



5.2.3.1 Rural and Agrarian Societies

The reduction of poverty is a key imperative development aspect in most countries in southern Africa. In fact, poverty in sub-Saharan Africa is largely situated in rural areas where the poorest people live. For this reason, efforts to eradicate poverty have largely targeted rural communities. In most countries in the region including Malawi, the majority of the population is located in these poor rural communities, relying on subsistence farming for their livelihood. This gives agrarian economies and rural community development special importance in the region and on the African continent at large.

However, modernisation theorists assume that traditional (that is rural and agrarian) societies are in some absolute sense underdeveloped and that their values and institutions cause underdevelopment as well as express it. Regarding this, August (2006:3) argues that, “Resistance to development” came to be a perjorative criticism of any non-Western society, as though the Western model of development was the *summum bonum* of human existence and those who declined to accept it were backward and too ignorant to accept it.” Such attempts to define what is good merely against the standard of one’s own experience are the height of ethnocentrism. To this, August (2006:3) poses the question, “Is ‘progress’ preferable to the adaptive patterns developed over centuries?”

5.2.3.2 Traditional Societies Are Not the Same

Modernisation theorists assume that their idea of development is an inevitable, unilinear process that operates naturally in every culture. They tend to assume that all traditional societies are alike, and they fail to explain the variations brought about by random change and by interaction between societies (August 2006:3). The theory that modernisation naturally occurs in a series of stages likewise assumes that “developing” countries today are similar to the “developed” countries at an earlier stage of their growth and that they can therefore modernise in the same way (cf. Korten 1990:33).



5.2.3.3 Productivity and Development

August (2006:3-4) makes the acute observation that “modernization theory assumes that productivity equals development, and that large-scale capital-, energy-, and import-intensive systems are the most productive and thus the most developed.” Benjamin Higgins in Bragg (1987:23) counters by saying that “productivity is not development, but merely the possibility of development.”

There is a qualitative aspect to development that productivity ignores. What may be exported along with the Western ideal of modernisation is universal alienation and industrial bondage. Indeed humanity can be reduced to a unit of production, *homo faber*, with all the anomie and alienation that goes with it (August 2006:4). Human beings are multidimensional with the psychological need for dignity, self-esteem, freedom, and participation. To reduce them to mere producers and consumers is to assume that some basic materialism is the goal of life. Of course, meeting human material needs makes life possible, but as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs shows, it is not sufficient for human self-realization and actualization.

In view of the above, what then can we say are the unintended results of Modernisation? Tribal people are bearing the brunt of the accelerated pace of Third World modernisation because their way of life is not tied into the money market, and therefore is considered unimportant. These so-called primitive people are jeopardized simply by where they live, for they often occupy land that is rich in resources and much desired by developers (August 2006:3).

As a small, poor, poorly educated nation, lacking significant mineral or oil deposits and landlocked between equally poor nations (wedged between Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania) far from global markets, Malawi stands out as a country with a decided lack of economic advantages. Its domestic market is too small to attract much investment aimed at serving the local market, and the high transport costs and landlocked position make it an undesirable location for export-oriented manufacturing.



Although it has an attractive climate, water resources and relatively fertile soils, the nation succeeded in developing only a few export crops of any note in the colonial era. Since independence in 1964, it has established few new crops and industries, but the vast majority of its citizens remain poorly educated and dependent on low-productivity subsistence agriculture. Herbert (2009:281) argues that, “poor government capacity, lack of political will, pervasive corruption and weak implementation of government initiatives have contributed to rising poverty and continued heavy dependence on foreign development aid.”

Faced with many constraints and few options, Malawi is in a profoundly difficult situation. This raises the question of what can be done when a nation has far fewer resources than fiscal needs and, consequently, very little room for manoeuvre. The country faces so many serious constraints that new methods of prioritisation are needed. The mere act of listing Malawi’s constraints would produce a report hundreds of pages long. The human and monetary resources needed to take action on such a long list are clearly beyond Malawi’s capacity at this point. The following constraints are thus worth noting:

5.3 THE INFLUENCE ETHNICITY AND CULTURE ON DEVELOPMENT

5.3.1 Chiefs, European Planters and Northerners in the South

The Southern Region of Malawi had experienced, well before the British arrival, the invasion of other African peoples and the overthrow of established political systems. During the 1860s, Yao-speaking people from Mozambique conquered the Shire Highlands, ruling as a group of competing warlords over the Mang’anja-speaking indigenous autochthones/inhabitants. The Shire valley was taken over by the Makololo porters of David Livingstone, who ruled from stockades along the riverbanks. The indigenous Mang’anja chiefs, including the Paramount Chief, Lundu, were killed and their people incorporated into the new Makololo chiefdoms (Vail & White 1989:166).



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When missionaries from the Established Church of Scotland established the Blantyre Mission in 1876, they attracted their first converts from the defeated and enslaved Mang'anja. Mang'anja became the language of preaching and education, the language used in Biblical translation, and the first language of the country to have a scholarly dictionary (Vail & White 1989:166).

It is possible, then, to sketch out a hypothetical history in terms of which the Blantyre Mission might have become the focus of a resuscitated anti-Yao, anti-Makololo, pro-Mang'anja consciousness, campaigning for the restoration of Chief Lundu's Paramountcy, drawing into its service the administrative and political talents of such educated converts to Christianity as John Chilembwe and John Grey Kufa, and obtaining critical support from the local Scottish missionaries.

As in the South, in the Northern Region of Malawi, the Ngoni ethnic group under Chief Mbelwa, Zwangendaba's successor, immigrated into Malawi from the Zulu kingdom in South Africa and arrived among the Tumbuka people who were by then under Chief Chikulamayembe viii. The Ngoni conquered the Tumbukas, Chief Chikulamayembe was slain and his people captured. The indigenous Tumbuka and Tonga peoples were incorporated into the new Ngoni villages and chiefdoms (Agnew & Stubbs 1972:42; Vail & White 1989:152-154).

When the Scottish missionaries of the Free Church of Scotland established the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Region in 1876, they attracted their first converts from the defeated and enslaved Tonga and Tumbuka peoples. The Livingstonia missionaries under the leadership of Dr. Robert Laws had initially visited Chief Chikuse of the Maseko Ngoni to ask permission to settle among the Ngoni and introduce to the people the Christian religion as well as to teach them how to read and write, but Chief Chikuse was not sure of the missionaries' real motive, therefore, he refused the request on the first visit. That is why Dr. Laws and his



mission left for the land of the Tonga, further north, and built their second mission station⁷⁴ at Bandawe, in Nkhata Bay District in 1881 (Phiri, DD 2004: 87, 90, 124).

Yet events followed quite a different course. Local African leaders who opposed colonialism, perhaps influenced by the distinctly non-particularist, universalist message of such foreign missionaries as Joseph Booth and James Cheek, made no attempt to mobilize African cultural symbols or to formulate a view of the African past in their opposition to British colonialism. It was not, in fact, until after Malawi's independence in 1964 that political leaders appreciated the possibility of the use of a crafted past as a mobilizer of political support, when President Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda added an historical dimension to the Chewa/Mang'anja ethnic political coalition he had built by reviving the defunct Lundu Paramountcy and crowning the new chief with a ceremonial pith helmet (Vail & White 1991:166).

5.3.2 The Political Economy of Marginalisation in the South

The political economy of the Southern Region was crucial in shaping its history in the twentieth century, and pivotal in shaping the political economy was the fact that land alienation by white Europeans occurred in the nineteenth century, before the establishment of a British colonial administration. Vast estates comprising almost one million acres were obtained by a handful of settlers and companies during the 1880s as part of their strategy to induce the British government to annex the Shire Highlands and adjacent riverine areas before the Portuguese could do so. Local Malawians were left landless, thereby rendered economically incapacitated.

Some Western historiographers who would want to justify the land grabbing by the whites from blacks in Malawi claim that one reason such land alienation was possible was that the bulk of the land 'purchased' from the chiefs was relatively unoccupied.

⁷⁴ The Livingstonia Mission's first mission station was at Cape Maclear in Mangochi. Their leader was Dr. Robert Laws, a medical man. They had an African assistant Rev. William Mthusane Koyi, a Xhosa from Lovedale, Cape Province by then, who acted as an interpreter (Phiri, DD 2004:87).



However, there is substantial evidence that in 1861, UMCA missionaries had found the Shire Highlands thickly populated with Yao and Mang'anja villages (Vail & White 1991:166). The expansion of the slave trade, and a disastrous famine in 1862 soon resulted, however, in an entirely different pattern of settlement wherein the major chiefs ruled from heavily fortified stockades on mountain tops. The plains reverted to secondary forest and were by the 1880s thick with game. With minor exceptions, it was this largely unoccupied and uncultivated land which was alienated by Europeans in the 1880s.

The planters were thus in a strong position to defend their interests against both government and missions after the British annexed the area in 1890, successfully insisting upon the de facto right to run their estates pretty much as they wanted, without government interference and without unwanted mission presence. Most planters barred mission work on their estates, and, therefore, in the south no networks of mission schools located in the villages developed as they did in the north. In the Southern Region education remained a relatively rare phenomenon.

From the 1890s onwards, the issue that dominated the politics of Southern Malawi centred on the nature of the terms on which Africans would be permitted access to the mostly empty lands held by the European planters or the Crown Land that still remained under Yao chiefs (Vail & White 1989:167). That this could become a central issue was because of the entry into Malawi from Mozambique of groups of 'Nguru' peoples seeking land. This immigration began in 1895 and continued for several decades. Some were slaves freed from the chief's stockades, while others were fleeing Portuguese tax and labour policies. They spoke various languages: Lomwe, Mpotola, and Mihavani, but nothing called 'Nguru'.

When these migrations began, the area's European planters were struggling to find a suitable product for export, and their main problem was finding an adequate labour supply. Though a hut tax had been devised to solve this problem, it had proved inefficient. Even when the local people could be induced to pay their tax in labour rather than in cash or kind, this generated only one month's work per man per year,



allowing no time for the development of skills and producing a labour surplus in the dry season but virtually none during the rains when the bulk of the agricultural work had to be done. Moreover, when people needed to earn money, they found it more advantageous to leave the country altogether to seek the higher pay available elsewhere in southern Africa. In the planters' view, Malawi's people had too many alternatives.

What made the new Lomwe immigrants so valuable was their vulnerability. As immigrants, they lacked land. By accepting land in return for their labour, they could be turned into a captive workforce. Two groups took advantage of their vulnerability: the European planters and the established Yao chiefs and headmen dwelling on Crown Land. When the Lomwe migrants crossed the border, the planters had vast tracts of empty land available for settlement which they offered to the newcomers under terms by which they exchanged land for labour – a system known as *thangata*.

According to the legislation of 1904 which defined *thangata*, workers were to be provided with acres of land for settlement and cultivation, the 'rent' on this land being one month's labour per year in lieu of hut tax, plus one month's Thangata labour paid at the current rate of tax. The real attraction of the system for the planters lay in its hidden advantages. A month's hut tax labour could be stretched to six or eight weeks simply by withholding a signature from the tax certificate.

Thangata agreements were informal and verbal and not subject to government review. Most planters had little difficulty in extending the actual labour service to four or five months. And unlike hut tax or tax certificate labour, it could be demanded in the rainy season. The Lomwe were in no position to bargain. If they refused to work, or if they attempted, as others did, to find work in South Africa or Zimbabwe, they lost their right to land in Malawi. The planters therefore encouraged the Lomwe to settle. As the governor commented a few years later, Lomwe immigration had come 'most opportunely'. It populated vacant spaces, it enhanced the Protectorate's revenue and most important of all it provided a ready and permanent labour supply for the



extension of European enterprise. This situation continued well into the 1920s (Vail & White 1989:167-168).

The planters were not the sole beneficiaries of the migrations. Some Lomwes also settled under the protection of chiefs and headmen on Crown Land. These chiefs and headmen were Yao-speakers established in the area since the 1860s. Once the British established an administration, people began to move down from Zomba, Chiradzulu, and the Mulanje mountains and reoccupied the abandoned plains, growing crops. Over the next fifteen years the whole of the Shire Highlands was repopulated. To clear the land required labour and it was the Lomwe immigrants who supplied it. The chiefs and headmen gave them food in exchange for their clearing fresh land and growing cotton, the area's major cash crop. Their labour was also used to produce maize and vegetables for sale. On the whole, the British approved.

Although there were accusations of slave-holding and slave-trading, the chiefs were successful in getting cotton and food production under way and were useful in supplying public works labour to the administration. The consensus was that although the Lomwe were 'kept in a certain degree of mild subjection and occasionally perform a little menial labour for the protection of the chiefs under whom they serve, there is no serious interference with their rights and duties'. The chiefs who came into prominence in the colonial period were precisely those who attracted the largest numbers of settlers.

The result of the welcoming of the Lomwe by planters and chiefs so as to gain access to their labour was the establishment in the Southern Region of a population of great ethnic complexity, a *mélange*/mixture of diverse peoples and cultures. The Mang'anja and Nyanja peoples had been overlain with – and ultimately outnumbered by – Muslim Yao people in the mid-nineteenth century and by the Lomwe immigrants from Mozambique in the early twentieth century. All these groups retained their own cultural practices, and the pattern of scattered settlement throughout the area undermined all possibility of defining geographically discrete ethnic areas (Vail & White 1991:168).



5.3.3 Racial Prejudice - Uprooting of African-Produced Crops

A slump in tobacco prices in the 1920s brought further state intervention. During the Depression years a general consensus developed throughout European colonial empires that the way out of the Depression was to force up prices by cutting commodity production (Vail & White 1989:175).

In Malawi, African-produced tobacco was the main target, and efforts were quickly made to ‘stabilize’ the industry. Officials talked urgently of ‘moral development’ of Africans as well as their material development and pontificated about the need to teach growers ‘a sharp lesson now and then’. It was a generally held opinion that ‘you cannot treat the native as if he were a responsible being’. So zealous was the Board that it passed regulations permitting the uprooting of growing tobacco. The policy succeeded.

In 1934, the District Commissioner in Dedza reported that the local industry was ‘dying of discouragement and neglect’, while the District Commissioner in Lilongwe observed about the African tobacco producer that:

One cannot help feeling that as a primary producer he has been the plaything of the rapacious middleman, and that the Native Tobacco Board has done remarkably little – beyond collecting enormous revenue for itself – in the way of protecting him from those powerful interests (Vail 1991:175).

Prices dropped again in 1937, and African growers showed their dissatisfaction by burning tobacco in protest in near-riot conditions. By the late 1940s many farmers had begun to produce large quantities of maize for the market to earn the money they needed. The colonial state reacted to this African initiative as it had towards tobacco growing in the 1930s, especially after a severe famine in 1949 had underscored the fragility of the country’s agricultural systems. Because agricultural experts asserted that mono-cropping maize was injurious both to soil fertility and soil structure, the state intervened in the 1950s, reducing prices paid for maize, abolishing many marketing facilities for it, and even uprooting maize, all in the hope of forcing a reduction in maize production (Vail & White 1991:177). This further fuelled African discontent.



The government's major solution to the perceived ecological threat, energetically pursued throughout the country from the mid-1940s onwards, was that the villagers themselves should bring soil erosion under control by constructing thousands of miles of contour ridges in their fields. Three facts about this decision are plain: First, it was clearly illogical to impose highly labour-intensive contour ridging in those parts of the country where the land's declining quality was caused by labour shortages.

Second, it was equally misguided to expect peasant producers to take measures to increase their yields without a pricing policy to make the extra work worthwhile. Villagers well understood that land shortages were caused partially by land alienation, and they could see that the European estates were underutilized. They also were aware that the state's marketing regulations required them to feed the towns and the labour compounds at prices lower than a free market would have secured (Vail & White 1991:178).

Third, and most important of all, it was over the issue of contour ridging that truly national politics finally came to Nyasaland. To the Africans, the fact that ridging was compulsory was another example of colonial brutality. To the administrators and agricultural experts, African resistance to ridging was another example of peasant conservatism and irrationality which had to be overcome with force if necessary. No other issue – not even the political question of the creation of the Federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland itself – generated such united mass protest at the village level as it became mixed with the political turmoil that surrounded the creation of the new Federation. This protest provided ample grounds for the Malawi Congress Party to mobilize an anti-colonial nationalism throughout the country, regardless of the presence or absence of local ethnic ideologies (Vail & White 1991:178).

5.3.4 Labour Migrancy, Food Crisis and Government Solutions

Finally as causes had effects, so effects produced further causes. Land shortages and soil exhaustion, reinforced by the hostile pricing policies of the Native Tobacco Board, led to increased labour migrancy and a shift in its sources.



Before World War II, the Northern Region of Malawi, with about 13% of the country's population, contributed over 50% of the total number of migrants. On the other hand, only 8% of adult male migrants came from the four districts where Africans produced tobacco or cotton and the two districts where European plantations held the local population through ties of *thangata* or where they could produce maize or tobacco for sale on Crown Land. By 1945 the situation was quite different, with only 28% of total migrants now coming from the north. Thus the problem inherent in large scale migrancy came to new areas of the country.

The significance of this shift however lay not merely in the fact that more labour was being removed from the villages. Not all the migrants left the country. Some became visiting tenants on estates in the Central Region, while others took jobs at nearby tea plantations. These workers, together with the migrants from Mozambique who continued to supply the bulk of the workforce, had to be fed. Buyers toured the villages to purchase maize, groundnuts, and cassava.

There were also substantial populations in the towns who purchased their food, most of which was supplied by peasant growers. Thus, at a time of growing labour migrancy, land shortage, soil erosion and exhaustion, the people remaining in the villages were required not only to feed themselves but also to feed an increasing proportion of the local population which did not produce its own food (Vail *et al* 1991:177).

The government offered one major and several minor solutions to these problems. The minor solutions included the gradual purchase of unused estate land for resettlement and a legal requirement that the big tea and tobacco estates grow their own food for their workers. A 'yeoman farmers' programme was also created that involved special allocation of land, distribution of free seed, fertilizer and advice, and the payment of cash bonuses for work well done to a select few, a plan that was generally unpopular because of its perceived unfairness (Vail *et al* 1991:177). In the Central Region, where policies of the Native tobacco Board had already alienated thousands, the government took yet another step against African producers.



5.3.5 African Discontent against Colonial Agricultural Policies

As the British colonial Administration devised ways and policies/ordinances which stifled the development of Africans in the agricultural sector, the rate of African discontent against the British colonial Administration kept on rising. For instance, during the 1940s and 1950s, there was African discontent in the Northern Region over labour migrancy; in the Southern Region the discontent was over the thangata system and Yao dominance by chiefs; and in the Central Region it was over economic policies. All these discontents from the three regions of Malawi came to be subsumed in a country-wide hostility to the British colonial administration's agricultural policies (cf. Vail and White 1991:176).

By the end of the 1930s, Malawi's agricultural experts had become convinced that there was an ecological crisis in the making. Problems of deforestation, soil erosion, and soil exhaustion loomed ever more prominent in official reports, holding out the prospect that Malawi might soon be unable to feed itself. There were various reasons for this problem, some national and some regional:

The first reason given for the ecological crisis and the looming hunger was simply that the population had increased to a point where in many parts of the country the carrying capacity of the soil had been exceeded. The country was, in the context of east central Africa, a relatively hospitable territory, and at the beginning of the British occupation the population was already fairly dense. With increased security and improved medical facilities, especially in the form of anti-smallpox vaccine, the population grew. To it were added tens of thousands of immigrants from Mozambique. In 1945, the census reported an average population density of 56 persons per square mile, with as many as 310 persons in the most densely populated areas.

The second reason given for the ecological crisis was linked to the first reason stated above and lay in the nature of the country's agricultural systems. Throughout the country, but especially in its northern half, with its dry *Brachystegia* woodland and relatively lower rainfall, successful subsistence cultivation depended on giving the



land long periods of rest, often extending to twenty or thirty years. Without such respite, the humus quickly vanished under strong sun and leaching rains. Such systems were appropriate to the country's ecological demands, but they depended on the abundance of two things:

- Land and
- Labour.

In the overpopulated areas, in particular in the Shire Highlands and the Lower Shire Valley, there was no longer land available for such fallowing. As a consequence, the soils of most of the heavily populated districts began to decline in fertility. By contrast, in the Northern Region of the country, where land remained relatively plentiful, it was labour that was lacking. Labour migrancy had drained the region of its men since the 1890s, and the labour necessary to open fallow land for cultivation, thus ensuring that the land already under cultivation could return to fallow, was simply not available. Again, the soils of the region suffered from excessive use (Vail *et al* 1991:176).

A third reason for the ecological crisis lay in the effects of the tobacco boom itself. Soil erosion and soil exhaustion were occurring in both African land and on the European estates, where, for example, tobacco was planted on ridges descending hillsides so that unwanted rainwater could be quickly carried away! Tobacco also required wood for curing, and deforestation had become a serious problem over wide tobacco-growing areas. Districts like Chiradzulu, for example, which older settlers could remember as having been thick with trees, were beginning to look like semi-desert. Streams that had once been perennial now flowed only in the wet season. This deforestation, together with the opening up of tobacco nursery gardens on the banks of streams, furthered soil erosion.

5.3.6 The Rise of African Consciousness

In 1943, a group of anti-colonial intellectuals from the Southern and Northern Regions formed the Nyasaland Educated African Council to press for concessions from the government that would open up avenues for African advancement. By 1944



the name had been changed to Nyasaland African Congress, but the aims were still the same, with a great stress upon access to more education and the appropriate rewards for such education. Internal divisions and lack of appeal at the village level, however, kept the Congress weak and ineffectual into the 1950s (Vail and White 1991:176).

In the 1950s the twin issues of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the colonial government's agricultural and soil conservation policies galvanized opposition to the state at all levels of Nyasaland's society and throughout the country. Although these interests were essentially economic in nature, through the limitations of Congress's own analyses they came to be expressed largely in terms of ethnicity and regionalism (Vail & White 1991:178-179):

- For the Livingstonia educated Tumbuka-speakers of the north, politics was still fundamentally about the possibilities of African advancement. The language campaigns of the 1930s had been fought to protect the interests of those Tumbuka-speakers educated in Mission schools. The strongest objection of northern intellectuals to the Federation was that it blocked promotions for which their education had prepared them. With independence, the key issue for these northerners would be the rapid Africanization of the bureaucracy, the hoped-for pay-off for all the years of educational investment.
- In this desire, they were supported by southerners – both Yao and Mang'anja – who had acquired their education largely at Blantyre Mission and who also coveted positions in the civil service and in commerce. For the majority of people in the south, however, politics was about an end to the hated *thangata* system and access to land. By the 1940s, southerners were the most uniformly poor people in the country. Those living on the estates still paid rent in kind, while those on the Crown Land were, years in advance of others in the country, being driven on to the labour market by the growing shortage of land. Politics in the south looked for the freedom to extend the villages on to empty estates and for the ability to enjoy whatever benefits cash-cropping might offer.



- Politics in the Central Region, where *mission education had had far less impact and Chewa cultural institutions* had largely endured were, by further contrast, essentially about agricultural policy. From the days of the tobacco boom of the 1920s and the confrontations with the state about pricing and buying policies for tobacco and maize in subsequent decades, spokesmen for the local Chewa-speakers had sought to secure for Africans all the opportunities of the European planter and Asian trader. One of the most consistent claims of the new President of Malawi, Dr. Banda, himself a Chewa from the Central Region, was that Africans should be allowed to grow anything and to engage freely in business.

5.4 CHALLENGES ON DEVELOPMENT IN CONTEMPORARY MALAWI

5.4.1 Globalisation

In this section, there will be a discussion on the global tendencies and their influence on the Malawian church and society. The researcher attempts to show the correlation between global tendencies and their impact on national development in Malawi. He believes that a deeper understanding of global tendencies will lead to better decisions by both state and church leadership. Understanding global tendencies will hopefully lead to better decisions which will hopefully increasingly enable the CCAP Blantyre Synod, as an ecclesiastical family and ecumenical community at large, to engage in mission work more successfully. In order to get oriented into a better understanding of global tendencies and their influence on the Malawian church and society, the researcher will firstly define the concept ‘globalisation’.

5.4.1.1 Definitions of Globalisation Depend on Focus

In many ways the world has become much smaller. Many factors have brought this about: technology, the information highway, the knowledge explosion, cross-border migration, the use of the English language, sport and leisure activities, multinational corporations, humanitarian intervention by the international community, and the like. Important events whether of an economic, political or leisure nature, now have a



global audience. Global consciousness is replacing the more limited consciousness of one's own ethnicity, gender, language, and national borders (Ryan 2000:5). Our daily lives are governed by products and images originating from all the corners of the world. We can justifiably and reasonably speak of globalisation. McLuhan 1964:93 in Schuurman 2001:31) rightly observes that, "this concerns not only the incorporation of more and more people in an encompassing politico-economic system; globalisation also refers to sociocultural encapsulation processes. We see the world turning into a global village." Although this process has been going on at least since the end of the Middle Ages (Schuurman 2001:31), we have to acknowledge that the current wave of globalisation is unique in scope and impact.

In view of the aforesaid, globalisation is a complex issue and we do not have enough space and time to go into all the details. However, the following comments are worth noting: Van der Walt (2006:91) and Mooney & Evans (2007: ix) observe that, "There are already numerous descriptions of this phenomenon which affects everyone, even in remote corners of the world." They further state that, "often the description depends on the facets and consequence(s) of globalisation on which the focus is."

Mooney & Evans (2007: ix) state that in the end, globalisation concerns a field of inquiry defined more by the questions it asks and its object of study: the world as a whole and parts of it in relation to this whole. The rising of food prices and the global financial down turn, for example have become global phenomena. In addition, Van der Walt (2006:91) argues that, "economically, for instance, it [globalisation] has the result that countries can no longer plan and regulate their economies on their own".

Sklair (2002:35) argues that, "there is no single agreed definition of globalization." And Boudreaux (2008:1) observes that, "If you Googled globalisation on June 12, 2006, you got 101 million hits". And he further cites the International Forum on Globalisation which defines globalisation as the present worldwide drive towards a global economic system dominated by supranational corporate trade and banking institutions that are not accountable to democratic processes or national governments.



This proves that the concept of globalisation is real and that it profoundly affects us all (cf. Swart 2003:405-423).

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Information online: http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/glob_is.htm <10/04/2010>), globalisation is defined as the growing economic interdependence of countries worldwide through an increasing volume of cross-border transactions in goods and services, free international capital flows and more rapid widespread diffusion of technology.

Coleman (2000:4) defines globalisation as a social process and embodied practice. He notes that globalisation as a concept refers both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole which accelerate concrete global interdependence. Boudreaux (2008:1) offers the shortest definition when he says globalisation is the advance of human cooperation across national boundaries. He further states that globalisation is a process of interaction and integration among people, companies, and governments of different nations, a process driven by international trade and investment and aided by information technology.

Rumscheidt (1998:4) says that the term globalisation designates a socially constructed economic process that has assumed the status of an economic necessity and an ideological imperative. She cites the shift in investment, production and trade decisions from serving national to serving world markets, the decline in trade barriers, the shrinking of communications and transportation time and cost as examples of what is happening worldwide.

Castells (2004:72) defines globalisation in terms of social movements. He argues that globalisation is enhanced by informationalisation enacted by networks of wealth, technology and power. Giddens (in Castells 2004:11) defines globalisation in terms of the dialectical interplay of the local and the global where individuals are forced to negotiate lifestyle choices among a diversity of options.

From the above perspectives, globalisation can be understood as the general macro affairs of countries, communities and the interactions and processes of human



integration through networks that alter the lifestyle of an individual. It involves a change of values and choices as well as a deconstruction and reconstruction of identities. Be it in economics, development, politics, trade, investment or religion, its influence transcends traditional values.

And so the challenge in defining globalisation and its influence lies in its constant movement. It is unpredictable and one needs multiple lenses to discern its speed of influence, for it seems globalisation is here to stay and it has no boundaries. Just look around, you will see that although the Afrikaner doesn't like the English-man, some of the Afrikaner people are flocking to the English-man's land. Today even the Chinese are living the American way and speaking English. Chinese people and Chinese products are now flooding the whole continent of Africa. Despite English being almost the global language, one will have to reconsider learning the Mandarin language in order to understand these Chinese people when conducting business with them.

The above perspectives on globalisation show that it has economic, political, cultural, and technological aspects that may be closely intertwined. In most cases these aspects of globalisation are key influences on the quality of life of an individual. The social benefits and the costs brought upon them by globalisation generate strong debate for orientation. These transformations affect not only the flows of goods and services across national borders, but also the implication of these processes on how countries go up or down in the international system.

5.4.1.2 Two Major Aspects of Globalisation

There are two major aspects of globalisation that have greatly affected the orientation of society in several ways, namely economic and political aspects (Chatterjee, 2008 - http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/glob_is.htm .2008/05/13>).

5.4.1.2.1 Economic Aspects.

The economic aspects of globalisation are stressed in terms of trade investment and migration. The economic consequence of globalisation is perceived to be increased



integration of nations becoming more interdependent with greater investment opportunities. Gosh & Guven (2006:70-71) say that a perception exists that trans-border trade and investment offer tremendous and often unprecedented economic opportunities as a vehicle of economic progress and prosperity for the nation. Maloka & le Roux (2001:65) state that, “the rationale is that developing countries acting individually cannot survive the vicious forces of globalisation which exceed the expected benefits”.

In line with the above perspectives, economic globalisation has resulted in a gradual restriction of goods and services despite the avowed free trade policy of the USA. Maloka & le Roux (2001:65) further note that one of the key aspects of globalisation in Africa is its influence on the national economies of international financial organisations such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB) through the instrument of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAP).

Since economic aspects of globalisation depend more on trans-border trade worldwide, they bring with them the challenges of the cultural orientations of each individual country. Thus, restrictions are placed on the exportation of goods and services from Malawi but there is no restriction on imports from the Western countries. As a result, each African community or country continues to be exposed to a wide range of choices in cultural orientation and values to the extent that our worldviews are constantly confronted with adaptation.

The economic aspects of globalisation have in various ways generated new consumeristic behaviour in individual dress, software, music, worship and even our staple food basket from across the world. This is becoming our cultural ideology whereby our sense of self, personal fulfilment and happiness are interlinked with the products and services we use and consume.

Mooney & Evans (2007:39) state that the key component in the global spread of consumerism has been the growth of the mass media and advertising with the rise of global brands. They argue that through advertising consumers are urged to align



themselves with the identities, values and lifestyles that a given commodity expresses. For this reason individuals are able to access them without much restriction. Consumerism is in fact fuelled by a desire to experience in reality those pleasures created in the imagination. From this perspective, the fashion industry and its adverts and the continuous desire for personal self expressions have become aspects of this intense focus on personal subjectivity.

The concept of marriage which has many traditions the world over, and which is traditionally cherished as between man and woman, has also become a topic of global debate in so far as the single sex marriages are concerned. For instance in Malawi, the imprisonment of the gay couple⁷⁵ to 14 years with hard labour for publically celebrating a traditional wedding on the 27th of December 2009 has drawn the attention of the international community with the USA House of Representatives and the British Parliament condemning the Malawian Government and Malawian people for being so conservative (Online: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2010-05-21-outrage-at-malawi-gay-jailing> <22/05/2010>).

Homosexuality is by law illegal in Malawi. Therefore, before Europeans and Americans started with their outrage campaign, they should have learned to respect other cultures. Africans don't tell Europeans and Americans what to do, and the same is expected from them. This is again a case of White superior attitudes and influence of globalisation. It seems that Westerners and Europeans continue to feel moral and intellectual superiority over the rest of the world, much like during the days of slavery and colonialism.

⁷⁵ Tiwonge Chimbalanga (20) and Steven Monjeza (26) were arrested in late December, 2009, after holding Malawi's first same-sex wedding. The couple have been sentenced to 14 years imprisonment with hard labour. At the time of writing this research study, the international community (Americans and Europeans) are criticising South African government under President Jacob Zuma, the only African nation to legalise same-sex marriage, for its failure to respond to the sentence. The following comment is worth noting in this context, "No one is asking the Jacob Zuma administration to send the army to invade Malawi and free Chimbalanga and Monjeza," said the *Cape Times* in its editorial" (Online: <http://www.mg.co.za/article/2010-05-21-outrage-at-malawi-gay-jailing> <22/05/2010>).



Africa is a community. The community is the custodian of the individual, who must go where the community goes. Individual choices impact on everyone else. From a theological-missiological praxis, human identity is bound up in relationships and interconnectedness, and we are, therefore, impoverished if we do not belong to a community where we can be accepted and grow in self-understanding through others. Homosexuality distorts the Malawian understanding of marriage. The purpose of erotic love which is to procreate and then provide a stable loving environment in which to raise children has to be a priority of the church in Malawi. Without the ability to procreate homosexuality love remains something very strange to Malawians. As we all know erotic attraction is temporary. It goes on to become a mature love only through marital commitment and raising children. Homosexuality cannot respond to the deepest longing of the human heart. In Africa we understand this much better than in other parts of the world.

If a man wishes to be a homosexual, that is his problem. If it is against the law of the land (in this case it is illegal in Malawi) it must be accepted until the law has changed. The homosexuals must not push their luck knowing that they break the law of the land. Homosexuality is unacceptable and the West should not force Malawi to accept what is immoral by threatening to withdraw 'Aid' if Malawi does not legalise homosexuality. As a church we believe in a rule of a law, if the magistrate in Malawi gave a sentence that is within the law we have no problem, and the West should not force Malawi to break its own laws.

On a different note, the ordination of gay priests in Protestant denominations worldwide has also sparked a great deal of controversy and caused rifts. In Malawi, the Anglican Diocese of Lake Malawi rejected the consecration of a gay bishop exported to Malawi by the Church of England, and imported by a certain section of the Anglican Church of the Diocese of Lake Malawi who had financial interest in the matter.

However, the extent of the influence of globalisation can be noted in this context, and one can just imagine, that under financial pressure and economic sanctions, Malawi



will in the end be tempted to legalise homosexuality against the wishes of the Malawian society. This is the Western cultural imposition against the will of the people in Africa. It is NOT transforming interculturalisation.

In the Roman Catholic Church worldwide the ‘doctrine of celibacy’ is beginning to draw much debate in many quarters of the world including Malawi. There is a silent voice within the Catholic Church in Malawi calling for more priests to fulfil their God given role by marrying, rather than burning with passion and committing the hypocrisy of confessing the same sin (sex) now and again (Information online at: <http://www.nyasatimes.com/national/malawi-sex-afflicted-catholic-church-says-no-end-to-priestly-celibacy.html> <22/05/2010>).

On the other side of our border, in Zambia, the excommunicated former Archbishop of Lusaka, Emmanuel Milingo, who got married to a Korean woman, Sun Myung Moon, sparked a lot of controversy in the Catholic Church.

5.4.1.2.2 Political Aspects of Globalisation

The political aspects of globalisation are mostly evidenced when countries create international rules and institutions to deal with it. Under globalisation, politics can take place above the state through political integration schemes such as the European Union (EU) and through inter-governmental organizations such as the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization, Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union (AU), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Political activity can also transcend national borders through global movements and NGOs.

Civil society organisations act globally by forming alliances with organisations in other countries, using global communications systems, and lobbying international organisations and other actors directly, instead of working through their national governments. Van der Walt (2006:93) notes that the power of multinationals controls



much of the world business transactions leaving the southern countries still grappling with poverty.

Through economical and political globalisation, new global cultural ties are developed and exchanged. The belief in the free market economy is seen worldwide as the only acceptable model for human society. The establishment of a Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and SADC are some of the examples in Southern Africa in the recent past. The global cultural ties grow as new ideas and fashions and through trade, travel, and media move around the globe at the speed of light. Hunt & Hamilton (1997:33) state that as a result of the marketing of video and tape sales, the rapid movement of people from country to country, and the beginning of information technology, new waves of Christianity were “created” in the late 1980s. It is against this background that the researcher will now turn to the discussion of global tendencies and their impact on the Malawian society.

5.4.1.3 Three Levels of contextual factors

Three levels of contextual factors: macro, meso and micro will be analysed in order to determine if there is any correlation with the decline of ecumenical spirit among denominations in Malawi. Particularly issues concerning the Livingstonia-Nkhoma border wrangle that has split the CCAP General Assembly of which the CCAP Blantyre Synod is a member will be discussed.

And these levels (macro, meso and micro) will highlight in what way the church leadership of the CCAP family in Malawi should engage to remedy the sickness of ethnic conceit, regionalism and the malady of an ingrown church and the congregations that constitute it (cf. Hendriks 2004:69). Each level of analysis is here applied within the context of linking global impact on the Malawian society. The World Bank (2007:31) mentions the importance of the following three levels:

5.4.1.3.1 Macro-level tools aim to help us understand the significance of the historical context, political ideological climate, political-institutional culture, and



economic and social makeup of countries engaging in policy reform.

5.4.1.3.2 Meso-level tools aid our understanding of the rules and incentives that govern the implementation of policy reform, transmitted through price-based incentives and through less predictable organisational cultures and social norms.

5.4.1.3.3 Micro-level tools help with the analysis of the distributional impacts of policy reform, identifying winners and losers, and explaining the dynamics of poverty in local settings. In the following section, the researcher will discuss each of the above mentioned levels and their importance by describing how information gathered at these three levels can be used to inform the Church of the link between the global and local influences.

The three levels are also crucial in understanding what type of information the CCAP Blantyre Synod used in mediating the Nkhoma-Livingstonia border dispute which resulted in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod declaring and informing its members that there will be no borders between the synod and the CCAP Livingstonia Synod which in 2005 established a congregation in Nkhoma Synod's territory in Lilongwe (online: <http://www.bnltimes.com//content/view/1968/26/<02/02/2010>>). This means that all the CCAP Synods are free to establish congregations anywhere in Malawi disregarding their own CCAP General Assembly's decision and constitution that there be borders between synods.

5.4.1.4 The Macro- level aspects that influence the Malawian Society

The World Bank (2007:33) argues that macro-level analysis is about understanding the country and the reform context. The World Bank further observes that there is a growing awareness among international donor agencies and partners in government and civil society that, “policy reform should be based on a better understanding of country and reform contexts”.



The World Bank argues that macro-level analysis of a country is important because “policy reform does not take place in an historical vacuum but takes place in a particular context”. The ethnic tension in Malawi, particularly the border dispute mentioned above between the CCAP Synods of Nkhoma and Livingstonia, cannot be better explained without understanding the impact of global Christianity in Malawi and Africa at large.

Andrew Walls (2002:11-12) alludes to this when he argues that the demographic transformation of the Church has brought us to a new “Ephesian moment”. This is the moment in the 21st century in which the church is challenged as never before to become one global body with its many cultural and ethnic members contributing their gifts. Hendriks (2004:77) alludes to this when he argues that we are all part of the global village at macro-level: the electronic age of information brings other cultures, influences and world events to local congregations almost daily.

To better understand the CCAP context in which the Nkhoma-Livingstonia border disputes evolved in the church, it means investigating the inherited political, economic and social variables that influenced the ecclesiological agenda and consequently challenged the CCAP General Assembly’s traditions as well.

Arising from these macro aspects, Hendriks (2004:77) notes that these have resulted in the disappearance of absolute norms and values. Today the growth of Pentecostalism and Independent Churches has become a global phenomenon. Whereas previously these movements were perceived as sects, of late they have become a worldwide phenomenon that has led to the decline of the monopoly of mainline churches in certain sections. In the African context, countries within the same region like Southern Africa, East Africa and West Africa differ substantially. Each country needs to find its own place within the global village.



Therefore, in this section, the ‘macro-level’ will refer to influences that make Malawi part of the global society. Of much interest here will be Malawi’s foreign relations⁷⁶ as well as characteristics of influence exerted by globalisation in Malawi. The aim is to better understand the social and cultural forces that inform change in a region and country and to link this understanding to the role of external forces that provide the context for the transformation of inherited traditions in the CCAP family in Malawi.

5.4.1.5 The foreign relations of Malawi and their Influence

Malawi is a member of 50 international organizations (Foreign relations of Malawi, 2008/05/09: online). Among the most notable are the United Nations (UN), World Trade Organization (WTO), African Union (AU), Southern African Development Community (SADC), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank (WB). And regarding the environment she is also a party to Biodiversity, Climate Change-Kyoto protocol, Desertification, Endangered Species, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea (even though Malawi has no direct outlet to the sea), and Ozone Layer Protection (CIA-The World Factbook--Malawi 10/04/2008: online).

In Africa, Malawi is a member of the African Union’s African Economic Community (AEC). Malawi takes part in the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and currently chairs the African Union. These organizations have influence on every member country. For example, regarding the UN peace keeping missions to war-torn countries, Malawi has provided troops to peacekeeping initiatives in Mozambique, Rwanda, Angola, Sudan, Somalia, and Sierra Leone (Mandiza 2010:129-130). The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in most cases has promoted monetary cooperation in countries who are members. Malawi in particular has benefited as a member country in several ways. This relationship has assisted Malawi in the establishment of a multilateral system of debt payments. However, this relationship has also had negative repercussions.

⁷⁶ The researcher also highlighted the global ‘Christianity’ movements that are perceived to have mushroomed in Malawi during the post-independence period in chapter four as some of the external forces that provide for the transformation of the inherited ecclesiological traditions in the CCAP Synods.



The impact of some of its policies have been the lowering of import tariffs on textile products, privatization, lay-offs, a freeze in wages and reduced state support to the agriculture sector (Print news - IPS Inter Press Services, 2008/09/12: online). The IPS states that in the textile industry, from 140 manufacturing firms in 1991, the number fell to just eight in 2002. This trend has led to the large scale import of cheap second hand clothing. This led to the reduction of the work force in this sector from 34,000 to just 4,000 in the same period. The global trend of world trade markets where Malawian products and Africa as a whole have to compete with products from the industrialized world on an equal footing has left many local industries bankrupt.

However, some of the positive aspects are increased cross-border trading, investment opportunities in various fields, transport and communication, and increased inflow of goods and services. Also Malawi has joined the rest of the world in the quest for democracy. The urge for global democracy has brought a complete shift in the role of civil society in Malawi and the church at large. Since 1994, Malawi has had more than one presidential candidate in its presidential and parliamentary elections. The position of women in key positions of governance is today a global requirement. The CCAP Blantyre Synod has accepted the ordination of women into ministry as ministers since the year 2000. At congregational level they are accepted to hold any position.

The human rights agenda is a global phenomenon. In Africa this phenomenon has given rise to many civil rights activists fighting for individual freedom. Malawi today has several non-governmental organizations promoting human rights. They use expressions like the girl-child education, the rights of the child, and freedom of association, press freedom, transparent Malawi international, and many more.

On the part of the church there are various groups too. The Public Affairs Committee (PAC) was formed by the Church in Malawi to fight the single party system of government. In the multi-party democratic dispensation, the Church formed the Forum for Democracy initially to curtail the third term bid by former president Dr.



Bakili Muluzi in 2002. The church in Malawi thus occupies a strategic social cite and offers a broad network that links ordinary people in so many social and economic activities. The CCAP Blantyre synod is a member of the Malawi Council of Churches.

5.4.1.6 The Five Characteristics Exerted by Globalisation in Malawi

The question is, what are the real characteristics of influence exerted by globalisation in Malawi which have also affected the church in general? To answer this question the researcher will cite what he found to be a goldmine of insights in Appadurai's⁷⁷ work, titled, "*Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*". Appadurai (1996:33-42) mentions the following fivefold conceptual framework for the analysis of globalisation:

5.4.1.6.1. Ethnoscapes (Appadurai 1996:33)

Appadurai states that by ethnoscapes, he means that,

"The landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to hitherto unprecedented degree. This is not to say that there are no relatively stable communities and networks of kinship, friendship, work, and leisure, as well as of birth, residence, and other filial forms. But it is to say that the warp of these stabilities is everywhere shot through with the woof of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of having to move or the fantasies of wanting to move. What is more, both these realities and fantasies now function on larger scales, as men and women from villages in India think not just of moving to Poona or Madras but of moving to Dubai and Houston, and refugees from Sri Lanka find themselves in South India as well as in Switzerland, just as the Hmong are driven to London as well as to Philadelphia".

In view of the above, ethnoscapes can here be described as the flows of people. This is regarded as human capital. These flows happen through different means: immigration, migration, emigration, deportation, war, employment, investment,

⁷⁷ Arjun Appadurai is professor of anthropology and of South Asian languages and civilizations at the University of Chicago, where he was previously director of the Chicago Humanities Institute (Appadurai 1996: cover page).



tourism and natural calamities, to name a few. Globalisation is best evidenced in the growth in the number of cross-border flows. The movements of people worldwide for various reasons have increased in almost every nation more than ever before. The impact of Ethnoscapes is in their diverse effect on social change in reshaping social identity. They have led to global and local processes of inclusion and exclusion which have led to new identity formation in society.

In Malawi, the tourism sector has seen an increased number of tourists since the beginning of 2002 (Charles Mkoka – Online 10/04/2008). Through tourism comes the much needed foreign currency and jobs as the sector opens the country to the outside world. Tourism keeps the national economy on the move as any growth recorded triggers the need for developing infrastructure such as transport networks, commerce and trade, as well as social amenities. According to figures obtained from the Ministry of Tourism, Parks and Wildlife, (Information online: <http://www.ens-newswire.com/ens/jan2003/2003-01-09-02.html> <02/09/2010>), the tourism sector in Malawi grew by 5.9% in 1998 with tourists numbering 219,600; by 15.8% in 1999 with tourists numbering 254,300 but in 2001 a decline in numbers to 227,600 showed a 10.5% decrease in tourists visiting Malawi. In tourist cities like Blantyre, Lilongwe, Mangochi and Mulanje, tourist arrivals rose by 31.6% to 57,000 in 2004 from 43,000 in 2003.

The growth of the sector was stimulated by increased investment in tourism facilities such as hotels and lodges; and the rehabilitation of the country's international airports to the current international standards. This growth was further stimulated by increased promotion activities targeted at both local and international markets (Online: http://www.euromonitor.com/Travel_And_Tourism_in_Malawi <30/11/2009>). The cross border trading is yet another area where Malawi has experienced an increase in the number of people coming into the country. The commonly called Comesa market demonstrates in Blantyre and Lilongwe how all the countries in Southern Africa want to trade without boundaries. Conferences of international groups have continued to take place in Malawi, more especially now (at the time of writing this dissertation) that Malawi is the current chair of the African Union (AU).



5.4.1.6.2 Technoscapes (Appadurai 1996:34)

Today, the need for improved technology is sweeping the entire world. In farming, the traditional methods of farming are being replaced more and more by modern technologies with seed varieties which are more drought resistance, mature early, and have a high yield per hectare, among others. The poultry technology, for example, breeds chickens ready for consumption in at least four weeks whilst a traditional chicken of free range in Malawi can take at least six months before being considered ready for human consumption. And since people are encouraged to venture in various entrepreneurships, this has become a lucrative business, even in remote parts of Malawi. This framework on globalization has led to a variety of social issues which have come to be part of an increasingly diversified space of living. Thus, maintaining a rigid institutionalized ecclesiology will eventually collapse. More people than ever before are in diasporic environments, looking for a better tomorrow such as in search of work, wealth and opportunities, be they religion, employment, politics, or family life. This mobility and the unforeseeable relationship between globalisation and our daily experiences of life define the shift in culture in Malawi. There is no way that the church can escape it. It is a new world that requires a new style of leadership and of being a Church (McLaren, 1998:11).

When we consider the position of the Church in the world today, practising the Christian faith in the praxis of modern society is a staggering challenge. The church and its leadership are haunted by insecurity. Our leadership structures, culture and identity, worship practices and to a greater extent our theological training, is being challenged. Most of the time, church leadership seeks to protect the church from exploitation by globalisation influences and fails to open itself to such global influences as may be required to make itself an instrument of witness.

While the faith community devotes most of its energy to maintaining the inherited traditions as the basis of being a church, the reality is that globalisation will determine either the effectiveness or the decline of our denominations. Caught between the past, present, and future, the church in Malawi and Africa at large is tempted to do little



and simply to avoid any engagement with these realities. This can be evidenced in the discussion on the rise of Pentecostalism as yet another wave of globalisation.

It will not be overemphasizing to state that processes of globalisation are happening at a faster rate than people are prepared to cope with. For instance, the coming of television in Malawi is limiting the local people's appreciation of their own cultural values because the TV brings different cultural practices closer to people (from all parts of the globe) and many local people take wholesale to what they see. Sadly, the loss of traditional values and whole cultures through the cultural imperialism of Westernization is increasing (August 2006:3-4). The good and the bad from the dominant televised cultures are replicated locally, creating a people that is rootless, whose identity is diminishing and whose living styles are no longer authentic.

5.4.1.6.3 Financescapes (Appadurai 1996:34-35)

This is a process described in terms of the global flows of money. It is often driven by interconnected currency markets, stock exchanges, and commodity markets. The liberalisation of the Malawian economy has witnessed an increased investment in communication services, transport, agriculture and even the mining industry. Today people have access to the visa electronic credit and debit cards which allow them to access their account in a foreign currency in another country.

Malawi has chains of shopping malls of South African origin in nearly all of the three regions of the country, more especially Shoprite and Pep Stores. Game stores are also found, but mostly in Blantyre City, the commercial capital Malawi. The country also witnesses a mushrooming of China textiles and some companies of American origin. All these investments in one way or another have contributed to the flow of foreign currency in Malawi. Ironically these investments have not meant anything tangible like putting money in people's pockets, there have contributed very little to the growth of the local economy, more specifically in the employment aspect.

Thus, the crucial point in the current economic predicament in our country as well as



on a global scale, is not growth or development or welfare or whatever, but the rapidly increasing economic marginalisation of vast sections of the population. Economic progress tends to benefit the few who are ruling rather than the majority (Herbert (2009:281). In addition, many investors have poor working ethics and offer conditions that do not translate to improving the livelihood of their workers, ignoring the fact that all human beings need space, time and energy for their lives. They need protection, food, rest, clothing, housing, and so on.

5.4.1.6.4 Mediascapes (Appadurai 1996:35-36)

This is the global distribution of media images that appear in newspapers, television, radio, and computer screens. Mediascapes are the most influential distributors of global culture. Sklair (2002:42) says that global culture in globalization is driven by a homogenizing mass media-based culture which in turn threatens national and local cultures and identities. In Malawi, Television Malawi⁷⁸ (TVM) broad casts foreign movies like Rhythm City, Passions, and World Wrestling to mention but a few. Along with such programmes, DSTV Multichoice seems to have no restrictions as to what an individual can subscribe to and free access to air channels which broadcast almost all the South African TV channels.

Though Malawi has a Censorship Board which has a policy of banning all pornographic materials, the community is exposed to many such images. It is consequently eroding the culture slowly and negatively. The midnight films on channel 'e' (mostly Fridays and Saturdays) with a focus on adult sex are watched by families in many homes - even Christian homes, across denominational boundaries. The electronic churches (TBN, Love World, etc) have more air space on Television Malawi (TVM) than any other mainline denomination. People in a way today can attend church in their homes and still claim to be Christians.

⁷⁸ Now renamed Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) TV after the merging of the MBC 1 & 2 radio stations and TVM early 2010.



5.4.1.6.5 Ideoscapes (Appadurai 1996:36)

This is the global spread of ideas and political ideologies. Malawi, which is a member to a number of international bodies, is directly called upon to be part of the global world in most of her policies – for instance, the ban on the selling of ivory in order to save the rhino and elephant species. The presence of international and SADC observers during every presidential and parliamentary election is a global requirement to which Malawi adheres.

However, policies developed by some of the international bodies sometimes adversely affect the country. For instance, the Malawian government operates in a highly constrained economic environment, with the economic orthodoxies of the post-Washington consensus putting strong limits on what is ‘thinkable’ in policy. Regional economic development is further constrained by a daunting range of crises and challenges, from spiking food and energy prices to the crisis in Zimbabwe. The obstacles are significant, and there is a critical and unmet need for creative policy answers such as the one President Mutharika adopted in 2005 by defying the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for fertiliser subsidy to the Malawian subsistence farmers. The defiance paid dividends because Malawi now has enough food to feed herself which was not the case before; we had to import food from South Africa.

5.4.2 Ethnicity, Cultural Heritages and Presidential Succession Plans

Finally, another development constraint in Malawi is the developing unresolved tensions within the ruling party⁷⁹ (Democratic Progressive Party – DPP) that seem to be creating a gridlock in a wide range of policy, governance and implementation

⁷⁹ The incumbent President Bingu wa Mutharika is limited by constitution not to contest for a third term in the 2014 Presidential elections. As a result it is allegedly believed he is grooming his brother Prof. Peter Mutharika, a Lhomwe by tribe, to succeed him. However, the country’s Vice President Joyce Banda, a Yao by tribe feels she is the rightful successor. As a result there is a presidential succession battle in the ruling party with two camps: some supporting the president’s brother, especially those in the Mulhakho wa Alhomwe heritage and others supporting the Vice President especially the Presbyterian church and the Yao belt in the southern region. It is believed President Mutharika and his wife created the Yao Heritage ‘Ndamo sya Yao’ and put his wife as patron in order to divide the Yao people’s support to the Vice president in favour of his brother.



processes. In addition, the wave of ethnic tension triggered by the establishment of many cultural heritages⁸⁰ seems to undermine the positive strides the government has taken in tackling poverty in our country.

The wave of ethnic tension that has recently gripped Malawi is a direct outflow of this deeply entrenched legacy of structural poverty and systemic marginalisation in the post-independence era. Cultural heritages *per se* are not bad if they can be used for tourism and research purposes (cf. Bekker *et al.* 2001:1-5, 153). Cultural heritage tourism could take tourists to the bottom of the people's lives. Culture is unique to every group of people. It might be similar but never the same. People usually make a mistake because they limit cultural tourism to traditional dances. These, while important, only form part of what culture can offer in tourism. Tourists would want to explore more about the way of life of a people.

Malawi is culturally diverse, and as such it has a lot to offer in this area. Malawians can also offer culture trainings for diplomats and expatriates willing to know more about Malawi culture/ethnicity. We can let tourists experience how agriculture is done in our country, visiting households that have made Malawi famous with subsistence agriculture. But it is very disturbing to note that in our country, cultural heritages are used to drum up political support, alienation and ethnic hatred. Regarding this, the Public Affairs Committee (2010:2), Malawi's para-church human rights organisation have the following critical observation:

We further take this opportunity to comment on our shared responsibilities in the face of common dangers that face our country. The consolidation of democracy and governance; and the promotion of peace and unity are the unique treasures that Malawi owns. These are the foundations of development and growth; for *without peace and unity no administration can triumph in its developmental agenda*. Yet, our observation is that *some Malawians are taking pride in regionalism, nepotism and tribalism* in the pursuit of democracy. Such attitudes are old-fashioned and must be consigned to the past. We urge all Malawians to refrain from such vices for they derail the full potential of our citizens. Let us learn to share opportunities in

⁸⁰ E.g. Mulhakho wa Alhomwe belonging to the Lhomwe tribe whose patron is President Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika, also a Lhomwe himself; the recently established Ndamo sya Yao heritage belonging to the Yao tribe whose patron is President Mutharika's wife, Calista Mutharika, not a Yao herself.



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both private and public sector not based on *nepotism, tribalism and regionalism* but based on justice and fairness. In the same vein, we appeal to religious leaders to *refrain from regionalism, nepotism and tribalism. We should be in the forefront of promoting peace and justice at all levels.* At times, we have noted that *within our faith communities extreme statements have been made to the extent that there has been a perception that we are also involved in the malpractice.* We condemn all authorities and individuals who perpetrate such malpractices. *We also urge Malawians to continue working together irrespective of their place of origin;* for divisions among us will only create tensions, and tensions will further generate divisions (Italics mine for emphasis).

Ethnicity becomes a challenge to a broader societal harmony when it is mobilised in hostile confrontation to the ‘other’ (Cf. Young 1998:4). Hence, the Roman Catholic Bishops in Malawi echoes the Public Affairs Committee in the following submission:

When we emerged from the 2009 elections, our hopes were high for peace, stability and development for all. Somewhat more than a year later our hopes are slowly fading away. The majority the ruling party enjoys in parliament was meant to facilitate Government business and progress but unfortunately it has bred a spirit of overconfidence on the one part of the Government. While Malawians recall with bad memories the era when the opportunity was in majority, they are slowly waking up to the downside of a government that has majority power as well. Both sides have used their pursuing the common good through the professed development and reconciliation agenda. *The Constitution of Malawi recognizes and places value in the office of the Vice President as the second highest office in the land* (chapter 8, section 78-82). *We are concerned with the lack of respect to the Office and the person of the Vice President.* We ask the Government to see to it that the Office of the Vice President be given all respect and necessary support...This is our honest sharing of the joys and hopes, *the grief and anguish facing Malawi today.* As a nation we have much to be grateful for, but in the process of charting the way forward, we realize that *we need to work together.* The principles of the poor must continue to guide us. We invite all citizens to take up their responsibility in this honest assessment of ourselves. In so doing, we hope to usher in a new era that is characterised by honest and respectful dialogue and an ardent common search for solutions towards the integral development of Malawi, ‘*Wakutsina nkhotu ndu mnasi*’ (<http://www.nyasatimes.com/national/catholic-bishops-pastoral-letter-in-full.html> <01/11/2010>)

Addressing this is a fundamental challenge for the Malawian church and society. However, it is also very disturbing to note that even in the church there also elements



of ethnocentrism manifesting themselves in different ways. For instance, in the scenario described above, the President of the country is a Lomwe while his vice President is Yao. Some people feel the President feels uncomfortable to work and trust his vice President because of being ethnocentric. Surprisingly, the CCAP Blantyre Synod, instead of being a reconciling change agent, it exacerbates the situation; the Synod Moderator of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, Rev. R. Mangisa, a Lomwe by tribe, supports the President, who is also a Lomwe. The moderator is also alleged to be supporting the President's hand-picked successor, his young brother, Peter Mutharika, also a Lomwe.

On the other hand, it is alleged, the General Secretary of the CCAP Blantyre Synod, Rev. M.J. Kadawati, Yao by tribe, supports the vice President, who is also a Yao. Therefore, these realities act both as constraints and as opportunities for church polity engagement: on the one hand, 'business as usual' in the policy and implementation process has been thrown into disarray; while on the other hand, high degrees of flux and uncertainty create opportunities for bold ideas.

In view of the aforesaid, it will not be overemphasizing to note that the concept of globalisation has also influenced the various domains within development studies in various ways. Theories as well as policy-making in the field of religion, politics, ecology, gender, urban life and production are influenced by globalisation in its practical and theoretical dimensions. The space and time coordinates with which we used to understand societies have changed and this is reflected in the ways in which social scientists try to understand their specific objects of study.

The challenge for development studies is to re-tool and re-establish their continued relevance to study and understand processes of exclusion, alienation, ethnocentrism, emancipation, and development. This cannot be achieved by clinging to their once treasured paradigms, but can be achieved by incorporating creatively the new transforming interculturalisation praxis without giving up their normative basis, i.e. the awareness that, "only with a universal morality of justice is there a future for humanity" (Schuurman 2001:14).



5.5 NEW INSIGHTS FROM PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

In the previous section it was argued that the labour force as well as the ecclesiastical theatre is becoming more diverse in terms of ethnicity, race, sex, sexual orientation, disability and other cultural factors. Therefore, to encourage the active participation of all the stakeholders or citizenry in the implementation process of national development, the development change agent must have interculturalisation skills that inform the person to be able to work effectively with people who are different from himself/herself.

Participatory development methods are born out of the recognition of the uniqueness of an individual as an entity which is capable of making a unique contribution to decision making. Currently, participatory methods are very much in vogue in development thinking. The entire spectrum of development agencies, from grassroots organisations to the World Bank, seems to have embraced the concept of participation in development planning and implementation (Mompoti & Prinsen 2009:94).

Over against the aforesaid, we need to postulate the view that progress and social change result both from independent discovery within a culture and from intercultural engagement or encounter and the transfer of innovation. In fact all societies receive benefits from others and all depend on others. Regarding this, the Shonas would say, “*Rume Rimwe Harikombi Churu*” (one huge man/woman cannot surround an anti-hill, he/she needs others to surround it). Thus, no one, and certainly no society, is self-sufficient: Again, regarding this philosophy, the Aboriginal prisoner is quoted as saying,

“If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time.
If you have come here because your liberation is bound up with
mine, Then *let’s work together*” (Julie 2007:1 – Italics mine).

The modernised countries have tended to assume that they alone have the key to success in social change and will generously use it to help the world “develop.” But they have forgotten that they too can learn from the poorer countries, especially in the area of cultural identity. From a theological perspective, what are the new insights



that interculturalisation brings into the missiological and development debates? In development studies the vision for humanity is its wellness and more so from a theological perspective where we are concerned with transformational development of humankind from a holistic integrated perspective from within the salvation of God for all humanity.

Development, if it is holistic and people-centred speaks of a cultural fit. In other words, transformation must always be appropriate to the culture that is to be transformed to ensure wholeness and well-being (August 2006:4). Thus, Christian theology must be relevant to all human well-being, and to do so, it must pursue an intercultural approach. When one is in a respectful intercultural dialogue, there is need to find a common ground as entry point to discuss issues affecting our common humanity. This does not suggest and it should be clearly stated that a Christian need not forsake his or her identity in any way like Peter did in the courtyard (Mt. 26:29; Mk. 14:71; Lk. 22:56; Jn. 18:17). To deny our identity is to make us false and untrustworthy and even bereft of any basis for that engagement. Even Jesus Christ did not deny his identity.

Our present crisis is first and foremost the consequences of not understanding and of the lack of transforming intercultural dialogue in the context of ethnocentrism, poverty and regionalism. In view of this, transformation theology and transformational development will be discussed in the next section.

5.6 TOWARDS A TRANSFORMATION DEVELOPMENT MODEL

Transformation is a part of God's continuing action in history to restore all creation to himself and to its rightful purpose and relationships. God intends that social structures should reflect and promote justice, peace, sharing, and free participation for the well-being of all. The idea of transformation contains a set of principles against which any theory of development may be measured. When all the elements, namely: Life Sustenance, Equity, Justice, Dignity and Self-Worth, Freedom, Participation, Reciprocity, Cultural Fit, Ecological Soundness, Hope, and Spiritual Transformation



are present “development” becomes “transformation” and ethnocentrism is overcome (August 2006:5). In a transferred sense, without these principles, also interculturalisation as a mode of being, is empty and oppressive for it will have failed to establish interdependence of people and cultures.

Transformational Development Theology is a theology of engagement by which it is hoped to establish and restore genuine relationships. This makes it clear that theology’s contribution does not just lie in application but also in interaction. It is not a control by a hegemonic network of doctrine, but participation, reciprocity and dialogue in which the course of the journey to be taken remains open. In a partnership of genuine equality, each of the members has a duty to contribute as much of an original and particular input as possible. This approach makes it clear that the biblical anthropology of equality before God forms the basis for the human relations in transformational development.

5.7 SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the researcher wishes to strongly submit again that while missionaries introduced the germ of ethnocentrism to the Presbyterian Church in Malawi, the British colonial administrators in Malawi also introduced the germ of ethnocentrism to Malawi’s national affairs concerning development. Unfortunately, indigenous leaders who came after colonialism have also pampered ethnocentrism alive up to this very day.

Development is people first for it sets out from where people are (Burkey 1993:23; Chambers 1997:14,210-220). In this regard, the researcher is of the opinion that, as a way of combating the economic injustice, the CCAP Blantyre Synod needs a deliberate policy to accelerate the development process in Malawi. Strides should be taken towards the promotion of a spirit of interdependence of people and their culture. Those who govern should hold the key in making sure that they do so to the benefit of all, making life better for *all* Malawians regardless of cultural or ethnic origin or backgrounds. In addition, the challenge for development change agents and those in



the missionary enterprise is to re-tool and re-orientate their continued relevance. Unfortunately many development workers from the West think of development as “a programme prepared for implementation for the poor”, they often forget that the poor are human beings with their own thinking abilities and understanding of what they need (Swart 2003). The tragedy of many Western development programmes is their treatment of people as “objects for compassionate hand-outs” rather than subjects with whom they can work together in synergy to achieve their own destiny. Commitment to the poor and the marginalized is the point of departure for development. Lamb (1982:22f in Bosch 1991:424) alludes to this when he argues that,

Orthopraxis aims at transforming human history, redeeming it through a knowledge born of subject-empowering, life-giving love, which heals the *biases* needlessly victimizing millions of our brothers and sisters.

The above stated objective cannot be achieved by clinging to churches’ once treasured paradigms, but can be achieved by adopting an interdependence of people and their cultures, a move from ethnocentrism to interculturalisation interculturalisation as a mission model. In fact, it emerged from our discussion in this chapter that when the world became a global village, a networking society emerged.

The global cultural onslaughts have underlined the question of how specific identities can survive in the face of diversity. Through the influence of the mass media, especially television and now the internet, everyone in the world can be exposed to the same images almost instantly (Sklair, 2002:43). Romanowski (2007:15) argues that movies, television, music, and videos provide a common experience for many people by addressing widespread concerns, fears, and prejudices and nurturing aspirations. He further observes that at the same time these experiences serve as a celebration of common values and even life itself. The capacity of globalisation to create imaginative worlds has been a source of controversy in the mainline churches who are concerned with the loss of values, meaning and worldview. This then brings us to another question: How can interculturalisation become a missional model to bond people of various ethnic groups in a globalised world? And what is interculturalisation? This is our focus in the next chapter.



CHAPTER 6

INTERCULTURALISATION: CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH IN MALAWI

Let the Nobles Come from Egypt;
Let Ethiopia Extend its Hands to God (**Psalm 68:31**)

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

— Universal Declaration of Human Rights (article 1), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 217 A (III) of 10 December 1948 (**Mor Barak 2005:17**)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapter, there was a discussion on the influence of ethnicity on development in Malawi. In this chapter the researcher discusses interculturalisation and argues that an interdependence of people (various ethnic groups) and their cultures will better facilitate a move from ethnocentrism/tribalism to interculturalisation in Malawi.

6.2 CULTURAL ALIENATION IN AFRICA

It is not to be forgotten that early European missionary activities in Malawi required local Malawians, consciously or unconsciously, to renounce their “Africanness” in order to accept Christianity (Mufuka 1977:7; cf. Amadi-Azuogu 2000:12). As a result of this, African basic values became substituted with *imported and imposed cultural values* under the umbrella of Christianity and in the name of God. African ways of life, ways of thinking, ways of believing, ways of worshiping and ways of living became equally substituted with what the European missionaries considered to be their own “*ideal*”. Though this was “a response to the gospel”, however, they forgot that it was “a gospel incarnated within the western cultural history. This is what the missionaries handed to indigenous converts, who received and maintained without question. For instance, the standardization of the liturgy then coincided with the Europeans’ scramble for Africa.



The church of the time shared with the colonisers an esteem of western superiority which ignored the social structures and human values of the conquered peoples. Everywhere, it imposed the same patterns of western religious ritual expressions, thereby rejecting or destroying indigenous cultural richness (De Carvalho Azevedo 1982:17-18). In order to achieve this, the early missionaries used the method of transculturation.

In other words, there was a wholesale cultural exportation of European culture by Europeans, since the mistaken motto was: Whatever is European is civilised and whatever is good for Europe is good for all. In the end, the African Christians became people with super-imposed identity. In this way the European tried re-create the African in his own European image and likeness. The church then was being used by the colonial powers as an ally of western control over the cultural space of the peoples. As a result no one was able to remember that a gospel which ignores the way of life of a people will not address real people.

Even though the European missionaries compelled African people to compromise their personal identity this was something which Paul himself refused to do to his missionary converts in the Epistle to the Galatians (Galatians 2:14). Here the Galatian Christians were being compelled to lose their identity as Gentiles and become like Jews. They were required to embrace circumcision (Act 15:1) and observe the laws of Moses in order to be saved (Acts 15:5). But as far as Paul was concerned, it was not necessary for the Gentiles to embrace Jewish way of life and to adopt their religious traditions as Jews in order to be saved (Gal. 6:15). So Paul rejected this and obliged none of his Christians to follow the pathway of who said Gentiles should proselytised.

It must also be noted that some parts of the Western culture were very helpful to Africa, but others were not and proved to be most damaging to the development of the church and its witness in Africa. It was most damaging when converts were told that African culture was to be dismissed, and were encouraged to adopt Western habits and values.



This is where the “three Cs” of Dr. David Livingstone’s colonialism comes from: Christianity, commerce and civilisation. The idea was that all three should go together and promote each other. Christianity must prepare for commerce so that Western civilisation can replace African culture that is African “lack of civilisation”. That is why Christianity has often been charged with being an instrument employed by the European colonial powers to enslave and oppress the Africans.

Thus, colonialism and mission, as a matter of fact were interdependent; the right to have loonies carried with it the duty to Christianize the colonized... The civilized however, not only felt superior to the “uncivilized” ...but also responsible for them. The compelling love of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:14) slowly changed to a feeling of spiritual superiority, and the message was sent to Christians from other cultures that their cultures were worth nothing. In that way, the missionaries were mostly willing to help colonialism, which assumed that people could be divided into “civilized” and “uncivilized”, the colonialists, being the civilized, and the indigenous people, the uncivilized (cf. Bosch 1991:344; Pobe 1979:15; Oduro *et al* 2008:38).

6.3 DEFINING INTERCULTURALISATION

‘Interculturalisation’ in this study project means an interdependence of people (various ethnic groups) and their cultures to better facilitate a move from ethnocentrism / tribalism to development as transformation and being a missional church. It is an inclusive way of life that respects the dignity of *all* human beings in doing theology and development regardless of one’s ethnic background or geographical location of origin (cf. August 2006:4; Bosch 1991:28). It is a missional model that provides a means for Theology to influence transformation with its *Kingdom values* and its Biblical anthropological principles of acknowledgement of the other and dignity of *all* human beings.

Interculturalisation, therefore, calls *all* the people to respond to the *unbiased gospel* in the here and now: wherever they are. And if they are not where we are, we must go in



the spirit of Jesus and seek them, not to make them like we are, but to offer them a glimpse of Jesus and to invite them to follow him (cf. Mark 2:13, 14). Kimball (1991:93) critically observes that,

Intercultural dialogue is not an attempt to suppress differences but rather to explore them frankly and self-critically. ...dare to hope for some convergence, not in impatient syncretism, but in openness to God's further guidance.

Interculturalisation's special importance is its emphasis on respectful engagement in dialogue, interdependency and hospitality within the economy of God which leads it also to be critical of the coerciveness of culture with a view of transforming it for the common good of humankind (van der Walt 2006:11; August 2006:2).

The researcher argues that the endemic conflicts in the CCAP Blantyre Synod can only be addressed through a theologically driven process of interculturalisation model to recover the church's missional identity. Our primary concern here is an engagement in a critical discussion of interculturalisation as a process of doing mission and theology in the face of ethnocentrism so visible and audible in our country. Hence, in the following section we will have a cursory discussion on the state of affairs regarding ethnocentrism in Malawi.

There is need in Malawi for an interdependence of of people and all cultures. Cultures should to genuinely co-exist and appreciate each other's differences, learn from one another and enrich one another, for no culture is superior to the other (Jiang⁸¹ 2005:223). August (2006:4) also alludes to this when he argues that, "All societies receive benefits from others and *all* depend (in the positive sense of the word) on others. No one, and certainly no society, is self-sufficient".

In developing his theology of inculturation, Bosch (1991:456) argues that, "There is no eternal theology, no *theologia perennis* that may play the referee over local

⁸¹ Available at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/12741165> (accessed on 26/06/2008).



theologies”. Lending his voice to the debate, Emmanuel Ayee (in: van der Walt 2006: Cover Page) argues that, “The difference between cultures should be seen positively as God-given opportunity for *mutual enrichment* and *empowerment*. Culture is the key to any communication.”

6.4 MULTICULTURALISM VS INTERCULTURALISATION⁸²

Multiculturalism suggests that there are a set of values, belief systems, ways of life or ideologies competing in ethical perspective, for what Tony Balcomb (2003:15) refers to as “high moral ground” and in theological perspective, producing different and contending theologies. This inevitably produces what the American Davison James Hunter (1991) calls “culture wars”, which again Balcomb (2003:15) describes as “different groups expressing *different sets of values* that find their legitimating moral base in different meta-narratives”. With this description of multiculturalism, we can describe the then apartheid South African society as multicultural society.

In the apartheid society, there was, on the one hand, a culture of “separation and division, of ethnocentrism and class, of privilege and oppression” mainly for the purpose of establishing social and economic hegemony for the Afrikaner nationalist and their people (Smit 1992:106). On the other hand, there was a culture of resistance, of struggle for liberation and subsequent social transformation for all South Africans being agitated for, at that time, by the blacks. These cultures were competing with each other for the “souls”, people and the South African land mass, each producing its

⁸² Interculturalisation should not be confused with inculturation. Interculturalisation is an interdependence of people and their cultures. Interculturalisation calls for the partnership of the various people and their culture, to get the best from both while inculturation is understood to be the process whereby the faith already embodied in one culture encounters another culture. In this encounter, the faith becomes part and parcel of this new culture. It fuses with the new culture and simultaneously transforms it into a novel religious-cultural reality. For Catholic Christianity in Africa, Inculturation implies integrating Christian doctrines with “useful” African traditional cultural values and a modern way of life. From their point of view, inculturation calls for the “fusion” of African cultures with biblical teaching, without sacrificing the basic values or principles of either. Cultural elements such as singing, dancing, the clapping of hands and the beating of drums in the liturgy are the evidence of a new awareness towards accepting African customs in the Church. This also include the shapes of some Christian symbols, such as the crucifixes, alters, and tabernacles, are taking on a more African outlook, something which would have been impossible previously. Thus, inculturation is helping people move from the colonial mentality and socio-religious confusion caused “by white, western missionaries who taught that African religiosity was satanic, devilish, barbaric and primitive” (Magesa 2004:10, 14; Ross, AC 1996:185). Thus, inculturation involves understanding biblical teachings within the context of African culture.



own ethics and theology. As a matter of fact, each culture had a different view of God, the mission of the church on earth, and the responsibility of the citizens to the state.

In view of the foregoing, Saayman (2010:2) has pointed out that the *Kairos Document* (1986) identified three (3) theologies in the then apartheid South Africa namely, “*State theology*”, “*Church theology*” and “*Prophetic theology*”. State theology apparently affirmed that the will of God was being fulfilled in the apartheid system and therefore the state was right in enforcing apartheid policies. Church theology opposed apartheid but nevertheless maintained that the *God of law and order* forbids violence for whatever reasons and the state laws should be obeyed, or at least repealed through non-violent means. State theology and Church theology directly or indirectly supported the “culture” of the white Afrikaners. Prophetic theology declared apartheid as sin (evil) and maintained that the theological justification of apartheid by state theology was heresy (Tutu 1983).

It is therefore clear from the above description of the various theologies in the then apartheid South Africa that, in one set of “cultures”, apartheid was right, and its theological justification a correct teaching of the Bible. In the other set of cultures, apartheid was morally *evil* (sin), and its theological justification heresy. Balcom (2003:15) is right in this sense for asserting that in multiculturalism there is inevitably a “multiplicity of stories from various segments of the society” competing for the “moral high ground”, because as Balcomb (2003:15) maintains, the different groups are expressing different sets of values based on their own belief systems, knowledge, traditions, customs, and on various “myths” that support their convictions and believes there is no common ground, to interaction and no dialogue.

Interculturalisation also implies plurality of religions or cultures. However, there is a high level of interaction and interdependence between the cultures. There is respectful intercultural dialogue, there is open-mindedness, tolerance, willingness to embrace and listen to one another. There is a dialogue between the cultures. The set of values



are still different, just as they are different in multicultural environment. But instead of prejudice and resentment arising from the “myths” (Balcomb 2003:16-17) that legitimate the various actions and worldviews, there is an interface between the various set of cultures and therefore, values and theologies arising from the cultures. Breakdown in society often occurs when either the cultural community or the individual is valued above the other.

In view of the above, our emphasis in this research project is peaceful co-existence because, there is much we can learn from each other if we are willing to discuss problems/differences, and share strength. Kendra Hoffman, Emily Kilbourn, Rebekah Oldenkamp and Candice Stevenson (2005:51) have pointed out that, “the establishment of a symbiotic relationship allows for the realization of both the person and the community” However, when either the community or the individual is valued above the other; both man and society are prevented from reaching their full potential/fruitfulness. Cultures or religions should be a force for peace rather than a source for pride, prejudice, and ethnocentrism or conflict (cf. Taringa 2007:185-195. At this point it should be clear (at least vaguely) to the reader how interculturalisation is distinguishable from multiculturalism.

6.5 DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES OF DIALOGUE AND MISSION

When discussing ‘Intercultural Dialogue and Mission’, Bosch (1991:483) observes that, “both dialogue and mission manifests themselves in a meeting of hearts rather than of minds. We are dealing with mystery...We cannot possibly dialogue with or witness to people if we resent their presence or the views they hold”. Today few Christians anywhere in the world find themselves in a situation where co-existence with other religionists is not part and parcel of their daily life.

Bosch (1991:483) has described amongst others, the following perspectives of ‘dialogue and mission’: First is: “*Decision of the heart*” rather than of the intellect/mind – this is to accept co-existence of different faiths [cultures/ethnicities]



and to do so not grudgingly but willingly. Second, true dialogue presupposes “*commitment*”: Without my commitment to the gospel, dialogue becomes a mere charter, without the authentic presence of the neighbour it becomes arrogant and worthless. Third, dialogue is only possible if we proceed from the belief that “we are not moving into the void that we go expecting to meet the God who has preceded us and has been preparing people within the context of their own cultures and convictions”.

God has already removed the barriers; His Spirit is constantly at work in ways that pass human understanding. We do not have Him in our pockets, so to speak, and do not just “take Him” to the others; “He accompanies us and also comes toward us”. We are not the “haves”, the “*beati possidentes*”, standing over against spiritual “have nots”, the “*massa damnata*”. We are all recipients of the same mercy, sharing the same mystery. We thus approach every other faith and its adherents reverently, taking off our shoes, as the place we are approaching is holy (Bosch 1991:484).

Fourth, “dialogue and mission can be conducted in an attitude of humility” (Bosch 1991:489). Fifth, “dialogue and mission should recognize that religions are worlds in themselves, with their own axes and structures; they face in different directions and ask fundamentally different questions” (Bosch 1991:489). This is a daunting task that requires living in a missional model as well as speaking a new language to suit our context. Bosch (1991:489) made the point when he said:

Such language boils down to an admission that we do not have all the answers and are prepared to live in the framework of penultimate knowledge, that we regard our involvement in dialogue and mission as an adventure, are prepared to take risks, and are anticipating surprises as the Spirit guides us into fuller understanding. This is not option for agnosticism, but for humility. It is, however, a bold humility- or a humble boldness. We know only in part, but we do know. And we believe that the faith we profess is both true and just, and should be proclaimed. We do this, however, not as judges or lawyers, but as witnesses; not as soldiers, but as envoys of peace; not as high-pressure sales-persons, but as ambassadors of the Servant Lord.



The Christian scriptures reveal that not only did the early church find itself proclaiming salvation in Christ among competing religions, but already in the Old Testament the faith of peoples of God was threatened constantly by the faiths of surrounding peoples. The people were in dialogue. The *Shema*, the confession of Israel's faith, was fashioned among pressures from a legion of gods and goddesses: "Hear O Israel, The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!" (Deut. 6:4 NASV). In our time, there are a host of reasons why globalisation poses a major challenge to all Christians – not only among Christians but also between Christians and peoples of other faiths in Malawi and the world at large.

First, let us look at the global scene. As Manuel Castells (2004) has pointed out, we live in a *Network Society* and the globe is now a village. With scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements, the population of the world has witnessed unprecedented access to other people and cultures.

In the world today, whether we want it or not, people of other cultures and faiths have much more to do with each other in schools, markets, workplaces, and even in families through inter-marriage. As a result, many religions that used to be considered "foreign" have gained acceptance and currency in many local contexts. Times have changed and are still changing, and we cannot deny globalisation as a social fact of our time.

In Malawi, Christian missionaries and converts are now virtually found in every part of the once predominantly 'Yao Muslim communities'. Malawians deal on a daily basis with people of various ethnic/cultural or religious backgrounds in their neighbourhoods. This, and many other related factors, has brought about a radically new context for Presbyterian Christianity in Malawi. Thus, Paul Knitter (1985:18-20, 172) has described it as a "*momentous kairos*". These new contexts call for an ecumenical approach to Christian mission. Furthermore, it is an ecumenical approach that requires a dialogical methodology.



6.6 INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE DEFINED

Intercultural dialogue looks at how people, from differing cultural/religious backgrounds (cultural diversity), endeavour to communicate. Its core is to establish and understand how people from different cultures communicate with each other. Thus, intercultural hermeneutics is a theory of communication across religious and cultural boundaries, starting from the context of shared humanity and demands a radical openness for the other in his or her religious and cultural context.

Furthermore, intercultural dialogue is based on the evidence and understanding that there is no longer any common binding and normative language either throughout the world or within the Church (Friedli 1987:222). Any language can be used when doing mission or development. In the book, *Striving Together*, Charles Kimball (1991:86) states that: intercultural dialogue by definition is a conversation, a process of communication through speech. It is a reciprocal relationship in which two or more parties endeavour both to express accurately.

Intercultural dialogue must involve more than one person; otherwise it will be a monologue. The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy has also said that: Inter-group dialogue is a process, which enables people from all walks of life to talk deeply and personally about the major issues and realities that divide them. Dialogues are transformational experiences that lead to both personal and collaborative action. Dialogue is deliberative, involving the weighing of various options and the considerations of differences for the purpose of reaching agreement or policy decisions.

There exists a bewildering array of definitions, as well as overlapping terms and concepts, in the field of dialogue. The concept is described by many other terms such as civic engagement, public participation, community conversations, public discourse, honest conversations, and deliberative discourse. Some of these terms are used within certain constituencies. But the oldest word with widest popularity is “dialogue,” and this is the term that will be used throughout this work. Dialogue is not new in



missionary discourse. The theological foundation for dialogue in mission is the Triune God. At the beginning of creation, when God said “let us make man in our own image” (Gen. 1:26-28), God revealed that dialogue is an essential element of His missional praxis. Here we see communion and community in the Trinity which Jesus constantly sought during His earthly ministry.

The Council in Jerusalem (Acts 15), which is believed to be the earliest ecumenical Church Council, demonstrated that intercultural dialogue is no stranger to the missiological vocabulary of the Church. Paul used it with positive results (cf Acts 17:16-33). And Verkuyl (1978:363) has rightly observed that, “communication of the gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the ages has had a dialogical character.” So dialogue as a missionary method is not new, though the practice of it takes various forms today. Respectful intercultural dialogue in mission here advocates an attitude of openness and respect to people of other faiths, coupled with the willingness of Christians to be challenged and changed in the encounter with people of other cultures/faiths.

As Samartha (1981) argues that, “dialogue is not just a concept; it is a relationship in community as people share the meaning and mystery of human existence and as they struggle together in suffering, hope and joy.” In a sense, dialogue is an adventure and opportunity in which people dare to challenge and be challenged as they seek to come to a deeper understanding about life and God. It is a way of understanding the experiences of men and women in community, and the meaning of life and God in their midst. What follows therefore illustrates the varying responses to dialogue among the different Christian persuasions.

6.7 MOTIVATION FOR RESPECTFUL INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

In the words of Thangaraj (1999:23), “all of our problems are global problems and demand global solutions. Such solutions have to be worked out by the people of the whole world in consultation and in cooperation with each other. The local and the



global spheres have come to interact with each other in ways we could not previously imagine.” David Bosch (1991:21) has also reminded us that

The contemporary theologian’s task is not really different from what the New Testament authors set out so boldly to do. What they did for their time, we have to do for ours. We too must listen to the past and speak to the present and the future. At the same time, our task is more difficult than that of the New Testament authors. Matthew, Luke, and Paul and others lived in cultures radically different from ours and faced problems of which we have no idea. Moreover, they used notions their contemporaries immediately understood but we do not.

Some of the peculiar difficulties of our time are the unprecedented pluralism and life-threatening conflicts we see everywhere. The nuclear threat and terrorism are but a few. We have come to a point that unless we confront these issues through creative dialogue with one another and the whole of creation, we all face imminent extinction. The opinion expressed in this dissertation is that the global situation needs dialogue among the various people of the world. With the endemic conflicts in Malawi and CCAP Blantyre Synod in particular, we need to engage in a theologically driven dialogue as a hermeneutic process of discerning God’s will in our situations. The benefits of this process can be enormous for us as we summarize as follows:

6.7.1 Fostering Collaboration

Without dialogue, it is almost impossible for any collaboration to take place. The Israelite prophet, Amos (3:3), put it succinctly when he asked “can two walk together without agreement?” Indeed, we cannot build relationships without the understanding of our potential partners, and “we cannot achieve that understanding without a form of communication that goes by way of conversation.” Our mutual interdependence makes collaboration an imperative for mission (Cf I Cor. 12; Eph. 4:11-16).

6.7.2 Improving Inter-Group Understanding

We all carry some form of cultural baggage. Many conflicts in the world and even in CCAP Blantyre Synod congregations in Malawi result from cultural prejudices and stereotypes of other people. “Facilitated dialogues” can foster new, respectful



relationships, informed by a deepened understanding of the role of prejudice and stereotyping in discriminatory behaviour.

Dialogue helps us to understand others better and to develop a commitment to fight against our personal, cultural and institutional prejudices and stereotypes like ethnicism and racism. For example, writing about African-Muslim dialogue, Azumah (2001:236) concludes,

The first step of dialogue with indigenous Africa should be to unlearn acquired misinformation and stereotypes and to begin to appreciate the other through their lenses. In other words, dialogue with indigenous Africa should, first of all, be geared towards bringing about a change of perception and attitude in the Self. In this regard, the Self needs as much liberation as the other.

Already, dialogue is being increasingly used “to transform deep-rooted, value-based conflicts” (Azumah 2001:236) in many parts of the world. Small groups of people who hold opposing views on highly divisive and emotive problems (such as abortion and gay rights) are brought together to have “a new kind of conversation or debate, which seeks to score points and to persuade.” The goals of this dialogue are mutual understanding and respect. This may not lead to a resolution of the conflict. It can, however, also lead to transformation of the way that conflict is pursued from one which is highly destructive and divisive, to one which is constructive and matured in understanding. In this way, dialogue can be very rewarding. Malawi, and indeed the CCAP Blantyre Synod, needs dialogue to deal with the myriads of deep-rooted ethnic conflicts in the polity.

6.7.3 Building Peace

Peace is both a condition for, and a result of, effective mission. Without peace, we will find it difficult to do mission. Yet the goal of mission is to produce peace. For instance, effective and fruitful mission can be elusive if there is war in a village, yet in the midst of the war we need to identify with the suffering people in order to bring peace and hope to them. Peace (*Shalom*) is the substance of the biblical vision of one community embracing *all* creation. It refers to those resources and factors which



make communal harmony joyous and effective (Brueggemann 1987:16). The Old Testament prophet, Ezekiel (34:25-29a) in a visionary passage expresses its meaning:

I will make them a covenant of *shalom* and banish wild beasts from the land, so that they may dwell securely in the wilderness and sleep in the woods. And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will send down the showers of blessing in their season. And the trees of the field shall yield their fruit, and the earth shall yield its increase, and they shall be secure in their land....They shall no more be a prey to the nations, nor shall the beasts of the land devour them; they shall dwell securely, and none shall make them afraid. And I will provide them plantations of *shalom*.

This communal harmony between people and things can only be possible through mutual relational dialogue. So dialogue is a fundamental component in the process of peace building. And peace building maintains human infrastructure for relationships that are harmonious, synergistic, cooperative, responsive and mutually beneficial. When people are divided by their differences, the patterns of relationships reinforce separation, fragmentation and divisiveness. In situations of severe conflict, the absence of peace breeds mistrust, distorted views, cycles of hurt and revenge, blame and pain. Dialogue is a way of creating bridges across the chasms of our differences.

6.7.4 Fostering Community Change

Participants in dialogue can have an increased sense of power and determination to initiate change based on the knowledge they gain from the vastly different experiences and perspectives of their own members. Intercultural dialogue can also put participating groups in a unique and powerful place to build developmental projects and solve community problems like crime.

The researcher still remembers how, as the District Coordinator of Public Affair Committee (PAC) in Mangochi in 2000 and 2001, our community was saved from complete ruin when there was a Muslim riots against Christians. The energy and resources that were almost wasted on destruction of lives and property were channeled to rebuilding our long-neglected road and other developmental projects in the community. This was possible because the Lord worked in His people through the



power of creative intercultural dialogue. Surprisingly, by God's grace, Roman Catholics, Anglicans and Presbyterians worked together as brothers and sisters.

6.7.5 Strengthening Democracy

Dialogue helps citizens take an active role in policy and decision-making. It has been said that the health and future of democracy depends on the active participation of responsible citizens, who take the initiative to engage in dialogue, deliberate about public policy choices, and work towards setting the public agenda. Many of the ills plaguing Africa are outcomes of the lack of political will on the part of Africans to establish a democratic culture.

There is need for us to cultivate and deepen democracy and tolerance through intercultural dialogue among the diverse ethnic groups in Africa, and Malawi in particular. It is only in such a culture that leaders are tested and retained or thrown out according to the will of the people as it has recently happened in Tunisia, Egypt and now Libya. It is only in such culture that mistakes are made and corrected without social upheaval. It is only in such culture that people are groomed to be tolerant of people of other languages, colours, ethnic groups or clans, and to be able to give and take in periods of triumphs and failure. It is only in such a culture that Malawians can evolve to become a viable polity that inspires loyalty and patriotism.

Talking about polity, there is no denying the fact that many of our church structures are still authoritarian in practice and exclusive of some members. We need to democratize these structures so that men and women, and even children, will freely unleash their God-given talents and also participate in building a better society of God's delight. But as long as we fear and neglect intercultural dialogue, there will continue to be autocracies and exclusions which will keep resources untapped both in the church and the larger society.



6.7.6 Encouraging innovation

Using the process of intercultural dialogue, we create our world and its future through a process of connecting with each other, showing knowledge and know-how, and building relationships. When we consciously focus attention on “questions that matter” to our organizations and communities, we are contributing to the evolution of the knowledge that we need to co-create the future. We “grow what we know individually and collectively using possibilities for mutual insight, innovation, and action that are already present, if only we are ready to look.” The innovative possibilities of the future can only be realized in our communities, nations and the entire world if we are willing to dialogue with one another. All the talks about African Union, African Renaissance, the Restoration of Carthage African Century or the much-announced Millenium Development Goals (MDG) are possible if we can engage in innovative dialoguing (cf. Makgoba 1999:204-205)

The points we have described above are about the mission and the hope that the CCAP Blantyre Synod is called to pursue. They are about realizing the future and making God’s kingdom visible. We believe that respectful intercultural dialogue holds promise for a better human society. In this connection, the researcher would add that respectful intercultural dialogue in mission is a liberating search for the truth about God and about who we are. This search is not an easy process, because intercultural dialogue is rooted in the awareness that we must *struggle* to achieve “truth”. This “Truth”, including the truth of Christian faith, is not something that can be handed to us in a package (Ellsberg 1991:82).

The search for truth demands that we know that “truth is not a non-negotiable dogma or principle with which we begin but a goal we seek.” If we want to know whether the injunction “love your enemies” has truth in it, we must try it. Only in the laboratory of experience can we test our understanding of truth. Love is not an abstract concept that should just be consigned to intellectual speculation. It is about people and relationships which have to be tried and tested in the laboratory of human lives and situations.



6.8 HOW DO WE MOTIVATE PEOPLE TO DIALOGUE?

As we have seen, respectful intercultural dialogue is not an easy exercise, and it is not to be entered into lightly or unadvisedly. Because of this, people need motivation to engage in respectful intercultural dialogue. And since individuals and faith communities differ in so many ways, it is often difficult to offer practical suggestions about ways to motivate people for a respectful intercultural dialogical mission and development. We nevertheless offer the following four broad suggestions:

6.8.1 Sound Theological Education

The process of respectful intercultural dialogue in a congregation is decidedly not one person's responsibility. If people are to engage in meaningful and fruitful dialogue in mission and development, there must be sound theological education. This will include, but should be not limited to, Sunday school classes, adult bible study groups, children's educational programmes, preaching ministries, and so on.

If we are to reach beyond our current situation in Africa, we will need to take seriously and respond urgently to the challenge being posed by Andrew F. Walls (2001:50): It need hardly be said that one of the areas of revision will be theological education. Generally speaking, the *theological curricula* across Africa have followed western models, simply making some additions for local relevance. But western curricula in Church History, for instance, do not present a universal model; they reflect a careful process of selection that makes the West the special focus of the church's life. The content of *curricula* for theological education should be *locally and broadly* prepared to include the needs of church leaders, the congregations, professional theologians and even outsiders.

6.8.2 Social Justice Engagement

We have often heard that Christians should not be involved in politics because it is a dirty game. But Jackson (2001:2) has quoted Alan Hendricks of Port Elizabeth as saying that "Politics is a dirty game and it needs Christians to clean it up." This could be why God did not only love the world as it is (John 3:16), but He took the initiative



to come and clean it up. In the person of Jesus Christ who died and rose again for us, God demonstrated that it is possible to engage in this process (Rom 5:1-8). Theologically speaking, Christians believe that the initiative-taking triune God speaks and works through his body in this world. In John 1:1, 14, Jesus as the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us. God taking His place among people is also called the “emmanuelisation” (Thangaraj 1999) of the human environment.

This approach therefore does not regard people or problems as objects to be studied “from a distance.” It invites people to become participants and to contribute to a process of finding solutions to problems. Since intercultural dialogue is all about ‘reasoning together’ (Isaiah 1:18), hands-on participation is therefore very important in the process. In research, this is called Participatory Action Research (PAR) (August 2010; De Vos 1998:408).

6.8.3 Facilitated Traveling

“Facilitated traveling” is another way of motivating people for intercultural dialogue. Technology has made it possible for people to move *en masse* from one side of the world to another in a matter of hours. This movement exposes people to a great deal of knowledge about other people, life and things beyond their own natural environments. This can create a great opportunity for respectful intercultural dialogue among people of different cultures and ideologies, thereby building a more humane and harmonious society. Regarding this, the CCAP Blantyre Synod should continue posting workers to areas other than their places of birth as a way to expose them to intercultural dialogue with others and to build bridges of friendship across ethnic boundaries.

The process of intercultural dialogue is a journey for every Christian. Believers should be equipped for this missional enterprise (Eph 4:12) by the church leadership. Where there is conflict, people should see themselves as Christ’s ambassadors (2 Cor 5:20) called into the ministry of reconciliation –reconciling people to themselves and to God. This is the goal and essence of our missional vocation.



6.9 SUMMATIVE CONCLUSION

In this chapter, we discussed and define the concept of interculturalisation. in a way that brought light to the reader to be able to distinguish interculturalisation from ethnocentrism or multiculturalisation. We also cursorily discussed issues concerning European missionaries' conduct of compelling Africans to compromise the cultural identity. Hence it is now the responsibility of the CCAP Blantyre Synod to understand changing times demand that we retool ourselves by the way we do mission and development. The challenge here is for the CCAP Blantyre Synod to recover its missional identity. This then brings us to the research questions we had earch on in chapter 1 of this research study project:

- How can the CCAP Blantyre Synod as a transforming public entity genuinely become a truly reconciling change agent among the various ethnic groups in church and society?
- In terms of people's roles in church and society, how can interculturalisation become a missional model to bond people of various ethnic groups?

Therefore, the next chapter is the final concluding chapter where among other things we will bring out interculturalisation as a missional model and propose the relevant recommendations to the CCAP Blantyre synod.



CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the researcher presents two parts: In the first part, he presents a summary of the arguments of this dissertation and outlines the findings. In the second part he makes recommendations and designs a missional model and guidelines for interculturalisation both to the Church and the society in Malawi regarding the issues raised and discussed in the research problem and hypothesis. The recommendations propose the adoption of interculturalisation as transforming praxis and a missional model.

Therefore, a summary of the entire work is given in order to proceed to the concluding missional model and guidelines as recommendations to the CCAP Blantyre Synod in her engagement in mission and development. The recommendations propose the adoption of ‘interculturalisation’ as a missional model. The recommendations ask the church to adopt this missional model that will help in her endeavour to be a transformational Church. The researcher advocates for an interdependence of the various ethnic groups and their cultures so as to better facilitate a move from ethnocentrism to interculturalisation in church and society in Malawi. Hence, he calls for a change in mind-set, and a hermeneutic of hospitality, interdependence, mutual respect, reconciliation, caring, sharing, preserving and liberating in order to overcome ethnocentrism, thereby restoring the fractured human dignity in Malawi.

Chapter one served as an introduction to the research study and examined the researcher’s motivation for the choice of the research topic: “Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The Case of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) Blantyre Synod Urban Ministry”.



7.2 Chapter 2

In this chapter the historical and contextual analysis of the CCAP Blantyre Synod is discussed. The researcher traces the origin and development of the CCAP Blantyre Synod against the background of the general history of Malawi, and mission history. The researcher also introduces problems of slavery, ethnicity, language, national and identity of the church.

Chapter 2 Findings

- ❖ On many occasions, the missionaries risked their lives in proclaiming the gospel. In the process the sacrifices made ensured the planting of the Gospel which remained with the CCAP Blantyre Synod till today.
- ❖ The English colonial administration and colonial settlers in relation to the Scottish missionaries caused racial tension in the missionary field.
- ❖ In Malawi, there are only three ethnic groups which have attained majority status in their respective regions: the Tumbuka in the north, The Chewa in the Centre, and the Yao in the South.
- ❖ Thus, many of our disputes in Malawi emanate from the tension concerning which group among the various ethnic groups is numerically the strongest in the country. Thus, instead of complementing each other and celebrating our diversity, we are busy competing against each other and destroying one another.

7.3 Chapter 3

In this chapter, the researcher analyses the concept of ethnicity/ethnocentrism and gives an overview of the anthropological and theological discourses. This analysis is then applied to the Malawian context which impacts on the identity of the church. Hence, in order to understand ‘interculturalisation’ in this study, it was important to investigate ethnicity since it has become a phenomenon that is visible and audible in church and society in our time. We may, however, ask the question: What role did ethnicity play in the identity and character of the early Christian movement? To attempt this question is to draw our initial contours from the life and ministry of Jesus who stands as the one from whom the Church originated. The first thing which can be



said is that the Gospel, while critical of ethnic pride (ethnocentrism) and strife, does affirm ethnicity. Its central theme is the incarnation, God taking on human “flesh.” The Messiah was a Jew. As the Man of all cultures, Jesus entered a specific culture. He was a descendant of David, raised in a small Galilean village. He accepted cultural identity and allowed his services to transcend cultural bias. That is consistent with the incarnation. Thus, ethnicity is not bad, it gives your cultural identity, but ethnocentrism is bad because it gives you ethnic pride, a cultural superiority complex that your culture or ethnicity is better than others.

Chapter 3 Findings

- ❖ We sadly noted that ethnicity distinguishes groupings of people who, for historical reasons, have come to be seen as distinctive – by themselves and others – on the basis of geographical locations of origin, and a series of other cultural markers.
- ❖ We also learnt that there are three approaches to the study of ethnicity. These are: instrumentalism, primordialism and constructivism. In the same process, it was noted that the paradoxical feature of the phenomenon rooted in the abiding dynamic ambivalence in human nature itself, shows that people are not only social beings, but also innately religious. What this implies is that, besides, social anthropology, we also need a biblical anthropology in the study and understanding of ethnicity.
- ❖ It emerged that the British colonial administration and the missionaries introduced the germ of ethnocentrism to Malawians.
- ❖ It also emerged that the post-colonial era indigenous leaders have also pampered and kept ethnocentrism alive till today.

7.4 Chapter 4

In the fourth chapter, the researcher carried an investigation on the influence of ethnocentrism on mission in Malawi. In order to see clearly the different phases and faces of ethnocentrism in our country, it was imperative to discuss what mission is, the reasons and motivation for it as well as its biblical foundation. This then led us to



a critical discussion concerning the the influence of ethnocentrism on mission. This helped us unravel factors that have shaped the CCAP family's self-understanding. The questions that then arose were: To what extent has ethnocentrism been used to define people's roles in the Church's mission in Malawi? How can the CCAP Blantyre Synod as a public entity genuinely become a truly reconciling change agent among the various ethnic groups in church and society? This chapter ends with a summative conclusion.

Chapter 4 Findings

- ❖ It emerged from our discussion that missionaries introduced the germ of ethnocentrism to the CCAP Christian family in Malawi.
- ❖ Indigenous church leaders have pampered and kept ethnocentrism alive up to this very day.
- ❖ In Malawi, ethnic consciousness aided by ethnocentric stereotypes, combine to create tension and conflicts in the mission field.
- ❖ It emerged from our discussion that the issue of the boundary wrangle between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods has divided the CCAP family.
- ❖ The CCAP Blantyre Synod cannot escape from the effects of the Nkhoma-Livingstonia Synods boundary wrangles since she has among her membership Christians from both Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods and also as a member of the larger CCAP Genral Assembly.

7.5 Chapter 5

In the fifth Chapter, the researcher carried an investigation on the influence of ethnicity on development in Malawi. First, the definition of development was given, and issues related to self-reliance, community participation and community development were discussed. In the process, we attempted to address the question: To what extent has ethnocentrism been used to define people's roles in development in Malawi? Our conviction here is that a sound theoretical basis is a necessity for the Christians' involvement in the society (Diakonia/ to serve focussing on the physical, psychological and social needs).



This involvement starts with an understanding of our missional identity as a church. The criterion for authenticity for a missional church is not orthodoxy but orthopraxis (Bosch 1991:424-5). This means more than just analyzing theology by Christian practice; for then it would be easy for theology to degenerate into a form of a pragmatic sociological analysis. It is a praxis that includes a focus on the kingdom of God (teleos) which looks to the final purpose of the action. Here again, however, the teleos itself is only discovered through action/service (diakonia). Thus, theology as praxis assumes that theory must be part of a theological reflection which integrates obedient participation in a missionally driven action.

It is this element of praxis that puts upon the Christian the duty not only to be a proclaimer (Kerygma) but also a practical witness (diakonia) to the good news; to deliver what one believes, “to love thy neighbour as thyself”. If this is the commandment of Jesus then it obligates a Christian to be sensitive to issues in the world. This is because a neighbour is the one in need, need of the good news: “I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly” (John 10:10 – NAB).

The one in need does not only need to hear and see but also to be attended to at times. James (2:14-16 –NIV) alludes to this when he says, “What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it?” Thus, commitment to the poor and the marginalized is the point of departure for orthopraxis, not orthodoxy.

The Church's "option for the poor" derived from Christ himself calls upon Christians to pay greater attention to the poor (Spiritual Poverty, Material Poverty, Intellectual Poverty etc without dichotomizing). There are many ways to do this but Economic Development is one of them. The activities of trying to alleviate poverty and the sufferings brought about by poverty which includes ethnocentrism, nepotism, oppression, hunger, etc. was Jesus', priority. However, the CCAP Blantyre synod



needs to be engaged in the diaconal services without becoming captive to the socio-cultural trappings of its environment (ethnocentrism in this context). This chapter ends with a summative conclusion.

Chapter 5 Findings

- ❖ Even in development, missionaries and the British colonial administration introduced the germ of ethnocentrism –uprooting of African-produced crops by the European colonial administration leaving white-produced crops. Thus deliberately planting hunger amongst the Africans.
- ❖ Only Africans were forced to work without wages on white farms.
- ❖ It also emerged from our discussion that the concept of globalisation has influenced the various domains in society- global mobility make different ethnic groups from various parts of the world to interact. As a result policy-making process in the field of religion, politics, economics, ecology, gender, urban life, ethics, and production are influenced by globalisation.
- ❖ In many ways the world has become much smaller. Many factors have brought this about: technology, the information highway, the knowledge explosion, cross-border migration, the use of the English language, sport and leisure activities, multinational corporations, humanitarian intervention by the international community, and the like. Important events whether of an economic, political or leisure nature, now have a global audience.
- ❖ The space and time coordinates with which we used to understand societies have changed. As a result, the development constituency has become more diverse in terms of ethnicity, race, and tribe. For instance, there are South African shops (Shoprite, Game, Pep Stores etc) in Malawi and other African countries. The workers in these shops are from different countries.
- ❖ Global consciousness is replacing the more limited consciousness of one's own ethnicity, gender, language, and national borders.



7.6 Chapter 6

In Chapter six, the researcher analyses the concept of interculturalisation. In the same process, he attempts to discuss interculturalisation in a way that enlightens the reader to be able to distinguish interculturalisation from ethnocentrism. The missionary enterprise of the CCAP Blantyre Synod needs to understand that changing times demand that we re-orientate regarding the manner we do mission and development. The challenge here is for the CCAP Blantyre Synod to recover its missional identity.

Chapter 6 Findings

- ❖ It emerged from our discussion that in the course of missionary enterprise by the Scottish, the African proselytes lost the true African identity.
- ❖ Interculturalisation – an interdependence of people and their cultures can also bring conflict/tension if adopted without cultural sensitivity and respect for human dignity that requires tolerance, open-mindedness and acknowledgement of the other with unconditional love.

7.7 RECOMMENDATIONS

For effectiveness in her life and ministry as missional church, it is recommended that the CCAP Blantyre Synod should be:

7.7.1 A Listening Church

Doing mission and theology calls for understanding and doing things in creative and new ways. Whereas the Gospel does not change (1 Pet. 2:23-25), the methods of communication are always changing within time and space. What is therefore required for creative and imaginative engagement in mission is active listening. The *Shema* opens with “*Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one...* (Deut. 6:4ff).



God chided Israel through the prophets because they were not listening to what he was saying (see Isaiah 1:1-31). Jesus usually ended his teachings with “*whoever has an ear, let him hear...*” (cf Mt 11:15). And the last book of the Bible concludes with the same message: “*he who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches*” (Rev.2:29; 3:22). The church has to listen to God - and for God. Without listening to God the church may never discern what the divine agenda for *missio Dei* is and without listening to the people, it will be impossible for her to hear the cries and the painful groanings of the oppressed people and the whole creation (Romans 8:23-25).

Listening opens the church up and empowers her to witness beyond her present experience. Not everybody has the understanding and discernment of a given text and context. This is why it is a challenge for those doing mission to develop the skill and art of active, rather than passive listening. As a strategy for faithful mission to the Lord and relevant service to the contemporary society, the CCAP Blantyre Synod should practically:

a) Listen to women:

Women are still suffering under patriarchy and we need to listen to them more than had been done before. The current political situation in our country is a testimony to this. This is important because both from the Scripture and our cultures, women hear so many things that are often unheard by men. As women constitute a critical mass among the world’s poorest of the poor, it is clear that there are realities they know of which we are ignorant. Women have a way of experiencing life that we (men) know not of and to listen to them is to understand not only their realities but also our own realities. As Gutierrez (1983:231) once put it, “When we listen to those who speak from the reality of other poor peoples, we gain a keener and more in-depth insight into the people to whom we ourselves belong and whose life of faith we are seeking to express. To listen to other realities is to let our own reality speak.” This is the message that the Circle of Concerned African Women Theologians (Phiri, Isabel *et al* 2002 *Her-Stories: Hidden histories of women of faith in Africa*) are trying to pass across to the churches and other faith communities in the entire continent. The church stands to gain a lot if it listens to our women more than it had done before.



b) Listen to the Youth:

The Church should listen to the youth and develop a relevant ministry that will not only ‘win’ them today to the Lord but also prepare them for mission tomorrow. We have often been reminded that a church that is indifferent to its youth is already committing a spiritual suicide. The Scripture challenges us to take seriously the ministry to the youth because “From the lips of children and infants, He (the Lord) has also ordained praise!” (Mt 21:16). The fact that David was a boy when he delivered Israel from what could have been an embarrassing defeat by the Philistines (I Samuel 17: 1-58), and Timothy became a Church leader when he was a youth (I Timothy 4:12) should convince us that God may deliver His kingdom through messengers otherwise deemed unlikely.

c) Listen to other Ecclesiologies and faiths:

My impression is that listening to what other theologies have to tell us is increasingly becoming the prime gauge of progress in our dialogue (Gutierrez 1983:230). The CCAP Blantyre Synod should listen to other ecclesiologies and faiths because, through them, the Lord might perhaps even teach us not only how to serve Him, but also how not to do so (cf Jer. 48:10a). In dealing with ethnicity and ethnocentrism especially in our diverse context, we need to listen to others to hear how they are sensitively dealing with the same problems that are troubling us in Malawi. Mission in this dispensation does not require any ‘solo’ effort. It requires our cooperation with others and listening to what the Lord might be saying to them which we would not hear if we remained in our spiritual enclaves. Genuine ecumenical mission and inter-faith dialogue/engagement will definitely create the channels through which we may hear more from others, and that is genuine interculturalisation.

d) Listen to the entire creation

We all need to listen to the entire creation so that we may learn how to be faithful stewards of the Lord’s people and property. Mission today is incomplete unless there is a deliberate effort by all humans to be eco-friendly. It is the task of the CCAAP Blantyre Synod to teach the members and our generation to not only be fruitful,



multiply and ‘dominate’ the earth (Genesis 1:28), but also to ‘work it and take care of it’ (Genesis 2:15). With the avaricious exploitation of the mineral resources by the multinational companies in Malawi (Exploitative Tea Estates Mulanje), the Church is expected to raise a prophetic voice both for the people and the environment. This represents the responsibility and mutual solidarity of the *missio humanitatis* that we spoke of in Chapter 4 as a method of doing mission. The question may be asked: what do we do with what we hear? In other words, after listening, what next? This question leads us to the next point of action: the art of creative thinking.

7.7.2 A Thinking Church

What we do with what we hear from the Lord and the people is very important. We have to think over them, which also means that we have to be discerning. A thinking church is a “dreaming” church. A church that dreams will hardly lack vision and direction. But a church without vision will harvest destruction: ‘where there is no vision, the people perish’ (Proverbs 29:18).

In view of the foregoing, the CCAP Blantyre Synod needs a visionary leadership. To do this, we must constantly ask ourselves, ‘*What is our vision and mission in Malawi?*’ It is only when we actively reflect on what we have heard and seen that that we will be able to build a foundation of ideas today upon which we can stand and engage the future. We are speaking about a future with sound foundation, a future that our children and our children’s children will be proud to inherit; it is God’s own preferred future.

Therefore, it is not a future to be met with despair, rather with *confidence* and *hope* in Christ who himself is the *hope* of glory (Col. 1:27; cf. Ps. 133:1-3). As Guder (1998:187) puts it, ‘The Spirit of God, which is the Spirit of Jesus, leads the people of God and their leadership into an eschatological future that is present among them now, even if imperfectly. This eschatology is not only about the end of the world. It is about the future breaking in today with an alternative order known as the reign of God.’ No wonder Bonhoeffer (1955:17) said ‘the coming of the kingdom of God in



Jesus Christ indicates that the day is already breaking even though night is not yet over’.

The nature of mission today therefore has to be understood and undertaken in a creative and imaginatively new manner (Bosch 1991:367). This would also require repenting, which as Bosch has said, ‘may not mean relinquishing what we are, but doing mission in a different way’ (Bosch 1991: 365). This would mean that as Malawian Presbyterians, we should start thinking as ambassadors of Christ and no more as local champions of our different ethnic groups. Unless we think creatively and imaginatively looking for new ideas to engage our society, we would become unfit for the *missio Dei* in critical times of distress like ours. Listening and thinking are meaningful only when they are backed by action. Therefore, the CCAP Blantyre Synod should also be known to be:

7.7.3 A Doing Church

In reconciliation, we understand that for God, this concept is meant not only to be a verbal message to humanity, but that it had to become incarnate; ‘an audible word had to become a visible deed in flesh before reconciliation could become effective’ (Naude 2004:139). This was the price God had to pay – the incarnation of Christ, the reconciliation of God with humanity. Jesus said to the disciples, “occupy till I come” (Lk 19:13). Again, He told them “*greater works shall you do because I go to the Father*” (John 17:12).

Indeed, much is expected from the CCAP Blantyre Synod. But as we listen attentively to various voices through which the Lord speaks, and as we think and create new ideas in the process and struggles of life, we are to put into practice new insights that will enhance the *missio Dei*, through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church has a number of internal resources to aid the ministry of reconciliation. I would like to point to a number of them. These strategies can be used for internal reconciliation processes and/or for promoting broader national and community reconciliation.



a) The power of ritual and rituals in Africa

Ritual is sometimes downplayed in secular societies as neurotic repetition (Schreier 1992:71). In African society, rituals are important aspects of our lives in expressing deeply felt, but hardly articulated feelings. In dealing with reconciliation, ritual becomes extremely important, because the drama of ritual can speak of that for which we have no words. The Church cannot underestimate the power of its ritual to mark the moments of transition in reconciliation, and to give expression to feelings so painful and so deep that no other way can be found to bear them. For Catholic and Orthodox traditions of Christianity, this turn to ritual may come easier than for Reformation traditions. But all will need to draw upon ritual according to their best lights (Schreier 1986:75).

One ritual needs to be singled out here, and that is the Eucharist. Eucharistic theologies and practices vary among churches, but the need for deliverance from the suffering of violence may draw them together around those texts in, say Ephesians discussed earlier in this study. Gathering around the Eucharistic table, the broken, damaged and abused bodies of individual victims and the broken body of the church are taken up into the body of Christ. Christ's body has known torture; it has known shame. In his complete solidarity with victims he has gone to the limits of violent death. And so his body becomes a holy medicine to heal the broken bodies of today (Schreier 1986:75).

b) Retelling the story (story telling as a way of healing)

A Malawian female theologian, Phiri (2002:3) has asked a very thought provoking question, "What's the use of telling stories?" We can understand the power of stories to overcome divisions when we reflect on the way in which Scripture has spoken of persons of every culture, race, and circumstance, no matter how different they may be. There is a depth in each of us, a depth of the human condition that is touched when we share our stories (Snyder 1992:95). Schreier (1992:71) alludes to this when he argues that, "Victims of violence and suffering must tell their story over and over and over again in order to escape the narrative of the lie. As they recount their own narrative, little by little they begin to construct a new narrative of truth that can



include the experiences to overwhelm it. This includes, in the first stage, establishing a kind of geography of violence and suffering; that is, bounding it so as to tame its savage power. The more that violence is so bounded, the less formidable it becomes. Without such boundedness, it roams at will in the life of the victim devouring, like the roaming lion in 1 Peter 5:8, whomever it will. The ministry of reconciliation at this stage is listening.” The incredible fact is how similar our stories often are.

Sharing our stories, however, will not overcome all divisions in a single blow. The suspicions run too deep, the problems of communication present hurdles that loom large before us, and our tendency to self-preoccupation is not easily given up. Nor does sharing our stores overcome all differences. We may still find ourselves disagreeing about what is to be done, even when we discover that we share the same fundamental human condition. Culture, strategies, and styles may lead to a variety of responses. Sharing our stories does provide us with a foundation for solidarity (Snyder 1992:92-94).

The stories to be shared are not only those of suffering, however. There are also stories in which we share our dreams and hopes. The creation narrative in Genesis reveals the power in sharing our dreams, our hopes, and our imaginings. God shared a longing: “Let us make” God shared these deepest longings and, in speaking those words, transformed the darkness into light, the formless into beauty, and the emptiness into abundance. The Bible is above all else, the story of longing, the sharing of God’s dreams, first for companionship and then for restoration of a lost relationship. The awful danger in not knowing each other’s stories is that we fail to build genuine friendships - caring relationships that can shape and guide our actions. Sharing our stories not only serves to create solidarity, it also gives solidarity a human face.

c) Advocacy on behalf of victims

The church has to stress the importance of poverty and economic inequality as fundamental obstacles to reconciliation. The importance of development initiatives



and advocacy regarding economic justice cannot be over-emphasized. The contemporary need to confront the ruling political elite and their cronies with the need for upliftment, and their consequent responsibilities, arises from the benefits they derive from the exploitation of the poor people in our country. These strategies are very similar to those used by the non-religious NGOs in many places in Africa. The fact that they are conducted under church auspices adds a new dimension to the intervention and provides access to different types of groups and communities.

Finally, I would like to say that any pedagogical and pastoral approach to mission has to acknowledge that the ministry of healing and reconciliation is a profound and lengthy process that therefore requires long-term strategies (Rom 8:25). For those who are reconciled, reconciliation becomes a calling (Shreiter 1986:73). They move to a wholly new place from which they call oppressors to repentance and service in a prophetic way for the whole society. This process requires patience and a deep understanding that we all share a common destiny from which none can escape. As Thabo Mbeki (in Boesak 2005:174) put it, “The challenge ahead of us is to achieve reconciliation between former oppressor and the formerly oppressed, between black and white, between rich and poor, between men and women, the young and the old, the able and the disabled ... seeking to reconcile ourselves with one another...moved to act together in pursuit of common goals, understanding that we cannot escape a shared destiny.”

Thabo Mbeki’s words fittingly conclude our perspective on the challenging task of reconciliation before the churches which has been presented in this dissertation. Mbeki might have spoken as a politician and not a theologian. Yet the word ‘reconciliation’, since Paul wrested it from classical Greek in his second letter to the Corinthians, has become a biblical term that can no longer be divested of its theological meaning. It is so central to the Christian faith that it is totally impossible to be a Christian without being confronted with the demand for reconciliation. “For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies (Ephesians 2:14 -GNB).



7.8 AN OVERVIEW OF INTERCULTURALISATION MODEL

The prevailing condition in our country necessitates the researcher to assist the church in designing a model that enables the church to involve all people as equals in all its structures: Congregation, Presbytery and Synod levels. The model is designed to complement the church's missional strategies being used at the moment. There is need for mutual opening of persons to each other, arising from the desire to learn from one another's strength and to be enriched by it. The CCAP Blantyre Synod is facing a lot of challenges now manifesting themselves in the form of amongst others: ethnocentrism, poverty and regionalism.

It emerged from research findings that the Scottish missionaries and the British colonial administration introduced the germ of ethnocentrism, and that indigenous leaders have pampered and kept ethnocentrism alive both in church and society till today. Therefore, to overcome ethnocentrism, a missional model is designed and proposed for adoption by the CCAP Blantyre Synod. This model has a strong Biblical anthropological value base that is manifested at each of the systems level. The pillars of interculturalisation are: Respectful-Dialogue, Hospitality, Reconciliation and Interdependence.

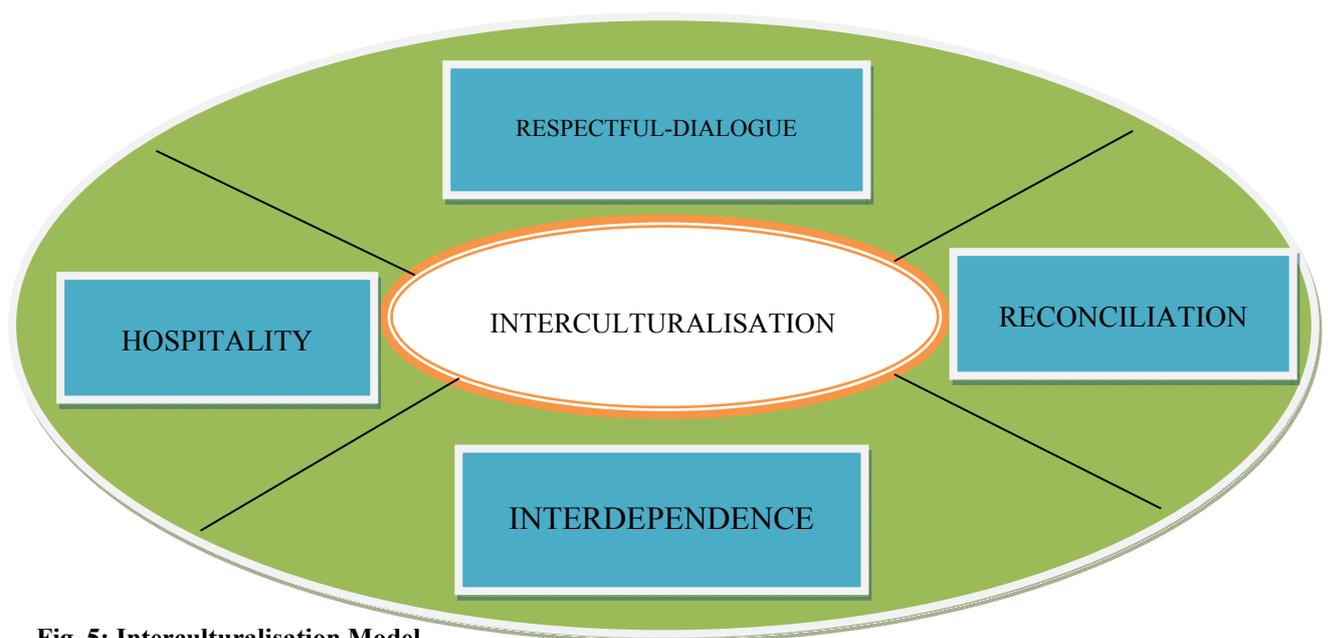


Fig. 5: Interculturalisation Model



7.8.1 Hospitality

This pillar of interculturalisation calls for communities in Malawi to build a culture of hospitality. The concept “hospitality” is used here in the moral and theological sense as described by Robert Vosloo (2003:66) in the following submission:

The challenge posed by moral crisis does not merely ask for tolerance and peaceful coexistence or some abstract pleas for community, but for ethos of *hospitality*. The opposite of *cruelty* and *hostility* is not simply freedom from the cruel and hostile relationship, but *hospitality*. Without an ethos of hospitality it is difficult to envisage a way to challenge economic injustice, racism and xenophobia, lack of communication, the recognition of the rights of another, etc. Hospitality is a prerequisite for a more public life. Without this kind of hospitality it is difficult to facilitate a move from multiculturalism to Interculturality in Africa.

The popular phrase, “I am because we are” more or less summarises the traditional African view point of being human marked by *hospitality*. In Africa, people do still realise that one cannot be fully human without being part of a community. Thus, most of the African people’s culture is much closer to the central Biblical command that we should ‘*love our neighbours*’. Individualism is increasingly creeping into Africa due to global mobility, but traditionally, it is not a culture of merciless competition between individuals, but one of *caring* and *sharing*, hospitality is what an African child is taught (van der Walt 2006:21).

7.8.2 Reconciliation

The concept of reconciliation should challenge the CCAP Blantyre Synod to focus on the concepts of the kingdom of God, justice, unity, love, mercy, forgiveness and harmony. These are foundations and pillars upon which true reconciliation can thrive. They are vital for greater social well being, transformation of the lives of the poor and addressing of the injustices that perpetuate most of our personal and communal conflicts. They will lead people to act together in pursuit of and to the creation of a society that truly progresses on the path of common goals, understanding that they cannot escape a shared destiny.

It must be noted here that any reconciliation that does not translate into the fundamental transformation of society is empty and meaningless. And when we live in the spirit of reconciliation, we affirm that: We are made for goodness. We are made



for love. We are made for friendliness. We are made for togetherness. We are made of joy, we are made of hope, and we are made for all of the beautiful things that you and I know. We are made to tell the world that there are no outsiders, no exclusion! All, all are welcome: black, white, red, yellow, rich, poor, educated, not educated, male, female, all, all, all to belong to this family, human family, and God's family (Tutu 2001: xiii). As Christians, we cannot we cannot surrender our faith and our conviction that God, in sending Jesus Christ into our midst, has taken a definite and eschatological course of action and is extending to human beings forgiveness, justification, and a new life of joy and servanthood through reconciliation. Reconciled to God and reconciled to one another.

7.8.3 Respectful Intercultural Dialogue

There is need for mutual opening of persons to each other, arising from the desire to learn from another's strength and to be enriched by it. People should avoid miscommunication, misinformation and misunderstandings by opening up to one another through communication. Thus, even people, from differing cultural backgrounds (cultural diversity), should endeavour to communicate respectfully, even if you do not agree. Thus, intercultural hermeneutics is a theory of communication across religious and cultural boundaries, *starting from the context of shared humanity* and demands a *radical openness* for the other in his or her religious and cultural context. Intercultural dialogue is not an attempt to suppress differences but rather to explore them frankly and self-critically in openness to God's further guidance.

7.8.4 Interdependence

'We are, therefore I am' (Southern African Proverb quoted by Saayman 2010:1). Archbishop (emeritus) Desmond Tutu (2004:22) has masterfully articulated his theology of *Ubuntu* as he juxtaposes it with the metaphor of *family* that can help us to understand our 'interdependence' or 'interconnectedness' in different settings whether in development, mission, political parties, other denominations or other faith communities in our quest to overcome ethnocentrism.



Tutu (2004:22) has made an acute observation that the “dreams of God” for us cannot be fulfilled without collective responsibility to one another (as a family). For this to happen, Tutu insists that all in Africa and the entire world must be willing to undergo a process of “conversion”, “conversion” from a culture of individualism and selective love for a segment of a society to a complete and unconditional love for all. Therefore, he calls for the adoption of a “*family*” metaphor as a path towards building a culture of ‘interdependence’ or communal life. Tutu explains the reason for his choice of *family* metaphor as follows:

The wonderful thing about family is that we are not expected to agree about everything under the sun. Show me a man and a wife who have never disagreed and I will show you some accomplished fibbers. But those disagreements, pray God, do not usually destroy the unity of the family. And so it should be with God’s family. We are not expected at all times to be unanimous or to have a consensus on every conceivable subject. What is needed is to respect one another’s points of view and to impute unworthy motives to one another or to seek to impugn the integrity of the other. Our maturity will be judged by how well we are able to agree to disagree and yet to continue to love one another, to care for one another and cherish one another and seek the greater good of the other (Tutu 2004:22).

The danger of a plurality of cultures poses is the inevitability of crises. In Tutu’s family metaphor, what binds a family together is not agreement, interest or commonness, but tolerance, unconditional love to all and for all. In this regard, Tutu describes the whole of humanity as being loved by, and belonged to, God. Therefore, Tutu says:

Sometimes we shocked them at home in South Africa when we said, the apartheid state president and I, whether we liked it or not, were brothers. And I had to desire and pray for the best for him. Jesus said, ‘I, if I be lifted up, will draw all to me’. Not some, but all. And it is a radical thing that Jesus says that we are members of one family. We belong. So Arafat and Sharon belong together. Yes, George Bush and Osama bin Laden belong together. God says, All, all are my children. It is shocking. It is radical (Tutu 2004:20).

In view of the above, Tutu explains it all that family love transcends ethnocentrism, family love transcends belief systems, values, cultural interests, ideologies, religious, gender and ecclesiological affiliations; sexual orientation; race, regional and national



boundaries (Tutu 2004:43-50). Therefore, Tutu speaks of *Ubuntu*, a person being a person through other persons (cf. van der Walt 2006:21). Though previously enemies by virtue of their race and cultures, they are now a family. They interact with one another. Hence, Tutu speaks of Bush and Osama bin Laden being brothers. The apartheid president and Tutu are brothers. There is an interface between the holders of different views; people with different cultures relating with each other; belonging together instead of competing with each other. This is Interculturalisation! Regarding this, Moltmann (1999:101) submits,

The Triune God isn't a solitary, unloved ruler in heaven who subjugates everything as earthly despots do. He is a God in a community, rich in relationships. 'God is love.' Father, Son and Holy Spirit live with one another, for one another, and in one another in the most supreme and most perfect community of love we can conceive: "I am in the Father and the Father is in me," says the Johannine Jesus. If that is true, then we correspond to God not through domination and subjugation but through community and relationships which further life.

They say there is strength in unity. There is need for the church to work together if it is to be taken seriously. Drawing from the rich resources of Scripture, tradition, the wider ecumenical and academic faith-based institutions – the CCAP Blantyre Synod can be an instrument of interculturalisation marked by love, forgiveness, justice, peace and reconciliation. The theological foundation for interdependence in mission is the Triune God. At the beginning of creation, when God said "let us make man in our own image" (Gen. 1:26-28), God revealed that interdependence is an essential element of His missional praxis. Here we see communion and community in the Trinity which Jesus constantly sought during His earthly ministry. Christ constantly sought the communion of His father.

7.9 FACILITATING INTERCULTURALISATION IN MALAWI

In order to facilitate a move from ethnocentrism to interculturalisation, we need to firstly change our mind-set/ perceptions and prejudices about other people. We need to broaden our horizon to accommodate all ethnicities/races, all cultures, all theologies, all hermeneutics and all people. There is need for conscientisation in our congregations, seminaries, and in our families. People should be sensitised to accept one another regardless of one's ethnicity.



Since this research is done in Africa, we will have to be contextual that the concept of Africa too needs to be redefined. There are white Africans in Egypt, Arab Africans in Libya, very dark Africans in Sierra Leon and many more. Africans outside Malawi, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Zambia have different cultures, different values and religious persuasions but are nevertheless Africans. Through open-mindedness and inter-cultural interaction we have come to know that Africa is not only defined by culture, race, economic power, type of education- whether Western or African – but more by geographical location and certain designed purposes.

We have some white South Africans who are Africans suffered became villains amongst their own people because they fought apartheid. Regarding this, some of us would not forget Beyers Naude. Of course those who would rather choose to be Europeans and yet South Africans are at liberty to do so. Africa will be again stuck in ethnocentrism/racism confusion of the worst kind if we do not learn to live together as brothers and sisters created in God's image.

Real interculturalisation takes place only where there is an interface between one culture and group of cultures and the others; between different theological schools; between different segments of a society where different groups, segments and theologies are partially “constituted” by each other. Interculturalisation will take place where and when the Nkhoma and Livingstonia synods; Blantyre and Nkhoma Synods; Livingstonia and Blantyre Synods; Tumbukas and the Chewas, the Yaos and the Lomwes, the white and black Africans are responsible to one another in the efforts to theologically respond to the challenges of Africa as bearers of the *imago Dei*. Regarding this, the researcher echoes the words of John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) when he states that, “We ought not to ordain that to be born a girl instead of a boy, any more than to be born black instead of white” (Mor Barak 2005:53).

To use Tutu's (2004:20) words, CCAP Nkhoma Synod, is a sister of Livingstonia Synod, Bakili Muluzi is a brother of Bingu wa Mutharika. Bakili Muluzi is a brother of Patricia Kaliti, and Patricia Kaliti is a sister of Bakili Muluzi. Yes, Bingu was Mutharika is a brother of Joyce Banda, and Joyce Banda is a sister of Bingu wa



Mutharika. Blacks are brothers and sisters to coloureds and coloureds are brothers and sisters to blacks. And both are brothers and sisters to whites and whites are brothers and sisters to black. We are one human race created by one God. If that is possible, why would it be difficult to live together as brothers and sisters created in the image of God?

7.10 GUIDELINES FOR INTERCULTURALISATION MISSIONAL MODEL DIALOGICAL ENGAGEMENT

In every generation, the church has faced the temptation of being simply absorbed by the prevailing culture or otherwise of trying in vain to live in isolation from the culture. But the challenge is how to engage the church in a dynamic interaction with the culture in which it is immersed. The answer is that the church must turn constantly to the scriptures, humbly seeking the illumination of the Holy Spirit to receive the necessary correctives and encouragements to sustain its transforming presence in society (Gibbs and Coffey 2001:214). In doing this, the CCAP Blantyre Synod may want to focus on following four options:

The first option is to *contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints* (Jude 3). In other words, to adhere strictly to the doctrine of *sola scriptura*. The second option is to concern itself with preserving its ecclesiastical heritage and liturgical tradition – a trend that has already produced a distorted identity because of systemic ethnocentrism. A third option could be to emphasize relevance to contemporary setting in terms of worship style and needs-related ministries. And the fourth option is a triumphalist anticipation of the imminent coming of the Lord, which on its own is at risk of making the church insensitive and useless to the society in which it exists. Settling on one of these options and neglecting the rest will definitely be only a partial approach to what mission demands today, and may even rob it of the challenges and the excitement of holistic missional engagement.



7.11 THE MISSIONAL CHURCH

Anticipation, Discernment, Obedience, Critical contextualization points for the missional church. Thus, to be missional, the church must embrace all four emphases, with the inevitable tensions that this brings. Such tension is inescapable, not only because of our human limitations, but because the church exists in the “time between the times” – the time between the inauguration and the consummation of the kingdom of God (Saayman 1990: 3-18; Livingston 1990:7-9; Gibbs and Coffey 2001:215).

As a missional church, the CCAP Blantyre Synod must learn to be faithful to the Gospel, to be informed and enriched by its heritage, to strive to be relevant to its ministry setting, and also to be inspired by the hope of Christ’s return. It is important that the church understands that “it cannot take refuge in castles of dogmatic assertions or in museums of fossilized ecclesiastical structures and liturgical antiquities. The church must be inspired by the hope of Christ’s return. Indeed, as an anticipatory sign of that event, it has to learn to live God’s future now” (Gibbs and Coffey 2001: 215-216). In fact there was a time when the church was very innovative and powerful – the time when the early Christians rejoiced at being deemed worthy to suffer for what they believed. Alluding to this, King Jr. (1994: 434) argues that, “In those days the church was not merely a thermometer that recorded the ideas and principles of popular opinion; it was a thermostat that transformed the mores of the society”.

Lack of innovation and creativity in mission can be very costly for the church. And how can the church do today’s mission and development with yesterday’s methods and still expect to be in business tomorrow? The church needs the spirit of innovation and creativity to save itself from the embarrassment of engaging in a mission of irrelevance in the 21st Century. Therefore, there is enormous challenge for the leadership of the CCAP Blantyre Synod to wrestle with the issues of curriculum for theological training and ministerial formation, liturgy, culture, socio-political and socio-economic engagement and indeed her entire missionary praxis today to ensure that all that we do fall under the ambit of the *missio Dei*. Regarding this, Bosch



(1991:391) has pointed out that:

The primary purpose of the *missiones ecclesiae* (missionary activities of the church) can therefore not simply be the planting of churches or the saving of souls; rather it has to be to service the *missio Dei*, representing God in and over against the world, pointing to God, holding up the God-child before the eyes of the world in a ceaseless celebration of the Feast of the Epiphany. In its mission, the church witnesses to the fullness of the promise of God's reign and participates in the ongoing struggle between that reign and the power of darkness and evil.

True ecclesiology, paradoxically, is not ecclesiocentric. Rather, the primary reality is the kingdom of God. The church is subordinate to the more inclusive concept of the kingdom. The kingdom transcends the church; the kingdom is not the church (Ryan: 2001:11). There are many ways the Church can prepare the entire faith community to participate in God's mission and the ongoing struggle with the powers of darkness. The list by Van Gelder (2000: 149-154) given hereunder may not be exhaustive, but it is a very helpful guide for the CCAP Blantyre Synod to initiate its membership to participate in the *missio Dei*:

Worship (*leiturgia*); Service (*diakonia*); Communion (*Koinonia*); Witness (*marturia*)
Preaching (*kerugma*); Teaching (*didaskalia*); Administrative (*kubernesis*);
Pastoral care (*paraklesis*); and Ecumenism (*oikonomeo*)

When the church faithfully engages in the above missionary activities, she would prove that it is possible for her to be in the world and at the same time not be of the world. It will enable it avoid being a countersign of the kingdom of God and become a sign of God's reign in the world and to humanity for whom God so loved and sacrificed the only Son.

7.12 CONCLUSION

The hypothesis of this research holds that ethnocentrism and regionalism that portrays one's ethnic group as superior to others and the tendency of favouring one's own ethnic group at the expense of others has to give way to a change of mindset, twining



and partnering between congregation, presbyteries, synods as well as a hermeneutic of hospitality, respect, caring, sharing, preserving and liberating. Hence at beginning of this research project, the concept of ethnicity was discussed and the fact of ethnocentrism was identified and explained as a monster militating against the missionaal strategies in the church in Malawi.

It is my sincere hope that with the implementation of the suggestions of this dissertation, the CCAP Blantyre Synod in particular and Malawi nation in general will gradually move away from life-threatening ethnic tension and high level of poverty incidence to a situation in which the majority of the people enjoy improved quality of life characterized by harmony and peaceful co-existence, again “For Christ himself has brought us peace by making Jews and Gentiles one people. With his own body he broke down the wall that separated them and kept them enemies” (Ephesians 2:14).

Let this encourage us to celebrate our diversity in unity. A true community is like a garden. After all, one’s enjoyment of the bursts of colour in a beautiful garden does not depend up one’s ability to ignore the fact that the rose is different from the carnation and that each bloom makes its distinctive contribution to the whole effect. Just as a rose’s individual beauty compliments the unique colours or a carnation, so each perosn’s unique attributes add to another’s, adding fullness and life to the community.

A community would not exist without the contributions of each person involved, while people flourish within the nurturing provisions of the community. When either the community or the individual is valued above the other, both man and society are prevented from reaching full fruitfulness. That becomes a stumbling block to the realization of transforming interculturalisation.

Let us draw our initial contours from the life and ministry of Jesus who stands as the one from whom the Church originated. The first thing which can be said is that the Gospel, while critical of ethnic pride and strife, does affirm ethnicity and diversity. Its central theme is the incarnation, God taking on human “flesh.” The Messiah was a



Jew. As the Man of all cultures, Jesus entered a specific culture. He was a descendant of David, raised in a small Galilean village. That is consistent with the incarnation. In fact Christ's Great Commission is a command to disciple all nations. Interculturalisation is therefore very much a part of fulfilling that Commission.

Those in the interculturalisation missionary enterprises obviously have to remember that Christ also said, "I give you a new commandment, love one another...If you love one another, the world will know you are my disciples" (John 13:34-35; 15:12-14). And he added, "If you do this to the least of my brethren, you do also to me (Matthew 25:40)". We don't have to spend a lot of words to say "I love", you demonstrate it.

In fact the concept of love for most African Christians is not abstract. Magesa (2004:11) alludes to this when he states that, "we believe love that is expressed in symbolic exchange of gifts, ritual visits and exchange of vows or agreements between the clan members of the betrothed before marriage." In this regard, marriage was a matter between relatives of the bride and the groom. After marriage the two groups were held responsible for the outcome of the relationship of the newly wedded couples, who might sometimes come from different ethnic or cultural background.

Therefore our cultural diversity should not be viewed as a "barrier" to the Gospel, but a "carrier". Religions and cultures should become a force for peace rather than a source for ethnic prejudice and conflict. Remember, breakdown in society often occurs when either the community or the individual is valued above the other. But, the establishment of a symbiotic relationship allows for the realization of both the person and the community. Furthermore, this religious-cultural symbiosis – or we might term this "mutual enrichment or mutual illumination" among different ethnic groups of people will spare the church the agonizing emptiness of triumphalism which characterised the missionary efforts of the past few centuries (e.g. the boundary wrangle between the CCAP Synods of Nkhoma and Livingstonia) and give her a humble but bold foothold on the threshold of the 21st century missiology. I sincerely trust that interculturalisation will do that. Hence, it is the hope of this researcher that



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this project will serve as a catalyst or ferment for respectful intercultural dialogue amongst the uniquely valuable cultures. The church in Malawi must unite and transcend ethnic categorisation. If we believe and do this, *the Church in Africa can change the world*. To every Malawian Presbyterian, I say, the ball is in our court!



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