



**MASTER THESIS IN CULTURAL ENCOUNTERS**

**SCOTTISH MISSIONARIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN  
MALAWI: THE CASE OF BLANTYRE SYNOD.**

(60 credits)

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## Abstract

This master thesis examines the development of Presbyterianism in Malawi with reference to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Blantyre Synod. Employing a qualitative approach to the research, the study aims at finding out the changes in Presbyterianism, regarding them as a response to the Scottish instituted Presbyterianism. Now that the church is an African church, the paper focuses on the difference between the Scottish and the African Presbyterianism. It looks at both the historical and modern day cultural encounter by employing the archival sources and conducting observations and interviews with the contemporary Presbyterians to determine the changes in Malawian Presbyterian practices, liturgy, leadership, worship and ethics of the church. The purpose of the research is therefore to critically examine how CCAP, as a culture has evolved with passage of time, responding to internal and external factors of indigenization and globalization respectively.

The paper gives a background to the formation of the Presbyterian Church in Malawi by looking at the initial missionaries' encounters with the indigenous Malawians, but also their aims and objectives. It also analyzes Malawian acceptance to Christianity and transformation with regard to Presbyterianism as a part of a cultural encounter. Both cultural encounter and religion enforces a change in the socio-cultural patterns of a society, hence the paper looks at the socio-cultural impacts of the missionaries on the local Malawian religious culture. It looks at the cultural conflict arising as a result of the cultural encounter involving the two different countries, races and religious viewpoints. Using Norbert Elias's concept of civilization, the study examines the civilization process and an understanding of how cultural changes take place.

The study argues that the contemporary Presbyterians have adapted the classical Presbyterianism to their cultural system, making it more Malawian than Scottish. The research found out that the church has changed, succumbing to indigenization and globalization especially in the areas of its leadership, liturgy, worship, ethics, and role of women. This papers' argument is that these changes describe the responses of the contemporary Malawians to the classical Presbyterianism set by the Scots. These changes are also evident of the cultural conflict that began in the early 1870s when the Scottish missionaries had arrived in Malawi, which continues to exist today, but in different forms and reaction.

**Key words:** mission, culture, religion, Presbyterianism, cultural encounter, cultural conflict.

## Sammendrag

Denne masteroppgaven undersøker utviklingen av den presbyterianske kirken i Malawi med særlig vekt på Blantyre Synod, som er en del av Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP). Ved bruk av kvalitativ metode har oppgaven vært å beskrive endringer i den presbyterianske kirken i Malawi. Endringene blir forstått som en reaksjon på presbyterianske tradisjoner, som skotske misjonærer innførte. Nå er kirken en afrikanisert kirke og oppgaven fokuserer på forskjellen mellom det skotske og det afrikanske presbyterianske systemet. Oppgaven ser på både historiske og moderne kulturmøter ved å bruke arkivkilder og gjennomføre observasjoner og intervjuer med moderne presbyterianere for å avdekke og analysere endringer i praksis, liturgi, ledelse, tilbedelse og etikk i den presbyterianske kirken i Malawi. Formålet med forskningen er derfor å undersøke hvordan CCAP har utviklet seg kulturelt over tid under påvirkning av interne og eksterne faktorer som stedegengjøring (indigenization) og globalisering.

Oppgaven gir en bakgrunn for dannelsen av den presbyterianske kirken i Malawi ved å se på de første misjonærenes møte med malawierne. Den fokuserer også på mål og strategi som misjonærer brukte. I tillegg analyserer oppgaven malawiernes aksept av kristendommen og transformasjonen i møte med den presbyterianske misjonen som en del av en kulturmøte. Både kulturmøte og religion utløser en endring i sosiokulturelle mønstre i et samfunn. Derfor ser oppgaven på de sosiokulturelle konsekvenser av misjonen på den lokale malawiske religiøse kultur. Den ser på den kulturelle konflikten som oppsto som et resultat av det kulturmøtet som involverte to forskjellige land, raser og religiøse synspunkter. Masteroppgaven undersøker kulturelle endringer i det malawiske samfunnet som misjonen medførte, og tolker endringene ved bruk av Norbert Elias' konsept om sivilisasjonsprosesser.

Oppgaven argumenterer for at de moderne presbyterianerne har tilpasset den klassiske presbyterianske til deres kultur, noe som gjør den mer malawisk enn skotsk. Disse endringene er kommet som reaksjoner fra moderne malawiere på den klassisk skotske presbyterianisme. I avhandlingen blir disse forandringer i kirkens liv forstått som utløst både av stedegengjøring og globalisering, spesielt i kirkens lederskap, liturgi, gudstjeneste, etikk og kvinners rolle. Disse endringene er også tydelige i den kulturelle konflikten som begynte tidlig på 1870-tallet da de skotske misjonærene hadde kommet i Malawi, som fortsetter å eksistere i dag, men i ulike former og med ulike reaksjoner.

**Stikkord:** Misjon, kultur, religion, presbyterianisme, kulturmøte, kulturkonflikt.

## Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my caring and loving grandmum, Enert Nkolokosa, Anaphiri.

I love you.

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## List of acronyms

ALC	African Lakes Company
ATR	African Tradition Religion
British	Overseas Management Administration (BOMA)
CAP	Church of Africa Presbyterian
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CCAPSO	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Students Organization
CLAIM	Christian Literature Association In Malawi
DRCM	Dutch Reformed Church Mission
EUL	Edinburg University Library
FMC	Foreign Mission Committee
MNA	Malawi National Archives
OT	Oral Testimony
PIM	Providence Industrial Mission
PPO	Polytechnic Presbyterian Organisation
PYO	Presbyterian Youth Organization
SCOM	Student Christian Organization of Malawi
UMCA	Universities' Mission to Central Africa
WW1	First World War

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# 1 THE SCOTTISH MISSIONARIES AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRESBYTERIANISM IN MALAWI: THE CASE OF BLANTYRE SYNOD.

## 1.1 Introduction

Christian missionaries have played a vital role in shaping the historiography of Christianity and the church in Malawi. The missionaries who established their stations in Malawi include the Roman Catholics, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), Joseph Booth and the Industrial Missions, Africa Evangelical Church of Malawi and the Providence Industrial Mission (PIM).<sup>1</sup> The history of such missionary developments that laid the foundation of the church in Malawi is connected to the initiatives and the work of David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary and explorer who visited Malawi in 1856.<sup>2</sup> Considering the fact that missions have a transnational character, understood in the extent to which they create interactions between people and institutions, within and across boundaries of national states, their cultural impacts and influences cannot be overlooked.<sup>3</sup> It therefore goes without saying that there is always an aspect of cultural encounter in such missionary endeavours, hence the relevance of this topic to the cultural discipline of study. The paper gives time and space to assess the cultural impacts of the Scottish missionaries on the local culture. Most importantly, it assesses the extent to which current changes in Presbyterianism are indicators of the reactions to the classical Presbyterianism. Scholars have discussed the reactions of the Africans to the introduction of Christianity and to missionaries as a people, but they have not done so with regard to the present reactions of Africans to the Presbyterianism instituted by the Scottish missionaries.

Thus this study is intended to answer the question of what are the reactions of the Malawian Presbyterians, not just to Christianity in general, but it specifically takes a denominational perspective by analyzing their responses to Presbyterianism over different time periods. It will study how the constitution, the congregations, the practices, the roles of the branches and the policies of the church have developed over time. By doing so, it seeks to identify the changes in Presbyterianism in Malawi. It will thus justify these changes in order to assess whether they are a positive or negative response to missionary Presbyterianism. Most importantly, the purpose for

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<sup>1</sup> Paas 2006: 187-205.

<sup>2</sup> Paas 2006: 187.

<sup>3</sup> Nielssen, Okkenhaug & Skeie, 2011: 1.

this topic is based on the fact that the church history of each country is a major component of the specific nation's history, hence it must be recorded. The Presbyterian Church in Malawi stands as one of the largest church groups with its membership approaching 1,000,000 by 1998.<sup>4</sup> It is one of the few antiquities that have a history originating beyond the formation of the British protectorate in 1891. Therefore, it is important that its history is recorded and preserved.

Of much relevance to the discussions held in this paper therefore is the term "mission". The term in question has many meanings and cannot be limited to a single context. It is widely held that mission is not a static concept and churches in different eras and different contexts have developed different understandings of mission. For this reason, it is very difficult to define mission and to produce a formulation that would do justice to biblical basis, historical developments and practical expression including theological developments and orientations.<sup>5</sup> The term 'mission' can be used in a quite general sense for any task or expressing the major purpose of a particular organization such as a school or an industry. There is also a diplomatic mission, either in the sense of a delicate task, such as mediating between parties, or in the sense of representing a country or the government of another.<sup>6</sup> This only indicates the extent to which the term must be contextualized in order to avoid confusion and give a proper meaning in a particular case.

What is more significant to this paper however is the point that in the past, mission enterprise was generally identified with different religions around the world. In general, it referred to religiously motivated assistance for economic and cultural development, accompanied by political provision of aid for people who are racially or economically oppressed.<sup>7</sup> Connected to this was the manner in which Christian expansion occurred in several parts of the globe. The word 'mission' denoted the spread of the gospel throughout the world, what used to be known as 'the conversion of the heathen'. Therefore, the study of mission (missiology) was regarded as a discipline which studied how to convert 'heathens' and expand Christendom. It must therefore be emphasized that mission as the proclamation of the gospel, is something that the Christian

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<sup>4</sup> K.R. Ross, 1998: 76.

<sup>5</sup> Blaser 1987: 69.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. p. 70.

churches see as an obligation in which they have to fulfill Jesus' command: the great commission in Matthew 28 verse 19. This paper therefore employs this term in its Christian circles to mean the proclamation of the gospel to “non-Christians”, wherein the Christians imply the missionaries from western countries and the non-Christians referring to the Africans or arguably called the “Heathens”.<sup>8</sup>

Some scholars like Balaj maintain that mission as a term implies cultural imperialism.<sup>9</sup> In time and under the influence of the ideology of the day, namely that the West was culturally and economically superior, the missionary enterprise began to be primarily understood in terms of saving the souls of the heathens who lived in the dark lands like Africa. Mission was conceived in terms of civilizing the uncivilized by improving them from their status of uncultured savages into the civilized race.<sup>10</sup> The expected outcome of mission was thus conversion of the Heathens to the Christian race through the adoption of western Christian values as a sign of conversion. This gave an impression that mission had a lot of connections with cultural imperialism in the sense that missionaries represented their national cultures and imposed the same on the different receivers of their message. Cultural imperialism, taken to mean the purposeful aggression by one culture against the ideas and values of another, is therefore a challenge for the missionaries. It is argued for example that far from acting as liberators, missionaries came to most countries as part of imperialist domination. The formal western education that they provided has been understood to be in consistent with the goals of imperialism: the economic and political control of the people. It is argued that the imperial powers attempted, through schooling for instance, to train the colonized societies for roles that suited the colonizer.<sup>11</sup> In this line of thought, it is worth noting that the term mission denotes polarizations in which it explores the elements of discontinuities, continuities, tension and oppositions between the two sides involved. For instance, the word ‘mission’ has to cover the Christian and the unchristian, the civilized and the uncivilized among other divergences. This indicates the point that mission continues to be the subject of an ongoing theological debate, with sharp contradictions.

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<sup>8</sup> Balaj 2010: 35.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Vilhanova 2002: 49-68.

Within these continuing theological debates however, there is an understanding among theologians and anthropologists for the point that mission enterprise has enduring effects on the cultures of either sides involved. The messenger and the recipient are both bound by their cultural categories because it is difficult to separate the religion of the people from their culture. Whatever forms and strategies mission takes, the relationship to culture can pose as a challenge or a positive platform for the missionary enterprise.<sup>12</sup> This is because all religions are cultured religions and they have both positive and negative factors. For instance, foreign missionaries create cultural challenges in as far as language and conflict of religions is concerned. In addition, any change in social customs engenders conflicts in societies. The missionaries must therefore encounter a culture with both opportunities and challenges attached.

Therefore, any discussion of the concept of cultural encounter necessitates an understanding of what the term culture implies. Several social anthropological studies have perceived culture from its *descriptive* and *dynamic* sense.<sup>13</sup> Those that emphasize the *descriptive* understanding maintain that culture is historically rooted and that tradition forms a significant element of the learned culture in a society. Everything that people learn manifests itself as frames for cognitive reference, “the cultural codes in back of the head” and that these cultural codes work as an interpretation framework.<sup>14</sup> Thus culture explains why and how people behave or are expected to conduct themselves in a particular manner. Such systems of meaning shape the individual and the society’s way of life and helps answer the question why people behave the way they do. The point is that each culture comprises certain goals, which society has posited for itself and which it considers good and strives, through its members, to achieve.

This explains why Geertz defines culture as “an historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate and develop their knowledge about and attitudes towards life.”<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Frazer & Dayton 1990: 56.

<sup>13</sup> Dahl 2013: 35.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Geertz 1973: 89.

Phiri explains culture as “that aspect of a people’s way of life that is reflected in their visual arts and crafts, music and dance, literature, drama, dress, language and religion.”<sup>16</sup> Taylor’s highly influential definition of culture refers to “the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of a society”.<sup>17</sup>

Therefore, this paper uses the term ‘culture’ to make an understanding that religion is an important element of culture and refers to it as culture. This is based on the justification that both culture and religion provides the very basis for collective conscience, shared moral values and beliefs that are transmitted to members of a particular society. Culture represent the members of the society as belonging to the same great national family called national culture or a distinct section of the community referred to as local culture.<sup>18</sup> In the same way, religion seeks to unify members of a particular society into one cultural identity and shared sets of beliefs and customs. This emanates from the functional view of culture which perceives society as a custodian of culture and that its parts work together to promote solidarity and stability.<sup>19</sup> Thus, both religion and culture can be used to mark the identity of an individual or a particular group of people.

Furthermore, understanding Geertz’s concept of culture as a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, allows this paper to refer to religion in a similar viewpoint of symbolic anthropology since it is referred to as a system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, persistent and long-lasting moods and motivations in men.<sup>20</sup> Such systems of meaning of life shape the individual and the society’s life style. It can therefore be argued that both culture and religion provide a system of symbolization of life which tend to establish certain mental perceptions that describe an order of existence and meaning of life. Religious beliefs are a very important part of a culture that instils, in its adherents, the ideological views of the world.<sup>21</sup> This also explains why Geertz describes religion as a cultural system. This relationship between

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<sup>16</sup> Phiri 1983: 19.

<sup>17</sup> Redse 2007:31.

<sup>18</sup> Gellner 1997: 5-13.

<sup>19</sup> Kidd 2002: 18 & 24.

<sup>20</sup> Geertz 1973: 94.

<sup>21</sup> Kidd 2002: 49.

culture and religion is what draws this paper to analyze the cultural encounter between the Christians from Scotland and the “heathens” in Africa.<sup>22</sup>

Furthermore, this paper greatly relates to the view that cultures are *dynamic* in the sense that they are continuously changing, adapting and responding to externally and internally generated forces and influences. Cultures interact with other cultures, hence they are not homogenous. Again, culture is a learned behavior and is therefore prone to transformation and manipulation since they can be learned or unlearned. Dahl explains that the *dynamic* concept of culture emphasizes that culture is something people apply in situational encounters with other people.<sup>23</sup> In Gellner’s words, the presence of culture introduces a mode of transmission of traits and activities from one generation to the other.<sup>24</sup> He goes further to define culture as the perpetuated, and sometimes transformed and manipulated bank of acquired traits or a shared style of expression in words, facial expression, body language, style of clothing, preparation and consumption of food.<sup>25</sup> In agreement with Gellner, Herskovits as cited by Redse, describes culture as the man-made part of the environment.<sup>26</sup>

It is therefore clear that a large part of cultural practice across the world are evident through forms and exchange of ideas concurrent with religion. From the understanding that culture is a learned behavior, and that religion is largely connected to it, this research connects religion and culture and uses this point to analyze the cultural encounter between the two different cultures in question. This is because both culture and religion are learned and often passed from one community to another and generation to generation. Religious views and beliefs have tended to be introduced in different parts of the world through missionaries, hence forth from generation to generation. This is evident with reference to how Africans adopted Christianity and in the many ways in which that affected both their individual and collective identities.

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<sup>22</sup> A further discussion of how religion is an important element of culture is made in the third chapter where I discuss the cultural encounter processes between the two cultures central in this paper.

<sup>23</sup> Dahl 2013: 42.

<sup>24</sup> Gellner 1997: 2.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid. pp. 1-3.

<sup>26</sup> Redse 2007: 31.



In the vein of the cultural definitions and characteristics discussed above, when this paper uses the term culture, it refers to the dynamic beliefs, values, regulations, customs and meanings that inform and guide behavior of an individual and a particular group of people on the larger scale. Therefore, both the *descriptive* and *dynamic* views of culture are relevant to understanding the cultural encounter processes. However, the element of fluidity and change creates opportunities for the acceptance of new cultural forms and patterns. This therefore justifies this papers attempting to explore changes in Presbyterianism.

Presbyterianism refers to a system of church government that bears its roots and foundation back to the protestant reformation and a theological heritage of the reformers, Martin Luther and John Calvin. It obtained its main characteristics in Scotland and was spread from there to the United States and further to African churches, just like the Scottish missionaries to Central Africa did.<sup>27</sup> This form of church government by presbyters (elders) which has been dominant in Scotland since the Reformation, is a logical submission to certain Reformation principles evident during and after the second half of the 16th century.<sup>28</sup> However, various missionaries have adopted the system in their respective evangelism work, some of whom were the Norwegian missionaries to China and Japan.<sup>29</sup>

The Presbyterian distinctive character derives from the point that the church's base is the local church, which selects elders to the spiritual leadership of the church, on the basis of their spiritual maturity. These elders represent the church in presbyteries, synods and General Assemblies. Worth mentioning is the point that in Presbyterianism, four major representative levels are considered important. The first and on the lower end is the congregation, which implies the main local church members electing the board or kirk session. This is followed by the presbytery which is described as a ruling body or court consisting of the Presbyterian ministers and representative elders from congregations within a particular district or locality. The third level is the synod, coming in between the presbytery and the General Assembly.<sup>30</sup> The different presbyteries, their powers and duties are fixed in the bounds of their respective synods. The final

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<sup>27</sup> Løvlie 2015: 61-73.

<sup>28</sup> Cameron, Lachman, Wright, & Meek 1993: 673.

<sup>29</sup> Løvlie 2015: 61-73.

<sup>30</sup> Cameron, Lachman, Wright, & Meek 1993: 809.

decision maker court is the General Assembly which is considered as the highest court of the church and has the authority to formulate policy for the church. It also acts as an overseer of the synods and lower courts.<sup>31</sup>

This shows that the Presbyterian Church is different from the Roman Catholic, Episcopal, Methodist, and Baptist churches which employ either the hierarchical or congregational approach to the system of governing the church. Instead, the Presbyterian Church is representative at every level because it is the congregations that choose elders to serve in the session and the sessions elect commissioners to go to Presbytery meetings, and Presbyteries elect commissioners to go to Synod and General Assembly meetings. Thus, while the different denominations stand in a similar point of view in as far as believing in Jesus Christ is concerned, they differ in their views of governing the church, with Presbyterianism being much more democratic and the other churches employing the hierarchical and congregational approaches to church government. Congregational elections are held in different times in various Presbyterian churches around the globe. The Presbyterian Church is thus a democratic form of church government in which the congregation elects church officers to lead the congregation, hence the Presbyterian Church is representative at every level. The following section of the constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C.C.A.P.) in Malawi sums up what Presbyterianism implies:

“By "Presbyterian" we refer primarily to our form of Church government, which is by democratic Courts composed of ordained Ministers and elders. These Courts are so formed that Ministers are never in a majority.... we recognize no hierarchy of priests or bishops. The Moderator of the Synod is the "first among equals", being for that time, recognized as the Chairman.”<sup>32</sup>

## 1.2 Time and space factor

Scottish Presbyterian missionaries moved into Malawi and established the influential Livingstone mission between 1875 and 1894.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, this study seeks to find out how Presbyterianism has evolved since its inception in Malawi. The researcher uses archival sources to find out how Malawians of the time received the missionaries. Another important period in the history of the CCAP is 1924, when the Presbyterian Church was actually established.<sup>34</sup> The study also

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<sup>31</sup> CCAP General Assembly 2002: 4.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. p. 8.

<sup>33</sup> Paas 2006: 190.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. p. 197.

examines the policies, doctrines and practices that governed the church during this period. By comparing these with the policies, doctrines and practices of the church since 1960, when the Church of Scotland missionaries ceased to be missionaries, and became full members of the indigenous Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, the study identifies changes that have occurred in the church. Emphasis will therefore be put on these three major periods.

However, assessing the Malawian responses to Presbyterianism in all the three synods of Blantyre, Livingstonia and Nkhoma, is likely to risk validity and reliability of the research findings. The researcher therefore decided to sample the Blantyre synod of the C.C.A.P in Malawi. A number of churches which fall under the synod's jurisdiction: Limbe C.C.A.P in Blantyre and Zomba C.C.A.P were the focus for the interviews that were conducted. The researchers' choice for these churches is based on the reason that both Limbe and Zomba CCAPs were important mission stations at the onset of the missionary enterprise hence tracing their history and change is relevant to achieving the objectives of this research.

### 1.3 Literature review

There is significant amount of literature on Christianity, Christian missionaries and Presbyterianism in Africa. This literature, among others, include studies by Peter Forster, Kenneth Ross, Andrew Ross, Wapulumuka Mulwafu, Steven Paas, Anthony Dachs, Edward Berman, Julia Allen, Kings Phiri, Adrian Hastings and Karen Fields. An analysis of this literature reveals many important issues about missionaries in Africa and their encounters with the local people that are worth noting. The literature demonstrates that historians have progressively investigated the relationships between Christian missions and missionaries and African societies. Recent studies have underscored that missionary encounters are two-way processes, in which both the Westerners and the local people are deeply affected. These constitute a record of missionary activities and attitudes that are of significance to the historiography of missionary contact with African societies. Berman for example, analyses and examines African reactions to Christian mission education and to missionaries as a people.<sup>35</sup> He concludes that African reasons for attending mission schools differed, but were mainly related to the political, social, or economic consequences. As the paper will show in the next pages, the Africans' reasons for choosing mission schools were generally not motivated by religious

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<sup>35</sup> Berman 1974: 527-540.

factors. This explains the fact that the response of Africans to the activities of the missionaries varied, hence it is still crucial to examine their responses today, specifically, Malawian Presbyterians.

The second observation arising from the available literature concerns the roles of missionaries within Africa. Professors Ajayi and Rotberg have made noteworthy contributions to understanding the willing and unwilling roles of missionaries. Other scholars however look at these roles as part of a general expansive movement that was political as well as humanitarian.<sup>36</sup> Scholars studying missionary works have also explored the roles played by missionaries in the religious, social, economic and political disciplines of life. They however have different and even opposing perspectives on the motives of missionaries. Paas discusses the relationship between missionary presence and colonialism and notes that most of the European missionaries came from those countries that took part in the ‘scramble for Africa’. He maintains that missionaries and colonial powers were partners in the crime of imperialism. To him, missionaries and colonialists are seen as soul mates.<sup>37</sup> Agreeing with Paas, Allen explains that despite the differences in their objectives, the missionaries were agents of external political expansion, as traders, representatives and concession hunters who threatened independence, eroded African custom, integrity and authority and invited the imperial replacement of resistant African rule.<sup>38</sup> This also explains why this paper will explore whether the Malawians received the Scottish missionaries as missionaries or imperialists. An assessment of how the Malawians received the missionaries gives a solid background of the comparisons that it will later present.

In relation to the cultural encounter, Paas maintains that missionaries often functioned as a bridge between western culture and African tradition, making the collision between the two cultures less damaging. On the other hand, Fields argues that missionaries’ main goal was Christian conversion whose focus was both on cultural and religious conversion. To him, missionaries were determined to attack "heathenism," the missionaries' term for wide ranges of African custom, hence they deliberately planned to transform African village life by introducing

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<sup>36</sup> Dachs 1972: 647-658.

<sup>37</sup> Paas 2006: 126.

<sup>38</sup> Allen 2008: 207–226.

Western medicine, tombstones, books, and money.<sup>39</sup> Thus, the scholars' analysis of this encounter is more general as it looks at Christianity and the Africa's Traditional Religion. It is therefore significant that a denominational analysis of this cultural encounter is undertaken.

Conducting a comparative analysis of the *Indigenous Encounters with Christian Missionaries in China and West Africa*, Lindenfeld gives well detailed presentations of circumstances in which the local people resisted missionary penetration and also circumstances in which they were converted. More importantly, he examines the ways in which they assimilated the beliefs and practices brought by missionaries into their own systems.<sup>40</sup> Since he looks at the case studies of China and West Africa, his writings provide a cross-cultural perception with which to look at the reactions of the local people to missionary work. His comparative studies yields a number of similarities, one of which is that the missionaries made initial appeal to marginal groups in society like women. He also states that in both circumstances, missionaries highlighted the importance of Western education and medicine. On the other hand, the two cases differed in the sense that there was an absence of large-scale resistance in West Africa.<sup>41</sup> It can therefore be argued that such comparisons necessitate a comparative analysis of the missionaries' encounter with the Malawian Presbyterianism with special attention to the responses over time.

Of much relevance to this study, is the literature available on missionaries in Malawi. Analyzing the roles of the Christian missionaries in relation to the environment in Malawi, Mulwafu argues that Christian missionaries in general did not actively promote the campaign for conservation of natural resources but some early missionaries frequently evoked biblical images and ideas that had a strong bearing on the perception and management of the environment.<sup>42</sup> It is within the frames of this literature that Forster examines the Scottish missions and their contribution to the ethnography of the Ngoni, Tumbuka and Tonga of northern Malawi.<sup>43</sup> He concludes that missionaries had to develop a much closer association with Africans since they were obliged to learn the local language. Knowledge of the language was important to help the local population make sense of Biblical concepts. Taking a political view of the circumstances around the

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<sup>39</sup> Fields 1982: 95-108.

<sup>40</sup> Lindenfeld 2005: 327-369.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Mulwafu 2004: 1.

<sup>43</sup> Forster 1986:101-120.

missionary endeavours, Stuart examines the differences expressed by the missionaries in response to the 'end of empire' in British colonial Africa. He maintains that this transition from 'mission' to 'Church' was a process marked by ambiguity and complexity, much of which were related to Nyasaland's political status.<sup>44</sup> Thus, his writing is centered on the events that surrounded the transitional period in which the colonies had become independent. This asks the question of what happened and continues to happen in Presbyterianism after Malawi gained political independence and the church gained its autonomy, hence this research.

Hokkanen views the interaction between the missionaries and the local people through the lens of medicine and health. He contributes to the cultural history of medicine and healing in Africa by analyzing issues of health, healing and medicine in the early Presbyterian Church in the Northern Malawi region during the first decades of the twentieth century. He states that missionary attitudes towards African healing were generally shameful and dismissive, and that the missionaries' ambitions were to create a healthy Christian society where missionary medicine would be central. He however concludes that topics of illness and health were open to contestation: In both theory and practice, the African Christian elite negotiated an acceptance of medical pluralism among the Presbyterian Christian communities of Northern Malawi.<sup>45</sup> It is therefore important to examine the ways in which this cultural interaction continues to occur in the modern day.

Kenneth Ross argues that Christians have been forming a viable self-understanding as believing communities have responded to events which have occurred over time. Using the Blantyre synod as an example, he notes that there are moments of crisis and challenge that are theologically formative with regard to the church's development of self-identity and self-understanding. He argues that the C.C.A.P. Blantyre synod, in the course of its history, has encountered certain decisive and definitive moments, most of which were political, but they have a cumulative effect of forming the church's ecclesiology.<sup>46</sup> It thus shows that Ross admits that there are changes in the political realm that triggered the transformation of the church. He however takes a political view of the causes of these changes with reference to the postcolonial political events. To this

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<sup>44</sup> Stuart 2003: 411-430.

<sup>45</sup> Hokkanen 2007: 734-750.

<sup>46</sup> K. R. Ross 1998: 73-91.

extent, we are still in suspense of how these changes might have fostered changes in the present ecclesiology of C.C.A.P.

In his book: *Malawi and Scotland: together in the talking place since 1859*, Ross looks at the two ways in which both Scotland and Malawi have been of influence to each other across several years since their connection began. He analyses the background through which a special relationship between Scotland and Nyasaland, now Malawi, was shaped and how it created the history of the two nations. He concludes that an appeal to their shared history in the life and work of David Livingstone can be guaranteed to evoke a strong response in both nations. He goes further to explain a situation in which thousands of Malawians happily celebrated 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of David Livingstone in Malawi.<sup>47</sup> However, the fact that the celebrations of David Livingstone's arrival still occur in Malawi and that there's continued connection between the two countries does not do much to show the reaction of the present Malawians to the Presbyterianism instituted by the Scots.

This literature has therefore indicated that most scholars of missionaries to Africa have tended to study the missionaries with a systematic pattern in which they examine the responses of African societies to the Western political, socio-cultural, environmental and medical ideas introduced in African societies by the Missionaries. It is within this literature that my study is situated. However, I will take the discussion a step further by examining the question of what are the current changes in the church and to what extent do these changes reflect Malawians' positive or negative response to the missionary Presbyterianism and culture. It does not focus much on the causes of the changes, as Ross for example, has done, but it draws much of its attention to the changes and the effects these changes have had on Presbyterianism, as a religious cultural system instituted by the Scots.

#### 1.4 The objectives of the project

With reference to the literature review presented above, a number of scholars have paid special attention to the Scottish missionaries and their activities. In the resultant literature, the responses to western culture have been studied mostly in reference to the societies and people who existed when the missionaries arrived in Malawi. The present study goes beyond these efforts by looking at the reactions of the present members of the Presbyterian Church in Malawi to the doctrines,

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<sup>47</sup> K.R. Ross 2013: 1-244.

practices and beliefs of Presbyterianism as introduced by the classical missionaries. The main purpose of this study is therefore to examine how Presbyterianism has changed as a result of indigenization and globalization factors. In order to achieve this, the study will:

1. Examine the history of the Scottish missionaries.
2. Present a method for analyzing the cultural encounter between the missionaries and the local population.
3. Compare the missionary practices of Presbyterianism to those of the current ones in Blantyre synod.
4. Examine and describe the changes and differences in the practices of Presbyterianism with special emphasis on church leadership, worship service or liturgy and the role of women in the church.

## 1.5 Methodology

### 1.5.1 Qualitative Research

In this sub-chapter, I describe the choice of the methodological approach to the question and objectives of the research. With the purpose of getting detailed insight into the informants' own experiences of changes in Presbyterianism, a qualitative research design was chosen. Although qualitative research is described as subjective, it provides room for analyzing the ways in which individuals interpret their social world through talk and interaction.<sup>48</sup> Despite the point that this close contact between the researcher and the informants can give rise to ethical challenges, it is overcome by the advantageous point that the researcher can ask deeper and follow-up questions in order to get a clear understanding of the social phenomena being studied. Thus qualitative research, as compared to quantitative research, is inductive, rather than deductive. This means that it is more directed by the empirical data, than theory and hypothesis as is the case with the quantitative research.<sup>49</sup> I therefore describe the data collection and analysis methods employed in this research below:

### 1.5.2 Data collection

Qualitative research projects generally involve a number of methodological approaches. The main sources of information in this research are derived from the written, oral and participant observation. The primary written sources constitute documents on C.C.A.P. from the Malawi

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<sup>48</sup> Berg & Lune 2012: 15.

<sup>49</sup> Tjora 2010: 16.



National Archives (MNA) located in Zomba. The letters, correspondences, personal papers and journals written by the Scottish missionaries and individual missionaries based at mission stations within Malawi in the nineteenth century provided an invaluable insight into time and place-specific interactions with local cultures. Since the time concept of this research dates back to the nineteenth century, it was difficult to interview people who were involved in this milieu, hence I turned to archival sources. Most importantly, missionary primary sources are often very rich in conveying close hand information on how indigenous peoples responded to the new culture introduced by the missionaries. Apart from that, the study draws useful insights from secondary written sources such as journals, books, articles obtained online through Volda university library, from my supervisor, from Chancellor College, Zomba theological college and the theology department libraries at Chancellor College in Zomba.

Although the researcher wrote this topic as one who, at the age of 27, had been a member of the C.C.A.P since birth, and had observed differences and changes as they occurred in the church, the study used observation as one of the data collection method. In this, I observed the services (six times) as they are normally conducted in the churches, Limbe and Zomba CCAP which fall under the Blantyre synod. The participant observation proved to be relevant to an understanding of the current practices of the Presbyterian Church in Blantyre synod in which I could observe the worship service, liturgy and the role of members of the church during the service. Thus, the Presbyterian culture was observed as it naturally occurred in its setting. This provided a good platform for understanding what the informants described during interviews. Notes were taken during the observation.

The oral sources that the paper employed were drawn from purposively sampled interviewees. The qualitative interviews aimed at understanding the subjective experiences of the Presbyterians with regard to how CCAP has changed. The interviews with general informants were conducted with Presbyterians who have been members of the church for more than thirty years and are deemed to have observed changes in the church. The eight general informants comprised members of groups within the church, such as choir groups, the women's guild and youth groups at Limbe and Zomba C.C.A.Ps. The four key informants interviews were conducted with deacons and pastors on the justification that they are the theologians who must have relevant knowledge in the history and the development of Christianity and Presbyterianism in Malawi.

Thus purposive sampling strategies were employed for both general and key informants who made an actual sample size of 12. Thus, the sampling of informants was strategic since the participants represented the characteristics and qualifications that were considered relevant to the research questions. Each interview with the key informants lasted about 45 minutes while that of general informants lasted about 30 minutes. An audio recorder was used to make sure I did not miss anything. Some notes were also taken during the interviews. Since some of the interviewees cannot understand English, some interviews were conducted in Chichewa, Malawi's national language. The research guide is attached at the end of the thesis.

#### *1.5.2.1 Ethical considerations*

The point that I was dealing with human beings in the data collection methods necessitated the consideration of ethics of social research. One of the major component of research ethics as described by Fisher and Nushko, is respect.<sup>50</sup> In this regard, I was well aware of respecting the informants' rights and dignity among other sensitive issues. Special emphasis was also made to ensure that research participation was informed. The informed consent was given to the interviewees by word of mouth, through the church administrators. The interviewees were informed of the academic motivation behind the research and that their participation was voluntary. Another ethical rule that was considered, following Kelly and Ali, was confidentiality in which the informants were made aware that the researcher will not make public, both the raw data that was collected and the participant identity.<sup>51</sup> In view of this, codes were used in the case of interviewees to avoid revealing the informants' identities. While the observations in the church setting were made when the general participants were unaware, the officials were aware of the observations.<sup>52</sup> Although this might have overlooked some ethical rules, it was necessary that the observations be made in their naturalistic setting. Walsh explains that it is more often that the researcher lets some people know about the research and keeps others completely unaware. This prevents the invalidation of research findings since people may not change behavior.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Fisher & Nushko 2008: 96.

<sup>51</sup> Kelly & Ali 2004: 120.

<sup>52</sup> Reference can also be made to appendix section where I present letters of requested for permission to conduct research at both Limbe and Zomba CCAP.

<sup>53</sup> Walsh 2004: 229.

### 1.5.3 Data analysis

The fact that the research design for this study is qualitative implied the use of qualitative methods of data analysis, which usually involve hermeneutic approach to the collected data. Hermeneutics emphasizes the point that the meaning of a social phenomenon is contextual hence interpretation is relevant.<sup>54</sup> Thus, interpretation of the qualitative data that emerged from the interviews, observations, published and non-published texts and archival documents required coding in order to find repeated patterns of meaning. Therefore, my choice of data analysis for this study was a theme-based analytical approach in which the collected data was subjected to thematic analysis. Thematic analysis entails the identification of emerging patterns and categories from the collected data.<sup>55</sup> The data was reviewed, systematically coded and put into categories or patterns as determined by the themes, whose structure and content was then interpreted. The categorized data was therefore deployed into relevant sections of the study which were also largely drawn from the themes. Although the approach is criticized for failing to provide a comprehensive perspective since parts of texts are separated from their original context, this contributed to the findings of this research. Thus it still remains essential because the qualitative analysis in this research has been the empirical data collected from the informants' understanding, meanings and experiences (inductive). On the other hand, the analysis has a deductive aspect since any research carries a researcher's pre-understanding of the social phenomenon which influences ones sensitivity and direction of focus.<sup>56</sup>

### 1.6. Theoretical framework

By Comparing Presbyterianism as practiced in different periods in Malawi, the studies involve diachronic processes of cultural comparison. In this view, the research employs Norbert Elias's theorizing of the term "civilization". Elias demonstrated the civilizing process through an examination of etiquette books and argues that the behaviours that were accepted as normal in Western medieval societies gradually became more strictly controlled or tabooed.<sup>57</sup> In this line of thought, Elias uses the concept of "the civilizing process" to mean sociological processes in social development which involve changes in behaviour and feeling extending over many generations. He further argues that the process of civilization is not linear and consistent, and

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<sup>54</sup> Tafjord 2006: 257.

<sup>55</sup> Mabry 2008: 218.

<sup>56</sup> Tjora 2010: 25-27.

<sup>57</sup> Elias 1994: 48-134.

that the diversity of social groups as well as the varying and uneven sources of change create a variety of social behaviours and formations. Elias provides a history of how manners, an indication of cultural tastes and standards, have changed and developed over time. His argument is that such cultural tastes are an indication of a culture of the individuals who live in particular society in particular times.<sup>58</sup> In the same vein, this study assesses the development of Presbyterianism culture over different times. Elias's central thesis is that as time goes by, the society becomes more increasingly civilized. It is in this line of thought that Elias's theory provides the lens through which to view the processes encompassing the development of Presbyterianism and helps answer the main questions in this research.

The fact that Elias wondered if the prescribed cultural standards presented in the etiquette books, might not have changed from edition to edition, greatly relates to this study, whose main objective is also to historically trace the development of Presbyterianism over the different periods. Thus the main problem statement of this research also centers on whether Presbyterianism might have changed over the different periods of its existence in Malawi. Therefore, the theory becomes an important guide through which data collection in this research can be conducted. By examining etiquette books over different periods, the theory implies how important it is to use old documents and archival sources, which this paper relies on. Since Elias argues for a historical sociology, embracing the idea of long-term social processes, he maintains that the character and form of the culture itself is highly dependent upon both historical and contemporary individuals who make up the figuration. This explains why this research will also examine contemporary Presbyterianism which reflects the responses of the existing Presbyterians to the culture introduced by the Scots. In short, this theory helps explain, predict, and understand Presbyterianism, the central concept in this paper.

Elias's theory is regarded as an essential contribution to a wide-ranging theory of social processes which has been employed by other historians and sociologists. For instance, Ole Thorstein Fougner in his book *Dannet Religiøsitet* used the theory on religion and religiosity.<sup>59</sup> Although critics of the theory have argued that Elias's understanding of the civilizing process was concerned with state formation, not primarily with the part played by religion, this paper,

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<sup>58</sup> Kidd 2002: 15.

<sup>59</sup> Fougner 1998: 8.

just like Fougner, argues for civilizing tendencies within religion. As to the question of how a theory of European civilization fits in a development of the church in Africa, the paper maintains that cultures are dynamic in the sense that they are continuously changing, adapting and responding to externally and internally generated forces and influences. Furthermore, these social processes of change are universal features of human societies. Even though conditions are different with time and space, the fact remains that cultural change is inevitable.

### 1.7. Study Limitations

It is also necessary to address the limitations of the study. In the search for archival material, it was found out that some documents were damaged or lost. At the same time, the archival material that I found at the Malawi National Archives frequently made reference to the documents available at the Scottish archives, which I could not directly access. However, this limitation was addressed through the use of archival information made available on the internet, from my supervisor and both Kenneth and Andrew Ross's rich accounts of the Scottish missionary works in Malawi.<sup>60</sup>

### 1.8 Thesis structure

The thesis follows the following structure:

Chapter 1 of this thesis aims at giving a brief presentation of the situation on the ground. It describes the relevance of the problem by providing the reader with an understanding of how important this research is to the cultural discipline of study. The major sources of information for this chapter are derived from the written sources such as books and articles, some of which have been reviewed above.

Chapter 2 is a discussion of the history of the Scottish missionaries to Malawi. It describes not only the question of how the Presbyterian Church came to Malawi, but also addresses the question of what its aims and objectives were. This chapter mainly relies on the archival data as well as the written presentations of the history of mission in Malawi, and to a lesser extent, oral sources.

Chapter 3 focuses on the Malawian responses to the arrival of the Scottish missionaries. It goes further by looking at the socio-cultural impacts of the Scottish missionaries on the local culture.

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<sup>60</sup> Scholarly works by Kenneth Ross and Andrew Ross are of great importance in this research. Their different works centered on the Scottish missionaries to Malawi. (See list of references).

Sources of information for this section of the paper are derived from the archives, oral interviews and written sources.

Chapter 4 encompasses the discussion of how different Presbyterianism has become with time passage. It looks at the changes in the church leadership, worship service or liturgy and the role of women in the Blantyre synod church. By doing so, the chapter analyses how the responses by Malawians have varied by analyzing the perceptions of the current Presbyterians to classical Presbyterianism. Data collected from oral interviews mainly forms the sources of information in this section

Chapter 5 comprises the conclusion, where I generally discuss and summarize the findings of the research study.

### 1.9 Chapter summary

This chapter aimed at describing the major aim of this research paper which mainly focuses on finding out how Presbyterianism has changed with passage of time. In order to achieve this, an examination of the current constitution, objectives, practices, ecclesiology, liturgy, church leadership, worship service or liturgy and the role of women in the church of Presbyterian Church is necessary. This will provide room for assessing if the practices still reflect the old doctrines, aims and objectives as instituted by the missionaries, hence identifying changes. The chapter has not only addressed the major aims of the research, but it has also laid the background and relevance of this topic to the cultural discipline of study. Since one of the major focus of the research question is on the responses of both the indigenous Malawians and contemporary Presbyterians to the culture introduced by the Scottish missionaries, the study goes beyond efforts made by previous scholars in giving a comparative analysis of the indigenous encounters with Christian Missionaries, a relevant subject in cultural analysis. The chapter has also described the methodology deemed relevant to achieve the major research objectives.

## 2 THE HISTORY OF THE SCOTTISH MISSIONARIES

### 2.1 Chapter overview

This section of the thesis aims at providing the background to the space factor question in this paper. It describes the geographical area called Malawi in which the missionaries found it relevant to undertake a missionary enterprise. The section also presents a brief history of the country in question in order to offer a relevant background to the history of Scottish missionaries and Presbyterianism in Malawi. It describes not only the question of how the Presbyterian Church came to Malawi, but also its aims and objectives. As a result, the following themes and sub-themes emerged:

1. Malawi as a country covering areas such as geographical location, history and religion.
2. How the Presbyterian Church came to Malawi, with much emphasis on the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions and some discussion on the Dutch Reformed Church Mission (D.R.C.M.).
3. The actual aims of the Scottish missionaries who came to Malawi.

### 2.2 Malawi as a country

To understand the origin of the Presbyterian Church in Malawi, it is relevant to present a brief historical and geographical background to the country:

#### 2.2.1 Geographical location

Malawi is located to the East of Zambia in the Southern Africa. It also shares boundaries with Tanzania to the North East and Mozambique to the South East. The country, usually known as the warm heart of Africa, has three major administrative regions: the North, Central and Southern, all of which make up 27 districts with Lilongwe, located in the central region, as the capital city.<sup>61</sup> More importantly, Malawi has a wide coastal area in which twenty percent of its total area of 118,480 square kilometers is Lake Malawi (See map on page 31).

#### 2.2.2 History

Historians of Malawi history usually discuss Malawi's major events with reference to the three main periods: the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial era. In this vein, this paper discusses Malawi's brief history from the pre-colonial time because such a period presents a

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<sup>61</sup> Gama 2010: 41-42.

connection point between the colonialists and the Christian missionaries who arrived in the country earlier than the colonialists. It is therefore worth noting that in the pre-colonial era, the region now called Malawi had no defined borders and consequently no fixed name. It is only in 1891 when Britain established her protectorate in the region that the country attained her national borders and at the same time began to be referred to as the British Central Africa in connection to the British colonial system that had taken control of the land. From 1907 to 1964 (within the British colonial era) however, it was known as Nyasaland.<sup>62</sup> Worth stating is the fact that it has always been debated as to whether the coming in of the British government to colonize Malawi was in connection with the Christian missionaries who had already occupied the region from the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>63</sup> As it shall become clearer in the next pages of this paper, some missionaries cooperated with their colonial compatriots in order to secure the occupation of their territory by their mother country. In connection with this, scholars have continued to discuss whether the missionaries were representatives of colonial power or messengers of the gospel.<sup>64</sup> Regardless of these scholarly debates, the chief point is that the Blantyre mission played a decisive role in the establishment of the British protectorate in 1889-91,<sup>65</sup> as the following discussion indicates.

#### *2.2.2.1 The Missionary influence*

The fact that the missionaries played a big role in the establishment of the colonies in some parts of Africa can lead to a hasty conclusion that the missionaries had an imperialist interest in their missionary enterprise from the beginning. It has to be noted however that Christian evangelization has always been required by Christ's great commission.<sup>66</sup> According to Gama, the British government was not interested in colonizing certain parts of Africa, and Malawi was one of such places. Since Malawi had no minerals like gold or copper, it would be very expensive to take the country for a colony. However, the missionaries had already occupied this part of the country for their evangelistic endeavours.<sup>67</sup> Worth stating is the point that the missionaries did

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<sup>62</sup> K.R. Ross 2013: 11.

<sup>63</sup> Baur 1998: 420.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> K.R. Ross 1996:13.

<sup>66</sup> Matthew 28 verse 19: therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

<sup>67</sup> Gama 2010: 48.



not find a peaceful Malawi. As the paper discusses in the following pages, the region was characterized by intensive wars among people, killing and selling each other to slave traders, among other atrocities. Faced with such kind of an environment and opposition from the Arabs and Portuguese,<sup>68</sup> the Scottish missionaries pressed the British government to establish a British protectorate in the region. As Gama explains, repeated calls for protection and ten thousand signatures from Scottish clergy and elders led the Scottish Members of Parliament to urge the parliament to change its decision and declare Malawi a British protectorate. As a result, the British declared Malawi a British protectorate. So it was the question of security that caused Malawi to become a British protectorate.

There is no doubt however that there were some Malawians who were of the view that Malawi needed to be independent of the British government. As a result, there arose a group of fighters who were determined to see Malawi gain her self-determination. The chief point is that these early freedom fighters who displayed resistance towards the colonial government were people who were Christians and later on became leaders in different churches after being trained by missionaries.<sup>69</sup> One prominent figure in Malawi is John Chilembwe who is celebrated as a hero of Malawi. He is remembered as a martyr in the freedom fighting against the colonial rule. As a result of the long struggle for independence, Malawi attained her political autonomy on 6th July, 1964 from the British colonialists and acquired her republic status in 1966. Since independence, the nation has been called Malawi.<sup>70</sup> After that, the country became a one party dictatorial system under the leadership of Hastings Kamuzu Banda of the Malawi Congress Party who ruled the country autocratically from 1964 to 1994. The country then saw a transition to democratic system of government in 1994 through a referendum held in 1993.<sup>71</sup> The term for the presidency is now five years with one more time of re-election.

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<sup>68</sup> The Portuguese had imperialist intentions in the region as they wanted the Shire Highlands to become a Portuguese territory while the Arabs were slave traders and also posed as a threat to the Scottish missionaries.

<sup>69</sup> John Chilembwe himself attended a mission school in Blantyre (Paas 2006: 203).

<sup>70</sup> In consideration of the fact that the name frequently changed from one era to the other, this paper uses the name Malawi throughout the thesis to avoid confusion.

<sup>71</sup> Chiponda 2007: 97-99.

These political transitions from colonialism to independence and later on to democracy raises the question of whether the missionaries had played an important role to the inevitability of Malawi's gaining of independence. By educating colonial fighters like Chilembwe, it can be argued that the missionaries raised a generation that stood up for Malawi's independency. On the other hand, the church or missionaries were directly involved and affected by the political events and processes that occurred in Central Africa. For example, the missionaries showed keen interest in the controversy between the Church of Scotland and the federal government hence they held meetings to come to the solution of the controversy.<sup>72</sup> Ross maintains that the Blantyre mission, together with its northern sister, Livingstonia mission, proved to be the most important actors in the nationalist movement which finally succeeded in achieving independence for Malawi in 1964.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, tracing the beginning and political development of Malawi up to the modern day is an exercise which demands frequent reference to the Blantyre mission. The Malawian society has thus to a greater extent been influenced by the missionary enterprise initiated by a number of Scots in the mid-1870s.

On a similar note, it can be maintained that just like the gaining of independence, the political transition from autocracy to democracy was largely achieved through the intervening and active roles of the church in the political processes. However, during the fight for democracy in 1992, the Catholic Church in Malawi seem to have been the more active church than the Presbyterian or Anglican churches. This is evident in The Pastoral Letter of the Catholic bishops of March 1992, *Living our Faith*.<sup>74</sup> While looking at the churches and their relationship to state and secular authorities, Birger Løvlie maintains that the bishops of the Catholic Church, through the pastoral letter, were the first to speak out with one voice, reacting against the dictatorial system of government in Malawi.<sup>75</sup> What influenced the bishops to speak was their awareness of the universality of mankind and church, including biblical knowledge of the church as Christ in the world. Again, the visit of John Paul II in 1989 seem to have encouraged the bishops to take a

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<sup>72</sup> The Nyasaland times 1959:7.

<sup>73</sup> A.C. Ross 1996:13.

<sup>74</sup> Løvlie 2007: 111-130.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

step in suggesting and fighting for equality, unity and same basic rights for all.<sup>76</sup> Despite the fact that the Presbyterian and Anglican Churches intervened a bit late, it seems proper to state that they too participated in the fight for and development of democracy in Malawi. The weakening of Banda and his powers was a result of pressure from the Catholic Church with the backing of other churches. This shows that Christianity as a religion, played an important role not only in the abolition of slavery and tribal conflicts, but also in the development of the democratic republic of Malawi.<sup>77</sup> It can therefore be maintained that both the gaining of Malawi's independence as well as her becoming a democratic country could not be achieved if not for the coming of Christian missionaries who had educated the freedom fighters like Chilembwe and company for example. More importantly, the Christian missionaries also laid the foundation for the church to constantly take active roles in politics, hence the interplay of the church and politics. In agreement with this, Gama explains how relevant it was for the early missionaries to play a big role in social issues as it influenced the mainstream churches to be active in the matters of social issues.<sup>78</sup> This leads to the conclusion that there would be no republic of Malawi if not for Livingstone and the Christian missionaries who had responded to his call to Christianize and civilize Africa.

### 2.2.3 Religion

Malawi is characterized by a number of religions which include Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, African Tradition Religion (ATR) as well as Rastafarianism among others. However, Christianity consists of the large percentage of Malawians who define themselves as Christians. According to national statistics 2008, 82.7% of Malawians are Christians, 13.0 Muslims, 1.9 other religions and 2.5 have no religion at all.<sup>79</sup> Christians are composed of the Roman Catholics and Protestants; the Presbyterians, mainly the CCAP make up the largest group of Protestants. Other denominations include; Anglicans, Baptist, Evangelicals and Seventh Day Adventist. In order to account for this remarkable growth of membership in Christianity as well as in the Presbyterian Church, it is necessary to arrive at an understanding of the history of Christianity

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Gama 2010: 47.

<sup>79</sup> Malawi National Statistical Office 2008:13.

through an analysis of the origins of the Presbyterian Church in Malawi which is more relevant in this paper. This stands as a background to the understanding of the changes in cultural make-up of the CCAP as one of the major churches introduced by the classical missionaries, the Scotts in Malawi.

### 2.3 How the Presbyterian Church came to Malawi

The history of Malawi is very much connected to the history of the church since Malawi first saw the establishment of the church as early as 1861 while the British protectorate was established in 1891.<sup>80</sup> The existence of and further political, religious and socio-cultural developments of life in Malawi cannot be adequately discussed if references to the Christian missionaries are not made. This is based on the justification that it is these missionaries who exposed Malawi to the external contacts as they opened up the interior of the continent to the rest of the world and stimulated further national-building developments. Similarly, an analysis of the modern Presbyterian Church in Malawi demands a critical reflection of its history as it originates from a period far beyond the British colonial settlement. Apparently, a meaningful historical account of the missionaries in Malawi starts with the adventurous expeditions by Dr. David Livingstone, a Scottish missionary and explorer who visited the region in 1856.<sup>81</sup>

More important to say, Livingstone's exploratory visits were not fruitless. It is maintained that the visit gave him an opportunity to make notice of the fact that Africans were engaged in slave trade. Balaj explains how violence and conflicts characterized the area at the time Livingstone made his initial exploratory visits. The region is alleged to have become a pandemonium of violence, fear and anonymous atrocities. It was one of the dark places of the earth, full of hatred and brutality as the indigenous population was continuously harassed by slave raiders and traders. On his return to Britain, Livingstone therefore made known the greater extent to which the slave trade was being practiced in Central Africa. He thus called for an international crusade to end the slave trade and to open up Africa to honest trade.<sup>82</sup> In his report, Livingstone described the extent of the slave trade on the lake, which he labeled as 'the open sore of the

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<sup>80</sup> Gama 2010:41.

<sup>81</sup> Paas 2006:187.

<sup>82</sup> Balaj 2010:109.

world' and the region as the centre of the slave trade.<sup>83</sup> Scholars further agree that in 1856, Livingstone addressed the Senate House of Cambridge University, appealing to the Church of England to start mission work as well as commerce in Malawi. His speech ended with the words:

“I go back to Africa to try to make an open path for commerce and Christianity. Do you carry on the work I have begun?”

The church's receptiveness to his appeal involved the responsiveness of the UMCA, the first classical missionary enterprise to come to Malawi which was led by Bishop Charles Frederick Mackenzie.<sup>84</sup>

### 2.3.1 The Scottish missionaries to Malawi

An understanding of the Presbyterian Church in Malawi cannot be fully achieved if this paper does not provide for an understanding of who the Scottish missionaries were. One key informant narrated:

As their name suggests, these were missionaries from the Church of Scotland who were first united, but because of the evangelical revival, they split into two in 1843. Those that were more of the evangelical type established the Free Church of Scotland. Evangelical in this case meant that they wanted to go out and preach the gospel. The conservative ones remained the Established Church of Scotland.<sup>85</sup>

Between the two, the first to respond to David's Livingstone call were those of the Free Church of Scotland who established a mission station in the Northern part of Malawi. Those that were under the established church of Scotland came to the shire highlands three years later and that was in 1876.

#### 2.3.1.1 The Livingstonia mission

This was the first Scottish mission to set foot in Malawi. The commencement of this mission is linked to the history of David Livingstone, who had died at Chitambo Village in Zambia on the 1<sup>st</sup> of May, 1873. After his death, a missionary of Lovedale in South Africa, James Stewart who also attended Livingstones' funeral ceremony proposed to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland that a mission should be established at Lake Malawi with the aim that such an institution can teach the truths of the gospel and the arts of civilized life to the natives of the country. In agreement to this, Balaj maintains that Stewart's attendance of Livingstone's funeral

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Paas 2006:188.

<sup>85</sup> Oral Testimony (hereafter O.T.). Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

ceremony left an emotional mark and impact on Stewart such that he was determined to start a mission in Central Africa, named Livingstonia, in memory of Livingstone.<sup>86</sup> As Paas quotes Stewart:

I would humbly suggest as the truest memorial of Livingstone, the establishment by this church, or several churches together, of an institution at once in industrial and education, to teach the truths of the Gospel and the arts of civilized life to the natives of the country, and which shall be placed in a carefully selected and commanding spot in Central Africa, where from its position and capabilities, it might grow into a town, and afterwards into a city, and become a great center of commerce, civilization and Christianity. And this I would call Livingstonia.<sup>87</sup>

#### 2.3.1.1.2 The establishment of Cape Maclear as a mission station

Consequently, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 1875, a group of missionaries from the Free Church of Scotland, led by Edward Young, arrived in Malawi and later on established the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland. However, they had started with establishing a mission station At Cape Maclear in Mangochi district. It is argued that the party chose cape Maclear because of its suitability as it seemed to be a healthy place and was sheltered from wind. Soon after their arrival at cape Maclear, the missionaries hoped to build a place that eventually might grow into a town and become a major centre of commerce, civilization and Christianity.<sup>88</sup> However, mission work at this station has been said to have been unsuccessful as they only managed to produce one baptized convert, Albert Namalambe, for a period of over five years they had spent there.<sup>89</sup> This was the situation regardless of the fact that the missionaries encouraged Africans to come and live at the mission. The region was inhabited by the Yaos whose economic structure was based on the slave trade, and this was incompatible with the convictions held by the missionaries. From the situation, it seems plausible to argue that the Africans who had come to live with the missionaries at the station did that as a rescue point of entry since a huge number of them had fled from slave traders. Death of some missionaries also contributed to the unfruitfulness of missionary work at the centre. As a result of this, the site had proved to be an unhealthy place for the missionaries hence, Robert Laws, a medical missionary

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<sup>86</sup> Balaj 2010: 68.

<sup>87</sup> Paas 2006: 190.

<sup>88</sup> Balaj 2010:123.

<sup>89</sup> Paas 2006: 191.

among them, decided to transfer the mission to a lakeshore center near Nkhata-bay called Bandawe.

#### 2.3.1.1.3 Work at Bandawe

The missionaries were welcomed by the Tonga tribe at Bandawe. Scholars like Balaj and Paas unanimously agree that Tonga tribe welcomed the Missionaries because the former desperately needed protection especially from the Ngoni raiders. The missionaries were therefore considered not only as diplomatic and political allies, but also as trade partners.<sup>90</sup> It has been indicated that the northern Ngoni had been raiding Tonga land since the 1850s when they arrived in the region. As a result, the Tonga lived in a number of large fortified villages which offered them some protection from the raiders. Often the Tonga themselves responded to Ngoni raids by raiding Ngoni villages. There is therefore no doubt that the Tonga saw in the mission a friend who could give them a military as well as a financially viable advantage over the Ngoni.

The mission work at Bandawe did not only include evangelism but also involved the provision of education and health care services as it has been documented that schools were established and that school attendants increased rapidly. Although there was quick positive response towards education, this was not the case in as far as their acceptance to the gospel was concerned. The first Tonga convert only emerged in 1899.<sup>91</sup> This marked the beginning of the Livingstonia mission which was going to become the Livingstonia synod of the CCAP as the study will discuss later on. While the researcher recognizes the relevance of the Livingstonia mission to the incoming of Presbyterianism in Malawi, the focus of the paper dwells so much on the Blantyre mission which later became Blantyre synod, the major focus case of this thesis, hence a more detailed approach to its history, development and changes:

#### 2.3.2 Blantyre mission

Apart from the missionaries who established the Livingstonia mission station in the Northern part of Malawi, another group of missionaries called by the name “the Established Church of Scotland” initiated the establishment of a mission station in Blantyre in 1875. Taking its name from the birthplace of David Livingstone, there can be no doubt that the mission was similarly

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<sup>90</sup> Balaj 2010: 125.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

inspired by his death, vision and commitment.<sup>92</sup> It is recorded that Livingstone had spoken with enthusiasm of the Shire Highlands, through which he passed in 1859, as an ideal sphere for missionary settlement. The early mission stations which they established in the southern region were at Blantyre, Domasi, Zomba, Mulanje and Nthumbi which later on expanded into a network of congregations effectively covering the territory from Nsanje in the south to Ntcheu in the North, and from Mwanza in the west to Mangochi in the east. As at the date of publication of Ross's book in 1996, the Blantyre synod of the church of central Africa Presbyterian comprised 13 presbyteries, 300 congregations and 955, 000 church members.<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 13.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.





### 2.3.3 The Dutch Reformed Church (D.R.C.M)

Despite the fact that this was totally a different group of missionaries from South Africa, it is worth noting that the D.R.C.M. also came to Malawi and introduced Presbyterianism. Since the major focus of the paper is on the Scottish missionaries and specifically on Blantyre mission, the paper discusses this mission in passing although it is still deemed relevant due to its historical importance in forming one of the major sections of the CCAP in Malawi. Upon their arrival in 1888, these missionaries set up a mission station at Mvera in the central region. Their arrival was in response to a request made by the Free Church of Scotland and the Established Church of Scotland, who upon realizing that their work was too much, gave up on their initial plans to meet in the middle and cover the whole of Malawi. As a consequence, the D.R.C.M. came to cover up the central and it was officially established on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1889 at Mvera.<sup>95</sup>

### 2.3.4 The CCAP

The CCAP comprises three administrative synods: the Livingstonia synod in the North, the Nkhoma synod in the central and lastly Blantyre synod which generally covers the southern region. The three synods reached a consensus and united to form the today's CCAP. At first, it was the two presbyteries of Blantyre and Livingstonia who held a united session and the motion to get united was unanimously agreed on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 1924.<sup>96</sup> One of the key informants narrated:

This union was a result of the fact in Scotland, where the missionaries actually had their roots and background, the church had also united: the Free Church of Scotland had gone back and they had what they called the United Church of Scotland. So in Malawi, they had to do the same, hence it became the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. Later in 1926, the D.R.C.M. also decided to join. As a result, today we have one big church of the Central Africa Presbyterian but with a little bit three different backgrounds.<sup>97</sup>

Although a union was achieved, it is important to make mention of the fact that the three synods are independent co-entities. Each of the three synods in question has their own constitution but they all fall under the general assembly. As a result, in terms of practice and how some things are done, there are several differences. In the words of the key informant:

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<sup>95</sup> Gama 2010:47.

<sup>96</sup> Paas 2006:197.

<sup>97</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

You will discover that some practices in Nkhoma are not the same as those of Blantyre. Some practices in Livingstonia are different. We are less a federation than a union. Am saying this because that will have an impact on how the synods will respond to issues on the ground.<sup>98</sup>

It is in this vein that this research makes a focus on the Blantyre synod to analyze how it has responded to the social changes around the globe and most specifically changes on the local scene.

## 2.4 The History of the Blantyre Synod

The CCAP Blantyre synod was officially established on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October, 1876 under the leadership of Henry Henderson.<sup>99</sup> However, to understand how the Blantyre synod came into being, Ross divides its historical background into three major periods: first in 1874 when Dr. Macrae of Harwick first suggested the establishment of the mission until 1881 when it had to be reconstructed under David Clement Scott, then from 1881 until 1898 when Dr. Scott left Blantyre for good. The third period which ends with the opening of the First World War (WW1) during which time the mission was led by Alexander Hetherwick.<sup>100</sup> It must be noted however that the history of the Blantyre synod cannot be fully explained and understood without reference to the Scottish base from which the missionaries who set up the Blantyre mission had originated. The following is therefore a presentation of the above stated major periods with much reference to what was happening in Church of Scotland as a base for the missionaries in Malawi:

### 2.4.1 The first period: 1874-1881

This time span was characterized by the preparation and setting up of mission to Africa. Dr. James Stewart, who initially warned the free church of Scotland of the inadvisability of a mission to Central Africa, had changed his mind in 1873.<sup>101</sup> After attending Livingstone's funeral, he encouraged the fellow members of the church to begin to plan for the sending of a Free Church of Scotland missionaries to Central Africa. This was followed by the efforts of Dr. John Macrae of Hawick who was appointed by the Church of Scotland to chair an African Mission Committee. Dr. John Macrae began to collect funds to keep going the planning of a mission. He also took a step further to appeal for volunteers from among the young clergy to join the

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<sup>98</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

<sup>99</sup> Gama 2010: 42.

<sup>100</sup> A.C. Ross 1996:17.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid. p. 18.

proposed expedition. Quoting the Church of Scotland Home and Foreign Mission Record of November 1874, Ross presents one of the Macrae's writing in the record:

Will no successors from Scotland be found to tread the path of her Christian Warrior? No volunteers of Scotland to go forth to endure hardness as becomes the soldiers of Christ...and shall the Church of Scotland be the only communion which has not planted her disciples on African soil?<sup>102</sup>

One of the first candidate to respond to Dr. Macraes' call was Henry Henderson who offered himself to be a pioneer and pathfinder for the church of Scotland Mission. Once accepted, his task was to travel to the Lake Malawi region accompanied by Lt. Young and the Free Church party. Although he set up for the journey to find a site where the mission was to be stationed in 1875, Henderson was worried because the party or recruits from the Church of Scotland that would join him later had not yet been found.<sup>103</sup> After desperately looking for some, it is recorded that the group of men that was ready to join the Blantyre mission was characterized by men, who were spared of any kind of a careful process of selection of volunteers. The group comprised John Buchanan, George Fenwick, Jonathan Duncan, William Milne and John Walker, who were led by a physician, Dr. T. Thornton Macklin.<sup>104</sup> When Scott reported of their character, he wrote:

"The men chosen for the mission were most unaccountably fit (sic) - without profession of Christian life or missionary spirit, and not even good workmen."<sup>105</sup>

This acts as evidence to the kind of implementation of the policies and actual activities that the missionaries employed in their evangelistic activities on the ground. They were a people of different character and behaviour, trying to survive in the difficult and poor situations and environments of the Central African region. Again, being a Presbyterian mission, one would expect that from its start, the mission would have proper and well developed arrangement and order of those chosen to go for mission. It is evident however that the first two years of its existence, the Blantyre mission of the Free Church Of Scotland had no clergyman or ordained minister at all. It was only in the year 1877 that the Foreign Mission Committee (FMC)

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<sup>102</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 19.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

approached Duff Macdonald who accepted to go to Blantyre despite that he did not volunteer for the same task.<sup>106</sup>

#### 2.4.2 The second period: 1881 until 1898

This period was began by the arrival of David Clement Scott who reached Blantyre in December 1881. This period has been characterized as a period of success in the history of the Blantyre mission. The fourth chapter will indicate how this period acted as a foundation building era for the Presbyterian Church and Malawi. The success was marked by a rapidly growing primary school system, a growing literature in Yao and Nyanja as well as a growing African church.<sup>107</sup> One of the factors for this success registered was the existence of willing and able staff both in Central Africa and back in Scotland. It is recorded that when D.C. Scott arrived in Malawi, he joined Henry Henderson and the gardener, Jonathan Duncan. Another very able group of people whom he managed to gather were the likes of Dr. Bowie, Rev. Alexander Hetherwick, Rev. Henry Scott, Miss Janet Beck and Miss Margaret Christie among others. From then until 1914, many others came to serve in the missionary activities in Africa.<sup>108</sup> In comparison to the years between 1874 and 1888, when the FMC was faced with a hopeless situation of lack of staff, this was a tremendous success. Coupled with other factors, this must have also led to the success that arose as a result of the presence of the much needed staff to take over the role of spreading the gospel.

At the same time, this period saw the historical success when Blantyre became well known in many Scottish homes because of the powerful campaigns that were launched to provoke some sort of action on the part of the British government to prevent a Portuguese or Arab take-over of Malawi.<sup>109</sup> In connection to the campaign carried out, the Church of Scotland started the setting up of organizations at presbytery and parish levels in order to work for the stimulation and maintain of interest in the overseas work of the church. These associations were established at the time when the missionaries in central Africa were also requesting for the establishment of British protectorate in Central Africa, which came to pass three years later, 1891. The main aim

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid. p. 21.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid. p, 23.

<sup>108</sup> Gama 2010: 45.

<sup>109</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 25.

of forming the organizations was to provide for the branches that would facilitate the raising of funds for the foreign missionary activities.

#### 2.4.3 The third period: 1898-1914

Although the success of missionary activity continued to characterize this period, the FMC continued to face major staffing and financial challenges between 1898 and 1914. During these years, the FMC was faced by a consequent fear of curtailing the work in the field due to the economic crisis it was experiencing.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, the staffing position which had not been as strong since about 1886 in Africa, had again worsened. This was evident in the lack of the supply of new recruits in 1912. Only two out of the desirable 15 recruits were available to take over the missionary activities overseas. The FMC report at the General Assembly of 1912 testified:

Only two new missionaries have been appointed since the last General Assembly, Dr. T.C. Borthwick to China, and Mr. G. Dennis to Kikuyu. Other vacancies have occurred, for which, unfortunately, no suitable candidates have been forthcoming, and at the date of the Report, they still remain unfulfilled.<sup>111</sup>

This shows that the kind of situation in the mother church continued to affect the implementation of missionary policies and work in the mission field.

### 2.5 The aims and objectives of the Scottish Missionaries?

To set out for mission work demands that a missionary has aims towards whosoever the mission is meant to reach out to. As Frazer and Dayton agree, missionaries do not engage in evangelism in general. It is only a clear idea of the mission and purpose of an evangelistic endeavour that properly makes plans and strategies as to whom, how, why and when to evangelize.<sup>112</sup> As for the Scottish missionaries, the main people to evangelize to were based in Malawi. This section attempts to account for Livingstone's and his followers' strongest desire to establish missionary enterprise, not any other part of Africa but specifically in Malawi:

#### 2.5.1 To establish Christianity

One of the major reasons for the Scottish missionaries' arrival to Malawi was to fulfill Livingstone's major aim of transforming African society through the impact of Christianity. In this time, Africans were considered as evil in their practices and culture. The missionaries found

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<sup>110</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 33.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid. p. 34.

<sup>112</sup> Frazer & Dayton 1990: 55.

an African who was practicing witchcraft, drinking beer, marrying two or more wives, killing and selling each other and these were considered as sinful acts, hence Africans were regarded as “Heathens”. It is in this line of thought that scholars have argued that the West was culturally considered superior; hence the missionary enterprise began to be primarily understood in terms of saving the souls of the heathens who lived in the dark lands of the uncivilized society. The expected outcome of mission was therefore the conversion of the “Heathen” to the Christian race which was considered to be the superior race.<sup>113</sup> This explains why even the term “mission” formerly seemed to mean the struggle against superstition, enslavement to the forces of darkness, ignorance and disease, which characterized the African society of the time. In fact, the Livingstonia missionaries named their mission as “the mission to the Heathen”. With this view in mind, the missionaries hope was to civilize Africans through Christianity which was meant to lift uncivilized Africans from their status of uncultured savages into the Christian and civilized race.

#### 2.5.2 To abolish slave trade and establish legal trade and commerce

Another main reason that provoked David Livingstone to think of getting engaged in mission work in Africa was the extent to which slave trade was being practiced at the time he first made his exploratory visit to the region. As he travelled in the lands that are now Mozambique and Malawi, he was shocked by the slave trade that went on among the people using the lakes and rivers. Local chiefs such as Chief Mlozi in Mangochi and Arabs were highly involved in the slave trade. In an interview with the Central African Broadcasting Service, one of the people who was once captured as a slave, Padre Petro Kilekwa, explained how he was caught and was sold from one master to another, and later to the Arabs, all in exchange of salt and cloth.<sup>114</sup> In view of this, Livingstone was convinced that the only thing that could change this inhumane situation was to bring honest commerce and Christianity.<sup>115</sup> It was deemed difficult to force the slave traders to stop their slavery engagements without giving them an alternative trade.<sup>116</sup> In a letter published in the Free Church of Scotland Monthly Record, Mr. E.D. Young described how

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<sup>113</sup> Balaj 2010: 35.

<sup>114</sup> Malawi National Archives (hereafter MNA), *Interview: Padre Petro Kilekwa with Peter Fraenkel*, Central African Broadcasting Service, recorded at Monkey-bay, Nyasaland. 14. 10. 1956. Kilekwa was however lucky to have been rescued by the European anti-slavery patrol boat, later got educated and became a teacher.

<sup>115</sup> Tengtenga 2006: 51.

<sup>116</sup> Gama 2010: 49.



the missionaries' arrival terrified the Arabs who were the main agents in the slave trade, hence no slaves were conveyed across for a whole month and the local people rejoiced at their arrival.<sup>117</sup>

Livingstone's idea was thus made to imply that sending the gospel to the Africans should not only be explained in terms of the missionary presenting the Bible to the Heathens. However, such a missionary endeavour should also take into consideration that which demolishes the sense of isolation which heathenism engenders and makes the tribes unite and feel mutually dependent and beneficial to each other and that was nothing other than legal and honest commerce.<sup>118</sup> Thus it was necessary to introduce a better trade than slavery. It was therefore hoped that the establishment of an institution that would be located at the spot in central Africa where it could grow into a town to become a great centre of commerce and civilization was a need.<sup>119</sup>

As a consequence, in 1876, James Stevenson, with a group of Scottish businessmen who were supporters of the mission set up a commercial company, independent from, but closely related to the mission work, the African Lakes Company (ALC). The main aim of the company was to develop a new form of legitimate commerce to eventually force out the slave trade. Although it is argued that the company in question had limited resources with which to replace the slave trade, the fact that they introduced a legal form of trade to give an African the honest kind of commerce to practice explains the greater extent to which they were committed to end the inhuman kind of trade, the slave trade.<sup>120</sup> Despite old scholars' argument that the intent of the missionary might have been to take away African economic and material capital rather than to promote trade, it can equally be argued that the men of the ALC and the Scottish mission came into the area with their families and that they had invested capital in the country, not only for their economic benefit, but for the benefit of the indigenous African as well as for the social stability of the country, hence their struggle to end slave trade.

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<sup>117</sup> The Free Church Of Scotland Monthly Record 1876: 175.

<sup>118</sup> Paas 2006: 187.

<sup>119</sup> The Free Church Of Scotland Monthly Record 1875: 86.

<sup>120</sup> Balaj 2010: 109.



Furthermore, in an interview with one of the key informants, it was clearly pointed out that the missionaries came with the intent of promoting trade. It was explained for example that the first botanical garden in Malawi was brought by missionaries and among other things they brought coffee and tea.<sup>121</sup>

When the missionaries came, they wanted to give the African something to do, so they established trade. At Blantyre mission, there is a carpentry shop and that at HHI secondary school, there were machines for metal and wood work including a home economics lab for girls to learn baking and cooking among other things.<sup>122</sup>

This equally shows how the missionaries were committed to fully equip the African to be economically independent by establishing their own bakery, garage, carpentry shop or restaurant for example and thus without the involvement of slave trade in it. Their vision of lawful commerce has to a notable extent been fulfilled as a great commercial city, Blantyre, has grown up around the mission station they established.

### 2.5.3 Provision of social services

Apart from evangelism, preaching the gospel and ending the unscrupulous slave trade, the Scottish Christian missionaries also responded to the social, economic and human basic needs of people around them by constructing social service institutions. It was unanimously agreed that Christianizing a society would not be possible in either an illiterate African society or an unhealthy society. As a result, the missionaries also contributed to the socio-economic development of the Malawian society through the provision of education and health services to the indigenous Malawian society as discusses below:

#### 2.5.3.1 Provision of education

It is important to state that the missionary enterprise in Malawi started with schools. For people to understand Christianity and read the Bible for example, they needed education.<sup>123</sup> As a result, every mission station that was established was followed by the construction of a school. The Scottish Missionaries, although having their primary motive in spreading the gospel by building churches, they as well constructed village schools in over 69 villages in the Southern region.<sup>124</sup> It

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<sup>121</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid.

<sup>123</sup> Gama 2010: 51.

<sup>124</sup> MNA, S1/1570/19, *Correspondence from Resident of the government offices in Blantyre to the acting chief secretary, Zomba, 27th November, 1916.*

was even made clear that the church members who chose to neglect the education of their children must be brought under church discipline.<sup>125</sup> Not only did the Scottish missionaries make an initiative to build schools on merit, but also village headmen requested them to do so, as Majasika of Mbirira village did.<sup>126</sup> Thus, some schools were constructed upon request from the chiefs who had realized the necessity of schools in their villages.

Furthermore, the little education that the missionaries had given to the local people prior to the coming of colonial administration enabled them to be employed within mission stations and in government positions or as civil servants in various junior positions such as clerks and interpreters. Even missionaries themselves boasted of producing qualified people who were later employed in the government.<sup>127</sup> According to Munyenyembe, the emphasis of the missionaries on education helped many Malawians to see the advantages of Christianity, as it was the mission schools that became the gateways to modern kind of life, which could only be gained by having some kind of education. The church's emphasis on education therefore made the church more popular among the indigenous people whose lives had intensely changed due to the encounter with Christianity and western values.<sup>128</sup> As the work of the mission expanded there was need for native teachers in the schools and leaders in the churches. At the same time, the colonial administration and the increasing number of European entrepreneurs in the country demanded a greater number of educated people.<sup>129</sup> Even in the post-colonial Malawi, mission schools by Scottish missionaries such as Henry Henderson Institute, have continued to produce government officials, such as the former president of Malawi, the late Bingu Wa Mutharika and of course various civil servants working for the different departments of the government. This implies that the legacy that the Scottish missionaries left through the provision of schools still lives on.

#### *2.5.3.2 Provision of medical services*

The other most important aim of the Scottish missionaries was to enhance the provision of medical care to the local people which was given at times for free or at a reasonable fee. The

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<sup>125</sup> MNA, BMC/1/2/ 1. *Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Presbytery of Blantyre Minutes*: 10.

<sup>126</sup> MNA, S1/1570/19. *Correspondence from Rev. Dr. Hetherwick, D. D. to Mr Milthorp*.

<sup>127</sup> Gama 2010: 51.

<sup>128</sup> Munyenyembe 2011: 23.

<sup>129</sup> Balaj 2010:128.

missionaries achieved these objectives by working hand in hand with the government as it also attempted to provide medical care to the people. The missionaries sent out their trained doctors to several hospitals for work, owing them to the mission's financial budget.<sup>130</sup> For instance, Dr. William Black was trained and sent to join the Livingstonia expedition in Central Africa as a medical officer to the mission in 1876.<sup>131</sup> He even hoped to make the instruments he had received the means with which to bring comfort, joy and life to some "hopeless" sons and daughters of Africa. Eventually, medicine was adopted by the Christian church as the handmaid of religion in the sense that the missionaries were sent to the Heathens with a twofold object of healing the sick and preaching the Word.<sup>132</sup>

In some cases, the missionaries made effort to train the local people in the medical fields of study. For example, the missionaries were able to train ladies in midwifery education because it was thought that there were fewer educated women capable of qualifying as midwives. They did this in cooperation with the government using funds raised by both the government and the mission. They were able to send out doctors in both government owned hospitals and mission hospitals. Some of the services offered were free yet some were offered at a fee. They were only free when a patient had been sent to the hospital by the government, otherwise one had to pay off a minimum fee.<sup>133</sup> In connection with this, the missions were able to establish the Blantyre Mission Hospital which was able to offer services to a lot of people. It was the only hospital providing for the African population of Blantyre and Limbe and surrounding districts. Just like some chiefs had asked for the construction of schools in their local areas, there were some chiefs who also requested hospitals in their areas as was the case with those from Zomba who requested for a nearby hospital "for natives".<sup>134</sup> The hospitals still operate today under the authority of the Blantyre synod.

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130 MNA, S/ 508/3. *Church of Scotland Mission- medical work carried by the mission.*

131 The Free Church Of Scotland Monthly Record. 1876: 146.

132 Ibid.

133 MNA, S1/508/31. *Church of Scotland Mission: Medical Work Carried by Mission.*

134 MNA, S1/508/31. *Church of Scotland Mission: Medical Work Carried by Mission.*

## 2.6 Chapter summary

This section of the thesis purposed to describe the historical and geographical formulation of Malawi as a country hence giving the background to the space factor question relevant in this paper. It has connected the history of Scottish missionaries to the history of Malawi by providing the areas in which missionaries played a role in the national-building process. In discussing how the Presbyterian Church came to Malawi, the section has shown that David Livingstone's exploratory visits and death stimulated the formation of the missionary enterprise to Malawi. It has also shown that the formation of the Livingstonia and Blantyre mission stations were a response to Livingstone's call to end slave trade in Malawi. With the joining of the D.R.C.M., all the three missions formulated the CCAP in 1924, which today form the Blantyre, Nkhoma and Livingstonia synods of the Presbyterian Church. In connection to that, the chapter has discussed the major reasons that explain why the Scottish missionaries came to Malawi and established mission stations in the northern and southern region of Malawi. It has been found out that the major aim was to establish Christianity as a means through which they could abolish slave trade and establish legal trade and commerce. However, the Christianization of the Malawian society could not be properly achieved if necessary social services were not provided for. As a result, the missionaries also offered both educational and medical services as tools with which to build a literate and healthy society that could embrace Christianity. In short, this chapter offers a background to both the historical and modern day cultural encounter of the missionaries and the Presbyterians.

## 3 MALAWIAN RESPONSES TO THE ARRIVAL OF THE SCOTTISH MISSIONARIES

### 3.1 Chapter overview

Chapter 3 focuses on the cultural encounter that took place during the Christianization of Malawi that was the result of the arrival of the Scottish missionaries. The historical context of this cultural encounter will be emphasized, as well as an examination of the socio-cultural impacts of the missionaries on the local religious culture. By doing so, my intention is to establish a basis for achieving the second objective of this research: to analyze Malawian acceptance and alterations with regard to Presbyterianism as a part of a cultural encounter.

### 3.2 Cultural encounter involving the Scottish missionaries and the local Malawian population

#### 3.2.1 Cultural encounter as a concept

The concept of cultural encounter employed in this paper refers to a personal relationship between individual people who belong to and represent different cultures or religions, hence they have been influenced by their respective cultural or religious backgrounds.<sup>135</sup> Applicable to this kind of cultural encounter was the situation in which Scottish missionaries, who possessed different cultural and traditional background from that of the Malawians, came in contact with the local Malawian population. The fact that the Africans were referred to as “heathens” while the missionaries had a “Christian” connotation of identity also represents a cultural encounter. In this view, cultural encounters are always challenging since they can force a re-assessment of one’s own cultural norms and values both to the missionary as well as the receiver of the new culture, thus the Scottish missionaries and Africans respectively.

In some cases, these encounters involve friction and conflict as they may include the mobilization of political forces involved but also contests over power and resources while in some instances, they may cause crisis within a culture that is forced to safeguard or rethink its own traditional values and ethics.<sup>136</sup> In a more moderate form, this kind of cultural encounter can stand for the interference of the indigenous and local patterns of life of Africans.<sup>137</sup> Blaser

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<sup>135</sup> Miedema 2010: 35.

<sup>136</sup> Humanities in the European Research Area 2013: 1.

<sup>137</sup> Blaser 1987: 68.

maintains that missionary cultural encounters can, in worst instances, result in destruction and liquidation of cultures, political oppression and economic exploitation, yet in the name of religion.<sup>138</sup> It is in this line of thought that this chapter allows the researcher to investigate the most fundamental aspect of mission history, the cultural encounter. The most important question arising from the understanding of the terms “mission” and “cultural encounter” therefore can be how the receivers of the Christian message understood the concept of Christianity and the missionaries to the extent that they, in the end, accepted the missionaries and the message they brought.

#### *3.2.1.1 Religion as part of culture*

Any discussion of the concept of mission and cultural encounters necessitates an understanding of the concept of religion as an important element of culture. The first chapter indicated that “mission” as a term conveys a historical meaning in which it refers to the attempt of the church to evangelize or witness, in different ways and forms, to people or groups who are situated beyond the church or Christian boundaries.<sup>139</sup> Thus mission is embedded within the religious circles. Similarly, culture consists of religion as one of its fundamental elements. While other scholars perceive religion as different from culture and make a clear distinction between what is religious and cultural, this paper maintains that religion is a manifestation of a people’s culture. Treating religion isolated from culture is in some sense impossible. This is based on the view that religion defines culture and constitutes culture.<sup>140</sup> Both culture and religion interact with each other in providing moral codes of conduct and a form of identity to a particular society hence they influence and shape each other.<sup>141</sup> Any type of religion takes a main role in the formation of a culture and inevitably contributes to the shape of culture. In the sense that religion is culture, an analysis of the responses of the Malawian population to the missionaries and the religion they came with allows the paper to examine the cultural encounter involved between the two peoples.

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<sup>138</sup> Ibid.

<sup>139</sup> Balaj 2010: 21.

<sup>140</sup> For example, Taylor’s highly influential definition stipulates that culture is “the complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities acquired by man as a member of a society” (Redse, 2010). Thus, Taylor’s implication is that culture consists of religion as one of its fundamental elements, hence the interconnection between the two concepts.

<sup>141</sup> Sarouglou & Cohen 2011: 1309-1319.

### 3.3 The perception of the local population towards the Blantyre missionaries

In missionary studies, it is agreeable that the reception and perception of the local population towards the incoming missionaries determines whether a mission can be successful or not. It is therefore relevant that this research takes a look at the response of the indigenous people to the arrival of the missionaries in question. The way that Malawians received Christianity is dependent on their perception of the missionaries. Since the focus of the paper is on Blantyre synod, an analysis of this cultural encounter is based on the reaction of the Mang'anja and the Yaos among whom the Church of Scotland missionaries settled and instituted Presbyterianism. It thus questions how and why the local population got converted to Christianity and how they became Presbyterians hence the following discussion:

### 3.4 The indigenous population in the Shire highlands during the Blantyre missionaries' arrival and establishment.

By the time the Blantyre missionaries arrived in 1876, a group of Yao had already migrated into the Shire highlands and became the dominant ethnic group around the southern shores of Lake Malawi. At that time, the Mang'anja had already occupied the region. Consequently, there was a war between these two tribes called the Mang'anja and the Yaos. The Mang'anja were then occupants of the highlands, and the Yao were aggressively confronting them.<sup>142</sup> Worth stating is the point that the mission took the side of the Mang'anja, and treated the Yaos as aggressors and intruders. In this little war, the mission people shot several natives, and burned one of their villages. The mission acted on the belief that the Yaos were both aggressors and slave-dealers or slave middlemen. Although this turned out afterwards not to be the case,<sup>143</sup> it must have produced a negative perception of the Yaos towards the mission and Christianity.

Apart from these two conflicting tribes, another tribe by the name of Makololo also established their state in the Shire valley. The Makololo were a group of people of Sotho origin who had migrated northwards into Zambezia. Livingstone had employed some of them as servants and porters and when his Zambezi expedition was over, they decided to stay in Malawi.<sup>144</sup> They later on created their dominance over the indigenous Mang'anja and organized a little state in the

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<sup>142</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 15.

<sup>143</sup> Buchanan 1885: 236. Buchanan was a Scottish horticulturalist who travelled to Central Africa in 1876 as member of the missionary party that established the Blantyre mission.

<sup>144</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 15.

Shire valley under the paramount chief Ramakuan. Ramakuan easily assumed the chieftainship of the Mang'anja tribe, who at that very time were in the extreme threat of being disintegrated as a tribe by the Yaos and slave-dealers outside, worse still by quarrels and divisions within themselves.<sup>145</sup> The Mang'anja rallied round their new chiefs, and soon the Makololo became a power on the Shire highlands.

In addition, the arrival of the Ngoni who were led by Maseko created tension and subjugated the two tribes that had arrived earlier. The Ngoni who settled in the Ntcheu area just to the north of the shire highlands, had a strong military organization that made them a dominant force. As a result, there arose a difficult political situation among the three tribes in question, and this created a hard stepping stone for the missionaries. John Bowie also asserts to this and explains that the Ngoni often came down in aggressive raids and swept across both the Yaos and the Mang'anja, who lived in fear of them and fled from their villages whenever they heard of the Ngoni's approach. Many bloody wars and blackened section of country bared witness to the fierce character of these Ngoni chiefs and their warriors when on the war-path.<sup>146</sup>

This was therefore what characterized the country and the kind of people to whom the Scottish missionaries came in 1875. From this, it is well known that by the time the mission became fully established in the 1890s, it was dealing with a culturally different African population, speaking diverse languages, often at war with one another and among themselves.<sup>147</sup> Yet, this was contrary to the peaceful and homogenous African society which Livingstone had found at the time he made his first visit and choice of a mission station in Blantyre, at the clock tower, about two kilometers away from its present location within chief Kapeni's area.<sup>148</sup> The combined effect of the conquests of Yao, Ngoni and Makololo had profoundly transformed the Shire highlands society which Livingstone had known.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>145</sup> Buchanan 1885: 94.

<sup>146</sup> Robertson 1892: 41.

<sup>147</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 15.

<sup>148</sup> Gama 2010: 42.

<sup>149</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 15.



### 3.5 Reception

An analysis of the ways in which the Scottish missionaries were received by the local villagers indicates a mixed reaction to their arrival. It is an undeniable fact that to the local African who was a potential candidate to be captured as a slave, the coming of the missionaries implied a positive change because the missionaries intended to stop slave trade and create a peaceful society for the ordinary African. As a result, the local women, children and men sought refuge in the arms of the missionaries, hence it is a common understanding that the missionaries were very much welcomed from the initial stages of setting up the mission.<sup>150</sup> Again, the relationship between the natives and the missionaries was found out to be very good as said by the Provincial Commissioner of the Sothern province. This applied to all districts which he had stationed.<sup>151</sup> Adrian Hastings reports that the missionary villages of the Blantyre mission hosted not only of freed slaves but also a large population of the local people, outcasts of their society and refugees who came to leave around the mission.<sup>152</sup> In the same vein, some of the chiefs accepted the missionaries when they were threatened by another tribe and needed protection from the missionaries. Thus in general, the majority number of the local population had a positive mentality towards the missionaries.

On the other hand, to the slave traders who were involved in the selling of people in exchange of salt, guns, beads, and calico among other things, the arrival of the missionaries was a negative development to their economic survival. Thus, those who were involved in slave trade made a living or at least profit off of slave trade. As a result, they disliked the missionaries and viewed them as intruders to their economy. For instance, two Yao chiefs who controlled one of the slave trade-sub route, passing through the southern part of Mulanje Mountain, Chikumbu and Matipwiri continued to terrify and capture the Nyanja people in the Shire highlands as well as the Mang'anja of the Lower Shire valley despite the missionaries' efforts to stop Slave Trade. Matipwiri who controlled the key of this route to Quilimane was one of the important Yao chiefs. It is recorded that he was not willing to show kindness towards the English men and he never wished that the missionaries should establish themselves near him on the account that his

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<sup>150</sup> O.T. Key informant 12, Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

<sup>151</sup> MNA. S1/176/36. *Missions and Native Authorities*. p.3.

<sup>152</sup> Hastings 1994: 212 & 461.

slaves would run from him to the missionaries.<sup>153</sup> To this effect, Christianity appeared to be less appealing to the Yaos who were largely converted into Islam, because of their ivory and slave trade involvement with the Arabs which existed before the arrival of Christian missions.<sup>154</sup>

At the same time, those that had strong political power in the region were much more reluctant to the missionary and his message than ordinary people. This can be explained by the point that there existed an up-down approach between the missionaries and the local people.<sup>155</sup> The missionaries seem to have employed an authoritative approach in controlling the natives' behaviour. Hastings explains that even the Scottish missionaries initially perceived themselves as a kind of a "mini-state" or a "Christian Colony", citing examples in which Blantyre missions' first clergy was advised to act as the General Director, and Christian Magistrate of the settlement.<sup>156</sup> A case is also recorded of a situation in which the Blantyre mission ordered quite inhuman battering of people who were suspected of various crimes like theft and murder.<sup>157</sup> As a result, the presence of the missionaries barred the establishment of Malawi society around a specific tribe or chieftaincy like the Ngoni tribe. Ross for example explains how the Blantyre mission, from the time of its establishment in the late 1870s hindered the formation of the Ngoni hegemony in the Shire highlands.<sup>158</sup> Therefore, the struggle for political power would determine how the Ngonis received the missionaries. This validates the assertion made by the European cultural encounters scholars who maintain that cultural encounters can sometimes involve friction and conflict as they may include the mobilization of political forces involved but also contests over political power and resources.<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> Buchanan 1885: 102.

<sup>154</sup> Yuya 2015: 3.

<sup>155</sup> MNA. S1/176/36. *Missions and Native Authorities*. p. 4.

<sup>156</sup> Hastings 1994: 212-213.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid. p. 212.

<sup>158</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 15.

<sup>159</sup> Humanities in the European Research Area 2013: 1.

In connection to the above stated point is a continued debate on whether the missionaries were colonial agents or not.<sup>160</sup> Those who maintain that the missionaries were colonial agents focus on the fact that most of the European missionaries came from those countries that took part in the “scramble for Africa”.<sup>161</sup> They also argue that in Malawi, the coming of colonialists was persuaded by the missionaries who needed protection. It is therefore argued that for those African chiefdoms in power, missionaries came to overrule them hence they received them as colonial imperialists. At the same time, the arrival of the missionaries must have robbed the African authorities off of their power and the local people’s support. As Adrian Hastings justifies this point, local people chose to accept the missionaries’ protection in a political world where the local authorities were distressed by the disorders of the time. In comparison to the local authorities, the missionaries’ policies, regulations, rules and punishments seemed worth accepting.<sup>162</sup>

Despite the reluctant chiefs like that of the Ngoni, there were more other chiefs who befriended the English: Ramakuan and the Ajawa section of the Yaos for example. Buchanan records that when the first of the Mission party arrived in 1875, Ramakuan was kind and obliging, and had so always been, having served as Livingstone’s porters and servants in the beginning.<sup>163</sup> Besides Ramakuan, there were the Ajawa section of the Yaos in Blantyre whose head chief was Kapeni. It is recorded that he too, among the many chiefs was open to the missionaries. Regardless of such friendliness, the missionaries were just never sure of what would come the next day.<sup>164</sup> Most important to state however is the fact that these kind of chiefs and African societies who positively accepted the missionaries contributed so much to the Africans’ conversion to Christianity. As a result, regardless of the difficulties encountered in times of death, sorrow,

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<sup>160</sup> Scholars in the debate, like Paas 2006: 126, and Allen 2008: 207–226, maintain that missionaries and colonial powers were partners in the crime of imperialism. On the other hand, Baur 1998: 420. argues that Missionary movement in Africa preceded colonialism by almost a century, and after all, Christian evangelization always has been in its essence the execution of Christ’s Great commission (Mt 28: 19). At the same time, Mission received a new inspiration by religious revival in the Christian homelands and a special motivation as atonement for the Slave Trade in Africa.

<sup>161</sup> Baur 1998: 420.

<sup>162</sup> Hastings 1994: 212.

<sup>163</sup> Buchanan 1885: 93-94.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid. p. 98.

stress, Ngoni attacks, Portuguese interference, the missionaries managed to start bringing the local villagers to a gathering meant to discuss God's word "a talk about God" every day and also every Sunday. Buchanan for example describes how the regular religious services, both native and European were conducted:

At half-past eight in the morning the bugle is sounded for the native meeting. Half an hour is allowed for the natives to come together. At nine o'clock the bugle is sounded a second time, and the service begins. The meeting is held in the school. The Europeans are seated at one end, facing the congregation. In front are the boys and girls attending the day-school, and others employed regularly in the mission service. I have seen a congregation of 300, and I have seen it as low as 30. The bulk of the congregation is drawn from the mission villages; but one often sees groups of men and women from villages four and five miles distant.<sup>165</sup>

This attests to the great extent to which the mission was becoming successful and the degree to which the natives were committed to the pursuit of spreading Christianity. In some instances, the local converts were involved in missionary work and invited fellow Africans to Christianity:

Despite the fact that Christian mission scholarship like those written by Western missionaries has tended to give priority to the agency of European missionaries in Africa, it is worthy pointing out the indigenous factor in the missionary enterprise. Harry Kambwiri Matecheta for example, was the first African ordained to holy ministry in the Church of Scotland's Blantyre Mission On 9<sup>th</sup> March, 1911. Together with Stephen Kundecha, who was also ordained as an indigenous minister in the church on 12<sup>th</sup> March of 1911, they served the mission's goals. With great diligence and loyalty, the two were instrumental in spreading Christianity and assisted in the establishment of Presbyterianism throughout southern Malawi.<sup>166</sup>

Thus the combined efforts of both the European and the local missionary must have contributed to the growth of the church. From its first mission center, where the St. Michael and All Angels Church building (see picture below) and the Henry Henderson Institute stand today in the city of Blantyre, the mission spread in all directions of Southern Malawi. Consequently, the early mission stations at Blantyre, Domasi, Zomba, Mulanje and Nthumbi expanded into a huge system of congregations abiding to Presbyterian principles, practices and beliefs.

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid. p. 102.

<sup>166</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.



*Figure 2. St Michael and All Angels Church, Blantyre.*

### 3.6 Factors behind the Malawians' conversion to Christian faith

Regardless of the difficult situation that the missionaries had found at the onset of the missionary enterprise in the Blantyre region, what is agreeable among scholars is the fact that the African accepted Christianity and Presbyterianism to be planted in her country by the Scottish missionaries. This has been recorded as the most significant religious change of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in which sub-Saharan Africa accepted Christianity. What arises as a matter of contention among the different theologians however are the reasons justifying Africans' acceptance of the Christian faith, leaving behind her African Tradition Religion (ATR) which had been known and practiced for ages.

One of the major reasons that is attributed to Africans' conversion to Christianity is that the religion in question addressed Africans' problems other than any other religion of the time. Robin Horton for example has argued that Africans became Christians because in a society that was transforming rapidly, Christianity contented their instrumentalist criteria more adequately

than anything found in the African tradition.<sup>167</sup> As explained in the previous chapters, some Africans accepted Christianity because it provided the much needed social services that encompassed both medical and educational services. For example, the Scottish education, combining a theoretical base with vocational training, attracted a good number of Africans to Christianity. As Adrian Hastings puts it, in a world where the expertise which Christians acquired were becoming politically and economically appreciated, there was an automatic and obvious update of ones' status in society.<sup>168</sup> For instance, in a case where a catechist was initially not of social importance, he became one because of his new religious status. Some of the chiefs who received the missionaries in their respective villages also seemed to have known well the advantages to be derived from being friendly to the English as it has been recorded that they all were fond of begging and asking for good stuff from the English men.<sup>169</sup> At the same time, some chiefs sent the sons to be educated by the missionaries having realized where the new power was held and ensured that their own children could partake in it.

On the other hand, scholars like Adrian Hastings maintain that African's acceptance of Christianity was a matter of an uncontrollable loyalty "to otherness" that primarily characterized the conversion. This can be connected to the point that western values were considered superior hence the Africans had to adopt the new culture.<sup>170</sup> Perhaps the question of cultural nationalism which focuses on identity, place and sense of cultural awareness and belonging had not been imparted in the pre-educated African, hence the result that most of them easily obeyed the request by the missionary to adopt Christianity and change some of their cultural values. Again, Christianity from its earliest history has maintained an undesirable attitude toward other religious traditions such as ATR. As a result, the African was made to re-think her religiosity and accept Christianity.

In short, the reasons for Africans' acceptance of Christianity has much to do with social, economic and political reasons other than a consideration of religion and spirituality itself. As a matter of fact, evidence indicates that some Africans combined Christianity and ATR practices

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<sup>167</sup> K. R. Ross 1996: 13.

<sup>168</sup> Hastings 1994: 461.

<sup>169</sup> Buchanan 1885: 99.

<sup>170</sup> Munyenembe 2011: 23.

and beliefs. Despite joining Presbyterianism, they would still practice witchcraft, magic and other traditional practices which were considered as sinful acts by the missionaries and Christianity. Africans seem to have acknowledged the Bible and its authority but they read it through the cultural and social spectacles totally different from those of the missionary who believed in angelic visitations and miracles in the Biblical context.<sup>171</sup>

### 3.7 The socio-cultural impacts of the Scottish missionaries on the local culture

Both historical and modern day cultural encounter encompasses socio-cultural effects on both sides of the cultures involved. The beliefs and ideas that the missionaries implied in the actual policy as well as those which they employed when implementing their task must have produced tremendous cultural effects on the two cultures involved. However, the fact that the missionaries came with a major purpose of Christianizing the African society meant that these cultural encounter effects were to be more visible on the African part than it would appear on the side of the missionary. As a result, this paper makes an attempt to analyze what really changed in the Malawian socio-cultural setting once Christianity and Presbyterianism were introduced. While scholarly literature on the Blantyre missionaries and their influences on Malawi culture remains scarce, it is possible that the Christian values altered the African socio-cultural settings in one way or the other. Despite that much scholarly work on missionaries and cultural changes have been analyzed in terms of the Livingstonia missionaries of the north, a number of missionaries' cultural impacts on both the northerners and southerners are common.

Furthermore, worth noting is the point that the church cannot avoid direct influence on a culture, and this does not exclude the Scottish missionaries. In most instances, the church is called to bring the gospel into creative tension and examination of the culture of its adherents by preaching and acting out the gospel in such a way that challenges and modifies the cultural structure and pattern. Otherwise it fails to address its responsibility of liberating and civilizing the society.<sup>172</sup> Whenever the Christian gospel encounters a culture, it interrupts the status quo, altering the normal state of things that offers a group of people an identity. At the same time, the church challenges prehistoric customs and declares relative, all existing cultural forms with the aim that new cultural patterns are introduced. From this understanding, a number of African

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<sup>171</sup> Hastings 1994: 527.

<sup>172</sup> Balaj 2010: 251.

cultural systems have been highlighted to show the ways in which the missionaries, representing a church from Scotland, altered the African's way of life.

### 3.7.1 African Traditional Religious (ATR) practices:

#### 3.7.1.1 *The concept*

African Traditional Religious practices characterized the religious style and patterns of Africans before Christian missionaries arrived in the various countries of the continent. Although there is no unanimous agreement as to whether this ATR is religions in the plural or religion in the singular, Mbiti believes that it should be religions in the plural.<sup>173</sup> His justification is that Africans are extremely religious and there are different beliefs and traditions according to their ethnic groups. Regardless of this, ATR demonstrates some common features of the belief in one God who is considered the creator of everything. In this vein, the use of ATR as employed here shall refer to the singular form of ATR and not the plural one.

Joseph Awolalu describes ATR as “indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Africans.”<sup>174</sup> He goes on and defines the term traditional as “indigenous, that which is aboriginal or foundational, handed down from generation to generation, upheld and practiced by Africans today”.<sup>175</sup> In agreement to this is Peter Clarke whose argument is that the term traditional refers to the religion being African and local to the different villages: the term traditional does not suggest that the religion is static and unchanging, rather it is one way of differentiating it from major world religions across various cultures<sup>176</sup> Against the missionary claims that Africans did not have culture and lived in a religiously vacuum society, most recent scholars of the history of Christianity in Africa have underscored the point that Africans did not live in societies deprived of religion and culture before the missionaries arrived. Therefore, emphasis has been made on the idea that most Africans in different parts of the continent just like in Malawi belonged to their traditional religion. To understand the changes that came about as a result of the missionary influence, this research makes a brief description of what ATR was and continues to be, as expressed in the discussions below.

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<sup>173</sup> Awolalu 1976: 1.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.

<sup>176</sup> Stewards & Peter 1991: 63-64.



### 3.7.1.2 Characteristics of ATR

As drawn from the definition given above, ATR refers to the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Africans. Accordingly, ATR is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith practiced by the ancestors of the contemporary Africans. This produced a trend in the society that if one does not follow the traditional beliefs and practices, that one may either die or experience a catastrophic result.<sup>177</sup> The point that ATR is traditional provides evidence to the idea that African belief in God existed before the arrival of missionaries. There's evidence that the African people knew and worshipped God in the pre-Christianity era. In an interview with one of the key informants, an understanding was made that Malawian members of ATR had their own ways of referring to God:

They believed that there is a deity known as God who created the earth. Thus why we have words like Namalenga, Chisumphi and Mphambe.<sup>178</sup> All the titles God is given existed before the missionaries came in.<sup>179</sup>

This justifies that the religion in question did indeed exist before Christianity was introduced.

In addition, nothing is more characteristic of African religion than its traditional healing processes. The Africans' belief in natural medicine is eminent through their traditional healers and doctors. This is clearly demonstrated by the people's appeal for the various shrines of traditional healers in order to be saved from common healthy problems or difficult situations of one kind or another.<sup>180</sup> As such, the African traditional belief in supernatural powers such as charms, herbs, sorcery, witchcraft, and medicine among others, are often credited to ancestral spirits, witchcraft, or the acts and incantations of magicians, believed to affect the sufferers even without direct contact.<sup>181</sup> This justifies the fundamental position traditional medicine men and diviners have in the healing and health care of Africans as a people. They are perceived as

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<sup>177</sup> Katani 2012: 1.

<sup>178</sup> Namalenga means creator from the Chichewa verb 'lenga' meaning create. Chisumphi is closely associated with an ancient rain cult that once flourished in the Southern part of Malawi. Mphambe is a name of God that is connected to God's expression of power in nature by means of lightning and thunder. (Wendland 1992: 430-438).

<sup>179</sup> O.T. Key informant 12, Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

<sup>180</sup> Essien 2013:237-238.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid. p. 237.

experts who can detect the roots to somebody's misfortunes and sicknesses. They can go further to provide suitable measures to be taken to calm down the ancestors, counteract the sorcery, or erode the evil curse that is believed to have caused the problem. It is therefore argued that the Africans were contented with the religion they followed because it satisfied and comforted them in times of stress, helped them maintain the morale in society and also provided them with the sense of security and hope in a hard and cruel world.<sup>182</sup>

The religion in question is also characterized by a number of moral and ethical values, religious actions such as rituals, festivals, prayers and initiation ceremonies among others. Sacred places and objects such as woods, trees and mountains are considered to hold a symbolic representation and are of paramount importance in the religion. The Africans believed in making sacrifices and praying to God for rains and good harvests for example.<sup>183</sup> Just as any other religion, ATR is also characterized by a particular leadership and responsible persons held in the positions of elders, priests, priestesses and doctors among others.

However, a number of features of ATR differed considerably from the demands of Christianity as a religion. The following is a presentation of how these features were and continues to be in sharp contrast with Christianity and makes an analysis of how the missionaries altered African beliefs that arose from their indigenous religion:

### 3.7.2 The missionary influence on ATR

Most of the Christian teaching that was imparted in the natives has shown to have been in contrast to the local peoples' traditional beliefs and practices. In the eyes of the missionary, the Africans were savages in need of being civilized and educated. In the missionaries' perception, there existed no African culture, just tribal customs with no religion.<sup>184</sup> As evidenced by a majority of archival letters and manuscripts, the missionary perceived an African as practicing foolish superstitions and devilish acts. This explains why the word mission was meant or seemed to mean the struggle against superstition and enslavement to the forces of darkness, ignorance

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<sup>182</sup> Robert & Warhurst 1972: 9.

<sup>183</sup> O.T. Interviewee 9: Limbe CCAP. 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2015.

<sup>184</sup> Baur 1998: 421.

and disease.<sup>185</sup> Consequently, when the foreign missionaries came, they condemned everything African as demonic, yet it is only the persons of the country, who, after being converted and while under the power of the Holy Spirit, can decide what is demonic and what is not their culture.<sup>186</sup> An upcoming brief discussion takes on the issues to deal with African culture as opposed to the missionaries' understanding of Christianity.

#### 3.7.2.1 *Medicine*

In the field of medicine, healing and health, there appears to have been a disparity between African traditional medicine and the western medicine brought by the missionaries. African healing processes and the use of local medicines as explained above were vehemently condemned by the missionaries whose understanding of their medicine was based on scientific grounds.<sup>187</sup> From such a scientific understanding of medicine, the missionaries perceived 'charm'<sup>188</sup> as an object connected to magical, spiritual or supernatural powers and this was objectionable on both religious and scientific grounds.<sup>189</sup> Although the traditional healers still exist today, it is deemed an unchristian act for a Presbyterian to participate or partake in the natural medicine and traditional healing processes involving the supernatural doctors.

#### 3.7.2.2 *Marriage*

One of the areas in which the missionaries affected the indigenous culture was the traditional marriage systems and customs.

"Traditionally, the indigenous population believed in and practiced polygamy in which a man was allowed to marry two or more wives and this was considered an ideal of the time."<sup>190</sup>

Nobody thought they were engaged in an immoral act by entering into more than one public marriage. In fact, ordinary local men could marry two while the rich and powerful people in the

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<sup>185</sup> Blaser 1987: 68.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid. p. 64.

<sup>187</sup> Hastings 1994: 277.

<sup>188</sup> Hokkanen (2007: 737) argues that the precise definition of charm was a problematic issue. Robert Laws defined the verb "*to charm*", as *kutsirika*, a Chichewa term for charm taken to mean to fortify with charms against evil, like to vaccinate against any evil planned by others.

<sup>189</sup> Hokkanen 2007: 737.

<sup>190</sup> O.T. Interviewee 9: Limbe CCAP. 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2015.

society had numerous wives.<sup>191</sup> Contrary to this, the missionaries thought that this practice acted as a barrier to realizing their ambition and that it was holding the Africans back from attaining civilization. The missionaries' understanding of Christianity was meant to suggest that nobody in a polygamous marriage should be baptized in the Christian religion. In fact, missionaries imposed the separation of wives from their husbands upon their conversion to Christianity.<sup>192</sup> Without overstressing the effect of imposing monogamy on conversion, there can be no doubt that this generated a sharp contrast between Christian and traditional marriage systems and discouraged many people from being converted to Christianity. However, the fact remains that many people did indeed become Christians. African Christianity and Presbyterianism adopted a monogamous system of marriage custom as something valuable by the faithful members of the church. As a result of this, any member of the church living in a polygamous family is summoned to church discipline and may not be allowed to partake in the sacraments of the church. In fact, one is excommunicated from the church for insisting on being such.<sup>193</sup>

At the same time, bride-price frequently became a controversial matter in as far as the African marriage custom was concerned. African bridegrooms were expected to make a payment in form of cash or cattle. Many missionaries however, misunderstood these African customs of marriage payments, perceiving such transactions as the purchase of a bride. "*Lobola*", as it is locally called, was central to the reproduction of social associations and continuity of patriarchy in the African mind. While the colonialists seem to have understood "*lobola*" as a dowry system which did not imply that the woman is purchased,<sup>194</sup> missionaries likened "*lobola*" to slavery. The missionaries must have been very much focused on their anti-slavery nature and aims such that they overruled the African understanding that the dowry is paid to her family partly as security for her proper treatment. Worth noting, "*Lobola*", which is regarded as a significant element of marriage, is still being practiced in some parts of Malawi despite the adoption of Christianity and Presbyterianism.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> Hastings 1994: 318.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> CCAP General Assembly 2002: 36.

<sup>194</sup> British colonial administration 1931: 1-42.

<sup>195</sup> I shall in the next pages explain which cultural values and systems the Africans fully adopted in the Presbyterian system and which ones they did not since different aspects of African culture were "adapted" in different ways.

In addition, it can be argued that these Christian missionaries affected people's reasons and preferences to engage in marriage decisions given that the missionaries were providing educational services. The Scottish missionaries, for instance, significantly encouraged females to convert to Christianity, attain education, and postpone their first marriage. This, to a greater extent affected the African cultural understanding of marrying their young girls at a very tender age. While arguing from an economic perspective of this change in marriage custom, Kudo Yuya maintains that the work of missionaries has had long-lasting effects on economic development by altering the structure of cultural institutions.<sup>196</sup> This research concurs with his findings and demonstrates that missionary activities and policies have produced a long-lasting effect on African cultural values in as far as marriage practices are concerned.

### 3.7.2.3 Initiation Ceremonies

Most African tribes have had some system of initiation in which both boys and girls are obliged to undergo. Such initiation ceremonies are considered as a means of preparing them to understand and deal with various biological and physical changes in their bodies. By passing through this initiation, it is believed that they obtain the status of adults and reach the marriageable stage. It is maintained that the African regard this traditional rite as something encompassing very great power, without which the young ones cannot obtain such a status.<sup>197</sup> Various anthropologists and sociologists have described the processes in which numerous beliefs and practices related to these initiation ceremonies are conducted. There were many things in these ceremonies which were in conflict with the requirements of faithful Christianity. The kind of circumcision and instruction on native customs (*miyambo*) for instance were considered to be against the Christian culture.

As a result, it was deemed necessary for Christians to put aside a number of initiation issues that were in conflict with the Christian life. It was argued that merely condemning such African rites without providing the African something in their place did more harm than good. For this reason, the '*Chilangizo*' or Christian initiation ceremony was started. This was based on the fact that the initiation of the young pagan girl for instance, went hand in hand with much cruelty and degradation, hence it was to save the young Christian girls from this that the presbytery had to

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<sup>196</sup> Yuya 2015: 3

<sup>197</sup> K.R. Ross 1996: 103.

take this important step of establishing Christian initiation ceremony.<sup>198</sup> This was adopted in 1929 and since then, young girls and boys in the CCAP have been going through such ceremonies.

In place of the traditional rite commonly known as *Chinamwali*, the *Chilangizo* ceremony from a Christian perspective is characterized by initiation rites covering three stages related to puberty, marriage and pregnancy, which were also important components of the traditional *Chinamwali* rite. Today, the contents of a *Chilangizo* booklet cover instructions on rites of passage, on infants, the youth at puberty, choosing a life partner, marriage, pregnancy and even when a child is born. The instructors are expected to follow such guidelines. The missionaries replaced the traditional instructresses (*anamkungwi*), with the Christian instructresses (*alangizi*). The Christian instructresses were to work under the supervision and training of the women missionaries. Teachers or counselors were to be chosen by kirk sessions only if their appointment was approved by the presbytery. The *Chilangizo* booklet of Blantyre synod clarifies three major aims of the Christian *Chilangizo*:

1. *Kuphuzitsa mwana kuti akule bwino pokhala ndi makhalidwe okoma* (To teach a child so he or she can grow with good manners).
2. *Kumphumzitsa zoti azitha kuzithandiza yekha komanso kukhala bwino ndi amzake* (to teach the child to be self-reliant and be able to relate well with friends).
3. *Kupulumutsa moyo wa mwana pomudziwitsa za chipulumutso chopezeka mwa Yesu khristu* (To save a child's life by teaching him about salvation brought by Jesus Christ).<sup>199</sup>

The *Chilangizo* booklet which contains all the instructions also makes reference to Bible verses to substantiate the fact that the *Chinamwali* had been Christianized and was taking place in Christian circles. All classes were to begin with a prayer since whatever was being taught was approved by the church.<sup>200</sup> The missionaries added some new elements to the initiation rites, and these were taught to the church instructresses. The committee replaced the name “*inyango*” with

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<sup>198</sup> The Christian initiation ceremony as altered from the initial native initiation ceremony will be explained in the following chapter of the paper.

<sup>199</sup> CCAP 1969: 13.

<sup>200</sup> MNA, BMC/50/1/2/3 1950, Jan. 12 – 1964, Feb. 13, Presbytery Committee, *Constitution*.

the name “*miambo*” as they considered there were other things which were not in line with the Christian teaching within the name “*inyango*”.

For the boys, circumcision was to be performed by all Christians who belonged to the tribes which were known to practice it. The only restrictions which were put up by the missionaries were that, circumcision must be practiced when a boy is young but also with instruction from the doctor to the operator. The committee considered its continuation as it was thought to be of native customs given by elders but also seen as a preventive for bilharzia.<sup>201</sup> Any other interested tribes was allowed to practice it. On instruction in native customs (*Miambo*), the missionaries encouraged that boys be instructed on several issues upon attaining the age of fifteen. Issues that were deemed relevant included: respect and help accorded to parents and elders, marriage and illicit intercourse, including home and family life and its dangers. On the part of the girls who had attained the age of 12, instruction in native customs was to be given on respect and help given to parents and elders. They also included a part which ensured that girls were prepared for married life, coming of age, first time pregnancy and child delivery.<sup>202</sup> It was compulsory for all the children of church members to attend the Christian initiation rite.

The early missionaries also banned alcohol, beer brewing and drinking including most of the village dancing which they associated with Pagan practices. The missionaries’ point of view was that a group of people who indulge in excessive beer-drinking usually end up in arguments, fighting and even murder. Even for those that did not drink in excess, it was maintained that even their drinking a little prevents them from thinking, speaking and acting straight, and thus they are unable to act in a righteous manner.<sup>203</sup> To become a Christian meant giving up beer drinking and dancing. It must be noted that most of the celebrations in ATR were connected to beer drinking and African dances which would be conducted at night and sometimes where children and visitors were not allowed. Such tribal dances and singing generally offended the missionaries because they encouraged sinful acts among men.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> K.R. Ross. 1996: 92.

<sup>204</sup> Fiedler 1999: 20.

In short, the presentation above has indicated the various ways in which the missionaries affected the socio-cultural pattern of the African society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It has been indicated of how the missionaries crushed the African marriage customs, traditional religion, medicine, initiation ceremonies as well as dances among other things. To them, the idea was to offer a backward people the paramount importance of western civilization, yet apart from the spiritual rebirth, they demanded Africans to change their culture.<sup>205</sup> They proudly believed, for example, that their own western concept of family and marriage including their theological approach to Christianity, were the best for the Africans. As a result, the African received the Presbyterianism system that was Scottish and western in nature, some of which aspects are prevalent in today's Blantyre synod.

### 3.8 Chapter summary

The aim of this chapter was an examination of the historical and socio-cultural encounter of the Scottish missionaries and the Africans, a people who belonged to two different cultures. The section has indicated how the local population got converted to Christianity and also explained why the population were motivated to join Christianity. The different sections of the African population received the missionaries differently, but a general understanding of their reception indicates that the missionaries achieved a positive impact of their missionary aims since Christianity was introduced and Presbyterianism was accepted in the southern part of the region. As part of the cultural encounter process, this section has also indicated ways in which the missionaries influenced the pattern of life, structure of society and cultural identity of the Africans. While the missionaries demanded that some cultural patterns be completely put to a halt, others were indigenized yet others remained constant and are still a part of the African society today. In the ATR, we find customs and traditions like polygamy which the missionaries said no to, but in some cases, they provided an alternative as was the case with the initiation ceremonies. The chapter has indicated that in both ways, there was a change. Thus, an analysis of the cultural encounter through the Malawian acceptance to Christianity and alterations with regard to Presbyterianism has been achieved.

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<sup>205</sup> Ibid. p. 21.



## 4 PRESBYTERIANISM AS PRACTICED OVER TIME

This chapter addresses the major question in this paper as it aims at analyzing the concept of how CCAP has changed since its establishment. Under the subtitle, Presbyterianism as practiced over time, this section examines the current constitution, objectives and practices of the Presbyterian church of Blantyre synod in order to find out if they still reflect the old doctrines, aims and objectives as instituted by the missionaries, hence identifying changes.

### 4.1 The concept of cultural change

One of the major aspect of culture is that it has a characteristic of *dynamism* in which different living cultures go through a process of transformation in response to a number of both internal and external forces. Like the previous chapter has indicated, the African culture went through a transformation process due to the external influence of the influx of missionaries. Fougner also explains that civilization is a process: an evolution in which continual change occurs because every society as a custodian of culture, is constantly in a process of change.<sup>206</sup> As people practice their own cultural structures, they adapt them to new situations, develop new approaches, new strategies and new structures as the society becomes more civilized. Therefore, human culture is never passed on to the next generation precisely as it was received from its ancestors. History and ongoing experiences keep on affecting culture. The resulting change can either be progressive (evolutionary) or rapid and violent (revolutionary). As Kalilombe, quoted in Munyenembe puts it:

Culture is never static, but evolves in response to new developments within society itself or stimulated by contact with the outside. These developments are in the form of new possibilities or options that reveal themselves to the society and challenge it to make new choices in one or the other dimension of the culture, for instance in the ideas or values of the worldview or in the relational or material spheres.<sup>207</sup>

### 4.2 Factors for cultural change

Cultural change can be influenced by a number of internal and external factors: Technological improvements, migration, globalization, political processes and leadership such as colonization and westernization.<sup>208</sup> More internally, indigenization also influences cultural change. The

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<sup>206</sup> Fougner 1998: 31.

<sup>207</sup> Munyenembe 2011: 28.

<sup>208</sup> Westernization in this case is taken to mean the process in which non-European countries adopt and implement decisions that are logically identical to those of the west. (Carmagnani, Frongia & Rosanna 2011:192).

following is a brief discussion of two of these factors deemed so relevant to the topic of this research:

#### 4.2.1 Globalization

Modern societies are progressively becoming dependent on each other. The increased interaction and integration among people of different nationalities and localities are leading to the development of shared cultural values and interests. For instance, global communication has been made possible through improved technology: mobile phones, internet, television, radios including improved transportation systems which have resulted into high mobility and transnational migration rates around the world. Global relations have increased opportunities and intensification in the flows of capital, labour, and information, which has produced tantamount influence on local cultures.<sup>209</sup> While recognizing Mike Feather's point that it would be impossible to form an integrated global culture without a world state,<sup>210</sup> this paper refers to the global culture in terms of processes that would form the globalization of culture. These global communication processes which have fostered the world's sharing of cultural traits have arguably resulted into a global village in which national borders have become less relevant. This paper therefore refers to such processes as cultural globalization.<sup>211</sup>

Scholars like Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Beck Ulrich have maintained that cultural globalization has encouraged countless new cultural combinations and blurred distinctions between nations and between civilizations. Without downplaying the independence of national states however, it is worth stating that cultural globalization has to some extent, led to loss of indigenous identity due to exposure to new cultures which are adopted either with or without adaptation to their new cultural contexts. The same processes of adopting global cultural trends have been associated with modernization, urbanization and westernization which fosters the transition of traditional or local cultures and societies to contemporary, western and improved ones. Westernization has impacted the African continent in many ways such that today, Africans live completely different lifestyles to that of the pre-colonial and colonial eras. Thus, there has

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<sup>209</sup> Eriksen 2007: 3-9.

<sup>210</sup> Featherstone 1990: 1-15.

<sup>211</sup> Ulrich 2005: 19-20.

been a tremendous change in traditional practices, values, beliefs and customs. This indicates that globalization as an external factor, can foster cultural change in many ways, yet for the sake of this brief discussion, the paper only focuses its connection to religion.

Thus globalization can be linked to the recent trends of religious changes and revivalism. Religion and globalization can also be seen as partners in influencing cultural change. Through missionaries, religion has been a carrier of globalizing tendencies in the world. The history of Christianity in Malawi and Africa in general can be perceived as an effort to create a global network of believers. At the same time, religion as a culture can be influenced by globalization trends around the world. The increased global networks have exposed new trends and patterns of religious systems due to the fact that it can be spread more easily and better than before through improved technological means. All these bi-directional influences efficiently promote cultural and religious changes. A relevant question related to this however could be whether the Presbyterian Church in Malawi is adopting the external influence of global culture or is embracing the internal indigenizing process, a discussion to be made in the following pages where this paper describes changes in Presbyterianism.

#### 4.2.2 Political processes and leadership

Political processes and policies also stand as one of the major factors that promote or discourage cultural change. Colonization for example stimulated cultural change in many countries. In Malawi, the adoption of English as an official language was a process that inevitably came as a result of the political leadership and control by the British government. Since language is also an important element of culture and forms a people's identity of any society, this must also have been a very important aspect of the process of cultural change. On the other hand, one aspect of cultural nationalism can be traced back to 1964 when Nyasaland ceased to be called Nyasaland and attained a new name, Malawi.<sup>212</sup> From the understanding that a name of a country provides a people with a collective identity, it can be argued that a political process of nationalism triggered a change in the cultural identity of the people.

With the attainment of independence came Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi's first president who had idealistic view of the African culture. Peter Forster explains how Banda's country-wide

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<sup>212</sup> Chiponda 2007: 97.

oratory not only contained indigenous elements but were also a constant reaffirmation of the importance of a particular view of African culture that Banda held. He stood against cultural imperialism and challenged western missionary Christianity because it was critical of African culture. Banda, as quoted in Forster explained:

It was not only politically that we were enslaved, colonized. We were also enslaved and colonized culturally. It became clear to me that the kind of Christianity we are being given here which condemns the people's national culture was not at all a true Christianity but something else.<sup>213</sup>

Such views held by Banda provided room for the establishment of African oriented Churches called the African Independent Churches (AICs) or the African Instituted Churches (AICs), whose ecclesiology provided the Africans with viable alternative to the classical missionary Christianity. The AICs gave people the freedom to choose between religions, between denominations and between races.<sup>214</sup> In Malawi, the outstanding case of such an indigenous church was the Providence Industrial Mission (PIM) founded by John Chilembwe in 1914 which was also very much connected to the independency movement.

On the other hand, the lack of full freedom of conscience and religion in Malawi during the period 1960 to 1990 is attributed to Banda's gaining of autocratic power. Through an informal presidential decree, Banda denied the establishment of religions that were not registered or recognized by the government. An example is given of how people of religious minority group were ill-treated because they had different beliefs from those of the majority. Historical and theological studies by Grenna Kaiya<sup>215</sup> and Klaus Fiedler<sup>216</sup> have indicated how the members of Jehovah's Witnesses were religiously persecuted because they rejected to purchase or possess membership cards, which was legally demanded of every Malawian to have. Their refusal was based on the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society rule, which permits members of Jehovah's Witness to belong to Jehovah only. The purchase of a membership card that was required by law, was therefore perceived as a sin by members of Jehovah's Witness since it meant announcing one's loyalty to the political party and not God. As a result of their refusal, many of them were ill-treated in different ways and others were killed, because they were taken as rebels against the

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<sup>213</sup> Forster 1994: 477-497.

<sup>214</sup> Fiedler 2015: 90.

<sup>215</sup> Kaiya 2013: 1-75.

<sup>216</sup> Fiedler 2015: 112-122.

government. This only indicates the extent to which political leadership can affect a people's culture as was the case with Banda who allowed the formation of AICs but persecuted those that seemed to disrespect his rule.

However, the attainment of democracy stimulated further cultural change as evidenced by means through which people have been able to create social systems out of their cultural choices. Contemporary Malawi has for example seen the development of several new Pentecostal and Independent Churches. With democracy came the full right and freedom to practice any religion as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human rights, article 18 of 1948. The introduction of such an important human right, in the principles of democracy, has in many countries, led to religious plurality just as is the case with Malawi. Generally, the periods after independence (from the 1960s) and specifically in democracy (from 1994 to the present) have been characterized by the establishment and registration of many faith communities, including non-Christian ones. This is just to indicate that political leadership, processes and policies play a fundamental effect in processes of cultural change as evidenced by examples given above.

#### 4.3 Indigenization

One of the major responses to Western Christianity from the Africans has been the formation of indigenous churches which became the symbol of political and religious freedom. Munyenyeembe maintains that the establishment of AICs are a reaction to missionary Christianity and have been interpreted as a cry for an authentic African Christianity.<sup>217</sup> These African churches have been characterized as indigenous and independent not only because they were developed and controlled by the native Africans, but also because they incorporated in them, traditional ecclesiology and polity including elements of the African religious tradition, such as healing and spontaneous expressions in worship. Christianity came from a socio-cultural set up different from that of Africa, but the missionaries anticipated it to grow within the African culture so as to become truly African.<sup>218</sup> There is a process of transformation that has taken place in order for Christianity to genuinely reflect the African cultural background. Such transformation geared towards making the Western Christianity an African one is a process well known as indigenization.

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<sup>217</sup> Munyenyeembe 2011: 1.

<sup>218</sup> Nthaburi 1989: 112-118.

Scholarly literature available in the quest for indigenization has indicated diverse terms which have been employed. They include adaptation, acculturation, inculturation, interculturalization, Africanization and contextualization. What is important is that all these terms represent forms of human responses when individuals have encountered a new culture. For the sake of this paper, the terms indigenization or inculturation shall be employed. In fact, indigenization basically means the same thing as inculturation. Aylward Shorter defines inculturation as:

the incarnation of Christian life and of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the culture, transforming it and remaking it so as to bring about a “new creation”.<sup>219</sup>

Worth emphasizing is the point that indigenization is much more related to incarnational theology which implies the kind of theology that attempts to orient the church’s ecclesiology towards the applicability and relevance of Christian teaching in view of a given context.<sup>220</sup> The concept is taken from Christian doctrine of the son of God who became human and lived among the people in order to save them. Therefore, Christianity must become African in order to reach the African soul by acquiring the characteristics, forms and symbols of African culture rooted in the traditional religions of the African people, which existed long before other religions such as Islam and Christianity were introduced. Bible reading, in one’s own local language for example can be taken to be the most relevant and practical concept of inculturation because it provides the adherents of that particular culture with the opportunity to understand God’s word and transpose it into their own cultural language.

It is therefore important to note that the term “inculturation” in its theological and contextual usage in this paper, describes the encounter between Christianity and ATR, which is fundamentally an encounter between two cultures. Again, inculturation is not only about the first inception of the Christian message into a previously non-Christian culture or cultures. This is because culture is a developing and dynamic process. Therefore, inculturation is a continuous dialogue between faith and culture and it is thus equally relevant and applicable to the Western countries which were Christianized before Africa.<sup>221</sup> Since it is a developing process, this paper

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<sup>219</sup> Shorter 1988: 11.

<sup>220</sup> Munyenembe 2011: 3.

<sup>221</sup> Shorter 1988: 11.

connects it to the civilizing process of Nibert Elias as presented in the introductory chapter and looks at how Presbyterianism has interacted with African culture with passage of time.

In the Malawian context, different developments have been and are still taking place in as far as ways of making the Christian faith more relevant to the Malawian context is concerned. The establishment of AICs like that of PIM is a relevant example of inculturation. Although one might argue that the AICs are only a sociological ideology and not a practical one, the AICs represent African efforts to indigenize Christianity. In agreement with this assertion is Munyenembe who maintains that the growth of AIC churches meant attrition from the mainline churches and evangelical denominations whose ecclesiology was dependent on the missionary Christianity.<sup>222</sup> According to Munyenembe, the members of the Pentecostal churches or AICs are not converts from Islam or from traditional religion, but they are those who withdraw their membership from the mainline churches. Munyenembe's hypothesis centers on the assertion that in the view of the dynamics of cultural pluralism being experienced in Malawi, there's much more contextualization going on in charismatic circles than in non-charismatic churches despite conscious efforts by the latter group.<sup>223</sup> In fact, mainline churches are sometimes derogatorily referred to as *matchalitchi a chidala* (churches of old people) because they are regarded as conservative. This study however argues that even though Presbyterian Church is one of the mainline churches, there has been a certain degree of contextualization. This paper considers such contextualization as a response to classical Presbyterianism hence a discussion of the changes is held in the next pages to explain the kind of reaction the contemporary Presbyterians hold against or for the classical Presbyterian Church principles that were instituted by the Scottish missionaries:

#### 4.3.1 The indigenization of Presbyterianism

While recognizing the fact that the African culture itself was transformed as a result of the adoption of Christianity, the paper makes further investigation on how the adopted culture, Presbyterianism to be specific, might have transformed while responding to the political forces like colonization and independence, social changes, globalization and internal cultural forces. It

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<sup>222</sup> Munyenembe 2011: 2.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

cannot be denied that Malawians responded to the Christian message as they heard it in their own language. However, as Walls remarks:

“The first hearing and the first response is not the whole, nor necessarily the climax of the story.”<sup>224</sup>

The impact of the gospel message upon the contemporary Malawian Presbyterianism must have created a new set of questions and the desire to make conscious choices from their own cultural values and experiences. The socio-cultural, historical, political and economic conditions in which mission flourished no longer exist in the present day, and as these conditions have changed today, so too has mission, Christianity and Presbyterianism. With the advance of technology, encompassing a worldwide communication network, the beginnings of tourism and migration, cultural processes have always been modified in the last two centuries. It is an undeniable fact that Presbyterianism as a system of church government in Malawi has responded to the various political, social and economic forces from within Malawi (internal) and also around the world (external). As a result, just as the Scottish Presbyterianism, from where Malawian Presbyterianism obtained its roots, has changed, so has the Blantyre synod Presbyterianism. The major differences must be the pattern of change experienced in these two different societies. However, due to time and space accorded, the frame of this research focuses on Blantyre synod Presbyterianism.

Therefore, while making a discussion of the changes in the Malawian context, the paper will clarify the identified changes to give an account of the situation on the ground in Presbyterian churches of the Blantyre synod. This paper shall therefore focus on how Presbyterianism, as a cultural system has transformed within the Blantyre synod circles. The alterations, according to this research, justifies the responses of the contemporary Presbyterians to the Presbyterianism instituted by the classical Scottish missionaries towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. While some scholars like Munyenyembe regard the Presbyterian Church in Malawi as one of the conservative churches, the constitution of the church in question is bounded on the point that the church is flexible. Flexibility understood as the ability to respond to the changes surrounding the local society and the global. The constitution of the CCAP in Malawi, section 11(1) clearly indicates:

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<sup>224</sup> Walls 1996: 101.



Reform basis: the church would be faithful to the Lordship of Christ and to its historic tradition of the church reformed always reforming (*Semper Reformanda*), by the spirit of God. In this faith, amendment procedures are understood as a means to faithfulness as God breaks forth yet lighter from His word.<sup>225</sup>

One key informant of Zomba CCAP affirmed to this and explained:

The constitution says we shall be open to new revelations as is revealed to us from the word of God from time to time, so we are not close minded. We believe that at a certain particular period of time we may not know all that needs to be known and we have got to be open for development.<sup>226</sup>

Therefore, from the understanding that Presbyterianism as a system of church government provides room for amendments of how the church is to be governed, this paper takes an analysis of the changes that have taken place in the church since 1960 when the Church of Scotland missionaries ceased to be missionaries, and became full members of the indigenous Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. To determine whether the church is really changing, the study identified changes that have occurred through an analysis of its guiding doctrine, mission statement and aims.

#### 4.4 Identified Changes

With the idea that Presbyterianism has changed, this research makes an attempt to categorize the kind of changes that have taken place. Evidence is given from the historical and archival data, the observation that I undertook as well as from the interviews conducted with both key and general informants from Limbe and Zomba CCAP. The results of the research indicate that notable changes are observed in the church leadership, order of the church service, language, music, the introduction of the contemporary service and the role of women in the Blantyre synod.

##### 4.4.1 The transition from mission to church.

One of the major changes observed in the Presbyterian church of Central Africa is the movement by which the mission ceased to be controlled by the mission. Instead, it gained a character of an independent church. The introductory chapters indicated how the Church of Scotland, in the three major periods between 1874 and 1881, continued to be run as a missionary enterprise controlled by the Church of Scotland from which it had sprung. The process of handing over the Church to the Africans was however a gradual one, with challenges and desirable achievements

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<sup>225</sup> CCAP General Assembly 2002: 12.

<sup>226</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

in between. The following discussion therefore explains how the mission was handed to the Africans as a church, with marked time frames:

#### *4.4.1.1 1889-1914: the growth of the church*

This was a period when D.C. Scott was the leader of the Blantyre mission. His ideas seem to have initiated the beginning of an indigenized Presbyterian Church in Malawi. In one of his articles, *Life and work in British Central Africa*, Scott explains his convictions about handing over the Church to African leadership:

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 realize he has a part to play in the education and life of Christ's church and kingdom. The more he realizes this, the greater his progress will be.<sup>227</sup>

Another quote about D.C. Scott's leadership, taken from the CCAP Blantyre Synod website, where a discussion of the Church's history is made, indicates:

"Africa for the Africans has been our policy from the first, and we believe that God has given this country into our hands that we may train its peoples how to develop its marvelous resources for themselves".<sup>228</sup>

This demonstrates the greater extent to which D.C. Scott was determined to permit Africans to contribute to their own Christian church. To him a missionary was not only supposed to be an evangelist, but also one who avoids producing a non-native product. The final result of the Christianizing task of the mission according to D.C. Scott was a civilization and a church that was thoroughly African as well as Christian.<sup>229</sup> With this view in mind, D.C. Scott made great efforts to keep the African Church away from the "isms" of the western church and control from the Church of Scotland Mission Council. The Africans owned the church in Malawi and it was deemed necessary to let them organise and worship as they were led by Christ and not by the Church of Scotland.<sup>230</sup> In trying to build this african leadership and responsibility for example, Scott endorsed the decision that all Church buildings and schools should no longer be built with the financial support from the mission council. Rather, the local people had to build them on their

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<sup>227</sup> Quoted from A.C. Ross 1996: 63.

<sup>228</sup> Blantyre Synod CCAP 2013.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

own so they could have a sense of ownership of the church.<sup>231</sup> About the African leadership of the church, D.C. Scott wrote:

We must beware of woodness in our development of african life. To attempt to force on Africa the details of church life and organisation at home is, we believe, fatal to true growth. African life must be met in its own way and it will grow on its own lines. No one who understands the problem before him would dream for a moment of employing the same evangelistic methods in this country as one would do at home. Neither can we expect the native Church life will move in the grooves cut out for it elsewhere. We have said it again and again, we repeat it, doubtless and nauseam, but the African has got his own gifts of life and work to present to the Church Catholic.<sup>232</sup>

In addition, D.C. Scott regarded the culture brought by the missionaries, not only European but also modern culture. Therefore, both Africans and Europeans were equal inheritors of this modern culture.<sup>233</sup> As a result, Scott held services that were both for Africans and Europeans and he maintained that they should partake together in the communion table. Apart from keeping the usual afternoon services held in English language, Scott also decided that the primary service of worship should be the morning service in *Nyanja*,<sup>234</sup> and that European Christians were expected to come. Nyanja prayer books and hymns were also provided for the services.<sup>235</sup> This has been recorded as a very huge step in the indigenization process of the African presbyterian Church. The third chapter indicated how the missionaries in general prohibited a number of cultural activities. Scott however had a unique approach to the African cultural practices such as dancing, drumming and African music. He held that drumming and dancing were not sinful acts. However he made a selection of the kind of dances that were to be incorporated in the Church. The forbidden dances were those that had strong sexual orientations and were usually conducted in connection to the *chinamwali* ceremonies.<sup>236</sup>

These major steps that Scott took in the line of integration of African culture into the Church produced positive results for the growth of the Church. The principles led Scott into a position of high esteem and affection among many Africans including chiefs who were working with him in Domasi and Blantyre. He obtained their trust because he had shown them that he trusted and

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<sup>231</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 156.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. pp. 152-153.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. p. 63.

<sup>234</sup> Nyanja or Chichewa is one of Malawi's local languages.

<sup>235</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 63.

<sup>236</sup> Ibid. p. 153.

believed them. Africans even saw Scott as a pillar who could provide security at the time the British Colonialists had began to control the land. They had the hope that Scott and his people could offer a hand in dealing with the new world of the British Overseas Management Administration (BOMA) and its demand for taxes and the planters' demand for provision of labour.<sup>237</sup> As a result of this, the Christian Church saw a tremendous increase in membership by the year 1898. In all mission stations of Blantyre, Mulanje, Domasi and Zomba, schools and church buildings were built. The church registered a membership of four thousand people who frequently attended church services, catechumen or hearers classes.<sup>238</sup> Indeed, many missionaries and educationists began to recognise the mistakes made by their predecessors, and to realise that African culture contained elements that Christians could admire.

This increase in African membership, according to D.C. Scott, was supposed to have an effect not only on policy, worship, organization and authority of the church, but also on the general nature of the church. Scott attempted in many ways to let the Church grow so as to express both the dignity of individual Africans and to give an African quality to its christianity. People were for example not forced to take new names when they had been baptised. Instead, they could continue with their old African names, and this was a practice contrary to other protestant missions whose baptism tampered with the persons' individual and collective identity by demanding a change of name.<sup>239</sup> In today's CCAP, no demand for change of name is made.

Another crucial cultural practice that Scott dealt with was the marriage ceremonies. Although he totally denied polygamy, Scott validated the traditional marriage pattern which comprised the church wedding service as a church blessing of the natural contract. He also accepted the role of the *ankhoswe*<sup>240</sup> in a christian marriage.<sup>241</sup> This is also prevalent in today's CCAP weddings. On their wedding day, the reverend blesses their holy matrimony and the *ankhoswe* are also

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid. p. 149.

<sup>238</sup> Ibid. p. 150.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid. p. 156.

<sup>240</sup> *Ankhoswe* are family representatives from both the groom and the bridegroom sides. They have a special responsibility for the marriage, not only during the wedding arrangements, but also throughout the duration of the marriage in which they are expected to be advisors or mediators in case any marriage conflicts happen.

<sup>241</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 149.

expected to be present.<sup>242</sup> Thus, relevant to state, indigenization processes of the CCAP that began in these years, by Scott, shaped the present form of indigenization that is taking place in the Blantyre synod.

However, D.C. Scott's ideas were not spared of criticisms from the FMC as well as fellow Scots who perceived Africans as inferior and unqualified to run their own church. They also wanted a segregated service, which was eventually started in 1901 after Scott's departure.<sup>243</sup> This group of missionaries disliked Scott because he was becoming a ritualist who had ceased to be true to the standards of the church through the kind and pattern of African Church he was trying to create. According to Ross, Scott's belief in the abundant potential of Africa and his theological ideas of an African Church led him into a long controversy with the administration.<sup>244</sup> Ross quotes one of the letters from Dr. Scott of St George to D.C. Scott:

I do not understand your paragraphs as to the future Church in Africa, and I have found it difficult to explain your position to friends of the mission here. They feel by writing such things, you are playing into the hands of those who allege that your aim is to form the mission after an Episcopal form not a Presbyterian type: you would put yourself right with all such who hitherto have been strong friends of the mission, if you showed yourself active in carrying out the instructions of the European lay missionaries materials for a good eldership... and were you provided with a proper session you would find yourself a much stronger minister.<sup>245</sup>

Although D.C. Scott made all the efforts, the move towards the sharing of responsibility with African Christians had to be institutionalised in some way. The usual power and authority holder was the Mission Council whose jurisdiction could not be bypassed if any changes were to be instituted. This council was responsible to the home committee for the mission work. Scott refused to form the kind of kirk sessions the FMC had wanted. As a result, the FMC regarded the Blantyre mission as an autocracy since there was no session.<sup>246</sup> The FMC was in fact unhappy with the way the mission had been working and considered it as ineffective regardless of the success in the growth of the church that was registered. Faced with a lot of criticisms from the FMC and also due to the decline in his healthy status, D.C. Scott decided to leave Blantyre for good in January 1898. He later on died and that also meant the death of his vision for the

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<sup>242</sup> Observation by the researcher.

<sup>243</sup> Blantyre Synod CCAP 2013.

<sup>244</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 63.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid. pp. 162-163.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid. p. 165.

development of an African Church because the African church he envisioned was suppressed by missionaries who only perceived the growth of the church in terms of Scottish Presbyterianism.<sup>247</sup>

#### *4.4.1.2 Hetherwick's leadership of the church: 1989-1914*

Hetherwick succeeded D.C Scott and took over the leadership with a number of changes that came as a result of detailed control by the FMC. His attempts to continue the institutionalization of a church that could grow in the foundation of the chosen African deacons had failed. The FMC insisted on the establishment of Kirk sessions,<sup>248</sup> arguing that without the Kirk sessions, there was no presbytery. Emphasis was indeed made that the Church in Africa should develop according to the constitution of the Church of Scotland.<sup>249</sup> Twelve years after Scott's departure from Blantyre, the Mission Council of the Church of Scotland did indeed disband the organization of deacons that Scott had instituted. In replacement of these were Kirk Sessions established in 1901 followed by presbyteries that were instituted in 1904. However, both Kirk sessions and presbyteries did not have any real power and this, as the second chapter discussed, was contrary to how the Presbyterianism as a system of church government works. The presbyteries were supposed to consist of a ruling body or court comprising Presbyterian ministers and representative elders from congregations within a particular district or locality. Instead, the Mission council which controlled the major financial resources in the field held total authority and control over the missionary enterprise in Blantyre, a situation which D.C. Scott was trying to prevent because he wanted freedom. Thus, Scott's departure from Blantyre initiated organizational changes which the FMC had wanted and these were contrary to Scott's ideas of an independent African church.

In addition to that, a new group of missionaries that arrived during Hetherwick's leadership period did not trust African leadership than the way D.C. Scott did. Ross states that only two, (Rev. Matecheta and Kundecha) out of the fourteen that had been taught by Scott were fully trusted for leadership of the church.<sup>250</sup> In fact, the new missionaries demanded strict supervision

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<sup>247</sup> Ibid. p. 167.

<sup>248</sup> Kirk session is the governing body of a Presbyterian congregation. In the Church of Scotland, it is the lowest court under presbytery, synod and General Assembly.

<sup>249</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 169.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid. p. 178.

of the Africans maintaining that any African left to preach unsupervised was a danger. An editorial by R.S. Hynde indicated how Europeans held negative attitudes towards the ordination of natives as elders or pastors. It was argued that putting Africans into the leadership positions as deacons implied some sort of equality and this was totally wrong:

It is utterly wrong to teach any native he is as good as white man because he is not. If he were, he would be on a level with the white man, but it is because he is inferior that he is under the white man.<sup>251</sup>

Furthermore, the service that was started by D.C. Scott, that of having one major worship which was held in both languages and open to all, was discontinued. Instead, two services of worship were formed in 1901: one was for the natives and the other was for the Europeans. The interracial service was no longer a norm and it could only occur in special occasions. The same situation was for Zomba. It is argued however that such a separation of congregations provided an opportunity for Africans to be able to sing their African tunes in the church when no missionary was present. This was therefore a good step towards indigenizing the Presbyterian Church in Malawi.<sup>252</sup>

Yet another important stage to Africanizing the Presbyterian Church was the union between the Blantyre and the Livingstonia mission. Suggestions of marrying the two mission enterprises of Livingstonia and Blantyre arose in the Mission Conference of 1904. Scott had however planned and envisioned the one church in British central Africa earlier on, but his ideas had been put down. It was only in 1902 that the Mission Council requested the General Assembly for permission to negotiate with the Livingstonia mission presbytery for the purpose of forming the one church. However, it was the third Missionary conference held at Mvera in 1910 that saw a formal decision to unite Blantyre and Livingstonia into one synod. Although the decision to unite the two was cemented, an agreement was made that the amalgamation of the churches should only be carried out under the direct control, or at least assisted by the Western missionaries.<sup>253</sup> Thus, the missionaries continued to take full control of the Church since power remained in their hands and the Mission Council which had organized the new churches after the Scottish Presbyterian system with Kirk sessions and presbyteries that practically had no power.

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<sup>251</sup> Ibid.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid. p. 180.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid. p. 131.

However, the work of the African evangelists in the local areas could not be controlled or directed by the Mission Council and this work continued to expand. To some extent, the African leadership of the church that had started during Scott's leadership continued. This was evident during the Blantyre Mission Jubilee celebrations of 1901. The papers at the conference were all delivered by Africans. Hetherwick still held that only Africans could spread Christianity effectively in Africa. The church continued to grow, with many local people attending the catechumen<sup>254</sup> class and being taught by fellow Africans to the effect that in 1904, the setting up of a presbytery signaled the establishment of many parishes and prayer houses.<sup>255</sup> By 1914, Blantyre presbytery consisted of twenty parishes, six thousand and five hundred Christians in full communion and four thousand attending catechumen classes. All schools had an increased enrollment of up to eleven thousand young people obtaining education.<sup>256</sup> According to Ross, this expansion of the church in terms of parishes and membership prevented the rigid and detailed control by the few missionary staff.<sup>257</sup> This again gave an opportunity of the church to develop in its own African way.

Although the FMC through its missionary workforce persisted on strict control and held negative attitudes towards African leadership, it is evident that the shortage of missionary staff challenged the achievement of their aims. Instead, it worked for the good of an African church which continued to grow. In the rural areas, the gospel was spread as a natural development. Before and after the WW1, many staff were called up to work for the government. It is also worth noting that this war, coupled with other major factors inevitably led to the Chilembwe uprising in 1915. The consequences of the disturbing revolt also presented the Presbyterian Church with the threat to its stability and permanence. Due to the shortage of missionary staff, it is argued that more responsibility fell onto Africans. By the mid-1920s, Africans were seriously involved at a number of levels in Livingstonia and Blantyre. The developments before and during the world wars led to the emergence of a new group of African leaders who were to use their experience of

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<sup>254</sup> Catechization is a form of instruction in the Christian and denominational principles given to the youth and those who are young in the faith (catechumen), and it precedes the Christian confirmation or baptism. (Cameron, Wright, Lachman & Meek, 1993: 142-145).

<sup>255</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 173.

<sup>256</sup> Ibid. p. 174.

<sup>257</sup> Ibid. p. 183.



authority in the church in the wider sphere of administrative action. The mission work and the provision of education in schools was solely left in the hands of new men from the African society who were Christian and literate. The increase in literacy on the mission and in the villages intensified the spread of the gospel. The local men did all the teaching in the hearer's and catechumen classes. They also held the power to be able to make decisions as regard what was permissible or was not with reference to Christianity and African customary behavior. This again gave an opportunity of the African Presbyterian Church to develop in its indigenized way.<sup>258</sup> Thus, although the WW1 diverged the developments that had been planned, it must have boosted the process of Africanizing the Presbyterian Church that had started earlier on.

In the same way, the continuing shortage of European staff allowed this vigorous growth of the church in a very independent way. African agency must have played a greater role in the success of the church that was registered in the years under discussion. This was evident in the increased growth registered in the Blantyre presbytery. It is recorded that by the year 1926, the church had nearly twenty thousand church members, with five thousand and eight hundred in the catechumen class. There were three hundred and twenty six schools with a registered number of sixteen children enrolled for education. A report by Hetherwick to Scotland reads:

The year has been marked by two things which indicate growth. The first of these was the erection of four new brick churches-a record for one year...these churches are the result of the efforts of the church members and catechumens themselves, without any extraneous aid whatever.... The second item of note is the arrangement made by the presbytery for the instruction and afterwards for the ordination of five new native ministers... these men will all be supported, as the others have been, by the Central Fund of the native Church, which is maintained by the churches to whom they minister.<sup>259</sup>

Another notable incident of 1926 as previously indicated in the second chapter is the fact that the D.R.C.M. of Nkhoma synod finally decided to join the union that had been formed between the two missions of Blantyre and Livingstonia. This resulted into a nation-wide Synod of the Presbyterian Church. Thus the CCAP, as it is formally known today, was achieved exactly ten years after the date for which it had previously been planned due to the war and its aftermath. It is therefore worth noting that the name CCAP, was given by the Scottish missionaries and that today, the church still answers to the same name. The Scottish missionaries not only built the

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<sup>258</sup> Ibid. p. 184.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. p. 186.

CCAP's historical foundation and shaped the Presbyterian Church, but they also gave it its identity, which because of other factors, has still remained. One interviewee explained:

The church was named CCAP. It's not called the Presbyterian church of Central Africa but CCAP. The constitution says the word Presbyterian appear at the end because it can be dropped. Initially, the missionaries when they were coming, they wanted to just establish the Church of Central Africa. So they came and establish two Churches: CCAP and Church of Central Africa Episcopalian which is Anglican. At the end, what the missionaries wanted was that these two churches should merge into one church, just called the Church of Central Africa. Unfortunately, this has not taken place.<sup>260</sup>

It can therefore be argued that the Presbyterian Church in Malawi, bearing the name CCAP, was still developing by the time the missionaries left. The intended goal of forming one church had not yet fully been achieved yet the name given in such a process still holds as an identity marker for the Presbyterian Church today. Much as the name of the church has not changed, the church in question has continued to develop in many African ways.

The fact that the Church of Scotland through its Mission Council remained in full control and that there were only a small number of ordained African ministers, can be considered as a minus to the indigenization process and the fully independent African church that Scott envisioned. In addition, the European missionaries were still expected to be full members of their Church in Scotland, and not that of CCAP. Nevertheless, this was an important phase to the realization of an independent church, the CCAP as it is known today. The conclusion is that although Scott's idea of forming one church in Central Africa was not fully achieved, his influence was vital to the forming of a group of people who were the forerunners of a new Malawi and the creators of the CCAP, an African Church.<sup>261</sup>

#### 4.4.2 The end of the Scottish Missions in Malawi

The end of the Scottish Missions, which entailed the transition from "Mission" to "Church" in Africa coincided with the larger political process of transition in which many colonies attained independency. Taking a political view of the circumstances around the missionary endeavours, Stuart maintains that this transition from "Mission" to "Church" was a process marked by ambiguity and complexity, much of which were related to Nyasaland's political status.<sup>262</sup> This can lead to a conclusion that the missionaries gave up on the mission enterprise due to the

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<sup>260</sup> O.T. Key informant 12, Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

<sup>261</sup> A.C. Ross 1996:196.

<sup>262</sup> Stuart 2003: 411-430.

political situation on the ground. However, Ross states that the end of the missions was a voluntary termination of the Blantyre and Livingstonia missions.<sup>263</sup> The FMC of the Church of Scotland, the many missionaries in the field, including African leadership of the two synods, had agreed by 1953 that the continued existence of a mission structure together with the synods represented a tradition that denied the equality of black and white Christians.<sup>264</sup>

The first pages of this paper alluded to the idea that a Presbyterian system of church government does indeed constitute a synod as one of its levels represented in the church governing system. However, the fact that the missions continued to take control of the church in Africa eroded the independency of the synod. If the church in Africa had attained independency, one wonders why they were still being controlled by the FMC. Again, the fact that the Missionaries in CCAP were still legally members not of the CCAP, but of the Church of Scotland seemed to demean the full attainment of this independency. It in fact meant that the synod was not truly a synod of the Presbyterian Church to which they could belong. In that regard, an understanding was made that the mission had to be dissolved. The Church of Scotland and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland continued to send missionaries and fund their salaries, but on arrival in Malawi, the missionaries gave up membership of their home churches and became members of the CCAP, coming fully under its ecclesiastical authority.

In 1959, the Mission Council was dissolved and the Blantyre Synod became fully autonomous. In the first phase of independence, there was a general concern of the churches for the establishment of an African leadership. John Baur Argues that for the protestant mission churches, the transition process was easier since all churches had been established on a synodic basis.<sup>265</sup> This meant that few changes were needed in order to make them legally independent of their missionary founding societies. The most visible elements of the changes in the church fall in three major areas of leadership, worship as well as ethics. This is evident in the africanization of church leadership, the translation of the Bible to local languages and the permission to sing hymns in local languages and to African tunes including the liberation of women in the church. The paper will first focus on the church leadership:

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<sup>263</sup> A.C. Ross 1994: 55.

<sup>264</sup> Ibid.

<sup>265</sup> Baur 1998: 451.

#### 4.4.3 Handing over of church leadership

The africanization of church leadership that began with the ordination of Rev Matecheta and Kundecha back in the year 1911, reached a climax in the 1960s. It is in the 1960s that the process of handling the mission church to the African church as it is known today, was fully achieved. In 1962, a Malawian General Secretary took over from the Scottish missionary, Rev. Andrew Doig. This was Rev. Jonathan Sangaya, who was a well experienced man having served at different levels in the Blantyre mission. He first worked as a teacher and inspector at mission schools. Later he served as a minister in the Blantyre Synod, and finally as the first African General Secretary of the main Malawian church, the CCAP. Most relevant to state is the fact that it was the Mission Council, which had exercised full control of the church previously that recommended him to become the first Malawian General Secretary of the CCAP Blantyre Synod.<sup>266</sup> His position as a General Secretary was certainly an evidence for the development of the CCAP from a foreign-controlled to an African-led church. Therefore, his leadership must have played a bigger role in the development of Presbyterianism because it gave the manifestation of Christianity in an African way. The chief point in Sangaya's legacy for Christianity in Malawi is the fact that in his long tenure as General Secretary, the Blantyre Synod continued to expand considerably. The church grew in membership as well as through the planting of congregations throughout Blantyre's' synodical jurisdiction, roughly equivalent to southern Malawi as it is today. Sangaya, who died in office in 1979, was succeeded by Rev. Chimpawhi, serving the office up to 1985.<sup>267</sup> The next General Secretaries that came in line were Africans. This was a sure sign that the transition to the independent African Church, with African leaders had been finally achieved and that marked the end of missionary era.

The Modern day Presbyterian Church is also full of Malawians, holding different positions, from the members to the highest order of the church government system. This is to emphasize the point that although the handing over of church leadership from the missionaries to the Africans was a gradual process, it shaped the kind of indigenized CCAP that is known today. The more the process delayed, the more opportunities it gave an African evangelist to win more souls to the CCAP at the expense of other Christian missionary denominations of the time like those of

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<sup>266</sup> Statham 2013

<sup>267</sup> Blantyre Synod CCAP 2013.

Roman Catholic and the UMCA. In fact, it led to an increased church membership which continues to characterize the Presbyterian Church in modern Malawi.

#### 4.4.4 Translation of the Bible

Another important factor that characterized this indigenization process was the translation of the Bible to local languages. It seems that it was D.C. Scott in particular who supported the idea of the ‘translation principle’ of Christian mission. His commitment toward building a truly African Christian church was also evidenced by his Mang’anja Dictionary.<sup>268</sup> The translation of the Bible into the Nyanja language was however achieved through the conscious efforts of the missionaries who mastered the Nyanja and Yao languages. They began to take the biblical message into the vernacular world of the people of Malawi. Since the original inhabitants of the Shire Highlands were the Nyanja or Mang’anjas, the appropriation of the Christian message into their respective languages was crucial to the further spreading of the Christian message. It is evident that, upon arrival into the Shire Highlands, most of the missionaries made efforts to learn the local language. For instance, Ross explains that both Reverend Duff Macdonald and Buchanan were able to speak Yao, hence they ably gave sermons to their native congregations, the majority of whom could not communicate in English.<sup>269</sup> It was also noted in the previous pages that D.C. Scott introduced the worship services in both English and Chichewa. However, the primary service of worship was in Nyanja. The Nyanja prayer books and hymnals were also provided to their aid. The major point here is that just as with African leadership of the church, Scott had valuable ideas towards making an African church by introducing tools that were crucial to this indigenization, herein, services in the local languages.

In line with Scott’s ideas of using local languages were efforts by a number of Blantyre missionaries who took a large share in the work of Bible translation in the years after Scott had departed. In the early days of missionary work, portions of scripture were translated into Yao and Nyanja, but in 1900, it was deemed relevant to produce a Nyanja Bible through a co-operation of all the missions, represented by a joint translation committee.<sup>270</sup> From the Blantyre mission were Dr. Hetherwick and Reverend Robert Napier who were active in Blantyre’s contribution to the

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<sup>268</sup> K.R. Ross 2013: 33.

<sup>269</sup> A.C. Ross 1996: 47- 48.

<sup>270</sup> Green 1957: 15.

translation work. The joint translation committee first held a meeting in 1900. However, it was Reverend W.H. Murray of the D.R.C.M. who not only did much of the work himself, but also coordinated the work of the other translators. Records have it that Murray had to resign as head of the mission in order to create time for translation work.<sup>271</sup> Through his efforts, the National Bible Society of Scotland and the British and Foreign Bible Society were able to produce a New Testament of the Nyanja Bible by the year 1907. Twelve years later, the Old Testament was ready. Dr. Murray also earned the further gratitude of the church in the Central and Southern provinces by revising the whole of the text. The whole work was completed in 1922, producing the first edition of the much needed Nyanja version of the Bible.<sup>272</sup>

The chief point is that the Nyanja Bible provided the Nyanja reader with an easy way of understanding God's words. Bediako argues that this Bible edition assimilated the Gospel message into the local culture and got rid of any Western possessiveness of Christianity. Although some theologians argue that Bible translation into local languages distorts the original meaning of the text, it must be noted that this accorded Malawian Christianity a starting point for seeking indigeneity because it is through ones' vernacular language that man can easily form imaginations and transmit the message into Christian usage.<sup>273</sup> Ross also indicates that the Bible translation acted as an accommodative principle of the relevance of pre-Christian African religion as evidenced by the use the traditional African names for God such as *Chiuta*, *Mulungu*, *Leza*, which are still being used today.<sup>274</sup> Thus, in the translation process, it was important that they went back and referred to names of God from ATR, hence a relevant instance of a cultural encounter.

However, the first version of the Nyanja Bible has through the years undergone different revisions. It has been argued that the revisions were necessary to accommodate the contemporary young people who find it better to understand the todays' version of Chichewa than the old difficult one. In today's Blantyre synod, either the English Bible or the Chichewa Bible version is used in an English or the Chichewa worship service respectively.

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<sup>271</sup> Ibid.

<sup>272</sup> Ibid.

<sup>273</sup> Bediako 1995: 123 & 175.

<sup>274</sup> K. R. Ross 1996: 109.

#### 4.4.5 Singing of hymns and songs

Another important factor that characterized the indigenization process of the Presbyterian Church in Malawi was the singing of hymns in local languages and to African tunes. The Scottish missionaries taught Malawians singing of hymns during church services in order to praise and honour God. Music lessons were also introduced in mission schools where students could learn the reading of music notations.<sup>275</sup> As noted previously, they also translated English hymns into the Malawian vernacular languages for easier understanding. The first hymn book by Blantyre synod was *Nyimbo sya Mulungu Mchiyao* (God's hymns written in Chiyao) then later *Nyimbo za Mulungu zolembedwa mchinyanja* (God's hymns written in Chinyanja). However, the kind of music that was being taught and translated by the missionaries were foreign hymns with foreign tunes. A key informant at Zomba CCAP explained:

The songs they were teaching and singing had Scottish tunes, and it was Scottish theology addressing Scottish issues, because songs address issues that people are facing. So any hymn that was coming meant it was a Scottish song, addressing things in Scotland. The hymns were just written and brought to Malawi, and Malawians began singing those Scottish hymns and Scottish tunes.<sup>276</sup>

This indicates that the Malawian Presbyterian church adopted the Scottish tradition of worship songs. Again, the previous discussions alluded to the point that during the mission-controlled services, most of the African cultural practices were not incorporated into the church for they were regarded as tools that promoted sinful acts. The local drums and guitars that were played to African hymns for example were prohibited. The instruments that were being used in church were also Scottish. In agreement to this, one interviewee testified:

The pipe organ was brought as a musical instrument that was to be used in the Church. At St. Michael and All Angels, there is a pipe organ because that was the instrument that was being used in Scotland in terms of singing in the church.<sup>277</sup>

After the departure of the missionaries, the singing of hymns to Scottish tunes seemed to continue. In 1968, the birth of Christian Literature Association In Malawi (CLAIM) signaled further developments in the indigenization process of Christianity. All the reformed churches,

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<sup>275</sup> Blantyre Synod CCAP 2013.

<sup>276</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid.

except the Seventh Day Adventists cooperated to produce a hymnbook of praise. With CLAIM's efforts, *"Nyimbo za Mulungu zolembedwa mchichewa"* (God's hymns written in Chichewa) was published in 1975.<sup>278</sup> Regardless, the African members of the CCAP were still not flexible when it came to worship services. Dancing or movement of the body when singing in any form was not allowed. This attests to the fact that even though the leadership of the church had changed, some of the practices remained rigid, and leaned towards what the Scottish missionaries had imparted. Some of the informants at Limbe CCAP explained:

The code of conduct was rigid. We were not allowed to clap hands in a song or to applaud any choir performance. This was regarded as not giving all the glory to God. Again, nobody was allowed to say the responsive "Hallelujah-Amen" in the church.<sup>279</sup>

In the past we were not allowed to clap hands in the church, to beat drums even guitars were not allowed, but singing hymns from hymn books only. There were just few choirs.<sup>280</sup>

This explains why some scholars like Munyenyembe maintain that CCAP, among other mainline churches, is conservative in the ways in which they maintain the classical set up of the church as adopted from the missionaries.<sup>281</sup> This was contrary to the AICs, charismatic and Pentecostal churches, which easily adapt to change compared to Catholics or the CCAP. This also influenced some of the members to break away from the church, as one of the pastors testified:

What has happened over the years is, I think it started with Livingstonia mission. You might hear there is a church in Malawi called the Church of Africa Presbyterian (CAP), not CCAP, but CAP, mockingly referred to as the Blackman's Church, led by black men and singing black men's tunes. That church was started because of this rival that they were guys who had composed African hymns with African tunes, the Ngoni tunes, but the Scottish missionaries then, were saying we cannot sing these songs. The Africans are not mature in terms of theology to compose songs, and that the tunes were coming from the African dances, the dances which the Europeans looked at as primitive and satanic. So, the people that wanted these African songs to be sung, broke off and started the CAP.<sup>282</sup>

Furthermore, in the years after the attainment of democracy, the Malawian church saw the rise of Pentecostalism. In fact, most of the Pentecostal churches were a result of the break away or

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<sup>278</sup> Nyimbo za mchichewa (Hymns in Chichewa) 1975: 3.

<sup>279</sup> O.T. Interviewee 9: Limbe CCAP 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

<sup>280</sup> O.T. Interviewee 3: Limbe CCAP 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

<sup>281</sup> Munyenyembe 2011: 70.

<sup>282</sup> O.T. Key informant 12, Zomba CCAP. 10<sup>th</sup> October, 2015.



separation of members from the mainline churches. While there's a continued debate among modern scholars of religion in Africa as to the reasons that justify the break away from the classical churches, most of the informants indicated that the rigidity in terms of service of worship resulted into the loss of many church members who left CCAP and joined Pentecostal churches where singing choruses, dancing, praising and worshipping is a norm. One of the informants testified:

At Limbe CCAP, we lost about 20 members to CAP because the Church could not accept their practices, which they were coping from Pentecostal churches. CCAP could not accept Pentecostal ideologies. Because they were rejected, they formed their own church. Three ministers from the CCAP also joined these youths who had left. In fact, three quarters of the members of the Pentecostal churches were members of CCAP.<sup>283</sup>

However, through the era of Chimphangwi as General Secretary (1979-1985), things had begun to change. Steps towards Africanizing the style of worship were still taking place through the formation of Music Department.<sup>284</sup> Music workshops for choir members and choir directors, comprising men, women and youth began to take in place in all the presbyteries. By the year 1984, Synod Music Festivals were introduced for Youth Choir groups. The number of choir groups also increased to over 150 by 1986.<sup>285</sup>

With passage of time, the number of choir groups has increased, with many of them singing African tunes and spreading the gospel from the African understanding of Christianity and addressing Malawian situations. The choir groups are also allowed to use local drums and other related local instruments, thereby moving the Christian church in Africa towards valuing and restoring African oriented church worship. It is argued that the existence of the many choir groups that have emerged has enabled the congregants to enjoy church services because the choirs help make church services lively, thus making the church more African. When I attended the worship service at Limbe CCAP, it was observed that the church has a Joint choir, which sings songs in African tunes. Its members are usually dressed in Malawian outfit. They also perform traditional type of Malawian dances as they sing, while clapping hands, ululating and

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<sup>283</sup> O.T. Interviewee 9: Limbe CCAP 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

<sup>284</sup> Blantyre Synod CCAP 2013.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid.

drumming as the song flows. The attendants of the service are free to stand and dance and sometimes sing along.<sup>286</sup>

In addition, the Pentecostal style of worship, which is accompanied by chorus singing and dancing has characterized the Blantyre synod styles of worship more recently. This is related to the introduction of a number of mechanisms to address the problem that some members of the church were abandoning the church to join other Pentecostal churches. It was therefore deemed relevant to provide room for such kind of worshipping in the church. This has been done through the introduction of the contemporary service, which is different from the traditional English or Chichewa worship services in many ways. While the English and Chichewa worship services are more orderly, the contemporary service is more flexible in nature. Everyone is free to pray on their own and those that can speak in tongues are allowed to do so. The praise and worship songs are always led by a praise and worship team, which is different from a choir in the sense that praise teams are used mostly in contemporary services, leading people in worshipping. Several instrument players such as piano, guitar, bass and drums are used. African dances are usually performed in relation to the choruses that are sung. Worth noting, the integration of music into church worship is an important factor in keeping the youth attached and involved in congregational worship. An informant narrated:

Of late, we introduced the contemporary service because of the people who love drums and shouting. Now we have a contemporary service, whereby you get singing, dancing and there is drums and shouting. If you want you can pray on your own, go to the corner and pray. This is one of the things, which if you did in the previous days, you would be excommunicated from the church.<sup>287</sup>

We observe that the activities in a contemporary service includes the singing of choruses, lifting of hands, shouting, standing, clapping hands, kneeling down, playing of various music instruments, prayer, giving offering, dancing and testifying. While the driving force and role of these activities in a worship service does not form a subject in this paper, it is agreeable that most

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<sup>286</sup> The following links on you tube provides illustrations of the type of songs being sang at Limbe CCAP choirs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fptMqRa5rtM>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8yTo\\_7Bn4U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D8yTo_7Bn4U)

<sup>287</sup> O.T. Interviewee 9: Limbe CCAP. 7th November, 2015.

of these activities relate to the African traditional religion and also largely to African culture. Makahamadze and Sibanda have argued for example that ‘African people are a singing and dancing people’,<sup>288</sup> thus considering Africans as a dancing and jolly people in which shouting, making and dancing to loud music is a normal culture.<sup>289</sup> This provides evidence to the point that the classical Presbyterianism is evolving towards Africanizing the worship services and that the purpose for this cultural change is to promote spirituality.

Furthermore, different fellowship programmes are also allowed by the church. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, Limbe CCAP holds morning devotions from 5 a.m. to 6 a.m., while Zomba CCAP holds the morning devotions on Saturdays from 5 a.m. to 6 a.m. The churches also make other arrangements where overnight prayers are held through the evangelism department. This is very different from the initial set up whereby the only official gathering by the members of the church was allowed on Sunday services and Wednesday for midweek services only. One of the informants at Limbe CCAP explained:

Nowadays, it is allowed to have three worship services on a Sunday. We also have morning devotions which are taking place in various churches around Blantyre synod. Previously, this was not allowed. We only had English or Chichewa service, nothing more.<sup>290</sup>

It can be argued that the church has deliberately taken on such high frequency in prayer meetings to substantiate the point of lack of spiritual growth of its members. This is very much common in Pentecostal churches where members regularly meet for different prayer sessions depending on their needs. It can therefore be contended that the morning devotions and even night of prayer sessions are meant to serve a double motivation for both spiritual promotion and counter-attack the force exerted by the Pentecostal churches. Otherwise the Presbyterian Church may continue to lose its members to Pentecostal churches where spiritual growth through prayer, fasting and praise and worship are emphasized.

In addition, it was observed that there is a lot of praise and worship in both morning devotions and night of prayer sessions where a Pentecostal kind of worship service takes place. Guided by

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<sup>288</sup> Tshabalala & Patel 2010: 74.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid. pp. 73–82.

<sup>290</sup> O.T. Interviewee 3: Limbe CCAP. 7th November, 2015.

the convener and the praise team, everyone is allowed to pray on his or her own. This is also not different from the Charismatic and Pentecostal movements whose significant part of service mainly revolves around the music and singing. Thus praise and worship understood as the singing and intermittent prayer that takes place in a church setting<sup>291</sup>, has characterized the kind of worship permitted in the Presbyterian Churches of Blantyre synod today. This is quite different from the previous set up, whereby the worship service was strictly by the order of the Church as acquired from what the Scottish missionaries had instituted.

Relevant to note is that most of the contemporary kind of worship services that were introduced are argued to address the concerns of the youth, a huge number of whom were leaving the church because it was strictly conservative. With regard to the youth, a number of developments have indeed taken place. In the 1950's, the church established the Blantyre Synod Youth Department which aimed at facilitating and implementing youth activities within its jurisdiction.<sup>292</sup> In 1961, a Student Christian Organization of Malawi (SCOM) was established. SCOM is an indigenous interdenominational association in which every student in secondary schools and universities is permitted to become a member as long as they agree to its aims and mission. The major characteristic of SCOM focuses on its evangelistic nature in which contemporary or Pentecostal worship styles are encouraged. To suit the kind of services that were being held in SCOM gatherings, the CCAP youth members decided to form their denominational organization called CCAP Students Organization (CCAPSO). CCAPSO was therefore established by Synod of Blantyre. It developed from what used to be called Polytechnic Presbyterian Organisation (PPO) and Presbyterian Youth Organization (PYO) at The Polytechnic College in Blantyre and Chancellor College in Zomba, constituent Colleges of the University of Malawi.<sup>293</sup> The PPO and PYO were organizations that had been set up unofficially by the students themselves, out of their own initiative in order to fulfil certain objectives that the students themselves identified as being missing in the Presbyterian family. This group of CCAP students had for a long time been appealing for recognition by the Synod to officially recognize the PYO and grant it mandate of

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<sup>291</sup> Tshabalala & Patel 2010: 73–82.

<sup>292</sup> Blantyre Synod CCAP 2013.

<sup>293</sup> Blantyre Synod CCAPSO 2013.

operation and freely pursue the quest for reaching out to those who have not been “born again”. One of the cofounders of CCAPSO indicated:

While at Chancellor College I came up with the idea of CCAPSO. With some others, we asked ourselves 'why can't we have an organization to champion the doctrines of the CCAP?'" Am Happy to see that CCAPSO, starting with 6 people, is big.<sup>294</sup>

What was missing was actually the Pentecostal kind of worship that the students were observing in SCOM. Officially launched in 2000, CCAPSO operates in many colleges and universities today. Although it is Presbyterian, the praise and worship services at CCAPSO are held like they are done in SCOM. In fact, one wouldn't notice the differences between the two. A key informant explained:

SCOM in schools which brought people of different churches together entailed the blending of styles of worship, and the fact is that Pentecostal kind of worship is contagious, it stands out and dominates because the other forms of worship are more quiet while the Pentecostal is about jumping and clapping, so the youth find it easier to jump, dance and clap. For a young person to just sit down for two hours, you will lose them. So those people that were in school during those days, influenced by the charismatic renewal movement are now taking leadership position in CCAP as elders, deacons and ministers. So you would expect that the Pentecostal kind of worship is going to take place in CCAP. The Blantyre synod tried to establish CCAPSO and CCAPSO was actually meant to counter the Pentecostal influence in SCOM. So CCAPSO is not different from SCOM because CCAPSO practices everything SCOM practices but within the CCAP.<sup>295</sup>

This validates the point that the youth have also been one of the fundamental group of people that have fostered change in CCAP. It also proves the point that some of the worship styles that are being introduced in CCAP are a direct result of the Pentecostal influence, as is the case with SCOM, which directly influenced the formation of CCAPSO.

#### 4.4.6 Order of the service

One of the major areas that the paper considers is the order of the service. Below are the different explanations as to how the order of the service was conducted and how it is conducted. The paper starts with the service as observed by Buchanan, one of the notable missionaries at Blantyre:

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<sup>294</sup> Jumbe: 2013.

<sup>295</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

The service is opened by the singing of a hymn in the native language. Of hymns there are about thirty, translated and made. The singing is led by Mr Scott, who presides at the harmonium. All Europeans, and natives who can sing, stand when singing; and during the last hymn and prayer, the whole congregation stands. After the opening hymn, a prayer is said in the native language by the preacher, then a chapter of the Old and New Testament is read, another hymn sung, and the Lord's Prayer repeated by the whole congregation, European and native. An address is then given, which may last twenty minutes or half an hour; another hymn sung, and the service ended by prayer. As a rule, the natives listen attentively and conduct themselves respectably. They do not always refrain from talking to one another.<sup>296</sup>

The researcher also made different observation of the order of the service at Zomba and Limbe CCAP:

The service starts with a hymn. Those that can stand are requested to do so. This is followed by the first Bible reading and a prayer. Then, a responsive psalm is recited by the congregation. The available Choirs are then requested to preach through their songs. This is followed by intimations by the session clerk which also involves welcoming visitors. Sometimes those that did not come with a transfer letter from their respective churches are also requested to stand and greet the congregation. This was not possible in the previous years. A song is sung for the visitors: *alendo talandilawa tiyamike Yesu*, literally translated as, we should thank God for the visitors we have received. Afterwards, Bible readings are made, first from the Old Testament and secondly from the New Testament. The Bible reading is succeeded by the reciting of the apostle's creed, which every member is expected to know by the time they become Christian, having undergone the hearers and catechumen classes. An intercessory prayer is then made by one of the church elders present. In ending the intercessory prayer, the Lord's Prayer is recited by the whole congregation. This is followed by the singing of a Hymn for the Holy Spirit that ushers the preacher to the pulpit for the days' sermon. After the preaching, a short fixed hymn is sung while the preacher of the day leaves the pulpit and takes his or her seat. This is followed by Sunday offering while the choirs alternate in singing, and some members of the congregation dance while they give their offering, usually in form of money. After all the offering is collected, a short hymn is sung and one of the elders pray for the offerings while the congregation remain standing. Then, a closing hymn is sung and the service is closed by the giving of a Benediction from one of the elders or reverend. The congregation is then requested to stand as the elders and minister leave the church for the vestry. After that, the rest of the congregation is free to go, and

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<sup>296</sup> Buchanan 1885: 206-207.

as they walk out of the church, one of the choirs is requested to sing. Some of the members dance while they walk out.

Thus, a comparison of the present order of service in CCAP from that described by John Buchanan indicates that the present one has some features that also characterized the order of service carried by the missionaries in their initial stages of mission establishment. For example, the beginning of the worship service by the singing of a hymn is common to both the old and the modern day CCAP worship service. Not only that, the congregants are expected to stand while they sing. However, a major difference lies in the length of the service, with the present-day service of worship being much longer than the initial worship services as observed by Buchanan. In fact, the present day worship service has more activities than that of the missionary days. Another major difference is that this day's order of service is flexible in comparison to the previous service. Most informants indicated that the service has become a little more different from what it was in the past 30 years.

Thus, the order is not strictly followed and that the convener can freely alternate the activities lined up for a worship service. The researcher also observed for instance, that a praise and worship song sometimes replaced the hymns. A chorus or a spiritual song, known by the majority, and led by the praise team is sung instead of the usual hymn that ushers the preacher into the preaching of his or her prepared sermon. This is also evident in the contemporary service whereby the strict order of service is not followed. The congregants are free to worship in the ways they will.

#### 4.4.7 Changes in the role of women in CCAP

One of the major sections of the church that has also experienced changes focuses on the role of women. The evolving gender aspects in all spheres of life have recently impacted the church. The previous chapters have indicated that the missionaries' policies in dealing with the local people's culture depended on what the FMC had to say. It can therefore be argued that the policies on women that were practiced in Scotland were reflected in the roles of women in the mission fields. The Scottish missionaries for instance came with women, but they excluded them from being evangelists, deacons and elders. The church's theology, even though it acknowledged the necessity of marriage for procreation, it also emphasized the natural inferiority and sinfulness of women. It was argued that by nature, women were weak, frail, impatient, feeble and foolish,

and that experience indicated that women lacked the spirit of counsel and regiment. Even during the reformation in the Church of Scotland, the prescribed roles of a woman were seen in the domestic sphere as an obedient wife, helpmate, comforter, companion and mother, denying them the rule, and authority in both the church and the nation.<sup>297</sup> This therefore had an impact on the perception of women in the Presbyterian Church in Malawi. One of the informants narrated:

Missionaries did indeed come with women but they were mainly teaching them sewing, cooking, dressing, not necessarily to become pastors in the church or teachers at church...the missionaries believed that women should be silent, and women did indeed obey that and remained silent. Even pastors and other elders made sure women were silent.<sup>298</sup>

Thus missionaries' policies on women were handled in western ways, which was considered to be in agreement with the church's theology.

Furthermore, the way the missionaries introduced Christianity has led to the marginalization of women as they followed the patriarchy of the Bible. The Presbyterian Church in Malawi did not implement structures to involve women from the onset. Although the missionaries did put some effort in stopping African traditional practices that totally discriminated women, women only fulfilled the traditional roles given to them as daughter, sister, wife or mother. The church as an institution promoted structures that indicated that the official work of the Presbyterian Church was exclusively meant for men. This was in fact contrary to the situation in the ATR where women were given a place and roles to fulfill. They had total control of rain shrines as mediums and played headship roles in religious matters.<sup>299</sup> In Malawi, the Chigodi women's center, established in 1968, trained many Christian women in practical skills like tailoring, knitting and Bible knowledge. It is argued that the missionaries introduced additional teaching and practices which placed women in subordinate positions in society, and reinforced some of the negative cultural elements. For instance, the Presbyterian Church policies in Malawi did not permit women to take positions of leadership as elders, deacons and ministers. The result has been that

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<sup>297</sup> Cameron, Wright, Lachman & Meek 1993: 883.

<sup>298</sup> O.T. Interviewee 2: Limbe CCAP. 7th November, 2015.

<sup>299</sup> Phiri 2000: 24.



african women have experienced oppression at various levels and in various ways rather than the full liberation which the gospel of Jesus Christ offers.<sup>300</sup>

What further perpetuates the oppression of women in some cases is the African patriarchal culture which does not allow a woman to have power and authority over men. Patriarchy is a social structure or system where all power and authority rests in the hands of the male head of the men. Because of patriarchy, the construction of womanhood in African societies has influenced the way people look at women and the roles that women can play in the African church and society. Patriarchy has defined women as inferior to men, thereby maintaining the subjugation of women in Africa in church and society. As a result, patriarchy has produced male dominated hierarchical institutions in most African societies, maintaining that the woman's place is expected to be the home and the kitchen. From such a discussion, it becomes clear that the expression of African Christianity in relation to women issues has been controlled by African patriarchal culture.<sup>301</sup> We might say that the coming of Christianity promised liberation from women in patriarchal societies, but the promise was not fulfilled to the extent that it should have been. Women's oppression was legitimized by reference to Biblical texts, taking an example of the Jewish culture of the Bible which is also patriarchal. Thus, patriarchy has been one of the major factors that has contributed to lack of women's involvement in leadership positions. The cultural encounter is therefore complex with regard to the women.

However, with passage of time and the global influence on the roles and rights of women, steps were taken to establish institutions that helped women become a relevant section of the Presbyterian Church in Malawi. With the help of the missionary women, the women's guild (*mvano*) in Blantyre synod was officially established in 1948. A *mvano* woman explained:

The main aim of the women's guild is to hasten women to serve the Lord by spreading the gospel, visiting the sick, the bereaved and the elderly as well as encouraging weak Christians. It also aims at encouraging women to take care of their husbands, family and children.<sup>302</sup>

The women's guild was therefore formed in all the three synods, but they bear different names, namely, *Mvano*, *chigwirirzano* and *umanyano* for Blantyre, Nkhoma and Livingstonia synod

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<sup>300</sup> Ibid. p. 13.

<sup>301</sup> Ibid. p. 12.

<sup>302</sup> O.T. Interviewee 12: Zomba CCAP. 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

respectively. Although they respond to different names, their names generally mean the same, with emphasis on unity among women who serve the Lord. In addition, their badge, aims and functions are the same because the organization was founded by the same missionary women.<sup>303</sup> These are the women who taught Malawian women the ways of the women's guild. Following the aims of the women's guild, it can be argued that the organization gave Malawian women a place in the church they had a function to fulfill.

However, the formation of Women's guild did not do anything to change the fact that women did not have powers and authority in the church. As indicated above, the aims and functions of the *Mvano* was designed to involve women serve the Lord through *womanly* roles. Even within the *mvano* itself, the mediator (*mkhalapakati*) of the *Mvano* and the session was expected to be a male church elder. Phiri argues that this still showed the continued existence of male dominance since the women could not meet without their male coordinator. She further argues that the introduction of the *mkhalapakati* was a way of trying to keep women in check because the leadership became afraid that the *mvano* would develop into a "church in a church" since women comprised a larger membership of the church and they were and continue to be more active members of the church than men.<sup>304</sup> One of the *Mvano* woman explained:

Previously, women were only active in the women's guild, and even there, we did not have access to the sessions because we were not allowed to attend. When there was an issue, there was always a mediator, who was always a man, *mkhalapakati*, who could listen to our concerns and report them to the board.<sup>305</sup>

Such control was also revealed in the rules that the CCAP established, denying women to take leadership positions in the church. For instance, women were not allowed to preach in church services, following the biblical argument in 1 Corinthians verse 34 that women should remain silent in church, but must be in submission as the law dictates. Not only that, women could not receive theological education that would enable them to become ministers. It was only in the mid-1990s that they could attain theological education, but were still not permitted to become ministers or preach in the church services. These women who had been qualified were instead

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<sup>303</sup> MNA/BMC/50/1/213 & MNA/BMC 1/2/3. *CCAP minutes of Blantyre synod: Women's work committee*. Jan 12, 1950.

<sup>304</sup> Phiri 2000: 80.

<sup>305</sup> O.T. Interviewee 2: Limbe CCAP. 7th November, 2015.

given other jobs such as teaching in secondary schools. One of the informants at Limbe CCAP testified:

I think the first two ladies to become ministers, it took a long time before they could be allowed to preach. They studied at the theological college, got their degrees but they were not allowed to practice.<sup>306</sup>

However, some theologians and women in church did not stay silent on the matter concerning women's rights in the religious sector. Awareness campaigns were held to sensitize women in Malawi through different organizations. The most important one in this regard was the group of Malawian Women in Theology. This was organized by the CCAP, Blantyre Synod, Chigodi Women's Center in September, 1990.<sup>307</sup> The Malawian female theologians have therefore exerted efforts to involve all women from different Christian denominations in voicing out their concerns on various forms of oppression experienced as a result of the cultural prejudice, biblical reasons and conservative church traditions described above. Phiri explains that such a call to fight for the women's rights in the church was met with divided attention. The positive response came from the Presbyterians from Blantyre synod which sent thirteen representatives while Nkhoma and Livingstonia sent one and two delegates respectively.<sup>308</sup> The fact that it is Blantyre synod that indicated a positive action towards the women's rights movement explains why further changes have been made in Blantyre synod than is the situation with Livingstonia and Nkhoma synod.

The present constitution of CCAP, section 6(1) on ordination for church office, stipulates that "the persons who shall be ordained to these offices by the church may be men or women."<sup>309</sup> In agreement to this subsection is section 6 (12) on ordination of women, which clearly states:

The Church is resolved and committed to use to the full the gifts and talents of all its members in the service of the church and to that end the General assembly accepts and endorsed the principle of the ordination of women to church office such as ministers of the word and sacrament, church elder or church deacon and other works. Each synod however shall lay down detailed rules.<sup>310</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> O.T. Interviewee 6: Limbe CCAP. 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

<sup>307</sup> Phiri 2000: 136.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid. p. 137.

<sup>309</sup> CCAP General Assembly 2002: 29.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid. p. 35.

Although it has taken several years for the General synod to reach an agreement on the matter of ordination of women, it seems plausible to argue that Blantyre synod stands on a positive ground in as far as improving women's participation is involved. It is the only synod that has an established a center for women with theologically trained female staff. It has also sent more theological women for theological training at Zomba Theological College than her sister synods have done. This was made possible during the authority of Rev. S.S. Ncozana as the General Secretary of the synod between 1985 and 1995. His ideas on women participation was meant to mean that "male dominance in the church is traditional, but has no place in the kingdom of God, it is not part of God's plan, but of human making".<sup>311</sup> However, his positive ideas on women participation was met with opposition when he failed to get the two thirds majority as a requirement for positive decision on the ordination of women in the Blantyre synod meeting of 1991. A pastor narrated:

When the issue came for women to be ordained as ministers came to the General Synod, it was discussed and rejected for the first time. The next two years, it came back, it was kicked out. It took a six year process of discussion to come to accept that women can be ordained as ministers.<sup>312</sup>

In agreement to this, an informant at Limbe CCAP explained:

I am one of the first women elders. When we had started, there was a big resistance from those who thought that women shouldn't be elders. They thought it was not good that women can be elders. We actually were feeling out of place, there were only 5 women in the session...<sup>313</sup>

This indicates the extent to which the debate on women's participation had been a matter of conflict among the different parties in all the synods of CCAP.

However, the fight for the women's power has not gone in vain since changes have taken place in Blantyre synod. This can be observed in the church where women can now preach, become ministers, session clerks and hold other various positions. Thus overcoming the initial cultural and biblical constraints that barred women from attaining authority in the church. It is only lately that the synod legalized the ordination of women and the first woman minister in Blantyre synod

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<sup>311</sup> Phiri 2000: 138.

<sup>312</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

<sup>313</sup> O.T. Interviewee 2: Limbe CCAP. 7<sup>th</sup> November, 2015.

was ordained on 7<sup>th</sup> January, 2001. With time passage, the involvement of women at various leadership positions in the Blantyre synod is steadily increasing. An informant explained:

There is a great change in the roles of women. In the old days, women were not given a chance to preach, but nowadays we see a lot of women going to the pulpit and preach during the church services. Previously, they could only preach in the gatherings of the women's guild, but now even in the church services. It's not only the *Mvano* women, even mere Christian women can preach.<sup>314</sup>

There have also been deliberate decisions to involve women even from the session. For example, the position of *mkhalapakati* which was supposed to be occupied by a male church elder has now been replaced by the woman elder, who is able to represent the *mvano* women in the sessions. One of the informants explained:

...when there was an issue, there was always a mediator, who was always a man, *mkhalapakati*, who could listen to our concerns and report them to the board, but now we have *amayi oyendera* (a female coordinator), whom we can tell our issues more openly. But also she can ably and easily represents what we also feel. She also represents what she is feeling as a woman because she is part of us.<sup>315</sup>

Furthermore, in instances where there is need for two or more people, there is always a chance to include women. Thus deliberately involving them so they are not left out. An informant explained:

...We have the session clerk who is a woman for example. If you go back to ten years ago, you would see that we had more men in the session than the women. I am a deputy session clerk, and we make deliberate decisions to include women. When choosing people for a task to do something, there must be ladies. In the past it wasn't like that.<sup>316</sup>

It is therefore observed that in the case of the role of women in the church, the western missionaries, the traditional interpretation of the Bible and African culture have played a role in discriminating women. However, the changes have been inspired by the globalizing trends as far as the world's perception of women's role in the church is concerned. Thus, the change towards involving women is not African, rather it is global and hence the Africanization concept to the involvement of women in the church does not apply in this case. Although it is agreeable among scholars that the women in ATR had a role and authority, it has to be noted on the other hand

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<sup>314</sup> Ibid.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid.

<sup>316</sup> O.T. Interviewee 4: Limbe CCAP. 7th November, 2015.

that this change in the role of women has been necessitated by the increasing pressure from different sectors around the global. One of the interviewee explained:

If we compare this to African culture, we are diverting, because African culture looks at men as dominant, but now we have noted that it's a changing environment, so we are now accommodating women. We have adopted the western ideology that men and women are equal, and we can easily work in a better environment when women are also empowered.<sup>317</sup>

Thus, unlike in the changes observed in the area of music, order of service and church leadership, the concept of gender has indicated that it is taking global trends, other than local patterns.

#### 4.4.8 Changes in the aims and objectives

The fact that the Presbyterian Church moved from Blantyre Mission to a Church under Blantyre synod, consisting of Africans, explains the necessity for a comparison of the aims of the Presbyterian Church in its mission controlled and post mission era. This will allow the paper to find out the changes in relation to the goals of a culture, namely Presbyterianism in the Blantyre Synod.

##### *4.4.8.1 What were the aims and objectives of the CCAP church in Blantyre Synod?*

The research indicated in the first chapter that the aims of the Scottish missionaries were mainly introducing Christianity, ending slave trade and introducing legal trade as well as civilizing the backward people through the provision of social services, comprising education and health services. As a Presbyterian mission, the church operated from the rules obtained from the Scottish Presbyterian church. However, the paper also indicated the extent to which some rules were introduced, not because they reflected the Presbyterian Christianity, but because they were Scottish in nature. One wonders whether the aims of the Scottish missionaries have been retained after more than 100 years of its existence have elapsed, hence the discussion below.

##### *4.4.8.2 What are the aims and objectives of the CCAP church in Blantyre synod?*

The aims and objectives of Blantyre Synod, as a component part of the CCAP for the southern region of Malawi are stipulated in its constitution. The mission statement as indicated in the constitution is:

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

The proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of mankind; the shelter, nurture and spiritual fellowship of the children of God; the promotion of divine worship; the preservation of the truth; the promotion of social righteousness and well-being of mankind.<sup>318</sup>

This shows that the major components that the missionaries aimed at have not changed because the CCAP continues to engage in evangelization, a clear indicator of the proclamation of the gospel. One of the key informants narrated:

In terms of evangelization, preaching the gospel, which was brought by the first missionaries, that has still remained. Blantyre synod has maintained being an evangelical church.<sup>319</sup>

On the other hand, the missionaries believed in the social well-being of people by providing health care services and education. This too, has been maintained as evidenced by the education and health departments that operate different schools and hospitals respectively.

#### 4.5 Chapter summary

This section of the paper aimed at discussing the major changes in the CCAP, Blantyre synod as responses to the Scottish instituted Presbyterianism. Before discussing the changes in Presbyterianism, the chapter has presented factors that influence cultural change. The factors which have been deemed relevant to this paper are globalization and political processes and leadership. An evaluation of the fundamental areas that build the church have indicated mixed reaction towards the classical Presbyterianism. Thus, in some areas, principles of the church have remained the same while others have changed. Those areas that have changed have been split into two, with some leaning towards the African culture while other changes lean towards globalization. The areas in which indigenization has been evident are in the fields of music where the church has permitted the singing of African choruses and songs using African instruments. Malawian dances have also been incorporated in the church. Another important evident of inculturation has been shown in the translation of the Bible as well as hymns to local languages for services. On the other hand, the order of service has been shown to be similar to the Scottish one, yet it has become flexible, incorporating Pentecostal, contemporary and

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<sup>318</sup> CCAP General Assembly 2002: 2.

<sup>319</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

traditional Scottish aspects of the liturgy. In the role of women in the church, the change has been shown to be directed by the globalizing trends of the gender aspect in which the global society has been challenged to stop the discrimination of women and involve them in the leadership positions. The paper has shown that conservative theology, patriarchy and African culture worked hand in hand to sideline women from becoming ministers in the CCAP. However, the Blantyre synod now permits women to obtain theological education and are ordained as ministers in the church. On the other hand, the aims of the church, as seen through the mission statement and the doctrine of the church compared from the 1956 and 2002 constitution have been shown to be the same, with small alterations. Thus, the type of leadership as well as global culture have played an important role in these changes. This in short, describes the responses of the contemporary Malawians to the classical Presbyterianism set by the Scots.



## 5 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

### 5.1 Chapter overview

This chapter summarizes the findings of this research based on the discussions held in the previous sections. It presents the critical questions that formed the discussion of each chapter, but also provides the conclusion as discussed from the themes that emerged from the topic. Emphasis is also made on the understanding of the cultural encounter between Scotland as represented by the missionaries, and Malawians who were receivers of Christianity. The chapter summarizes the civilization process and an understanding of how cultural changes take place. Emphasis is also made on the relevant data collected from the informants who explained their various experiences in Presbyterianism. I will then summarize the findings by presenting the conclusion of the whole thesis whose main focus is on the development of Presbyterianism in the Blantyre synod of Malawi.

### 5.2 Discussion

#### 5.2.1 The initial cultural encounter

The initial questions that formed the basis of this thesis were connected to the history of Malawi and how relevant the Scottish missionaries were to Malawi's national building process. Apart from the national building process, the study found out that the missionaries were instrumental in forming the Presbyterian Church in Malawi (see chapter two). This provided an understanding of the relevant historical and modern day cultural encounter between the missionaries and the Africans. It also brought the paper to the major focus of the research question: the responses of both the indigenous Malawians and contemporary Presbyterians to the culture introduced by the Scottish missionaries. As a part of a cultural encounter process, the research found out that the local Malawian population did positively welcome the missionaries (see chapter three). Regardless of the difficulties the missionaries faced, their main goal of Christianizing the Malawian society was achieved.

#### 5.2.2 Influence of missionaries on Malawian culture

Once Christianity was introduced, the Presbyterian Church in Malawi operated as a branch of the mother church in Scotland. The missionaries continued to come from the mother church in Scotland and were controlled by the FMC. Therefore, the Malawian Presbyterian Church adopted the doctrine, practices and liturgy based on the Scottish Presbyterian system. In this cultural encounter process, the missionaries forced the Malawians to stop a number of their

cultural practices which they deemed sinful and unacceptable for a christianized society. While some cultural patterns were completely put to a halt, others were indigenized yet others remained constant and they continue to form a part of the African society today. Those that were put to a halt included the ATR practices like traditional medicine, polygamous marriages, and beer drinking. What was more serious was that the missionaries were less willing to accept the Malawian cultural phenomena which they viewed as religiously unacceptable and primitive. It has also been found out that some of the practices like beer drinking were denied because the missionaries viewed them as a risk to one's healthy and also affected their thinking and actions, such that the drunkards usually end up in fighting and murder (see chapter 3). In addition, the ATR customs and traditions like initiation ceremonies were indigenized by introducing the *Chilangizo* Christian ceremony which still takes place in today's Presbyterian Church. Thus, the paper has found out that in many ways, there was a change of the African culture. A key informant had this to say:

In the religious sector, it is debated because people have argued that should we really say that the missionaries are the ones that taught us there is a God, because most societies did believe there is God. May be the concept of God is what was different. They believed that they could approach God through ancestral spirits. But they believed that there is a deity known as God who created the earth. Thus why we have words like Namalenga, Chisumphu and Mphambe.<sup>320</sup> All the titles God is given existed before the missionaries came in. It wasn't the missionaries who brought these terms. But the missionaries brought an understanding that God should not be approached through ancestors, but should be approached through Jesus Christ. That we don't need sacrifices. Christ is the last sacrifices given to us. What we can give to God are offerings and not sacrifices. So they did affect our religious view.<sup>321</sup>

### 5.3 Cultural conflict

The citation above shows the missionary and theological elements in the indigenization processes. It indicates the missionaries' willingness to accommodate certain pre-existing religious acts like the names of God which Malawians used before becoming Christians. However, the citation provides evidence for a cultural conflict between the missionaries and the Malawians in which the beliefs and traditions of the missionaries represented a challenge to Malawians. Elias's theory of civilizations also explains how Europeans came to view themselves as civilized while others were barbaric or that they settled in a savage past. Although Elias did not condone these European-self-congratulation images, the theory provides an understanding of

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<sup>320</sup> Mphambe is a name of God that is connected to God's expression of power in nature by means of lightning and thunder.

<sup>321</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

processes that resulted to the sense of cultural superiority among Europeans.<sup>322</sup> An informant narrated:

...but the Scottish missionaries then, were saying we cannot sing these songs. The Africans are not mature in terms of theology to compose songs, and that the tunes were coming from the African dances, the dances which the Europeans looked at as primitive and satanic.<sup>323</sup>

This indicates that there was a cultural conflict in connection to the kind of music that was sung in the church. The conflict in question can therefore be considered as partly a product of Cultural imperialism in which Europeans insisted that their culture is better than that of Africans.

#### 5.4 Malawian responses to the imposed culture

However, with passage of time and in response to various factors, the Presbyterian culture has not remained the same. The Malawian Presbyterians have over time reacted to the classical Presbyterian system set by the Scottish missionaries in many ways. The transition from mission to church in the 1960s (leadership), globalization, localisation and political processes have triggered a number of changes in the Presbyterian Church.

#### 5.5 The observed changes

The study evaluated the fundamental areas that build the church such as church leadership, worship service or liturgy and the role of women in the church. These have indicated the contemporary Malawian Presbyterians' mixed reaction towards the classical Presbyterianism. In some areas like objectives and doctrine, the principles of the church have remained the same while others have changed. In chapter four, I found out that those areas that have changed, fall into two categories: some lean towards the African culture while other changes lean towards globalization. The areas in which indigenization has been evident are in the fields of music where the church has permitted the singing of African choruses and songs using African instruments. Malawian dances have also been incorporated in the church. Another remarkable point of inculturation lies in the translation of the Bible and hymns to local languages for services. On the other hand, the order of service has been shown to be similar to the Scottish one, yet it has become flexible, incorporating Pentecostal, contemporary and traditional Scottish aspects of the liturgy. In the role of women in the church, the change has been directed by the

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<sup>322</sup> Linklater & Mennel 2010: 385.

<sup>323</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

globalizing developments of the gender aspect in which the world is challenged to stop the discrimination of women and involve them in the leadership positions. Contrary to the Scottish system, which followed the patriarchy of the Bible to sideline women from becoming ministers in the CCAP, the Blantyre synod now permits women to obtain theological education and are ordained as ministers in the church (see chapter 4).

#### 5.6 Continued cultural conflict

Therefore, this papers' argument maintain that these changes describe the responses of the contemporary Malawians to the classical Presbyterianism set by the Scots. While the ancestors of the present Presbyterians accepted Christianity and the Scottish Presbyterian system, the contemporary Presbyterians have reacted to the classical Presbyterianism by introducing the Malawian cultural concepts into the Presbyterianism instituted by the Scots. These changes are also evident of the aforementioned cultural conflict. Thus the cultural conflict that began in the early 1870s when the Scottish missionaries had arrived in Malawi continues to exist today, but in different forms and reaction. This cultural change is evidence of the cultural conflict that continues to exist between the Presbyterian churches of Scotland and Malawi. One of the main informant argued:

If you have followed the latest news, Nkhoma and Livingstonia synods have broken ties with the Church of Scotland. Completely, they are not together. They are not going to associate because Church of Scotland is liberal and has taken approaches like accepting same sex marriages, which the old Church of Scotland missionaries who came wouldn't accept. So over the years, theology in the west has changed and Africans have also developed what we term as African theology. So basically, the first major change is in terms of theology with African theology leaning towards conservative side and the western theology leaning towards the liberal side. Thus the first major change.<sup>324</sup>

It is therefore evident that any change in social customs that make up a culture create conflicts. In addition, this cultural conflict continues to exist because of the different theological stands held by the different cultures in question.

#### 5.7 The civilization process and the development of Presbyterianism

Using Elias's theory of civilization, this paper has established an understanding of how cultural changes takes place. Elias described the process of civilization as a process involving changes in behaviour extending over many generations. He also discussed the question of the inevitability of

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<sup>324</sup> O.T. Key informant 12: Zomba CCAP. 10th October, 2015.

social changes and development in a society. In the same way, the development of Presbyterianism has been covered over many generations, beginning with the recipients of the religion in question, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Using Elias's theory of civilization, an understanding has been made of how changes in power (both political power and religious authority) affects behaviour. Once the Presbyterians became free of the missionary control, they engaged in processes that involved africanizing and making choices of their Presbyterian system. Another clear example of how the change in power relations altered Malawian culture and Presbyterianism is that of Kamuzu Banda. His views on having a culture that was independent of European influence represents a reaction of the Africans in this cultural encounter process.

### 5.8 Conclusion

This research project aimed at a better understanding of how the CCAP has evolved since its commencement in Malawi, focusing on cultural changes with reference to the cultural encounter involving Malawians and the Scottish missionaries. The paper gave time and space to assess the cultural impacts of the Scottish missionaries on the local Malawian culture. It also discussed the reactions of the Africans to the introduction of Christianity and to missionaries as a people. This represented the cultural encounter in which changes were seen more on the part of Malawian culture than that of the Missionaries. By looking at how the practices of Presbyterianism in terms of ethics, worship service, the role of women and the church leadership, the study has found out that there have been both globalizing and indigenizing tendencies in the CCAP. The development of new constitutions and practices, the indigenization and inculturation of Presbyterianism, the evolving relationships of the Blantyre, Nkhoma and Livingstone synods do much to show how far Presbyterianism has changed from merely being a mission church to a church reflecting Malawian culture. This explains the reactions of the contemporary Presbyterians to the Presbyterianism established by the Scottish missionaries, an evidence of a continued cultural conflict.

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## 7.0 Appendix

### 7.1 Interview guide

Following the aims of this study: To Examine the history of the Scottish missionaries, present a method for analyzing the cultural encounter between the missionaries and the local population, Compare the missionary practices of Presbyterianism to those of the current ones in Blantyre synod, examine and describe the changes and differences in the practices of Presbyterianism with special emphasis on church leadership, worship service or liturgy and the role of women in the church, I developed the following questions which guided me to collect data:

#### **KEY INFORMANTS**

##### **Chapter 1: The history of the Scottish missionaries**

1. How do you understand the history of the Scottish missionaries
2. What was the history of the Scottish missionaries
  - a. Can you explain in details who the Scottish missionaries were
3. How the Presbyterian church came to Malawi
  - a. How did they find themselves in Malawi
4. what were the aims and objectives of the Scottish missionaries
  - a. What was the main aim of their coming to Malawi: building a nation or church?

##### **Chapter 2: Malawian responses to the arrival of the Scottish missionaries**

5. What was the perception of the local population towards the Scottish missionaries?
  - a. How did the Malawians of the time perceive them
6. How did the Africans receive the missionaries
7. What were the socio-cultural impacts of the Scottish missionaries on the local culture  
Did they make any changes to the existing culture of the local population? In what way?

##### **Chapter 3: Presbyterianism as practiced over time**

8. What were the aims and objectives of the CCAP church in Blantyre synod at the time of its introduction?
  - a. Mission statement?
9. What are the aims and objectives of the CCAP church in Blantyre synod now?

- a. The current mission statement
- b. How does the mission statement, the stated objectives, doctrines and beliefs reflect the actual practices in the church

**Chapter 4: What are the changes in Presbyterianism?**

- a. What do you think are the changes taking place in the church if any? If yes, can you give examples and explain? e.g.
    - i. In the role of women in the church: are women allowed to be church leaders?
      - the role of women compared to African culture.
      - Does this change of the role of women reflect the change of the church from an institutional one to a more fellowship?
      - Are women allowed to be leaders or pastors?
    - ii. In the direction it is taking: institutional or fellowship one?
    - iii. In the practices of the church
    - iv. In the way the church conducts its services
    - v. Do you personally support these changes?
  - b. Do you think that the changes have a direct effect on the way Christianity is perceived by Presbyterians? Or on the way Presbyterianism is being practiced?
    - If no, would you like that the church introduce changes in the way it conducts its services and follows the tradition or constitution? In which areas should the changes take place?
  - c. Do you think that Presbyterianism is being practiced in the way the Scottish missionaries introduced it?
10. How do Presbyterians perceive Presbyterianism today?

**For general informants (members of the church):**

You have been a member of the church for almost 20 years, can you explain Presbyterianism in general?

1. Does the church seem foreign to you? Or would you say that it is truly African?
  - In what way is it African or foreign?
- 2 a. Growing up in the Presbyterianism church, do you see any changes over time?

- i. If yes, can you give examples and explain?
- ii. Do you personally support these changes?

**IF NO:**

- i. Would you like that the churches implement some changes?
  - ii. In which areas?
  - iii. Why?
- 3 Do you attend any other fellowship or Pentecostal church apart from mainly being a member of the Presbyterian Church?



## 7.2 Applications for research permission

Volda University College

The History Department

Postboks 500

6101 Volda

The director

National Archives of Malawi

P.O. Box 62

Zomba

Malawi

Dear Sir/madam,

### **REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH FROM THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF MALAWI**

Ms. E. M'biya, student number 73915 is currently studying for a master's degree in cultural encounters at Volda University College in Norway. As part of her study programme, she is supposed to write a thesis in her second year of studies. The programme she is studying involves a historical analysis of relations that arise when cultures encounter, hence her topic of study: **The Scottish missionaries and the development of Presbyterianism in Malawi: The case of Blantyre Synod.**

Ms. E. M'biya therefore needs to collect data specifically for her research on the history of the Scottish missionaries. I therefore request for a permission to allow her conduct her research at the national archives of Malawi.

We will be most grateful for your assistance in this regard.

Yours faithfully,

Birger Løvlie.

The History Department

Postboks 500

6101 Volda

**Zomba C.C.A.P.**

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

**REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT ZOMBA CCAP**

Eunice M'biya, student number 73915, is currently a student at Volda University College in Norway, studying Master of Science in Cultural Encounters. As part of her study programme, she is supposed to write a thesis in her second year of studies. The programme she is studying involves a historical analysis of relations that arise when cultures encounter, hence her topic of study: **The Scottish missionaries and the development of Presbyterianism in Malawi: The case of Blantyre Synod.**

As part of data collection exercise within the Blantyre Synod, Eunice needs to conduct research at Zomba C.C.A.P. She intends to interview members of the church, specifically those have been C.C.A.P. members for a period of more than 20 years but also reverends and church leaders as key informants.

I therefore request for a permission to allow her conduct the interviews at Zomba CCAP. The data collected from the interviews will solely be used for the academic research.

We would be grateful for your assistance in this regard.

Yours faithfully,

Birger Løvlie.

Volda University College

The History Department

Postboks 500

6101 Volda

**Limbe C.C.A.P.**

**Dear Sir,**

**REQUEST TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT LIMBE CCAP**

Eunice M'biya, student number 73915, is currently a student at Volda University College in Norway, studying Master of Science in Cultural Encounters. As part of her study programme, she is supposed to write a thesis in her second year of studies. The programme she is studying involves a historical analysis of relations that arise when cultures encounter, hence her topic of study: **The Scottish missionaries and the development of Presbyterianism in Malawi: The case of Blantyre Synod.**

As part of data collection exercise within the Blantyre Synod, Eunice needs to conduct research at Limbe C.C.A.P. She intends to interview members of the church, specifically those have been C.C.A.P. members for a period of more than 20 years but also reverends and church leaders as key informants.

I therefore request for a permission to allow her conduct the interviews at Limbe CCAP. The data collected from the interviews will solely be used for the academic research.

We would be grateful for your assistance in this regard

Yours faithfully,

Birger Løvlie.