

**A History of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
(CCAP) as a Federative Denomination (1924-2015)**

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Theology at the University of the Free State

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my children, Victor and Louisa, in prayer for their success in life.

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May the Lord Jesus Christ richly bless you all!

List of Abbreviations

ACEM:	Association of Christian Educators in Malawi
AIDS:	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BMO:	Board of Mission Overseas
CBFM:	Consultative Board of Federated Missions
CCAP:	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CCAPSO:	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Student Organisation
CCAPYUFS:	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Youth Fellowships
CCAPYUM:	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Youth Urban Ministry
CHAM:	Christian Health Association of Malawi
CLAIM:	Christian Literature Action In Malawi
DPP:	Democratic Progressive Party
DRC:	Dutch Reformed Church
DRCM:	Dutch Reformed Church Mission
DRCSA:	Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa
FCU:	Forum for CCAP Unity
FMC:	Foreign Mission Committee
GAC:	General Administrative Committee
GK:	<i>Gereformeerde Kerk</i>
GZB:	<i>Gereformeerde Zendingsbond</i>
HIV:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
LDC:	Leadership Development Committee
LISAP:	Livingstonia Synod AIDS Programme
LMS:	London Missionary Society
LUANAR:	Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources
<i>LWBCA:</i>	<i>Life and Work in British Central Africa</i>
MAPC:	Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church

MCP:	Malawi Congress Party
MMU:	Ministers' Mission Union
NGK:	<i>Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk</i>
NHK:	<i>Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk</i>
NIV:	New International Version
PAC:	Public Affairs Committee
PCI:	Presbyterian Church in Ireland
PCM:	Presbyterian Church of Malawi
PCT:	Presbyterian Church in Taiwan
PCUSA:	Presbyterian Church in the USA
PresAid:	Presbyterian Aid
PWS&D:	Presbyterian World Service and Development
RCA:	Reformed Church in Africa
RCA:	Reformed Church in America
SADC:	Southern African Development Community
SCOM:	Student Christian Organisation of Malawi
SSPCK:	Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge
TEEM:	Theological Education by Extension in Malawi
UDF:	United Democratic Front
UFC:	United Free Church of Scotland
UK:	United Kingdom
UMCA:	Universities Mission to Central Africa
UP:	United Presbyterian Church of Scotland
UPC:	United Presbyterian Church
URCSA:	Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa

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Abstract

This study is about the history of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) as a federative denomination in South-Central Africa. This denomination comprises five synods that are more or less independent of each other and function in a kind of federation known as the General Assembly.

The research issue was identified by observing that following the Presbyterian system of church government, one would expect that the church's courts would continue to become stronger and more powerful from the session to the General Assembly. However, what one actually sees on the ground is that real administrative and ecclesiastical power ends with the synods, so much so that the General Assembly appears to be a kind of umbrella organisation of no real significance. This is so despite the transformation of the constitution of the General Assembly in 2002, which aimed at giving more power to the General Assembly over and above the synods. This means that despite the CCAP clergy's intention to give more power to the General Assembly, the autonomy of the synods makes them more powerful than the General Assembly itself.

The aim of this research was to investigate the history and nature of the CCAP as a federative denomination. The study makes a conscious departure from most research activities on the CCAP which confine themselves to the histories of individual synods and or issues related to them without trying to engage with a composite history of the synods together with their General Assembly. This study therefore makes an original contribution to knowledge in the area of Church History and Polity by engaging with an integrated history of the synods and General Assembly of one of the mainline Protestant churches in South-Central Africa, thereby enriching our knowledge of Church History in this region.

The research was done through gathering of material from archival sources and contemporary documents and conducting informal and formal in-depth interviews with key informants. The material gathered from these activities was analysed systematically following the procedures of qualitative research.

The study shows that the CCAP Synods share their theological and historical roots all the way to the Reformation through the life and ministry of John Calvin in Geneva. The study also shows that the CCAP is a child of revivals as the missions that gave birth to the denomination were actually influenced by the spirit of revivals. It has been shown that during the formation of the CCAP there was much cooperation among the missionaries, indicating that the synods have always been one in cooperation and not in competition with one another, at least in their early history. However, things began to change with the actual process of the formation of the CCAP as the different attitudes of missionary personnel from the three original missions began to manifest. The result of such differences was that the formation of the CCAP endured many compromises for the sake of the success of its unity. Consequently, many things were not ironed out during the formative years of this federative denomination. Besides, the emerging African leadership did not play a significant role in the formation of the union and yet they were the ones to be entrusted with its future life. Consequently, the indigenous leadership of the CCAP has had to struggle with an elusive unity of the denomination over the course of its history.

The study validates the research hypotheses that the CCAP, with its ongoing inner wrangles and its own leadership's recognition of lack of real unity, has lost its denominational bearings, having become in fact a loose umbrella body of five distinct 'denominations.' The study further demonstrates that the original intention of the founding fathers of the CCAP to retain Synodical autonomy in respect of the mother churches arrested the development of the CCAP into a single and fully united denomination.

In view of these observations it follows that whatever unity the future of the CCAP holds, it must first of all be acknowledged that there is actually no one CCAP denomination but five denominations. It must also be realised that the CCAP has actually never been a single denomination before, except in assumption.

The efforts of the CCAP to move forward in its unity have often been hampered by references to a history that cannot be fully apprehended as it was beyond the grasp of African leadership to take full control of the CCAP while the missionaries, who were the initiators of the project, belonged to their own exclusive camps. The onus is therefore on the current leadership to re-orientate the denomination since current developments show that the denomination has reached a stage where a drastic landmark decision in its history is supposed to be made. I argue that this re-orientation of the denomination can only be successful if the leaders of the synods are concerned more with the future of the CCAP and its contribution to the Kingdom of God than with current divisions or the glorious past of the missionary era from whence the CCAP synods have come.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Preamble

The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) is one of the mainline churches in Central Africa. The CCAP as a denomination is composed of five synods; three of its synods are in Malawi and one each in Zimbabwe and Zambia. Administratively, the synods are under the General Assembly (formerly known as the General Synod), whose moderator is chosen from among the synods on a rotational basis. The origins of the CCAP in Malawi are traced back to the classical missions of the Church of Scotland (Blantyre Mission), Free Church of Scotland (Livingstonia Mission) and the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (Nkhoma Mission).

The first two Scottish missions came together to form the CCAP in the year 1924 and in 1926 the Dutch Reformed Church joined the union. However, the CCAP is not a very peaceful church, in the sense that its own diversity seems to be working against its stability.

1.2 The Research Issue

The CCAP is a unique denomination in Central Africa in that there is no any other denomination that is structured like it, administratively. This is so, partly, because of the Presbyterian system of Church government, which the CCAP follows, and partly because of the historical circumstances that influenced the development of the CCAP, as we know it today. In line with the Presbyterian system of Church government, the CCAP gives powers to the courts or assemblies of elders (both teaching and ruling) from the session, which is the lowest court, to the synod, which is the highest court.¹ However, in the Central African case the highest court is (or is assumed to be) the General Assembly, as it is higher than the synods.

Following the Presbyterian system of church government, one would expect that the influence the church's courts have would continue to become stronger from the session to the General Assembly, but what one actually sees on the ground is that real administrative and ecclesiastical power ends with the synods, so much so that the General Assembly appears to be a kind of umbrella organisation of no real significance. This is so despite the changes in the original constitution of the General Assembly, changes that consciously aimed at giving more

¹ The CCAP refers to its ordained clergy as teaching elders while the lay elders are known as ruling elders.

power to the General Assembly over and above the synods.² This means that despite the CCAP clergy's intention to give more power to the General Assembly, the autonomy of the synods still makes them more powerful than the General Assembly itself.

Because of the precarious position of the General Assembly, most members of the CCAP do not know much about it. The average CCAP member cannot even mention the leadership of the General Assembly or where its headquarters are housed. Even in the liturgies of the synods, the General Assembly is not given much attention. This can be seen in the intercessory prayers of the church where in most cases the synods are mentioned and prayed for systematically but nothing is heard concerning the General Assembly.

It seems the General Assembly is such an isolated thing that many people do not equate it with the CCAP as a denomination. For instance, while various works have been written on the individual synods, there is very little written on the General Assembly itself. Yet the CCAP can only be recognized as one denomination because of the existence of the General Assembly. Of late, there is some mention of the General Assembly, mostly in relation to the boundary wrangle between the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma, but even in this regard, the belligerent synods completely eclipse the General Assembly.

It is therefore clear that while the General Assembly was formed to unite the synods into one denomination, there is much more diversity and autonomy with the synods, such that the idea of the CCAP as a single denomination becomes questionable. The five synods have different liturgies, different Sunday school curricula and different catechisms, besides their differences in many other areas.

Even the institutions that hitherto seemed to underscore the oneness of the denomination in the face of the synods' autonomy are no longer serving that purpose as originally intended. For example, the initiative of the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma in establishing their own theological institutions apart from their participation in the ecumenical Zomba Theological College has greatly reduced the status of that college as an institution of the whole denomination. Besides, the position taken by the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma in not recognizing the boundaries between them because of their wrangle is a clear indication of the

² The original constitution of the CCAP General Assembly (or General Synod as it was known then) was adopted in 1956. However, in the year 2002 that constitution was overhauled in order to give more power to the General Assembly than was the case with the previous document.

powerlessness of the General Assembly. This in itself points to a lack of denominational oneness of these CCAP synods.

It is therefore important to dig deeper into the history and life of this denomination in order to understand its dynamics as it tries to make sense of a unity that only appears to be real in word rather than in deed among its five synods.

1.3 Hypotheses

This research therefore poses as its hypothesis the assertion that in view of the developments that have taken place and are still taking place in the CCAP, the organisation has lost its denominational bearings and has become a loose umbrella body of five distinct denominations.

The study also hypothesizes that the original intention of the founders of the CCAP to retain synodical autonomy, in respect of the mother missions, arrested the development of the CCAP into a fully-fledged denomination. With regard to historical circumstances, it is obvious that the different origins of the missions that eventually evolved into the CCAP have had a major impact on the course that the denomination has taken in its history.

1.4 Aim of the Research

The aim of this research was to investigate the history and nature of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) as a federative denomination. This aim made a conscious departure from most research activities on the CCAP, which confine themselves to the histories of individual synods and or issues, related to them.

1.5 Objectives of the Research

In order to achieve the above aim, the objectives of the study were to:

1. Trace the historical and theological origins of the CCAP.
2. Examine the influence of revivals on the missions that led to the formation of the CCAP.
3. Investigate issues surrounding the formation of the CCAP as a federative denomination.
4. Investigate the development of the concept of *comity* in Africa and how it was applied to missions that evolved into the CCAP.
5. Probe into the position of the General Assembly vis-a-vis the understanding of the common Christian in relation to CCAP identity.
6. Examine inter-synodical relationships in relation to issues of education, theological training and ethnicity.

7. Examine the position of women in the church from the point of view of the General Assembly and the actual practice in the five synods.
8. Analyse the Livingstonia/Nkhoma synods' boundary dispute and its impact on the CCAP in relation to the General Assembly's administration, congregational life and theological implications.
9. Investigate the role foreign relations play in the current developments in the CCAP.
10. Find out how developments in the CCAP influence the Church's relationship with the state.
11. Find out about the church's current and future plans in relation to the unity of the denomination and its identity in a pluralistic society.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

This study squarely falls within the confines of the sub-discipline of Church History and Polity in the wider field of Christian Theology. Due to the comprehensive nature of the discipline of theology, it is not possible to pursue any theological study in a narrow scope in terms of branches or sub-branches of the discipline. Consequently, other sub-disciplines are tackled in the study hence the presence of material that would otherwise be confined to systematic theology or missiology. As Steven Paas rightly observes:

The various branches and sub-branches of History do not belong to the field of Theology, *whereas Church History does*. But a certain knowledge of these branches of General History is indispensable when describing or telling the history of the Church.³

Theology therefore becomes very important in Church History research. The interpretation of the data of the Church historian can only make sense within a theological interpretation. Indeed as Hofmeyr argues, "Without a proper theological understanding, the writing of church history in Africa will still remain more of a dream than a reality."⁴

Since the bulk of this work falls within Church History and Polity, it becomes imperative to discuss the technicalities with regard to its approach. Church historians define Church History differently and approach the subject from various angles. Their emphases however show the type of spectacles a particular Church historian is wearing.

³ Steven Paas, *Digging out the Ancestral Church: Researching and Communicating Church History*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, ²2002, p. 13-14 (emphasis added.)

⁴ J.W. Hofmeyr, "Challenges for Writing Church History in Africa in a Global Age: A Zambian Perspective", *SKRIF EN KERK* Jrg (19 (1) 1998, pp. 38-39.

A systematic discussion of all the merits and demerits of the various approaches in Church History would be beyond the scope of this study. The present study, however, follows in the footsteps of Mark Shaw in trying to provide an interpretative framework of the material discussed herein from the concept of the Kingdom of God.⁵ According to Shaw:

God's raising up of witnesses to the theocratic, redemptive, and utopian aspects of his Kingdom is the key to understanding the variety of churches and religious movements that have made up the story of African Christianity.⁶

I have also been compelled therefore to use the key of the Kingdom of God in order to understand the position of the CCAP in the wider activities of the Church. Mark Shaw reveals that he is not the originator of this way of interpreting Church History. He claims to follow in the footsteps of John de Gruchy, who also followed the categories promulgated by H.R. Niebuhr in his engagement with Church History in America.⁷

Shaw argues that a Kingdom framework to the study of Church History in Africa offers hope to finding a higher reference point than either Church growth or African independence which are themes that have so far come to be identified with missionary historiography and nationalist historiography respectively.⁸ In following Shaw's footsteps this study therefore tries to strike a balance even between these two historiographical camps, hence a fair treatment of the contributions of foreign missionaries and that of the indigenous leaders of the denomination.

According to Mark Shaw the Kingdom of God manifests itself in three ways: Firstly, as the providential and theocratic rule of God; secondly as the redemptive rule of Christ in peoples' hearts and thirdly as the promotion of justice in the world.⁹ The denomination dealt with in this study is a product of the 19th century missionary movement, which according to Mark Shaw, is an example of the Church's witness to the Kingdom as a spiritual and personal redemptive rule

⁵ Mark Shaw, *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity*, Katunayake: New Life Literature, 2006.

⁶ Mark Shaw, *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity*, Katunayake: New Life Literature, 2006, p. 18.

⁷ See: Mark Shaw, *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity*, Katunayake: New Life Literature, 2006, pp. 12-15. See also John De Gruchy, *The Church Struggle in South Africa*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979 and H.R. Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America*, New York: Harper and Row, 1937.

⁸ Mark Shaw, *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity*, Katunayake: New Life Literature, 2006, pp. 99-10, 19.

⁹ Mark Shaw, *The Kingdom of God in Africa: A Short History of African Christianity*, Katunayake: New Life Literature, 2006, pp. 16-17.

of Christ. Its history will therefore be evaluated in view of its conformity or deviation from this position of the Kingdom concept. In addition, the third aspect of the Kingdom, namely the promotion of Justice in the world, will also be considered in view of the denominations' responses to the ongoing socio-political developments in its missionary context.

Yet another attempt is made in this work: that of trying to balance the male and female contributions to the history of the denomination. The challenge in this study, however, has been that stories of individuals have not been fully highlighted due to the overarching nature of the research as several things are forced to fit into a single narrative. Nevertheless, pains have been taken to make sure that the study does not favour one gender only.

1.7 Literature Review

1.7.1 Introduction to the Discussion on Selected Literature

The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) is one of the mainline churches in Central Africa, especially in Malawi and one of the earliest denominations to arrive in this part of Africa during the 19th Century missionary movement.¹⁰ This means that the history of this church is intricately tied up with the history of Malawi since it started in this country before going to neighbouring countries of Zambia and Zimbabwe.¹¹

Being one of the most prominent churches in Central Africa, it is not surprising to find that a lot has been written on the CCAP both in general history books and in Church history and theological works. These have been written by both African and non-African scholars from abroad. It is for this reason that some scholars in Malawi are of the view that a lot has already been researched and written concerning mainline churches, CCAP inclusive, so much so that it is now time scholars concentrated on other churches, especially smaller and new ones, which apparently seem not to have been given reasonable scholarly attention.¹²

¹⁰ The Livingstonia and Blantyre missions arrived in the country in 1875 and 1876 respectively while Nkhoma Mission was established in 1889.

¹¹ Many historians acknowledge the fact that the history of modern Malawi is a history that has been greatly influenced by the churches, especially the Presbyterian churches, who in a way even courted colonial administration into the country. See: P.R. Wurhurst, "Portugal's Bid for Southern Malawi 1882-1891", in B. Pachai et al (eds), *Malawi Past and Present: Selected Papers from the University of Malawi History Conference 1967*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1971, pp. 20-26.

¹² This is generally the view of Professor Klaus Fiedler, who because of such convictions is very much interested in the documentation of the histories and impact of churches that are not as prominent e.g. the Seventh Day Adventists, Bible Believers, the Jehovah's Witnesses and other non-mainline

Nevertheless, it is surprising to note that with regard to the history of the CCAP as a whole not much has been written. What we see in most cases are works on individual synods of the CCAP, and largely, treating the earlier decades of these synods (or missions, as they were known then). Conspicuously missing from the scholarly discourse is a comprehensive work that treats the CCAP as a federative denomination from the time of its establishment to the contemporary developments. This dissertation is an attempt towards filling this gap. In trying to do this, the present study is not trying to re-invent the wheel with regard to what is already known concerning the history of the five synods of the CCAP in Central Africa. To the advantage of the present researcher, some of the scholars who first wrote the early histories of these synods were accomplished academics whose works have now become classics. One, therefore, cannot circumvent these works when dealing with the history of the CCAP, irrespective of the choice of one's periodisation. Below is a sample of the relevant literature firstly under each synod and later about the CCAP as a whole, which lay the foundation for the present discussion.¹³

1.7.2 Livingstonia Synod

With regard to the Livingstonia Synod, the most significant work so far is that by John McCracken.¹⁴ McCracken set out to write a history of the Livingstonia Mission by analysing the relationship between politics and Christianity in Malawi and in so doing examining the impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the northern part of the country between the years 1875 and 1940. Though this book is very much concerned with political issues vis-a-vis Christianity, the author treats at length the inner life of the Church and all the major developments in the course of the history of the mission. The book starts with a survey of the economy and society of Malawi in the mid nineteenth century and then goes on to explain the background to the Livingstonia Mission of the Free Church of Scotland and the influence of Dr David Livingstone, the missionary explorer, whose labours are generally acknowledged as the causative influence of the coming in of Christianity to this part of Africa. While David Livingstone was of the view that Christianity and Commerce could easily be established in this part of Africa while replacing

denominations. See: Klaus Fiedler, *Teaching Church History in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2005, pp. 15-17.

¹³ The order of the synods or missions in the discussion follows the chronology of the establishment of the synods and not any other consideration.

¹⁴ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000.

the Arab slave trade and traditional religions, the Mission's initial encounter with this country did not succeed in these ventures, at least not in the area around the southern part of Lake Malawi, where the first Presbyterian mission station was established at Cape Maclear. McCracken, however, shows that in its subsequent establishment of mission stations, the Livingstonia Mission became quite successful as it kept on ascending along the shores of Lake Malawi. The book discusses at length the influence of the Overtoun Institution, the most developed educational institution in this part of Africa during the missionary era.¹⁵

This book by McCracken covers the history of Livingstonia Mission for a period of 65 years (1875-1940). Since the CCAP was formed in 1924/26 there are obviously overlaps, but the author's intention was only to concentrate on the history of Livingstonia and not on all the synods of the CCAP. Besides, no equal research has been done for the Synod of Livingstonia since McCracken published his classical work.

Another academic work worth mentioning concerning the Synod of Livingstonia is that by Moses Mlenga.¹⁶ Moses Mlenga set out to write a history of the Livingstonia Mission with the aim of covering the fifty years of post-missionary leadership from 1958 to 2008. Mlenga's work evaluates the contributions of indigenous leadership of the Synod of Livingstonia from the time the missionaries handed over the leadership mantle to local leaders of the Synod. It also examines whether indigenous leadership has done much to contextualise the faith by making it more African in view of contemporary developments. The present research finds this work to be very useful in that it brings the history of the Synod up to date by treating the years that are largely silent in the history of this Synod and the CCAP as a whole. However, Mlenga's work does not throw light on synodical relationships in the CCAP.

The above discussion of literature under the Synod of Livingstonia, though not exhaustive, gives us a picture of the history of the Livingstonia Synod as a tributary of the CCAP, thereby contributing towards a fuller understanding of the whole history of the denomination as will eventually be seen and appreciated in this work.

¹⁵ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre-Kachere, 2000.pp. 171-196.

¹⁶ Moses Mlenga, *History of Livingstonia Mission: 50 Years of Post-Missionary Leadership (1958-2008)*, Zomba: Kachere, 2012.

1.7.3 Blantyre Synod

With regard to Blantyre Synod, the undisputable classical work concerning the history of the Synod is that of Andrew Ross.¹⁷ Just like his fellow Scot, McCracken, Ross' treatment of Blantyre Synod's history is mostly in relation to the making of modern Malawi - which obviously emphasises the political contribution of the synod. Notwithstanding the bulk of political discussion in the book, there is substantial information concerning the establishment of the mission and all the relevant developments in its history up to the time of Andrew Ross's research. The book tries to explain why there were so many CCAP members as detainees during the Nyasaland State of Emergency of 1959. From here, the author wants to show that it was because of the contribution of Blantyre Mission to education that there were so many mission-educated Malawians who wanted to take part in the struggle for independence during the years leading to 1964, when Malawi became an independent country. The book also tackles the history of the CCAP in general but mostly from the formative years.

Another significant work among the many works that treat the history of Blantyre Synod is the biography of the Reverend Jonathan Sangaya, the first General Secretary of Blantyre Synod by Silas Ncozana. Ncozana's biography of Sangaya provides a link between missionary and indigenous leadership of the Church.¹⁸ The author does not hide his admiration for the man whom Blantyre Synod was privileged to have as its leader in the turbulent period of the 1960s and early 1970s. Since this is biographical work, it is not surprising to find that most of the discussion centres on the person of Sangaya; the CCAP is mentioned only in passing.

While more works can be cited concerning the birth and development of Blantyre Synod, the above-cited sources do give a picture of the Synod as a part of the CCAP, whose overall history is the concern of the present research.

1.7.4 Nkhoma Synod

Just like the first two Malawian synods, Nkhoma Synod has also received reasonable scholarly attention. The most comprehensive history of Nkhoma Synod is the dissertation of Christoff Martin Pauw who provides substantive material on the history and development of Nkhoma

¹⁷ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996.

¹⁸ Silas S. Ncozana, *Sangaya: A Leader in the Synod of Blantyre of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996.

Synod from Malawi and the Western Cape in South Africa.¹⁹ Pauw's work digs the history of Nkhoma Mission from the beginnings to the year 1962 when the Missionary Council of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission handed over responsibilities to the indigenous leaders of Nkhoma Synod under the General Administrative Committee (GAC). Pauw's work includes the history of Nkhoma Synod from the mid-1920s to the 1960s within the context of the CCAP unity, which is the issue that this dissertation is grappling with. It is interesting to note that the observations of the present researcher are very much in agreement with those of Pauw with regard to the synods' relationships with one another. Pauw notes that at the time of the formation of the CCAP, the three presbyteries (which later became synods)

were independent to such an extent that the Synod could even be said to have been more of a Federated Church than a United Church, each presbytery retaining its own constitution, liturgy, and standing orders.²⁰

It is this dimension of the CCAP, as a federated church, that the present research is trying to highlight from a historical point of view.

Closely following Pauw's work and continuing the story of Nkhoma Synod from where Pauw stopped is the work by Walter Lawrence Brown.²¹ Brown consciously takes up the story of Nkhoma Synod from around 1962 to the year 2004, acknowledging the foundational work of Pauw.²²

Of special importance to Brown is the question of the self-understanding of Nkhoma Synod as an autonomous church after the departure of missionary administration. In his work, Brown devotes a chapter to the relationship of Nkhoma Synod with other synods of the CCAP. It is this chapter that has a direct bearing on the present research as it shows that the synods are indeed autonomous and churches in their own right so much so that the CCAP is indeed a mere umbrella body of independent denominations that share a name.

¹⁹ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980.

²⁰ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 339.

²¹ Walter Lawrence Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church during the First Forty Years of Autonomy: An Ecclesiological Study", PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2005.

²² Walter Lawrence Brown, "The Development in Self-Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church during the First Forty Years of Autonomy: An Ecclesiological Study", PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2005, p. 6.

On the side of the treatment of women within the jurisdiction of Nkhoma Synod, Isabel Apawo Phiri's book is becoming a classic in its own right.²³ Phiri argues that due to the system of patriarchy, women have not fared well under the Presbyterian System of Church Government in that the system has been greatly monopolised by men, with women's contribution only existing on the fringes of influence. The merit of Phiri's work is that it is the first of its kind to treat the inner life of Nkhoma Synod's religiosity, especially with regard to the position of women in the Church. Just as the authors cited above, Phiri's work remains partial with regard to painting a comprehensive picture of the situation in the CCAP as a whole as it only deals with Nkhoma Synod's issues vis-a-vis the cultural influence of the Chewa on the treatment of women in the Church. Nevertheless, this work is quite significant in showing the differences between Nkhoma Synod and other synods with regard to the practical steps in responding to women's issues in the churches as they continue to emerge.

1.7.5 Harare Synod

With regard to works on the CCAP Harare Synod, the first comprehensive history was written by M.S. Daneel in the Chichewa language.²⁴ This book explains the history of the Synod from the beginnings in 1912 up to 1982. Of special significance in this work is the discussion on the inner life of the church, especially the concern with pastoral issues among the members of the Church who are mostly immigrants from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique.

Apart from Daneel the other important work on the history of Harare Synod is the work by Samuel Gunde.²⁵ The work by Gunde, though written from the point of view of Church History, focuses much on the issue of Church Growth in the Synod, especially numerical growth of the members.

The two pieces of literature provide ample information for the discussion of the presence of the Harare Synod in the CCAP though they do not go very far in explaining the nature of the CCAP General Assembly and the relationship among its synods.

²³ Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experiences of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1997.

²⁴ M.S. Daneel, *Mbiri ya CCAP Sinodi ya Harare 1912-1982*, Harare: CCAP, 1982.

²⁵ Samuel Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry regarding Growth of Membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod (1912 – 2012)", MA (Theology) University of Stellenbosch, 2013.

1.7.6 Zambia Synod

A thorough introduction to the history of Zambia Synod is presented by Victor Chilenje in his PhD thesis.²⁶ Chilenje traces the history of the Synod from the 1880s when missionaries of the Livingstonia Mission started evangelising in what is now Zambia. Chilenje's emphasis in this work is on the origin and development of this Synod in Zambia while touching on the developments in other areas in order to show the interconnectedness of the history of this Synod with other Synods of the CCAP. The thesis covers the period from 1882 to 2004 thereby providing a substantial amount of information for this synod in the tapestry that is the history of the CCAP.

1.7.7 The CCAP as a Whole

With regard to works that try to bring the intertwined histories of the five synods together as a federative denomination, the literature is currently not available. However, even if the literature were to be available, the treatment of the history from 1924 or before to the present would in no way be exhaustive in a single work. In fact writing a comprehensive history of the CCAP within this span would be the activity of a lifetime. It is for this reason that this dissertation wants to make a contribution, no matter how humble, towards filling the gap that is there with regard to the treatment of the CCAP as a federative denomination in Central Africa.²⁷ However, two works deserve special mention with regard to the discussion on the unity of the CCAP synods.

The first work is by Lapani Nkhonjera.²⁸ This work is quite significant for the present research despite its level as a Bachelor's Degree dissertation that is yet to be published, making its quality a bit lower though it has a good amount of useful information. Nkhonjera's work is a passionate plea for practical unity in the CCAP which he finds wanting after tracing the denomination's history from the missionary era to the year 2008. He concludes by noting that

²⁶ Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007.

²⁷ The gap I am talking about here is with regard to the histories that are specifically dealing with CCAP issues. However, when it comes to general histories or the history of the Church in Africa and Malawi there are works that try to bring together the histories of CCAP synods especially during the formative years of the CCAP. Examples of such works would include: John Weller and Jane Linden, *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo, 1984; Harvey J. Sindima, *The Legacy of Scottish Missionaries in Malawi*, Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992.

²⁸ Lapani Nkhonjera, "The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian: Formation and Impact on its Unity and Disunity", BD, Zomba Theological College, 2008.

the General Assembly of the CCAP is a very weak institution whose decisions are easily ignored by the synods, which are still invested with a lot of power.²⁹ Nkhonjera's conclusion propels this research to dig the history of the CCAP as a federative denomination in order to understand further the dynamics of such an ecclesiastical organisation, especially by looking at the relationships of its synods.

The second work is by Augustine Musopole, published in the journal *Transformed*, in which he discusses the CCAP from the point of view of its being an ecumenical project gone sour.³⁰ The provocative title of the article reads, "Is CCAP a Failed Ecumenical Experience?" This article specifically treats the border dispute between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma within the wider history of ecumenism in which the CCAP provides an interesting case study among churches founded by missionaries in Africa.

Musopole traces the problem of the border dispute between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma to the establishment of the Dwangwa Sugar Corporation, which according to him attracted Nkhoma Synod to open new churches in an area that belonged to the Synod of Livingstonia. Without putting blame on any one of the two synods for the havoc they have caused in the CCAP, Musopole laments the ethnic-language factor that divides the two CCAP Synods. Musopole's observations with regard to the formation of the CCAP, is that it can be looked upon as a product of ecumenism, at least from the time of its birth. He asserts that the 1924 constitution of the CCAP was tentative because the missionaries felt "that only the indigenous people would decide the final shape that the new church could and would adopt on matters of doctrine and practice."³¹ Musopole further argues that the 2002 constitution was intended for the synods to realise the 1924 vision but which has now been adversely affected by the ongoing conflict between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma. Musopole goes on to show that over the years the CCAP has been able to show positive signs of ecumenism in areas such as theological education which culminated in the establishment of Zomba

²⁹ Lapani Nkhonjera, "The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian: Formation and Impact on its Unity and Disunity", BD, Zomba Theological College, 2008, p. 93.

³⁰ Augustine Musopole, "Is CCAP a Failed Ecumenical Experiment?," *Transformed* Vol. 1. No. 1, August-October 2009.

³¹ Augustine Musopole, "Is CCAP a Failed Ecumenical Experiment?," *Transformed* Vol. 1. No. 1, August-October 2009, pp. 4-7.

Theological College and the joint venture in the production of *Nyimbo za Mulungu Chichewa Hymnal*.³²

In trying to trace a theology of ecumenism in relation to the CCAP, Musopole observes that this vision is rooted in five things: Firstly, the mission of Jesus Christ himself who wanted and prayed in his priestly prayer that his disciples be one (John 17:1-26). Secondly, he observes that the vision was also rooted in the Reformation, especially considering the Reformed nature of the CCAP. His emphasis is that the church should always be reforming (*semper reformanda*) under the sovereignty of God. The vision of ecumenism is said to have been easier due to the Scottish links of all the three Malawian synods. In the fourth observation, Musopole argues that the initiators of the CCAP union were of the view that the Holy Spirit would lead and direct the indigenous leaders into further theological reflection, making the union even stronger. The fact that this is not happening, according to Musopole, makes one to conclude that it is not the spirit of Jesus Christ that is leading the two synods into doing what they are doing. Lastly, Musopole faults the theological training that is producing the CCAP leaders in failing to equip them with the right theological tools to forge the church ahead instead of defending their actions on non-theological grounds. Musopole concludes that the actions of the disputing synods have actually invalidated all the ecumenical progress that had begun in 1924/26. He finds fault with the loss of authority of the Word of God and also in the pride of institutional identity, language, culture and region[alism].³³

1.7.8 Concluding Thoughts on Literature Review

The above literature review shows that there is need for a comprehensive research on the intertwined histories of the synods of the CCAP in order to come up with an interpretative framework for understanding the history and nature of the CCAP as a federative denomination; a Church that is unique in Central Africa where oneness and diversity seem to be a never-ending experience of the agonies of a history that cannot be changed and a future that can only be imagined at present.

Contrary to earlier works which mostly start with either the coming of Dr David Livingstone to Malawi or the 19th Century Missionary advance in general, this dissertation makes a

³² Augustine Musopole, "Is CCAP a Failed Ecumenical Experiment?," *Transformed* Vol. 1. No. 1, August-October 2009, p. 5.

³³ Augustine Musopole, "Is CCAP a Failed Ecumenical Experiment?," *Transformed*, Vol. 1. No. 1, August-October 2009, p. 6.

conscious departure from that trend by starting with the figure of John Calvin, who is generally considered the father of Reformed Theology and the Presbyterian System of Church Government. It has been necessary to do so because of the importance of understanding the theological fountain of the three original synods of the CCAP in Malawi, which can all be traced back to the Geneva reformer John Calvin in the 16th Century. This is a historical task of very special importance, as it will show that the coming together of the three Presbyterian missions during the second decade of the 20th Century was not a matter of trying to force a unity that could not work. It will therefore be easier to argue that the possibility was there for the CCAP to develop into a fully-fledged united denomination under one central administration without its development being arrested in the mould of a federative denomination with independent synods that behave like rival denominations.

1.8 Research Methodology

While this research, largely, falls within the sub-disciplines of Church History and Church Polity (i.e. Church Law) in the studies of Theology and Religion, the nature of the subject matter demanded that several approaches be used in relation to the various themes tackled. For example, as church history demands, there have been many historical methodologies in dealing with past events in the development of the CCAP as a federative denomination. On the other hand, the research has made use of some knowledge of missiology, anthropology and sociology as when dealing with ethnic issues in the encounter of Christianity and African cultures and current issues in the interaction between religion and society.

With regard to material collection, I first acquainted myself with all the relevant literature to do with the history of the CCAP denomination, starting from John Calvin in the 16th century to the history of the Church of Scotland and the formation of the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This material has provided the background to the formation of the CCAP in the year 1924. At the same time there has been a treatment of the Dutch Reformed Church (via South Africa), being the mother church of the Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP.

Besides the use of published literature, I also visited various archives that contain both published and unpublished material related to my research. Of special importance were archival sources treating the histories of the synods from their formative years when missionaries arrived in this part of Africa. With regard to contemporary developments, I made use of newspapers

and online publications in order to gauge media and public feelings and analyses on the issues to do with my research.

I also visited several relevant websites from where I got important information for the study. Besides these, I also sought access to contemporary files that have documents that are still being piled up in view of the various developments still taking place within the CCAP General Assembly and its synods.

The above activities were supplemented with information from various people who were purposely selected for in-depth interviews, both with regard to historical reminiscences and comments on contemporary issues. In this category, some of the clergy from the CCAP synods were of great importance in providing the much-needed information. Individuals were targeted because of the researcher's conviction that they possessed relevant information either because of their present or former position in the church or some important connections. In most of these interviews, I used a voice recorder in order to capture the whole conversation so that I could trace and appreciate the context in which each piece of information was given. These interviews were later transferred to a computer, where after listening to them attentively, they were transcribed and the information was arranged in a notebook according to recurring themes.

Throughout the thesis, Christian theology has been the interpretive framework for all the issues surfacing from the research since Church history cannot be divorced from Christian theology.³⁴ Over all, the research heavily relied on a qualitative approach with regard to the analysis of the material gathered and the conclusions reached.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

When dealing with the history of the CCAP or any other Church history for that matter, there are many equally useful things that one may be tempted to include in a dissertation like this one. For example, one may want to satisfy the readers' curiosity by treating the early histories of the synods at length with details on the formation of individual presbyteries and congregations and even biographical details of notable personalities. One may also be tempted to show the evidence regarding the growth of the church statistically and otherwise. Though all these things are important, this study has not tackled them because a choice was made at the

³⁴ See: E. van Niekerk, "Can the Angel be Saved?: Comments on Church History as a Theological Discipline," in *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae* XIV, 1988. Cf. Steven Paas (with contributions by Klaus Fiedler), *The Faith Moves South: A History of the Church in Africa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006, p. 12.

proposal stage that the study would only include content that was directly relevant to the aim of the present discussion, which is about the federative nature of the CCAP General Assembly, hence the treatment of the synods in a synoptic fashion. Besides, considering questions of feasibility given the time that one has to finish a tightly scheduled PhD programme it becomes inevitable to limit oneself to what is achievable within the confines of certain parameters.

In line with the aim of the research, the discussion has therefore concentrated on the General Assembly and the synods' histories have been discussed only as far as they relate with one another in a federative fashion. Consequently, the main objective of the study has been achieved without much ado about information that does not have a direct bearing on the discussion, though equally important in other respects.

1.10 Ethical Consideration

Of ethical significance in the methodology of this research were mostly interviews with key informants who divulged on many a thing that was either politically or otherwise sensitive and I have consciously hidden the names of the informants with such information. Besides, before conducting the interview the purpose of the research was thoroughly explained in order to gain informed consent from the interviewees and I made sure that nothing that violates the rights of my informants be entertained. I am therefore quite confident that this is a research that does not infringe upon other people's rights in any way. Should the reader discover anything that is unethical in this work it will be dealt with as soon as it comes to the notice of the researcher for corrective purposes.

1.11 Value of the Study

The value of this study is that it makes a contribution to the emerging picture of Central African Church History through its concentration on the five synods and the General Assembly of the CCAP found in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The study further throws light on the political and socio-economic aspects of life in relation to the influence of religion as experienced in the context of the Church's catchment area. It has to be pointed out that previous studies have overtly concerned themselves with individual synods and or their presbyteries rather than the whole CCAP as a federative denomination under the umbrella of the General Assembly. It is in this all-embracing approach to the study of the CCAP that this work attempts to be a forerunner, hence breaking new ground.

1.12 Limitations of the Study

In an attempt to bring to a single narrative the histories and challenges of five Synods of the CCAP with their General Assembly it is more than likely that some things have been left out. In this regard, it has to be mentioned that the Malawian Synods appear to have been given much treatment when compared to their sisters in Zambia and Zimbabwe. This has been the case because it was more convenient for the researcher to deal with the Malawian Synods than with the non-Malawian synods due to travel costs. Consequently, there are likely to be gaps in the discussion as it directly affects Harare and Zambia Synods though such limitations do not significantly alter the picture in as far as the overall aim of this study and its findings is concerned.

1.13 My Position as a Researcher

I am a member of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian currently residing in Mzuzu City, which is the seat of the headquarters of the Synod of Livingstonia. Before coming to Mzuzu I was a member of the same denomination in Blantyre and Zomba where I was also ordained a church elder in 2006 within the jurisdiction of Blantyre Synod. I have also had a chance to belong to Nkhoma Synod at one time.

This means that in as far as congregational life is concerned I have been exposed to all the three Malawian Synods of the CCAP. However, I have not been a member of either the Synod of Harare or the Synod of Zambia at any time.

My position shows that with regard to congregational life I am an insider and one who is well versed with the denomination's way of doing things, especially at congregational level. However, since my ecclesiastical authority has never gone beyond deliberating and voting in the session, which is the lowest court in the denomination, my experience at higher levels such as presbytery, synod and General Synod is wanting. I have, therefore, relied much on literature and interviews in order to understand higher court issues in the denomination.

With regard to the actual findings of the research my position does not influence the research in any significant way except to say that I am passionate about the CCAP's welfare and ministry but not to the extent of extreme subjectivism.

1.14 Thesis Outline

Below is a summary explanation of the contents of each individual chapter of the dissertation in order to give a picture of the configuration of the whole work.

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introduction is the technical chapter that introduces the subject matter of the thesis and discusses all the technical approaches with regard to the dictates of academic research. Some of the technical issues discussed in this chapter are: the statement of the problem, hypothesis, the aim of the research, specific objectives of the research, literature review and methods of the research process.

Chapter 2: The Fountain of CCAP Theology and History

In this chapter, I discuss the genesis of the churches that eventually influenced the formation of the CCAP in Malawi right from the time of the Reformation. It has been necessary, therefore, to critically present the figure of John Calvin (1509-1564) as the acknowledged father of Reformed Theology and the Presbyterian system of church government. Thereafter the path of Reformed Theology and Presbyterianism has been traced from Geneva in Switzerland to Scotland and Holland through the influence of figures like John Knox and others. The overall presentation of the material in this chapter shows the common roots of the missions that gave birth to the CCAP and argues that the amalgamation was a natural consequence of these seemingly estranged siblings. There is also a discussion in this chapter on the differences between the Presbyterian and Reformed traditions even though they are mostly taken to be one thing.

Chapter 3: The Influence of Revivals on Missionary Activities that Gave Birth to the CCAP

This chapter explains the relationship between revival and missionary activities, especially in order to underscore the fact that it is revival that sets ablaze the church's missionary zeal, which also influences the Church's ecclesiology. In this regard, it has been necessary to show how the Great Awakening influenced the formation of the Scottish missions to Africa, especially those that led to the formation of the CCAP. In the same vein, there is a discussion on the *Nadere Reformatie* in order to explain the influence of this revival on the missionary activities of the

Dutch Reformed Church in Holland, which gave birth to the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa and influenced the Livingstonia Mission.

Chapter 4: The Three CCAP Tributaries: Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma up to 1926 and Further Developments in the Union

In this chapter, I present a brief history of the three missions of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma from their establishment to the formation of the CCAP in the third decade of the 20th Century amidst the clamour of ecumenism. Special attention has been paid to the ever-cooperating spirit of the early missionaries of these missions and the eventual establishment of the CCAP in a progressive and cumulative manner of missionary strategy and appropriate response to the historical context. Here, the relationship to related developments in other African countries has also been tackled. The concept of comity has also been discussed in this chapter in order to show how it was practically applied in the case of Malawi, emphasizing the African perspective and experience.

Chapter 5: The CCAP: One Denomination, Several Independent Synods

This chapter discusses the inner life of the CCAP from its formation to the present times in terms of its liturgy and other denominational and congregational practices in order to highlight the points of unity and diversity within the denomination. Significantly, this chapter also looks at the church/state relations and evaluates how the various synods have cooperated or differed in their responses to the various political contexts in history. For example, there have been times when the CCAP synods have cooperated in their prophetic voice towards the government but also times when some synods felt it necessary to write pastoral letters individually without involving their sister synods. Diversity has also been traced in developments like educational policies, theology and theological training.

This chapter also looks at the position of women in the five CCAP synods in order to appreciate the similarities and differences with regard to the way women have fared in the history of the CCAP.

Chapter 6: The Pangs of Unity in Diversity among CCAP Synods

This chapter discusses the growing tensions within the CCAP as one denomination from its establishment in 1924/26 to the time the Synods came into the open concerning their differences. The chapter argues that the process of union did not go all the way to make the

CCAP one denomination in Malawi, thereby sowing seeds of discord in the future, unbeknown to the otherwise well intending missionaries and early African church leaders.

The chapter also discusses the wrangle between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma and the precarious situation of the synods of Blantyre, Harare and Zambia vis-à-vis the unity of the CCAP.

Chapter 7: The Unstable Position of the CCAP General Assembly

In this chapter an in-depth analysis of the position of the General Assembly (and changes in this position) vis-à-vis its synods is presented in order to appreciate the challenges associated with the denominations' unity.

Chapter 8: Foreign Relations and Current Developments in the CCAP

This chapter explores the relationship of the CCAP General Assembly and the five synods with regard to foreign partnerships. The chapter discusses the dynamics of foreign relations in view of the current challenges the CCAP is facing, especially the oneness of the synods.

Chapter 9: Oneness of the CCAP Synods beyond the Border Disputes

This chapter explores the current relationship of the five synods in what can be termed a post-border wrangle period. This, however, is tricky in the sense that the understanding of many is that the border issue is not over but that the synods have swept the dirt under the carpet, pretending that their declaration of “no more borders” has solved the problem. In fact, it is a recipe for socio-theological pitfalls in the sense that matters of ethnicity and the catholicity of the Church will always have a bearing on the Church's witness. It is in view of this observation that I argue that the CCAP is no longer one denomination (if at all it ever was) but five denominations in the names of the synods under a very loose umbrella denominational name.

This chapter further presents an ecclesiological evaluation of the history of the CCAP by trying to show the theological pitfalls that have been dogging and continue to dog the CCAP in this century.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

Finally, chapter ten provides a conclusion based on the overall findings of the research and presents a challenge to the current CCAP leadership with regard to a possible vision for the denomination's future.

Chapter Two: The Fountain of CCAP Theology and History

2.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the origins of the churches that gave birth to the CCAP by tracing the sources of the Presbyterian system of church government and Reformed Theology from the figure of John Calvin and others in the 16th Century. I argue that the current history of the CCAP in Malawi cannot be fully understood without appreciating the ministry and convictions of John Calvin, who is generally taken to be the Father of the Reformed tradition and the Presbyterian system of church government. Indeed, as William Barry comments

The cold, hard, but upright disposition characteristic of the Reformed Churches, less genial than that derived from Luther, is due entirely to their founder himself.¹

It is therefore logical to start with a biographical sketch of the reformer, before showing his influence on the terrain of Church History, reflected even in the context of contemporary Central Africa in the life of the Synods of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.

2.2 John Calvin and his Contribution

2.2.1 Birth and Early Life

John Calvin was born at Noyon in Picardy, France in the year 1509 to Gerard Calvin and Jeanne LeFranc. His father was a lawyer by profession and he wanted very much that his son should follow him in his career. To that effect, John Calvin's father tried as much as he could to influence the young John Calvin into pursuing a legal career. Though John Calvin eventually became something else, his acquaintance with the legal profession left an indelible mark on his intellect, which eventually contributed to his theological reasoning, especially with regard to the meticulous systematisation of theological ideas issuing from his laborious exegesis.²

John Calvin was the fourth son in a family of five sons, which made his family not very well to do despite his father's professional background and middle class social status. It was therefore fortunate for the young Calvin to have a chance of being tutored privately together

¹ William Barry, "John Calvin", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, New York: Robert Appleton, 1908. Retrieved February 20, 2013 from *New Advent*: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03195b.htm>.

² William Barry, "John Calvin", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, New York: Robert Appleton, 1908. Retrieved February 20, 2013 from *New Advent*: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03195b.htm>.

with the children of a noble friend of his father's. After some time the Church granted him a benefice in order to continue with his education. At the age of fourteen Calvin was admitted into the College de la Marche of the University of Paris, where he studied for a short time before moving to the College de Montaigu.³

2.2.2 *Scholarship*

Calvin's ambition was to become a scholar and so he set himself to the study of theology and literature. However, due to his father's influence, Calvin enrolled at the University of Orleans in the Faculty of Law and later on moved to Bourges, still pursuing the legal career. Even though Calvin had trained as a lawyer, the year 1531 gave him an opportunity to continue with the studies he enjoyed after the death of his father, who was no longer in a position to influence him. His interest in literature enabled him to publish his first book, a commentary on Seneca's work, *De Clementia*, in the year 1532.⁴

It is generally believed, and rightly so, that Calvin was greatly influenced by the humanist scholars during his university studies and that he had become a budding humanist scholar before his ministerial convictions.⁵ Calvin's Christian convictions came in the year 1533 or thereabout when he claims to have experienced what he termed a "sudden conversion."⁶ What this actually was all about has eluded many a scholar. Nevertheless, what is clear is that even though Calvin was already a Christian and had done some studies in preparation for the priesthood, during this time he experienced a deeper spiritual experience, which would eventually change his understanding of the Christian faith, especially as practiced by the Roman Catholic Church then. This eventually gave him the conviction that he had a mission to fulfil with regard to

³ William Barry, "John Calvin." *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3. New York: Robert Appleton, 1908. Retrieved February 20, 2013 from *New Advent*: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03195b.htm>.

⁴ R. Ward Holder, "John Calvin", <http://www.iep.utm.edu/category/history/philosophers>, Retrieved 25.2.13.

⁵ Nigel Lee, *Calvin on the Sciences*, Cambridge: Sovereign Grace Union, 1969, p. 10.

⁶ Briefly mentioned in his *Preface to the Commentary on the Psalms*. See: John Calvin, "The Author's Prefaces, xl-xli", in *Commentary on the Psalms*, vol. I trans. James Anderson, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1979. See also H.B. Lee, "Calvin's Sudden Conversion (*Subita Conversio*) and Its Historical Meaning", *Acta Theologica Supplementum* 5, 2004.

Protestant Christianity. Calvin surrendered his clerical benefice in 1534, which was symbolic of permanently severing his connection with the Roman Catholic Church.⁷

In March 1536 Calvin published his most significant work, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, while in Basel after he had ran away from Catholic persecution in Paris. This book, considered by many to be “the standard of orthodox Protestant belief in all the Churches known as ‘Reformed’” was revised several times during the author’s lifetime until 1560, when the last edition was published.⁸ This work, as finally produced, is in four parts: Book I, God the Creator; Book II, God the Redeemer; Book III, The Way we Receive the Grace of Christ; and Book IV, The Church.⁹ It has been suggested that the order of Calvin’s *Institutes*, to some extent, follows the pattern suggested by the Apostles’ Creed.¹⁰

Apart from the *Institutes*, Calvin wrote numerous commentaries on books of the Bible and many tracts and sermons, especially during his stay in the City of Geneva. His pen was so prolific that it remains a mystery how he managed to write all the things he wrote, given the stressful life and ministry that was his experience in Geneva.¹¹

2.2.3 First Contact with Geneva

In July 1536, John Calvin was on his way to Strasbourg, but he detoured towards Geneva in order to avoid the Habsburg-Valois wars. While in Geneva, Guillaume Farel, who was a Protestant preacher in the city, persuaded Calvin to stay so that they could team up in establishing Protestantism thoroughly in Geneva.¹² This event, which, humanly speaking was but an inconvenience on the part of John Calvin, was so significant in the life of the reformer, in that it marks his acquaintance with the City of Geneva where he would eventually work for

⁷ R. Ward Holder, “John Calvin”, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/category/history/philosophers>, Retrieved 25.2.13.

⁸ William Barry, "John Calvin", *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. 3, New York: Robert Appleton, 1908. Retrieved February 20, 2013 from New Advent: <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/03195b.htm>.

⁹ R.S. Wallace, “Calvin, John”, in Sinclair B. Ferguson (ed), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, p. 121.

¹⁰ R.S. Wallace, “Calvin, John”, in Sinclair B. Ferguson (ed), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, p. 121.

¹¹ Williston Walker, *John Calvin: The Organizer of Reformed Protestantism 1509-1564*, New York and London: Knickerbocker Press, 1909. Also T.H.L. Parker, *John Calvin: A Biography*, Westminster: John Knox Press, 2007.

¹² [http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/John Calvin.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/John%20Calvin.htm), retrieved, 1.3.13.

the Kingdom of God. Except for a three-year break, he spent the rest of his life in Geneva, becoming the renowned Geneva Reformer who gave birth to the Presbyterian System of Church Government and the system of Theology known as Calvinism or Reformed Theology. Calvin thus narrated his encounter with Farel:

Farel, who burned with an extraordinary zeal to advance the gospel, immediately strained every nerve to detain me. And after having learned that my heart was set upon devoting myself to private studies, for which I wished to keep myself free from other pursuits, and finding that he gained nothing by entreaties, he proceeded to utter an imprecation that God would curse my retirement, and the tranquility of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance, when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so stricken with terror that I desisted from the journey which I had undertaken.¹³

The period during Calvin's initial stay in Geneva saw the city coming out of a religio-political turmoil due to the struggle for independence in which it had been embroiled for some time. Two authorities wanted to rule the city. On the one hand was the Duke of Savoy and on the other the Bishop of Geneva. The city allied itself with the cantons of Bern and Fribourg against Savoy. The Bishop eventually fled the city and Savoy was defeated in 1535.¹⁴

By the time John Calvin was arriving in the City of Geneva in 1536, some reforms had already taken place in the church. For example, monasteries had been dissolved, the Roman Catholic Mass abolished and papal authority renounced. However, the city was not united with regard to the type of reformation that the citizens were supposed to follow. Eventually there developed two opposing camps. The first was the camp of the 'libertines', who wanted the affairs of the Church to be governed by the magistrates, with a lot of freedoms on the part of the citizens. On the other hand were Calvin and Farel who wanted a more radical approach to the reforms and the church leaders to be in complete control of the city. It, however, happened that during this initial stay of Calvin's in Geneva the populace was for mild reforms as championed by the libertines. This made Calvin and Farel less popular in the city so much, so that in the year 1538, the two reformers were expelled from Geneva and they went to live in Strasbourg as exiles.¹⁵

¹³ *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, trans. by James Anderson, in *Calvin's Commentaries*, 22 vols. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1993), preface, pp. xlii-xliii. Quoted in Garry Williams, "John Calvin in the Valley of the Shadow of Death", http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_print.php?1642, retrieved 10.4.13.

¹⁴ Garry Williams, "John Calvin in the Valley of the Shadow of Death", http://www.Banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_print.php?1642, retrieved 10.4.13.

¹⁵ Garry Williams, "John Calvin in the Valley of the Shadow of Death", http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_print.php?1642, retrieved 10.4.13.

2.2.4 Exile in Strasbourg and Return to Geneva

Calvin stayed in Strasbourg for three years from 1538 to 1541 and it is obvious that this experience influenced his thinking a great deal. It is significant to note that during this time, Calvin met Martin Bucer, who was a moderate Protestant reformer from Germany. Bucer's ideas might have greatly influenced John Calvin, especially when it comes to ecclesiastical organisation.¹⁶ In 1541, Calvin returned to Geneva after the libertines had been expelled from the city in the previous year. It was now Calvin's sole responsibility to make sure that things were moving in the right direction. He committed himself to the development of a new liturgy, a new formulation of doctrines and a new organisation of the Church and moral behaviour. This task took fourteen years for Calvin to complete.¹⁷

With regard to the liturgy, Calvin wanted a very simple form of worship without the elaborate way of doing things that was characteristic of Medieval Catholicism. The services he introduced were plain and simple, placing great importance on the preaching of the word. His sermons were very logical and intellectually inspiring. Though Calvin liked music, his thinking at the time was against it in the context of Church worship; he believed that it distracted people from concentrating on worship and seeking the knowledge of God. He therefore banned musical instruments from churches but allowed non-instrumental singing of the congregation.¹⁸ He also encouraged the use of the psalms in singing.¹⁹

¹⁶ Steven Paas, *Ministers and Elders: The Birth of Presbyterianism*, Zomba: Kachere, 2007, pp. 50-54.

¹⁷ [http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/John Calvin.htm](http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/John%20Calvin.htm), retrieved, 1.3.13.

¹⁸ The Free Church of Scotland (Wee Frees) continued with this idea of John Calvin's of only singing the Psalms and not hymns and making use of no musical instruments in church until as recent as 2010 when the church voted in favour of hymn singing and the use of instruments. Three pastors of the church are said to have resigned over this issue because they wanted to continue with the conservative stand. See: "Free Church Minister Resigns over Music in Services", www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-glasgow-west-12480877, retrieved 1.3.13.

¹⁹ It is interesting to note that even though the congregations of the CCAP are now free to use all sorts of instruments in the Church, they are not coming from that background. This may be the reason why most of them have been quite resistant to the Charismatic Movement's influence in the area of contemporary music with the use of all sorts of instruments and lively emotional expression. Within the African context, it can be argued that the failure of missionary churches to encourage the use of all sorts of traditional musical instruments in the Church, in a way, arrested the spontaneous inculturation of the liturgy with regard to congregational singing. It is only now that the mainline churches, including the CCAP, are encouraging their people to express themselves freely in their cultural ways.

2.2.5 Calvin's Theology

Calvin's theology was so influential that it did not remain in Geneva alone. The theological system known as Calvinism found its way into such countries as France, Germany, Poland Holland, Scotland and Switzerland itself. However, for the sake of this dissertation, we are only interested in the development of this theological tradition as it planted itself in Scotland and Holland (and eventually South Africa); these being the countries that nurtured the growth of this brand of Christianity before it came to Malawi in the latter half of the 19th century, eventually leading to the formation of the CCAP in the first half of the 20th Century.

The theology known as Reformed or Calvinist Theology is distinguished from other theological systems mostly because of Church government and the doctrines of grace. There is a consensus that the theology of Calvin centred on the doctrine of the sovereignty of God in that God is the one behind all that happens in the universe and that it is his predetermined purposes that succeed. It is, however, argued that Calvin is not the sole originator of Reformed Theology despite the prominence accorded to him when discussing Reformed Theology.²⁰ There can be no doubt, though, that Calvin was the greatest contributor to what is now known as Reformed Theology despite the contributions of other reformers and latter divines in the course of the history of the Reformed Churches.

It is, therefore, important now to appreciate a general understanding of Calvin's theology. As already alluded to, Calvin's theology starts with the idea of the sovereignty of God. For Calvin "God is providentially in control of all things that come to pass, including evil things, but this does not make him the author of evil."²¹ Having settled the question of God, Calvin went on to expound the doctrine of man.²² According to Calvin's view, which is the position of Reformed theology, man was created in the image of God and was pure before the fall. Due to the fall, man lost his original purity and became depraved. This depravity is so thorough that all the faculties of man have been affected. It is, therefore, not possible for man to seek God

²⁰ "Calvin is sometimes made to be the exemplar of Reformed theology (and perhaps rightly so), but Reformed theology is, by no means, limited to him. So, rather than tracing Reformed theology to Calvin as the sole source, Reformed theology is better imagined as a river into which many sources flow and from which many streams originate." Robert Johnson, "What is Reformed Theology?," *Institute for Reformed Theology*, <http://reformedtheology.org/SiteFiles/WhatIsRT.html>, retrieved 5.3.13.

²¹ www.theopedia.com/John_Calvin, retrieved 11.3.13.

²² I am using the word "man" here to mean humanity in general. This is so in view of lack of a better way of expressing these ideas in a language that would be perceived to be more inclusive.

unaided because even his will has been tainted so much so that man cannot, on his own, seek God. Man, therefore, becomes saved, in the Christian sense of the term, when God takes the initiative on his behalf.

The initiative God takes in his plan of saving man finds full expression in the person of Jesus Christ, the God-man, who bridges the gap between the righteous God and sinful man. With regard to the natures of Christ after the incarnation, Calvin closely follows the orthodox patristic view of the two natures in one person. It is on record that Calvin was the first theologian to describe the work of Christ in terms of the threefold office of prophet, priest and king.

As prophet, Christ's teachings are proclaimed by the apostles for the purpose of our salvation. As priest, Christ's sacrifice of himself and his mediation before the Father secures the salvation of men. As king, Christ rules the Church spiritually in the hearts of its members.²³

With regard to the person and work of Christ, it can be argued that Calvin's theology was not unique in its formulation, except perhaps in its emphases. His description of the three-fold office of Christ has nowadays become so popular and is accepted by all theological traditions. Besides, its scriptural backing is not hard to comprehend.

On the part of the Holy Spirit, Calvin taught that it is He who unites men to Christ when Christ is received and believed in by faith through the testimony of the scriptures. The work of the Holy Spirit is so important that without its manifestation, it is not possible for any person to have a saving faith in Jesus Christ.²⁴ In line with the rest of the reformers, Calvin also stressed on the doctrine of justification by faith, which is understood in Reformed Theology as the result of the mercy of God and not the merits of human beings.²⁵

With regard to the teaching on sacraments, Calvin restricted himself only to the two dominical sacraments namely: Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In contradistinction from sacramentalists, who are of the view that sacraments are a means of justifying grace, Calvin taught that they are the marks of Christian profession, testifying to God's grace.²⁶ Calvin believed that infants were proper objects of baptism. He, therefore, did not object to infant baptism. His view, however, differed from that of the Roman Catholic Church and Martin Luther in that he taught that baptism did not regenerate infants who were baptised. For Calvin,

²³ www.theopedia.com/John_Calvin, retrieved 11.3.13.

²⁴ Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1956, p. 24.

²⁵ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 3:17:8.

²⁶ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4:1-53.

infant baptism symbolised entrance into the New Covenant just as circumcision did for the Old Covenant.²⁷

Calvin's theological acumen was again manifested in the way he came to understand the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, especially with regard to the presence of Christ in it. Calvin took a middle position over and against Martin Luther and the Roman Catholic Church, on one hand, who believed that the body of Christ was literally present in the sacraments and that of Zwingli, on the other, who taught that the Lord's Supper was a mere memorial.²⁸ Specifically, Calvin's position was against the doctrines of transubstantiation and consubstantiation as believed and taught by Roman Catholics and Lutherans respectively. It has been argued that the elements, as a symbol, could not be the thing they signified whereas Zwingli's position of memorialism divorced the symbol from the substance. The Calvinist position is that when one receives the bread and wine, which are literal food and drink, in a spiritual sense, he receives the spiritual food and drink of the Christian; Christ being spiritually present when the Eucharist is received by faith.²⁹

2.2.6 Calvin's Church Polity: The Presbyterian System

Perhaps the most notable thing about Calvin as one of the fathers of the Reformation was his formulation of the government of the Church known as the Presbyterian System. As with all other things in history, the Presbyterian System of Church Government has somewhat evolved from the time of John Calvin to the present day. Besides, the system has taken on the flavour of the localities wherein it has been established. Nevertheless, the foundation and structure of the Presbyterian System of Church government started with John Calvin in Geneva.

With regard to Church Government, Calvin came up with his new ordinance in the year 1541. He considered the Medieval Church to have deviated from the New Testament pattern, and so, in his thinking, he was trying to go back to the apostolic model of Church Government. He, therefore, started by abolishing the office of bishop, making all ministers equal. They had to preach and teach the word, administer the sacraments and look after the spiritual welfare of the people. They were also responsible for the moral discipline of the people, helped by the elders, who were from among the lay people. According to the arrangement of the time in

²⁷ *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, 4:23.

²⁸ www.theopedia.com/John_Calvin, retrieved 11.3.13.

²⁹ www.theopedia.com/John_Calvin, retrieved 11.3.13.

Geneva, these elders were elected by the city council. Though eventually the mandate of electing church elders and deacons became exclusively that of the Church, the element of democracy with regard to ecclesiastical offices had been introduced in the Presbyterian system of Church Government. From that time onwards, the Church would have different courts of the clergy (teaching elders) and the lay elders (ruling elders) from the session all the way to the synod.³⁰

Calvin's system consisted, at the lowest level, of a local council of pastors responsible for teaching and shepherding the church. Above the council was the Consistory, which was a larger council comprising pastors and lay elders elected according to district. This body was responsible for maintaining church discipline and watching over the moral lives of the church members. Above the consistory was the presbytery, which was a regional body and above it were the provincial synod and a national synod.³¹

This pattern has been followed over the centuries in all the churches that belong to the Presbyterian tradition.³² In the Central African setting, following the developments in Scotland and Holland and South Africa, the lowest court in the CCAP is called the session. This is the body responsible for the running of the affairs of the church at congregational level. It is a body comprising the pastor (known as the moderator) and elected lay elders and deacons. The name congregation in this context is a bit tricky in that it is more than a congregation would mean in other churches. The church where the pastor is resident may have several smaller congregations, which are referred to as prayer houses. These smaller congregations or prayer houses send their representatives to the mother congregation, which houses the session, as it were, and the prayer houses are members of that session where decisions are made even for them. In some synods, for example the Synod of Livingstonia, it is vestries that form the session, which means the vestries are responsible for the administration of prayer houses.

2.2.7 Death and Impact

John Calvin died in 1564 at an early age of fifty-five. His life ended after battling with many bodily ailments besides fierce opposition from various quarters. Though he did not die in old age, Calvin had completed his task, as it were, if we look at the impact of his life and ministry.

³⁰ Steven Paas, *Ministers and Elders: The Birth of Presbyterianism*, Zomba: Kachere, 2007, pp. 54-56.

³¹ www.theopedia.com/John_Calvin, retrieved 11.3.13.

³² See: R.E.H Uprichard, *What Presbyterians Believe*, Ahoghill: The Oaks, 2011, pp. 79-87.

His writings are still read today and many are the churches that trace their historical roots back to him. His combination of legal training and theological abilities enabled him to balance the Christian understanding concerning the relationship between God's grace and the law in the life of the believer, which has remained a mark of Calvinism up to this day.³³

It was Calvin's wish that he should be buried in an unmarked grave after his death, and that wish was followed. Consequently, there is no mark pointing to Calvin's sepulchre up to this day.³⁴ In doing this it can be surmised that Calvin did not want an exaggerated posthumous honour and fame. Nevertheless, Calvin has remained well known in history, attracting both admiration and hatred depending on one's theological position and interpretation of history since the 16th century. The CCAP synods in Central Africa are among the denominations that hold Calvin in high esteem (they ought to if they do not), hence this treatment of the reformer before we consider more of his influences below.

2.3 Reformed Soteriology

The Churches referred to as Presbyterian and Reformed follow a certain understanding of the Christian teaching on soteriology or the teaching concerning the salvation of humankind. Due to historical circumstances, the teachings of Calvin on soteriology have been summarised into five points.³⁵ It is interesting to note that these teachings in their crystallised form of five points were not formulated by John Calvin himself. However, many scholars are of the view that all the points in this system point to the teachings of John Calvin, thereby validating the nomenclature 'Calvinism.'³⁶

Historically, though, the five points were not hammered by Calvinists in their leisure time while appreciating the theological depth of their founder. They were actually a response to the formulation by the followers of the teachings of James Arminius who came up with the five ways of refuting Calvinism in 1610.³⁷ Eventually the five points of Calvinism under the Acrostic

³³ John Witte, "Calvin the Lawyer", *Tributes to John Calvin On His 500th Birthday*, David Hall and Martin Padgett (eds), pp. 1-23, 2010. Available at SSRN: <http://ssrn.com/abstract=1863624>, retrieved 8.4.13.

³⁴ Garry Williams, "John Calvin in the Valley of the Shadow of Death", http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/articles/article_print.php?1642, retrieved 10.4.13.

³⁵ W.J. Seaton, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970.

³⁶ B.B. Warfield, *Calvin and Calvinism*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1931.

³⁷ W.J. Seaton, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970, p. 7.

TULIP were formulated at the Synod of Dort in the Netherlands in the year 1618. Ever since, these points have been part of Calvinistic theology for better or for worse. The “T” in the acronym refers to “Total Depravity” (or total inability). This means that the fall of humanity affected all the departments of human life without leaving any area untouched. There is always an explanation from the sympathisers of this view that this does not mean that mankind is as evil as evil can be, but only that all the parts of humanity, such as mind and body, have been marred by the presence of sin. Since humans are affected in totality by sin, it is not possible that they can do anything to redeem themselves. That explains the concept of total inability.³⁸ The Arminians were of the view that depravity was partial in that humans still had the potential to respond to the gospel and be saved despite the fall.

The “U” in the acronym stands for “Unconditional Election.” This follows logically from the above position. If humans are totally depraved and unable to save themselves, then only God can save them. Since all humans are sinful, it follows that those that are saved are not saved because of their ability but because God chose to redeem them unconditionally, that is to say without anything from them compelling God to save them. This point was emphasized by Calvinists at the Synod of Dort in contradistinction to the Arminian position, which argued that God elected some people unto salvation because in his foreknowledge he had seen that they would respond to the Gospel. His choice, therefore, according to Arminianism, was based on the condition that the people were able to respond to the divine message.

The third letter in the acronym stands for “Limited Atonement”, meaning that the number of the people who are to be saved is exactly as God has intended in electing some people unto salvation. This means that even though the blood of Jesus is enough to atone for all humanity, in practical terms only the elect are atoned for, therefore, the availability of Christ’s atonement is “limited” to the number of the elect.³⁹ This position was against the Arminian view that Christ’s atonement is potentially available for all without any reference to the elect.

The “I” in the acronym stands for “Irresistible Grace,” meaning that those who have been atoned for, following their unconditional election, cannot resist the grace of God to have them

³⁸ W.J. Seaton, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970, p. 8.

³⁹ Whether the people to be saved will be more than the damned, Reformed Soteriology does not explain, though the Bible talks of multitudes from every nation, tribe, people and language (Rev. 7:9).

saved. This means that humans are compelled to be saved and they cannot do otherwise but eventually respond to the gospel call no matter their initial resistance or hardness of heart.

Finally, the “P” stands for “Perseverance of the Saints.” This means that the saints who have thus been drawn to God are in no danger of falling away from their effectual calling as their security is guaranteed. They may in the course of their journey face “many dangers, toils and snares”⁴⁰ but in the end, the will of God for their salvation and glorification shall prevail.⁴¹

The Calvinist understanding of the doctrines of grace as elucidated here is highly cherished by those that know them and believe in them. On the other hand those that know them but do not believe them, they have nothing but contempt for them. Some even suggest that these teachings are against the scriptures, making their source less holy. In fact, many CCAP Christians do not know about these teachings. The reason for the ignorance of many Christians on such teachings is largely the absence of such teachings from the pulpit. In any case, this is the teaching of the CCAP as endorsed in the various books of doctrine that explain the faith as understood from a Presbyterian and Reformed perspective. A good example of the literature that forms the theology of the CCAP apart from the writings of John Calvin himself and his successors is the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. This doctrinal document is in most cases accompanied by *The Shorter Catechism* and *The Larger Catechism* that also teach about the same things.⁴²

2.4 Presbyterianism in Scotland

After the reformer John Calvin had established the Presbyterian System of Church Government in Geneva, he went further and established the Geneva Academy, which eventually had a profound effect on the spread of the Calvinist understanding of the Christian faith in the rest of Europe.⁴³ It was through the influence of this school that John Knox, the harbinger of the Presbyterian system into Scotland, became acquainted with the teachings and manner of John

⁴⁰ Quoted from John Newton’s hymn, “Amazing Grace.”

⁴¹ W.J. Seaton, *The Five Points of Calvinism*, Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1970, pp. 20-22.

⁴² From a Malawian point of view, Handwell Hara’s work makes a nice introduction to the relationship between Reformed Soteriology and the Malawian context. See: Handwell Yotamu Hara, *Reformed Soteriology and the Malawian Context*, Zomba: Kachere, 2008.

⁴³ Tim Dowley (ed), *The History of Christianity*, Oxford: Lion Publishing, p. 390.

Calvin.⁴⁴ An often-repeated quote of John Knox concerning the Geneva Academy is that it was “The most perfect school of Christ since the time of the apostles.”⁴⁵

John Knox is the credited leader of the Reformation in Scotland though it is on record that he alienated many by his rigid and censorious attitude.⁴⁶ It has to be remembered, however, that these were times of both political and religious upheavals. Consequently, the reformers could not afford to be responsible only for spiritual matters, for the success of spiritual matters largely depended on favourable political conditions. In 1559, John Knox returned to Scotland from continental Europe and became a vocal proponent of Reformed theology and the concept of Presbyterian leadership in the church. A number of Scottish lords had already been agitating for religious reformation in the Scottish Church, and they enthusiastically embraced John Knox's teaching. Under Knox's leadership, these “Lords of the Congregation” wrote the *Scottish Confession of Faith* in 1560, which ended papal jurisdiction in Scotland and outlawed the Mass. The *Scottish Confession* remained the primary doctrinal guide for the Church of Scotland until the publication of the *Westminster Confession* in 1647.⁴⁷

When the reformation started taking place in the Church of Scotland, there were three factors that affected it, eventually determining the route that the Scottish reformation was going to take. The first factor was the continental reformation, especially from Geneva as led by John Calvin. The second factor was the reality of a national episcopal church that needed to be reformed and lastly the struggle between church and state for the authority of the church.⁴⁸ This means that the reformation in the Scottish Church was largely the result of another instance of the practicability of the ideas of John Calvin with regard to Church polity. It was what Calvin had taught, starting from France and finally in Geneva that the Church in Scotland considered worth adopting in its reforming exercise. However, some scholars have observed that the development of Presbyterianism in Scotland did not absolutely follow the pattern laid down by John Calvin. This was so because of the unique situation in Scotland, which differed significantly from the contexts in which John Calvin's ideas were first practised and adopted. Nevertheless, the nucleus idea was the same.

⁴⁴ Jasper Ridley, *John Knox*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1968.

⁴⁵ Tim Dowley (ed), *The History of Christianity*, Oxford: Lion Publishing, p. 390.

⁴⁶ Tim Dowley (ed), *The History of Christianity*, Oxford: Lion Publishing, p. 390.

⁴⁷ Tim Dowley (ed), *The History of Christianity*, Oxford: Lion Publishing, p. 390.

⁴⁸ Jurgens Johannes van Wyk, *The Historical Development of the Offices according to the Presbyterian Tradition of Scotland*, Zomba: Kachere, 2004, p. 22.

With regard to the second factor, the reformation in Scotland was not supposed to develop alongside Roman Catholicism. There was a desire to have the whole national church, which was Episcopalian, change according to the dictates of Reformed ideas of church polity. There was therefore, some kind of compromise for the sake of facilitating a national reformation between those that wanted the Church to be thoroughly reformed by giving absolute powers to the church as a whole and the sympathisers of the Episcopalian system who, politically, wanted the state to have a say in the running of the church through the office of the bishop. As it happened, however, the pure Presbyterian way of doing things as proposed by John Calvin was altered by elevating the courts or assemblies, which eventually had the same authority as the bishop in a diocese except that in the case of the presbytery, they were a group of people instead of an individual. It is because of such observations that Jurgens Johannes van Wyk argues that the offices of the Church according to the Presbyterian system are yet to be developed.⁴⁹ According to van Wyk,

It was this ambivalent tradition that was brought to Central Africa by the various Scottish missionaries, embraced by Dutch Reformed Church missionaries with their Scottish background, and accepted and maintained by the African Church.⁵⁰

Due to the difficulties that the Church of Scotland faced with regard to the issue of ecclesiastical control, there was a “time bomb” that was not diffused in the early decades of the Scottish reformation which would eventually explode in the 19th century in the event known as the Disruption of 1843. The Disruption was a schism that took place in the established Church of Scotland, in which 450 ministers of the Church broke away over the issue of the Church's relationship with the State to form the Free Church of Scotland. The events leading to the Disruption can be traced with accuracy to the event that took place in the year 1712 when the Patronage Act was passed, giving local lairds legal powers to choose ministers for their congregations. In effect this meant that congregations had no say in who preached the word to them.⁵¹

This ruling often caused deep unhappiness, as local Church members felt they had a right to say who should preside over their worship. Gradually ministers began to leave the church, starting with the resignation of the Stirling minister, Ebenezer Erskine, whose secession is

⁴⁹ Jurgens Johannes van Wyk, *The Historical Development of the Offices according to the Presbyterian Tradition of Scotland*, Zomba: Kachere, 2004, p. 128.

⁵⁰ Jurgens Johannes van Wyk, *The Historical Development of the Offices according to the Presbyterian Tradition of Scotland*, Zomba: Kachere, 2004, p. 13.

⁵¹ <http://www.scotland.org.uk/history-of-scotland/disruption>, retrieved 29.3.2013.

sometimes referred to as the Original Secession.⁵² This was followed by the second secession by Thomas Gillespie in 1761, who founded the Relief Church.⁵³

The last straw in the build up to the Disruption was the Reform Act of 1832 and the establishment of a group of Evangelicals within the Church, who, among other things, wanted the Church to be serious with missionary work. These Evangelicals found themselves in tension with the Moderates who easily aligned themselves with the lairds. As the power of the opposing group grew, they insisted that the Church should allow congregations to have their own ministers and that ties with the government be relaxed. In 1834, the Church's General Assembly passed the *Veto Act*, which allowed prominent members within a congregation to reject a patron's choice of minister for the congregants. This landmark act would have gone a long way in ensuring that the Church was back in the hands of ordinary Christians, if it were not for the legal battle started by one John Hope, who was at the time one of Scotland's leading legal figures. John Hope challenged the *Veto Act* in court, making the Church endure a protracted legal battle which ended in the House of Lords ruling that the General Assembly did not have the legal right to amend the law that gave patrons the power to appoint ministers for congregations.⁵⁴

These developments had greatly affected the relationship between the Church and the government by the year 1842.⁵⁵ The General Assembly tried to assert its ecclesiastical powers by drawing up a Claim of Right, barring the state from interfering in ecclesiastical matters. This Claim of Right elevated Christ as the head of the Church and not the government.⁵⁶

By 1843 some ministers wanted to convince the government that they were not deliberately trying to cause trouble. However, among their ranks there were some who wanted to part ways with the established Church because they were convinced that the established Church had surrendered its ecclesiastical powers to the state and that the state had weakened the Church's spiritual power. It, therefore, happened that during the meeting of the General Assembly in May of 1843, some ministers walked out of the meeting into the nearby Tanfield Hall where they elected Thomas Chalmers as their first Moderator of the newly established Free Church of

⁵² <http://www.scotland.org.uk/history-of-scotland/disruption>, retrieved 29.3.2013.

⁵³ James Rankin, *A Handbook of the Church of Scotland*, Oxford: Blackwood, p. 57.

⁵⁴ <http://www.scotland.org.uk/history-of-scotland/disruption>, retrieved 29.3.2013.

⁵⁵ J.H.S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, London: OUP, 1960, pp.334-335.

⁵⁶ <http://www.scotland.org.uk/history-of-scotland/disruption>, retrieved 29.3.2013.

Scotland. Following this development, a total of 474 ministers left the Established Church of Scotland.⁵⁷

As time went by the issues that had caused the Disruption were abandoned by the established Church of Scotland, and government control of the Church was stopped altogether. With the issues that had caused the division no longer there, it became possible for the two sides to reunite. In the year 1900 the Free Church of Scotland had joined the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UP) to form the United Free Church of Scotland.⁵⁸ It was this United Free Church of Scotland that re-united with the Church of Scotland in 1929.

The above history is quite interesting when we try to relate the developments in Scotland and those that were happening in Malawi which was the mission field for both the Free Church of Scotland and the Church of Scotland before the reunion. The Free Church of Scotland was responsible for the establishment of Livingstonia Mission in Malawi in 1875 which eventually became the Synod of Livingstonia of the CCAP, from where also the CCAP Synod of Zambia was born. On the other hand, The Church of Scotland was responsible for the establishment of Blantyre Mission in Malawi in 1876, which eventually became the Blantyre Synod of the CCAP. This clearly shows that the history of these two synods is a history of churches whose 'mother' Church knows unity, division and re-union.

Another significant thing to note is that Robert Laws, one of the most popular Scottish missionaries in Malawi, was, back home in Scotland, a member of neither the Church of Scotland nor the Free Church of Scotland but of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Due to the cooperation between the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland it was possible to have Robert Laws in the Free Church's missionary party, being the only ordained minister in the group when the group set out for Malawi. The merger of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland that took place in 1900 did not unsettle Robert Laws at all since as a missionary he was already working for both churches. Robert Laws' cooperation with the missionary party of Blantyre Mission also found fruition in the re-union of the Free Church of Scotland and the Church of Scotland through the merger with the United Free Church of Scotland in 1929, though this happened after he had retired as a missionary but he was still alive and he might have rejoiced at the event.

⁵⁷ J.H.S. Burleigh, *A Church History of Scotland*, London: OUP, 1960, p. 334.

⁵⁸ The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland was a merger of the Relief Church and the United Secession Church established in the year 1847.

This section, therefore, clearly shows how the Presbyterian system of Church government and the theological tradition known as Reformed Theology found their way from John Calvin in Geneva in the 16th century to Malawi in the 19th century via Scotland. This connection caters for the establishment of the Synod of Livingstonia and Blantyre Synod of the CCAP in Malawi. There is need therefore to also trace the history leading to the coming of the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries in Malawi from South Africa who are credited with the establishment of Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP, which later gave birth to the Harare Synod.

2.5 The Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands

The Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP is a child of the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa which had come from the Netherlands in the 17th Century. Interestingly, though, the South African Church has retained the name while the mother Church in the Netherlands changed its name in the 19th century and has experienced a metamorphosis through by many amalgamations so much so that what we have there now is no longer the original Dutch Reformed Church that was born out of the 16th Century Reformation.

The original Dutch Reformed Church was born in the 16th Century as a result of the desire for freedom from both political and religious oppression among the people of the Netherlands. In the 16th Century, the Netherlands were under the Spanish Monarchy, which was against its subjects being drawn towards Protestantism because of its Catholicism. As a result, King Charles V of Spain even established the inquisition in the Netherlands in 1522 in order to deal with those that were agitating for reforms in the Church.⁵⁹ Through influential leaders such as William the Silent, the Dutch shook the Spanish yoke off their necks and became an independent nation. As an independent nation they decided to adopt Protestantism as their religion and it so happened that the brand of Protestantism that was most popular was that of Calvinism. The first general synod of the Dutch Reformed Church took place in the year 1571 and thereafter other general synods followed. Having fallen for Calvinistic Theology it was not surprising to see the Dutch Reformed Church following the Presbyterian System of Church Government. The *Belgic Confession* of 1561 and the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563 were accepted as standards of doctrine in the Dutch Reformed Church which had become the national Church of the Netherlands.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/410259/Netherlands-Reformed>, retrieved 28.3.13.

⁶⁰ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/410259/Netherlands-Reformed>, retrieved 28.3.13.

In the year 1798 the Dutch Reformed Church was dis-established as the national Church of Holland, though the government still retained some influence over it. In 1816 the Dutch Reformed Church was renamed the Netherlands Reformed Church after it had undergone some reorganisation by King William I. Due to theological disputes the Church was not spared from breakaways. In 1834 the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands broke away from the Netherlands Reformed Church. However, the Netherlands Reformed Church still remained the most influential Protestant Church in the Netherlands though it was not the biggest until the 20th Century.

More developments were to take place within this church. In May 2004, the Netherlands Reformed Church (formerly Dutch Reformed Church) and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands joined with the Evangelical Lutheran Church to form the Protestant Church in the Netherlands. This Church has become the largest Protestant denomination in the Netherlands with over 2.5 million members currently.⁶¹

Our interest though is mostly with the group that left Holland in the 17th century for the Cape of Good Hope in South Africa. This group carried the Dutch Reformed Church to South Africa where the name has remained until now, even though the original Church changed the name in the 19th century.

2.6 The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa

The Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa is a denominational family of three sister denominations that trace their history back to the Dutch Reformed Church of the Netherlands which was born out of the Reformation in the Netherlands.⁶² This Church came to South Africa in 1652 when Jan van Riebeeck and the first Dutch colony established it at the Cape as a church of their homeland. From the Cape the church spread into many parts of South Africa and neighbouring countries.

It is this Church that became the mother church of the Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP owing to the fact that the first missionaries who came to plant this brand of Christianity in Malawi came from South Africa after the Church had been there for over two centuries. As shall be

⁶¹ <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/410259/Netherlands-Reformed>, retrieved 28.3.13.

⁶² These sister churches are: *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk (NGK)*, *Nederduitsch Hervormde Kerk (NHK)* and *Gereformeerde Kerke (GK)*. Sourced from: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Reformed_Church_in_South_Africa, 8.4.13.

seen in the subsequent sections, the coming in of the Dutch Reformed Church missionaries in Malawi was well received by the Presbyterian missionaries of Scottish background who were in the missions of Livingstonia and Blantyre. These had been in the country for over a decade and were quite familiar with the mission field and so they could provide a base for their South African Dutch colleagues who, like them, were Reformed in their theology and Presbyterian in their Church polity.

It is interesting to note that despite the differences in nationality and theological emphases, all the three missions could trace their history back to the ministry of John Calvin in Geneva in the 16th Century. It can therefore be argued that with regard to their historical origins, these three synods have always been one Church together with the Synods of Harare and Zambia which are mature and independent daughters of the Synods of Nkhoma and Livingstonia respectively.

2.7 The Difference between Reformed and Presbyterian

In the history of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches, sometimes a question is asked with regard to the difference between the two. Are all Reformed churches Presbyterian? And are all Presbyterian churches Reformed? It has to be pointed out that it is not easy to untangle the two because their histories are so intricately woven together. For instance, Reformed Theology is sometimes referred to as Calvinism even though it is well known historically that Calvin was not the sole developer of Reformed thinking. He, however, ended up eclipsing all those who came before and after him in the thinking that has come to be known as Reformed Theology.

A simple explanation of the difference between the two is that first and foremost the term Presbyterian specifically refers to a form of Church government by elders (presbyters) in opposition to government by bishops (Episcopal system, prelacy), or by congregations (congregationalism, independency), though it may also refer to a system of scriptural doctrine.⁶³ The Presbyterian system falls between the Episcopalian and Congregational systems.⁶⁴

The Presbyterian System of Church government provides ruling courts of the Churches at various levels comprising of teaching and ruling elders. The teaching elders are ordained clergy

⁶³ E.P. Clowney, "Presbyterianism", in Sinclair B. Ferguson (ed), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, pp. 539-531.

⁶⁴ <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12392b.htm>, retrieved 1.4.13.

whereas the ruling elders are lay members of the church though some of them may have undergone theological training.

On the other hand Reformed Theology specifically refers to the Reformation teaching that slightly differed from the position of Martin Luther. This teaching in itself is quite diverse and expresses a kind of plurality which is found in the various catechisms and confessions of the Reformed Churches such as *The French Confession* of 1559, *The Scots Confession* of 1560, *The Belgic Confession* of 1561, *The Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563, *The Second Helvetic Confession* of 1566, *The Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church of England* of 1562 and 1571, *The Canons of the Synod of Dort* of 1619, the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and catechisms of 1647 and the *Formula Consensus Helveticus* of 1675.⁶⁵

Apart from the above works, included in the Reformed Theology corpus are all the various works of the leading representative theologians of the Churches referred to as Reformed Churches such as Ulrich Zwingli and Heinrich Bullinger of Zurich, Martin Bucer of Strasburg and Cambridge, John Calvin and Theodore Beza of Geneva, Peter Martyr Vermigli of Strasburg, Oxford and Zurich and other recognized writers in the tradition such as Karl Barth and G.C. Berkouwer.⁶⁶

All the churches with the name Presbyterian are also Reformed or Calvinistic in their theology. However, not all churches that are Reformed are also Presbyterian.⁶⁷ This means that Reformed Theology is bigger than Presbyterianism. Some congregational and Baptist churches also belong to the Reformed family though in terms of Church government they are not Presbyterian.⁶⁸ With regard to the synods under focus in this dissertation, it is interesting to note that it is only the synods with the Scottish mother church (i.e. Livingstonia and Blantyre) that are coming from a background where the name Presbyterian was used. On the other hand, the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa and its parent, the original Dutch Reformed Church of the Netherlands, which is no longer there, never used the word Presbyterian in their names though they were Presbyterian in terms of church government. This means that whatever

⁶⁵ R.W.A. Letham, "Reformed Theology", in Sinclair B. Ferguson (ed), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, p. 569.

⁶⁶ R.W.A. Letham, "Reformed Theology", in Sinclair B. Ferguson (ed), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, p. 569. Handwell Yotamu Hara, *Reformed Soteriology and the Malawian Context*, Zomba: Kachere, 2008, pp. 42-113.

⁶⁷ R.E.H. Uprichard, *What Presbyterians Believe*, Ahoghill: The Oaks, 2011, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁸ See: R.E.H. Uprichard, *What Presbyterians Believe*, Ahoghill: The Oaks, 2011, p. 80.

differences may be there between Reformed and Presbyterian, in the Central African context the two are combined within the CCAP via their Scottish and Dutch roots all the way to John Calvin in Geneva, Switzerland in the 16th century.

2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the genesis of the churches that eventually influenced the formation of the CCAP in Malawi right from the time of the Reformation. It was, therefore, necessary to critically present the figure of John Calvin as the acknowledged father of Reformed Theology and the Presbyterian System of Church Government. Thereafter the path of Reformed Theology and Presbyterianism has been traced from Geneva in Switzerland to Scotland, Holland and South Africa through the influence of figures like John Knox and others. There has also been a discussion in this chapter on the difference between the terms Presbyterian and Reformed even though they are in most cases wrongly taken to mean one thing.

The overall presentation of the material in this chapter shows the common roots of the missions that gave birth to the CCAP and argues that the amalgamation was a natural consequence of these seemingly estranged siblings. The next chapter looks at how the three mission stations that evolved into the CCAP got established in Malawi fuelled by revivals. Special reference is given to their cooperation right from the beginning so that their oneness is emphasised prior to the amalgamation that eventually took place in the first half of the 20th century, albeit not without problems.

Chapter Three: The Influence of Revivals on Missionary Activities that Gave Birth to the CCAP

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets to give an overview of revival history as it affects Malawian church history, with special reference to the CCAP denomination in order to underscore the importance of revivals in mission formation and the spread of the Christian faith. The goal is to show how missions, which in most (if not all) cases are born in revivals, influence the church's theology and history. It will eventually be shown that if it were not for revivals, the Protestant brand of Christianity, of which the CCAP is part, would not have come to this part of Africa.

The word 'revival' is understood in different ways by different people. For example in certain American religious circles the word refers to evangelistic campaign meetings or open air evangelism rallies.¹ In this study the word revival refers to those moments in the history of the Church when there is an extraordinary outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the believers. It is "God's quickening visitation of his people, touching their hearts and deepening his work of grace in their lives."² This greatly affects the believers who in most cases are empowered to preach, teach, counsel, pray and do other extraordinary things with great zeal and fervour. It is during revivals that many non-Christian people and nominal Christians become converted since revival times are renewal moments in the life of the Church.

According to Kenneth Scott Latourette, who is indisputably one of the greatest Church historians, "the Holy Spirit moves forward Church History by bringing in ever new revivals which produce ever new organisations."³ Latourette's emphasis is on the emergence of new organisations but it is now common knowledge that apart from organisations, revivals produce denominations as well. While some Christians feel that the presence of many denominations is a bad thing for Christianity since it suggests a division in the body of Christ, others argue that they are actually expressions of the vitality of the one body of Christ.⁴ The latter's argument is

¹ See: C.G. Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*, Cambridge, MA, 1960.

² J.I. Packer, "Theology of Revival", in Sinclair B. Ferguson (ed), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester/Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1988, p. 588.

³ Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity*, vol. 1. From 1-1500 AD, Peabody: Prince Press, 2007, p. xxi.

⁴ Klaus Fiedler, *Missions as the Theology of the Church*, p. 6.

based on the fact that since the Holy Spirit is the one behind revivals, and since denominations are children of revivals, it logically follows that Christian pluralism cannot be evil.⁵

3.2 A Brief History of Revivals

Before the 16th Century Reformation there were many activities in the Church which can be referred to as revivals.⁶ However, for the sake of modern Church history scholars like to start counting revivals from the Reformation period (1517). Following this pattern of counting revivals, the second revival is that of Puritanism in Britain and Pietism in continental Europe, starting around 1572. On the third position we have the Great Awakening from the year 1734. The fourth one is the Holiness Revival which some scholars call the Second Evangelical Awakening (1859). The Pentecostal Revival of the 1900s would be the fifth revival and the Charismatic revival of the 1960s the sixth and the last revival so far.⁷

It has to be noted though, that there have been many revivals in different places even after the Reformation which cannot all be mentioned here. These revivals are in most cases not mentioned because they are considered to have occurred in localised places and at a smaller scale. However, the influences of even such revivals have been immense in the history of the Church when considering their impact with the advantage of hindsight.⁸

3.3 Revival History and Malawian Church History

Whatever Christian witness might have been there in Malawi before the year 1861, it is concretely that year that marks the beginning of the Church in this country. This is so because this is the year when the first mission station, the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA), was initially established in the country.⁹

⁵ Klaus Fiedler, *Missions as the Theology of the Church*, p. 6, n. 11.

⁶ See: William Allen, *The History of Revivals of Religion*, retrieved from <http://www.revival-library.org/catalogues/genhistory/allen.html>, retrieved on 1.5.13.

⁷ There is no name for subsequent revivals after the Charismatic Revival. Many scholars like to talk about waves within the Charismatic Movement. This means that there are several waves within the same Charismatic Movement e.g. first wave, second wave and third wave but no distinct name for any other revival yet.

⁸ An example of such revivals would be the 1860 Cape Revival which is treated at length in this chapter's subsequent sections, especially in relation to the establishment of Nkhoma Mission in Malawi.

⁹ See: James Tengatenga, *The UMCA in Malawi: A History of the Anglican Church 1861-2010*, Zomba: Kachere, 2010. The UMCA was the first mission to be established in the country as a direct

As a result of the Great Awakening there emerged many missionary societies in Europe and America which eventually evangelised Africa and other parts of the world in the years that followed. The missions from this revival have been termed classical missions.¹⁰ It was the classical missions that first established the Church in Malawi beginning with the UMCA in 1861, the Livingstonia Mission in 1875 and the Blantyre Mission in 1876. The last two eventually formed the CCAP together with the Nkhoma Mission, which came into the country a little over a decade later.

After the classical missions, Malawian Church history was influenced by the coming of the post-classical missions which are rooted in the Holiness Revival. These include Joseph Booth, through whose influence missions like Zambezi Industrial Mission (now Zambezi Evangelical Church) and Nyasa Industrial Mission (now Evangelical Church of Malawi) and others were established in the country.¹¹

The Pentecostal Revival has affected Malawian Church history by the bringing in of such churches as the Assemblies of God, Apostolic Faith Mission, Four Square Gospel as well as the various Zionist churches which, though distinct from the rest of the Pentecostal churches, have roots in the Pentecostal Revival which is responsible for their birth.¹²

Lastly, the Charismatic Revival which has its roots in the mainline churches came to Malawi in the 1970s and 1980s. The Charismatic revival was introduced in Malawian Christianity through para-church organisations like Scripture Union, Life Ministry and SCOM.¹³ This revival continues to express itself in the formation of new Charismatic Churches as well as

result of the appeal of David Livingstone. Livingstone had been in the country some years before but he only passed through as an explorer without establishing any mission station himself.

¹⁰ See: Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa*, Oxford: Lynx/Regnum, 1994, pp. 20-22.

¹¹ Harry Langworthy, *"Africa for the African": The Life of Joseph Booth*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996; Klaus Fielder, *The Making of a Maverick Missionary: Joseph Booth in Australia*, Zomba: Kachere, 2008.

¹² Klaus Fiedler, "The Process of Religious Diversification in Malawi: A Reflection on Method and a First Attempt at a Synthesis", *Religion in Malawi* no. 11, November 2004. For the history of the Zionist churches in Malawi see: Ulf Strohhenn, "The Zionist Churches in Malawi: History, Theology, Anthropology, PhD, University of Malawi, 2010.

¹³ Bright Kawamba, "The Blantyre Spiritual Awakening 1969 to 1986: an Antecedent of Charismatic Movement in Malawi," MA, University of Malawi, 2013.

influencing mainline churches where sometimes split offs occur while in other cases the innovative groups are contained within the confines of the mother denominations.¹⁴

The history of revivals clearly shows that the church in Malawi is made up of different denominations which have their roots in different revivals from the past as well as the present. This means that for purposes of Church typology in Malawi (and the world as a whole) it is important to take note of the churches' links with the history of revivals as the waves of revivals continue with the ever-unfolding history of the Church militant. It is now necessary to appreciate how the CCAP qualifies as a product of the revivals in Europe and South Africa with regard to the formation of the missions that led to its establishment.

3.4 The CCAP as a 'Child' of Revivals

Andrew Walls argues that it was actually voluntary associations that spread the Christian faith in the mission fields rather than the established churches themselves.¹⁵ In some cases the established churches were even suspicious of missionary organisations, fearing that they had revolutionary aims under their cloak of civil and religious liberty.¹⁶ Andrew Walls observes that “the Church as then organized, whether Episcopal, or Presbyterian, or Congregational could not effectively operate missions overseas. Christianity had accordingly to ‘use means’ to do so.”¹⁷

The voluntary associations that committed themselves to the spread of the Christian faith had in most cases people who had been touched by the transforming power of revivals. These people were ready to serve in faraway mission fields, sacrificing their comfort back home for

¹⁴ See: Klaus Fiedler, “The Charismatic and Pentecostal Movements in Malawi in Cultural Perspective”, in *Religion in Malawi*, no. 9, November 1999; Rhodian G. Munyenyembe, *Christianity and Socio-Cultural Issues: The Charismatic Movement and the Contextualization of the Gospel in Malawi*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2011, p. 37-38. It is interesting to note that some scholars refer to the Charismatic denominations as “neo-Charismatics” because for them the Charismatics proper have not left their churches to form new denominations. For example See: Felix Nyika, “Apostolic Office amongst Malawian Neo-Charismatic Churches: A Contextual, Biblical –Theological and Historical Appraisal”, PhD, Mzuzu University, 2015.

¹⁵ Andrew Walls, “Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church”, in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 88:2 (1988), pp. 141-155.

¹⁶ Andrew Walls, “Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church”, in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 88:2 (1988), p. 3.

¹⁷ Andrew Walls, “Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church”, in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 88:2 (1988), p. 5. Cf. William Carey, *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to Use Means for the Conversion of the Heathens*, Leicester: Ann Ireland, 1792.

the sake of the gospel. It was such individuals who came together to form the missionary societies that became responsible for missionary work in overseas countries including Malawi. It was such endeavours that led to the establishment of the Presbyterian missions in Malawi starting in the 1870s that eventually merged into the CCAP in the 20th century.

However, it has to be noted that the missionary spirit was not easily awakened among the Scots and the Dutch in order for them to start engaging in cross-cultural missions across major geographical features such as seas, oceans, deserts and mountains. It is, therefore, important to trace the history of missions within the Church of Scotland and the Dutch Reformed Church in order to situate the time and context in which the missions that came to Malawi were born. We shall also evaluate the revival influence on the formation of these missions within the wider context of the debate on the influence of revivals on missionary work. For the sake of chronological order it is appropriate to begin by looking at the Scottish Church, which produced the two Presbyterian missions of Livingstonia and Blantyre and afterwards the Dutch Reformed Church which was responsible for the establishment of Nkhoma Mission.

3.4.1 Revivals and Missionary Endeavours in the Church of Scotland

The Church of Scotland never seriously engaged in mission work between the years 1560 and 1824.¹⁸ The former is the year when the Reformation in Scotland was launched while the latter is the year when the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland formally launched into the area of missions. Bruce Ritchie observes that prior to 1824 some Scottish churchmen who wanted to serve as missionaries in foreign lands did so not through the Church of Scotland but through other avenues.¹⁹ Such was the case with Robert Moffat of Kuruman, who left for Africa in 1816 under the auspices of the London Missionary Society because his own Church, the Church of Scotland, had no foreign mission organisation then to direct and support the zeal of such an intrepid church man.²⁰

¹⁸ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission, PhD Module, University of Malawi, Kachere Text no. 65, 2011*, p. 1.

¹⁹ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission, PhD Module, University of Malawi, Kachere Text no. 65, 2011*, p. 1.

²⁰ The London Missionary Society was not Presbyterian but Congregational in its Church government but it was open enough to people from diverse backgrounds who wanted to serve as missionaries. This is a clear instance of how free and accommodating missionary organisations born in revival can be.

The explanation for the lack of any missionary endeavours overseas in the Church of Scotland prior to 1824 can be traced back to the 6th century when Columban monks evangelised most of the remaining ‘pagans’ of Scotland. Ritchie draws parallels between the explanations of Ruth Tucker, who claims that the early Church lost its missionary zeal when hordes of barbarians and other people joined the Church en masse after the end of the persecution in the 4th century AD, and that of Mackichan who says the same thing for the Scottish people, who became nominal Christians after the 6th century’s evangelizing efforts, thereby killing the Church’s missionary zeal.²¹ Things did not improve even during the Reformation when actually there was a lot of evangelisation among the Protestants but this was confined to Europe only and did not extend to other peoples across the seas.²²

Bruce Ritchie has offered explanations for the absence of missions in the Church of Scotland from the Reformation period to the 19th century in a way that the present study finds quite useful. He traces early attitudes to foreign mission in the Reformed tradition. As part of the Protestant family, the Reformed churches also suffered from merely fighting for survival after the Reformation, and this fighting to a large extent was among themselves.²³ Besides, there was a perception among many Christians in the West that the evangelical task of the Church had already been accomplished by the creation of European Christendom.²⁴ Ritchie argues from this observation that this may be the reason why there was a tendency in the Reformed Tradition to hold that the office of ‘evangelist’ was no longer applicable.²⁵ This is gathered from the fact that the Presbyterian form of Church government contains a very revealing section on the Offices of the Church in connection with the term evangelist, where the office of the evangelist together with that of the apostle are understood to have ceased in the Apostolic Church.²⁶ Thus we see that in the 16th century, the Church of Scotland did not really find the impetus for foreign

²¹ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 1. See also Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1983, p. 28 and Dugald Mackichan, *The Missionary Ideal in the Scottish Churches*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1927, p. 51.

²² The Roman Catholic Church was during this time far ahead of all Protestant churches in evangelizing the peoples of foreign lands. See: L.K. Fuller, *Going to the Nations: An Introduction to Cross-Cultural Missions*, Jos: Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute, 1993, pp. 46-47.

²³ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 1; Ruth Tucker, *From Jerusalem to Irian Jaya*, p. 24.

²⁴ Cf. Robert Paul, “Reformed Churches and Evangelism: Historical Background”, in D.K. McKim (ed.), *Major Themes in the Reformed Tradition*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1992, p. 354.

²⁵ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, pp. 1-2, n.7.

²⁶ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 4.

mission work to the unreached peoples of the world even though some documents of Reformed thinking could mention the issue of reaching the unreached and the Gospel being preached to all peoples of the world before Christ's return.²⁷

In the seventeenth century the Church of Scotland was greatly affected by internal conflicts. It was during this period, however, that some of the most important works of Presbyterianism were written. These include *The Westminster Confession of Faith*, *The Larger Catechism*, *The Shorter Catechism*, *The Form of the Presbyterian Church Government* and *The Directory for Public Worship*. In all these documents Ritchie argues that the issue of mission is very silent and where it is apparently mentioned, like in *The Larger Catechism*, it is only mentioned with regard to the exposition of the Lord's Prayer, with no sense of urgency in it.²⁸

According to Andrew Walls, the Westminster documents' mention of the non-European peoples' embracement of the Gospel is viewed as an action of God eschatologically rather than as a responsibility of the Church in the present time.²⁹ Ritchie sees sense in Walls' view by observing that even though Westminster documents mention the conversion of the Jews and the gathering in of the fullness of the Gentiles, the practice of the Westminster tradition is contrary to this thinking.³⁰ Ritchie further argues that this was the case because of the Covenant Theology prominent in the Church of Scotland obtaining then and the Puritan emphasis on the coming of the Kingdom of God inwardly to the individual rather than outwardly to the world.³¹

It has sometimes been suggested that the cause of lack of missionary zeal in the Scottish Church was the Reformed doctrine of double predestination which is clearly stated in the Westminster documents.³² Though this view is debatable, some scholars echo it unreservedly as does L.K. Fuller:

²⁷ Cf. John Calvin, *Harmony of the Gospels*, vol. 3. Commentary on Mathew 24:14, Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd, 1960.

²⁸ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, pp. 3-4.

²⁹ Andrew Walls, "Missions", in N. Cameron (ed), *Dictionary of Scottish Church History and Theology*, Downers Grove Illinois, IVP, 1993.

³⁰ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 4.

³¹ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 4.

³² *The Westminster Confession of Faith* states the doctrine thus: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others foreordained to everlasting death. These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished." See: *Westminster Confession of Faith* chapter iii, 3 and 4.

Theologically, many Protestants believed so strongly in predestination that they thought evangelism was useless because God had already decided who would be saved and who would be lost, and nothing could change this. They believed that if the heathen were lost, God was punishing them for their sins by purposely blinding their eyes, and nobody should interfere. They believed the Great Commission was a command only to the original twelve apostles.³³

Bruce Ritchie, whose view is representative of the scholars who are hesitant to conclude that double predestinarian theology or philosophy automatically translates into passivity with regard to missionary endeavours, argues that very few theological systems are totally consistent:

Philosophically the Westminster doctrine of election might nurture passivity, but on the other hand there was the clear biblical command of Jesus to take the Gospel into the whole world. Theological systems which seek, however imperfectly, to base their conclusions on Scripture, are always open to powerful biblical imperatives which have the ability [to] break through the 'system' itself. The piety nurtured both by Calvinism and Westminster was a piety which placed great importance on obedience, whether God's will was fully understood or not. As such, an 'inconsistency' between a theological system and biblical imperative was not to be questioned. Obedience to the imperative could over-ride everything else. It is doubtful if any Church, or even any theological movement, has ever followed the logical implications of its philosophy to full conclusion.³⁴

Moreover, Ritchie observes that the Churches which come from the school of Westminster Calvinism became very much involved in mission work in later generations though it can be argued that they were following the lead of other churches.³⁵ In any case their Reformed theology's emphasis on double predestination did not deter them from evangelising the peoples of the world once they became aware of their mandate in meeting the needs of the unevangelised. However, it cannot be denied that the literature that guided Presbyterian thinking in the 17th century has little to say on the mandate of the Church to carry mission work to foreign lands.

The next phase in considering the history of the Church of Scotland's position vis-a-vis foreign missions is the 18th century. Many things happened during this century, the details of which are beyond the scope of the present study. Suffice to say, though, that this was the century in which the Church of Scotland experienced peace from political upheavals. Be that as it may, the Church settled down to a routine kind of spirituality and became inward looking. In the words of Bruce Ritchie, "Eighteenth century Scotland regarded itself as a Christian nation, but

³³ L.K. Fuller, *Going to the Nations: An Introduction to Cross-Cultural Missions*, Jos: Nigeria Evangelical Missionary Institute, 1993, p. 46.

³⁴ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 5.

³⁵ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 5.

not as a Missionary nation.”³⁶ It is significant to note, however, that during this century, Scotland saw the establishment of some independent missionary societies that became channels for those that wanted to spread the Gospel but could not do so under the auspices of the established church. The independent missionary societies were the “The Scottish Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge (SSPCK)” established in 1707 and “The Propagation of the Gospel at Home” established in 1798. These independent mission organisations were founded amidst a general apathy towards foreign mission work and even though they tried all they could, their work was not generally successful. The SSPCK for example had tried to do mission work in New England and met with little success. It was later, through the work of David Brainerd, that there was some success in the work of SSPCK, though Brainerd himself did not come from Scotland but worked on behalf of the Scottish organisation.³⁷

Towards the end of the 18th century, many in Scotland were beginning to realise the importance of foreign mission and there was a lot of support from the Church of Scotland to the SSPCK in the area of personnel and finances. This shows that the Church of Scotland was now willing to support independent missionary societies for the propagation of the Gospel abroad but was not ready to be directly involved in the exercise. This position of the Church of Scotland reached its peak in the 1796 General Assembly where the Church shot down proposals by its own synods of Fife and Moray to be fully and directly involved in foreign mission. The reasons cited for the Church of Scotland’s lack of enthusiasm for foreign mission work was that the heathen were not refined enough in their manners to embrace the teachings of the Gospel. Secondly, some people felt there was great need of the Gospel within Scotland itself so much so that it was not prudent to spend energies on a faraway people when one could equally serve his own people. Thirdly, it was argued that the poor in Scotland were suffering through want and scarcity and it was not acceptable to be making huge collections of money for the mission field when there were poor people just next door.³⁸

Thus from 1796 to 1824 the Church of Scotland lived in a period in which it had definitely said “no” to direct involvement in mission work. However, this was also the period when there was a lot of agitation for missionary work because of the influence of the Great Awakening.

³⁶ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 6.

³⁷ John A. Grigg, *The Lives of David Brainerd: The Making of an American Evangelical Icon*, Oxford: OUP, 2009.

³⁸ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 5.

This means that people who could not get involved in the work of mission through the Church of Scotland had to still continue finding ways of doing so through other means. It was through the influence of one Dr James Bryce who had worked as a chaplain in India that the Church of Scotland re-considered its stand on foreign missions which was tabled at the 1824 General Assembly.³⁹ This time around it was possible for the church to unanimously accept this responsibility of the churches in foreign missions. The position taken by the Church of Scotland at this stage did not in any way alter the theology or spirituality of the Church. As Ritchie remarks:

Traditional Calvinism had always had an emphasis on the importance of the mind, as well as the heart, as the place where God's Spirit has its effectiveness within the individual. This tradition meant that this very Presbyterian missionary enterprise of the Church of Scotland was not simply 'pietist' but had an emphasis on evangelism through education. The Evangelical's emphasis on 'piety' and 'feeling' became combined with the Moderates' emphasis on 'mind' and 'intellect'. These emphases would become a hallmark of all missions carried out under the aegis of the Church of Scotland.⁴⁰

It is important, at this juncture, to ask why the Church of Scotland now became supportive of being directly involved in doing missionary work when initially it was against the move. The answer can be found in the observation that most of the people who were agitating for mission work at this time were touched in one way or the other by the power of revival through the Great Awakening. It can, therefore, be argued that through the influence of revival, the Church of Scotland was now ready to start sending its sons and daughters to foreign mission fields in fulfilment of the Great Commission which had not previously been the case.

The apathy of the Church of Scotland in Mission work was not an isolated case. Many Protestant churches in Europe were apathetic to the work of missions for many centuries until after the Great Awakening and the pioneering works of such people as William Carey, who were obviously influenced by Jonathan Edwards and the spirituality of the Great Awakening and the Evangelical Awakening, both in America and Europe respectively:

³⁹ Robert Hunter, *History of the Free Church of Scotland in India and Africa*, London: Forgotten Books, 2013 (original work published 1873), pp. 8-9. D. Chambers, "The Church of Scotland's Nineteenth Century Foreign Missions Scheme: Evangelical or Moderate Revival?", *Journal of Religious History*, vol. 9, Issue 2, December 1976, pp. 115-138.

⁴⁰ Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 23.

From the time of the Reformation, to the eighteenth century, the efforts of Missionary zeal were few and feeble: more attentive to preserve themselves and their flocks from the assaults and seductions of Popery, than to extend their labours to the unknown heathen.⁴¹

It can now be safely asserted that the coming of the Gospel to Malawi, especially through the work of the Scottish missions was as a direct result of the influence of revival on mission work, thereby justifying the general observation that missions are children of revivals. The succeeding sections are therefore an attempt at showing how the revival brought the church to Malawi through the means of missions.

3.4.2 The Influence of Revivals on Dr David Livingstone, the Missionary Explorer

It is interesting to note that even Dr David Livingstone, the missionary explorer who opened up Malawi and neighbouring countries for missionary work, was himself greatly influenced by revivals. Peter Hammond comments:

Books and tracts from the Revival movement sweeping America reached Scotland and created much excitement and deepening of spiritual life and vision. David Livingstone received a pamphlet written by Karl Gutzlaff, of the Netherlands Missionary Society. In it Gutzlaff appealed for medical missionaries to go to China. David was inspired at how a medical missionary could be much more effective in converting the lost.⁴²

As is well known with the advantage of hindsight, the door for David Livingstone's missionary work did not open in China but in Africa, where through the influence of Robert Moffat of the London Missionary Society, he led his own mission stations in present day Botswana before abandoning the stationed missionary ministry for that of a missionary explorer. He thus reminisced:

I had fondly hoped to have gained access to that then closed empire by means of the healing art; but there being no prospect of an early peace with the Chinese, and as another inviting field was opening out through the labours of Mr. Moffat, I was induced to turn my thoughts to Africa; and after a more extended course of theological training in England than I had enjoyed in Glasgow, I embarked for Africa in 1840, and, after a voyage of three months, reached Cape Town.⁴³

The views of David Livingstone with regard to the work of Christian missionaries were greatly influenced by the theology of revivals. Any discussion of David Livingstone with regard to his goal of the missionary enterprise in Africa includes the following: Christianity, Commerce and

⁴¹ LMS, *Transactions of the Missionary Society*, Vol. 1: 1795-1802, p. vii. Quoted in Bruce Ritchie, *The Scottish Church and Foreign Mission*, p. 6.

⁴² Peter Hammond, "The Family, Faith and Upbringing of David Livingstone", <http://www.Livingstone200.org/index.php/biographical-articles/81-the-family>, retrieved on 30.5.2013.

⁴³ David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in Africa*, London, 1875 (see the introduction).

Civilisation. And yet these ideas did not originate with David Livingstone, but were given much more prominence by him at a time when most European powers were interested in nothing but imperialism. Fidelis Nkomazana argues, while trying to defend Livingstone against anti-colonial critics, that the missionary explorer has been wrongly identified as the harbinger of colonialism, which only benefited the western powers and not the indigenous peoples.⁴⁴ On the contrary, Livingstone was in agreement with the rest of the Christian thinkers and missionaries of the time whose spirituality revivals greatly influenced. It becomes obvious to see that what Livingstone was championing for with regard to Christianity had already proven to be a successful approach towards alleviating human misery. We observe in the initiatives of Thomas Chalmers, who multiplied the churches and schools in order to bring Christian witness and education closer to the people of impoverished Scotland after he himself had embraced an evangelical spirituality born out of revival.⁴⁵ William Carey, the “father” of modern missions, who appeared on the scene earlier, embraced the same ideas and had actually gone to practice them in India.⁴⁶

While Livingstone initially came to Africa as a stationed missionary, he is generally known in history as a missionary explorer, who believed that the interior of Africa was supposed to be opened up for the spread of the Christian faith and legitimate commerce.⁴⁷ Realising that someone needed to go deeper into the interior of Africa in order to explore the land and give an accurate picture of what was inside what at that time used to be perceived as the ‘Dark Continent’ by most Westerners, Livingstone came to the conclusion that he was the man to do that kind of job. He consequently resigned from the role of a stationed missionary in order to concentrate on the work of exploration, which to him was crucial if at all there was going to be any success in the work of evangelising Africa.

Owing to his conviction, Livingstone made three epic journeys into the interior of Africa, making important geographical observations for the people outside Africa. During his second journey he came to the land adjacent to Lake Malawi, where he felt a mission station could be

⁴⁴ Fidelis Nkomazana, “Livingstone’s Ideas of Christianity, Commerce and Civilization”, *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1&2, 1998.

⁴⁵ Fidelis Nkomazana, “Livingstone’s Ideas of Christianity, Commerce and Civilization”, *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1&2, 1998, p. 46.

⁴⁶ Fidelis Nkomazana, “Livingstone’s Ideas of Christianity, Commerce and Civilization”, *Pula: Botswana Journal of African Studies*, vol. 12, no. 1&2, 1998, p. 47.

⁴⁷ David Livingstone, *Missionary Travels and Researches in Africa*, London, 1875, p. 28.

successfully established. Though Livingstone's methods were not without criticism among his contemporaries, his labours eventually vindicated him as Christian missions and trade later flourished in the same areas where he had envisioned their success.⁴⁸

It is interesting to observe that even before any mission station was established in the country, the person who had to 'clear the ground' was himself a product of the spirit of revival, thereby underscoring the fact that missionary endeavours are indeed influenced by revivals.

3.4.3 Revivals and the Formation of the Livingstonia Mission

The Livingstonia Mission, originally established in 1875, started as a mission of the Free Church of Scotland (1843-1900). It has to be noted that among the issues that separated the Free Church of Scotland from the (established) Church of Scotland was the issue of evangelicalism. Thomas Chalmers, who was one of the leaders of the Church of Scotland before the Disruption, did not have evangelical convictions prior to 1810.⁴⁹ However, after 1810 his convictions tilted towards evangelicalism.⁵⁰ This can only mean that he was eventually influenced by the evangelical spirit of revival. This was to have far-reaching consequences because when the Disruption took place in 1843, Chalmers led the split which took the name Free Church of Scotland.⁵¹ This means that right from the beginning the Free Church was a Church of evangelical convictions and revival spirituality as led by Thomas Chalmers and other leaders following in his footsteps.⁵²

It may not be possible to trace the spirituality of each and every individual that enlisted with Livingstonia Mission during the early decades of the mission but suffice it to say that the zeal of most of these missionaries was a result of the revival fire which had touched them back home

⁴⁸ See: Fred L.M. Moir, *After Livingstone: An African Trade Romance*, Blantyre: Rotary Club of Blantyre, 1986, pp. 1-6 and James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 350.

⁴⁹ The Disruption (1843) was a schism within the Church of Scotland that led to the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland after 450 ministers with evangelical convictions left the Church of Scotland.

⁵⁰ John Roxborough, "The Legacy of Thomas Chalmers", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, 23 (4), October 1999, pp. 173-176.

⁵¹ David .F Wright and Gary D. Badcock (eds), *Disruption to Diversity: Edinburgh Divinity 1846 – 1966*, Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.

⁵² John Roxborough, *Thomas Chalmers. Enthusiast for Mission: The Christian Good of Scotland and the Rise of the Missionary Movement*. Rutherford Studies in Historical Theology. Carlisle: Paternoster Publishing, 1999.

in Scotland. Some, as we shall later see in the course of this study, actually tried to replicate in the mission field the same revival tendencies of the Scottish Church which they had experienced while still in their country.⁵³

It is a well-known fact that the establishment of the Livingstonia Mission was the brainchild of Dr James Stewart of Lovedale, who in response to Dr David Livingstone's appeal and influence during his missionary travels, wanted to establish a mission station in one of the places Dr David Livingstone had explored.⁵⁴ Though James Stewart was himself not to lead the mission station, the role he played in the formative years of the mission cannot be overemphasized. Noteworthy though is the fact that he was himself a child of revival as he was greatly influenced by evangelical revivalism in Scotland. The same can be said concerning his colleague, Robert Laws, who carried on with the mission work from where James Stewart left. Robert Laws was eventually to become the chief architect of the mission in its first fifty years of existence.⁵⁵

Thus it can be argued that the impetus for missionary work in as far as the Scottish initiative with regard to the establishment of the Livingstonia Mission is concerned was directly or indirectly a result of the spirit of revival obtaining in Scotland at the time. It has to be pointed out again that when the Disruption took place in the Scottish Church in 1843, most of the leaders that left the Church of Scotland for the revivalist Free Church of Scotland were those that had been influenced by the revivals whereas the remaining clergy in the Church of Scotland were those of the 'party' of the Moderates.⁵⁶ It is interesting also to note that all missionaries joined

⁵³ A case in point here is Donald Fraser, who when he was sent to minister among the Ngoni of Mzimba, he encouraged huge sacramental conventions which were modeled after nineteenth-century Scottish Highland gatherings only that in the Malawian case they included both baptism and communion. See: T. Jack Thompson, "Fraser, Donald," in Gerald H. Anderson (ed), *Biographical Dictionary of Christian Missions*, New York: Macmillan Reference, 1998, p. 224; T. Jack Thomson, *Christianity in Northern Malawi: Donald Fraser's Missionary Methods and Ngoni Culture*, Leiden: Brill, 1995; Jack Thomson, Ngoni, *Xhosa and Scot: Religious and Cultural Interaction in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2007, pp. 75-93. It has to be pointed out that Donald Fraser was influenced by the Holiness Revival (otherwise known as the Second Evangelical Awakening). See: Steven Paas (with contributions by Klaus Fiedler), *The Faith Moves South: A History of the Church in Africa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006, p. 192.

⁵⁴ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 19.

⁵⁵ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 281.

⁵⁶ <http://www.emw.org.uk/magazine/2011/09/pre59-revival-scotland/>, retrieved on 10.5.13.

the Free Church of Scotland after the Disruption because they could not place themselves under the Moderates.⁵⁷ This observation will prove quite useful in making comparisons between the enthusiasm that was in the Livingstonia Mission during its formative years and a lack of the same in the Blantyre Mission which was from the Church of Scotland, apparently continuing to be led by the Moderates.

3.4.5 Revivals and the Formation of the Blantyre Mission

The history of the formative years of Blantyre Mission is full of contradictions when one considers the general background to the work of missions, especially in relation to the influence of revival and the legacy of the great missionary explorer, Dr David Livingstone. The story that due to David Livingstone's labours and emotional funeral many a Scot were stirred to follow in the footsteps of the great missionary explorer lacks the 'sound and fury' that one generally expects from a story so widely retold and believed.

It has to be appreciated that the general observation made by many missiologists that missions are children of revival(s) has become so axiomatic in missiological discourse that to say something different would be going against the tide. Within this kind of understanding it has to be stated that it is, therefore, safer to intone that even the Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland was established as a result of revival(s). However, it has to be noted that this mission was a child of the Church that had remained with the Moderates after the Disruption. To what extent that spirit of moderation was responsible for the lack of enthusiasm for many to respond to the appeals for mission work later in the case of Blantyre Mission is not easy to establish. What is known though is that despite the grandeur of naming Blantyre Mission after the birth town of the famous missionary explorer, there was no enthusiasm for the mission and it was not easy for the organisers of the mission to find pioneer volunteers for the work.⁵⁸

One would be tempted to ask at this juncture whether there was indeed a revival in Scotland at that time which could accelerate the work of missions by producing enthusiasts that were ready and willing to go forth into Africa, full of confidence in the Saviour's cross. The testimony of the time shows that there was indeed a revival even during this time in Scotland. The revival most referred to during this time is that triggered off by the Moody and Sankey

⁵⁷ www.scotland.org.uk/history/disruption, retrieved 10.5.13.

⁵⁸ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, p. 18.

mission to Scotland. It is claimed that this mission greatly influenced Scottish churches so much so that the Christian life of many was deepened in many denominations.⁵⁹ Somehow it cannot be explained why there were no volunteers for missionary work when in fact the churches had actually been stirred by a revival. The explanation however must be found in the fact that it was not from established church structures that most of the missionaries came from. Even for the Livingstonia Mission, which was a child of the Free Church of Scotland, its backing did not come from the Church directly but from a committee of Glasgow businessmen.⁶⁰ This observation is very much in line with the observation made by Andrew Walls, that missionary societies were a fortunate subversion of the church in that direct appeals from the Churches yielded little, if anything, whereas the missionary societies are the ones that succeeded in planting the church in distant lands.⁶¹

It can therefore be argued that the Blantyre Mission faced difficulties to take off because of volunteers who were expected to come from a Church which was unashamedly lukewarm in its approach by being led by the Moderates who were aiding and abetting those with moderate views in the Church over and against those that were clearly enthusiastic, who had been influenced by the spiritual fervour of revival and evangelicalism.⁶² This partly explains why it was not even easy for the organizers of the Blantyre Mission to find even a single ordained pastor who could accompany the first missionary party when the time came for the party to depart for the mission field as we shall see later in chapter four.

We can therefore conclude this section by observing that even though missions are children of revival it was not always that Christians were stirred in the context of revival to go for mission work abroad. Secondly, it is also necessary to conclude that the apparent enthusiasm of the Scottish people to send missionaries to Africa, and Malawi in particular as a result of Dr

⁵⁹ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, p. 18.

⁶⁰ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, p. 18.

⁶¹ Andrew F. Walls, "Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church", *Evangelical Quarterly*, 88:2, 1988.

⁶² Even though it was Livingstonia Mission that was first to come to Malawi, the initiatives to start a Scottish mission in the country had actually started with the Church of Scotland representatives. It was Dr John Macrae who first contacted Lt E.D. Young to lead a missionary party to Malawi but Young later responded to James Stewart's request and joined the Livingstonia party because Dr Macrae had not yet succeeded in appointing staff nor received any firm offers of service. See: Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 18.

David Livingstone's influence was not as simple and as straight forward as it is often thought. There were hurdles to overcome, notwithstanding the general feeling that there was need for something to be done for the sake of the work that Dr David Livingstone had begun in Africa.

So far we have seen how, directly or indirectly, the two Scottish missions were influenced by revivals and the missionary zeal of Dr David Livingstone. Though in the case of Blantyre Mission there is reason to doubt the direct impact of the two, nevertheless it still stands that missions to Malawi from Scotland were precipitated by the revivals as is the case with missions generally and also because of the romance of Dr David Livingstone's life despite the lack of dramatic enthusiasm. We now turn to the influence of the Dutch Reformed Church on the formation of the Nkhoma Mission.

3.4.6 Revivals, the Dutch Reformed Church and the Formation of Nkhoma Mission

The argument that missions are born in revival is true for the Nkhoma Mission as well. This mission was started by the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (or by an organisation of pastors of that Church) but we cannot appreciate the history behind it without first of all trying to see the history of revival within the Dutch Reformed Church itself from Holland and then to South Africa.

The Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in Holland, which merged with other churches in 2004, is the indisputable mother of the Dutch Reformed Churches of South Africa where the name has been retained. From this church also came up missions which can only be described as having been born in revival, one of which is responsible for the establishment of Nkhoma Mission in Malawi in the late 1880s.

3.4.6.1 The Nadere Reformatie in Holland

It is important to note that the 16th Century Protestant Reformation itself is taken to be a revival in that the life of the Church was greatly influenced by it and many Christian nations were renewed. However, immediately after the Reformation there followed a period of spiritual dryness commonly referred to as Reformation Orthodoxy, which emphasised much the intellect and neglected the emotions to the extent that the vibrancy of Church life reached a low point.

It was during this time that the *Nadere Reformatie* started in Holland.⁶³ This was a movement that emphasized applying Reformation principles at the individual level in the Dutch Reformed Church, which roughly started in 1600 and ended in 1750.

This movement was characterised by a desire to live out the doctrines of the Reformation in the lives of individuals, in the home and in the Church.⁶⁴ It can therefore be rightly said that the *Nadere Reformatie* was the first revival in the history of the Dutch Reformed Church and parallels have been drawn between it and Puritanism in England and Pietism in Germany. It is actually even argued that English Pietism had a profound effect on the *Nadere Reformatie* due to the presence of some English Puritans and Scottish Covenanters refugees in Holland in the 17th century.⁶⁵ It was more or less this kind of spirituality that found its way into South Africa in the decades after 1652 when a number of Dutch settlers began to settle at the Cape following the lead of Jan van Riebeeck and the pioneer settlers.

3.4.6.2 *The 1860 Revival at the Cape*

There have been negative descriptions of the life of the Dutch vis-a-vis the indigenous peoples at the Cape and in other places in the years following their settlement. It cannot be denied that some of these descriptions are exaggerations but it is generally true that the spirituality that accompanied the Dutch from Holland under the influence of the *Nadere Reformatie* had to eventually wear out as is always the case between periods of revival. Thuo Mburu observes that

[T]he Church has tended to slide to a state of lethargy and compromise in the periods between successive revivals. Such dark phases have been characterized by apathy to the plight of the suffering/problems in society, loss of the prophetic voice and decline in missionary zeal. Preoccupation with institutional expansion and the maintenance of ecclesiastical order has always tended to mask the divine component of the nature and function of the Church.⁶⁶

⁶³ The term *Nadere Reformatie* can be understood in the English language as the "Dutch Second Reformation", "Further Reformation", or "Continuing Reformation". See Joel R. Beeke, *The Dutch Second Reformation (Nadere Reformatie)*, http://www.abrakel.com/2009/11/dutch-second-reformation-dr-joel-r_06.html, retrieved on 20.5.13.

⁶⁴ Joel R. Beeke, *The Dutch Second Reformation (Nadere Reformatie)*, http://www.abrakel.com/2009/11/dutch-second-reformation-dr-joel-r_06.html, retrieved on 20.5.13.

⁶⁵ Joel R. Beeke, *The Dutch Second Reformation (Nadere Reformatie)*, http://www.abrakel.com/2009/11/dutch-second-reformation-dr-joel-r_06.html, retrieved on 20.5.13.

⁶⁶ Tuo Mburu, "Revival and Mission Movements: Bedfellows or Marriage Partners?", <http://svm2.net/abandonedtimes/revival-and-mission-movements-bed-fellows-or-marriage-partners-%E2%80%93-part-1/>, retrieved on 20.5.13.

It was therefore a kind of correction to the life that the Dutch Reformed Church members were living when a distinct revival came upon them in 1860. Prior to this revival the Cape Colony has been described as nothing but a spiritual wilderness.⁶⁷ The reasons for describing the Cape Colony as a spiritual wilderness arise from the low level of Christian life and witness to which the Dutch Reformed Church had sunk in the years towards the revival. It was the Dutch East India Company that was in control of the appointments of pastors and the establishment of congregations of the DRC. It is observed that for a period of over 150 years that the Dutch Reformed Church was in existence at the Cape, it only managed to establish five congregations within the 130 km of the radius of its influence. This is a clear indication of the lack of zeal among the members to spread their faith to the surrounding peoples. The testimony of Rev Nicolaas Hofmeyr is that he despaired at the unresponsiveness of his congregation in Calvinia where for six years people did not in any way respond to his pleas for prayer meetings.⁶⁸ His congregation even opposed his initiatives to evangelise the coloured peoples in the vicinity of their parish. Even the attempt by Gottlieb van der Lingen to establish Christian schools did not stir the people into affirmative response.⁶⁹

The coming in of the revival in 1860 presents a sharp contrast to the reality explained above within the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa. It is on record that whereas at first it was very difficult to find people who were willing to train as pastors, with the result that the Church greatly suffered from lack of adequate pastors, young men were now offering themselves freely to train for the pastoral ministry.⁷⁰

In January 1862 Revs Andrew Murray and Servaas Hofmeyr launched a Bible-based newspaper titled *Die Volksvriend*, which contributed to the blowing of a new breeze of life on the Church with the result that all the previous resistance to mission work that was there before the revival evaporated.⁷¹ From now onwards missions were launched with an understanding that it was the responsibility of the Church to continue spreading the gospel. The first DRC missionaries in the names of Alexander McKidd and Henri Gonin were sent to Transvaal. Women also became zealously involved in missionary work, establishing the Women

⁶⁷ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival," www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013.

⁶⁸ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival," www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013.

⁶⁹ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival," www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013.

⁷⁰ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival," www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013.

⁷¹ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival," www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013.

Missionary Union (*Die Vrouwen Zendingsbond*) with Emma Murray serving as its founding president.⁷²

The missionary vision of the Dutch Reformed Church exploded with mission stations being established in many lands beyond South Africa. It was this initiative that eventually led to the missionary venture that sent missionaries to Malawi, who eventually became responsible for the founding of the Nkhoma Mission. The missionaries who were entrusted with the task of establishing a mission station in Malawi were A.C. Murray and T.C.B. Vlok. Details of their labour will be highlighted in chapter four of this study. Suffice it to say at present that this connection underscores the fact that it is revival that gives birth to missions, and in the case of Nkhoma Mission the connection is very clear as J.L. Pretorius testifies:

The D.R.C. Mission to Nyasaland is the direct result of a religious revival in South Africa during the nineteenth century. There was an urge among many members of the Church to do more for the spread of the Gospel than they were doing, at the time, among the coloured people in their midst.⁷³

Besides, the establishment of the Nkhoma Mission presents another instance of the observation of Andrew Walls concerning missionary societies and the fortunate subversion of the church in that in this case also it was a missionary organisation that brought the Dutch Reformed Church to Malawi, with the Church taking over only at a later stage. The mission was founded through the initiative of a hundred members of the Ministers' Missionary Union of the DRC but it came under the direct control of the Cape Synod in 1903 after a period of fifteen years of the missionary society's control.⁷⁴

⁷² Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival," www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013. Andrew Murray was a leading figure in the Holiness Revival or the Second Evangelical Awakening as it is sometimes known. See: Klaus Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions: From Hudson Taylor to Present Day Africa*, Oxford: Lynx/Regnum, 1994, pp. 218-219. See also Steven Paas (with contributions by Klaus Fiedler), *The Faith Moves South: A History of the Church in Africa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006, 91-95.

⁷³ J.L. Pretorius, "The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland", *The Nyasaland Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 12.

⁷⁴ See: John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 216, n. 76. Also Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experiences of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1997, p. 44 and footnote 59.

3.4.6.3 Scottish Connections of the 1860 Cape Revival

It is really interesting to see how intertwined the histories of the three Malawian synods of the CCAP are, especially concerning their revivalist and theological roots. While it is generally understood that the mainline churches in Malawi are products of the missionary endeavours of the Great Awakening, otherwise known as classical missions, it has to be noted that the individual missionaries that came to the mission field were influenced by different subsequent revivals. It is in the course of following this chase that we see that the Nkhoma Mission was a product of the Cape Revival of 1860 in South Africa with regard to direct missionary initiatives. Also of vital significance in this regard is the Scottish connection of this revival, which in a way makes the Nkhoma Mission to have revival connections with the other two missions of Livingstonia and Blantyre that eventually formed the CCAP in the mid-1920s.

The Scottish connection of the 1860 Cape revival concentrates on one family. This is the family of the Murrays: Andrew Murray Snr, Andrew Murray Jnr and John Murray. However, it has to be noted that Andrew Murray Snr did not come alone from Scotland but led an eleven man team of pastors which eventually had the effect of revitalising the spirituality of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa some decades before the revival. These pastors came as a result of the British policy of Anglicisation which championed the suppression of the Dutch language from schools and government. This policy indirectly made the British prefer to have Presbyterian pastors coming from Scotland to serve the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.⁷⁵

Coming back to the Murrays, the sons of Andrew Murray, Andrew Murray Jnr and John Murray went to Scotland to live with their uncle, the Rev John Murray, from where they were supposed to receive a British education. After graduating with MA degrees from the University of Aberdeen the two boys went to Holland for further studies in theology and the Dutch language at the University of Utrecht. It was here where Andrew and John Murray became pastors, having been ordained by the Hague Committee of the Dutch Reformed Church on 9 May 1848.⁷⁶ While their stay in Holland exposed the boys to liberal theological thinking which was obtaining at the time, it can be argued that they had already been toughened against such influences through their stay in Scotland. This is so because while in Scotland they were brought

⁷⁵ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival", www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013.

⁷⁶ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival", www.reformationsa.org, 20.5.2013.

into contact with some of the most powerful Reformed preachers of the day, including Dr. Thomas Chalmers and William Burns.⁷⁷

Andrew Murray was destined to play a major role in the revival as well as in the whole life of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa in the period after the revival and the subsequent orientation of the Church into mission work. One testimony points to a prayer by Andrew Murray during a conference in Worcester as being the actual moment of the start of the 1860 revival:

Ds. Murray (Jnr.)'s participation during the first part of the conference was limited to one prayer, but it was a prayer so full of power and emotion that people came under deep conviction of sin. You can safely say that the Revival dates from that moment.⁷⁸

While it is generally understood that the revival started in the Cape, the fire soon spread to the surrounding places and beyond, so much so that eventually the revival is referred to as the South African revival of 1860. Andrew Murray Jnr continued to lead the Church in several capacities. He served as pastor of Worcester from 1860 to 1864 after serving in Bloemfontein, and between 1864 and 1871 he served in Cape Town and then moved to Wellington where he worked until his retirement in 1906. During his ministry as a pastor in the DRC, Andrew Murray was elected Moderator of the *Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk* (NGK) Synod in 1862, 1876, 1883, 1890 and 1894.⁷⁹

Andrew Murray's brother, John, was also significant in the work of the Church. He is credited, together with Nicolaas Hofmeyr and Johan Neethling for establishing the Stellenbosch

⁷⁷ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival", <http://www.slideshare.net/frontfel/andrew-murray-and-the-1860-revival.html>, retrieved on 23.5.13. The two brothers became members of Het Réveil, a religious revival movement opposed to the rationalism which was in vogue during their stay in the Netherlands. However, their opposition to theological liberalism cannot necessarily be explained by their joining of this movement because it can also be argued that they found this movement attractive because of the anti-liberal stand which they might have developed while in Scotland. In any case their spirituality was molded before coming to the Netherlands. Their anti-liberal stand proved quite useful in fighting against liberalism in the South African Church after their return.

⁷⁸ C. Rabie. Quoted in Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival", www.reformationsa.org, retrieved 20.5.2013. Rabie who was a teenager during this conference later became a pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa.

⁷⁹ K.W. Smith, "Murray, Andrew Jr." *Dictionary of African Christian Biography*, http://www.dacb.org/stories/southafrica/murray_andrew_jr.html, retrieved on 20.5.2013.

Kweekschool, which was initially launched for the purpose of training pastors due to the Church's despair in obtaining suitable pastors from Holland at the time.⁸⁰

Thus we see that the revival in the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa was not an isolated event in the history of the Church in general but had connections with happenings in other parts of the world.

Of significance under this section has been the endeavour to show the Scottish connections in this revival in order to demonstrate how the Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP, which is one of the many results of the 1860 Cape revival, shares not only its theological roots but also revival roots with its sister Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre in Malawi.

3.5 Conclusion

It has been argued in this chapter, following the general observation in the history of missions that missions are born in revival and that the CCAP is not an exception to that observation. It has therefore been necessary to trace the history of revivals in order to show how they have influenced the Church in Malawi, especially the CCAP, which is the subject of this study as we attempt to present its history as a federative denomination.

In agreement with mainstream missiological thinking it has also been seen, though only in passing, that missions are mostly done not by the established Churches but by missionary organisations which may be totally independent of established denominations or somehow affiliated to them. In the end though, when missions get established, the churches in the mission fields eventually come under the jurisdiction of the established Churches to which the missionaries are affiliated.

In the case of Blantyre Mission which was the mission of the (established) Church of Scotland, we saw that there was not much enthusiasm on the part of would-be missionaries to volunteer for the work of mission, especially during the beginnings. This observation apparently mars a beautiful picture that is painted concerning the eagerness of many people to join the work of missions when touched by the fire of revival. Besides, it also apparently throws some doubt on whether the Scots were really stirred by the example in life and death of the great explorer, Dr David Livingstone (who was their own man), as most legendary stories of the time

⁸⁰ Peter Hammond, "Andrew Murray and the 1860 Revival", <http://www.slideshare.net/frontfel/andrew-murray-and-the-1860-revival.html>, retrieved on 23.5.13.

purport.⁸¹ I argue, in spite of this observation, that the general context in which the Presbyterian missions were launched for the evangelisation of Malawi was that of revival, especially the Great Awakening/Evangelical Awakening on the part of the Churches in general and the Holiness Revival with regard to some individual missionaries. In the case of the Scottish missions, the influence of David Livingstone adds flavour to the general context, though in any situation where generalisations are employed there are always individual cases that seem to act against the rule. These become exceptions. However, exceptions to the rules do not change the rules. This would be the case in the current discussion concerning the initial lackadaisical attitude during the formative years of Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland.

Notwithstanding the above observation it can still be safely concluded that the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) is a child of revivals, just like all other churches. It has also been shown that the three original synods of the CCAP share not only their theological roots but their revival roots as well, as seen in the connections with regard to the movements of the people of Scotland and Holland via South Africa to Malawi. The next chapter will logically discuss the establishment of the three missions in Malawi in order to provide the background to the formation of the CCAP in 1924.

⁸¹ Cf. Andrew C. Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, pp. 18-23.

Chapter Four: The Three CCAP Tributaries: Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma Missions up to 1926 and further Developments in the Union

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I first of all present a brief history of the three original missions that formed the CCAP from their establishment to the formation of the CCAP in the third decade of the 20th Century amidst the clamour of ecumenism. Special attention has been paid to the ever-cooperating spirit of the early missionaries of these missions and the eventual establishment of the CCAP in a progressive and cumulative manner of missionary strategy and appropriate response to the historical context. Here, the relationship to related developments in other African countries has also been tackled. The concept of comity is also discussed in this chapter in order to show how it was practically applied in the case of Malawi. Afterwards, I also present brief histories of the Synods of Harare and Zambia, being the synods that were born later after the establishment of the CCAP as daughters of the Synods of Nkhoma and Livingstonia respectively.

4.2 Early Cooperation between Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions

The three missions of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma are the tributaries that eventually poured into the CCAP in the years 1924 and 1926. However, it will be appreciated that cooperation among the three missions started long before their actual establishment in the country. In the case of the two Scottish missions, it is interesting to note that the Blantyre Mission party would have been the first to set for Africa if the process of recruitment of its volunteers had been swift. However, due to the delays in the processing of recruits, especially due to the reluctance of people to volunteer for missionary work, the organizers of the Livingstonia Mission managed to overtake their Blantyre counterparts. Nevertheless, when the Livingstonia party set out, there were some Blantyre personnel travelling with them in order to scout for a place where Blantyre Mission could be established.¹ This is a clear indication that

¹ See: Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Zomba: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, p. 41.

the coming in of Livingstonia and Blantyre missions to Africa was characterised by cooperation rather than competition.²

4.3 The Livingstonia Mission

The irony of history is that there seems to have been no direct connection between David Livingstone, in whose memory the Livingstonia Mission was named, and the leadership of the Free Church of Scotland which gave birth to the memorial mission. As argued by McCracken:

Not only was the Free Church's decision to found a mission in East Africa unconnected with Livingstone's appeals, its authorities were ignorant of the area he had selected for evangelisation. Only the fortuitous appearance of [James] Stewart and his suggestion of a title and location for the new mission connected Livingstone with its foundation at all.³

This observation underscores the fact that the influence of David Livingstone in the establishment of mission stations in the southern interior of Africa went beyond direct connections with him. His legacy was such that a suggestion of something in connection with him, whether directly or indirectly, would still carry the day. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that while the Livingstonia Mission took his name, its counterpart, the Blantyre Mission took the name of the missionary explorer's birth town back in Scotland, thereby popularising both his name and his birth place.

It has to be noted, however, that the founding of a mission that would be Livingstonia encountered many a problem and the idea was even abandoned at first, while David Livingstone was still alive. This was so because of the changes in circumstances of the place that the explorer had identified for a mission prior to James Stewart's visit to the area, who came at a time when the place was greatly ravaged by the evils of the slave trade. Consequently, James Stewart

² See: Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Zomba: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, pp. 18-21. Andrew Chirnside, however, was of the view that the Church of Scotland decided to send its mission in this area because it did not want to be seen to be lagging behind the Free Church of Scotland: "Now, with every desire to be just it is impossible not to feel that jealousy of the Free Church was the chief cause which made the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee decide to plant a rival mission not far from the projected Livingstonia Mission on Lake Nyassa." See: A. Chirnside, *The Blantyre Missionaries: Discreditable Disclosures*, London: William Ridgeway, 1880, p. 8.

³ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 58.

advised against establishing a mission station in the area despite his earlier enthusiasm following Livingstone's appeal.⁴

In the meantime Stewart was sent to South Africa where he worked for over five years, heading the Lovedale Mission, having, to all appearances, forgotten about establishing a mission station in the area around Lake Malawi according to David Livingstone's wishes. Whether Stewart had indeed forgotten about the Lake Malawi mission idea is debated among historians. What is not debatable though is that when the opportunity came for him to consider the issue again, he was enthusiastically ready to embrace it. This was during the time of David Livingstone's funeral in England, an event which stirred the hearts of many people with regard to the convictions of the great explorer. Even those who had been Livingstone's critics during his life time now became admirers and champions of his cause. It was this circumstance that, in a way, encouraged James Stewart to persuade the leadership of the Free Church of Scotland to consider establishing a mission station in the area near Lake Malawi. He had to argue against the Free Church's idea of establishing a mission in Somalia through Indian connections and prevail over contrary voices.⁵

It was eventually accepted that a mission station should be established for the propagation of the gospel in the area around Lake Malawi and the task of organizing the recruitment of personnel fell on the shoulders of James Stewart with the help of other gentlemen in the names of Rev Dr Duff, Mr James Stevenson, Mr James White of Overtoun, Dr James Young of Kelly, Sir William McKinnon, Sir John Cowan, Mr John Stephen, Rev Robert Howie of Govan, Dr Moir of Edinburgh, Rev Dr Goold and other well-wishers.⁶

One of the most remarkable things about the establishment of the Livingstonia Mission is the ecumenical cooperation that was experienced during the formative period of the mission in Scotland. People of different social and denominational backgrounds joined hands in supporting the mission irrespective of the differences they had with the Free Church of Scotland, which was unmistakably the owner (denominationally speaking) of the mission. Dr John Macrae, who was appointed by the Church of Scotland to chair an African Mission

⁴ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 54.

⁵ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, pp. 57-58.

⁶ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 30.

Committee, went as far as addressing an official note to the Free Church's Committee, stating that he was anxious for some form of co-operation with them in this business of African missions.⁷ James William Jack reports that on receipt of this note the Foreign Missions Committee of the Free Church of Scotland under the influence of Dr Duff would have gone in for full co-operation or even union but things did not work like that because this initiative was only regarded as a step in advance or as an extension of the work at Lovedale which was a purely Free Church of Scotland institution.⁸ In any case, this incident underscores the fact that even in their embryonic phase the missions of Livingstonia and Blantyre were intertwined and had somehow a common future in the offing.

The Livingstonia Mission as an organisation can be taken to have been publicly founded on 8th January 1875 following a meeting that took place in Glasgow in Scotland. The goal of this mission was to spread the Christian faith among Africans of the land adjacent to Lake Malawi and to provide some kind of influence for the industrial and commercial development of the area.⁹ To that end the pioneer mission party had to be composed of people of various skills besides their Christian convictions. The following was the team that Dr James Stewart managed to find for the task ahead: Mr George Johnston (carpenter); Mr Allan Simpson (blacksmith); Mr John MacFadyen (engineer); Mr Alexander Riddell (agriculturist) and Mr William Baker (a sailor).¹⁰ In addition to these five, there were Lieutenant Edward Young, R.N., the leader of the party; Rev. Dr Laws of the United Presbyterian Church, the only ordained clergy in the team and Mr Henry Henderson, the missionary appointed by the Established Church of Scotland to scout for what would eventually become Blantyre Mission.¹¹

⁷ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 36.

⁸ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 36.

⁹ To evangelisation and industrial training were added the emphasis on education and medical work. All the three missions that formed the CCAP practically had these four components in their missionary work even when not emphasised by some. See: Robert Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, Edinburgh/London: Oliver and Boyd, 1934, p. 6 and W.A. Elmslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni*, Edinburgh: Oliphant Ferrier, 1899, p. 9.

¹⁰ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 37.

¹¹ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 37.

This group of pioneer missionaries left London on 21st May 1875 for South Africa where they were supposed to rest for some time before embarking on their journey for the interior.¹² They arrived in Cape Town on 17th June 1875 and after spending a week and a few days in Cape Town, they left on the 26th of June 1875.¹³

It is important to note that the arrival of the missionary party bound for Lake Nyasa attracted a gathering of some eminent men in South Africa. This can partly be explained by the fact that Dr James Stewart had gone ahead of the party from London in order to arrange for their arrival and departure in South Africa but also because of the adventure and sensationalism surrounding the purpose of their journey. Of special importance among the people that attended to the missionary party in South Africa was the Rev Dr Robertson of the Dutch Reformed Church, whose own missionaries would in later decades be received by the Livingstonia Mission staff in the field in order to pave way for the establishment of the DRCM in Malawi, which eventually became Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP.¹⁴

With much difficulty, the missionary party kept on pressing northwards until it reached the southern tip of Lake Malawi in October 1875 and established the first Presbyterian station in the country at Cape Maclear. The Synod of Livingstonia of the CCAP is currently associated with the northern region of Malawi and yet the first mission station was in the southern part of the country. From Cape Maclear circumstances kept on pushing the headquarters of the Livingstonia Mission northwards as we shall see in the succeeding sections. The initial headquarters of the Livingstonia Mission was to be advantageous to the establishment of the Blantyre Mission which at one time greatly needed the assistance of some Livingstonia missionaries during a period of crisis. Back in Scotland when the missions were being formed, the founding fathers had hinted at possible cooperation and even assistance in times of trouble:

[They] agreed that each Church should have its own distinct settlement at Lake Nyasa, with its own stores and supplies, and should send out its own staff of missionaries, under its own Committee; but that the two settlements should not be so far distant from each other as to forbid easy intercourse and possible assistance in time of danger.¹⁵

¹² James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 41.

¹³ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 41.

¹⁴ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 41.

¹⁵ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 36.

What the founders of the missions had feared indeed came to pass in between the years 1876 and 1878 as Blantyre Mission found itself in such a crisis that it was inevitable for some Livingstonia senior personnel to go to Blantyre and assist in calming down the situation before the arrival of an able leader of the mission. This happened after Henry Henderson had asked for some assistance from the Livingstonia personnel at a time when Blantyre Mission came to a “standstill and in danger of utter collapse.”¹⁶

4.3.1 The Move to Bandawe and Ministry among the Tonga and the Ngoni

Using Cape Maclear as a base, the missionaries, with the aid of the Ilala (their steam ship named after the district in which David Livingstone had died in Zambia), started exploring the northern parts of the lake. It had become obvious to them that Cape Maclear was not the right place for a mission station despite that the place was well suited for a harbour. Eventually a station that had been founded at Bandawe among the Tonga in 1878 became the new headquarters in 1881.¹⁷ The move of the mission from Cape Maclear to Bandawe was necessitated by the problem of malaria and the fact that the mission was separated from the surrounding villages. Besides, the activities of those involved in the slave trade made the area not conducive for a mission station at the time.

From Bandawe the Livingstonia Mission’s influence continued spreading northwards and eventually opened up sub-stations in Njuyu (1882), Ekwendeni (1889), Khondowe (1894) and Loudon (1902).¹⁸ Khondowe was to become the new headquarters of the mission in 1894 after transferring it from Bandawe. In any case Bandawe was understood to be a temporary headquarters while searching for a more permanent and better place conducive to European settlement.¹⁹

It was during its settlement at Bandawe that the Livingstonia Mission proved to have come into the country to stay as the fruits of its labour began to manifest. This was mostly due to the

¹⁶ Stewart to Duff, 20 December, 1876, NLS 7876, quoted in John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 84.

¹⁷ Jack Thomson, Ngoni, *Xhosa and Scot: Religious and Cultural Interaction in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2007, p. 95.

¹⁸ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, pp. 125, 130, 156, 163.

¹⁹ Jack Thomson, Ngoni, *Xhosa and Scot: Religious and Cultural Interaction in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2007, p. 95.

fact that the Tonga people readily accepted the presence of the mission in their midst and enthusiastically embraced the schools which the missionaries were establishing. It has to be noted, however, that the Tonga's embracement of the mission was not only because of the Christian message which the missionaries brought but the protection their presence promised in the midst of the upheaval caused by the Ngoni raids in their vicinity. Though not necessarily the policy of the mission, some white people signed agreements with some Tonga chiefs, promising them help in the event that they were attacked by the Ngoni or any other enemy. On their part, the Ngoni caused quite a consternation in the eyes of the missionaries and for a long time they made the missionaries' stay in the country precarious because of their warlike culture.²⁰

Besides other factors that might have contributed to the pacifying of the Ngoni, the presence of the Livingstonia Mission and all the tactics that the missionaries used played a significant role in making sure that this ethnic group changed its behaviour towards other groups.²¹ It has to be noted that right from Cape Maclear the Livingstonia Mission wanted to have an influence among the Ngoni people. To that effect Dr Robert Laws visited the Ngoni Chief Chikuse in a bid to explore the possibility of opening a mission station in his area. However, this did not immediately materialise, and due to the influence of James Stevenson, who wanted to develop a transport corridor in the north going all the way to Tanganyika, the influence of the Livingstonia Mission kept on pushing northwards.²² The result was that the Mission was to eventually have influence on the M'mbelwa Ngoni of northern Malawi rather than on the Chikuse Ngoni of central Malawi.²³

4.3.2 *William Koyi and other Xhosa Missionaries*

In the entire Mission's encounter with the Ngoni, the role played by William Koyi cannot be overemphasized. Koyi was a Lovedale graduate of Xhosa origins who joined the Livingstonia Mission in 1876 together with three fellow Lovedale graduates who had responded to the call to volunteer for missionary work in Malawi after the Scottish missionaries had seen that the

²⁰ See: W.A. Elmslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni*, Edinburgh: Oliphant Ferrier, 1899.

²¹ Donald Fraser, *Winning a Primitive People*, London: Seeley Service, 1914.

²² Jack Thomson (ed), *From Nyassa to Tanganyika: The Journal of James Stewart CE in Central Africa 1876-1879*, Blantyre: Central Africana, 1989.

²³ The Chikuse Ngoni of Central Malawi were eventually evangelized by the DRC Mission.

work of fellow Africans would be of much help among the inhabitants of Malawi.²⁴ It was upon the request of those that were in Malawi that Dr James Stewart of Lovedale challenged the young Lovedale gentlemen to enlist for missionary work in Malawi working alongside their Scottish counterparts.²⁵ Four young men volunteered for the missionary work in Malawi. These were William Koyi, Mapassa Ntintili, Isaac Williams Wauchope and Shadrack Mngunana. Of the four it was William Koyi whose contribution to the history of the Livingstonia Synod in its early years was to have great significance, though during the first months it was mostly Shadrach Mngunana and Mapassa Ntintili whom the Scottish missionaries used to praise for their contributions. It is significant to note that even before reaching their destination, Koyi was already being looked upon as a kind of leader among fellow Xhosa evangelists as can be deduced from Isaac Williams Wauchope's correspondence aboard the *Ansgarius*:

We are all well yet and hope to be spared to the end. We love one another very much and there are no quarrels among us. We are still looking forward without any doubts and expect to face all difficulties like men. William Koyi is *like a father to us* and we are like sons to him.²⁶

This description of Koyi by a fellow Xhosa evangelist en route to Malawi was partly because of Koyi's age, which was a bit advanced compared to his friends but also because of his agreeable and generous spirit which made his presence a blessing to the others.²⁷

Besides their work with the Livingstonia Mission, two of the Xhosa missionaries, William Koyi and Mapassa Ntintili, were to contribute significantly to the work of the Blantyre Mission during its early days when the mission almost came to a standstill. Following the plea for help that came from Henry Henderson, Dr Robert Laws and the two James Stewarts (Dr James Stewart of Lovedale and Mr James Stewart, Civil Engineer) heeded the plea and went to provide leadership at Blantyre Mission following the confusion and depression that the Blantyre party

²⁴ See: T. Jack Thomson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi 1876-1888*, Pretoria: University of South Africa, 2000 and Jack Thomson, *Ngoni, Xhosa and Scot*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2007.

²⁵ T. Jack Thomson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi*, pp. 15-24.

²⁶ Isaac Williams to Mr Bennie, no date, in *Lovedale News*, 25 October 1876, p.8. Quoted in T. Jack Thomson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi*, p. 33. Emphasis added.

²⁷ Koyi's personality was responsible for attracting Joseph Bismark to join the missionary party as a young man, who wanted to go back to his area of birth from Quelimane where he had been sold or somehow found himself after being enslaved as a boy. He was eventually to become a significant figure in Blantyre Mission in his later years, thanks to Koyi who helped him in re-directing the course of his life. See: T. Jack Thomson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi*, pp. 32-33.

had experienced from the time of arrival when the six founding missionaries joined Henry Henderson who had been sent to scout for a place.

Mapassa Ntintili was the first of the Xhosa missionaries to arrive at Blantyre Mission during the period referred to as “the rescue operation.”²⁸ Due to his carpentry skills it was felt that Ntintili would be of great help in the work of building Blantyre Mission. Apart from his carpentry contributions, Mapassa Ntintili also contributed in the area of education and was able to produce a good number of schooled young men from his teaching endeavours. One of the most important persons to have been taught by Mapassa Ntintili during his stay at Blantyre Mission, which took eighteen months, was Kagaso Sazuze, whom he taught for almost a year. Afterwards, Kagaso Sazuze was able to continue with his education at Lovedale, where he greatly excelled and returned to Malawi in 1883. After returning to Malawi, he was posted to Zomba, where Blantyre Mission had opened an outstation. He worked in Zomba as a teacher while training as a medical orderly before dying prematurely in 1888.²⁹

On the other hand William Koyi’s arrival at Blantyre was a little later in January 1878 and he worked side by side with Ntintili in the work of evangelisation and experienced the adventure of the early years of Blantyre Mission together, especially in the issue of safeguarding the mission from thieves and other ill-intentioned people.³⁰ The significance of the two in their relations with the Church of Scotland’s Blantyre Mission in the late 1870s, as argued by T. Jack Thompson, was that both Ntintili and Koyi played a significant role in ensuring the survival of Blantyre Mission at a time when it was in danger of collapse.³¹

All this shows the intricate interconnectedness of the two missions during their formative years. One cannot stop to marvel at the cooperation of the brains behind the establishment of the two missions back in Scotland, the cooperation during the initial voyages of the missionary parties from Scotland to Malawi via South Africa and the cooperation in the mission field, not only in the contribution of the Scottish missionaries but also of the Xhosa missionaries and native Malawians as shown in the succeeding section.

²⁸ T. Jack Thomson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi*, p. 64.

²⁹ T. Jack Thompson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi*, pp. 64-68.

³⁰ See: Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Zomba: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, pp. 53-54.

³¹ T. Jack Thompson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi*, p. 73.

4.3.3 Indigenous Malawians' Contribution to Early Cooperation

It has to be noted that indigenous Malawians also played a significant role in the cooperation that was there during the formative years of the missions that evolved into the CCAP. The first DRC missionaries could not have survived without the assistance from their Scottish colleagues but more so their work could not have started so successfully if it were not for the help of Malawian Livingstonia 'boys.' Among these were Tomani and Albert Namalambe and many others from Bandawe Mission who accompanied the DRC missionaries to their new settlement.³²

When the DRC missionaries A.C. Murray and T.C.B. Vlok established their first school at Mvera they recruited Tomani, who had come from Cape Maclear as their first teacher.³³ Tomani had been taught by Rev Bain of the Livingstonia Mission and he proved to be one of the best pioneer teachers in the DRCM schools.³⁴

Albert Namalambe, the first convert of Livingstonia Mission at Cape Maclear, was a former servant of one of the Makololo chiefs, Ramakukani's sons who had joined the mission school.³⁵ When the royal boys left the mission Albert remained and eventually distinguished himself as a hard working boy during the early years of the mission. On 25th March 1881 he was baptised while at Bandawe station after expressing his own wish to do so but with full approval by Dr Robert Laws, who was convinced without doubt of his genuine conversion and zeal for the gospel.³⁶ He later became a teacher and an evangelist. The establishment of Livulezi Mission in 1886 is credited to his successful visit and negotiations with Chief Chikuse in 1885.³⁷ When the

³² See: Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 65.

³³ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 67.

³⁴ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 67.

³⁵ W.P. Livingstone, *The Life of Robert Laws of Livingstonia: A Narrative of Missionary Adventure and Achievement*, New York: George H. Doran, 1921, p. 180.

³⁶ W.P. Livingstone, *The Life of Robert Laws of Livingstonia: A Narrative of Missionary Adventure and Achievement*, New York: George H. Doran, 1921, p. 181. A little later Namalambe's wife was also baptized at Bandawe. See: *Ibid.*, p. 218.

³⁷ See: Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 72; Jack, James William, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, pp. 180-181.

Livingstonia Mission moved its headquarters to Bandawe, he was made in charge of the Cape Maclear Mission settlement as an outstation.³⁸ In 1890 he visited Mvera Mission station with two teachers who proved to be of much help in consolidating teaching in the DRCM.³⁹ Some of the early scholars of this initiative include Amoni Phiri Ndiwo who was ordained a minister in 1929.⁴⁰ Albert Namalambe later had a glorious ministry as a teacher and an evangelist in the DRCM after the Livingstonia Mission had transferred him to the former together with Livulezi and Cape Maclear stations. He is also recognised together with Louis Murray as the founders of Malembo mission station of the DRCM in 1904.⁴¹

4.3.4 The Move to Khondowe

Having moved the headquarters from Cape Maclear to Bandawe the Livingstonia missionaries continued to search for a more appropriate place to permanently settle as it was understood that Bandawe being on the lake was not very different from Cape Maclear in as far as the problems of malaria and hot temperatures were concerned. The next move of the mission headquarters was to go further north and further upwards.

In 1894 the mission headquarters came to Khondowe among the Phoka-Tumbuka people of the hills.⁴² The mission headquarters was to remain at Khondowe until the 20th century when further considerations made it move southwards to Mzuzu City but now no longer as the Livingstonia Mission headquarters but as the headquarters of the Synod of Livingstonia of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian.⁴³ Khondowe was praised at the time for being a much safer place in terms of malarial attacks and also for having a cool temperature characteristic of

³⁸ James William Jack, *Daybreak in Livingstonia*, Edinburgh and London: Oliphant, Anderson and Ferrier, 1901, p. 141.

³⁹ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 69.

⁴⁰ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 69, fn. 83.

⁴¹ Nkhoma Synod, "List of Founders of various mission stations," Nkhoma Museum poster.

⁴² W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia: A Narrative of Missionary Adventure and Achievement*, New York: George H. Doran Company, 1923, pp. 276-279.

⁴³ For this move to Mzuzu see: Chance Mwangomba, "The Life and Work of the Rev Wedson Paul Chibambo and Lucy Chibambo of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia", BA (Theology and Religious Studies) University of Livingstonia, 2013.

a high altitude.⁴⁴ One of the significant developments at the new headquarters of Khondowe was the establishment of the Overtoun Institution, an academic institution of the highest quality for many years in the whole of Central Africa during the colonial period.⁴⁵

4.3.5 The Overtoun Institution

The establishment of the Overtoun Institution was one of the most ambitious projects ever attempted by the Scottish missionaries in Malawi during the colonial era. While the institution could not have been there without the imagination and ambition of the Scottish missionaries, much credit is given to Messrs Overtoun and Stevenson, without whose financial muscle the project would have remained a mere dream with no hope of fulfillment. On the part of indigenous Malawians it was their receptivity of the Christian message and their desire to have the missionaries settle in their midst that made sure this project succeeded.⁴⁶

Of especial importance is the fact that despite the many praises that have been showered on Dr Robert Laws and other Scottish missionaries for this singular achievement, the irony is that the project remained controversial throughout the career of Robert Laws from the time he conceived the idea to the time when he retired in 1927.⁴⁷ For example Kerr Cross accused Laws in 1894 of acting as if he were the Pope, when trying to highlight Laws' perceived weakness in not consulting others on many issues including his ideas concerning the Overtoun Institution, which according to Cross was a good idea but ill-timed.⁴⁸

Whether one wants to side with Laws at this stage or not the issue is that despite the criticisms levelled against the Institution, it was nevertheless to become very famous in the subsequent years, training many young men (and a smaller number of young women) in this part of the world who could not have had their potential developed if it were not for the presence of this

⁴⁴ J.H. Morrison, *Forty Years in Darkest Africa: The Story of Dr Laws of Livingstonia*, Edinburgh: Foreign Mission Committee of the United Free Church of Scotland, 1917, p. 10.

⁴⁵ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 171-196.

⁴⁶ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 171.

⁴⁷ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 171.

⁴⁸ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 173.

institution in the vicinity of their birth place.⁴⁹ It was these very Overtoun Institution graduates that became quite handy for the colonial administration, business people and planters who came to settle in the country after the arrival of the missionaries and the establishment of Christianity and schools. The impact of this institution was felt throughout Southern Africa and beyond as its graduates dispersed.⁵⁰

4.3.6 Emerging African Leadership in Livingstonia Mission

Before the establishment of the Overtoun Institution in 1894 the kind of education that the missionaries were giving to the original inhabitants of the land was quite basic. However, after the establishment of the institution, there was a dramatic change in the kind of stuff to which scholars in mission schools were exposed. In the words of John McCracken

By the beginning of the 1890s Laws had become convinced that the creation of a viable Christianity in northern Nyasaland could be achieved only if African teachers, pastors and evangelists were given a more substantial training than that which individual missionaries had been able to provide.⁵¹

This thinking meant that Laws and the other missionaries had come to a realisation that the people they were serving had the potential to achieve greater things if given an opportunity and the necessary support. It was this turn of events that saw the first indigenous African theological students enrolling at Livingstonia, some of whom were to become the first ordained African pastors of the Livingstonia Mission.⁵²

Ironically, though, the first generation of Livingstonia missionaries did not want to give full authority to indigenous pastors so that they should be on the same level with the missionaries with regard to pastoral work. In the words of Hamish McIntosh:

It took a long time for Laws and his fellow missionaries to give to the Africans in practice what they readily conceded in words to be their due.⁵³

⁴⁹ Jack Thomson, *Ngoni, Xhosa and Scot: Religious and Cultural Interaction in Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere, 2007, p. 102.

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the contribution of this institution see: H.W.K Nyambose, "The Establishment and Contribution of the Overtoun Institute in Northern Malawi and beyond (1895-2010)", MA (Theology and Religious Studies), Mzuzu University, 2015.

⁵¹ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, pp. 171-172.

⁵² See: Hamish McIntosh, *Robert Laws: Servant of Africa*, Cadberry: The Handsel Press, 1993, p. 152.

⁵³ Hamish McIntosh, *Robert Laws: Servant of Africa*, Cadberry: The Handsel Press, 1993, p. 156.

It can be argued that it was this attitude of the Livingstonia missionaries that made the Mission delay the ordination of most of its accomplished and promising scholars, to the frustration of many. It is on record that it took Livingstonia Mission thirty-nine years to ordain its own indigenous pastors since its establishment in the country in 1875. The first Livingstonia indigenous pastors (Yesaya Zerenji Mwasi, Jonathan Chirwa and Hezekia Tweya) were ordained in 1914. This means that despite the participation of Africans in Church life, the Church within the jurisdiction of the Livingstonia Mission was largely led and controlled by Europeans before 1914 and to some extent even beyond as indigenous pastors continued to experience what they perceived to be oppression.⁵⁴ On the part of the Scottish missionaries, it was their general belief “that the African is most efficient as an evangelist when guided and controlled.”⁵⁵

The behaviour of the missionaries towards emerging African leaders was quite intolerable in certain respects. In the thinking of some of the indigenous leaders the behaviour of the Mission was even unchristian in the way it treated African Christians. For example Charles Domingo lamented that

Though Christ had dwelt only three years among His disciples and after these times left whole responsibility to them...White fellows have been here for nearly 36 years, and not one of them sees a native as his brother, but as his boy, though a native is somehow wiser than he in managing God’s work.⁵⁶

It can be argued that the position which the missionaries had taken put the indigenous pastors in an awkward situation vis-a-vis their missionary counterparts. It is therefore not surprising to find that some of the early African leaders of the Livingstonia Mission such as Charles Domingo, Kenani Kamwana and the rightfully ordained Yesaya Zerenji Mwasi and others “rebelled” against the Mission and founded their own denominations, independent of white missionary supervision.⁵⁷ Practically, most missionaries saw themselves as superior to Africans,

⁵⁴ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 240. See also “Letter of Yesaya Chibambo 1921 to Livingstonia Mission Council,” reproduced in Kenneth R. Ross (ed), *Christianity in Malawi: A Source Book*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996, pp. 155-159.

⁵⁵ Donald Fraser, *The Future of Africa*, London: Church Missionary Society, 1911, p. 206.

⁵⁶ Charles Domingo correspondence to Joseph Booth, 19.09.1911.

⁵⁷ Yesaya Zerenji Mwasi put his ideas in a document that has been published (with an introduction by Kenneth R. Ross) as a booklet under the Kachere Text series. See: Yesaya Zerenji Mwasi, *Essential and Paramount Reasons for Working Independently*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1999. One of the Livingstonia indigenous pastors who left the Mission Church was Charles Chidongo Chinula (1885-1971), though unlike his colleagues he rejoined the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia before his death.

perhaps because of the cultural and technological advancement of their own society, though some, with the advantage of hindsight, saw things differently as reflected in Alexander Caseby's testimony after he had left the mission field:

Men and women, mostly from Scotland, became missionaries and travelled to Africa, not to exploit but to explain; not to parade as superiors but to prove equality; not to demand but to share; not to cause friction but to show unity, goodwill and peace. In all my work I treated the African honestly and in deepest faith and in so doing my burdens were eased and all under me knew I, and most missionaries, had dedicated ourselves to uplift every African in sincere work, patient perseverance and all the time prove we were Christians with Christ's love for everyone.⁵⁸

The most important thing at this stage though, is the observation that, notwithstanding some racial tensions between white missionaries and the emerging Malawian leadership, the Livingstonia Mission, which was by now a Presbytery (since 1899), was ready to come to an amalgamation with the other presbyteries to form the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP).

4.4 The Blantyre Mission

Just as was the case with the UMCA and Livingstonia Mission, the establishment of Blantyre Mission was also a result of the life and work of Dr David Livingstone in Africa. We have already noted that in the case of Blantyre Mission the enthusiasm on the part of the would-be volunteers for the mission was not as fervent as is often imagined. However, it can be argued that for its organisers the enthusiasm was just as good as that of the organisers of the Livingstonia Mission. It was actually Dr Macrae who was in the forefront of organising the recruitment of a missionary party for the establishment of what was to become the Blantyre Mission. Even the identification of Lt. Edward D. Young as the leader of the party, due to his experience in the area of destination, was first made by Dr Macrae. When the Livingstonia Mission people contacted Young for the same purpose, he suggested a joint Scottish mission though his suggestion was not supported by the churches.⁵⁹ Eventually Young had to transfer to the Livingstonia initiative when they appeared to be ready ahead of their Blantyre

See: D.D. Phiri, *Chidongo Chinula*, London: Longman, 1975 and Louis Ndekha, "Chinula, Charles Chidongo", www.dacb.org/stories/malawi/chinula_charles.html, retrieved 14.6.14. For a view of some of the notable graduates of this institution see Happy Nyambose, "The Establishment and Contribution of the Overtoun Institute in Northern Malawi and beyond (1895-2010)," MA, Mzuzu University, 2015.

⁵⁸ Ronald Caseby, *Going with God: The Biography of Reverend Alexander Caseby from 1898 until 1991*, Sussex: The Book Guild, 1993, p. 194.

⁵⁹ D. MacDonald, *Africana or Heart of Heathen Africa*, Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1893, Vol 2, p. 19.

counterparts. The organisers of the two missions though remained friendly with each other and continued with cooperation for the success of the two missions' work.

4.4.1 The First Phase of Blantyre Mission History

Due to the cooperation that was taking place in preparation for the establishment of Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions, the departure of the pioneer parties of the two missions would almost have taken place at the same time. Owing to the delays of recruitment of the Blantyre Mission volunteers, the missionary party was not yet ready when their Livingstonia Mission colleagues were ready to depart for the field. However, in the spirit of cooperation, Henry Henderson, an experienced farmer and scout, was recruited in order to accompany the Livingstonia Mission pioneer party so that he could search for a suitable site for the establishment of the mission in preparation for the arrival of the pioneer missionaries of what would become Blantyre Mission.⁶⁰

In October 1875, Henry Henderson arrived with the Livingstonia party in the area where he was to scout for the site of a mission of the Established Church of Scotland. With the aid of some interpreters, especially Tom Bokwito, Henderson toured the Shire Highlands and settled for an area under Chief Kapeni. It is significant to note that Chief Kapeni, just like Chief Mponda of the Lake Shore area in whose land the Livingstonia Missionary party had established themselves, was supportive of the settlement of the "English" in his area because he thought they would provide some kind of protection for him from the raiding Ngoni who were terrorising the area at the time.⁶¹ This was an advantage for Blantyre Mission to be established in an area where the locals, including their traditional leadership, wanted its presence.

While Henry Henderson was already in Africa, there was not yet a group of missionaries to follow him as the Blantyre missionaries. This made the Church of Scotland Foreign Mission Committee anxious for the recruitment of the pioneer missionary party, consequently softening considerably on the qualifications of the people who were to go out for missionary work at Blantyre, with disastrous consequences during the mission's formative period due to the behaviour of some personnel with less, if any, Christian convictions.⁶²

⁶⁰ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Zomba: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, p. 19.

⁶¹ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940*, p. 72.

⁶² Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 19.

The pioneer missionary party of Blantyre Mission was composed of Dr T. Thornton Macklin, John Buchanan, George Fenwick, Jonathan Duncan, William Milne and John Walker. Thornton, a medical doctor, was the leader of the party and he and John Buchanan are described as dedicated Christian men.⁶³ The unfortunate thing with the Blantyre party though was that it had no ordained minister in its midst, a thing which made the spiritual direction of the mission a very challenging job despite the Christian zeal of the leader. This problem was accentuated by the unbecoming behaviour of some members of the party especially Walker and Fenwick, who became notoriously evil in their dealings with the locals, putting the mission and the Church in general in a very negative light in the midst of “heathenism.”⁶⁴

Between late 1876 and 1878 the Blantyre missionaries had to rely on the services of their sister mission of Livingstonia for spiritual and other responsibilities which the Blantyre team could not manage on its own.⁶⁵ This explains the presence of Dr Robert Laws, Dr James Stewart of Lovedale, Mr James Stewart CE, and the two Xhosa missionaries in the names of Mapassa Ntintili and William Koyi at Blantyre Mission during some periods of this time.⁶⁶ It was actually Henry Henderson himself who appealed for assistance from the Livingstonia missionaries – and this was quite in agreement with the foresight of the organizers of the missions back in Scotland who had envisaged a time when cooperation in the field would be needed.⁶⁷

The Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland considered it a humiliation that up to 1877 there was not even a single ordained minister coming forward to volunteer for the work of Blantyre Mission.⁶⁸ Relief came to the organizers of the Blantyre Mission in November 1877 when the Rev Duff MacDonald accepted their request to go to Blantyre.⁶⁹

The arrival of the Rev Duff MacDonald was a great relief to both the Livingstonia leaders who had shouldered the responsibility of caring for the two missions and the Blantyre missionaries who did not have a spiritual leader of their own. Immediately after his arrival, Duff MacDonald set to work and he was able to make a lot of progress with the Yao language, which

⁶³ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 19.

⁶⁴ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, pp. 20-21.

⁶⁵ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 21.

⁶⁶ T. Jack Thomson, *Touching the Heart: Xhosa Missionaries to Malawi*, pp. 59-73.

⁶⁷ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 40.

⁶⁸ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 21.

⁶⁹ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 63.

was the dominant language in the area then. Besides, he committed himself to the preaching of the word, making sure that the mission was able to do that for which it had been established.⁷⁰

The biggest problem for the missionaries at Blantyre during this time was the precarious position they found themselves in due to the questions of civil jurisdiction where they had no real government to relate with. Prior to MacDonald's arrival, some of the Blantyre missionaries were already involved in scandals of beating people and relating to the surrounding chiefs in a manner that was not expected of Christian missionaries. Since they did not see the "native chiefdoms" of either Chief Kapeni or other chiefs as properly constituted government, these Blantyre missionaries took the law into their own hands, as it were, and dealt with civil matters as they saw fit,⁷¹ often ending up in abusing their position as Christian missionaries.

Due to such kind of a background, it is not surprising that when one Mr Andrew Chirnside, a traveller, visited the area and the mission in 1879, he was horrified by the floggings and abuses that were taking place at the mission. When he went back to Scotland, Mr Chirnside published his experiences of the Blantyre Mission visit, highlighting the issue of execution and floggings which he witnessed or heard about.⁷² This publication caused a scandal in Scotland and the Church of Scotland had to do something about it. Consequently, the Church of Scotland appointed Dr Rankin of Muthill and Mr Pringle, a lawyer from Edinburgh, to go and find out about the issues as Commissioners of Enquiry.⁷³

The result of the Commission of Enquiry was the dismissal of Duff MacDonald, John Buchanan and Fenwick from the mission. The two notorious fellows, Macklin and John Walker, had already left their missionary employment, and so they could not be punished by merely dismissing them from the mission. Since the UK Government, which had been informed of the atrocities left everything in the hands of the Church, nothing could be done against those that had left the Church's employ.⁷⁴

The Sub-committee of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland was aware of the exercise of civil jurisdiction by the Blantyre missionaries as it had instructed them on

⁷⁰ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 47.

⁷¹ Duff MacDonald, *Africana or Heart of Heathen Africa*, Edinburgh: John Menzies & Co, 1882, p. 82.

⁷² A. Chirnside, *The Blantyre Missionaries: Discreditable Disclosures*, London: William Ridgeway, 1880.

⁷³ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi* p. 56.

⁷⁴ Church of Scotland, *Assembly Reports*, 1881, FMC Report, East Africa Section, p. 78.

many occasions earlier on that they were to establish a mission station as a kind of Christian colony, which means that they could not run away from exercising a measure of civil jurisdiction.⁷⁵ Ironically, Duff MacDonald was opposed to that policy and he attempted to extricate himself from such responsibilities by refusing to act as a magistrate. The same is true concerning Henry Henderson, who also could not happily “don a magistrate’s robe.”⁷⁶ MacDonald’s practice of handing over runaways, who were seeking refuge from the mission station in his bid not to burden himself with civil matters, coincided with Chirnside’s visit, who, without understanding the situation, felt sending people back to the local native authorities was more like signing their death warrants.⁷⁷ MacDonald was therefore punished for the bad which he did not do and was not praised for the good which he was doing, which eventually became the new policy; emphasizing that the missionaries of Blantyre were to have nothing to do with civil jurisdiction. This was a point which the Church authorities later admitted had been vague and yet they seem to have supported it as a policy earlier on prior to the atrocities that are reported to have taken place. As Andrew Ross argues

One can come to no other conclusion than that Duff MacDonald was made scapegoat for the African Mission sub-committee, whose policy he had consistently opposed.⁷⁸

In 1882, the Commission of Enquiry’s report and the facts of the Blantyre Mission atrocities were re-visited, and it was found out that Duff MacDonald was not to blame, though the damage had already been done and there were no further follow-ups on the issue. This saga in a way marks the end of the first phase of Blantyre Mission and it is significant to note that in the year 1882 there came new leaders for both the Mission and the Africa Sub-committee of the Church of Scotland’s Foreign Mission Committee in the names of David Clement Scott and Dr Archibald Scott of St George’s respectively.⁷⁹

4.4.2 Blantyre Mission “Re-founded”

It is generally believed by many church historians that the year 1881 marked the re-founding of the Blantyre Mission. In any case, the negative stories of the past had to go and a new

⁷⁵ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, pp. 56-57.

⁷⁶ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 56.

⁷⁷ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 57.

⁷⁸ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 57.

⁷⁹ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 61.

foundation had to be established.⁸⁰ While it can be argued that had the Rev Duff MacDonalld remained at Blantyre he could perhaps have done great things for the Mission, if we consider his zeal and abilities, his short stay in the country brought to an end what would have been a great missionary career, perhaps not very different from that of Robert Laws, if he were to live and stay long enough.

It was David Clement Scott whose mark on the history of Blantyre Mission was to have lasting results. Andrew Ross has observed that D.C. Scott saw the task of the missionary as being both a bearer of the Gospel and of modern culture.⁸¹ This was so because he considered the culture brought by the missionaries not simply as European culture but as modern culture in which all the peoples of the world were to participate. Despite his mistakes in certain instances with regard to his understanding of African culture, Scott was a champion of the Africanisation of the Church in order for it to be grounded in African forms. He thus expressed himself:

Our purpose we lay down as the foundation of all our work that we are building the African Church – not Scotch or English – but African. Rather we should say the African portion of the “one Catholik and Apostolik Church.”⁸²

After the unfortunate incidents referred to as the Blantyre Scandal, some authorities in the Church of Scotland were of the view that the Mission should have nothing to do with the civilizing role and industrial development except the preaching of the Gospel to the natives. This position was reached especially through the recommendations of the report of the Commission of Inquiry mandated to investigate the Blantyre atrocities. Though Reverend Scott was fully aware of this position, he pursued an agenda that was in many ways contrary to this view - continuing with the civilizing role of the mission and industrial activities. His argument was that unless the missionary “cut himself from all that is human and declare himself an ascetic, or unless he fall below the appreciation of culture, he must perforce take an interest in and develop the people around him to the best of his ability.”⁸³

⁸⁰ It is interesting to note that the current history page of the Blantyre Synod’s website starts with the year 1881 as if there had been no Blantyre Mission between 1876 and 1880. The obvious reason behind this silence can be nothing other than the unedifying story of the Blantyre Scandal which led to the dismissal of Rev Duff MacDonalld. See: www.blantyresynod.org/history, retrieved 6.10.13.

⁸¹ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 63.

⁸² *Life and Work in British Central Africa (LWBCA)*, May 1891; Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 146.

⁸³ *Life and Work in British Central Africa (LWBCA)*, December 1893.

Some of D.C. Scott's most significant contributions to the Church in Central Africa were the building of the St Michael's and All Angels Church, which still stands today as an icon of the success of the 19th century missionary endeavours in Malawi, and his publication of the *Cyclopaedic Dictionary of the Mang'anja Language*, considered by many scholars to have been no mean an achievement at the time.⁸⁴ Scott is also fondly remembered for the training of many Africans as evangelists who were to form the nucleus of the future Church.⁸⁵

Scott's leadership of Blantyre Mission was, however, not without controversy. While he was regarded by the indigenous Africans as a very religious and friendly person who had the welfare of the African at heart, he had no sympathy from many European settlers in the Shire Highlands who were planters and traders. The other quarter of animosity against Scott came from the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland and from some missionaries of Blantyre Mission who did not like his style of leadership, especially in the way he administered the Missionary Council and his accommodating attitude towards native customs. He was also criticized for promoting Black leadership in the Church. It seems there were just so many things that Scott was enthusiastic about which did not please many quarters except the target of missions in the catchment area of Blantyre Mission.⁸⁶

Andrew Ross has observed in line with Stephen Neil's argument that the period of the second half of the 19th century was the period of a fundamental shift in the way missionaries operated in the field. Whereas before this time there was a lot of freedom on the part of the missionaries in the field to act more independently of the home committee with regard to the administration of the mission Church, that freedom was now being minimized, with the home committees gaining a lot of supervisory influence on what was happening in the field, with the result that there was less leeway for innovation on the part of the missionaries.⁸⁷ This was also the period when the mission council gained prominence in the mission field as it formed a link between the home committee and the Church of the mission field.

⁸⁴ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 143.

⁸⁵ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, pp. 151-153. See also Kenneth Ross, "Vernacular Translation in Christian Mission: The Case of David Clement Scott and the Blantyre Mission 1888-1898," in Kenneth R. Ross, *Gospel Ferment in Malawi: Theological Essays*, Gweru: Mambo-Kachere, 1995, pp. 107-126.

⁸⁶ For a detailed discussion of these issues see: Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi* pp. 158-159.

⁸⁷ See: Stephen Neil, *A History of Christian Missions*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1964, p. 510 and Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, pp. 143-144.

Ross argues that Scott's way of doing things at Blantyre was totally different as the Mission Council was not active, to say the least. This means that Scott was the sole leader of the mission and he directed most, if not all things, according to his own thinking. This arrangement seems to have been fine with the missionaries who were in one way or the other closer to Scott – and they were in majority during the early years of Scott's administration.⁸⁸ However, when new missionaries who were not related or somehow personally closer to Scott arrived on the scene they resented his leadership style and reported him home negatively and sometimes even caused trouble for him in the Protectorate. The response of the FMC on this issue, after instituting a Commission of Enquiry, was that there should be more regular meetings of the missionary council and that it should be active in its work. This obviously had a negative effect on Scott who in many ways was used to his own way of heading the mission, with results that satisfied him in as far as the growth of the Church in Malawi was concerned.⁸⁹ During David Clement Scott's tenure, the work of Blantyre Mission spread to many parts, where other mission stations were opened such as Domasi and Zomba (1885), Chradzulu (1887), Mulanje (1890) and Ntcheu (1893).⁹⁰

On the issue of Scott's sympathy towards African cultural elements, he was accused of tolerating what was not holy enough in the Church. On this point it can be argued with the advantage of hindsight that Scott was ahead of most of his contemporaries in understanding the importance of African cultural elements for the growth and vitality of the Church in Africa. His belief in the ability of native leadership made him to ordain some of his outstanding students to the position of deacons in order to prepare them for ordination as full Church ministers. It has been observed that the ordination of Scott's deacons was not, as generally understood in the Presbyterian sense, that of lay servants in the day to day running of the Church's activities under the leadership of elders but more akin to the Anglican understanding, where deacons are just below the position of priests on the way to their own priestly ordination. It was to this "Deacons' Court," as it has come to be known that Scott frequently resorted to in order to discuss matters affecting the African Church. This tendency plus some innovations he initiated in the liturgy

⁸⁸ See William Robertson, *The Martyrs of Blantyre*, London: James Nisbet, 1903, pp. 148-149 and Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 158-159.

⁸⁹ Andrew Ross does not hide his admiration and defense for D.C. Scott. See: Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 163.

⁹⁰ Hastings Matemba Abale-Phiri, "Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The Case of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Blantyre Synod Urban Ministry," *DTh (Missiology)*, University of Stellenbosch, 2011, p. 41.

for the African Church made Scott to be accused of being a “traitor” of the Presbyterian system while cunningly introducing High Church Anglicanism. This was quite anathema for most Scots of the time who felt that their Presbyterianism should be guarded at all cost whether at home or abroad.⁹¹

Another important issue on which Scott differed with most of his contemporaries was that of racial unity in the Church. While most Europeans during this time considered themselves superior to Africans and therefore not free to associate with them on the same level, Scott was encouraging European members of the Church in the Shire Highlands to mingle with their African brothers and sisters in matters both social and religious. To that effect, Scott promoted the mixing of races in both the local language Church worship and in that of the English service, which to him was a true mark of Christianity if black and white Christians fellowshipped together.⁹² The conservative white party did not like that idea and tensions continued in the Church until it became inevitable later for the white Christians to separate from their African brothers and sisters in congregational life.

Due to the pressure of opposition to his ideas from the FMC and his unwilling colleagues in the field, coupled with his personal crisis after the loss of his wife and brother within a month, Scott’s health deteriorated and he was forced to resign from Blantyre Mission and headed for Scotland in 1898. After staying home for a short time Scott proceeded to another missionary posting among the Kikuyu in Kenya where he died in 1907. It is not surprising that Scott was greatly missed by the African Church in the jurisdiction of Blantyre Mission.⁹³

After Scott’s tenure of leadership the Blantyre Mission was led by Alexander Hetherwick who for a long time had been Scott’s right hand man in the work of the mission. As a member of Scott’s inner circle, Hetherwick did not completely break with Scott’s views though it was very difficult for him to continue with the way Scott was doing it. It became obvious to Hetherwick that in some situations he just had to bow down to the inevitable. He was, however,

⁹¹ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 165.

⁹² D.C. Scott was very much for the idea of an African Church that was free from the “isms” of Europe.

⁹³ An obituary of D.C. Scott that appeared in the *LWBCA* of September/October 1907 by Mungo Chisuse expressed the sorrow the people had at the news of the passing of D.C. Scott. Chisuse, however, rhetorically explained that the people were amazed at the news of his death since they had been mourning him since 1898 when he left Blantyre. For a later appreciation of Scott’s ministry see: Andrew Ross, “*Wokondedwa Wathu: The Mzungu who Mattered*,” in *Religion in Malawi* no. 8, 1998, pp. 2-7.

able to utilise the solid foundation laid by Scott in such a way that the Church continued to flourish under his leadership. The stations opened during Scott's leadership continued to grow and the Henry Henderson Institute was opened in 1909.⁹⁴ Another significant event was the ordination of the first Malawian pastors of the Blantyre Mission in 1911 in the names of Harry Kambwiri Matecheta and Stephen Kundecha.⁹⁵ It is Hetherwick that is credited with the success of steering Blantyre Mission towards the formation of the CCAP during the early and mid-1920s.⁹⁶

4.5 The Dutch Reformed Church Mission

The Dutch Reformed Church Mission, which eventually evolved into the Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP was formally established in the country in 1889 through its first missionary, A.C. Murray, who arrived in the country in 1888.⁹⁷ It is interesting to note how even the establishment of the DRCM in Malawi is intricately connected with the Scottish Presbyterian missions of Livingstonia and Blantyre.⁹⁸

Due to the influence of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Free Church of Scotland, which was responsible for the establishment of the Livingstonia Mission, the leadership of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa came to a consideration of starting their own mission in Malawi near where the Scottish Presbyterian missions had already established themselves for over a decade.⁹⁹ Further encouragement came from Dr James Stewart of Lovedale, who even proposed that the South African Mission could be hosted by the Livingstonia Mission and use that mission as a base for their own establishment in the country.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁴ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940*, p. 171.

⁹⁵ John Weller and Jane Linden, *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984, 119.

⁹⁶ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, pp. 193-194.

⁹⁷ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 59-61.

⁹⁸ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 45-56.

⁹⁹ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ *Die Kerkbode*, 25.6.1886, pp. 203-204, cited in Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 56.

The body that became responsible for this initiative was the newly founded *Predikanten Zending Vereniging* [Ministers' Mission Union] (MMU) which was a semi-independent organisation of the Dutch Reformed Church, with the aim of sending out missionaries for the work of evangelisation in distant places.¹⁰¹ The founding of this union by pastors who wanted to spread the faith using an organisation that was parallel to the Church's own Foreign Mission Committee, is in total agreement with the observation that it was missionary societies rather than churches or denominations that promoted the work of missions.¹⁰² In the case of the MMU the Foreign Missionary Committee had given them a go ahead in their work on condition that they would not burden the committee with requests of funds and that they would be sending reports to the committee and consulting it before making any important decisions.¹⁰³

The Rev A.C. Murray was ready to sail for Malawi in June 1888 after returning from Scotland where he had gone to train himself in the science of medicine in preparation for work in the mission field.¹⁰⁴ When A.C. Murray arrived in Malawi he had to spend some time at Blantyre Mission of the Church of Scotland while waiting for the steamer to take him up north from Matope to Bandawe, then the headquarters of the Livingstonia Mission. Murray's stay at Blantyre Mission was his first experience of how mission work was being carried out in the country. He was greatly assisted by the generosity of his hosts, the Rev and Mrs D.C. Scott from whom he also learnt some approaches of missionary work even if his own approach was to be different from what he had observed as evidenced from the following quote:

We are not sent out, I think, to civilise peoples, but to convert them. Not to give them a high secular education, but to "teach them to keep all things" which our Lord and Master commanded. Let those who will be our helpers as evangelists, catechists or teachers, learn what is necessary for their work, but as far as the people in general are concerned, let us impress the Word of God upon them in all possible ways, and furthermore teach them to read the Bible for themselves in their own language.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰¹ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 56.

¹⁰² Andrew Walls, "Missionary Societies and the Fortunate Subversion of the Church", in *Evangelical Quarterly*, 88:2 (1988), pp. 141-155.

¹⁰³ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980p. 59.

¹⁰⁴ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980.

¹⁰⁵ AC Murray, *Nyasaland en mijne ondervindingen*, p. 79. Quoted and translated from Dutch in Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980p. 60.

Afterwards Murray left Blantyre Mission for Bandawe station of the Livingstonia Mission from where he was supposed to be hosted while searching for a suitable site for the establishment of a mission station of the DRCM. After spending some days at Bandawe, Murray, accompanied by Mr Bain and other Livingstonia missionaries, headed farther north in search of a place for a mission station and he did find one at the village of Kararamuka, which at that time he thought would be a suitable site.¹⁰⁶ However, after staying for some time at this place, he fell sick and was not able to move for some days. The Livingstonia missionaries transported him back to Bandawe and Robert Laws was making plans to have him repatriated to South Africa, when all of a sudden his health returned back to him.¹⁰⁷ Because of the improvement in his health the plan to have him repatriated was abandoned. Instead he was sent to Njuyu Mission, which was under Dr and Mrs Elmslie, to continue with his recuperation since the place was considered healthier than Bandawe. His stay at Njuyu provided A.C. Murray with more opportunities to learn how the Livingstonia Mission was doing its missionary work.¹⁰⁸

4.5.1 DRCM Stations Established

Due to his experience of ill health, A.C. Murray felt the place in the north of the lake was not good enough for the establishment of a mission station and so he decided to go to a different place, towards the south west of the lake from Bandawe farther into the interior. Apart from the unhealthiness of the place, there were Arab slave traders in the area which also made the area quite unsafe at the time. Besides, Murray was of the view that the area was under Livingstonia Mission's influence. While Murray was at Njuyu, Dr Robert Laws communicated to Murray's authorities in South Africa that there was need for another missionary to come and be colleagues with Murray. The missionary who came in response to this suggestion was the Rev T.C.B. Vlok who arrived at Bandawe in 1889 and from there they were to set off for another search for a suitable site for the establishment of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980p. 61.

¹⁰⁷ Janet Wagner Parsons, "Scots and Afrikaners in Central Africa: Andrew Charles Murray and the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi", *The Society of Malawi Journal*, Vol. 51, no. (1998), pp. 24-25.

¹⁰⁸ Peter Pretorius, "An Introduction to the History of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi, 1889-1910 in B. Pachai (ed), *The Early History of Malawi*, London: Longman, 1971, p. 122.

¹⁰⁹ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, pp. 62-53.

After many an adventure travelling southwards towards what is now the Central Region of Malawi, A.C. Murray and T.C.B. Vlok pitched their tent in the area of Chief Chiwere. Here they waited for the chief to grant them permission to settle in his country and once permission was granted they established their station near a hill called Mvera. Choosing from various options of a name for their mission, they settled for the name Mvera, which had some connections to their purpose of preaching the gospel as the name means “to listen or obey.”¹¹⁰

The DRCM missionaries set to the task of establishing themselves in the field by opening a school at Mvera and attending to village evangelistic meetings. A medical practice was also established at the station with A.C. Murray treating the patients.¹¹¹ The first teacher of the school at Mvera was Tomani, who had been trained by Rev J.H. Bain of the Livingstonia Mission and had come from Cape Maclear. Later many school teachers and assistants came from the Livingstonia Mission station of Bandawe to work with the DRCM.

It was observed that attendance at Church services both at the station and in the surrounding villages was at first very high but later on it went down. Consequently, the missionaries made a rule that whoever was employed by the mission or wanted to deal with the mission in matters of medicine and trade had to be attending the morning prayers at the station. This policy retained a good number of people who continued to listen to the preaching of the gospel.¹¹²

The first permanent church was built at Mvera in 1898. Work progressed well, so much so that by the year 1900 the number of baptized Christians in the mission register reached 151 names.¹¹³ The first children of Christians are recorded to have been baptized on 13 November 1898.¹¹⁴ More missionaries were also added to the original number as the years progressed. The

¹¹⁰ Tracing the origin of the name “Mvera” P.A. Cole-King argued that it was named thus because it was a rallying point whenever the chief called his people to arms by drumming from his headquarters. See: P.A. Cole-King, “Lilongwe”, p. 17; *Nuusbrief uit Malawi*, January 1974. Also Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, p. 66.

¹¹¹ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, p. 69.

¹¹² Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980p. 67.

¹¹³ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 70.

¹¹⁴ CCA S5 15/6/11/4, Mvera Mission Log Book, 13.11.1898. Cited in Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 70.

first to arrive was Robert Blake in 1892. Later J.S. Cridland and Miss Martha Murray also arrived. Miss Martha Murray was the first lady worker of the DRC Mission in Malawi. In 1894 W.H. Murray, who was to succeed A.C. Murray, arrived. Among the first band of missionaries to work for DRCM in Malawi three had died before 1899. These were Mrs Vlok, who died at Livulezi in 1895, Rev du Toit who died at Nkhoma in 1897 and J.S. Cridland who died at Kongwe in 1898.¹¹⁵

In 1896 a mission was opened in Chief Mazengera's area at the foot of Nkhoma Mountain. This event was very important in the history of the DRCM as this station would eventually become the headquarters of DRCM in Malawi in 1912.¹¹⁶ More mission stations were opened after 1896 in Chief Mpezeni's area in what is now Zambia. The pioneer missionaries sent there were Revs P.J. Smith and J.M. Hofmeyr who opened Magwero Mission in 1899, and the next decade saw four more stations being opened namely, Madzimoyo in 1903, Chipata in 1905, Nyanje in 1905 and Nsadzu in 1907.¹¹⁷

4.5.2 Separation from Livingstonia Mission

From the beginning the DRCM was founded as a separate mission but due to circumstances of lack of capacity during its formative years it operated as a department or a branch of Livingstonia Mission until 1898 when it formed its own Mission Council. This was after the Home Committee had given the missionaries in the field the mandate to do so in the previous year. From now onwards, the DRCM would continue to cooperate with the Livingstonia Mission but was no longer required to report to its Council. One area of cooperation that continued for a time was the training of the workers of DRCM at the Overtoun Institution until 1903, when the DRCM institute was built at Mvera. In the same year another significant

¹¹⁵ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 72.

¹¹⁶ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 74.

¹¹⁷ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 76. It has to be noted that the mission stations established in Zambia did not become part of the CCAP. The work of DRCM from Malawi in Zambia was taken over by the Synod of the Orange Free State of the DRC and these eventually separated from the Malawian work, later developing into the Reformed Church in Zambia. See: also, Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 101.

development happened. Previously, all aspects of the work of the mission had to be discussed at the Mission Council meeting but a special council of congregations was formed with the mandate of dealing with matters concerning the ecclesiastical development of the work and to advise the Council.¹¹⁸

Christoff Martin Pauw disagrees with John McCracken's interpretation of the separation of the two missions. Whereas McCracken explains the independence of the DRCM from Livingstonia as a mission pluralism challenge in the sphere of the Scottish Presbyterian missions, Pauw considers the event a natural sequel to the developments that had taken place up until this time and also that this was what was agreed upon right from the beginning. Indeed it is strange for McCracken to explain in the way he does. I totally agree with Pauw that the DRCM had to wean itself from Livingstonia Mission at one time and there were no ill feelings about it as the plans of the two missions were not a guarded secret. Besides, one is tempted to conclude here that McCracken did not take much time to study the Livingstonia/DRCM relationship during the formative years of the DRCM (which was not his aim any way) and consequently made unfortunate statements concerning the DRCM missionaries whom he had to mention in passing in his reconstruction of the Livingstonia Mission story.¹¹⁹

4.5.3 Challenges Unique to the DRCM

In the years that followed the Dutch Reformed Church Mission experienced challenges as well as blessings that were unique to them owing to their South African origin. On the side of challenges, the mission found itself in a very awkward position between 1899 and 1902 and immediately after. This was the period during which the Afrikaners and the British fought in South Africa in what has come to be known in history as the Anglo-Boer war. Since the DRCM was an Afrikaner mission it meant that they were operating in enemy's territory in Malawi as

¹¹⁸ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 82.

¹¹⁹ See: John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 216; Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 80-81 and also AC Murray, *Ons Nyasa-akker*, p. 117. It has to be noted that Pauw quotes McCracken's words on this issue as appearing on page 175 while the present research is quoting page 216. The reason for the difference on the number of the page being that the current research is using the 2000 edition published by CLAIM and Kachere (ISBN 1025-0964) whereas Pauw used the first edition published by Cambridge University Press in 1977 (ISBN 0-521-2144-0).

the country was at the time under British colonial rule. A cloud of suspense, therefore, hung on the DRCM missionaries as they could not know what the Colonial Government's move could be against them given the circumstances. Apart from this uncertainty, this was also a period of rapid missionary turnover due to deaths and illness in the midst of a financial crisis.¹²⁰

4.5.4 The MMU Hands over Responsibility to the General Mission Committee of the Cape DRC Synod

In 1903 the MMU handed over its responsibility of the DRCM in Malawi to the newly created General Mission Committee of the Cape DRC Synod. At its first meeting this committee elected a Malawi Subcommittee to be specifically responsible for the DRCM in Malawi. The MMU was however not abolished as it continued to exist and functioned as a supporting body which could make annual contributions to the General Mission Committee fund.¹²¹

From 1904 onwards the mission experienced unprecedented growth and it expanded its work in various activities e.g. education, agriculture, medical work and industrial activities. It must be noted here that though A.C. Murray and other pioneer missionaries were against the uplifting of the people in general in their missionary policy, even the DRC Mission evolved into an industrial mission as circumstances dictated that it respond to the needs as they arose in the mission field. This position was reached long before the DRCM joined with the other Presbyterian missions or presbyteries to form the CCAP.

4.6 The Formation of the CCAP

When the CCAP was finally formed in 1924 with the union of the two Scottish Presbyterian missions, it was a fulfilment of the dreams of men like Robert Laws and David Clement Scott who had a vision of an African Church unencumbered by European divisions right from the dawn of their missionary work. It will, however, be shown that the union achieved did not go all the way to fulfil the dream of the early missionaries.

¹²⁰ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 82-86.

¹²¹ DR C, *Acta*, 1903, pp. 44, 45, 60, 61, 62; CCA S5 1/1/2: entry for 1.11.1903. Both sources cited in Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 85.

David Clement Scott of Blantyre Mission was of the view, which was later inherited by his successor, Alexander Hetherwick, that a Church created by African evangelists should have some freedom to develop in its own way.¹²² To this end Scott wanted very much to have a Church that would be fully in the hands of Africans. This desire of Scott's was fully in line with the thinking of Robert Laws who, as early as 1893, had propagated the formation of a United Presbyterian Church out of the congregations of Blantyre (Church of Scotland) Mission, the DRC Mission and the Livingstonia Mission:

I do not believe ... that we should merely be a presbytery of the home church; we should work towards a Central African Presbyterian Church, which would include Blantyre and the Dutch.¹²³

The ideas of a unified Church which had been conceived in the late 19th century were to develop further and bear fruit in the 20th century. As early as 1900, there were several efforts at cooperation among the missions that were in the Malawian field. At the General Missionary Conference of 1900 which took place at Livingstonia the missionaries agreed that their aim should be the establishment of a self-supporting and self-propagating native Church.¹²⁴

In 1903 Hetherwick revived Dr Laws' proposal for a united Church which he had proposed earlier on. More discussions were to take place at the 1904 Missionary Conference between the representatives of the two Scottish Presbyterian presbyteries of Livingstonia and Blantyre, which had been established in 1899 and 1902 respectively. Though encouraging, the discussion between the two presbyteries still had some areas to be ironed out. Some of the questions raised had to do with the issue of theological basis, the number of missions to be involved and the disciplinary code to be established.¹²⁵ Another complication at this stage was the fact that whereas Blantyre Presbytery was a presbytery of the home Church of Scotland, the Livingstonia Presbytery had a greater level of autonomy as it was not under the home Church. A compromise position was suggested that the new Synod to be formed should be a purely African Synod,

¹²² Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 174.

¹²³ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia: A Narrative of Missionary Adventure and Achievement*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, ³1923, p. 260. See also Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 265.

¹²⁴ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 266.

¹²⁵ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 267.

with the European missionaries remaining members of their home Church as separate congregations.

During the third Missionary Conference of 1910 at Mvera Mission a formal meeting took place between the Blantyre and Livingstonia Presbyteries with the DRCM missionaries, A.L. Hofmeyr and A.G. Murray acting as observers. The meeting agreed to have the two presbyteries united into one synod of a common Church.¹²⁶ Opinion though was divided with regard to the actual name of the new Church to be formed. Donald Fraser of Livingstonia Mission was of the view that the name of the Church should just be “The Church of Central Africa”, but he was opposed by Alexander Hetherwick who wanted the word “Presbyterian” added at the end. After voting those that wanted the name Presbyterian won the day and from that time onwards the name has remained like that. Upon the presbyteries communicating with their mother churches back in Scotland both the United Free Church of Scotland’s General Assembly and that of the Church of Scotland agreed to the proposal, paving way for the establishment of the Synod of the CCAP.

The idea of the Church of Central Africa was open to other missions that were willing to join the union. During the early days Robert Laws hoped that the London Missionary Society in Zambia and the German missions in Tanganyika would join but later historical events took a different direction.¹²⁷

While most arrangements for the unity had been completed by 1914, the actual amalgamation was to wait for another decade, mostly due to the disturbance caused by the First World War. A few more years passed after the war before the union could be consummated on the 17th of September 1924, with Livingstonia and Blantyre presbyteries becoming one Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP).¹²⁸ The most obvious candidate to join the union within Malawi after the two Scottish presbyteries was the DRCM Nkhoma Mission owing to its cooperation and affinity to the Scottish Presbyteries both in terms of history and theology. It has to be noted that the DRCM had three spheres of work in this region of Africa

¹²⁶ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 268.

¹²⁷ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, Franker: T. Weber, 1967, pp. 194-196; Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 265.

¹²⁸ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 270.

namely: Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique. It was the intention of the DRCM to first of all amalgamate its presbyteries of Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi into a Synod before joining the CCAP. However, the end of the DRCM's mission work in Mozambique in 1922 and the handing over of Kasungu Station to the DRCM by Livingstonia were factors, which according to Christoff Martin Pauw, "swung the pendulum in favour of the Nkhoma section of the DRCM joining the CCAP."¹²⁹

It took two years for the Nkhoma Mission to join the union. The reasons for this delay were many. Firstly, it was the reluctance of the DRCM to accept the wording of the first article of the Statement of Faith for the united Church.¹³⁰ Though this could not be changed, the DRCM was given a leeway to interpret the same according to its own taste, which was more of a compromise. Secondly, there was the issue of the influence of the DRC on the union. There was a proposal that the DRC should reserve the right to pull Nkhoma out of the union if it deemed it necessary to do so in certain circumstances. This proposal could not be accepted by the Scottish missionaries who wanted all the presbyteries to have full rights of continuing or withdrawing from the union without undue pressure from the mother churches. The last issue was the fear of Scottish liberalism on the part of the DRCM whose theological position was conservative (in the evangelical sense of the word). The DRCM needed some kind of assurance from their Scottish colleagues that the Church in Central Africa would not be influenced by the so-called modernistic teaching of the Christian faith which, according to them, was not in tandem with orthodoxy.¹³¹

Once these issues had been ironed out the way was open for the Nkhoma Presbytery to be received into the union and this was officially done in 1926. The presbyteries were now free to discuss issues pertaining to the African Church independently, though the mother churches of the missions returned some jurisdiction over their missionaries. Pauw has noted that

Although now united in one Church, the three presbyteries still retained a large degree of independence and autonomy in such matters as the training, licensing, ordination and

¹²⁹ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 271.

¹³⁰ The article reads: "The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, is the supreme rule of faith and conduct." CCAP, "Extracts of Minutes of Synod 1924-1945, p. 4.

¹³¹ P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia*, Franker: T. Weber, 1967, pp. 197-199; Also Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 273.

appointment of ministers as well as oversight and discipline over them, while the function of the Synod only included “matters pertaining to the general welfare of the Church.”¹³²

This in essence meant that the CCAP had more the character of a Council or consultative body than an organic single denomination. With no legislative and enforcement powers as far as the work of the presbyteries was concerned, it was effectively excluded from imposing any change in the basis of faith and the Terms of Union upon the presbyteries.¹³³ Pauw argues that had this not been the case, the union would definitely not have lasted. He has not elaborated on this statement but I understand him to mean that any meaningful union beyond the level reached would not have been achievable in the case of the CCAP. What then was achieved in this union? I argue that what was achieved was a loose federation of three distinct denominations and a safeguard for any further development of these former missions into an organically unified denomination since the union had no powers of its own to decide the direction it would go without the blessings of the presbyteries which remained independent of one another.

4.7 Related Developments to the Formation of the CCAP

The formation of the CCAP in 1924, with the union of Livingstonia and Blantyre presbyteries, was not an entirely isolated phenomenon in the history of the Church at the time. This was the time when many denominations were talking about unity or cooperation among Christian denominations, a concept otherwise known as ecumenism. While this unity was not as easy in the old Christian countries of Christendom, it was considered a bit easier or more desirable in the mission field where some missionaries did not want a repetition of the divisions of Christendom among indigenous peoples who through the work of missions had come to embrace the Christian faith in several parts of the world. Cooperation was, therefore, largely encouraged in the mission field.

Among the Scottish Presbyterian missions it must have been pleasing to note that the home churches that were responsible for the sending of the missionaries in the field were themselves re-uniting. Robert Laws for example was a minister of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland loaned to the Free Church of Scotland’s Livingstonia Mission in Malawi but in 1900 the two denominations united to form the United Free Church of Scotland. In 1929 the United

¹³² CCAP Synod 1926, minute 5.4; Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 278.

¹³³ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, p. 278.

Free Church of Scotland re-united with the Established Church of Scotland. By this date the CCAP had already been formed in 1924 but there can be no doubt that activities taking place in Scotland accelerated or influenced the unity of the mission churches in the field, especially when one considers that for the CCAP the initiative was wholly that of the missionaries.¹³⁴

In the mission field outside of Malawi, good examples of different churches coming together to form a single denomination can be instanced from Zambia, Kenya and India. In Zambia several denominations of various denominational and missionary backgrounds united to form the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) on 16th January 1965.¹³⁵ It has to be noted however, that this was a union that had its genesis in the early 1920s, the same time the CCAP was being formed. For the UCZ the steps are that the negotiations that started in the 1920s led to the formation of the Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia (CCAR) in 1945. This developed further into the United Church of Central Africa in Rhodesia (UCCAR) in 1958 after further unifications.¹³⁶ In the case of Kenya, a similar development to the formation of the CCAP was the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) between 1936 and 1956.¹³⁷ While this was a limited union, like that of the CCAP in Malawi, there was also a wider attempt, to form a united native church, which was attempted in the Kikuyu Conferences of 1913-14.¹³⁸

¹³⁴ The indigenous pastors were at this time not powerful enough to make such decisions. In any case the discussions towards unity had actually started long before the indigenous pastors were even ordained as ministers.

¹³⁵ See: John Weller and Jane Linden, *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984, p. 148.

¹³⁶ John Weller and Jane Linden, *Mainstream Christianity to 1980 in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1984, p. 149. See also P. Bolink, *Towards Church Union in Zambia and Bwalya S. Chuba, A History of Early Christian Missions and Church Unity in Zambia*, Ndola: Mission Press, 2005.

¹³⁷ <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/member-churches/presbyterian-church-of-east-africa>, retrieved 15.10.13. See also www.pceaheadoffice.org.HiSTORY.html, retrieved 15.10.13.

¹³⁸ Here, especially the Anglo-Catholic position of the UMCA (who did not even have a mission in Kenya) but Bishop Frank Weston of Zanzibar nevertheless participated, made it clear that an Anglican Mission can never join a United Church. He even accused Bishop John Jamieson Willis of Uganda and Bishop William George Peel of Mombasa for heresy because of their involvement in the unity talks with other denominations. So the conferences settled for no union but cooperation in Missionary Council. See: Arthur Aston Luce, "The Kikuyu Scheme of Federation," *The Irish Church Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 31 (July 1915), pp. 186-199. Also Fred D. Schneider, "Kikuyu and Ecclesia Anglicana," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, Vol. 41 No. 1, Fortieth Anniversary Number (March 1972), pp. 37-65; "No Kikuyu Heresy Trial", *The New York Times*, 10 February 1914 and "The Kikuyu Controversy: Archbishop of Canterbury's Judgment, *The Morning Post* (London), 26 April 1915, p. 2.

Another interesting union of churches around this time took place in India when several denominations from different denominational backgrounds such as Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational came together to form the Church of South India in 1947.¹³⁹

The above examples squarely place the formation of the CCAP within the wider movement of Ecumenism, which makes one understand that the field was ripe for such a development as changes were taking place in many corners of the world where the Christian faith was advancing.

4.8 The Concept of Comity and its Application in Malawi

Missiologically, the word comity refers to the agreement of different missions on the boundaries of their spheres, which are supposed to be respected and maintained on the understanding that the missionary work of neighbouring missions is equally valid Christian witness. Practically, this means that the missionaries of one sphere cannot cross their boundary and go into their colleagues' sphere to preach the gospel without the approval of the owners of the sphere according to the comity agreement. Additionally, Christians converted by a mission that is different from one's own but with whom there is a comity agreement are accepted as such upon production of their membership evidence.

In the Malawian situation this agreement was initially only among the Scottish Presbyterian missions and the DRC Mission. The other missions that came later, especially the Roman Catholic missions and Evangelical missions did not enter into nor respected this agreement. This meant that the three Presbyterian missions had to face competition from other missions within the areas they had designated to themselves. This in many cases caused a lot of conflicts among Christians of rival missions. For example the presence of Joseph Booth's Zambezi Industrial Mission within the vicinity of Blantyre Mission was not a welcome thing. Even when there were no direct clashes such missionary rivalry was the cause of many suspicions and accusations, especially when those missionaries that were late comers in the field were perceived to be coaxing mission boys with higher pay in order to employ already 'educated' personnel.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ See: Bengt Sundkler, *Church of South India: Movement towards Union, 1900-1947*, London: Lutterworth Press, 1954 and John C.B. Webster, "The Church of South India Golden Jubilee", *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*, April 1998.

¹⁴⁰ See: Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Zomba: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, pp. 179-180.

From its beginning to mid-1890s, Blantyre Mission enjoyed cordial relations with the UMCA, especially during Bishop Smythies' and Bishop Hines' times. However, in later years there was no love lost between them.¹⁴¹ The UMCA did not seem to value any cooperation at all with the Blantyre Mission and there were many tensions between the two missions, especially during the time leading up to the First World War.¹⁴² Nkhoma Mission also had some unpleasant experiences with the Roman Catholic missions in the upper regions of the Central Region. The situation was the same with the UMCA in the Nkhotakota area, which somehow disturbed the Livingstonia Mission's relationship with them since the latter expected them to expand from Likoma towards the eastern shore of Lake Malawi and not the western shore which they considered their own territory.¹⁴³

These observations show that the issue of comity in Malawi was initially practiced only among the Presbyterians. On the part of the Roman Catholics there were two groups that brought the faith into the country namely, the Montfortians and the White Fathers, but the agreement between the two groups in spreading the Catholic brand of Christianity cannot be termed comity since they were both serving the same denomination.

It has to be noted though that there was some cooperation among Protestant missions for the sake of the Gospel, even if that cooperation did not entail unity or comity. For example, as early as 1900 the missions in the Malawian field agreed to have some cooperation in the area of education, especially in order for them to have one voice when lobbying the Government in its support for missionary education activities. They also cooperated in the translation of the New Testament into Chinyanja (Chichewa). In 1910 the Consultative Board of Federated Missions (CBFM) was formed, which brought even more cooperation among the Presbyterian missions and some Evangelical missions such as the Zambezi Industrial Mission, Nyasa Mission and the South African General Mission.¹⁴⁴ The areas of cooperation were in such fields as education, hymnal compilation and more importantly Bible translation. The cooperation in Bible translation led to the publication of the first full Chichewa Bible in 1922 under the leadership

¹⁴¹ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 180.

¹⁴² Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, pp. 180-181.

¹⁴³ See: Hamish McIntosh, *Robert Laws: Servant of Africa*, Cadberry: The Handsel Press, 1993, p. 132.

¹⁴⁴ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 40-43.

of William Murray of the DRCM.¹⁴⁵ It can be argued that through this body there developed some kind of practical comity among the member churches, especially when one looks at the fourth clause of their agreement, which emphasized “the recognition of each other’s church membership and church discipline.”¹⁴⁶ Ross has observed that due to the cooperation engendered by the CBFM, “the squabbles that had from time to time in the past taken place over encroaching on one another’s areas or bribing away teachers by offering higher wages were now at an end.”¹⁴⁷

The above discussion has shown that cooperation among missions in Malawi for the sake of mutual benefit was widely promoted, especially among Protestant missions and later their churches. However, cooperation for the sake of eventual unity was a thing envisaged only among the Presbyterian missions. However, even in their case unity did not mean going all the way to creating an organically unified one denomination. It is this nature of a denomination to which the newly formed Synods of Harare and Zambia joined to make the five CCAP synods in the General Assembly, as we know them today. Below is a brief explanation of the histories of the two synods in order to appreciate their positions in the CCAP General Assembly.

4.9 Harare Synod

The Harare Synod of the CCAP is the result of the development of the Harare Presbytery, which formed out of the congregations that were under the Presbytery of Nkhoma in Zimbabwe following the establishment of immigrant congregations there between 1905 and 1956.¹⁴⁸

The first members of this church were immigrants from Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique who had decided to go to Zimbabwe for the sake of economic opportunities since they could easily find jobs then in the Zimbabwean mines, farms and industries.¹⁴⁹ Apart from those that just wanted employment, many Malawians trekked to Zimbabwe during this time because of

¹⁴⁵ M.W. Retief, *William Murray of Nyasaland*, Lovedale: The Lovedale Press, 1958, pp. 96-106.

¹⁴⁶ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 180.

¹⁴⁷ Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, p. 180.

¹⁴⁸ Samuel Gunde, “A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth Of Membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod (1912 – 2012)”, MA (Theology), University of Stellenbosch, 2013, p. 31.

¹⁴⁹ G. Verstraelen-Gilhuis, *From Dutch Mission Church to Reformed Church of Zambia*, Franeker: Wever G., 1982, p. 55.

the hut tax the colonial government had introduced in the Protectorate.¹⁵⁰ The reason for the establishment of the church was a response to the pastoral need that had developed due to lack of pastoral supervision of the immigrant community in Zimbabwe.¹⁵¹ Consequently, several volunteers from the Synods of Nkhoma, Livingstonia and Blantyre went to serve the migrant community in Zimbabwe.¹⁵²

In the year 1912, the Rev T.C.B. Vlok took over the leadership of the Church, bringing with him 23 years of missionary experience, as he had been a founding missionary of Nkhoma Mission together with A.C. Murray back in the late 1880s.¹⁵³ Rev Vlok was to lead the Synod of Harare during its formative years from 1912 to 1936.¹⁵⁴

The Rev J. Jackson succeeded T.C.B. Vlok when the latter retired in 1936. Rev Jackson served the church from 1936 up to 1952. It was Rev Jackson's wife who initiated the establishment of the Women's Guild (*Chigwirizano cha Amayi*) in Zimbabwe.¹⁵⁵ She led the group from 1940 to 1952 when her husband retired.¹⁵⁶

Between 1935 and 1965, the CCAP church in Zimbabwe grew under two presbyteries of Harare and Gweru. The two presbyteries joined into one Synod in 1965 under the name of Harare Synod, thus becoming the fourth independent synod in the CCAP at that time.¹⁵⁷ Later the Gweru Presbytery became the Gweru and Bulawayo Presbytery while Harare Presbytery

¹⁵⁰ Samuel Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth Of Membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod (1912 – 2012)", MA (Theology), University of Stellenbosch, 2013, pp. 32-34.

¹⁵¹ Chilenje, Victor, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007.

¹⁵² J.M. Cronjé, *Born to Witness*, Pretoria: NG. Sendingpers, 1982, p. 27.

¹⁵³ See Steven Paas (with contributions by Klaus Fiedler), *The Faith Moves South: A History of the Church in Africa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006, pp. 222-223.

¹⁵⁴ Samuel Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth Of Membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod (1912 – 2012)", MA (Theology), University of Stellenbosch, 2013, p. 39.

¹⁵⁵ Samuel Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth Of Membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod (1912 – 2012)", MA (Theology), University of Stellenbosch, 2013, p. 39.

¹⁵⁶ Samuel Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth Of Membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod (1912 – 2012)", MA (Theology), University of Stellenbosch, 2013, p. 39.

¹⁵⁷ M.S. Daneel, *Mbiri ya CCAP Sinodi ya Harare 1912-1982*, Harare: Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, 1982, p. 49; J.M. Cronjé, *Born to Witness*. Pretoria: NG. Sendingpers, 1982, p. 112.

became the Harare Highfield Presbytery. Currently there are four presbyteries in this synod namely: Harare, Gweru, Highfield and Bulawayo.¹⁵⁸

The Synod celebrated its centenary in 2012, recognizing the formal existence of the church in Zimbabwe since 1912 though it attained its synod status in 1965.¹⁵⁹

4.10 Synod of Zambia

The Synod of Zambia developed from the evangelistic efforts of the Livingstonia Mission as early as the 1880s.¹⁶⁰ The first mission station to be opened in Zambia was Mwenzo in 1882 followed in the same year by Chitheba and thereafter by Uyombe in 1889, Tamanda in 1894, Kamoto in 1896, Kazembe in 1897, Lubwa in 1904 and Chitambo in 1907.¹⁶¹

After a break of sometime, two more stations were opened at Chasefu in 1922 and Lundazi in 1962.¹⁶² Since all the missions in Zambia were under Livingstonia Mission it followed that when Livingstonia Mission became a presbytery in 1899 it was also responsible for all the congregations in Zambia.¹⁶³ This continued even after the Livingstonia Presbytery had become a Synod in 1956 up to 1984 when the Synod of Zambia was constituted. Just as was the case with the DRCM stations in Zambia that originated from Malawi, some Livingstonia Mission stations did not become part of the CCAP but joined other Reformed churches in Zambia.¹⁶⁴

Plans to have a separate CCAP Synod in Zambia started way back before 1984 but the General Synod blessed the plans to go ahead with the establishment of the Zambia Synod at its

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.ccaphresynod.com>, retrieved 10.7.15

¹⁵⁹ Samuel Gunde, "A Church Historical Enquiry Regarding Growth Of Membership in the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian – Harare Synod (1912 – 2012)", MA (Theology), University of Stellenbosch, 2013.

¹⁶⁰ For a thorough treatment of the history of Zambia Synod see: Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007.

¹⁶¹ Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007, pp. 49-50.

¹⁶² Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007, pp. 81-87.

¹⁶³ Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007, p. 128.

¹⁶⁴ See: Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007, p. 111-115.

1982 meeting.¹⁶⁵ In 1984 the Zambia presbyteries, which had developed over the years were given the status of a Synod, thereby bringing the number of the CCAP synods to five. The first general secretary for the Synod of Zambia was Rev Dr Wyson Moses Kauzobafa Jele who previously served in several capacities under the Synod of Livingstonia.¹⁶⁶

4.11 Conclusion

This chapter has shown how the three original missions that led to the formation of the CCAP came and established themselves in Malawi. It has been shown that through cooperation among them, starting with Livingstonia and Blantyre in Scotland and later with the DRCM both in South Africa and Malawi, the three missions' histories are intricately intertwined. One can be tempted to say even that they were destined to belong to one church.

It has, however, been shown that even though all efforts were leading towards the unification of the missions into one Central African Church in the 1920s, the actual unity did not go all the way to making one denomination but a kind of federation of churches that largely remained independent of one another. This observation shows that even though there were ecumenical feelings among the missionaries, they were not completely free from the influence of the home churches with their emphasis on denominational distinctives, which were not only influenced by theological emphases but also by cultural and historical factors. The other issue was to do with the lack of the African voice in the whole project despite the fact that the future of the Church was to be entrusted into the hands of indigenous leadership in later years.

It was this lack of the development of a full-blown denomination that nurtured within the CCAP unity seeds of discord that would be a thorn in the flesh in the later years of the history of the three original synods and later five synods after the Zimbabwean and Zambian congregations had reached Synodical status and incorporation into the General Assembly.

¹⁶⁵ Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, "Minutes of the General Synod, 24th -27th August, 1982", minute 14(b), p. 4.

¹⁶⁶ Kelly Bwalya, *The Life of Dr Wyson Moses Kauzobafa Jele*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2014, pp. 46-48.

Chapter Five: The CCAP: One Denomination, Several Independent Synods

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the inner life of the CCAP from its formation to the present in terms of its liturgy and other denominational and congregational practices, in order to highlight the points of unity and diversity within the denomination. Significantly, this chapter also looks at the church/state relations and evaluates how the various synods have cooperated or differed in their responses to the various political situations obtaining in their contexts. For example there have been times when the CCAP synods have cooperated in their prophetic voice towards the government but also times when some synods felt it necessary to voice out issues through pastoral letters and press releases individually without involving their sister synods in a bid to highlight societal ills from the perspective of a particular synod. Diversity has also been traced in developments like educational policies, theology and theological training.

This chapter also looks at the position of women in the five synods in order to appreciate the similarities and differences with regard to the way women have fared and continue to fare in the history of the CCAP. It also discusses several similarities and differences of the synods in the unity that is the CCAP.

It will be seen that, though the three presbyteries of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma came together in 1924/26, the process of becoming one denomination did not go all the way, thereby creating room for the perpetuation of distinctive characteristics of the missions which made them develop differently.¹ It is this fact that has made the CCAP one in name but five distinct “denominations” practically. Some would even argue that in Malawi the Synods are actually three separate regional denominations as their areas of influence roughly correspond to the country’s regional administrative divisions.²

¹ The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, “Minutes of First Meeting of Synod”, 17 to 22 September 1924.

² Malawi is divided into three regions namely, North, Centre and South. Livingstonia Synod is in the North, Nkhoma in the Centre and Blantyre in the South. The actual boundaries of the Synods, however, do not necessarily follow the regional boundaries. Due to the border dispute between the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma some borders are no longer being followed as the two synods are opening congregations beyond their traditional boundaries.

5.2 Constitutional Matters

The five synods differ first and foremost in their constitutions in that they are recognized as separate legal entities despite sharing the same General Assembly Constitution. During the formative years of the CCAP the original three groups that came together were at the level of presbyteries. As such they had their own constitutions independent of one another and still affiliated to their own home churches under whose synods they were operating. It therefore became necessary for the united Church to come up with a constitution that could be agreed upon by all the three original missions. Initially Blantyre and Livingstonia agreed upon this constitution in 1924 while the DRCM of Nkhoma had to wait for two more years to consider but they were also finally comfortable with the agreement by 1926.³

Right from the beginning of the CCAP as a united denomination differences were seen in the way many things were left to the jurisdiction of the presbyteries so that the autonomy of all the presbyteries was respected to the extent of rendering the Synod powerless on many issues. The presbyteries were left with all the powers to deal with their former churches as they pleased. This meant that the Synod could not be completely free when the presbyteries' relationship with their mother churches could not be monitored by the Synod itself. One could imagine that a lot of things could actually be taking place behind the Synod's back. In a way the presbyteries even had the powers to veto a decision of the Synod as proposed in the Barrier Act of 1926:

That before the Synod passes any Act which is to be binding Rule or Constitution to the Church, such Act before passing into law shall have been passed by no less than three quarter ($\frac{3}{4}$) majority of members present, and shall therefore be remitted by them to the presbyteries, who may consult their respective sessions, and opinion of Presbyteries and consent thereto be reported to next Synod, who may then pass the Act as a law of the Church, if the more general opinion of the Church thus obtained agree thereto.⁴

This clearly shows that the Synod as established then could not make any binding legislation and go to sleep expecting that the presbyteries would adhere to the policy. Even though the Barrier Act was there to safeguard the interests of the presbyteries over and against the wishes of the Synod, it made the process of coming up with new ways of doing things in the Synod very slow. The Synod could not conclude anything at any sitting, since matters had to go the

³ Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, *Minutes of Second Meeting of Synod 13-15 October 1926*, Blantyre: Blantyre Mission Press, minute no. 5 "Entrance of Nkhoma Presbytery into Synod.", pp. 4-6.

⁴ "Proposed Barrier Act", *Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Minutes of Second Meeting of Synod 13-15 October 1926*, Blantyre: Blantyre Mission Press, minute no. 27, "Entrance of Nkhoma Presbytery into Synod," pp. 12-13.

presbyteries first for their scrutiny before the Synod could have a go ahead to formalise the decision.

Since the establishment of the CCAP the nomenclature of the union has been changing over the years in order to respond to the historical realities. When the three original missions came together, their churches were at the level of presbyteries in the structure of the Presbyterian System. This means that the union of the three presbyteries resulted in the formation of the Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. The union under the name of synod operated from the year 1924/26 to the year 1956, some 30 years later, when the three presbyteries were promoted to the status of synods. This development made the former Synod to be referred to as the General Synod.⁵

The unity of the three synods in Malawi together with their sister synods in Zimbabwe (Harare Synod) and Zambia (Synod of Zambia), who joined them in 1965 and 1984 respectively, existed as the General Synod from 1956 up to 2002 when the CCAP adopted another constitution with some changes to suit the modern era.⁶ This constitution became not the Constitution of the CCAP General *Synod* but rather of the CCAP General *Assembly*. It is this General Assembly that now continues with the union or federation of the CCAP.

This therefore means that the CCAP denomination has practically six constitutions: the five constitutions for the synods and that of the General Assembly. This allows for diversity while providing room for some kind of unity. My observation is that there is more diversity than unity even at the level of constitutions. For example on the issue of women ordination the constitution of the General Assembly explains it in such a way that any Synod can do what it deems fit.⁷

It can thus be argued that at the level of constitutions the CCAP is both one and five denominations. While oneness is still an ideal to be fully realised, practically the five Synods are existing in the same way as other denominations that are not in any union but in some kind of agreement or association. This observation agrees with the study's presupposition that the

⁵ See: *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1956*, as passed by the meeting of the Eight Synod, held at Nkhoma, 25th to 29th April; and as amended by the meeting of the Ninth (Special) Synod, held at Livingstonia, 18th to 21st April, 1958, pp. 8-9.

⁶ See: *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, Adopted at Lilongwe 8th December 2002.

⁷ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, Adopted at Lilongwe 8th December 2002. See: "The CCAP General Assembly Constitutional Schedule", 6.12.1 and 6.12.2.

CCAP is actually a loose federation of five denominations, notwithstanding their similarities in other respects.

5.3 Liturgy

Despite some similarities, the five synods have differences in the way their liturgies are performed to such an extent that if one moves from a congregation of one synod to another congregation belonging to a different synod, one feels like a stranger in the congregation of the new synod. The differences in liturgy are minor between Livingstonia and Blantyre but more similar between the Synod of Livingstonia and Zambia Synod. Nkhoma and Harare Synods are quite close but pronouncedly different from their three colleagues. This can partly be explained due to differences in the liturgies of the synods' mother churches back in Scotland and South Africa, which, though removed geographically and culturally, still influence their daughter churches in Malawi through historical connections and contemporary interactions. Besides, the closeness of the Synods of Livingstonia and Zambia can be explained in the sense that it was the Synod of Livingstonia that gave birth to the Synod of Zambia. In the same way Harare Synod is closer to Nkhoma Synod because the latter produced the former.

In the history of the CCAP attempts have been made to make the liturgy uniform in all the five synods but practically all the synods have continued with their particular liturgies. It seems people prefer to continue with what they consider to be familiar than embracing something new and unfamiliar. On the other hand it can be argued that the General Assembly is lacking the capacity to implement this decision. It can also be argued that one of the reasons for the synods to continue with different liturgies is conservatism. The CCAP church as a whole is well known for its conservative stand on points of spirituality, including the issue of liturgy. One of the reasons for breakaways or individual attrition from the CCAP in the recent years is the inability of the CCAP to embrace new ways of doing things, especially in the liturgy. Some youths and young adults leave the CCAP because they feel that the CCAP is quite rigid when it comes to changing its liturgy. These youths and young adults eventually find themselves in the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches, whose styles of worship are considered lively and appealing to them.⁸

⁸ Rhodian Munyenembe, *Christianity and Socio-cultural Issues: The Charismatic Movement and Contextualization in Malawi, Zomba/Mzuzu: Kachere/Mzuni Press, 2011, pp. 89-90.*

It has to be appreciated, however, that of late the CCAP at least in its three Malawian synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma has adopted what it calls “contemporary worship.” This type of worship or liturgy is quite charismatic and it is attracting a section of the Church that was being pulled towards the Pentecostal and Charismatic denominations. However, even with this development the contemporary service is looked upon as not being ‘the real thing.’ For example in the Synod of Livingstonia the contemporary service in many congregations is conducted in the afternoon from around 2.00pm. This can mean that the actual morning Sunday service, which follows the old way of worship or liturgy is still taken to be the real thing. In most cases people associate Sunday worship with morning services. This means that afternoon services are mostly taken to be optional services for those that need an extra-service after the ‘real thing’ that takes place in the morning.⁹

The main church of Blantyre Mission, St Michael and All Angels, holds its contemporary services in the multi-purpose hall as one of the many services that the church conducts on Sundays. The contemporary service is never held in the “cathedral.” This in itself may give the impression that the Charismatic contemporary service is more of an entertainment kind of thing than a serious service of worship as is the case with the traditional worship that is reserved for the more “sacred” church building.¹⁰

As for the Livingstonia Synod’s practice of holding the contemporary worship in the afternoon, the negative observation is that it is sometimes waved whenever there are other programmes planned for Sunday afternoon. For example, the study has found out that whenever there are choir festivals, the afternoon contemporary services are postponed, as people are encouraged to patronise the choir festival. This is equally true of any other programme that may need the participation of the same people who are attending the contemporary service. Consequently, the contemporary service is failing to attract a large number of participants as it is not considered to be in the mainstream of things in the Church’s culture.¹¹

⁹ Participatory Observation, Mzuzu, 2014.

¹⁰ Int. Mr Henock Chakhaza, Administrator, St Michael’s and All Angels Church, Blantyre, 14.2.14. The idea of holding the contemporary service in the multi-purpose hall may also be for the reason of preserving the old church which appears not to be a very strong building after standing for over a century.

¹¹ Participatory Observation, Mzuzu, 2014. I must, however, mention that in the course of the research there have been improvements taking place. For example I have seen changes in the times allocated to the contemporary service in some congregations in order to allocate the right hour even for this

Another liturgical difference among the synods is in the area of the sacrament of Holy Communion. My observation is that the strictness of preparation for partaking of the Holy Communion differs greatly among the five synods. In the synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre, a full communicant can decide to go and partake of the Holy Communion or even discover upon his arrival at the Church that Holy Communion is being administered and then join the rest of the communicants without any problem. In the case of Nkhoma Synod such a thing cannot happen because people who want to participate in the Holy Communion on Sunday are first of all supposed to commit themselves to the rite by coming to Church on Saturday for preparation. These preparations are spiritual on the part of the communicant and logistical on the part of the congregational leadership, so that they have a picture of what to expect during the communion service the following day.¹²

When one looks at these differences in something that is so central to the life of a Christian, it explains the frustrations many Christians experience when they transfer from one synod to another. Within Malawi, for those that go to the Central Region from either the North or the South there is now a choice between joining a Livingstonia Synod congregation or that of Nkhoma Synod. The same is true when one goes to the North where Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods congregations now exist side by side in some areas.

In certain cases, the differences in liturgy among the synods are accentuated by the differences in culture and language as it is a given fact that the cultures and languages of the synods differ in accordance with the places in which they are found. For example in the Northern Region of Malawi, where the Livingstonia Synod has its headquarters, the dominant language is Chitumbuka. This means that most services in this synod are conducted in the Chitumbuka language except in urban areas where you also have English services alongside the Chitumbuka ones. But in the rural areas it is mostly Chitumbuka or one of the Northern local languages dominant in the area (such as Tonga in Nkhata-Bay district or Nkhonde in some parts of Karonga district) that feature in the worship service. For someone coming from the Southern Region or Central Region of Malawi it is not easy to fully participate in the worship services within such a context, especially when one considers the singing of Chitumbuka hymns, the

new innovation. For instance at Chibavi congregation in Mzuzu City in the Synod of Livingstonia the contemporary service time has changed from 2.00 pm to 11.00 am.

¹² Int. Mr Nathaniel Kawale, Retired Church Elder and Evangelist, Nkhoma University, 20.2.14.

liturgical recitation of things such as the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed in a language very different from one's own.

While Blantyre and Nkhoma Synods use similar Chichewa hymn books and speak almost the same language of Chichewa/Chinyanja with different dialects, even between these two synods there are differences in culture and accent when one finds himself or herself away from one's home synod. It is for this reason that the English language services are quite popular among urban Christians of the CCAP as they are a unifying force among members of the congregations from different language and cultural backgrounds.

5.4 Theological Training

The history of theological training in the CCAP is one of the most fascinating things in the history of the church because of all the incidences experienced in this area. It must be pointed out from the onset that when the missionaries arrived in Malawi they did not immediately set to teach the people with a view to ordaining some of them into pastors in the nearest future. Each mission at first taught its people whatever individual missionaries felt was appropriate without any structured plan of what theological content was supposed to be covered and for what purpose besides basic evangelism.¹³

Later each synod formalised its theological education, paving way for the first crop of theological students to emerge, some of whom became the first ordained indigenous leaders of the Church in the country. During this time, despite cooperation in many areas, the synods did not have a single institution for the teaching of its theological students until after the union had come to fruition. It has to be mentioned, though, that during the early years of the Overtoun Institution some scholars came from other missions in order to obtain the advanced training that was being offered at the institution. For example in 1897 the DRCM sent four Africans to be trained as teachers at the Overtoun Institution.¹⁴ In 1904 the DRCM started its own school at Mvera which was transferred to Nkhoma in 1912.¹⁵

¹³ John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, pp. 171-172.

¹⁴ J.L. Pretorius, "The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland", *The Nyasaland Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 17.

¹⁵ J.L. Pretorius, "The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland", *The Nyasaland Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 17.

Even with the CCAP union in place the different synods continued with their own theological schools. This remained the state of affairs throughout the period of missionary control of the Church until closer to the time when indigenous leadership was about to take over the control of the synods. In response to an overture from Livingstonia and Blantyre it was decided that a theological institution for the three original synods be established based at Nkhoma Mission, the headquarters of Nkhoma Synod.¹⁶ It was thought that Nkhoma being at the centre of the country was better placed in terms of the distance to be covered by the synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre.¹⁷

Consequently, the first truly joint theological institution for the synods was established at Nkhoma in 1963. This arrangement seemed to be working well for the three synods until in the early 1970s when due to political influence, the Synods were divided, and the institution transferred from Nkhoma to Kapeni in Blantyre. The College was at Kapeni in Blantyre from 1974 to 1977 when it further moved to Zomba, assuming the name Zomba Theological College. The three Malawian synods continued to train their ministers at Zomba Theological College and were later joined by their sister synods of Harare and Zambia, which have also had some of their student ministers trained at Zomba Theological College. Apart from the CCAP synods, the ecumenical nature of Zomba Theological College was boosted by the joining of other churches such as the Anglicans, Churches of Christ (Gowa Mission) and individual Baptists.¹⁸

It has to be noted, however, that at a later stage some churches such as Nkhoma Synod and the Anglican Church decided to establish their own theological institutions. The Anglicans eventually pulled out, thereby reducing the ecumenical nature of Zomba Theological College. They opened their own theological institution named Leonard Kamungu Theological College less than a kilometre from Zomba Theological College on the way to Chancellor College Campus of the University of Malawi. Besides this college, they opened another one in Lilongwe known as College of Christian Ministries. Nkhoma Synod also went to open its own college, Josophat Mwale Theological College. In the case of Nkhoma it may not necessarily be opening

¹⁶ Church of Central African Presbyterian, “Minutes of Eighth Synod, held at Nkhoma from 25th- 29th April 1956”, minute 36.

¹⁷ See also Church of Central African Presbyterian, “Minutes of the Ninth Synod (Special), held at Livingstonia from 18th- 21st April 1958”, minute 25, p. 7.

¹⁸ Innocent Brave Chikopa, “The Rise and Decline of Zomba Theological College as a Uniting Factor for the CCAP General Assembly and as an Ecumenical Institution”, BA (TRS), Mzuzu University, 2010.

a new college as such but reviving the old one. It has to be noted that even during the time when Nkhoma was happily sending all its students to Zomba Theological College, they were still required to spend one more year at Nkhoma after leaving Zomba Theological College in order to be fully immersed in the culture of Nkhoma Synod before going out to start heading their own congregations. This training was done at an institution known as Nkhoma Institute for Continued Theological Training (NIFCOTT). The difference here between Nkhoma and other synods is that in the other synods the pastor who has just graduated from a theological college does not lead a congregation on his/her own but is put under the tutelage of an experienced pastor for one year before being given a congregation.¹⁹

With the opening of the new college under Nkhoma University, it means that in their very final year, Nkhoma Synod students from Zomba Theological College join their colleagues from Josophat Mwale Theological College in finalising their synodical teaching. Some have observed that the extra one year that Nkhoma Synod pastoral students spend at Nkhoma does not really introduce anything new to them since during the holidays they already serve under pastors who have congregations from where they learn the practical aspects of pastoral work as demanded by their synod.²⁰ It is also observed that in terms of theology they cover much while at Zomba Theological College, so much so that the theology they learn during their final year at Nkhoma Mission is in most cases a mere repetition of the material they learn in the preceding years. My observation is that the only important reason for the students to spend one more year at Nkhoma before being sent to congregations is for them to absorb the ecclesiastical culture of Nkhoma Synod, especially with regard to certain liturgical practices and theological emphases that are particular to Nkhoma Synod.

On the part of Livingstonia Synod, there are still students that go to Zomba Theological College but with the establishment of Ekwendeni College of Theology (now Faculty of Theology) in the University of Livingstonia, some pastoral students are now being trained at this institution.²¹ It is obvious that for Livingstonia Synod it is easier to train their pastors at

¹⁹ Oral information, Rev Matalius Likhoozi, Nkhoma, 20.2.14.

²⁰ Int. Rev Dr Winston R. Kawale, Senior Lecturer in Theology at Mzuzu University and former General Secretary of Nkhoma Synod, Mzuzu, 8.5.14.

²¹ The institution was known as Ekwendeni College of Theology until March 2014 when it became one of the faculties of the University of Livingstonia, Ekwendeni Campus. This happened because the college received some students from the main campus of the University of Livingstonia at Khondowe after their Faculty of Social Science was transferred from Laws Campus to Ekwendeni Campus. See: Gloria Mlowoka, "An Investigation into the Establishment and Impact of Ekwendeni College of

Ekwendeni than Zomba because of travel costs. Ekwendeni is near most of the areas in the Synod's catchment area. It is very likely that in future Livingstonia Synod will stop sending its students to Zomba Theological College altogether, if only due to logistical constraints. This may not be as easy, though, due to the Synod's stake in Zomba Theological College as one of the owners of the institution.²²

With regard to Blantyre Synod, their sending of pastoral students to Zomba Theological College has remained largely unchanged since the establishment of the college. In the first place it has to be appreciated that Zomba Theological College is within the geographical area of Blantyre Synod's jurisdiction, making it very difficult for Blantyre Synod to disassociate itself from the college even if it wanted to. This means that even if all the other participating churches and synods were to withdraw from Zomba Theological College, Blantyre Synod would still remain and perhaps become the sole owner of the college.

The challenge of Zomba Theological College's inadequate capacity to accommodate a larger number of students has from time to time also affected Blantyre Synod. In order to respond to this challenge, the Synod has sometimes engaged in crash programmes and parallel programmes in order to increase the number of pastors for its congregations. These have taken place at Zomba Theological College itself or at Chilema Lay Training Centre near Malosa in Zomba, which is jointly owned by the CCAP Blantyre Synod and the Diocese of Upper Shire of the Anglican Church as an ecumenical institution.²³

It can be concluded in this section that there is no difference in terms of theology among the five synods. They are all Reformed in theological orientation and Presbyterian in church government, which indeed qualify them to be one denomination. Their differences however are in the emphases they make in certain liturgical items, ecclesiastical culture and approaches in dealing with contemporary logistical challenges in theological education, especially in view of the fact that Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod are now situating their theological institutions within the synods' newly established universities.

Theology of the University of Livingstonia in the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia", BA (TRS), University of Livingstonia, 2014.

²² Int. Reverend Levi N. Nyondo, General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, 5.9.14.

²³ <http://www.ccapblantiresynod.org/chilema-ecumenical-center.html>, retrieved 23.6.15.

5.4 Education in the CCAP Synods

In general, the policies of the synods on education do not differ much. In a way all the synods have continued with providing educational services from the missionary era.²⁴ With regard to primary and secondary schools, Malawian synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma have many schools and their efforts are co-ordinated through the Association of Christian Educators in Malawi (ACEM) of which they are members together, individually, with other Christian denominations that own primary and secondary schools in the country. These come under the umbrella bodies of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, the Malawi Council of Churches and the Evangelical Association of Malawi.²⁵

The CCAP Harare Synod has only one school known as Nyabira CCAP School which is a primary school offering education to children of ages between five and thirteen. This school was built in 1957 and it is one of the many schools that the CCAP built in Zimbabwe prior to the establishment of the Harare Synod. All the other schools were handed over to the government through the local councils. The Harare Synod does not have any secondary or tertiary institution. The Church retained Nyabira School in its hands in order to continue showing its concern for a holistic Christian ministry in a symbolic manner.²⁶

The Synod of Zambia, just like its sister synods in Malawi, is making a significant contribution to education in its area of operation.²⁷ The history of this synod's contribution to education goes back to the missionary era when the Livingstonia Mission opened several schools in what is now Zambia especially in the Central, Northern and Eastern provinces.²⁸ Some of these schools were taken over by the colonial government in 1952.²⁹

²⁴ See: Walter Lawrence Brown, "The Development in Self Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church during the First Forty Years of Autonomy: An Ecclesiological Study, PhD Theology", University of Stellenbosch, 2004, pp. 80-110.

²⁵ www.aceemmalawi.wordpress.com/

²⁶ See: www.ccaphresynod.com/ourschool.htm., retrieved 11.8.2015.

²⁷ Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007, pp. 219-220.

²⁸ See: P. Snelson, *Education Development in Northern Rhodesia 1883-1945*, Lusaka: Kenneth Kaunda Foundation, 1974.

²⁹ Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007, pp. 219.

At the 2002 Synod Meeting, the Education Committee of the Synod of Zambia recommended to the Synod to re-possess some of its former schools.³⁰ In 2003 some of these schools were indeed repossessed by the Synod. The Synod now has a number of primary and secondary schools that it is operating. Some of these schools, especially primary ones are community schools, meaning that they are operated like charity organizations in order to help the poor and vulnerable in society, especially orphans and the teachers in these schools are volunteers.³¹ The synod so far does not have a tertiary institution.

With regard to tertiary education there is cooperation among the Malawian Synods in medical schools and hospitals through the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) in which they are also members alongside other Christian denominations that equally serve Malawians in this sector. However, on other fronts, especially in general tertiary education, the three synods are acting independently. Blantyre Synod does not have a university yet though plans are at an advanced stage to have one. According to the Secretary General, Rev Alex Maulana, the university was expected to open in September 2015.³² On the other hand, Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods have their own universities in the names of University of Livingstonia and Nkhoma University respectively.³³

While some observers are of the view that it could be better for the CCAP as a whole to come up with one university, others feel it is far better for all the synods to have their own universities. However, looking at how the church-related universities are struggling (despite their tremendous contribution) I feel having one CCAP University would have been a better idea for the sake of a wider base for resource mobilisation and also for enhancing the oneness of the church, just as it is the case with the Catholic University of Malawi, which is not a university of a particular diocese of the Catholic Church in Malawi but of the whole Catholic Church. The idea of having one CCAP University in Malawi owned by all the Synods could not work while the synods continue nurturing their autonomy and independence from one another.

³⁰ Victor Chilenje, "The Origin and Development of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Zambia 1882 – 2004" PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 2007, pp. 219.

³¹ See: www.ccapzambia.org/community-schools.html, retrieved 11.8.15.

³² See: Tikondane Vega, "University of Blantyre Synod to Open in Malawi this Year", www.nyasatimes.com/2015/02/05/university-of-blantyre-synod-to-open-in-malawi-this-year-rev-maulana/.

³³ The University of Livingstonia opened in August 2003 while Nkhoma University opened its doors in September 2013.

Obviously, the CCAP General Assembly does not have any plans to establish a CCAP University in the nearest future. The synods are therefore left to themselves on this issue, thereby being divided further with regard to unity of purpose in tertiary education matters.

5.5 Women's Ministry

Women have always been involved in Church work right from the beginning of the Christian faith in this part of Africa. Though not always well documented, women's contribution to the spread of Christianity even within the CCAP church cannot be overemphasized. Apart from the individual contributions that women make in the five synods, their group contributions are most conspicuous through their organisations known as women's guilds. All the five synods have their women's guilds whose activities are almost similar across the synods.

5.5.1 Women's Guilds

It is generally believed, and perhaps rightly so, that women's guilds are among the most active groups of Christians in the CCAP denomination. The women's guilds in the five synods are known as: *Umanyano wa Wanakazi* in the Livingstonia Synod, simply known as *Umanyano*; *Chigwirizano cha Amayi* in Nkhoma and Harare Synods, simply known as *Chigwirizano*; *Mvano* in Blantyre Synod, and Christian Women's Guild in the Zambia Synod. Several names were suggested for these groups during their formative years before the current names were accepted by all.³⁴

The ideas that led to the formation of these women's groups were hatched in the late 1930s by women who were already active in Church work. However, it was not until the early 1940s that the various women's groups in the presbyteries of the synods evolved in the women's guilds as they are now known. Among the many activities that women's guilds do are such things as conducting bible studies, doing charity work and comforting the bereaved during funerals. But above all, these guilds are also there to spread the gospel. It is interesting to note that in the history of the Women's Guild of the Synod of Livingstonia (*Umanyano*), the group at one time even sponsored an evangelist to go and do the work of a resident missionary in Marambo in Zambia in the 1960s and 1970s. The first evangelist to do this job in the name of *Umanyano* was Mr S.M. Kumwenda, who worked in this capacity from 1964 to 1973 before

³⁴ See: Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia, *Mdauko, Mendeskero na Milimo ya Umanyano wa Wanakazi*, p. 14.

being succeeded by another man, Mr M.A. Nkunika.³⁵ This was a rare case of the women's guild shouldering the responsibility of an evangelist's welfare for the sake of the spread of the gospel. All this just shows the zeal and dedication that women have towards the success of the Christian ministry in their synods.

The women's guilds have worked as avenues of women's ministries in CCAP synods for a very long time. There was a time when the highest position a woman could get in the church was through her ascendance in the administrative structures of the women's guilds. This is not surprising though, since women could not be ordained as ministers in all these synods until in the recent past when some synods have reluctantly accepted the development.³⁶ This means that in the synods where women are now ordained as ministers, it is possible to have women in the leadership of the Church as a whole, while other women are leading in the women's guilds.

The changes that have taken place in the church have not spared the women's guilds. As a result we see that the women's guilds have also evolved with time in order to suit the modern context in which they are now operating. For example, changes have occurred in the manner of dressing and of conducting bible study and other church activities following the innovation that comes with trends of doing things especially as new generations take over from older ones.³⁷

5.1.2 Women as Ordained Ministers

The five CCAP synods are coming from a background that used to take it for granted that men alone are supposed to be leaders in the whole church while women can be leaders among fellow women and children. This attitude can be traced back to the time of the missionaries where it was only male missionaries that could be mission heads and also serve in congregations as ordained pastors. Their wives were not recognized, as they were only known as wives of missionaries irrespective of their education qualifications.³⁸ The only women whose

³⁵ Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia, *Mdauko, Mendeskero na Milimo ya Umanyano wa Wanakazi*, p. 14.

³⁶ Though some synods have accepted the ordination of women it is not celebrated by many Christians because people are still prejudiced against women ministers. See: Joyce Dainess Mlenga, "Women in Holy Ministry in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia: A Study of Perceptions", TRS PhD Module, Mzuzu University, 2008.

³⁷ See: Esela Gondwe, "The Continuity and Change of the Umanyano Women's Guild of the Livingstonia Synod, BA, University of Malawi", 2006, pp. 5-10.

³⁸ See: Mamie Martin's letter to her parents of 26 August 1923 in Margaret Sinclair, *Salt and Light: The Letters of Jack and Mamie Martin in Malawi 1921-28*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2002, pp. 148-149.

contribution could be appreciated were the unmarried women who came into the mission field in their own right as missionaries without being attached to a husband.³⁹ But even these could still be under a male missionary even if that missionary was junior to them in terms of age and experience. As Isobel Reid comments in view of the relationship between missionaries Jack Martin and Miss Mary Patrick at Livingstonia Mission's Bandawe station in the 1920s:

It was entirely expected that a young inexperienced man should have authority over a single woman missionary with seven years more experience.⁴⁰

On the part of indigenous women, they too were not recognized as leaders in the Church except among fellow women and children. Besides this lack of recognition, indigenous women were also belittled for their lack of education, especially during the first decades of the Church. This situation continued even after the responsibility of the Church's leadership was passed on to indigenous males.⁴¹

Due to changes in the secular world, especially as influenced by women's liberation movements some churches began to get influenced, and in so doing they were forced to re-read their bibles in order to find a justification for the ordination of women or to falsify the view that appeared to put women in the Church at a disadvantage vis-a-vis men. These developments led to changes in the way some members of the clergy in the CCAP used to view women leadership in the church. Consequently, the Synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Zambia took courage to change their conditions for eligibility in becoming a pastor by allowing women, whether married or single, to join theological training for purposes of serving as ordained ministers in the church. Currently, there are women ministers in the synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Zambia. In the case of Blantyre Synod one female pastor, Reverend Mercy Chilapula, has even served in the position of synod moderator, which is the highest but not the most powerful position in the Church.⁴²

³⁹ Mamie Martin's letter to her parents of 26 August 1923 in Margaret Sinclair, *Salt and Light: The Letters of Jack and Mamie Martin in Malawi 1921-28*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2002, p. 149.

⁴⁰ I.E. Reid, "Myth and Reality of the Missionary Family: A Study of the Letters of Rev. J.R. (Jack) Martin and His Wife, Mary Evelyn (Mamie) Written from Livingstonia Mission, Malawi, 1921-28, with Particular Emphasis on the Position of Missionary Wives", MTh, University of Edinburgh, 1999, p. 35.

⁴¹ Phoebe Faith Chifungo, "Women in the CCAP Nkhoma Synod: a Practical Theological Study of their Leadership Roles, PhD, (Practical Theology)", University of Stellenbosch, December, 2014, p. 164.

⁴² See: Paida Mpasos, "The Big Interview: Mercy Chilapula (27.10.14)", www.mwnation.com/mercy-chilapula, accessed 1.6.14.

It can be argued that this trend is not likely to be reversed in the three Synods of Livingstonia Blantyre and Zambia. The question, however, is: do women now flood the theological institutions in order to take advantage of the chance long denied to them? The observation of the present study is that contrary to many optimistic expectations, the number of women theological students in the institutions of the synods is very low.⁴³ There can be a lot of reasons for this scenario but above all it has to be remembered that these churches are coming from a culture that never accepted women pastors due to reasons that range from biblical interpretation to traditional African culture via early missionary practices. It is therefore not easy to find many women joining what hitherto was perceived to be exclusively a men's calling in the denomination.⁴⁴

Within Nkhoma Synod, the issue of women ordination is still being discussed and the synod is yet to take a position.⁴⁵ However, the study reveals that among the clergy of Nkhoma Synod there are some who personally and theologically have no qualms with women being ordained to the ministry of Word and Sacrament though they would not dare opine like this while in the pulpit or in the Synod's meetings.⁴⁶ Despite the presence of diverse views concerning women ordination in Nkhoma Synod, many commentators feel the Synod is oppressive towards women because of its official stand, which is yet to give women a leeway to pursue theological education for the sake of ministerial ordination.⁴⁷

This issue of women ordination, therefore, is another instance in which the five Synods of the CCAP differ at the level of synods though they are supposed to be one denomination in doctrine and practice. Their differences are making some observers to conclude that those

⁴³ The numbers of female students doing ministerial studies or theology is generally smaller than the number of male students. See: Rachel NyaGondwe Fiedler, "The Challenge of Theological Education for Women in Malawi", *Studia Historiae Ecclesiasticae*, Volume, 35 Supplement, December 2009.

⁴⁴ See: Joyce Dainess Mlenga, "Women in Holy Ministry in the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Synod of Livingstonia: A Study of Perceptions", TRS PhD Module, Mzuzu University, 2008.

⁴⁵ See: Grace Patience Banda, "A Study of Assessment of Women's Rights in Nkhoma Synod: A Case Study of Three CCAP Congregations in Lilongwe City", BA (TRS), Mzuzu University, 2010.

⁴⁶ Int. Retired Nkhoma Synod Minister, Lilongwe, 20.2.14.

⁴⁷ Angela Kadzakumanja Nyirenda, "Women Voice in Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) in Malawi: A Critical Evaluation Especially with Nkhoma Synod", MA (Diakonia and Social Practice), Diakonhemmet University College, 2013.

synods that are acting differently from their sisters should be perceived to be oppressive if their policies appear to be negatively disposed towards women's rights and other considerations.⁴⁸

5.6 Non-ordained Men's Ministry

Apart from the women's guilds in the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma, known as *Umanyano* and *Chigwirizano* respectively, there are groups specifically for men's fellowship. These are *Umanyano wa Madodana* (simply *Madodana*) for the Synod of Livingstonia and *Chigwirizano cha Amuna* for Nkhoma Synod. While the Synod of Livingstonia has had this men's guild for quite some time alongside the women's guild, the phenomenon is of recent origins in the Nkhoma Synod though it is now getting settled.⁴⁹ The synods of Blantyre, Harare and Zambia on the other hand do not have special guilds for adult males. While it is generally believed that Blantyre Synod and Livingstonia are closer to each other together, with Nkhoma Synod being on the other side, it appears there are stronger similarities between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma in the issue of men's guilds over and against Blantyre Synod.

It is on record that Nkhoma Synod copied the men's guild phenomenon from Livingstonia Synod where it was first established. But why would Nkhoma Synod copy such a thing unless it was advantageous to them? The testimonies of many members of Nkhoma Synod point to the fact that the Church felt a need in the areas of men's coordination whenever men were supposed to do some tasks in the Church. This problem was not there among women because their *Chigwirizano* was able to mobilise them whenever there was need. It therefore became necessary to come up with an organisation that could be in a position to mobilise men in ecclesiastical responsibilities, especially when we consider that a good number of men are not very active in the Church when they are just ordinary members.

The formation of the men's guilds on the part of both Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods is a contextually relevant development in these synods which came up without the influence of the original mother churches, which do not have such guilds. The presence of men's guilds in the two synods is enabling men, who would otherwise have been inactive, to be active participants

⁴⁸ Cf. Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experiences of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1997, pp. 110-111.

⁴⁹ Griffie G. Victor Banda, "The Role of Men's Guild in Relation to Women's Guild in Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian: A Case Study of Lilongwe and Mlanda Presbyteries", BA (TRS), Mzuzu University, 2010.

in such things as bible study participation, marriage seminars, charity works and evangelisation through guild initiatives.

One interesting thing in the phenomenon of men's guild is that they do not have a woman elder in their midst to check on their discussions in relation to the norms of the Church. In the women's guild within Nkhoma Synod there is the controversial position of a male member of the Church leadership who sits in the midst of women in order to make sure that all is well with the women in their group. This position is known as *Mkhalapakati*, (literally he who sits in the midst or in between i.e. between the women's guild and the church leadership). The absence of this office in the men's guild makes some people to question the integrity of the Church when it comes to its perception of women's groups.⁵⁰ This gives the impression that it is only women who need supervision in their spiritual gatherings and not men. As long as such practices continue they will always be attracting the wrath of feminist theologians and other feminist scholars who are fighting for the implementation of the equality of the sexes in all spheres of life but more especially in the church.⁵¹

5.7 Youth Ministry

All the five synods have their Youth Departments which are quite active in ministering to fellow youths, besides doing various church responsibilities that can best be handled by the youth.⁵² All the five Synods of the CCAP have youth organisations with representatives from synod level to congregational level. Due to the fact that the youth are energetic and quite conversant with contemporary developments, they in most cases fail to be edified by the ministrations of their elders. In view of this, the youth find it easier to engage in their spiritual exercises without elderly supervision. This sometimes clashes with the leadership of the Church as they think that the youth are going astray. I argue that when such things happen, the youth are not going astray as such but that they are expressing their dissatisfaction with the lack of spiritual imagination and contextual innovation by their elders and leaders, who naturally are comfortable with the status quo.

⁵⁰ Isabel Apawo Phiri, *Women, Presbyterianism and Patriarchy: Religious Experiences of Chewa Women in Central Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1997, p. 90.

⁵¹ See: Hawkins Chepah Tom Gondwe, "The Possible Influence of Crucial Pauline Texts on the Role of Women in the Nkhoma Synod of the Central African Presbyterian Church", MA (Biblical Studies), University of South Africa, 2009.

⁵² The term youth in the CCAP context may refer to anyone between 15 and 35 years of age.

With the establishment of contemporary services in CCAP congregations this is the kind of worship that many youths want and it is not a surprise to see that these services are mostly attended by them. In all the five synods of the CCAP the youth have been very much influenced by the Charismatic Movement's way of doing things in the Church. For example over a decade ago, the leadership of the CCAP discovered that their youth were drifting away from the spirituality and ecclesiastical culture of the CCAP to that of the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches through their involvement in the Student Christian Organisation of Malawi (SCOM) since it was this spirituality that had pervaded the organisation. The leadership's solution to this problem was to establish a separate student Christian organisation that could identify with the ethos of the CCAP as a denomination. Consequently, the CCAP Student Organisation (CCAPSO) was born. This means that the birth of CCAPSO was a reaction to the emphases of SCOM and other Christian youth organisations as influenced by Pentecostal and Charismatic spiritualities, especially as most of the people that are invited to preach and teach in the gatherings of these organisations come from Pentecostal and Charismatic backgrounds.⁵³

It has, however, been observed that CCAP students who have been significantly influenced by the Charismatic spirituality continue to fellowship in SCOM rather than in CCAPSO while some have dual membership of these student Christian organisations.⁵⁴ It is partly because of this trend that the youth have wholeheartedly embraced the introduction of contemporary services in their congregations. My observation is that what is termed contemporary worship is actually the Charismatic way of worship. It is known as contemporary in the CCAP because it is an innovation in this denomination, coming in after the manner of their Charismatic neighbours, while among the Charismatic and Pentecostal Christians it is just a normal thing without any adjectives to qualify it as being new or contemporary.⁵⁵

Within the Nkhoma Synod there was born in the year 2005 another youth organisation with overtly charismatic spirituality targeting urban youth. The name of this organisation is CCAP Youth Urban Ministry (CCAPYUM) with its emphasis on urban ministry, especially in order to reach out to the urban youth whose life is very fast and vulnerably exposed to all kinds of

⁵³ See: Boston Khonje, "A Historical Study of the Establishment and Contribution of the Student Christian Organisation of Malawi (SCOM) to the Malawian Society (1961-2012)", MA (TRS), Mzuzu University, 2013.

⁵⁴ Personal observation in various college and university campuses in Malawi.

⁵⁵ Cf. Rhodian Munyenembe, *Christianity ad Socio-cultural Issues: The Charismatic Movement and Contextualization in Malawi*, Zomba/Mzuzu: Kachere/Mzuni Press, 2011, pp. 89-90.

influences, especially due to the proliferation of information technology and urban culture. This organisation works more or less like an umbrella organisation for all the youth fellowships in the congregations of Nkhoma Synod known as CCAPYUFS (CCAP Youth Fellowships).⁵⁶

It can be argued that the challenges that the youth face in the CCAP are basically the same across synodical boundaries though there is no uniformity in dealing with them as each synod approaches the issue from its own pastoral angle. This means that the unity of the CCAP as a denomination does not translate down to the youth who remain confined within the perimeters of their synods. I believe things would be different if there was an active youth desk at the General Assembly level with the task of coordinating all youth activities in the denomination. However, the state of the General Assembly is such that it cannot manage to bring leadership to the synods on issues affecting the youth in the denomination.

5.8 Church and State Relations among the Synods

This section discusses the varied ways in which the CCAP, both at the level of the General Assembly and at the level of the synods separately, has been responding to political issues over the decades that the church has been in existence, especially in Malawi. I have divided this section into four subsections namely: colonial period, single party era, transition period and multiparty era in order to show how the different political contexts have been influencing the church in its responses to socio-political issues over the course of history up to the present.

The discussion in this section concentrates on the Malawian Synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma and the political issues obtaining in Malawi. This does not mean that there have been no church-state relations in Zambia and Zimbabwe where the Synods of Zambia and Harare operate. There are three reasons for not treating these synods in this section: Firstly, it has to be remembered that the Synod of Zambia was not there as a Synod until 1984, which means that the synodical decisions discussed herein could not originate from Zambia until after the Synod's establishment. The second reason concerns only the Synod of Harare which, though established as early as 1965, because of the immigrant status of its members, engaging with the powers that be would not be as practical as is the case with Malawian synods. Lastly, it has to be remembered that these two synods were very small for a good part of their history; it is only

⁵⁶ Foster Kamuyanja, "The Impact of Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Youth Urban Ministry in Nkhoma Synod (CCAPYUM): A Case Study of Selected Churches within Lilongwe Presbytery", BA (TRS) Mzuzu University, 2012.

now that they are growing, hence not able to exert any significant political influence from their past. In view of these reasons it was not possible to find readily available information for their discussion under the title of this section.

5.8.1 The Colonial Period

Church state relations are one area in which the CCAP as a whole has had a challenge with regard to raising one voice on issues. During the colonial times Presbyterian missionaries were suspected by the colonial government of pulling in the opposite direction because of their tendency to act as a kind of “opposition party” in certain circumstances.⁵⁷ And yet it was the missionaries that desired the establishment of British colonial government as preferred to Portuguese colonial rule.⁵⁸ The Scottish missionaries were of the view that a British Protectorate would be a better alternative to Portuguese annexation which they believed would be injurious to their work and to the welfare of the native population.⁵⁹

The relationship between the DRCM missionaries and the Colonial Administration became sour during the Anglo-Boer war of 1899-1902 as the DRCM found itself in enemy territory as Nyasaland was a British Protectorate.⁶⁰ The DRCM missionaries were subjected to suspicion by the colonial government besides the afflictions caused by the war on their people.⁶¹

It can, however, be safely stated that during the fight for independence the synods were all on the side of the freedom fighters though more credit has been given to the Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre than to Nkhoma Synod.⁶² The reason for this state of affairs has been the observation that the education policy of the DRCM perpetuated peasantry in its area of influence and did not produce many highly educated Malawians at the time of the independence

⁵⁷ Cf. Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, p. 129. Also LWBCA, August-December 1897 and Andrew Ross, *Colonialism to Cabinet Crisis: A Political History of Malawi*, Zomba: Kachere Series, 2009, pp. 16-19.

⁵⁸ See: P.R Warhurst, “Portugal’s Bid for Southern Malawi, 1882-1891”, in Gordon W. Smith et al (eds), *Malawi Past and Present*, Blantyre: CLAIM, 1971, p. 25.

⁵⁹ Kenneth Ross, “Crisis and Identity: Presbyterian Ecclesiology in Southern Malawi, 1891-1993, *Missionalia* 25:3 (November 1997), p. 382.

⁶⁰ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 82.

⁶¹ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, PhD, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 82-86.

⁶² Cf. Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, 1996, pp. 11-12.

struggle as was the case in the jurisdictions of Livingstonia and Blantyre.⁶³ This gave the products of Livingstonia and Blantyre mission schools an upper hand in terms of articulating issues during the fight for independence.

When the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland was imposed in 1953, it was bitterly resented and opposed by the African population. The Synod of Blantyre found it necessary to add its voice to the criticism levelled against this act of white supremacy by issuing a statement condemning the many abuses and the retrogression that the Federation had brought to Nyasaland:

Synod is aware of the need for moderation and careful speech in these difficult times. Sometimes, however, to say nothing is to deny the truth. Synod therefore feels it urgently necessary to say that it is unanimously opposed to Federation as it has been in practice over these years. We see no hope of a peaceful, and righteous future for all the people of this land (whatever their race) under the present form of Federal Government.⁶⁴

Though this statement did not have much impact in Malawi, it did influence the Church of Scotland to plead with the British Government to consider taking Malawi out of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which later made it possible for the country to attain independence.

It is significant to note that even though race relations had become sour in society in general during this time it was possible for black and white Christians to stick together during these trying times when the Church was generally in support of African nationalism. During the State of Emergency of 1959 the Colonial Government wanted to protect the white missionaries and offered them protection if they were in danger. At Livingstonia Mission, the oneness of the races in the Church became significant during this time when the missionaries indicated that they were not in danger in the midst of their black brothers and they dramatized this by marking the words of Ephesians 2:14 with whitewashed bricks in the lawn, which government planes flying above could easily see.⁶⁵

⁶³ Janet Wagner Parsons, "Scots and Afrikaners in Central Africa: Andrew Charles Murray and the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi", *The Society of Malawi Journal*, Vol. 51, no. (1998), pp. 31-32.

⁶⁴ Blantyre Synod, "Blantyre Synod Statement on the Present State of Unrest 1958" reproduced in Kenneth R. Ross (ed), *Christianity in Malawi: A Source Book*, Gweru: Mambo Press, 1996, pp. 195-201(200).

⁶⁵ Eph. 2:4 reads "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility" (NIV). See: Bill Jackson, *Send Us Friends*, Belfast: Bill Jackson, 1996, p. 78. See also Bill Jackson, "Breaking Down the Wall: The Diary of a Participant in the Emergency of 1959", *Bulletin of the Scottish Institute of Missionary Studies*, No. 10 (1994), pp. 46-51.

After observing the fellowship of black and white in the church as experienced during the independence struggle at Livingstonia Mission the Rev Stephen Kauta Msiska remarked: “I think this is the beginning of Church history in Nyasaland.”⁶⁶ Kenneth Ross has observed in reference to these words of Stephen Kauta Msiska that it was in the heat of the crisis that the identity of the church became clear.⁶⁷

5.8.2 *The Single Party Era*

Between 1964 and 1994, when Malawi was under the one party system of government, all the churches, in a way, became silent. It was not possible to criticise the government and the ruling party because of the ruthless way in which the government machinery was dealing with suspected critics of the regime. It has, however, been observed that the Nkhoma Synod was closely aligned to the ruling party, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP). It can be argued that Nkhoma Synod’s closeness to the MCP was not something that the Synod consciously initiated but that the Synod was actually overtaken by historical events. For instance, it happened that the State President then, Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, was Chewa by ethnicity from the Central Region district of Kasungu. According to the Church boundaries of the synods of the CCAP in Malawi, the Central Region largely falls under the jurisdiction of Nkhoma Synod. Besides, it was generally believed that Dr Banda was a Church elder in the Church of Scotland, which automatically made him an honorary church elder in the CCAP and more so in the Nkhoma Synod. This made the Nkhoma Synod to view Kamuzu Banda as “its own man.”

W.S. Zeze has argued that the relationship between Nkhoma Synod and the MCP-led government between 1964 and 1994 can be likened to a situation where Christianity became a state-sponsored religion.⁶⁸ Zeze develops his thesis by providing four instances to illustrate how Christianity became a state-sponsored religion in the way Nkhoma Synod related to the MCP during the single party regime.⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that this write up by Zeze is quite critical

⁶⁶ See: Bill Jackson, *Send Us Friends*, Belfast: Bill Jackson, 1996, p. 68. See also Ferguson McPherson’s “Foreword” to Stephen Kauta Msiska, *Golden Buttons: Christianity and Traditional Religion among the Tumbuka*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1997, p. 15.

⁶⁷ Kenneth Ross, “Crisis and Identity: Presbyterian Ecclesiology in Southern Malawi, 1891-1993, *Missionalia* 25:3 (November 1997), p. 389.

⁶⁸ W.S. Zeze, “Christianity: A State-Sponsored Religion in Malawi? A Critical Evaluation of the Relationship between the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the MCP-led Government (1964-1994)”, www.iclrs.org/content/events/28/751.pdf, retrieved 18.6.14.

⁶⁹ W.S. Zeze outlines the following instances as examples that illustrate his point: Rev. Dishan Chimombo Episode (1964), Nyau Episode (1965), Theological College Episode (1974), Prayers and

of Nkhoma Synod's relationship with the Malawi Congress Party during the First Republic despite the author being a member of Nkhoma Synod, from whom one would expect some sympathy. The write up is therefore self-criticism at its best within the Nkhoma Synod in view of past historical realities.

While the Nkhoma Synod can be accused of aligning itself with the Government and the party during the single party regime, the Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre can equally be accused of being silent during this time so much so that many lives were lost without saying anything because the Synods had been rendered voiceless.⁷⁰ Here we see differences and similarities in the way the CCAP Synods related to the government during the single party era. The Nkhoma Synod can be understood to have been co-opted, thereby rendering it very uncritical to whatever the ruling party was doing. On the other hand, Livingstonia and Blantyre, though not co-opted as was the case with Nkhoma, equally failed Malawians by maintaining a culture of silence for the sake of their own survival over and against exercising the prophetic role of the Church in society.

5.8.3 The Transition Period to Multiparty Politics

Come the transition period from a single party system to a multi-party system of government in Malawi, the differences among the three Malawian synods became clearly pronounced. While the Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre were in agreement with what was going on, the Nkhoma Synod took a very different stand, which made it appear as the sole defender of the MCP-led government among Malawi's ecclesiastical bodies.⁷¹ And yet facts on the ground were

Loyal Messages to President Dr H Kamuzu Banda and Political Transition Episode (1992-1994). In all these instances Zeze is trying to show how the Nkhoma Synod collaborated with the MCP and sometimes even placing itself under the party by appealing to the party's arbitration even on purely ecclesiastical matters. See: W.S. Zeze, "Christianity: A State-Sponsored Religion in Malawi? A Critical Evaluation of the Relationship between the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the MCP-led Government (1964-1994)", pp. 5-10.

⁷⁰ Kenneth R. Ross, "The Transformation of Power in Malawi 1992-94: The Role of the Christian Churches", in Kenneth Ross (ed), *God, People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996, p. 20.

⁷¹ Walter Lawrence Brown, "The Development in Self Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church during the First Forty Years of Autonomy: An Ecclesiological Study, PhD Theology", University of Stellenbosch, 2004, pp. 234-236.

indicating that the majority of the citizens in the country did not want to continue with that party's leadership in the country during the years 1992 to 1994.⁷²

When the Roman Catholic bishops issued their 1992 Lenten Pastoral Letter, which many believe was the match that sparked the fire to burn up the single party regime, the synods of Blantyre and Livingstonia supported the Bishops' letter and expressed their desire for change. The Nkhoma Synod on the other hand did not support the Roman Catholic bishops' initiative. It actually even went so far as to distance itself from the agitations which the Roman Catholic Church and other Protestant churches were making in the country for the sake of political change.⁷³

Nkhoma Synod's aloofness or even its desire to pull in the opposite direction led to the Malawi Council of Churches suspending the Synod from its membership until it was ready to mend its ways. All this shows that, though the CCAP is supposed to be one denomination, the plurality of its independent Synods sometimes made (and makes) it fail to speak with one voice on pertinent prophetic issues as a united denominational force. As Schoffeleers further comments, "this difference of opinion between the synods made a formal official position of the CCAP on the bishops' letter impossible."⁷⁴

5.8.4 The Era of Multiparty Democracy

Some interesting things about the unity of the CCAP vis-a-vis political developments in Malawi have been manifested during the era of multiparty democracy as the country continues to

⁷² Some commentators have observed that the coming in of multiparty politics exposed the regional and ethnic divisions that have always been there in Malawi. For some people in the Central Region, those advocating for the introduction of multiparty politics were viewed as enemies of the Region and by implication of all the Chewa people, especially when we consider that the main political players on the side of multiparty advocates during this time were mostly people from the Northern and Southern Regions. It is suggested that due to these facts, the Nkhoma Synod felt it was also being attacked due to its association with the leadership of the then ruling Malawi Congress Party, the region and the dominant ethnic group in the area of its jurisdiction. This partly explains why in the Central Region a majority (67.54%) voted against the introduction of multiparty politics in the 1993 June 14 Referendum in which Malawians were given a chance to choose either political pluralism or to continue with the single party system of government. See: African Elections Database, "14 June 1993 Referendum", http://africanelections.tripod.com/mw_detail#1993_Referendum, retrieved 18.6.2015.

⁷³ See: Mathew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice: Confrontations between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1999, p. 190.

⁷⁴ See: Mathew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice: Confrontations between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1999, p. 190.

conduct elections every five years in order to choose its leaders. One thing that has come with the new dispensation is the issue of freedom of expression, which was not there during the single party regime. This means that the churches are now free to issue press releases in both print and electronic media in order for them to inform the general public on issues of national importance. It is in this vein that the CCAP has also sometimes seen it fit to write pastoral letters to its faithful in order to enlighten them on the position of the church on any burning issue in the country. In this regard the three Malawian synods have sometimes cooperated to produce the said documents through their General Assembly so that all members of the CCAP have felt that their Church has spoken. It has also sometimes surprised the faithful to see that pastoral letters have been written by one synod alone on an issue of national importance in a way that has put the leadership of the other synods in a quandary.

One example of the time when the General Assembly (still known as General Synod by then) wrote a pastoral letter that was quite useful as a prophetic voice was in 2001 when the Malawi nation was engulfed in a kind of uncertainty concerning the stability of its constitution with regard to the provisions regulating the presidential tenures. The then President of the Republic, Dr Bakili Muluzi, was cunningly pursuing the amendment of the constitution in order to allow for the extension of the constitutional maximum two terms for a president to the possibility of allowing a president to keep on contesting in elections for as long as he/she wished. This was dubbed the Open Terms Debate. After the failure of this attempt, there was a second attempt in the name of the Third Term Debate where the argument was that the amendment would only give chance to a president who has been voted into power twice to stand again for the third and last time. This proposal was again defeated. It can be argued that the pastoral letter which the General Synod leadership had written prior to the voting had sensitised the people on the dangers of such a proposal and constitutional amendment to Malawi's nascent democracy, especially considering the fact that the first person to benefit from such a constitutional amendment would actually be the very first president who had emerged victorious against a life president.⁷⁵ It was as if the country was put in a reverse gear in order to experiment with what it had just rejected in a period of less than a decade. The condemnation of such machinations was expressed in no uncertain terms by the CCAP General Assembly leadership under the Very Reverend Dr Felix Chingota (Blantyre Synod) who was the moderator of the General Assembly

⁷⁵ See Kenneth R. Ross: "Some Worrisome Trends: The Voice of the Churches in Malawi's Third Term Debate," *African Affairs*, vol. 103, no. 410 (Jan., 2004), pp. 91-107.

at the time and Rev Y.A. Chiyenda (Nkhoma Synod) who was the Senior Clerk.⁷⁶ Many Malawians of good will supported this letter and agreed with it entirely. The only people who were against this letter were the ruling party cadres and some political mercenaries from other parties who intended to benefit from such a rape of the constitution for the sake of their egocentric tendencies.

Recently, during the time of President Dr Joyce Banda, the General Assembly also spoke on behalf of the synods in the country concerning what it saw as ills in Malawian society, especially with regard to the looting of public funds in the government ministries dubbed the Cashgate Scandal. The letter also pleaded with political leaders to campaign cleanly towards the 2014 tripartite elections that took place on 20th May 2014.⁷⁷

Despite their cooperation in different forums such as the General Assembly, the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) and the Malawi Council of Churches, where they are represented, the synods have also been exercising individual synod's rights to engage the general public or their own members by going it alone in their criticism of the government or in guiding the faithful on political choices during elections. For example in the year 2009 the Nkhoma Synod wrote a pastoral letter titled *Choosing the Right Leaders* in order to enlighten Christians on various issues in preparation for the 19th May 2009 General Elections. The pastoral letter went further to even giving tips to Christians on how to identify God's choice of a leader.⁷⁸

Come April 2012, the Nkhoma Synod issued another pastoral letter in which, among other things, it indirectly criticized the government and the ruling party for some socio-economic ills that were being experienced in Malawi.⁷⁹ This was perhaps one of the worst moments in the history of Malawi since the dawn of multiparty democracy. Of special concern among the issues that the Nkhoma Synod raised were such issues as the scarcity of forex and fuel, which came in as donor nations vowed to punish Malawi, following the country's poor diplomatic relations

⁷⁶ The CCAP General Synod, *Some Worrying Trends Which Undermine the Nurturing of Our Young Democracy* (Pastoral Letter of the CCAP General Synod, 2001).

⁷⁷ <http://mwnation.com/ccap-general-assembly-calls-peaceful-elections/>, 2.27.2014.

⁷⁸ Nkhoma Synod, *2009 Pastoral Letter: Choosing the Right Leaders*, pp. 3-4.

⁷⁹ Nkhoma Synod, *2012 Pastoral Letter: Exercising Our Faith through Prayer in Our Time, In Our Nation*.

with them.⁸⁰ Nkhoma Synod also lamented the proliferation of political violence which the political leadership of the time appeared to be promoting, considering the freedom which the youth wing of the ruling party had in terrorising the masses.⁸¹

From a purely historical point of view, the Nkhoma Synod pastoral letter of 2012 was also significant in that it marked fifty years of the existence of the Synod under indigenous leadership. The Synod noted the significance of the year in this way:

This year is very special one for CCAP Nkhoma Synod because we have clocked 50 years since the Dutch Reformed Mission handed over the Church to Malawi leadership in 1962. Therefore let us join hands in thanking God for using our Synod to His glory. We have now grown to 150 congregations in 16 presbyteries. Glory be to God [sic].⁸²

Thus the Synod has found its voice in commenting on political matters without fearing any reprisals as was the case during the single party regime. It can be argued that the Synod's practice is actually very much in line with Reformed Theology, which looks at all professions as God's calling and therefore worthy of his praise whenever everything is going on well and liable to censure when human practice seems to be departing from the norm or the ideal. It is this kind of thinking that made the Synod to condemn the Joyce Banda administration, especially in relation to the infamous Cashgate Scandal that rocked the country in the year 2013.⁸³ Besides the Cashgate Scandal this pastoral letter condemned other evils in society such as lack of respect for the elders, lack of decency in dressing, promotion of secular humanism, homosexuality, abortion, prostitution and pornography.⁸⁴

As can be seen above it is now generally expected that the churches have to speak out whenever there is need for some voice of reason in society concerning negative socio-political

⁸⁰ Some observers are of the view that the scarcity of forex was not due to donor punishments as such but the selfish attempt by the then President Bingu wa Mutharika to control the value of the Kwacha artificially. Oral information, Klaus Fiedler, 27.8.15.

⁸¹ There is documentary evidence on how the youth members of the DPP, also known as Youth Cadets by their leadership, were terrorizing those of opposing views. As an example, there are pictures of these youths in pickup trucks wielding panga knives on the eve of 20th July 2011 in order to threaten the CSOs and concerned citizens who had planned to demonstrate against the government. Twenty people died as a result of this demonstration as the police clashed with the irate demonstrators.

⁸² Nkhoma Synod, *2012 Pastoral Letter: Exercising Our Faith through Prayer in Our Time, In Our Nation*, p. 1.

⁸³ Nkhoma Synod, *2014 Pastoral Letter: Renewal and Regeneration of Our Nation: A Call for Church Responsibility*. The Cashgate Scandal refers to massive looting of government coffers by some civil servants and politicians that was revealed in the year 2013.

⁸⁴ 2014 Pastoral Letter of the Nkhoma Synod, *Renewal and Regeneration of Our Nation: A Call for Church Responsibility*.

developments. This is unlike in the past when silence was the order of the day amidst the suffering of the masses at the hands of political leaders through the party and the government machinery that was at their disposal. It is in view of this that the CCAP General Assembly is taking an active role in prophetically condemning the ills in society but also giving some kind of direction on what would be in tandem with the values of the gospel.

With regard to the individual synods, it is interesting to note that Nkhoma Synod has been quite active in the new political dispensation in openly criticising the political leadership whenever things have been perceived to be wrong, especially with regard to issuing of politically critical pastoral letters.⁸⁵ This does not mean that the other two synods have not been active. Their contributions through the voice of the General Assembly cannot be underestimated, besides their own critical reflection as uttered from the lips of those in the synod's leadership.⁸⁶ It is, however, generally perceived that Nkhoma and Livingstonia have been more critical than Blantyre Synod as individual synods. Some see political bias in the way the synods respond to various political issues, especially when the voice of the synods is not coming through the General Assembly. Since the dawn of multi-party democracy, the presidents that have ruled Malawi have always come from the Southern region, which is under the jurisdiction of Blantyre Synod, according to synodical administrative boundaries. Can it be that Blantyre Synod is succumbing to the temptation of treating its own "children" with kid gloves? Can it be said on the part of Nkhoma Synod that since the Malawi Congress Party was ousted from the government some two decades ago, the Synod has never been able to find an ally in political circles and it is therefore critical of any political party that is in government

⁸⁵ While this tendency by the Nkhoma Synod appears to be new practically, theoretically the Synod arrived at this position as far back as 1960. See: Sinodi ya Nkhoma, *Zolamulira, Zopangana ndi Zolangiza (Buku 2)*, Nkhoma: Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP, pp. 3-4, especially Z.II—12, 2 (d). In this passage the Synod clearly states that it is the Church's responsibility to protect Christianity in the country, and that the Church has a God-given mandate to oppose anybody, including the government when it acts or commands things that contradict the Word of God (Original Chichewa verbatim quote: *Ndi udindo wa Eklesia kusamala Chikristu mdziko, Eklesia mwa mabwalo ake ali ndi mphamvu yopatsidwa ndi Mulungu kutsutsa aliyense kungakhale Boma lomwe likuchita kapena kulamulira zotsutsana ndi Mau a Mulungu*). See also F.J. Botha, *Mkristu ndi Ndale za Dziko*, Nkhoma: Nkhoma Press, 1963.

⁸⁶ In this regard the Rev Levi Nyondo, General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, was arrested by the DDP led government in 2010 for uttering what the political leaders of the ruling party interpreted as sedition during the funeral of Professor Moses Chirambo, a former cabinet minister. See Frank Jomo, "Church Warns of Malawi 'Dictatorship' after Leader's Arrest," *Ecumenical News Service*, <https://www.pcusa.org/news/2010/8/27/church-warns-malawi-dictatorship-after-leades-arr/>, 10.1.15.

until “their own political party” regains power? What about on the side of Livingstonia? Is it because the Northern Region is regarded as a minority politically and so the Synod is always resentful of the ruling parties that come from the majority Southern Region, who, together with their Central Region colleagues, tend to scapegoat the minority North? One cannot avoid pondering over these questions as one tries to make sense of the synods’ responses to political developments in the country, especially when one considers the fact that the synods are equally susceptible to socio-political pressures. The answers to these questions are not simple and straightforward as personalities and political leanings of their leadership influence the synods sometimes even leading to divisions within the synods due to political influences, as the leaders succumb to the temptation of teaming up according to their political sympathies.⁸⁷

5.9 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to appreciate the fact that though the CCAP is taken to be one denomination, the independence of the synods has made it to appear as if there are actually five denominations. By tracing the similarities and differences of the synods from their genesis it becomes quite clear that diversity outweighs unity in the CCAP.

From a theological point of view we see that some of the differences are there because of different theological emphases, especially due to traditions of the mother churches that gave birth to the synods. While on political issues it has been seen that the geographical and cultural contexts in which the synods are situated do contribute to the synods’ perspectives on pertinent issues as they cannot be taken to be operating in a vacuum. These observations therefore underscore the fact that the five synods’ unity under the General Assembly is merely that of a federation rather than an organic one.

⁸⁷ These politically motivated teams usually come to the fore during the periods leading to synodical leadership elections. For a fresh example as reported in the local press see: “Edwin Nyirongo, “Blantyre Synod Moves to Reconcile after Elections”, *The Nation Newspaper*, 26 August 2015. Also <http://mwnation.com/bt-synod-moves-to-reconcile/>, retrieved 28.8.2015.

Chapter Six: The Pangs of Unity in Diversity among CCAP Synods

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the growing tensions within the CCAP as one united denomination from its establishment in 1924/26 to the time the Synods came into the open concerning their differences. The chapter argues that the process of union did not go all the way to make the CCAP one denomination in Malawi, thereby sowing seeds of possible discord in the future, unbeknown to the otherwise well intending missionaries and early African church leaders.

The chapter also discusses the wrangle between the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma and the precarious situation of the synods of Blantyre, Harare and Zambia vis-à-vis the unity of the CCAP in contemporary times. Attention has also been given to views and experiences of ordinary church members, and to current developments on the ground.

6.2 Early Tensions in the Unity of the CCAP

The coming together of the Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre (as presbyteries then) as one church in 1924 was received with a lot of jubilation by the members of the Church in Malawi as well as the mother churches of the missions back in Scotland.¹ The same was true when Nkhoma Synod joined the union in 1926. However, with regard to the joining of Nkhoma Synod, the jubilation was short lived as the continued membership of Nkhoma Mission in the CCAP remained unstable throughout the period when the first constitution of the General Synod was in effect. This means that for thirty years (from 1926-1956) the unity of the CCAP was threatened by the DRC's influence to have Nkhoma pull out of the union if the union appeared to be working contrary to the expectations of the mother church back in South Africa.²

There were specifically two things that threatened the withdrawal of Nkhoma Presbytery from the Synod of the CCAP. Firstly, it was the issue of the article concerning the word of God in the document regarding the agreement of the three presbyteries, which according to the DRC had not been worded to their satisfaction. Initially, the DRC's dissatisfaction concerning the article was expressed prior to the joining of Nkhoma in the CCAP family in 1926. The response

¹ See: United Free Church of Scotland, *Reports to the General Assembly of the United Free Church of Scotland*, Edinburgh, UFCS, 1926, pp. 12, 75-82.

² See: Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 346-347.

of the other sister presbyteries of Livingstonia and Blantyre was initially to leave the wording of the article unchanged but giving Nkhoma Presbytery the liberty to interpret the article according to their own understanding.³ At the time this concession appeared to have solved the problem, for Nkhoma eventually joined the CCAP family in 1926. It has, however, to be remembered that the concern about the wording of the article came in the context of general suspicion of the DRC with regard to the theological liberalism of the Scottish ministers, whose perceived modernistic attitude to biblical interpretation was, according to the conservative position of the DRC, undermining the authority of the scriptures.⁴

This issue resurfaced at the Synod meeting of the DRC which took place in Cape Town in October 1945. The Rev J.F. Mentz proposed that the General Missionary Council of the DRC be advised to see to it that the wording of Article I in the original Statement of Faith of the CCAP be changed to clearly indicate that “the Bible as such is the word of God and not that it merely contained the word of God.”⁵ This issue became so serious in the DRC Synod meeting that it was actually proposed that if this were not to be done, the Nkhoma Presbytery should withdraw its membership from the CCAP. When it was learnt that this was what was agreed upon during the Cape Synod meeting some members of Nkhoma Mission staff were greatly perturbed by the Synod’s decision. This decision had actually put Nkhoma Presbytery in a very awkward position vis-a-vis its sister presbyteries of Livingstonia and Blantyre concerning their union in the CCAP. Consequently, some missionaries from Nkhoma took it upon themselves to explain the issue to their Livingstonia and Blantyre counterparts, in order to show that they were not particularly in agreement with the decision of their mother church synod on the issue.⁶ For some Nkhoma missionaries the DRC Synod had actually even acted illegally since the terms of the union as originally drafted gave the powers to the Presbytery of Nkhoma on the question of possible withdrawal.⁷ This meant that even though the DRC Synod wanted to exert its

³ The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, “Minutes of Second Meeting of Synod”, 13th to 15th October, 1926, Minute 7 (last paragraph).

⁴ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 273-274.

⁵ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 348.

⁶ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 349.

⁷ See: The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, “Minutes of Second Meeting of Synod”, 13th to 15th October, 1926, Minute 5.9.

influence on the presbytery by posing as the final authority, it was actually contradicting itself since it had already agreed to the autonomy of the presbytery in matters concerning the union. This issue could not be fully resolved until there was a new constitution governing the CCAP.

The second major issue that threatened the unity of the CCAP during this first thirty year period of its existence was the question of the incorporation of the Zambian churches into the CCAP family. Certain elements of the DRC, especially as influenced by the Orange Free State Synod, did not favour the London Missionary Society (LMS) in Zambia even though this was the desire of the Livingstonia missionaries, who wanted the CCAP to include the Presbyterian missions working in Zambia as well as those of the LMS.

The DRC wanted to preserve the Presbyterian system of Church Government and also the distinctive theology that the CCAP had come to embrace without diluting it with amalgamations from other church traditions. Besides, it is on record that some decades before this time, the relationship between some LMS missionaries and the Dutch colonists had proved sour and the DRC leadership of the 1930s did not feel encouraged to associate itself with the LMS, which to some DRC members, was perceived to be more of a political party than a missionary organisation because of its criticism of Dutch political policies.⁸ In view of this lingering possibility of the CCAP amalgamation with the Zambian churches, the view of the DRCM was that Nkhoma Presbytery should withdraw from the CCAP if the other presbyteries would go ahead with welcoming the Zambian churches into the CCAP fold. This meant that the presbyteries of Livingstonia and Blantyre were faced with two awkward situations: either lose Nkhoma and embrace the Zambian churches or risk losing the Zambian churches and consolidate the membership of Nkhoma in the CCAP family. As it happened the need to preserve the membership of Nkhoma prevailed and so for some time the CCAP would include only the Presbyterian missions operating in Malawi. This threat to the unity of the CCAP would also be dealt with in the second constitution of the union.

6.3 Differences in Practice

Besides the major issues that threatened the unity of the CCAP during the first thirty years of its existence, there are also some minor issues which the Synod then found it necessary to bring

⁸ Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 342.

to the attention of the presbyteries from time to time, especially in a bid to make uniform the different practices of the three presbyteries.

The first issue to be considered was the issue of infant baptism. It is now generally assumed that there has always been uniformity in the CCAP concerning infant baptism. However, that was not the case during the formative years of the federative denomination because different presbyteries then had different practices, especially when there were differences in the spirituality and membership status of the infant(s)' parents.⁹ It took some time before a uniform practice could be established in the Synod. Due to the problem of migrant labour from the catchment area of Livingstonia it was not easy for the presbytery then to confine Christian marriage to Christians only. Where one partner in a Christian marriage was non-Christian, the Christian parent was allowed to present the children for baptism, if there was reasonable expectation that the vows would be carried out.¹⁰ This practice by Livingstonia Mission or presbytery continued up to 1948 when it was reported in the minutes of the Sixth Synod that the Livingstonia Presbytery had agreed to "administer baptism to infants whose parents were both Christians, or one a Christian and the other a Catechumen, thus establishing a uniform practice in the Synod."¹¹

For some time it was also proposed that the disjunction certificates for the Christians should be uniform in all the three presbyteries. In this regard, Nkhoma presbytery was in the forefront in implementing the new policy by being the first to use the new disjunction certificates. During the Sixth Synod meeting it was reported that Blantyre and Livingstonia presbyteries had not yet exhausted stocks of the old certificates, but would begin to use the new certificates as soon as present stocks were finished.¹² This means that the two presbyteries, though in agreement with the decision of the Synod, did not consider it a matter for urgent implementation.

All this shows that it was the desire of all the three presbyteries to make sure that the unity of the CCAP was not only imagined but practically realised even if it were at a slow pace. For the Christians at the grassroots level this meant that the differences in the presbyteries were being minimized, thereby bringing unity and uniformity in the family of the CCAP. However,

⁹ Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Minutes of Synod, 1932, minute 36.

¹⁰ Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Minutes of Synod, 1936, minute 28 (4).

¹¹ See: Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, "Minutes of Sixth Synod", 7th-11th October 1948, minute 14, p. 3.

¹² Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, "Minutes of Sixth Synod", 7th-15th October 1948 minute 15.

it has to be noted that the emphasis on the autonomy of the presbyteries as they continued to cooperate with their mother churches clearly marked differences that would later prove negative to the unity of the CCAP vis-a-vis the relationship of the three presbyteries, but more so that of Livingstonia and Nkhoma.

It is interesting to read from some authorities that the unity of the CCAP was actually successful because of its “disunity” as the parent churches of the missions that formed the CCAP would not allow their missions to be fully under the newly established united local church. As Pauw explains:

In fact it is probably true to say that had this not been so the CCAP would never have come into being in this particular position. It is highly unlikely that the DRC or the Church of Scotland, for that matter, would have granted permission for its mission church to join as a presbytery if all control and authority over doctrinal and church political matters were in future to rest solely with the Synod of the CCAP.¹³

This shows that the mother churches of the missions were interested in union only in as far as they were able to exert influence on their former missions. It is in line with this observation that this study pursues its thesis that the CCAP, though touted as one church or denomination is (and has always been) in fact five denominations under a loose umbrella of federative denominational identity. Pauw has actually referred to the CCAP as a “Federated Church [rather] than a United Church.”¹⁴ It is this concept that this study is following in trying to understand the relationship existing among the now five synods of the CCAP.

This observation does not in any way ignore the successes that the union has achieved, firstly as an amalgamation of the presbyteries and later the three Malawian synods and eventually the maturing of the Zimbabwean and Zambian branches into the Synods of Harare and Zambia respectively. The union itself is acknowledged as one of the most significant events in the history of Christianity on the African continent.¹⁵ This union therefore was and continues to be a cause for celebration in the history of the Church in Africa in general and in Central Africa in particular. Moreover, among the synods themselves there can be no doubt that more has been gained through the union, despite its problems, than would otherwise have been the case. It has

¹³ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 339.

¹⁴ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 339.

¹⁵ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 398.

been observed that Nkhoma Synod was able to contribute an evangelical and spiritual emphasis to the union as well as provide a certain theological conservatism and orthodoxy not very much associated with the other synods.¹⁶ On the other hand the Scottish missions did contribute to the method and approach on the successful administration of the Church which Nkhoma Synod emulated.¹⁷

It can, therefore, be argued that on the basis of the positive factors of the union, it would be more prudent to uphold the union, more especially by exploring more areas of cooperation and uniformity, thereby sealing the cracks that are currently visible in the edifice that is the CCAP. The cracks that are in the CCAP are not new in that as we have seen, the seeds of possible discord were sowed right at the time of the establishment of the denomination when boundaries were drawn in order to maintain the distinctiveness of the founding missions and their mother churches against a more uniform union under local synodical leadership.¹⁸ It is not surprising therefore to find that the greatest bone of contention in the CCAP today is actually the issue of synodical boundaries and how these are treated by the various CCAP synods in order to maintain or increase their areas of jurisdiction or pastoral oversight to the flock that is always on the move across synodical boundaries. It is therefore necessary at this juncture to turn to a discussion on the issue of the boundaries vis-a-vis the unity of the five synods.

¹⁶ Cf. Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 398. Even among the grassroots it is well known that Nkhoma Synod tows a stricter, if conservative, line than her sister synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre. A simple story illustrated this point quite well during the course of the search for material for this chapter of the study. It was reported in one of the online news publications that St Columba Church of the Blantyre Synod had banned the wearing of miniskirts by women during church services. While this thing had nothing to do with the rest of the congregations under Blantyre Synod, let alone Nkhoma Synod, one commentator saw in it what he considered to be Nkhoma Synod’s influence on Blantyre Synod by commenting thus: “The *NkhomaSynodisation* of Blantyre Synod will amount to nothing. How far will we go to judge women’s spirituality by the clothes they wear? No matter the argument; conscience and one’s personal relationship with God are what matter!” See: <http://www.nyasatimes.com/2013/05/20/ccap-against-women-wearing-miniskirts>, retrieved 20.5.13. Emphasis added.

¹⁷ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, p. 398.

¹⁸ See: The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, “Minutes of Second Meeting of Synod”, 13th to 15th October, 1926, Minute 5.5.

6.4 Border Disputes in the CCAP

One of the issues, perhaps, the greatest of them all that have rocked the unity of the CCAP in recent years is the issue of the borders demarcating the areas of jurisdiction for the member synods of the General Assembly. In a way this issue concerns all the five synods of the General Assembly namely: Livingstonia, Blantyre, Nkhoma, Harare and Zambia. However, the dispute between the synods of Nkhoma and Livingstonia is so pronounced that differences in other areas and with other synods are significantly eclipsed by this single dispute. For instance, the presence of the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma in Zimbabwe is an issue in the General Assembly in relation to the jurisdiction of the Harare Synod. At issue also is the presence of Malawian Synods operating side by side in South Africa without uniting and without considering placing these South African congregations in the responsibility of the Reformed and Presbyterian churches of South Africa. It is interesting to note that at one of the General Assembly meetings it was resolved that all synods should pull out of the areas where they do not have constitutional jurisdiction and hand over the churches and assets to their sister synods or churches of the Reformed and Presbyterian denominational family.¹⁹ This resolve is yet to be honoured by the synods but it is also interesting to note that it was actually during this meeting's deliberations that the delegates of the Synod of Livingstonia decided to act as mere observers, in protest, because they were, according to them, denied their constitutional and traditional turn to chair the assembly by providing a moderator from their synod.²⁰

6.4.1 *The Livingstonia – Nkhoma Border Dispute*

The border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod continues to make headlines even though the two synods appear to have closed the chapter by declaring that there are no more borders between them, meaning that each synod is free to establish churches in another's hitherto exclusive territory and expect the other synod to do the same. Some observers and commentators are of the view that this stand by the two synods is not a solution to the problem but a mere sweep under the carpet, which, with the passage of time, may actually prove to be a time bomb as it does not give any guarantee that the issue has been solved once and for all.

¹⁹ See: The CCAP General Assembly, Press Release, 25th January 2007, paragraphs (d) and (e).

²⁰ CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, "Issues of Concern in Regard to General Assembly's Request that We Sit as Active Delegates and Take Up the Moderatorship Presented on 24th January, 2007", Caucus Document for the General Assembly meeting, 2007.

In order to understand the current developments in the border dispute between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma we need to go back in time to where things began so that we can appreciate the problem from its source. It has to be noted that prior to the coming of the DRCM, which is the mother mission of Nkhoma Synod, the missions of Livingstonia and Blantyre shared the whole country of what is now Malawi (and beyond into neighbouring countries) between themselves in as far as Presbyterian comity was concerned. This means that Livingstonia and Blantyre shared between themselves what is now the Central Region of Malawi, and largely the territory of Nkhoma Synod, except for Ntcheu District and some parts of the northern and southern regional boundaries.

When the DRCM missionaries came into the country, they were hosted by Livingstonia Mission and afterwards they were provided for and sent on their journey from the north of the country towards what is now the Central Region of Malawi. For some time, the DRCM was under the supervision of the Livingstonia missionaries, whose materials, including even stationery, they used for some years before the establishment of their own Mission Council.²¹ During all this time the question of boundaries did not enter anybody's mind except assuming, in general terms, that the sphere of influence for the DRCM was to be between the areas targeted by Livingstonia Mission in the north and Blantyre Mission in the south. The question of actual physical boundaries, therefore, did not arise until the year 1904, at least in as far as recorded missionary history is concerned.

The year 1904 saw the boundary between Livingstonia and Nkhoma being officially drawn. The results of this boundary demarcation date from 1910 in as far as documentation is concerned but it is faithfully recorded that there was a meeting of the representatives of the Livingstonia Mission and of DRCM at the Village of Chinkwiri on 29th July 1904 where the boundary between their respective spheres was agreed upon in the following details:

From the highest point of Chipata Mountain the boundary line passes through the highest points of Mpsa, Kanjoka (a small knoll south of Chinkwiri's), Mpale, Mwanjezi; hence to the mouth of the Rusa River; from which point the boundary is the watershed between the Rusa and Bua Rivers passing the Kapirintiwa, across the Rusa on to Mbwabwa.²²

²¹ It is on record that even the bricks used for the first permanent building at Mvera had the name Livingstonia engraved on them. See: Janet Wagner Parsons, "Scots and Afrikaners in Central Africa: Andrew Charles Murray and the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Malawi", *The Society of Malawi Journal*, Vol. 51, no. 1 (1998), p. 22.

²² An extract from *Notuen Uitvorenden Roads Der Ned Geref Kerk Zending Naar Mideee Afrika Book I* appearing as an attachment to a memo from Maurice Munthali, the then Acting General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia to all ministers of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia under the subject "Border

The Livingstonia Mission representatives that agreed to this boundary line were George Prentice and M.H. Henderson, while on the side of the DRCM there were W.H. Murray and A.J. Liebenberg.²³

Perhaps if this original official boundary had remained, there would have been no (or less) disputes between the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod in the succeeding years. However, as it happened, the original boundary was not to remain forever as in the year 1923 Livingstonia Mission officially handed over its Chilanga and Tamanda Missions to the DRCM, thus completing the handover of all the mission stations established by the Livingstonia Mission that were now in the area of influence of the DRCM. It is interesting to note that this transfer was actually initiated by the Livingstonia Mission leadership, who some two years prior to the handover, had asked the leadership of the DRCM if they could accept the responsibility of taking over the administration of Chilanga and Tamanda mission stations. After their deliberations, the council of the DRCM agreed to accept the offer of transfer of Chilanga (Kasungu) and Tamanda Missions into their hands. They appointed the Revds J.A. Retief, G. De C. Murray and Mr W.F. v de Riet as a commission to negotiate the terms of the transfer with their Livingstonia counterparts in the persons of Mr C. Stuart, Dr Prentice and Dr Laws.²⁴

It appears that this offer was made at the same time as the invitation to Nkhoma Mission to join the CCAP family, being the direction towards which Livingstonia and Blantyre were heading. In the wisdom of the DRCM missionaries they saw it fit to separate the two issues in order to deal with them on their own merits. They thus intimated their position to their Livingstonia colleagues: “In reference to joining the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, we would consider the matter entirely on its own merit.”²⁵

Having transferred the ownership of the two mission stations, it was now necessary to re-define the boundary between the two missions in view of the new situation. It was recorded

Dispute”, 16th May 2005, p. 1. The name M’bwabwa was proposed to change to Kwingwinyembe by request of Dr Prentice (the Livingstonia Missionary at Kasungu) on 4th September 1904.

²³ An extract from *Notuen Uitvorenden Roads Der Ned Geref Kerk Zending Naar Mideee Afrika Book I*, p. 2.

²⁴ “Minute of Meeting of Commissioners from the Dutch Reformed Mission and Livingstonia Mission to Deal with the Transfer of the Missions of Kasungu and Tamanda from the Livingstonia Mission to the Dutch Reformed Church Mission”, Kasungu, 8.10.1923.

²⁵ “Minute of Meeting of Commissioners from the Dutch Reformed Mission and Livingstonia Mission to Deal with the Transfer of the Missions of Kasungu and Tamanda from the Livingstonia Mission to the Dutch Reformed Church Mission”, Kasungu, 8.10.1923.

eventually that the new boundary would follow the approximate tribal boundary as represented by the schools occupied by Kasungu and Loudon, thus separating the two missions but also the ethnic groups in the area.²⁶ According to Pretorius “this was the final stage of a movement to assign all the Chewa people to the DRCM and the Ngoni/Tumbuka to Livingstonia.”²⁷

According to Felix Chingota, scholarly research in the area has shown that after the end of Chewa/Ngoni wars the tribal boundary was the Mpasadzi River.²⁸ Chingota further claims that there is no other document that has superseded or abrogated the 1923 document concerning the boundary between the two synods, at least in as far as the upland boundary is concerned.²⁹ As for the lake shore area boundary, archival sources do not show any document indicating the actual boundary between the two synods in the Dwangwa-Bua area of Nkhotakota District. Be that as it may, the claim on the part of Livingstonia Synod is that the boundary has all along been considered to be the Bua River, except for a small strip of land along the lake shore between Bua and Dwangwa Rivers and that apart from this strip, the border is the Dwangwa River. On the part of Nkhoma Synod the conviction is that the boundary is the Dwangwa River all the way to the lake without recognizing the strip of land along the lake as part of Livingstonia territory.³⁰

This means that the areas of dispute in as far as the border issue between the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod are concerned are those areas between the Rivers of Dwangwa and Milenje in Kasungu (upper land) and Bua and Dwangwa in the lakeshore area of Nkhotakota District.³¹ The uncertainty of the borders can therefore be described as an old problem in the relationship of the synods, especially the relationship between Livingstonia and Nkhoma.

²⁶ Kasungu and Loudon were both Livingstonia Mission stations but serving two different ethnic groups of Chewa and Ngoni respectively.

²⁷ J.L. Pretorius, “The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland”, *The Nyasaland Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 16.

²⁸ Felix Chingota (the then Moderator of General Assembly), “Lost Opportunities”, text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006, p. 4.

²⁹ Felix Chingota (the then Moderator of General Assembly), “Lost Opportunities”, text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006, p. 4.

³⁰ “Memorandum of Understanding on the Border Dispute between Nkhoma Synod and Livingstonia Synod”, 2006, p. 2.

³¹ “Memorandum of Understanding on the Border Dispute between Nkhoma Synod and Livingstonia Synod”, 2006, p. 2.

After the establishment of the General Synod in 1956 attempts were made in the succeeding years to resolve the differences concerning the border issue. Of special significance in this regard was the Chamakala Agreement of 1967. This agreement which was ratified by the Border Committees of the two synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma at a place known as Chamakala, proposed that there be a buffer zone along the disputed border so that the two synods could be establishing churches side by side within the buffer zone but not beyond it.³² The buffer zone proposed was the area between Milenje and Dwangwa Rivers. When the decision of the two committees was referred back to their respective synods for approval, the synods did not approve it. Firstly, when the issue was presented to Nkhoma Synod, the Synod Conference rejected it summarily, arguing that the synod could only accept it if there was another buffer zone beyond Milenje River. This means that from the point of view of Nkhoma Synod Milenje River was their perceived boundary, with the result that any proposed buffer zone on the southern side of the river was already in a territory considered exclusively their own. Secondly, when the Synod of Livingstonia learned about Nkhoma Synod's proposal to extend the buffer zone northwards of Milenje River they also rejected the proposal, thereby halting the whole process of sorting out the border dispute at that particular time.³³ Had the issue been sorted out at that time the border dispute would by now be just a footnote in the history of the CCAP.

The dispute between the two synods continued and escalated further between the years 1980 and 1996 when some Christians of Matiki congregation of the Synod of Livingstonia in the disputed area of Dwangwa Sugar plantation in Nkhotakota District decided to break away in order to form a Nkhoma Synod congregation which they called Majiga.³⁴ This was more like a rebellion against the administration of the Synod of Livingstonia to Nkhoma Synod with which they wanted to identify at that time for whatever reasons they had. When the matter reached the General Synod, the leadership decided that the said congregation should go back into the hands of the Synod of Livingstonia. They arranged that a special handover ceremony be held where officials representing the two synods would symbolically perform the act of handing over and

³² "Memorandum of Understanding on the Border Dispute between Nkhoma Synod and Livingstonia Synod", 2006, p. 2.

³³ Felix Chingota (the then Moderator of General Assembly), "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006, p. 1.

³⁴ "Memorandum of Understanding on the Border Dispute between Nkhoma Synod and Livingstonia Synod", 2006, p. 2.

receiving the congregation back into the hands of the Livingstonia Synod.³⁵ When the General Synod's Standing Committee met at the Christian Health Association in Malawi (CHAM) secretariat to be briefed on how the handover ceremony had been carried out they learned, to their shock, that the ceremony had actually ended in a fiasco due to congregational resistance. They learned that the doors of the prayer house were sealed with logs of blue gum (eucalyptus) trees in order to prevent the officials of the two synods from performing the handover ceremony.³⁶

In reviewing the incident the General Synod's Standing Committee found Nkhoma Synod at fault and reiterated the earlier decision that Nkhoma Synod must facilitate the handover of the prayer house under dispute to Livingstonia Synod without conditions.³⁷ As it stands, Nkhoma Synod did not comply with that decision as no further arrangements were made to implement the handover of the prayer house in question. After some years a Nkhoma Synod minister was sent to pastor the same congregation.³⁸

The unity of the CCAP was greatly tested in 1996 when the Synod of Livingstonia pulled out of the General Synod with the intention of embarking on the establishment of prayer houses across synodical boundaries. The decision to leave the General Synod was rescinded in the year 2000 when they eventually re-joined "in the hope that a lasting solution would be found to the border dispute leading to Nkhoma Synod's withdrawal from encroached territory."³⁹

In the year 2005 the dispute was fuelled further owing to the failure of the synods to agree on one thing in the Standing Committee of the General Assembly. The meeting became so emotional that the delegates of the Synod of Livingstonia opted to walk out in a kind of

³⁵ See: "Minutes of the General Synod Sub-committee on Dwangwa held on 9-10th September, 1995", item 5 under "Closing", p. 2 and "Minutes of the General Synod Standing Committee held at St Peter's Church on 17th-18th July 1996", minute 2.7/96.

³⁶ See: The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Synod, "Minutes of the Forum of the Standing Committee on Dwangwa Dispute held on 27th September 1996 at CHAM Secretariat Conference Room in Lilongwe."

³⁷ Felix Chingota (the then Moderator of General Assembly), "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006, pp. 1-2.

³⁸ CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, "Minutes of the Operation beyond Borders Taskforce Committee, held at William Koyi Conference Centre on 21st March 2006", minute 06/2006, being matters arising from minute 08/2005 (i).

³⁹ Synod of Livingstonia, "Solution to the Border Dispute between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods", Press Release Issued at the 30th Synod Assembly Held at Bandawe Mission Station from 22nd to 27th September, 2006.

defiance. According to Rev Chingota's testimony the meeting was convened on 18th April with the aim of deliberating on only two things: reports from the synods and way forward on the border dispute issue. After the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma had presented their reports on the issue, as asked, it was now time to discuss the way forward but they started asking questions on the reports in order to get some clarification but the process developed into a match of accusations and counter accusations between the "belligerent" synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma which led to the former literally walking out of the meeting. This meant that the meeting could not continue as one primary stakeholder had walked out. This meeting, together with the behaviour of the synods, was heavily reported in the press and received criticism and condemnation from the general public at large as the behaviour shown, notwithstanding the grievances aired, was below what is expected of the Church as the custodian of morality and the spirit of toleration and accommodation for those with contrary views.

In the year 2006, with support from the Church of Scotland, the General Assembly constituted a Commission of Inquiry to investigate issues relating to the border dispute in terms of causes and the identification of the true border between the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod. This Commission of Inquiry came in as a result of commitment to an action plan recommended by a Conflict and Management Skills Workshop facilitated by Mr John Sturrock which took place at Kambiri Lodge in Salima District from 12th to 15th March 2006. Mr Sturrock was identified as an expert in mediation by the Church of Scotland, which had convinced the General Secretaries of the three CCAP Malawian synods when they visited Scotland towards the end of the year 2005 that such a person and his skills was needed in the effort to bring the border dispute to an end.⁴⁰

Though the Synod of Livingstonia was not adequately represented at the Workshop, owing to the conspicuous absence of its moderator and the moderator-elect, the recommendations of the workshop had to be carried out. Consequently, on 28th March 2006 the Standing Committee of the General Assembly set up the Commission of Inquiry comprising three commissioners from the Synod of Livingstonia, three from Nkhoma Synod and two each from Blantyre Synod and the General Assembly.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Felix Chingota, "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006.

⁴¹ Felix Chingota, "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006.

It has been observed that the Synod of Livingstonia did not assist the Commission of Inquiry as expected; its three commissioners are said to have been absent during the work of the Commission. Besides, contrary to its promises, the Synod of Livingstonia failed to hand over to the Commission of Inquiry the necessary documents that would help them with the work of the inquiry.⁴²

After the Commission of Inquiry had written their report it was arranged that there be a meeting of the General Assembly's Standing Committee to officially receive the report. This meeting took place at Masamba. Apart from the leadership of the CCAP General Assembly present at this meeting, were Mr John Sturrock, the mediation expert, and the Rev Dr Kenneth Ross, a representative of the Church of Scotland. Guided by the findings of the Commission of Inquiry, the Standing Committee went on to determine the border line between Nkhoma Synod and the Synod of Livingstonia even though the moderator of the Synod of Livingstonia did not attend the meeting.⁴³

Of special significance at this Masamba meeting was the realisation that the issues to do with the border dispute were deeper than what had been imagined up to that time, as economic, political, linguistic and ethnic undercurrents were perceived.⁴⁴ Due to what had been discovered as the undercurrents with regard to the border dispute, it was decided that a meeting of moderators and general secretaries of the synods and the General Assembly be convened in order to discuss a memorandum of understanding and a code of conduct with regard to the practicalities of the transfer of property and congregations in view of the new proposed boundaries. This meeting was however brought to a premature closure because the delegates of the Synod of Livingstonia did not continue with the discussions. Their argument was basically that the draft documents of the memorandum of understanding and code of conduct were ultimately based on the report of the Commission of Inquiry, which, according to them, contained wrong information. The meeting was stopped in order to give the Synod of Livingstonia a chance to present their views in the next Standing Committee meeting.

⁴² Felix Chingota, "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006, p. 2.

⁴³ Felix Chingota, "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Zgambo, Humphreys F.C. "Conflict within the Church: A Theological Approach to Conflict Resolution with Special Reference to the Boundary Disputes between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods in Malawi," MTh, University of Fort Hare, 2011, p. 52.

6.4.1.1 Livingstonia Synod's Operation beyond Borders Stand

On the part of the Synod of Livingstonia, Nkhoma Synod's establishment of over eighty congregations in Livingstonia territory is intolerable. It is on record that the decision to ignore the boundary between itself and Nkhoma was agreed upon at a Synod of Livingstonia meeting held in Mzimba in 1990. However, the Synod of Livingstonia claims that this decision was not immediately implemented in order to give chance to the General Assembly and Nkhoma Synod to consider Livingstonia's concerns.⁴⁵

In a letter addressed to all ministers of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia dated 16th May 2005, the then Acting Secretary General of the Synod of Livingstonia, the Rev Maurice C.E. Munthali, informed all the ministers and heads of department of the Synod of Livingstonia about the decision the Synod had taken concerning the border issue. The letter explains the frustration experienced by the Synod of Livingstonia on the failure to amicably resolve the border issue at a meeting called by the Moderator of the General Assembly on 18th April 2005 where only the three Malawian synods of the CCAP General Assembly were invited. Owing to this "frustration," the letter intimates that the moderator of the Synod of Livingstonia called for a Synod Executive Committee meeting on 20th April 2005 in order to seek some guiding mandate and way forward. It was at this committee meeting that the Synod of Livingstonia strengthened its position of not respecting any borders between itself and Nkhoma Synod. The letter reads in part:

The committee noted that we will only be spending time fighting over a boundary which our counterparts actually disregarded years ago if we choose to keep negotiating for it. It was pointed out at the same meeting that we should remain as members of the General Assembly but that each of us will be free to establish churches without regard to any official border.⁴⁶

The Acting General Secretary explained in the letter that the reason Nkhoma Synod are advancing into Livingstonia territory is that they are following their Chewa-speaking "children", who do not understand or are not interested in the languages spoken in the Synod of Livingstonia's sphere of influence.⁴⁷ One of the reasons for this communication was for the

⁴⁵ Synod of Livingstonia, "Solution to the Border Dispute between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods", Press Release Issued at the 30th Synod Assembly Held at Bandawe Mission Station from 22nd to 27th September, 2006.

⁴⁶ Rev Maurice C.E. Munthali (the then Acting General Secretary), "Border Dispute", Letter to Ministers and Heads of Department of the Synod of Livingstonia dated 16th May 2005.

⁴⁷ Rev Maurice C.E. Munthali (the then Acting General Secretary), "Border Dispute", Letter to Ministers and Heads of Department of the Synod of Livingstonia dated 16th May 2005, p. 2.

presbyteries to discuss the issue in their meetings and come up with their own independent opinion, even though the position of the Synod was already reached.

It can be argued that the frustration which Livingstonia Synod felt was because she perceived the new arrangement of the border to be favouring Nkhoma Synod in that through the Commission of Inquiry's Report the proposed upland boundary of Mpasadzi River was actually giving Nkhoma Synod more territory into the Synod of Livingstonia's sphere of influence. What is not known is whether the acceptance of the new boundaries as demarcated would indeed bring the border dispute to a rest concerning the undercurrents that complicated the otherwise simple issue of physical boundaries. The Synod of Livingstonia's press release of 24th September 2006 made it very clear that, in as far as it was concerned, the issue of borders with Nkhoma Synod was over. This decision was reached unanimously at the Synod's 30th Assembly held at Bandawe Mission from 22nd to 27th September 2006. Interestingly, the press release reiterated the Synod of Livingstonia's commitment to peaceful coexistence with her sister synods in Malawi and beyond, including its fellow "belligerent", Nkhoma Synod, and also upholding the unity of the CCAP General Assembly in the new context of post-border co-existence of the synods.⁴⁸

The decision taken by the Synod of Livingstonia appears not to have been greatly challenged by the Synod's clergy though it cannot be ruled out that there were some who did not agree with the decision.⁴⁹ On the part of lay people, however, the negative responses have been experienced as evidenced by some members of the Synod who organised themselves into concerned groups and raised their reservations on the Synod's stand through petitions. One example, a group in Zomba calling itself "Friends of Livingstonia-Zomba", met at Zomba Theological College on 2nd May 2005, where after deliberations, they decided to write a letter to the General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, expressing their concerns regarding the relationship between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods. They observed, among other things, that by building different CCAP churches from the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod

⁴⁸ Synod of Livingstonia, "Solution to the Border Dispute between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods", Press Release Issued at the 30th Synod Assembly Held at Bandawe Mission Station from 22nd to 27th September, 2006.

⁴⁹ For instance, Rev H.K. Mvula, an ex-moderator of the Synod of Livingstonia expressed his concern over the manner in which the Border Dispute was being handled by the Synod. He also did not agree with the idea that this critical issue should be discussed by the Synod's Executive Committee. See: H.K. Mvula, "There is a Crisis in the CCAP Church", Letter to the Moderator of the Synod of Livingstonia copied to the Acting General Secretary and Moderator Elect, 3rd May 2005.

in one town, the Church would inevitably foment conflict amongst its members.⁵⁰ One of their recommendations, therefore, was that the decision to recognise only Blantyre Synod's boundary and any actions arising from it should not be implemented immediately in order to allow more people to understand the problem, so that there is further effort to resolve it.

Despite resistance from many quarters, the Synod of Livingstonia resolved to establish churches deeper into Nkhoma Synod's territory, in their view, as a way to make sure that the issue of border dispute was now water under the bridge. Consequently, the Synod of Livingstonia formed a taskforce committee with the mandate of planning and directing the logistics towards establishing churches in the territory that was hitherto unquestionably under the jurisdiction of Nkhoma Synod. The results of the labours of this taskforce committee are such that the Synod of Livingstonia was able to establish Livingstonia congregations in Kasungu, Nkhotakota and Lilongwe, a deep penetration into Nkhoma Synod's territory beyond the disputed border areas.

Resistance against the Synod of Livingstonia's stand to disregard the boundary with Nkhoma Synod and to start building churches in Nkhoma's interior territory continued even after the Synod of Livingstonia had already started seeing the mushrooming of some of her churches in Nkhoma Synod's territory. On 26th April 2006, concerned members of the Synod of Livingstonia wrote a letter to the Synod's Moderator expressing their concerns over the opening of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia churches inside Nkhoma Synod's area of jurisdiction.⁵¹ The letter was copied to the General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia and the General Secretary and Moderator of the General Assembly. Interestingly, among these concerned members there were three ordained ministers: one expatriate and two locals.⁵² What this means is that even though the Synod of Livingstonia has gone ahead with its decision of not recognising boundaries with its sister Synod of Nkhoma, not all of its members, whether ordained or lay, are comfortable with the present developments. The general concern among

⁵⁰ Friends of the Livingstonia Synod – Zomba to the General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, "Relationship between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod", 2nd May 2005, p. 2.

⁵¹ Concerned Members to the Moderator of the Synod of the Livingstonia, "Concern over the Opening of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Churches inside Nkhoma Synod Jurisdiction, 26th April 2006.

⁵² Among the signatories of this letter there was also one non-ordained missionary.

those that were against the Synod's stand at that time was that these developments were likely to lead to a breach of peace and preclude any attempts at reconciliation and unity.⁵³

The study observes that pulling out from encroached territories is not easy, though possible, but pulling out from inner areas such as Lilongwe would not be an easy task to execute. Besides, Nkhoma Synod has also taken a stand that they too will not recognise the boundaries with Livingstonia, which means that in future we are likely to see Nkhoma Synod's churches not only along the disputed border areas but right in the interior of the Synod of Livingstonia's territory such as Mzuzu City, Karonga and other areas.⁵⁴

Livingstonia Synod is fully convinced that when the Nkhoma Synod churches were established in her territory the border was abolished and she notes that there is co-existence along the disputed areas and hopes that by disregarding the borders there can still be peaceful co-existence.

6.4.1.2 Nkhoma Synod's Position

Following Livingstonia Synod's position of not recognizing the borders with it, Nkhoma Synod has been forced to reciprocate in this initiative. However, it is being said that for Nkhoma Synod the issue of doing away with the boundaries is being considered beyond its dispute with Livingstonia alone. This means that in principle, Nkhoma Synod is pushing for a "no border policy" that will affect even Blantyre Synod, as it does not want to have boundaries in the south while there are no longer boundaries (or no respect for them) in the north.

In any case, Nkhoma Synod is known to operate in the Synod of Livingstonia's sphere of influence but so far only in areas near the borders. We are yet to see Nkhoma Synod congregations in the interior of the Northern Region but it is likely to happen soon if there will be no reverse in this new direction of not recognizing the borders between the two synods.⁵⁵

⁵³ Concerned Members to the Moderator of the Synod of Livingstonia, "Concern over the Opening of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Churches inside Nkhoma Synod Jurisdiction, 26th April 2006.

⁵⁴ When I was drafting this chapter, Nkhoma Synod had not yet opened up a congregation in Mzuzu City.

⁵⁵ After this chapter had already been drafted there were reliable reports that a Nkhoma Synod congregation had been established at Mzimba, which is a long distance from the disputed areas into the interior of Livingstonia Synod's territory. Besides, a new Nkhoma Synod congregation is now officially established in Mzuzu (where Livingstonia Synod is headquartered) at Katoto Secondary School.

6.4.1.3 Blantyre Synod's Position

The history of the border dispute and the other differences among the three CCAP Synods in Malawi has always been a concern to Blantyre Synod, which could not enjoy peaceful membership of the CCAP when its two sister synods in the country have been drifting apart over the course of history, but also realising that, in general, the unity of the CCAP has ever since been 'superficial.' As late as over fifty years after the formation of the CCAP, in 1977, Blantyre Synod was lamenting at what it perceived to be a lack of real unity in the CCAP as expressed in its "Life and Work Report" during the General Synod of 1977:

The Synod of Blantyre deplors that the unity of the CCAP has remained superficial for so long and wishes to express its support for any move towards deeper and organic unity. The Synod rejoices that the theological college will move to Zomba this October under the auspice of the four synods. More fields of cooperation should be encouraged to join, for in working together the Church will present a united Gospel Message of its Master Jesus Christ through prayers that we should all be one.⁵⁶

This shows that Blantyre Synod has been concerned with the issue of differences in the synods and the current border dispute between the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma is no mean a thing in as far as the position of Blantyre Synod is concerned. Clerical members of Blantyre Synod have voiced the need to resolve the differences between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods. They have done so either in their capacity as ordinary church ministers or in view of their privileged senior positions in their Synod or in the General Assembly.⁵⁷

Owing to the current disagreements, Blantyre Synod finds fault with both the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod in their failure to resolve their differences but also to respect the decisions made by the General Assembly in a bid to sort out the issue. Of special importance, the Blantyre Synod censured Nkhoma Synod's failure to implement what have come to be

⁵⁶ J.D. Sangaya (the then Blantyre Synod's General Secretary), "Life and Work of Blantyre Synod", being Appendix IV to the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, *Minutes of the General Synod Held at Chongoni from 16th to 17th August 1977*, Nkhoma: Nkhoma Press, 1977, p. 17. See: also The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, *Minutes of the General Synod Held at Chongoni from 16th to 17th August 1977*, Minute 20. C. (xiii). The reference to four synods in the above quotation refers to Livingstonia, Blantyre, Nkhoma and Salisbury (now Harare). This was before the establishment of the Synod of Zambia.

⁵⁷ For instance see Felix Chingota (Blantyre Synod minister and the then Moderator of General Assembly), "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006; S.G. Chitsulo, "Prophetic Message for Reconciliation between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods", 2nd January 2007; Reynold Mangisa, "Questions of Conscience on Livingstonia-Nkhoma Relations" (Letter to the General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia), 14th February 2007.

known as the Chamakala and Majiga Agreements. In the first case, Nkhoma Synod refused to abide by the proposed agreement concerning the buffer zone south of Milenje River, while in the second instance they did not bless the transfer of Majiga Prayer House which it was unanimously agreed by the General Assembly belonged to the Synod of Livingstonia.

Of great concern also to Blantyre Synod is the current position of Livingstonia Synod's policy of saying there should be no recognition of borders between Livingstonia and Nkhoma. Comparing the situation with other churches in the country, which have and do respect their borders, such as Anglican Dioceses and Roman Catholic Dioceses, Blantyre Synod fears that the "No Border Policy" has the potential to breed confusion and anarchy.⁵⁸ Some observers feel that Blantyre Synod is wary with this issue because it fears that Livingstonia Synod may declare the "No Border Policy" even with them as it is feared Nkhoma Synod has done, though practically it has not yet gone into the territory of Blantyre Synod.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Blantyre Synod, "Blantyre Synod Response", an unpublished document on the Livingstonia – Nkhoma Border Dispute, p. 1. Point No 5.

⁵⁹ Oral information, Synod of Livingstonia Minister, n.n.

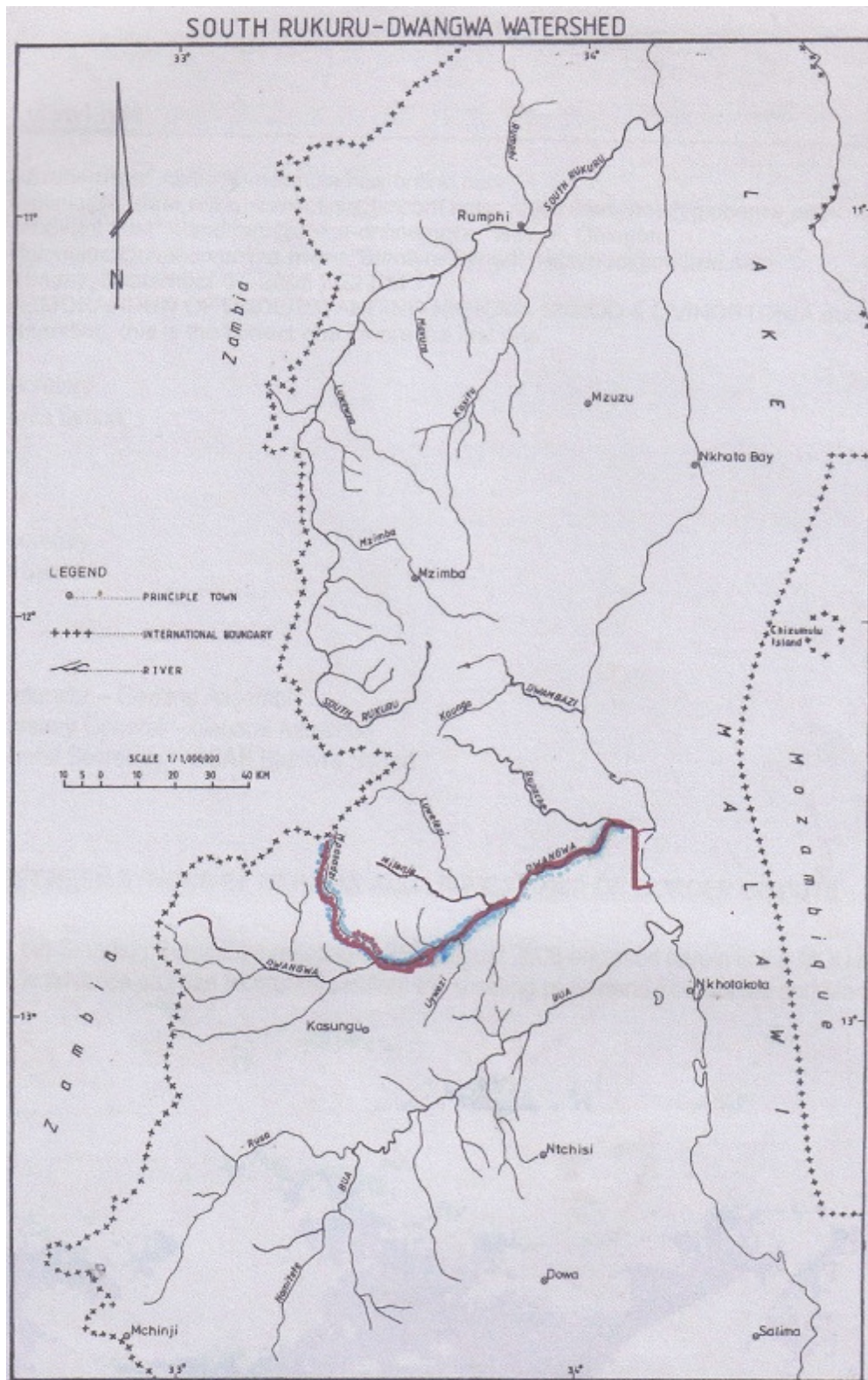


Fig. 1: Map of South Rukuru and Dwangwa Rivers Watershed, showing the post Commission of Enquiry proposed boundary between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods of the CCAP.

(Sourced from: Synod of Livingstonia, General Secretary's Border Dispute File)

6.4.2 *Legal, Political and Theological Implications of the Border Disputes*

The border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod, especially in relation to the current stand taken, that borders should no longer be recognised, presents interesting legal, political and theological cases. This is so especially in view of the church's need to adhere to its own constitution and theological position and the perceived failure to be able to do so within a given socio-political context.

6.4.2.1 *Legal Implications*

From a legal point of view both the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma are at fault with regard to the constitution of the General Assembly as it currently stands. There are reports that a new constitution is being drafted which will take into consideration the current status of the synods' relationships. However, before that constitution becomes effective the current constitution is still valid and the actions of the synods are supposed to be evaluated in light of what is stipulated therein. In the first place, the constitution does recognise boundaries among the synods as stipulated in the following provision:

The Church being one and only divided into Synods for administrative convenience each Synod shall ensure it lives in harmony with the Synod it shares a common border with and shall at all times respect the boundaries as existing or as prescribed herein.⁶⁰

This means that not to respect the boundaries is to act unconstitutionally by the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma. While it can be counter argued that the constitution does mention the boundaries, but that they are not so clear and neither are they agreed upon by the synods, hence their violation, it would still be unconstitutional to declare that the boundaries shall no longer be respected when the constitution still mentions them and expects the synods to respect them. Besides, even if there were disagreements along the boundaries, the differences of opinion on these do not give the synods the mandate to go all the way into their sister synod's territory and establish churches where the question of boundary dispute cannot be justified. If the border lines could not be settled, why not just continue with encroachment in the disputed areas than going all the way to places that are farther removed from the disputed areas? Consequently, the actions of these synods and of the Christians who join the newly formed congregations further violate the constitutional order of the General Assembly, whose constitutional schedule stipulates as follows:

⁶⁰ The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, *Constitution of the General Assembly*, Constitutional Schedule, 4.1.1.

The General Assembly shall, in the case of new Synods or Mission work areas, demarcate geographical boundaries of Synods and mission work areas and allocate authority to a particular Synod over the demarcated area. The geographical boundaries shall be set in such a way that all Christians within the bounds of that area will be under the jurisdiction of one Synod and no area or group of people within its bounds shall have the right to affiliate themselves with a Synod other than the one granted jurisdiction over that area by the General Assembly.⁶¹

This means that the General Assembly's constitutional provision that talks about boundaries among the synods is not just being violated but that it has been disregarded and abandoned altogether, making the two synods irredeemably culpable in as far constitutional adherence is concerned. Be that as it may, the General Assembly has no powers to punish the two synods; it can only plead with them to consider changing things for the better but it has no enforcing authority to execute any punitive measures on the 'wayward' synods.⁶² This is to be most lamented because constitutionally the General Assembly is mandated to punish or discipline an offending synod as explained in the following provision:

When a Synod or any of its lower courts wishes to open, establish or construct a new church or prayer house within three kilometres to the known Synod boundary it shall first consult the other Synod with which it shares a common border to confirm that such a site is indeed within the jurisdiction of the constructing Synod and failing such agreement the matter shall be referred to the General Assembly whose decision shall be binding on the parties. Contravention of this provision shall lead to disciplinary action being taken against the offending Synod.⁶³

While appealing to civil courts in border dispute matters may be a possibility, it is something that may not necessarily produce a lasting solution, since legality alone may not touch the core of the problem which has moral and theological dimensions besides other numerous undercurrents.

6.4.2.2 Political Implications

The disagreements between the three synods in Malawi in most cases make people fear that they are likely to further disintegrate the country since the country is already divided along

⁶¹ The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, *Constitution of the General Assembly*, Constitutional Schedule, 4.1.2.

⁶² In 2006 the then Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rgt Rev Dr Felix Chingota, was quoted in the press saying that the General Assembly would punish the Synod of Livingstonia for its violation of the provisions of the 2002 General Assembly constitution on border dispute issues but the "threat", as it were, came to nothing. See: Edwin Nyirongo, "General Synod to Discipline Livingstonia", *The Nation*, 29.9.06.

⁶³ The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, *Constitution of the General Assembly*, Constitutional Schedule, 4.2.

regional lines and the synods to a larger extent follow these regional boundaries. This observation is true in the sense that the three Malawian synods are naturally associated with the three regions of the country. While it may not be the intention of the synods to extend their differences into the political arena, politics is such a phenomenon that it makes the politicians not to leave any stone unturned in a bid to manipulate the situation for their own political gains.

It has to be noted that big political parties in Malawi take advantage of the people's differences along regional lines to consolidate their power bases by associating with particular regions as their strongholds and trying to make them "no-go-zone-areas" for rival parties. Since the three Malawian synods have their areas of influence along regional lines, it is very easy to associate them with the political parties that consider those regions their strongholds. While this is not necessarily always the case, there is a temptation in the country to associate members of one synod with a particular political party and by implication making them rivals of their brothers and sisters of a different synod; and therefore different region and different political party. This scenario gives confidence to politicians who are members of a dominant political party in the region, that come what may, they cannot lose an election in that particular region, because it is "their" region. Consequently, even if this political party were associated with negative things it cannot be censured by the synods of other regions because their position cannot be taken to be objective but as one based on regionalism or, worse still, as mercenary on behalf of rival political parties.⁶⁴

It is because of such complexities that many feel a united CCAP is a guarantee for the unity of the country and a CCAP divided along synodical lines is likely to divide the country if not along tribal lines at least along regional ones. It is in view of such observations that some of the concerned members of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia who did not support the idea of opening Livingstonia churches in the Central Region pleaded with their Synod to stop the trend and continue to trust that the General Assembly will arrive at an amicable solution to their differences with Nkhoma Synod and reminding the Synod leadership that the "country is in bondage of regionalistic discriminations."⁶⁵ Even some members of the clergy from Blantyre

⁶⁴ It is due to this situation that sometimes a CCAP Synod has been accused of being either a mouthpiece or a defender of a certain political party with which it is closely associated. On the other hand a CCAP Synod has also been accused of being an enemy of a certain party which has not managed, as it were, to charm the Synod in question.

⁶⁵ Concerned Members to the Moderator of the Synod of the Livingstonia, "Concern over the Opening of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Churches inside Nkhoma Synod Jurisdiction, 26th April 2006, p. 2.

Synod are afraid of the divisions in the Church among the synods which they see to have wider implications, as Rev Master Jumbe observes:

This is dangerous not only to the church but to the nation that has enjoyed peaceful coexistence among its people throughout history. This development should be of concern not only to CCAP members but the government as well.⁶⁶

As it currently stands, there are no open hostilities among the Christians of the CCAP since the issue of borders or no borders is largely an administrative one though not immune from other influences. It is the fear of what may happen when other non-administrative and even non-ecclesiastical influences take over that makes many uneasy since the differences are already piling up like fuel for the spark that may come. Some are of the view that Malawian politicians are happy with the status quo because it, in a way, renders the Church less critical ethically as it cannot speak with a united voice when it has a lot of issues to sort out in its own house. As Jumbe again rightly notes:

Unfortunately, any divisions, disagreements and schisms in the church is a cause for celebration among our politicians who for the last decades have been threatened by the stand of the church [sic].⁶⁷

Jumbe's sentiments are reminiscent of the fact that the churches in Malawi, and the CCAP synods in particular, have to a certain extent lost their prophetic role or mandate in society because of in-house fighting. Writing towards the end of 2008, as Malawi was approaching the 2009 General Elections, George Kasakula added his voice to the criticism levelled against the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma in relation to their moral authority to arbitrate between rival political camps:

In fact because of the way the two synods are conducting themselves, they have lost moral authority to pontificate to political leaders on what to do on anything although they will shamelessly attempt to do so especially with elections coming next year.⁶⁸

It therefore becomes obvious even to a casual observer that the CCAP Synods are treading on slippery ground when it comes to the possible manipulation of their ecclesiastical issues by political stakeholders who may not necessarily be concerned with the general welfare of the country, let alone with eternal matters—matters which are of primary concern to the Church. This calls for great prudence on the part of the CCAP leadership both in the General Assembly

⁶⁶ Master Jumbe, "When the Church becomes Tasteless", *Nation on Sunday*, 4.4.2010.

⁶⁷ Master Jumbe, "When the Church becomes Tasteless", *Nation on Sunday*, 4.4.2010.

⁶⁸ George Kasakula, "Synods Mere Clubs", *Weekend Nation* 20-21 September 2008 ("My Diary" column).

and in the individual synods so that the Church does not become a victim of political machinations because of ecclesiastical disputes.

6.4.2.3 *Theological Implications*

From a theological point of view it has to be mentioned first and foremost that one of the marks of a true church is that of catholicity. By catholicity we mean that the Church is and should be universal. Practically this means that the Church should in no way show favouritism to some people or disregard certain people groups because of their colour, gender, language, ethnicity, social class status, level of education or otherwise. Any group that champions these things is not a true church. However, if such a group belongs to an acceptable Church denomination we can conclude that it has started to develop heretical tendencies. Heretical tendencies are not just false positions theologically, but they are also quite destructive to the life, nature and work of the church.⁶⁹

If we take the justification for Nkhoma Synod that it is encroaching into Livingstonia Synod's territory because it is following its "Chewa-speaking children", then it means that language is more important for Nkhoma Synod than the unity of the Church. This would mean that Nkhoma Synod's position is heretical in the sense that its emphasis on language is interfering with the catholicity of the church.

In the same vein the Livingstonia Synod would also be culpable of heresy if her going into Nkhoma territory is for the sake of those members of hers who hanker for the "home" language in worship and music. It has to be pointed out though that this has not been mentioned as Livingstonia Synod's reason for going deeper into Nkhoma Synod's territory.⁷⁰ In any case the situation would not be easier for Livingstonia Synod if that were the reason because the Synod's catchment area in the Northern Region of Malawi has several languages, making it the richest Synod in as far as linguistic diversity is concerned. Due to the fact that the Tumbuka language

⁶⁹ B. Demarest, "Heresy", in Sinclair B Ferguson and David F. Wright (eds), *New Dictionary of Theology*, Leicester/Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 1988, pp. 291-293.

⁷⁰ On the part of Nkhoma Synod, it has been emphatically aired that their presence in the sphere of Livingstonia along the disputed borders is because they are following their Chewa-speaking children who cannot speak or understand northern languages. Whether this sentiment was made on an individual's basis or not there has been no any statement from Nkhoma Synod to explain otherwise. See Samson Salmon Kaonga, "A History of the Birth and Growth of Livingstonia Synod's Congregation in Kasungu District in the Context of the Border Dispute with Nkhoma Synod (2005-2012)", BA (Theology), Mzuzu University, 2012, p. 8.

is considered the *lingua franca* of the Northern Region, there is always a temptation to associate the Livingstonia Synod with the Tumbuka language and sometimes even the leadership of the Synod behaves as if that were the case. As a matter of fact there are more ethnic groups and languages in the Northern Region of Malawi than in both the Central and Southern Regions combined.

If the Synod of Livingstonia is therefore not in the Central Region in order to follow its “Tumbuka speaking children”, it should prove the point by not associating itself intricately with the Tumbuka language. For example the programme for the launch of the Synod of Livingstonia Congregation in Lilongwe on 17th September 2006 was a combination of the English and Tumbuka languages as opposed to Chichewa, which ought to have dominated the programme, considering the geo-linguistic position of the City of Lilongwe.⁷¹ It is perhaps such observations that may tempt a neutral observer to conclude that the Synod of Livingstonia is also in the Central Region for the sake of its “Tumbuka-speaking children.”⁷² But even if that were not the case, the predominant membership of northerners in Livingstonia Synod’s congregations in the Central Region would and does betray them as being segregative or being attracted to the home synod and fellowship with familiar peoples from one’s own region, if not even district or village. By this chase, the argument makes both Livingstonia and Nkhoma synods culpable of heretical tendencies by emphasizing the differences between “we” and “them” in the body of Christ, which ought not to recognise or pander to differences of language and other socio-cultural distinctions among its members. Consequently, this compromises the catholicity of the Church among the members of the two synods. Of course this is something that can be remedied when the new churches recognise that it is important to show that they are not trying to be particular but ready to accommodate other members from whatever background, without emphasizing their differences, and behaving in a manner that resonates with a cosmopolitan culture, where differences due to areas of origin and language preferences are lost in the one identity of a local church in a particular geographical area.

⁷¹ See: CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, “Programme for the Official Launch of the Lilongwe Congregation on Sunday 17th September 2006. Cf. Samson Salmon Kaonga, “A History of the Birth and Growth of Livingstonia Synod’s Congregation in Kasungu District in the Context of the Border Dispute with Nkhoma Synod (2005-2012)”, BA (Theology), Mzuzu University, 2012, p. 28.

⁷² Besides this apparently linguistic reason for the synods’ encroachment into other synods territories, there is also a monetary explanation because the people of a particular language in a different place are likely to contribute money to the synod of the language with which they associate. Actually some people feel this is main reason for following the so-called “children.”

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion we can emphatically say that this chapter has highlighted the pangs that the CCAP is experiencing in its “unity”, which actually makes the unity to appear as a goal to be pursued but never fully attained. While the three synods in Malawi and their sister synods in Zambia and Zimbabwe want to continue existing as independent organisations there can be no one organic denomination. The study therefore argues that it is this prolonged independent existence of the synods that makes them separate denominations in the name of the CCAP federation. This therefore further illustrates the fact that the CCAP is actually a loose umbrella of independent denominations and not one church. The examples of the diocesan boundaries of the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches and the administrative boundaries of other denominations in the country do not make sense in the case of the CCAP synods whose oneness, in the sense of singularity, has never existed.⁷³ Cooperation among the synods has existed, and sometimes very deeply but this has been the case due to the leadership of the time or certain circumstances obtaining but not the achievement of a truly united church. However, this observation does not mean that nothing can be done about it. After recognising that the unity wished for has not been achieved over the years, more effort at unity can be exerted now with a view to changing the future history of the five synods. While that time awaits its fulfilment, the synods will continue to feel the pangs of unity in diversity.

⁷³ In the churches mentioned here it is not doubted that they are single denominations despite having several dioceses or administrative boundaries. The uniqueness of the CCAP is in the fact that its oneness as a denomination is still subject to discussion.

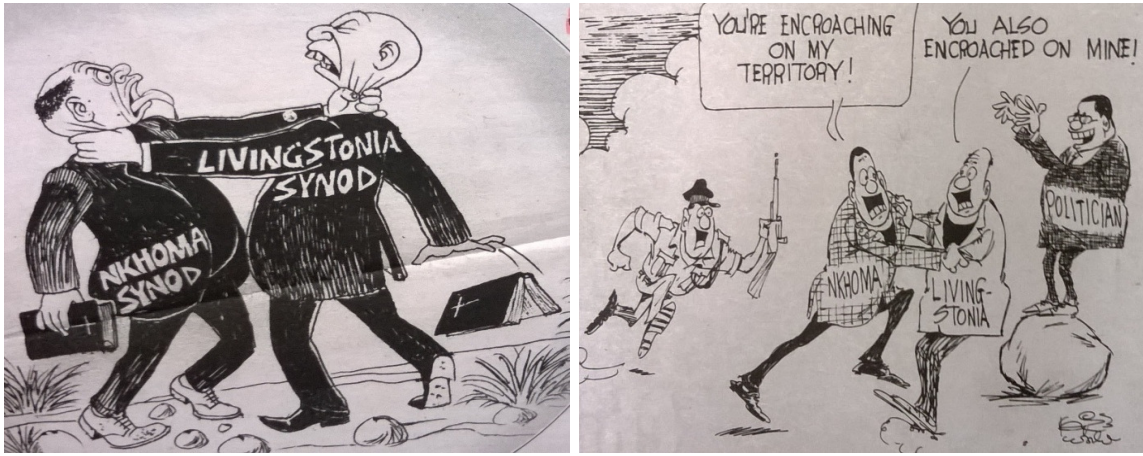


Fig. 2: A sample of newspaper cartoons depicting a caricature of the Border Dispute between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma.

(Sourced from: George Kasakula, "My Diary", *Weekend Nation* 20-21 September 2008 and Steven Nhlane, "On Saturday", *Malawi News*, October 4-10 2008 respectively)

Chapter Seven: The Unstable Position of the CCAP General Assembly

7.1 Introduction

In this chapter an in-depth analysis of the position of the General Assembly (and changes in this position) vis-à-vis its synods is made in order to appreciate the challenges associated with the federative denomination's unity. The leadership of the CCAP acknowledges the problems that are there when it comes to enhancing its unity, and to that end several attempts have been made and continue to be made by the leaders of the synods in ensuring that the CCAP does not only appear to be one denomination but that it actually works as one.¹ Before going deeper into the discussion concerning the unstable position of the General Assembly, there is need to provide an exposition of the body so that its structure and composition is known. After that its evaluation can be ably handled.

7.2 Constitutional Direction of the General Assembly

7.2.1 Change of Name from General Synod to General Assembly

As alluded to earlier in this study, the General Assembly is the current umbrella body that strives to unify the CCAP with its membership of the five synods, namely: Livingstonia, Blantyre, Nkhoma, Zambia and Harare. The General Assembly as we know it today is the result of the evolutionary character of CCAP unity which started from its establishment in 1924. The constitution guiding the CCAP now is the 2002 constitution adopted on 8th December 2002. One of the most significant issues with regard to this constitution is the change in the nomenclature of the federative denomination. Whereas the CCAP union was previously known as General Synod, the current constitution changed that name to General Assembly. It has to be noted though, that prior to the General Synod stage, the CCAP was only known as 'Synod' as it was presbyteries that had joined together to form the union in 1924 and 1926.² This means

¹ From the days of the General Synod, the General Assembly is referred to, in some circles as, "a half-way house", because of its inability to bring all the synods together as a united denomination. The weakness of the General Assembly is seen in its lack of capacity to coordinate such things as ministers' salaries, theological education scholarships or even to oversee the various departments in the synods. See: Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, "Minutes of Sixteenth General Synod," Held at Ekwendeni from 5th to 10th August, 1987, Moderator's Report," pp. 43-47.

² See: The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, "Minutes of First Meeting of Synod", 17 to 22 September 1924 and Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Minutes of Second Meeting of Synod

that for a very long time (1956-2002) the unity of the CCAP was known by the name General Synod.³ It is, therefore, important to know why the name changed from that of General Synod to General Assembly. The explanation for this change is that the name General Synod was a misnomer as it did not actually capture the composite nature of the unity of the CCAP. It was argued that since the CCAP was made of several synods, the greater gathering of all the synods needed to have a better name than the singular General Synod. It was consequently decided that the term General Assembly was the most appropriate name with regard to embracing the diversity and totality of the synods. Besides, it was realised that actually the churches that had brought the Presbyterian system to Central Africa, especially the Scottish churches, had the General Assembly for their umbrella bodies rather than general synods. This therefore explains the reason for the change of name from General Synod to General Assembly in 2002.

7.2.2 Changes in some of the Names of the General Assembly's Leadership Positions

Further to the change in the name of the church's union, the new nomenclature also came with changes in the names and functions of some positions in the organisation. Whereas the position and powers of the Moderator of the General Assembly have not changed since the General Synod days as will be seen below, the names of the other positions have changed completely. In the General Synod the leadership comprised the Moderator, the Vice-Moderator, the Senior Clerk, the Junior Clerk and the Deputy Clerk. The position of Senior Clerk in the General Synod has been changed to that of Secretary General in the General Assembly. The position of Junior Clerk in the General Synod has changed to Deputy Secretary General in the General Assembly while the position of Deputy Clerk from the General Synod has also changed to that of Deputy Secretary General in the General Assembly. This means that while in the General Synod there were three executive officers ranked in three different positions hierarchically, in the General Assembly there are still three executive officers but with only two ranks. The position of Secretary General of the General Assembly has two deputies of the same rank while in the days of the General Synod the Senior Clerk was the top most executive, seconded by the Junior

13-15 October 1926, Blantyre: Blantyre Mission Press, minute no. 5 "Entrance of Nkhoma Presbytery into Synod", pp. 4-6.

³ See: *Constitution of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian 1956*, section 29.

Clerk, who was above the Deputy Clerk, the latter coming third in the ladder. The Junior Clerk was, by virtue of his position, also the treasurer of the General Synod.⁴

In the General Assembly the deputies of the Secretary General have specific areas for oversight despite their general role of deputizing the Secretary General. The first office of Deputy Secretary General is for development and it is responsible for education, administration, relief and development, health and communication and advocacy.⁵ The other office of the Deputy Secretary General is responsible for ministry work: mission and evangelism, interfaith relations, women, youth and church and society.⁶

Whereas in the former General Synod the treasurer was by default the Junior Clerk, in the General Assembly the office of treasurer is a stand-alone office and it is filled by a person with appropriate qualifications and experience in accounts, besides being a devoted Christian of the CCAP denomination from any synod.⁷ According to the current constitution this position is supposed to be filled on a permanent basis.⁸ With regard to General Assembly meetings, the treasurer is not considered a commissioner and may not be allowed to vote but he attends the meetings for the purpose of presenting reports.⁹

It was also necessary to change the names of the executive officers of the General Assembly because it was felt that, as they were in the General Synod, they were not appropriate for the chief executive officers of the General Assembly. In the hierarchy of the CCAP, generally the lowest executive officer is the Session Clerk, who with his/her deputy or deputies is responsible for the administration of the congregation under the spiritual supervision of the congregational moderator.¹⁰ When we come to the presbytery level, which is normally the second level in the

⁴ See: *Constitution of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian 1956*, section 29 (4).

⁵ See: *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002*, section 8.5.4 (a).

⁶ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002*, section 8.5.4 (b).

⁷ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002*, section 8.5.5.

⁸ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002*, section 8.5.5.

⁹ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002*, section 8.5.5.

¹⁰ In the Synod of Livingstonia they also have a Vestry Chairman who is responsible for the administration of a “vestry”, meaning a governing body of a prayer house, which is a branch or outstation of a congregation. It is these vestries that form a congregation which is led by a session.

Presbyterian ladder comprising a grouping of several sessions/congregations, the executive officer is known as the Presbytery Clerk while at the synod level he is known as General Secretary. It, therefore, did not sound proper to have the executive officer of the General Assembly called Senior Clerk, a term similar to the executives of sessions and presbyteries, when under him there were General Secretaries of the Synods, hence the change in the name of the office.¹¹

7.2.3 The Office of the General Assembly Moderator

While the nomenclature and powers of this office did not change during the transition from the General Synod to the General Assembly, there is some dissatisfaction currently with the name in view of the contemporary understanding of the Presbyterian offices in the General Assembly. Since the name moderator is used from the session level to the synod level, there is a feeling that the moderator of the General Assembly should have a more appropriate title befitting his seniority among colleagues instead of merely calling him moderator. Since he happens to be the moderator of moderators in the hierarchy of the Church, some are of the view that the term “Moderator-General” would be more appropriate for the moderator of the General Assembly in order to distinguish him from the other moderators who are lower than him in rank by virtue of the stage at which they preside in the hierarchy of the CCAP.¹²

It is my observation that the office of moderator of the General Assembly is not a conspicuous office compared to the moderators of the synods. In most cases people recognise the presence of the synod moderators but not the presence of the General Assembly moderator. The General Assembly moderator becomes conspicuous only when the General Assembly is meeting or when the General Assembly has either authored a pastoral letter that appears to be critical of the government of the day or has made a comment that is considered sensational in the media. This is so because it takes four years for a General Assembly to meet and whenever there are other impromptu meetings the General Assembly moderator works behind the scenes. It is for this reason that many Christians do not know their General Assembly moderator. Even the other officers of the General Assembly are equally unknown to ordinary members of the CCAP who are only interested in their congregations, presbyteries and synods.

¹¹ Interview Rt Reverend Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu, General Assembly Moderator, 20.11.14.

¹² Interview Rt Reverend Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu, General Assembly Moderator, 20.11.14.

The moderator is elected by secret ballot from among the ministerial commissioners to the General Assembly meeting and he and his deputy hold office for a period of four years, after which they are not eligible for re-election.¹³ This position rotates among the synods and the constitution stipulates that the General Assembly or the Standing Committee shall by resolution determine the order of the rotation as it deems fit.¹⁴ So far the practice is that the positions of General Assembly Moderator and Secretary General come only from the three Malawian synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma, though the deputies may come from the Synods of Zambia and Harare. The reason for this is to ensure that the top most leadership of the General Assembly comes from Malawi because of the prominence of the CCAP church in the country compared to the presence of the other CCAP Synods of Harare and Zambia in their respective countries.¹⁵ This has the advantage of making the CCAP leadership always ready to engage with the political powers within Malawi, than it would have been the case if the top most leadership of the church was not always Malawian.

7.2.4 The Meetings of the General Assembly

The General Assembly meets every four years and it is convened by the Moderator or in his absence by the Vice Moderator. Apart from the regular meetings taking place once in every four years, the General Assembly may be convened by the Moderator or his Vice in his absence in extraordinary session any time when matters arise requiring urgent attention and resolution.¹⁶ In the absence of the Moderator or Vice Moderator the General Assembly meetings may be chaired by a locum chairman of the meeting.¹⁷

The General Assembly demands in its constitution that all its decisions and resolutions be implemented by each synod without further ratification by the Synod. It further warns that

¹³ The pronoun for the moderator is masculine because some synods are yet to start ordaining women ministers. This means that for the sake of those synods that do not recognize women pastors the moderator of the General Assembly at present can only be a man though in the synods that ordain women it is possible to have a lady pastor as synod moderator.

¹⁴ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, section 8.4.3.

¹⁵ Despite the autonomy of the Synods in the CCAP there is a silent recognition of the fact that the Synods of Harare and Zambia are daughters of the Synods of Nkhoma and Livingstonia respectively.

¹⁶ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, section 8.7.2, paragraph 2.

¹⁷ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, section 8.7.3.

failure to implement such resolution shall be cause for disciplinary action against the failing synod. Realising that the synods may not always be willing to bind themselves to some decision and resolution of the General Assembly, the constitution provides the following provision:

The General Assembly, however, may in some cases when passing a resolution or decision require and specify that ratification of the resolution or decision by at least a maximum of 3/5 of all Synods is necessary before the concerned resolution becomes binding on all Synods. The ratification or rejection by the Synod must be communicated to the General Assembly within six months of the resolution. Failure to notify within this period shall be taken as ratification.¹⁸

In between the meetings of the General Assembly the executive work of the General Assembly is run by the General Assembly Standing Committee. This committee is composed of the General Assembly Moderator, Vice Moderator, Secretary General, the two Deputy Secretary Generals, the moderators and general secretaries of each synod and two church elders nominated by each synod. All these serve for a period of four years. The treasurer of the General Assembly also attends the standing committee meetings in an ex-officio capacity without voting powers.¹⁹

7.2.5 Commissioners of the General Assembly

The people who represent their synods at the General Assembly are referred to as commissioners. In keeping with the Presbyterian tradition, which emphasises the rule of the church by elders, the General Assembly delegates consist of equal numbers of ministers and elders from each synod. In the current constitution different synods have a different number of delegates that they can send to the General Assembly meeting. The three Malawian Synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma are required to send forty commissioners each (20 elders and 20 ministers) while the synods of Zambia and Harare are required to send ten commissioners each.²⁰ Section 8.3.2 of the Constitution of the CCAP General Assembly stipulates that the number of the commissioners as explained in section 8.3.1 may be changed from time to time by resolution of the General Assembly or its standing Committee. In the interview I had with the current moderator of the General Assembly, Rt Rev Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu,

¹⁸ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, section 8.7.5. Paragraph no. 2.*

¹⁹ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, section 9.4 (closing paragraph).*

²⁰ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, section 8.3.1.*

he mentioned that the Synods of Zambia and Harare are now sending 20 delegates as commissioners to the General Assembly meeting.²¹ It can therefore be assumed that the provision of section 8.3.2 of the constitution has been in use since the constitution was adopted in 2002. According to the current General Assembly Moderator, the decision to have different numbers of delegates for different synods was reached depending on the sizes of the synods. It is a well-known fact that the Malawian synods of the CCAP are far much bigger than their sisters in Zambia and Harare.

The constitution also recognizes the General Assembly Moderator, Vice Moderator, the Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General as commissioners from their particular synods for purposes of determining the total number of commissioners from each synod. Special church ministries such as the Women's Guild, Men's Guild and the Youth also have a representative each. However, their representative is supposed to be a church elder by rank.²²

7.2.6 Attempts at Empowering the General Assembly

The General Assembly cannot be seen to have any powers if it is not engaging with the synods and the lower courts of the church down to the congregational level as an umbrella body of the CCAP. Its task would be better realised if it were possible for it to be coordinating all the functions of the synods. It has to be pointed out though that so far this has not been possible, partly due to inadequate funding on the part of the General Assembly as an umbrella body over the individual synods. There are constitutional provisions for the General Assembly to establish desks which would synchronise the various works of the federative denomination. So far none of these desks have been established. The functions for which the General Assembly would have established specialised desks include the following: Mission, Evangelism and Interfaith, Youth Work, Women's Work, Health, Church and Society Work, Relief and Development Work, Education, Communication and Advocacy and Men's Desk.²³

It is expected that if these desks can be established, the synods are supposed to support them with human, material and financial resources in such a form and to the extent as the General Assembly Standing Committee may determine from time to time.²⁴ The constitutional proposal

²¹ Interview Rt Reverend Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu, General Assembly Moderator, 20th November, 2014.

²² See: *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, sections 8.3.1 and 8.3.3.

²³ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, section 8.13.

²⁴ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, section 8.13.

is that these desks should be manned by ministers or lay people who are seconded by their synods or directly engaged by the General Assembly. With regard to their physical offices, they may either be at the General Assembly's secretariat or at the offices of the sending or sponsoring synod. It is expected that these desks should be holding church conferences with delegates from the synods and at the end of the day presenting their resolutions to the General Assembly or the General Assembly Standing Committee for consideration and action in its subsequent meetings.²⁵

All this shows that on paper there are grand plans for empowering the General Assembly and that the aspirations of its members are thereby known. However, when it comes to implementation things seem not to work according to the members' expectations. With regard to the individual synods making contributions of money and personnel to various desks of the General Assembly, it is a well-known fact that that would be stretching the synods too much since some of the well-established departments in the synods themselves are greatly challenged by lack of personnel and inadequate funding. It would therefore not be easy for them to be making substantial contributions to the General Assembly when they cannot meet their own needs.

During the General Synod era the mandate of the General Synod in speaking on behalf of the whole federative denomination was confined to four areas as enumerated below:²⁶

1. To warn the congregations of evils tending to invade the church
2. Marriage regulations
3. Relations with other churches
4. Legislation which conflicts with the word of God

On the above matters, according to the phraseology of the 1956 Constitution, which governed the administration of the General Synod up to 2002, it was stated that "the synods shall ... have power to delegate authority to the General Synod to speak in the name of the whole church on such matters."²⁷ By contrast, in introducing the issues alluded to above, the 2002 General Assembly constitution, which currently governs the General Assembly, states, "The General Assembly shall have power to speak in the name of the whole Church on the following and

²⁵ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, section 8.13.*

²⁶ *Constitution of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian 1956, section 30 (4).*

²⁷ *Constitution of the Church of Central Africa, Presbyterian 1956, section 30 (4).*

other matters.”²⁸ As a matter of fact, the General Assembly gives itself power over and against the synods so that the synods do not delegate power to the General Assembly as was the case with the General Synod. Besides, by adding the phrase “and other matters”, the General Assembly is leaving the door open to whatever other matters it may want to speak out on behalf of the synods in trying to enhance CCAP unity in ecclesiastical pronouncements. Moreover, the list in the constitution of the General Assembly adds a fifth item in the words “serious matter of national interest or concern.”²⁹ This last clause is the justification for the General Assembly’s involvement in socio-political critique, especially when it comes to issuing press statements on some pressing issue in society or writing pastoral letters that comment on socio-political matters in the country in the church’s bid to fulfil its prophetic role.

It is the intention of the General Assembly to see greater unity and uniformity among the synods of the CCAP. Its constitution therefore mandates the General Assembly to endeavour to achieve uniformity and harmony in such matters as the training of ministers; catechetical instruction; prevention of evils which corrupt the people such as alcohol drinking, gambling, drug abuse, heathen initiations and other such things; education; medical work; ordering of public worship; dispensing of the sacraments; funeral rites; criteria for selecting church elders and deacons, women’s guild and recognition of church officers.³⁰

Besides the above areas, the General Assembly also intended in its 2002 constitution that the liturgies and rules of the synods be harmonised. In this regard, there was need to make uniform across the synods such things as the order of service and the various liturgical instruments. This was supposed to be done very quickly after the adoption of the 2002 constitution and synods were asked to send their documents to the General Assembly for scrutiny and evaluation by the liturgy committee which had been formed to steer the process.³¹ Practically this would ensure

²⁸ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, Constitutional Schedule, section 4.5.*

²⁹ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, Constitutional Schedule, section 4.5.5.*

³⁰ *See: The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, Constitutional Schedule, section 4.5 ff.*

³¹ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, Constitutional Schedule, section 4.3.*

that when members transfer from one Synod to another they would be subject to similar rules and regulations to the ones they are familiar with.³²

What all this means is that the change from the General Synod to General Assembly wanted to completely transform the CCAP by re-aligning all the synods in a uniform manner in order for the oneness of the Church to be enhanced. However, what is obtaining on the ground over a decade from the time these decisions were made and incorporated into the constitution is business as usual in the synods; all the synods are still doing their thing as they have always been doing it. No strides seem to have been made towards a practically more united CCAP under the General Assembly as it was intended from the 2002 constitutional change.

In concluding this section I argue that though the General Assembly would like to strengthen itself and promote the unity of the CCAP under its umbrella, the reality on the ground is pulling against this direction. In trying to understand why this is so the study has discovered that the root of all this failure for the General Assembly to take off with oomph is the autonomy of the synods. This means that in so far as the synods shall maintain their autonomy, it will be difficult for them to voluntarily place themselves under the authority of the General Assembly. Consequently, it becomes very clear that the direction the CCAP General Assembly wants to go cannot just be determined by constitutional provisions. Something needs to be done beyond or alongside constitutional provisions if true unity and uniformity is to be achieved. As it were, the constitution stipulates that the highest court of the church is the General Assembly and that it has authority to formulate policy for the Church and to oversee and direct the synods and lower courts.³³ However, without real power in its possession, the General Assembly shall remain a toothless ‘dog’ and an auxiliary organisation among the autonomous and relatively well organised synods.

7.3 The Efficiency of the General Assembly versus the Autonomy of the Synods

While the synods want the General Assembly to be efficient, it may be that they do not realise that while they are maintaining their autonomy, it may not work that the CCAP can have a vibrant General Assembly. There are reminiscences among some senior ministers in the CCAP

³² *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, Constitutional Schedule, section 4.3.*

³³ *See: The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly, 2002, Constitutional Schedule, section 6.6.*

to the effect that the General Assembly Secretariat was efficient and vibrant in the past during the tenures of Rev W.P. Chibambo and those that followed him. These ministers, therefore, hanker for this golden age gone by when the General Assembly (still known as the General Synod then) was vibrant and efficient and the Secretariat was a true representation of CCAP unity. What these ministers forget, though, is that the General Synod did not bother much with the way the synods were being administered and there was little effort to try and unite the synods by proposing some kind of radical uniformity as is the case in the 2002 General Assembly Constitution. One elderly minister of the Synod of Livingstonia confessed that during the General Synod era not many differences among the synods were known and people did not care much whether there were differences or not.³⁴ He, however, notes that with the changes that were proposed in the then new General Assembly constitution and the desire to initiate some uniformity, the synods realised that there were pronounced differences among them and they could not just easily sacrifice their long cherished traditions and distinctives for the sake of a uniform CCAP under the General Assembly.³⁵ This means that until the change to the General Assembly demanded true unity and uniformity of the federative denomination, the synods did not realise how much they were going to lose as synods while gaining as a General Assembly. No wonder there has been resistance (though subtle, but effective) on the part of the synods as can be seen by their reluctance to change towards a more unified and uniform CCAP identity and character. For example, to make the liturgy uniform would be a very easy matter for the synods but that has not materialised though it has been a song over the decades that the liturgies be synchronised.³⁶

7.3.1 Lack of Adequate Funding for the General Assembly

In accordance with constitutional provisions the General Assembly is supposed to have its own budget in order for it to be able to support its operations within its jurisdiction for mission work abroad.³⁷ This budget is supposed to be approved by the General Assembly Standing Committee. It is interesting to note that synods are expected to make contributions towards the

³⁴ Int. Reverend K.R.M. Nyirenda, retired Synod of Livingstonia minister, Mzuzu, 12.12.14.

³⁵ Int. Reverend K.R.M. Nyirenda, retired Synod of Livingstonia minister, Mzuzu, 12.12.14.

³⁶ The call for the synchronization of the liturgy can be seen even in the minutes of the General Synods meetings of the 1970s up to the 1990s. For example see: *The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Minutes of the General Synod Held at Chongoni from 9th to 13th November 1994* (Moderator's Keynote Address, F. 2 (f), p. 18).

³⁷ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, section 8.8.

General Assembly budget annually. Constitutionally, these budgetary contributions by the synods are supposed to be made in two instalments in a year, that is, in the months of January and July.³⁸ This means that the sustainability of the General Assembly largely depends on the ability and willingness of the synods to make contributions to its budget.

Apart from the contributions from the member synods, the General Assembly also receives donations from well-wishers within the country and from foreign donors. With regard to money coming from foreign donors, the General Assembly benefits subject to good working relations among the synods. For example the Reformed Mission League of the Netherlands has always been funding the General Assembly but due to inter-synodical wrangles, especially the dispute between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma, which rendered the General Assembly inactive for some time, the funding stopped until the CCAP General Assembly was ready to put its house in order.³⁹

A good amount of foreign funding also goes to Zomba Theological College, which is one visible sign of CCAP General Assembly unity, especially in the area of theological education as a number of ministers from all the five synods of the CCAP train there. In recent years some synods are establishing their own synodical theological colleges but they are still sending some of their theological students to the ecumenical Zomba Theological College. This means that funding from donor partners has to go to three different places, namely, synods, Zomba Theological College and the General Assembly. With regard to synods, each synod sends its own request to partners in order to fund their budgets and the same partners may receive budgetary support requests from various synods. At the end of the day there is not much set aside for the General Assembly. Consequently, the General Assembly suffers from lack of adequate funding.

7.3.2 Lack of Adequate Infrastructure

While all the synods have relatively well-looked after places for their headquarters, the story is different for the General Assembly. The General Assembly headquarters or Secretariat lacks well-furnished offices where the different departments or desks proposed for it could be working. While in the past a full time Secretary General was manning the office, now the place

³⁸ *The Constitution of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian General Assembly*, 2002, section 8.9.

³⁹ Int. Rt. Reverend T.P.K. Nyasulu, General Assembly Moderator and Synod of Livingstonia Education Secretary, Mzuzu, 20.11.14.

is nearly abandoned except for the presence of security personnel guarding what is left after several raids by burglars. The previous caretaker of the office, Mr Kafumbi Njewa, retired from work and as late as November 2014, almost a year after the election of new office bearers, the Secretary General had not yet gone to stay in Lilongwe in order to command a powerful presence of the General Assembly there. There were initiatives though to have the Secretary General settle in Lilongwe by December 2014.⁴⁰

When the new leadership of the General Assembly visited the General Assembly offices in 2014 after their election in December 2013 at the Lundazi General Assembly meeting, they reportedly cried because of the pathetic situation of the place they witnessed.⁴¹ They saw the place in a state of abandon due to the fact that the offices were built some decades ago coupled with the fact that due to the wrangles leading to the 2013 General Assembly meeting the General Assembly Secretariat was not fully functional. This clearly shows that with regard to the sense of ownership, the synods do not seriously regard the General Assembly offices as their own. The relative seriousness with which the synods look after their own mission stations or headquarters does not translate to the General Assembly Secretariat, hence the neglect of the General Assembly premises.

The neglect of the General Assembly offices in Area 18 in Lilongwe is one of the signs of lack of unity and cooperation in the CCAP. The place and its infrastructure hardly qualify as the headquarters of the General Assembly of the CCAP. In his humour, the former General Secretary of Nkhoma Synod, Rev Dr Winston Kawale mused that the state of the General Assembly premises reflects the current picture of the CCAP.⁴² At a closer look though, the premises seem to be worse than the Church itself but one can be excused for making the comparison. Lapani Nkhonjera, a fellow researcher whose work has already been mentioned in this study testifies thus in his work concerning the General Assembly premises:

When I visited the place for the first time during my research work, I did not believe having reached at such a high office by looking at its structures which look worse than some

⁴⁰ Int. Rt. Reverend T.P.K. Nyasulu, General Assembly Moderator and Synod of Livingstonia Education Secretary, Mzuzu, 20.11.14.

⁴¹ Int. Rt. Reverend T.P.K. Nyasulu, General Assembly Moderator and Synod of Livingstonia Education Secretary, Mzuzu, 20.11.14.

⁴² Rev Dr Winston Kawale, Lilongwe, 14.5.14.

congregational offices of the CCAP. But no wonder this is a sign of how ineffective the office has been (sic).⁴³

The CCAP General Assembly premises tell the story of a body that is not taken seriously by its own members as they are busy running their own business which looks more real and takes much of their time. The leadership of the CCAP, if truth be told, is mostly concerned with the synods and not with the General Assembly; the General Assembly suffers from lack of serious ownership. Consequently, the General Assembly office has not seen any development since the structure that is there was built. Worse still the place has all the marks of deterioration.⁴⁴ The structure is at an open plot with no fence and no security features whatsoever. No wonder the windows and other fittings have succumbed to plundering over the years. When you visit the place sometimes you do not even find anybody there, though apparently there is supposed to be a caretaker. The situation at the General Assembly offices shows that it will take a very long time before the General Assembly can become an active player with a secretariat that is visible and working with good infrastructure and departments or centres that are vibrant. Meanwhile it is business as usual in the CCAP Synods except for the occasional bad publicity due to in-house wrangles.

7.3.3 Lack of Adequate Personnel

Apart from the ministers who are elected into several positions of the General Assembly, there are no people so far to serve in the various proposed desks as provided for in the constitution. This is a direct consequence of lack of adequate funding, because where an organisation is not well funded, it cannot employ the relevant personnel it requires. It has therefore remained the dream of the General Assembly, at least as provided for in its constitution, that several desks and projects be implemented with many people coming in from their respective synods and other places to work for the General Assembly, but with no realisation of this dream so far.

7.3.4 Inability to Implement Decisions

Another problem with the General Assembly is its inability to implement decisions that are made during the General Assembly meetings. For decisions that are likely to bring change to be implemented, there is need for strong leadership; leadership that is not concerned with the

⁴³ Lapani Nkhonjera, “The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian: Formation and Impact on its Unity and Disunity”, BD, Zomba Theological College, 2008, p. 47.

⁴⁴ See: Appendix Three for some pictures of the CCAP General Assembly office.

plight of the individual synod but with the welfare of the Church as a whole. One former General Secretary of one of the synods laments concerning the passivity of the General Assembly secretariat. According to him this is due to leadership incompetency and lack of management skills among pastors, some of whom are tasked with the mandate of leading the General Assembly. He laments that no one is strong enough to initiate the change, and so decisions gather dust without being implemented.⁴⁵

I find it difficult for the General Assembly leadership to initiate much change since they all come from their respective synods and they are expected to go back to them once their General Assembly responsibilities are over. It is therefore natural that they would very much be concerned with their synods, seeing that that is where their future lies unlike the General Assembly, which they are likely to leave soon once their tenures expire. Besides, because of the inactivity of the General Assembly Secretariat, the elected leaders have been operating from their synods where they also hold responsibilities in either administration work or as pastors running congregations.⁴⁶ In such a scenario, the position in the General Assembly leadership is looked upon as an extra responsibility on top of their most important synod work.⁴⁷ Consequently, it is difficult for such people to commit themselves fully to the work of the General Assembly, which in any case has its offices far away from them unless they are operating in Lilongwe.

7.3.5 Lack of Knowledge Concerning the General Assembly among Ordinary CCAP Members

The ordinary CCAP member is very much aware of his local congregation and the role of the moderator (who is always a minister) and the session clerk in the session which is the administrative body at congregational level. From the session many Christians are aware of the presbyteries, though here the common Christian is not very knowledgeable. When it comes to knowledge of their synods, many know about them a great deal. This means that the ordinary members know more about their congregation and the synod but a little of their presbytery. However, when it comes to the General Assembly, there is just too much ignorance among the

⁴⁵ Oral information, former General Secretary of one of the Synods in Malawi.

⁴⁶ Reverend Colin M'bawa, General Secretary, CCAP General Assembly, phone conversation, 11.11.14.

⁴⁷ For example the Current General Assembly Moderator is the Education Secretary for the Synod of Livingstonia's Education Department, an equally demanding office. The General Secretary was still pastoring a congregation in Blantyre Synod almost a year after he was elected I when contacted him.

CCAP Christians. Many do not even know that such a thing as the General Assembly exists.⁴⁸ With regard to sister synods, they do know about them and they know that they are all CCAP but that there is a body known as the General Assembly above the synods many are not aware. Why is it so when the General Assembly has always been there since time immemorial? Besides, the unity of the CCAP as one denomination only makes sense in view of the General Assembly's existence. Explanations for this state of affairs vary but they are basically condensed into three reasons as explained below.

7.3.5.1 Non-recognition of Something above the Synods

The synods have developed in such a way that they do not recognise something above them. The way the Presbyterian system operates in the CCAP, it is generally assumed that the buck stops at the synod level. It is, therefore, practically not easy to pass on authority to a higher body which is not fully recognised as having superiority over bodies that may be understood to be lower in rank. I argue that this failure to recognise the superiority of the General Assembly is the result of the General Assembly's inability to monitor what goes on in the synods. In any case its funding and personnel abilities are such that it cannot make its presence felt in the congregations, hence lack of its knowledge among the grassroots Christians.

7.3.5.2 Pronounced Sense of Synodical Uniqueness

While the leaders of the synods know that they are supposed to be united in one denomination despite belonging to different synods, there is always a tendency to emphasise what is unique about a particular synod. Usually these emphases go back to the culture of the founding missions with some feeling of pride that this synod, unlike its sister synods, was founded by such and such a Church. For the Synod of Livingstonia, the emphasis is on the fact that its ethos is that of the Free Church of Scotland despite the developments that have taken place over the course of history. In the same way Blantyre Synod prides itself in being a 'child' of the Established Church of Scotland and Nkhoma Synod too finds its unique identity in the South African Dutch Reformed Church roots worth clinging to. These distinctives, whether consciously or unconsciously, do eclipse the people's understanding that all the synods belong

⁴⁸ A random survey among ordinary Christians in the three synods conducted between 2012 and 2013 showed 90% of the respondents expressing ignorance of the General Assembly, let alone its leadership.

to the General Assembly because much energy and time is spent on emphasising on these distinctives to the neglect of what actually unites the synods into the CCAP today.

7.3.5.3 Lack of Civic Education on the Part of the Leaders and the Christians

As a corollary to the above reasons it has also been observed that there is lack of civic education on the part of the Christians and even some leaders. The Christians are not taught about the General Assembly and its role. It is therefore not surprising to see that they do not know about it. During services of worship in the CCAP churches there comes a time when one member in the congregation rises to say the intercessory prayer. In this prayer many things are mentioned and the synods are in most cases specifically mentioned. In Malawi it is mostly the three Malawian synods that are singled out for specific mention in prayer while at other times all the five synods are mentioned, depending on the knowledge of the person praying. In either case the General Assembly is never mentioned. The surprising thing is that this happens not only when the person offering the intercessory prayer is an ordinary Christian but even when it is an elder, be it lay or ordained. In all the times I have been attending the CCAP Sunday worship in all the three synods in Malawi over the years, I witnessed a Church leader lamenting the lack of knowledge of the General Assembly among congregants only once. This happened in Zomba at Chinamwali CCAP congregation of Blantyre Synod where the Rt Rev Dr Felix Chingota mentioned it to the congregation that there should be a special mention of the General Assembly in the intercessory prayer, lamenting that it was regrettable that the General Assembly is never mentioned, unlike the synods, which are always mentioned and specifically prayed for during the service of worship's intercessory prayer. This instance shows that the leadership has not made it their practice to tell Christians that they belong to the General Assembly, hence the ignorance.

7.4 Inter-Synodical Wrangles and the Stability of the General Assembly

On top of all the other challenges that the General Assembly faces, one of the biggest challenges is that of inter-synodical disputes, especially in relation to Synodical boundaries. As already alluded to, though there are many disagreements among the synods with regard to boundaries, the most pronounced dispute is the one between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma. In line with the adage which says "united we stand, divided we fall", the efficiency of the General Assembly is very much tied to the unity and good relations of the synods. Whenever the synods are not at accord, the General Assembly suffers heavy setbacks. It is because of this realisation

that at each and every General Assembly meeting there are calls for greater unity and cooperation among the synods. While such calls are good for the sake of encouraging the members to seriously take care of their oneness in the General Assembly, the problem is that it becomes more like a song when there are no tangible results from the calls. From the beginning of the CCAP as a federative denomination tensions have been part of the life of the General Assembly. What is surprising, therefore, is not that there are disputes among the CCAP synods, but that there is any unity at all.

While disagreements have always threatened the existence of the General Assembly right from the beginning, the real threat to this unity was manifested in the years between 1996 and 2000 and 2007 and 2013. According to the view of the Livingstonia Synod, Nkhoma Synod rejected the General Assembly resolutions on the border issue in 1967 and 1996, which seemed not to have been in Nkhoma Synod's favour. In view of these prolonged disagreements and frustrations, the Synod of Livingstonia took a very negative step in the year 1996 by deciding to pull out of the CCAP General Assembly. This was a very heavy blow to the stability of the General Assembly. This initial pull out by the Synod of Livingstonia lasted up to the year 2000 when "after a series of mediations" they decided to re-join the General Assembly after being out of it for a period of four years.⁴⁹

The second heavy blow to the stability of the General Assembly happened from 2007, when owing to inter-synodical disputes the Synod of Livingstonia opted out of the 21st General Assembly deliberations because, according to them, they were not given a chance to provide a moderator as it was their turn to do so. The position of Nkhoma Synod was that the leadership that was there should continue leading the General Assembly until the border dispute issue was resolved. Apparently, Nkhoma Synod was more comfortable to have a member of the Blantyre Synod leading the General Assembly as moderator than someone from the Synod of Livingstonia, with whom they were not in good terms owing to the border dispute. The General Assembly Moderator at this time was the Rt Rev Dr Felix Chingota and he continued chairing the meeting after the synods of Blantyre and Nkhoma had adopted the agenda of not starting the meeting with the election of new office bearers as was the practice. Due to their disappointment at what they considered constitutionally and traditionally un-procedural, the

⁴⁹ Synod of Livingstonia, "Solution to the Border Dispute between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods", Press Release Issued at the 30th Synod Assembly Held at Bandawe Mission Station from 22nd to 27th September, 2006.

Livingstonia Synod's delegates decided to make themselves mere observers of the deliberations. It is interesting to note that at this time the Synod of Livingstonia delegates felt 'betrayed' by their Blantyre Synod colleagues whom they usually consider closer to them than those of Nkhoma Synod due to their Scottish connections. The then General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia did not hide his feelings when sharing the issue with their partner churches:

To the astonishment of the delegates from Livingstonia, the proposal from Nkhoma Synod was strongly supported and backed by Blantyre Synod...All the delegates from Blantyre and Nkhoma Synods voted against passing the office to Livingstonia. Only one delegate from Blantyre voted that it was time for the chair to be passed on to Livingstonia.⁵⁰

On the fourth and the last day of this meeting, the General Assembly requested the Synod of Livingstonia to rescind its decision and participate in the election of new office bearers but the Synod of Livingstonia delegates would have none of it. Since this was a stalemate as the mandate and authority of the new office bearers could be questionable, the General Assembly resolved to appoint former moderators, who are life members of the General Assembly, to act as a team of interim leadership until the time when new office bearers would be elected. The appointed former moderators were: The Very Rev Dr S.S. Nyirenda from the Synod of Livingstonia, the Very Rev K.J. Mgawi from Nkhoma Synod, Rev G.J. Maseko from Nkhoma Synod and the Rt Rev Dr Silas Ncozana from Blantyre Synod.⁵¹ The then serving Moderator, Rev Dr Felix Chingota was made part of the group and it is actually him who handed over the mantle of the General Assembly Moderator to Rev T.P.K. Nyasulu in 2013 when new office bearers were elected.⁵²

The stalemate was also due to the fact that the Synod of Zambia declared that they would not participate in the election exercise because the General Assembly had denied the Synod of Livingstonia their turn to chair the Assembly through the provision of a moderator. Consequently, the Synods of Blantyre and Nkhoma could not form a General Assembly quorum since the Harare Synod did not attend this particular General Assembly meeting. Interestingly, the Synod of Zambia happens to be a 'child' of the Synod of Livingstonia as it was Livingstonia missionaries who established this brand of Christianity in Zambia. One can therefore argue that

⁵⁰ Reverend Howard Matiya Nkhoma, General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia, email correspondence to all partner churches, Mzuzu, 29th January 2007.

⁵¹ Reverend Howard Matiya Nkhoma, General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia, email correspondence to all partner churches, Mzuzu, 29th January 2007.

⁵² Int. Rt Reverend Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu, 20.11.14.

it was the affinity between the two that made the Synod of Zambia to sympathise and side with their Livingstonia colleagues.

The sad thing about the existence and efficiency of the General Assembly is that it had to take six years before another General Assembly meeting could take place. During this six year period the General Assembly as it is known became quite passive. As a result, even the General Assembly secretariat offices in Lilongwe were neglected. No wonder the newly elected leaders cried when they visited the premises during their familiarisation tour.⁵³

The current top most General Assembly leadership has Rt Rev Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu from the Synod of Livingstonia as Moderator (“Moderator General”) and Rev Collin M’bawa from Blantyre Synod as Secretary General. These were elected at the General Assembly’s 22nd Meeting held at Lundazi in Zambia from 13th to 15th December 2013.⁵⁴ As would be expected, even during this meeting “differences of perspectives were acknowledged while the desire for unity was widely and repeatedly emphasised.”⁵⁵ This observation by Nancy Collins is in line with the current study’s general view that whenever the General Assembly meets, there are calls for unity, which is not surprising given the unstable position of the General Assembly over the decades.

Though not much can or should be promised, it is pleasing to note that despite the differences in the stands of the synods, the 22nd General Assembly meeting revived the desire for the unity of the Church and renewed the synods’ commitment to the unity of the CCAP in the General Assembly. Some leaders have testified that even the atmosphere of this meeting was pleasing and uplifting, so much so that delegates felt that they really belong to one denomination despite differences in their synods.⁵⁶ In a way, this meeting was also corrective of the past disagreements from the 2007 meeting when the Synod of Livingstonia missed its turn to chair the General Assembly by providing a moderator. Noteworthy is the fact that all the synods were present at this meeting and the support for the election of the new office bearers was

⁵³ Int. Rt Reverend Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu, 20.11.14.

⁵⁴ James Chimpweya, “Reverend Nyasulu is General Assembly Moderator”, *The Nation* newspaper, December 29, 2013. Also *The Nation* online, <http://mwnation.com/reverend-nyasulu-general-assembly-moderator/1of2.php>.

⁵⁵ Nancy Collins, “Malawi: A Report on the Recent CCAP General Assembly”, 18 December 2013, www.pcimissionoverseas.org/news/item/635/malawi-a-report-on-the-recent-ccap-general-assembly/.

⁵⁶ Oral information, Reverend Levi N. Nyondo, General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, 5.9.14.

overwhelming even from synods that would otherwise have been against candidates from their considered rivals. In this regard, Nkhoma Synod's support for the Synod of Livingstonia's candidate, Rev Dr T.P.K. Nyasulu, as moderator was more than edifying.⁵⁷

7.5 Partner Churches and the Stability of the General Assembly

A thorough discussion of the General Assembly vis-avis the synods and their foreign partners is treated in the next chapter. At this juncture the question is whether some of the foreign partners' policies do contribute to the unstable position of the General Assembly. In the words of some oral informants who happen to be leaders in the denomination, the foreign partners too, share the blame for the failure of the General Assembly to be a vibrant union. The blame goes back many years to the time of the moratorium when the missions were handing over the leadership of the church to the indigenous leaders. According Rev Dr K.J. Mgawi, the first indigenous General Secretary of Nkhoma Synod, the missionaries or mother churches of the missions contributed to the problems that the General Assembly is facing today.⁵⁸ Mgawi claims that the indigenous leaders inherited a church that was not fully united because the expatriate leaders had not dealt with the issue of total union of the synods fully before handing them over to the local leaders. The local leaders were therefore not able to initiate further unification, especially in view of the fact that the mother churches had committed themselves to keep on helping their former missions (now turned daughter churches) with money, personnel and other resources. This meant that even though the local churches were now independent, their independence was not total because they still had to rely on or expect assistance from the mother churches. In view of this, the synods do not fully face towards the unity of the CCAP but towards their various partners who still fund them and give them some direction even today. Some church leaders even claim that the foreign partners favour different synods so much so that not all of them can be trusted in ensuring that the General Assembly ticks to the extent of eclipsing the individual synods. It has to be confessed that this is a very tricky and complex issue and that it perhaps involves personalities more than the hidden agendas of the foreign partners in question. In any case the fact still remains that "he who pays the piper dictates the tune" and so the influence of the foreign partners cannot be ignored when we consider that theirs is the financial muscle.

⁵⁷ Int. Rt. Reverend T.P.K. Nyasulu, General Assembly Moderator and Synod of Livingstonia Education Secretary, Mzuzu, 15.11.14.

⁵⁸ Int. Reverend Kilion Mgawi, First General Secretary of Nkhoma Synod, Nkhoma, 21.2.14.

Some CCAP leaders are of the view that this economic power of the foreign partners can and should actually be used to force the synods into more unity and uniformity under the General Assembly. When he was the General Secretary of Nkhoma Synod, Rev Dr Winston Kawale, in one of his meetings with fellow Church leaders and delegates from partner churches actually made this suggestion to the Associate Secretary of the Church of Scotland World Mission, Sandy Sneddon. His suggestion was that just like the foreign governments which give aid to Malawi forced the single party regime in the early 1990s (and still do so to current governments) to allow for political change in the country by freezing aid and imposing certain sanctions, the partners of the synods should do the same to the synods by threatening aid freeze until the synods have sorted out their problems in the General Assembly or resolved their disputes. In response, apart from explaining to Rev Kawale that overseas partners would not do that for fear of hurting the common people who are the beneficiaries of aid and assistance from partner churches, Sandy Sneddon reiterated his position and that of his organisation by writing a letter from Scotland to Rev Kawale saying:

The dispute between Nkhoma and Livingstonia synods remain a major challenge for CCAP and the General Assembly and I hope and pray this issue will be resolved to the satisfaction of all parties. As I said when we met, this is an issue for the General Assembly and I do not believe overseas partners should use pressure or threats of sanctions against any synod.⁵⁹

It is clear that many leaders in the CCAP would love to see greater unity among the synods under the General Assembly. To achieve that goal some would even use desperate measures to force foreign partners to exert their influence on the synods, if it were possible. However, as has been seen, the onus is still on the local leaders to move forward without relying on the foreign partners who have their own ecclesiastical problems to solve in their respective countries.

7.6 Political Machinations and the Stability of the General Assembly

It is a fact that the bigger churches in Malawi exert some political influence in the country which makes politicians try by all means to gain some sympathy or even support from these churches, especially their leaders. In situations where the government is not doing the right thing, the bigger churches sometimes write pastoral letters which end up damaging the reputation of the party in government or even in the opposition if it becomes very clear that the problems rocking the country are coming from the opposition parties. Politicians, therefore,

⁵⁹ Letter correspondence: Sandy Sneddon, Associate Secretary, Church of Scotland World Mission Council, to Reverend Dr Winston Kawale, General Secretary, Nkhoma Synod, 14th August 2007.

realise the importance of endearing themselves to prominent church leaders, in the hope of lessening the critical stance of the churches on their governance performance. In view of this scenario I have observed that the synods are sometimes forced to work in antagonism with each other because of the political pressure bearing on the churches' leadership. Of course this comes as a temptation to some individuals in the leadership of the churches as sometimes they do not realise that they are being ensnared.⁶⁰ Consequently, the synods are divided when it comes to voicing out on pertinent issues in society. This explains why some synods have written pastoral letters on their own without involving their sister synods in the General Assembly in order to have a united CCAP voice. And the sister synods that have not issued the critical pastoral letter have opted not to make any official responses to such pastoral letters as a sign of maintaining political neutrality.

An incident illustrative of political influence in the Church happened in December 2010 in Blantyre Synod when the then Moderator of the Synod, Rev Reynold Mangisa and his Deputy General Secretary were removed from their positions for addressing a press conference in the name of Blantyre Synod when they were actually expressing their own views, apparently in a bid to defend the then ruling party (to which they had become quite close) from the criticism published in a Roman Catholic pastoral letter of October 2010.⁶¹ During this incident, the General Secretary of Blantyre Synod then, the Rev MacDonald Kadawati was barred from seeking re-election even though he was not dismissed as the others, apparently due to slightly different reasons.⁶² In the same vein there were allegations that the United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) supported and campaigned for certain

⁶⁰ Moses Mlenga mentions an interesting testimony with regard to the tenure of office of Rev Dr O.P. Mazunda of Livingstonia Synod who served between 1992 and 2000 that he left the office “a frustrated man because he was being accused of being too close to the President [Dr Bakili Muluzi] and the United Democratic Front (UDF).” See: Moses Mlenga, *History of Livingstonia Mission: 50 Years of Most-Missionary Leadership, 1958-2008*, Zomba: Kachere, 2012, p. 24. Of course the former General Secretary does not hide the fact that they were and are still friends with Dr Bakili Muluzi (Oral information, Ekwendeni, 2013). It was, therefore, not surprising to see Rev Dr O.P. Mazunda contesting as an aspiring councillor of one of the wards in Mzuzu City under the banner of the UDF party in the 2014 General Elections.

⁶¹ *The Nation* newspaper, 2 December, 2010.

⁶² *The Nation* newspaper, 2 December, 2010.

individuals who were running for Blantyre Synod's leadership positions in the elections of 2009 and 2011.⁶³

A similar incident happened in the Synod of Livingstonia in April 2013 when Reverend Clifford Baloyi, a former Moderator of the Synod, wrote a critical 'pastoral' letter against President Joyce Banda's regime, apparently in sympathy with the DPP which had been forced out of government a year earlier by the death of President Bingu wa Mutharika. In this letter Reverend Baloyi opined on issues such as homosexuality, the quota system of selecting students to public universities, section 65 of the Malawi Republican Constitution which bars members of parliament from crossing the floor and on issues to do with civil servants' salaries among other things. The Synod of Livingstonia, however, disowned this 'pastoral' letter saying that it had nothing to do with it.⁶⁴

Such incidences have the potential to instil a sense of mistrust among leaders of the General Assembly who may suspect that some of their colleagues are not only doing church business but also serving their political masters. And since it is common knowledge that the synods sometimes differ when it comes to political leanings, it becomes inevitable for the General Assembly leadership to view one another as belonging to different political camps.

During the presidency of Dr Bingu wa Mutharika some leaders in the synods even approached the late president in the company of some party gurus, asking him to intervene in the inter-synodical disputes by using his executive powers. In his wisdom, the late president is said to have declined to have anything to do with church disputes because in his view, church disagreements are very volatile and have the potential to throw the country into chaos.⁶⁵ This was the president's official position. However, besides the official position, the president is said to have bared his soul to some church leaders on the inter-synodical disputes, explaining the advantage of it at that time to his party and thereby taking sides.⁶⁶

It is obvious that politicians use divide and rule tactics to influence certain individuals in the churches. Once some of the church leaders have been co-opted by politicians they tend to do

⁶³ See: Lucy Liponda, "Muluzi Sponsored Clergy Lose Polls", *Malawi Digest*, Monday, August 24, 2009. See also Green Muheya, "Blantyre Synod Elects Female Moderator, New SG", www.nyasatimes.com, 22 August, 2011.

⁶⁴ *Nation Online*, "Livingstonia Synod Needs Discipline", www.mwnation.com, 17.4.13.

⁶⁵ Oral information, Reverend Levi N. Nyondo, General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, 5.9.14.

⁶⁶ Oral information from a minister who was present in the meeting. Name withheld.

things that are against the Church's mandate because temptations to please their political masters become great. This therefore means that political forces, though quite subtle, have a significant bearing on the failure of the synods to fully unite for the effectiveness and efficiency of the CCAP General Assembly.

7.7 Private Initiatives at Reconciling the Synods and Strengthening the General Assembly

Many Christians who would rather see the CCAP fully united under the General Assembly have voiced out on the synods' failure to sort out their differences. Already mentioned in this study are such groups as the Friends of Livingstonia in Zomba who in 2005 tried to persuade the Synod of Livingstonia to reconsider its stand on the border issue so that it does not go ahead with its plan of officially establishing churches in Nkhoma Synod's interior territory.⁶⁷ Alongside these ones were the concerned Christians in the Northern Region, especially Mzuzu and Ekwendeni, who also did not agree with their synod's position and tried to persuade it to change its stand for the sake of the unity of the General Assembly.⁶⁸

Close to the end of the year 2011 there was also another group comprising of twenty members from all the three Malawian synods which also wanted to initiate some inter-synodical dialogue for the sake of unity in the CCAP. One prominent member in this group was Professor Kings Phiri, who at one time chaired the Commission of Inquiry which looked into the border issue between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma under the auspices of the General Assembly. Other prominent members were Professor Kanyama Phiri, a renowned academician and the current Vice Chancellor of the Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources (LUANAR) and Rev Takuze Chitsulo of Blantyre Synod, among others.⁶⁹

This grouping decided to call itself Forum for CCAP Unity (FCU) and it launched its activities in Blantyre in November 2011. Interestingly, the leaders of all the three synods of the CCAP in Malawi expressed pessimism at the success of this grouping fearing that it will be a

⁶⁷ See: Letter of Friends of the Livingstonia Synod – Zomba to the General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, "Relationship between Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod", correspondence, 2nd May 2005.

⁶⁸ See: Letter of Concerned Members to the Moderator of the Synod of the Livingstonia, "Concern over the Opening of CCAP Synod of Livingstonia Churches inside Nkhoma Synod Jurisdiction", 26th April 2006.

⁶⁹ See: Golden Matonga, "Livingstonia Synod Snubs Dialogue Initiative", *The Guardian*, Wednesday 7th December –Thursday 8th December 2011, pp. 1-2.

tall order for all the concerned parties to reach a compromise on the issue under dispute.⁷⁰ According to the *Malawi News* of December 24-30, 2011, the General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, Rev Levi Nyondo, dismissed the legitimacy of this grouping, arguing that it did not follow Presbyterian channels and procedures when coming up with the initiative. When contacted by the said newspaper, Rev Takuze Chitsulo, the group's secretary, contended that the group remained focussed and could not be blamed of breaking protocol. He thus argued:

Our grouping is an independent entity. As such it would not be wise to align ourselves with structures of the same institutions that we are [mediating]. The most important thing is that we have alerted the leadership of all synods about our existence ... we aim to see that at the end of the day our synods are working in harmony.⁷¹

Rev Nyondo, however, acknowledged the importance of the group's intention, though in his capacity as General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia he could not appreciate the position of the group in the CCAP hierarchy.

As for the Rev Davidson Chifungo, who was the General Secretary for Nkhoma Synod then, he observed that the success of FCU depended on their being accepted by all synods and also on the strategies that they would use.⁷² For him it was important that some people could take such an initiative for the sake of having unity in the Church, which he claimed Nkhoma Synod fully supported.⁷³

Speaking on behalf of Blantyre Synod, Rev Alex Maulana, General Secretary, believed that the emergence of such a group was complementary to the prayer for practical unity, which according to him, Christ preached.⁷⁴ He, however, blamed fellow Church leaders for failing to humble themselves in order for a solution to be found, lamenting that the gospel of unity and reconciliation seem to be falling off the Church's spiritual agenda.⁷⁵ Predicting the challenges

⁷⁰ Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, pp. 1, 3 and 6.

⁷¹ Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, p. 3.

⁷² Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, p. 6.

⁷³ Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, p. 6.

⁷⁴ Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, p. 6.

⁷⁵ Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, p. 6.

ahead of the group's task, Rev Maulana reasoned that "from a human perspective, the task of uniting the synods may seem impossible because one looks at the level of disagreements which has been escalating."⁷⁶ He, however, hoped that with God's help the goal may be achieved, provided church leaders decide to listen and be obedient to God.⁷⁷

The above scenario shows that the failure of the General Assembly to experience practical unity is a thorn in the flesh in as far as the oneness of the CCAP denomination is concerned, hence the many attempts by individuals and groups to try and reconcile the synods. These attempts are happening in the context of the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma having already concluded that the solution to the border dispute is to ignore the borders so that the General Assembly becomes a unifying factor irrespective of Synodical boundaries, at least between Livingstonia and Nkhoma.

7.8 Current Trends in the General Assembly

Since December 2013, there seems to be some peace in the General Assembly, especially as there are no more squabbles or disputes among the synods worth reporting in the newspapers. The Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma continue to establish churches in each other's territory with less eye-brows raised now as the practice has been there for some time and it seems people are beginning to consider it as something normal. This is so especially in the wake of Nkhoma Synod saying that they too would not recognize the boundary with Livingstonia. This reciprocal position by Nkhoma Synod in a way gives the Synod of Livingstonia some feeling of peace and confidence to go ahead with their planting of churches in what used to be Nkhoma Synod's exclusive territory as their position now becomes less radical.

The other Synods of Blantyre, Zambia and Harare may not be very much supportive of the new trend of not recognising synodical borders but even for them peace in the General Assembly is something desirable. At present the fear of Blantyre Synod that Livingstonia and Nkhoma may want to invade Blantyre territory seems to be unfounded. Livingstonia Synod has made it very clear that she will not go into Blantyre Synod's territory. On the part of Nkhoma Synod, their message has not been very clear whether they would want to go to Blantyre as well or not. Despite sporadic differences that are experienced along the Blantyre Nkhoma boundary,

⁷⁶ Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, p. 6.

⁷⁷ Archibald Kasakura, "Synods Giving Up on Border Row: Leaders Admit Uniting Nkhoma and Livingstonia not a Stroll in the Park", *Malawi News*, December 24-30, 2011, p. 6.

the dispute has not reached a boiling point where one can liken it to the Livingstonia-Nkhoma wrangle. It is hoped that the relations will continue to improve for the better.

With regard to having a united voice when commenting on socio-political issues in the country, it is now showing that there are some positive developments. For example the General Assembly managed to issue a statement in the year 2014 expressing dismay at the failure of Government and the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) to open up the public broadcaster to all political parties as the country was drawing closer to the May 20 tripartite elections. In the same vein the General Assembly showed that the CCAP could sometimes unite, when on behalf of the synods, it further condemned the scandal of looting public coffers in various Government ministries otherwise known as Cashgate, which saw many donor partners withdrawing their aid from Malawi between 2013 and 2014. The General Assembly also condemned homosexuality in the same statement, arguing that the church's teaching is clear that a man marries a woman and vice versa.⁷⁸

It is therefore becoming clear that in the new understanding of the General Assembly, the synods are trying to co-exist and make the General Assembly work despite their differences. It is yet to be seen how far this positive development will go but with good leadership in the General Assembly it makes sense to say that the CCAP has spoken, than when the synods utter their own statements. One CCAP leader is of the view that without the borders being recognised the CCAP synods can continue to work harmoniously under the leadership of the General Assembly.⁷⁹ An example is given of Scotland where there are no geographical boundaries of ecclesiastical jurisdictions but the Church functions well under the General Assembly. The difference though is that in Scotland there are no synods; from the presbyteries they go straight to the General Assembly. This may explain why their General Assembly is not plagued with inter-synodical disputes.

7.9 Conclusion

This chapter has closely looked at the General Assembly, in the process showing that the changes that were initiated during the transition from the General Synod to the General Assembly were meant to foster a closer unity of the synods. Even the General Assembly

⁷⁸ See: Frank Namangale, "CCAP wants Govt to open up MBC", *The Nation*, March 29, 2014. See also *The Nation* online, www.nationmw.com, 19.3.14.

⁷⁹ Oral information, Reverend Levi N. Nyondo, General Secretary, Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, 5.9.14.

constitution was drafted in such a way that the unity of the five synods would be more practical. However, looking at the developments from the year 2002 when the General Assembly constitution was adopted to the year 2013 when the most recent General Assembly meeting took place, it can be seen that the road to closer unity has been and continues to be a bumpy one.

Of special significance in the issues that divide the CCAP synods, is the issue of the border dispute between the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod, which is indeed a thorn in the flesh that affects the whole body of the General Assembly. At the 22nd General Assembly meeting it became clear to the rest of the delegates from all the synods that the positions taken by the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma would not be reversed. This means that the penetration of the Synod of Livingstonia into Nkhoma territory is likely to be permanent and so too the penetration of Nkhoma Synod into Livingstonia Synod's territory. This is a fact not to be forgotten when considering the future of the CCAP General Assembly. The delegates to the 22nd General Assembly meeting, realising this fact, decided to elect a constitutional review committee. This committee would look into the issue of boundaries between the synods so that some provisions in the constitution can be amended in order to provide a legal framework for those synods that do not want to have borders between them to operate freely wherever they want to go. Now the question would be: if this is given a constitutional blessing, is the CCAP still one denomination or several denominations that cooperate under the name CCAP? It is my argument that the CCAP General Assembly is only a loose umbrella organisation of independent denominations albeit under the names of the synods.

I, therefore, conclude in this chapter that indeed the position of the General Assembly in the CCAP is an unstable one, and has been so over the years due to the autonomy of the synods but much more so in the recent years because of the disputes among the synods. Though the 2013 General Assembly has somehow healed the tension, the future of the General Assembly is likely not to be a vibrant one as long as the synods do not fully surrender their autonomy to a body that is supposed to be above them administratively. And this appears not to be the synods' option in the nearest future.



Fig. 3: *The first CCAP General Assembly leadership after the change from General Synod.*
From left to right: Rev Daniel Tembo (Deputy Secretary General 2), Rev Jeremiah Chiyenda (Secretary General), Rt Rev Dr Felix Chingota (Moderator), Rev Kingsley R.M. Nyirenda (Deputy Secretary General 1) and Rev Joseph C. Juma (Deputy Moderator)

Chapter Eight: Foreign Relations and Current Developments in the CCAP

8.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the relationships of the five CCAP synods and their General Assembly with regard to foreign partners. What are the dynamics of foreign relations in view of the current challenges the CCAP is facing? How are these relationships impacting on CCAP unity? These are some of the questions explored in this chapter so that the relationship of the five synods under the umbrella of the General Assembly can be appreciated when it comes to initiating and sustaining the various relationships that the synods have with foreign partners.

8.2 The Genesis of Foreign Relations

The CCAP as a product of 19th Century missionary activities has foreign relations that go back to the time of the establishment of the missions in Central Africa as initiated by the “mother churches” of the synods. This means that each Synod has some kind of traditional partner from whom they cannot be separated as their histories are intertwined. Such relationships put some synods of the CCAP in the shoes of “daughters” while the missionary sending churches are considered “mother churches.” These mother churches were responsible for the welfare of the mission churches throughout the time that the synods existed as missions.

During the time of the transition from missions to churches, with the responsibility of the missionaries passing on to the indigenous churches, it was the same “mother churches” that handed over the leadership to the first generation of indigenous leaders. Even though leadership was handed over to the indigenous leaders it did not mean the end of the presence of the “mother churches” in the life of the synods. These churches continue to help their “missions” in terms of money, personnel, and other resources hence the presence of relations with them up to now. It can therefore be argued that the relationship of the “mother churches” and that of their “daughters” in the former mission fields is similar to that of former colonial governments with their colonies after the latter had attained independence. The difference being that whereas in the political world foreign partners exert a lot of pressure on the local political leadership, among the churches there is a reasonable recognition of independence so much so that it is not always that partner churches demand conformity to certain conditions in order for the relationship to continue. Actually partner churches from the West are even reluctant to get involved in the politics of the synods though occasionally they try to assist in finding solutions

to the problems the synods face, especially in relation to humanitarian assistance and their unity in the General Assembly.¹

All the five synods of the CCAP have these partners and it is my observation that were it not for the assistance of these partners, there would be more problems in the synods, especially in issues to do with projects and other money-related activities.

8.3 The Development of Foreign Relations

It has to be noted that the CCAP synods' relations with different partners have not been static over the years. There have been many developments taking place in relation to foreign partners due to several reasons. One notable feature of this issue of foreign relations is the diversity of the partners. Apart from the traditional partners dubbed "mother churches", the synods have over the years explored possibilities of increasing their partners, especially from overseas countries. Another feature of these relationships is that apart from the more lofty partnerships at General Assembly and Synod levels, the different synods have also seen their presbyteries twinning with other presbyteries in countries such as USA, Ireland, Scotland, Australia and Canada. This trend has gone down even to the congregations so much so that now it is not surprising to learn that a certain remote congregation in one of the CCAP synods has a partnership agreement with a congregation in the USA or Scotland.

It must however be pointed out that in as far as church-related partnerships are concerned, the CCAP synods do not partner with churches that are outside the Reformed and Presbyterian family of denominations at the level of presbytery or congregation. Besides church-related partners, there are also partnerships with organisations that are neither church nor church-related, though it can be argued that they are still motivated by the Christian faith.

It is also clear that in all the partnerships that are there, it is the African churches that are benefiting in terms of material sharing because the Western churches are not in lack when it comes to material blessings and therefore they do not expect such blessings from their African partners. The benefits that Western partners gain from these relationships are therefore different from what they themselves give out.

¹ A case in point is the initiative taken by the Church of Scotland in bringing the synods together in 2005/2006 in order to resolve synodical differences that had surfaced due to the Livingstonia – Nkhoma boundary dispute. See: Felix Chingota, "Lost Opportunities", text of speech delivered at the Bi-annual Meeting of Synod of Livingstonia, 23-28th September 2006. See also Edward Chisambo, "Nkhoma, Livingstonia Spare Rev Lunan the Blushes", *Malawi News* March 28-3 April 2009.

8.4 The Synod of Livingstonia and its Foreign Partners

The Synod of Livingstonia has had a very interesting story with regard to foreign relations, especially the relationship between “mother” church and “daughter” church. Besides the Church of Scotland, which is its currently recognised parent Church, the Synod of Livingstonia has other partner churches such as the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, Presbyterian Church in Canada and others.

8.4.1 *The Church of Scotland*

It has to be remembered that the initiative to establish the Livingstonia Mission came from the Free Church of Scotland which was in existence between 1843 and 1900.² Besides, the man who eventually became the recognised father of the Livingstonia Mission, Dr Robert Laws, was originally not a Free Church of Scotland member but someone loaned from the United Presbyterian Church (UP).³ Since the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church joined together in 1900 to form the United Free Church of Scotland (UFC), Robert Laws found himself comfortably at home with the new development.⁴ This meant that whereas the Livingstonia Synod was originally considered a child of the Free Church of Scotland, it had now become a child of the United Free Church of Scotland consequent to the amalgamation of the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church. One can imagine that this was very good news for Dr Robert Laws who in a way was already a member of the two denominations before their unification by virtue of his being a Free Church missionary loaned by the United Presbyterian Church. In the words of Hamish McIntosh:

He himself [Robert Laws] had for a quarter of a century embodied in himself the principle of such a union, although he had always felt that loyalty to his own UP Church obliged him to remain a minister within it until such time as the union so many desired should come about.⁵

Further developments happened towards the year 1929 when the United Free Church of Scotland decided to re-join the Established Church of Scotland. When this re-joining happened, a small section that had distanced itself from the union of 1900 between the Free Church and

² Alexander Finlayson, *Unity and Diversity: The Founders of the Free Church of Scotland*, Fearn: Christian Focus, 2010.

³ See: Robert Laws, *Reminiscences of Livingstonia*, Edinburgh/London: Oliver and Boyd, 1934.

⁴ W.P. Livingstone, *Laws of Livingstonia: A Narrative of Missionary Adventure and Achievement*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, ³1923, p. 327.

⁵ Hamish McIntosh, *Robert Laws: Servant of Africa*, Cadberry: The Handsel Press, 1993, p. 144.

the United Presbyterian Church became the sole owner of the name Free Church of Scotland (also known as the “Wee Free”) but because of its minority status it had already lost some of the Free Church property and personnel though at first it was granted permission to own everything that had previously belonged to the main Free Church of Scotland. This settlement did not affect the Livingstonia Mission much because its revenues were raised independently.⁶

Since 1929 the Livingstonia Synod has been a “daughter” of the Church of Scotland through the union of the United Free Church and the Established Church of Scotland, considering that the union actually made the United Free Church of Scotland to be swallowed up by the Established Church of Scotland. This means that the Established Church of Scotland is the “primary” partner of the Synod of Livingstonia when it comes to foreign relations since the missionaries handed over the administrative responsibility of the church to the first Malawian General Secretary of the Synod, Rev Patrick Chaweya Mzembe, in 1956.⁷ It is interesting, however, to note that due to contemporary controversial issues in the Church and the world the relationship between the two is not rosy. For instance the Church of Scotland has in the recent years softened its stand on the issue of homosexuality to the extent of even accommodating clergy who are confessedly gay in their sexual orientation. The Synod of Livingstonia is very much against this view and to that end it is not endearing itself to the Church of Scotland as was previously the case though it has not completely severed the ties.⁸

Against this background the Synod of Livingstonia is attempting to re-establish ties with the remnant Free Church of Scotland with which they have similar roots though historical developments forced them apart for over a century. The Free Church of Scotland has continued with an evangelical theology that borders on conservatism and they have decided to openly oppose gay relationships in the church. This is where the two churches feel they are birds of the same feather over and against the Church of Scotland. Even in Scotland itself, some

⁶ See: John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000, p. 166, fn 65.

⁷ Rev Patrick Chaweya Mzembe served the Synod in the position of General Secretary from 1956 to 1978. For a thorough treatment of his leadership style and how he tried to avoid transferring the Synod headquarters from Khondowe to Mzuzu see: Moses Mlenga, *History of Livingstonia Mission: 50 Years of Post-Missionary Leadership, 1958-2008*, Zomba: Kachere, 2012, pp. 7-10.

⁸ Interview Rev Douglass Chipofya, Moderator of the Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, 26.4.15.

congregations and pastors from the Church of Scotland are crossing over to the Free Church because of the gay rights question, which has caused division within the Church of Scotland.⁹

Despite the differences with regard to the issue of homosexuality, the Church of Scotland still assists the Synod of Livingstonia in many ways in their partnership. The two partners run projects from which the partner with financial difficulties benefits. For example the Church of Scotland assists the Synod of Livingstonia through direct support to the David Gordon Memorial Hospital at Khondowe, Ekwendeni Theological College (now Ekwendeni Campus of the University of Livingstonia) and in the Livingstonia Synod AIDS Programme (LISAP).¹⁰

Apart from funding these areas there are also exchange visits between the two partners' workers in what is known as the Faithshare visits. The current General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, Rev Levi Nyondo, is himself one of the beneficiaries of the Faithshare programme as he went to serve as a minister for Pitlochry Parish in Scotland from 2000 to 2001.¹¹ Another notable minister who spent some time in Scotland owing to the Faithshare programme is Rev Mezuwa Banda.¹² This programme of the Church of Scotland does not only involve the clergy but also lay church workers.

Another area of cooperation in this partnership is in congregational twinning whereby congregations in Scotland befriend congregations in Malawi and exchange friendship visits between them. These visits have the significance of enlightening the peoples of the two churches in what takes place in the other's country, especially with regard to church life and the cultural context in general. I observe that the relationship between the Synod of Livingstonia and the Church of Scotland is a very strong one and that it is likely to continue because of the history behind it despite the challenges currently rocking it due to the issue of gay rights in the church and in society in general.

⁹ Interview Rev Levi N. Nyondo, General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, 5.8.14. See also <http://www.scotsman.com/news/scotland/top-stories/anglican-minister-to-take-free-church-congregation-1-2910003>, retrieved 20.4.15.

¹⁰ http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/mission_worldwide/our-partner-churches/africa/malawi, retrieved 5.4.15.

¹¹ Interview Rev Levi N. Nyondo, General Secretary of the Synod of Livingstonia, Mzuzu, 5.8.14.

¹² Moses Mlenga, *History of Livingstonia Mission: 50 Years of Post-Missionary Leadership (1958-2008)*, Zomba: Kachere, 2012, p. 29.

8.4.2 *The Presbyterian Church in Ireland*

The testimony of the leadership of the Synod of Livingstonia is that of all its partner churches, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI) is the most active. It is claimed that even when it comes to the number of contemporary missionary personnel there are more missionaries coming from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland than from other partner churches. Through its Board of Mission Overseas (BMO) the Presbyterian Church in Ireland sends missionary personnel to various organisations in Malawi and in other countries. In this section we only concentrate on the Church's activities in its partnership with the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia.

Table 1. Some of the PCI's BMO missionaries to Malawi serving specifically within the sphere of influence of the Synod of Livingstonia since 1995 up to the time of this research.¹³

<i>Missionary Personnel</i>	<i>Year Engaged</i>	<i>Activity/Place</i>
Diane Cusick ¹⁴	1995	Preschool teacher training, Mzuzu
Robin and Helen Quinn ¹⁵	2004	Lay Training Centre and University of Livingstonia Faculty of Theology at Ekwendeni Campus.
Una Brownlie	2007	Nursing, David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Khondowe
Lyn and John Dowds	2011	Doctor, David Gordon Memorial Hospital, Khondowe
Matt Williams	2011	Lecturer, University of Livingstonia Faculty of Theology at Ekwendeni Campus.
Adam McCormick	2012	IT Support Personnel, Synod
John Justin	2013	Teacher Support, Synod

The PCI's BMO categorises its missionary personnel in three categories. The first category known as the Integrate Programme has missionaries that serve in the mission field for a period of two or more years. The second category is known as the Involve Programme. In this category missionaries serve for a period of up to two years. The third category is known as the Ignite Programme and in it members render services of up to one year. The table above has PCI missionaries representing all the three categories though practically there seems to be no real difference as some missionaries remain in the mission field beyond the designated period of their programme. In this regard, I noted that Matt Williams was in the country for longer than his Programme allowed since he was still serving after being in Malawi for over two years.

¹³ Source: Presbyterian Church of Ireland, *2013 General Assembly Annual Reports*, pp. 141-143.

¹⁴ Now ministering as a missionary in Zambia.

¹⁵ The couple has since left Malawi and is back home in Ireland.

When I asked him about it he explained that there is some flexibility to the rules concerning the different programmes.¹⁶

Within the BMO there is a committee known as the Leadership Development Committee (LDC) which helps to train and equip leaders in PCI's partner churches. This committee also works to promote individual partnerships through a rotating emphasis on each region of the world and engagement by congregations in leadership development work. In 2012, the Executive Secretary of BMO, Uel Marrs, paid a visit to Livingstonia Theological College where he learned about the challenges faced by theological students at the institution.¹⁷ Such visits enable their missionary organisation to appreciate the challenges their partners experience so that they can be able to scratch where it itches when it comes to providing assistance.

It is argued that the Presbyterian Church of Ireland is closer to the Synod of Livingstonia in its ethos than the Church of Scotland hence the close relationship between the two. The relationship between the two is an old one as it started in the 1950s and it has been growing from strength to strength as evidenced by the presence of Irish missionaries and their continued support in the Synod.¹⁸

8.4.3 Focus on Malawi

Among the many overseas partners that help the Synod of Livingstonia is an informal group of volunteers in the UK composed of both medical and non-medical personnel. These work in association with the Raven Trust, which is a charity supporting needy communities in Malawi. The objectives of Focus on Malawi are to:

1. Support the hospital directors of Ekwendeni, Livingstonia and Embangweni in the development of permanent and self-sustaining eye-services.¹⁹
2. Raise awareness in the UK among friends, professionals and the general public concerning the needs and required support.²⁰

¹⁶ Interview Matt Williams, PCI's BMO missionary, Mzuzu University, 16.4.15. He eventually left the country in August 2015.

¹⁷ Presbyterian Church of Ireland, *2013 General Assembly Annual Reports*, p. 134.

¹⁸ According to the testimony of Rev Andrew D. Kayira, the first Irish missionary to work with the Synod of Livingstonia in Malawi was the Rev Bill Jackson who initially came to work in Karonga in 1958. This was after Rev Andrew Kayira had asked Rev Dr A.A. Fulton of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland for a missionary helper when the former visited Malawi in 1957. See: Rev Andrew D. Kayira's Foreword in Bill Jackson, *Send Us Friends*, Belfast: Bill Jackson, 1996, p. ii.

¹⁹ <http://focusonmalawi.blogspot.com>, retrieved 7.12.14.

²⁰ <http://focusonmalawi.blogspot.com>, retrieved 7.12.14.

3. Channel resources and expertise, and to support local training.²¹

This group was established in 2005 and it is headed by Sue Kevan, an orthoptist and Dr Caroline Sheldrick, an ophthalmologist.²²

8.4.4 The Raven Trust

Already mentioned above in connection with the Focus on Malawi group, the Raven Trust is a registered charity in Scotland as well as a company limited by guarantee.²³ Its name comes from the story of Prophet Elijah in the Old Testament (1 Kings 17:6) to whom ravens brought bread and meat in the morning and in the evening when he was at the brook Cherith during a period of drought in Israel in the reign of King Ahab. The motto of this Trust is “Serving communities in Malawi directly”, and just like the ravens in the Elijah story, they aim to bring provisions for the needy in Malawi.²⁴ Among the things this charity has been able to send to Malawi, in excess of £1,000, 000 so far, are medical supplies, books of all kinds, tools and equipment, clothing and other items such as mattresses, sports equipment and other necessities.²⁵ This organisation collects donations made by individuals and church congregations in the UK and sends them to the Synod of Livingstonia according to identified needs in the Synod’s institutions.²⁶

8.4.5 The Presbyterian Church in Canada

The Presbyterian Church in Canada is another major partner of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia as it assists the Synod in various ways. This Church mostly engages in relief and development work through its development arm known as Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) and through its Department of International Ministries, both of which are under the Life and Mission Agency Committee.²⁷ Through PWS&D the Presbyterian Church in Canada is helping the Synod of Livingstonia in such crucial areas as the Malaria Control Programme through links with the Synod’s hospitals such as Ekwendeni Hospital, David Gordon Memorial Hospital and Embangweni Hospital.²⁸ Through this programme in

²¹ <http://focusonmalawi.blogspot.com>, retrieved 7.12.14.

²² <http://focusonmalawi.blogspot.com>, retrieved 7.12.14.

²³ <http://www.theraventrust.org/about/>, retrieved 10.4.15.

²⁴ <http://www.theraventrust.org/about/>, retrieved 10.4.15.

²⁵ <http://www.theraventrust.org/about/>, retrieved 10.4.15.

²⁶ <http://www.theraventrust.org/about/>, retrieved 10.4.15.

²⁷ <http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/mission/>, retrieved 11.4.15.

²⁸ <http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/mission/>, retrieved 11.4.15.

2010, 800 bed nets were distributed and 95 volunteers were trained on malaria prevention and they went door-to-door educating community members in the vicinity of the synod's hospitals concerning malaria issues. In the same vein PWS&D has been providing households with nutritional supplements, fertilisers and feeds. In the same year of 2010, some 264 orphans were enabled to attend primary school by being provided with school uniforms and other supplies courtesy of PWS&D Ekwendeni Hospital HIV and AIDS Orphan Programme.²⁹

PWS&D has also assisted in the construction of a community based childcare centre at Ekwendeni and provided training and bicycles to volunteers for HIV and AIDS work. They have also helped the Synod in capacity development for its Development Department especially in the area of optimising the use of computers and strengthening the monitoring and evaluation systems of the Development Department in its bid to provide effective programming.³⁰

Through its Leadership Development Programme, the Presbyterian Church in Canada helps a number of students from different places in the world who study either in Canadian institutions or in institutions within their own countries. From the Synod of Livingstonia the current beneficiary of this programme is Rev Greyson Munyimbili who is studying for a Master's Degree in Theology and Religious Studies at Mzuzu University.³¹

8.4.6 The Presbyterian Church in the USA

The Presbyterian Church in the USA (PCUSA) is another foreign partner of the Synod of Livingstonia. This church assists the Synod's College of Theology at Ekwendeni with funds and educational materials such as computers and books. It also provides scholarships for secondary and post-secondary education and assists the University of Livingstonia with funding. It also funds the Synod's Water and Sanitation Programme and provides general support for the Synod. Apart from monetary and material support, PCUSA also sends missionary personnel with different expertise to contribute to the work of the Synod of Livingstonia. Some current PCUSA missionaries in the Synod of Livingstonia include couples James and Jodi McGill and Tyler and Rochelle Holm.³² James McGill coordinates the clean

²⁹ <http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/mission/>, retrieved 11.4.15.

³⁰ <http://presbyterian.ca/pwsd/malawi/>, retrieved 11.4.15.

³¹ See: "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada", 2011, p. 13.1.15.

³² <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/find-mission-worker-malawi/>, retrieved 4.5.15.

water and sanitation work of the Synod of Livingstonia while Jodi McGill is the synod's coordinator for primary health care, working with a congregation-based malaria prevention program, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, and other public health programs. She also works as a clinical instructor at the Ekwendeni College of Nursing.³³ Tyler Holm teaches theology at the University of Livingstonia while Rochelle Holm manages the Mzuzu University Water and Sanitation Centres.³⁴

From this church the Synod of Livingstonia still has some more partners with individual presbyteries and congregations. Among the presbyteries and congregations that are partners with the Synod of Livingstonia are Meyers Park Presbyterian Church, Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery, Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church and Mountain View Presbyterian Church.

8.4.6.1 Myers Park Presbyterian Church

The Myers Park Presbyterian Church has what it calls “partner countries.” In all, Myers Park Presbyterian Church has five partner countries in the world in the names of Congo, Cuba, El Salvador and Malawi. In Malawi the Church's partner is the Synod of Livingstonia. The Synod of Livingstonia benefits from this partnership through assistance in the following areas: crisis nursery, community based child care centres, hospitals, schools and clean water programmes.³⁵

8.4.6.2 Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church

Through its mission outreach, Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church has sponsored over 150 children through the World Vision Hope Child Programme and it has also assisted in the building and funding of an AIDS block at Embangweni Mission Hospital. Apart from these mission actions the Shepherd of the Hills Presbyterian Church has established a twinning relationship with Manyamula Congregation of Engalaweni Presbytery through which the local congregation has benefited in the funding of a building project for its manse, the building of a grain bank for lean periods and the installation of a solar school block lighting system.³⁶

³³ <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/find-mission-worker-malawi/#mcgill>, retrieved 4.5.15.

³⁴ <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/find-mission-worker-malawi/#holm>, retrieved 4.5.15.

³⁵ <http://www.myersparkpres.org/>, <http://serve.myersparkpres.org/#/world/malawi>, retrieved 11.4.15.

³⁶ <http://www.shpc.org/malawi-missions/>, retrieved 11.4.15.

8.4.6.3 *Mountain View Presbyterian Church*

The relationship between Mountain View Presbyterian Church in the USA and Engalaweni Congregation of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia in Mzimba has seen delegates of the two congregations visiting each other in order to strengthen their bond of friendship. This church helps its Malawian partner in the areas of school improvements and funding micro-businesses.³⁷

8.4.6.4 *Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery*

Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery is one of the most vibrant partners of the Synod of Livingstonia. Apart from the financial support this church gives to the Synod of Livingstonia, it has initiated the twinning of several congregations, so much so that there are now many congregations in the Synod of Livingstonia that have twinning partners in Eastern Oklahoma Presbytery in the USA church.³⁸

8.4.7 *The GZB (Gereformeerde Zendingsbond)*

Another important partner that assists the Synod of Livingstonia is the GZB known in English as the Reformed Mission League. In the Dutch language it is *Gereformeerde Zendingsbond* but popularly known by its acronym GZB.³⁹ This organisation supports the Synod of Livingstonia directly besides its commitment to the General Assembly and other synods.

8.4.8 *Conclusion*

The Synod of Livingstonia has so many partners and it is not strange to imagine that the Synod benefits a lot from these partnerships in terms of personnel, money and other resources since the partners come from countries that are not as poor as Malawi is economically. It is therefore obvious that it is the Synod of Livingstonia that benefits more from these partnerships though to a lesser extent the foreign partners also benefit in terms of international friendships and an opportunity to learn about the Christian faith from partners in circumstances of less abundance.

³⁷ <http://www.mymvpc.com/home/missions>, retrieved 10.3.15.

³⁸ <http://eokpresbytery.org/blog/?s=livingstonia>, retrieved 11.4.15.

³⁹ Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Synod of Livingstonia, “Minutes of 33rd Synod Assembly, held at Karonga Teachers’ Training College, from 10th to 14th August 2012”, minute 50/12, 1 (d). See also www.gzb.org.

8.5 Blantyre Synod and Its Foreign Partners

Just like the Synod of Livingstonia, Blantyre Synod has several partners from foreign countries from whom it benefits a lot in terms of Christian sharing.

8.5.1 *The Church of Scotland*

For Blantyre Synod the parent church is and has always been the Church of Scotland (established).⁴⁰ From 1876 when Blantyre Mission was founded to 1959 when the Blantyre Mission Council was dissolved, the Synod was solely under the supervision of the Church of Scotland which was sending missionaries and money and continues to do so even now. The Church of Scotland lists Blantyre Synod as one of its partner churches and there are many congregational twinning initiatives between the two churches. Apart from the regular personnel that come to Blantyre Synod from Scotland and the general support that the Church of Scotland renders to Blantyre Synod, there are several areas in which the Church of Scotland is continuously helping the work of Blantyre Synod. Some of these areas include the support for HIV prevention and awareness-raising within marriage, support for the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission, support to Mulanje Mission Hospital and enhanced couple counselling in an age of HIV and Aids. Another component of this partnership is the Faithshare programme where exchange visits between the two churches do take place regularly.

The controversial issue of homosexuality proves to be slippery ground for the relationship between the two churches as well. In September 2011 St Michael's and All Angels congregation of Blantyre Synod ended their partnership with Queen's Cross Church in Aberdeen, Scotland because the Scottish congregation had ordained a gay pastor, Scot Rennie.⁴¹ In view of such developments, when the Rev Diane Hobson visited Malawi in February 2012, she promised on behalf of the Church of Scotland that no gay missionaries would be sent to Malawi.⁴² This means that there is mutual respect between the two partners despite their differences in responding to some contemporary issues such as gay rights.

⁴⁰ See: Kenneth R. Ross, "Partnership in Mission and Postcolonial Politics: the Case of the Church of Scotland," in Kenneth Ross, *Here Comes Your King: Christ, Church and Nation in Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1998, pp. 12-130.

⁴¹ <http://mwnation.com/scots-promise-no-gay-missionaries-to-malawi/>, retrieved 23.2.15.

⁴² <http://mwnation.com/scots-promise-no-gay-missionaries-to-malawi/>, retrieved 23.2.15.

8.5.2 The Presbyterian Church of Victoria (Australia)

Blantyre Synod is also in a partnership agreement with the Presbyterian Church of Victoria (Australia) through the Australian Presbyterian World Mission. This partnership involves the members of Blantyre Synod agreeing to pray for the spread of the gospel in Australia and to keep their Australian friends informed about the work of the Gospel in Malawi through articles and literature.⁴³ On the part of the Presbyterian Church of Australia there is commitment to sending visiting lecturers to provide ministry training at the Blantyre Synod's Theological Resource Centre or other places within the jurisdiction of Blantyre Synod and to assist in funding the renovation and running costs of the Theological Resource Centre. The Presbyterian Church of Australia has assisted Blantyre Synod in the establishment of the Orbus Centre for the Care of Orphans and Vulnerable Children which is currently under the direction of Blantyre Synod but with some input from Australia.⁴⁴ This Centre is located at Ngumbe in Traditional Authority Machinjiri's area in Blantyre District and it was opened on 31st July 2010. The centre's programmes and activities are under the oversight of the Blantyre Synods' Health and Development Commission and the Synod's Education Department.⁴⁵

Through this partnership the Presbyterian Church of Australia also assists Blantyre Synod schools and in particular the Presbyterian Ladies College in Melbourne has entered into a special relationship with Neno Girls Mission School.⁴⁶ The Presbyterian Ladies College is a Christian independent girls' school founded in 1875 and it is affiliated to the Presbyterian Church in Victoria.⁴⁷ Students of this college, particularly those in the Student Leadership Team and on the Social Work Committee raise thousands of dollars for their school's support for Neno Girls Secondary School of CCAP Blantyre Synod.⁴⁸

8.5.3 Presbyterian Church in USA

With regard to the Presbyterian Church in USA, Blantyre Synod's partnership is with the Pittsburgh Presbytery. This partnership was conceived in 1990 and from 1991 there have been

⁴³ <http://www.apwm.org.au/partner-churches/malawi/>, retrieved 5.4.15.

⁴⁴ <http://www.apwm.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Malawi-Country-Information-Sheet-2014.pdf>, retrieved 5.4.15.

⁴⁵ <http://www.orbusafrica.org/index.php?page=orbus-projects>, retrieved 4.5.15.

⁴⁶ http://www.plc.vic.edu.au/learning-plc_personal-development.aspx, retrieved 16.3.15

⁴⁷ http://www.plc.vic.edu.au/our-school_history.aspx, retrieved 16.3.15.

⁴⁸ http://www.plc.vic.edu.au/learning-plc_personal-development.aspx, retrieved 4.5.15.

exchange visits between the two partners of over 500 persons and they continue to take place. These visits involve relationship building, education events, pastoral exchange, evangelism rallies, medical mission work and building construction.⁴⁹ According Dr Silas Ncozana, former Blantyre Synod General Secretary and one of the founders of the relationship:

The purpose of the partnership between Pittsburgh Presbytery and the Synod of Blantyre CCAP, Malawi is to move us toward the fulfilment of Christ's prayer for unity among his disciples; that all are invited into His Kingdom, that the world may accept the gospel and have faith; that God's love may abound; that the Church may grow and be mutually encouraged in faith.⁵⁰

On the part of PCUSA the mission statement of the Malawi Partnership of Pittsburgh Presbytery reads:

Our mission as the Malawi Mission Partnership Committee of Pittsburgh Presbytery (PCUSA) is to carry out God's plan for this world through mutual encouragement in our faith and life journey in partnership with the Synod of Blantyre of the Church of Central Africa (CCAP) in Malawi, Africa.⁵¹

In 2012 the Pittsburgh Presbytery/Blantyre Synod partnership was joined by the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, making a three-way church partnership. In January 2013 a team of representatives from Pittsburgh joined their Blantyre Synod colleagues to attend a General Assembly meeting of the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan.⁵²

As can be seen the partnership between the Blantyre Synod and Pittsburgh Presbytery has been there for some time and it can be argued that Blantyre Synod has over the years benefited greatly from this relationship both in terms of material blessings and the opportunity for exposure as the members go to Pittsburgh in the USA for their exchange visits.

8.5.4 Presbyterian Church in Canada

The Presbyterian Church in Canada through its Presbyterian World Service and Development (PWS&D) is carrying out a lot of programmes in Malawi through its partnership with Blantyre Synod. For example the Mulanje Mission Hospital Orphan Care Programme compliments hospital services to orphans and to guardians on health care.⁵³ Through its PWS&D the

⁴⁹ <http://pghpip.org/about/about.shtml>, retrieved 6.4.15.

⁵⁰ Silas Ncozana, "New Dawn for Partnership in Mission: An African Perspective", http://pghpip.org/about/mp_brochure_2012.pdf, retrieved 6.4.15.

⁵¹ http://pghpip.org/about/mp_brochure_2012.pdf, retrieved 6.4.15.

⁵² http://www.pghpresbytery.org/news/sheldon_shares/2013/ss_010313.htm, retrieved 4.13.2015.

⁵³ http://presbyterian.ca/wp-content/uploads/ga137_report_life_and_mission_agency.pdf, retrieved 20.4.15.

Presbyterian Church in Canada has also involved itself in the Blantyre Synod's Church and Society Programme's civic and voter education by engaging in logistical exercises. In 2010 PWS&D supported the distribution of educational materials sourced from Malawi Electoral Commission and the Public Affairs Committee. It also facilitated awareness meetings with local leaders and church committee members.⁵⁴

In the area of education the Presbyterian Church in Canada has helped with sanitation infrastructure development at Neno Girls Secondary School and also provided bursaries and scholarships to needy students. PWS&D has also helped in funding the Titukule Ana Programme for orphans. Through this activity many orphans have acquired vocational skills and some have managed to attend secondary education with support from this programme.⁵⁵

PWS&D in partnership with Blantyre Synod has also been involved in relief work, especially in providing food items to families affected by drought. In 2010, with support from Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission, PWS&D initiated a food assistance project in Balaka area, which experienced drought during the 2009-2010 rainy season. The project also supported the targeted beneficiaries with training and seedlings to promote the adoption of cassava production as a drought resistant crop.⁵⁶

Within Blantyre District there is the Lirangwe Food Security Project which the PWS&D is funding through Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission.⁵⁷ This project aims at diversifying and increasing sustainable staple crop production in nine villages targeting 500 food insecure households.⁵⁸ In this project conservation farming techniques are being introduced and promoted as a central focus of the project through a community based approach. The emphasis is on locally available resources in order to ensure sustainable results.⁵⁹

⁵⁴ http://presbyterian.ca/wp-content/uploads/gal37_report_life_and_mission_agency.pdf, retrieved 20.4.15.

⁵⁵ "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2011", p. 13.1.80.

⁵⁶ "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2011", p. 13.1.76.

⁵⁷ "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2011", p. 13.1.76.

⁵⁸ "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2011", p. 13.1.76.

⁵⁹ "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2011", p. 13.1.76.

PWS&D is also involved in the activities of empowering people with disabilities. It is doing this through the Tidzalerana Club where people with disabilities and their families come together to support each other and in the process some people are able to start engaging in income generating activities.⁶⁰

Apart from the various projects mentioned above in which the Presbyterian Church in Canada through its PWS&D is proving its commitment to its partnership with Blantyre Synod, there are also contributions of personnel from the Canadian Church to Blantyre Synod. For example between 2007 and 2013 some Canadians served in several capacities with Blantyre Synod. In 2007 the Rev Glenn Inglis embarked on serving as Executive Director of the Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission. His position was renewed in August 2010 so that he could serve up to the end of 2012. On the other hand Ms Linda Inglis served in a volunteer missionary capacity as the Ecumenical Officer for Blantyre Synod. The Rev Dr Todd Statham was appointed to serve as a lecturer in Church History and Theology at Zomba Theological College between 2011 and 2013 as a missionary of Blantyre Synod. In the same vein the Rev Michael and Ms Debra Burns were also appointed to serve in Blantyre Synod between 1st January 2011 and 31st December 2013. Michael served as associate minister at St James Church in the City of Blantyre.⁶¹

On this note we conclude some of the instances of the partnership between Blantyre Synod and the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

8.5.5 Scotland Malawi Partnership

Blantyre Synod's website specifically mentions the Scotland Malawi Partnership as one of its official partners.⁶² Through this partnership there have been visits to Scotland from Blantyre Synod and projects funded in Malawi through the Scottish people's initiative. For example Child Survival in Malawi (Scotland) is a Scottish charity supporting small community based development initiatives in Malawi. In August 2009 two women from Blantyre Synod who were involved in the Child Survival in Malawi projects visited Scotland under the auspices of the

⁶⁰ "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2011", p. 13.1.81

⁶¹ "Life and Mission Agency Committee Report to the 137th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 2011", p. 13.1.11.

⁶² See: <http://www.ccapblantyresynod.org/current-partnerships.html>, 23.6.15.

Church of Scotland's Faithshare programme but facilitated by the Malawi Scotland Partnership. These women were Grace Kulupando and Violet Chavura.⁶³

While the Scotland-Malawi Partnership embraces a lot of things between the two countries as signed in their 2005 agreement, it is important to note that the genesis of this partnership is the relationship of the Presbyterian churches in the two countries which go all the way to the founding of the Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions which also have their roots in the activities of the missionary explorer Dr David Livingstone.⁶⁴

8.5.6 *The GZB (Gereformeerde Zendingsbond)*

Last but not least among the official partners of Blantyre Synod is the Mission Board of the Protestant Churches in the Netherlands (GZB). According to Rev Lieuwe Schaafsma, GZB is mainly involved in three things in its partnership with Blantyre Synod: 1) Theological Education by Extension in Malawi (TEEM); 2) Orphan Care Programmes and 3) Zomba Theological College.⁶⁵ Rev Schaafsma was himself the Director of TEEM for some time and between 2001 and 2009 he served in Blantyre Synod as an associate pastor at St Michael's and All Angels Church. In both cases he served under the auspices of the GZB.

GZB also funds the Ndirande Orphanage in Blantyre and contributes to the budget for Zomba Theological College.⁶⁶

After leaving Malawi, Rev Schaafsma visited the country again in 2012 when he led a group of young people from the Netherlands to Malawi. The young people who all came from the Protestant Church in the Netherlands (PKN) helped with some volunteer work in Blantyre Synod at Tidzalerana Shelter for the disabled in Ndirande and also at Mulanje Mission Hospital, all under the auspices of GZB.⁶⁷

Another notable missionary from GZB in Blantyre Synod is the Rev Steven Paas who made the initial contact with the Synod in 1997 and ever since he has been a regular visitor even after

⁶³ Sue Pattison, "Member Focus: Child Survival in Malawi", *Scotland Malawi Partnership Newsletter*, vol. 3, Issue 1, p. 9.

⁶⁴ Kenneth Ross, *Malawi and Scotland: Together in the Talking Place since 1859*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2013, pp. 12-29, 30-47.

⁶⁵ <http://www.ccapblantiresynod.org/news.html>, retrieved 20.3.15.

⁶⁶ <http://www.ccapblantiresynod.org/news.html>, retrieved 20.3.15.

⁶⁷ <http://www.ccapblantiresynod.org/news.html>, retrieved 20.3.15.

his period of missionary work expired. Apart from working as a minister in Blantyre Synod Rev Paas also served as lecturer at Zomba Theological College. He is well known in academic circles for his contributions in compiling language dictionaries (*Chichewa/Chinyanja to English and English to Chichewa/Chinyanja*), historical research and writing and spreading of various Christian literatures.⁶⁸

8.5.7 Conclusion

The partners of Blantyre Synod can be said to be making a huge impact on the work of the Synod as it is evident that most of the relief and development programmes that Blantyre Synod has, are being funded in one way or the other by these partners. This is therefore another instance in which the foreign partnerships of the CCAP synods prove to be more beneficial to the African churches.

8.6 Nkhoma Synod and Its Foreign Partners

As is the case with the Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre with their former “mother”, the Church of Scotland, Nkhoma Synod too has a very special relationship with the South African Dutch Reformed Church, being the church whose missionary personnel established Nkhoma Mission which has evolved into the present Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP. Apart from this partnership the Synod has other partners from diverse places as we shall see below.

8.6.1 Dutch Reformed Churches in South Africa

The relationship between Nkhoma Synod and that of the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa has been an evolving one. From the dawn of Malawian leadership of Nkhoma Synod to the present day there have been changes in the relationship between Nkhoma Synod and the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa in order to respond to the ever-changing circumstances in which this relationship operates. The current document that guides the relationship between Nkhoma Synod and the South African Reformed Churches is the Partnership Agreement of

⁶⁸ Some of Rev Steven Paas’ publications include: Steven Paas, *Ministers and Elders: The Birth of Presbyterianism*, Zomba: Kachere, 2007; Steven Paas (with contributions by Klaus Fiedler), *The Faith Moves South: A History of the Church in Africa*, Zomba: Kachere, 2006; Steve Paas, *Dictionary – Mthanauziramau, English Chichewa/ Chichewa English*, Nuremberg: VTR Publications, 2012; Steven Pass, *Christian Zionism Examined: A Review of Ideas on Israel, the Church and the Kingdom*, Nuremberg: VTR Publications, 2012; Steven Paas, *Digging out the Ancestral Church: Researching and Communicating Church History*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, ²2002

2003. This partnership agreement is unique in that the South African partner is actually the Commission for Witness in South Africa which is a representation of the family of the Dutch Reformed Churches in Western and South Cape namely: the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa (DRCSA), the Uniting Reformed Church in Southern Africa (URCSA) Cape Synod and Reformed Church in Africa (RCA) Sunthonsan Congregation. This partnership agreement is considered a continuation as well as further development and maturing of the relationships preceding this one with the Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, whose missionary activity gave birth to Nkhoma Synod.

The genesis of this relationship in the post-missionary period was the Act of Agreement that was entered upon in 1962 when Nkhoma Synod came under Malawian leadership, when indigenous Malawian leaders assumed full responsibility over all the work and all departments and property that were previously under the supervision of the General Administrative Committee (GAC), which comprised both indigenous Malawians and South African missionary personnel.⁶⁹ In the course of time this Act of Agreement experienced several revisions which culminated into its replacement by the Deed of Agreement of 1992. It is this 1992 Deed of Agreement that eventually gave way to the new Partnership Agreement in 2003 which is still active up to now.⁷⁰ In this Partnership Agreement there are specific obligations for the partners as explained below. Nkhoma Synod's obligations in this Partnership Agreement are to:

1. Receive prayer requests and pray for such needs of the Partner.⁷¹
2. Send Nkhoma Synod prayer requests to the Partners.⁷²
3. Propose and discuss possible new projects with the Partner(s) and submit detailed project proposals for consideration by the Partner(s).⁷³
4. Seek technical advice from the Partner on some projects to be carried out.⁷⁴
5. Send budgeted financial and material requests for various projects in the fields of ministry, evangelism, social service and witness.⁷⁵
6. Submit requests for personnel to serve in various fields.⁷⁶

⁶⁹ Walter Lawrence Brown, "The Development in Self Understanding of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod as Church during the First Forty Years of Autonomy: An Ecclesiological Study, PhD Theology", University of Stellenbosch, 2004, p. 20.

⁷⁰ Rev Dr W.R. Kawale, Email communication, 22.4.15.

⁷¹ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.1.

⁷² Partnership Agreement, 8.1.2.

⁷³ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.3.

⁷⁴ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.4.

⁷⁵ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.5.

⁷⁶ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.6.

7. Provide a job description for the required personnel.⁷⁷
8. Indicate which qualifications such personnel should preferably have.⁷⁸
9. If necessary interview prospective candidates for a particular post.⁷⁹
10. Determine the period of service of the candidate in consultation with the Partner.⁸⁰
11. If, for whatever reason, it is deemed necessary for the services of a personnel member to be terminated earlier, the Synod shall decide upon this after due consultation with the Partner. The personnel concerned shall be given three months' notice of the termination of his/her service.⁸¹
12. Evaluate and report annually concerning the work and performance of the personnel to the sending Partner.⁸²
13. Take decisions concerning change of work or transfer of personnel after due consultation with the Partner and with the concurrence of the personnel member.⁸³
14. Be accountable to the financial assistance provided by the Partners.⁸⁴
15. Use all finances solely for the purposes they are intended for, with proper accountability and transparency. For this purpose specific accounts will be identified for specific projects or Departments into which funds from Partners as well as contributions from donors may be deposited.⁸⁵
16. Provide accommodation and basic furniture for the personnel from the partner Churches.⁸⁶

On the other hand, the obligations of the Commission for Witness, being the partner in South Africa, are to:

1. Receive prayer requests and pray for the needs in Nkhoma Synod.⁸⁷
2. Receive and consider the financial, material and personnel requests from Nkhoma Synod.⁸⁸
3. Provide technical advice and financial and material assistance to Nkhoma Synod.⁸⁹
4. Send all the monies to Nkhoma Synod (cf. PA.8.1.14 and PA.8.1.15).⁹⁰
5. Provide personnel requested and agreed upon for specific tasks.⁹¹
6. Be responsible for the payment of the salaries, travel expenses, pension, medical fund contributions, and any other allowances for the personnel.⁹²

⁷⁷ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.7.

⁷⁸ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.8.

⁷⁹ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.9.

⁸⁰ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.10.

⁸¹ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.11.

⁸² Partnership Agreement, 8.1.12.

⁸³ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.13.

⁸⁴ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.14.

⁸⁵ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.15.

⁸⁶ Partnership Agreement, 8.1.16.

⁸⁷ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.1

⁸⁸ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.2

⁸⁹ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.3

⁹⁰ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.4

⁹¹ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.5

⁹² Partnership Agreement, 8.2.6

7. Provide funding for the maintenance of the accommodation provided by Nkhoma Synod.⁹³
8. Provide personnel who are full members of their church or, in the case of prospective personnel from another denomination, first obtain the approval of Nkhoma Synod before sending such a person.⁹⁴
9. Participate with Nkhoma Synod in providing counselling, spiritual care and moral support for its personnel.⁹⁵
10. Receive annual reports from Nkhoma Synod on the performance of each personnel member.⁹⁶
11. Wherever necessary, supply motor vehicles to Nkhoma Synod for use in particular project(s). These motor vehicles shall be registered under Nkhoma Synod (cf. PA.8.2.2).⁹⁷
12. In consultation with Nkhoma Synod take such steps as may be necessary regarding the performance of personnel in terms of the accountability being expected of them.⁹⁸
13. In consultation with Nkhoma Synod deal with such personal and official matters concerning members of the personnel as may be necessary.⁹⁹
14. In case where personnel have to be evacuated from Malawi in an emergency situation, such as major medical problem, the sending partner shall be responsible for the evacuation expenses.¹⁰⁰

While it can be argued that the evolution of the relationship between Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP and the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa has done away with the “mother-daughter relationship” between the two churches to that of equal partners, there is still some traces of dependence on the part of Nkhoma Synod which makes it more of a receiver in this partnership, especially in relation to the issues of money and personnel from South Africa.

8.6.2 The Church of Scotland

Nkhoma Synod is also in partnership with the Church of Scotland, which actually is in partnership with all the three Malawian Synods of the CCAP as well as the General Assembly itself. This partnership mostly involves the work of Nkhoma Mission Hospital and the Faithshare programme between the two churches where personnel from the Church of Scotland and Nkhoma Synod share visits between Scotland and Malawi.¹⁰¹

⁹³ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.7

⁹⁴ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.8

⁹⁵ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.9

⁹⁶ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.10

⁹⁷ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.11

⁹⁸ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.12

⁹⁹ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.13

¹⁰⁰ Partnership Agreement, 8.2.14

¹⁰¹ http://www.churchofscotland.org.uk/serve/mission_worldwide/our-partner-churches/africa/malawi,14.4.15.

8.6.3 *The Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT)*

Another foreign partner which Nkhoma Synod had was the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (PCT). This partnership was formalised in the year 2004 at the 49th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan which took place from 13th to 16th April 2004.¹⁰² During this General Assembly Nkhoma Synod sent six delegates to the Taiwanese Church. This delegation included the Rev Stonham Sande Mwale, the Synod's Moderator, and the Rev Dr Winston R. Kawale, the Synod's General Secretary. The two signed the Partner Church Agreement with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan on behalf of Nkhoma Synod during this visit.¹⁰³ Prior to this formal agreement with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, Nkhoma Synod was already involved in a relationship with the Ta-an Presbyterian Church in Seven Stars Presbytery within the City of Taipei.¹⁰⁴

Sadly, this partnership with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan is no longer there as it died following the termination of diplomatic ties between the Government of Malawi and the Taiwanese Government. The Malawian Government in 2007 decided to establish ties with mainland China in line with the international policy of "One China", which makes the Communist People's Republic of China eclipse Taiwan. Consequently, all the projects the Taiwanese were doing with Nkhoma Synod such as mobile clinics in different congregations and a computer college in Lilongwe came to a halt.¹⁰⁵ This is one incident in which international politics had a direct impact on the life of the church with regard to foreign relations.

8.6.4 *The Reformed Church in America*

Nkhoma Synod shares its Dutch Reformed roots with the Reformed Church in America (RCA), which also traces its history back to the Dutch Reformed Church in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁶ It is therefore not surprising for the two churches to be in a partnership agreement. Through this

¹⁰² William J.K. Lo (PCT General Secretary), Letter to Partner Churches and Related Organisation, Friends around the Globe and PCT Related Missionary Personnel, <http://english.pct.org.tw/others/20040400.htm>, retrieved 29.4.15.

¹⁰³ <http://english.pct.org.tw/others/20040400.htm>, retrieved 29.4.15.

¹⁰⁴ Reformed Online, "Taiwan Presbyterians Open Mission Centre in Malawi", <http://www.reformiert-online.net/aktuell/details.php?id=1189&lg=eng>, retrieved 29.4.15.

¹⁰⁵ Email communication: Rev W.R. Kawale, retrieved 30.4.15.

¹⁰⁶ See: Gerald F. DeJong, *The Dutch Reformed Church in the American Colonies*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978.

agreement, RCA sends its volunteers to Nkhoma Synod who assist in various projects.¹⁰⁷ For example through this partnership work has been done at Malingunde Women's Centre with regard to roof and interior repairing of the premises there, and there are also ongoing programmes funded by the RCA such as the Malawi Children's Feeding Programme which tries to reverse malnutrition among under five children.¹⁰⁸ Nkhoma Synod has also benefited from its partnership with the Reformed Church in America in the area of building a vocational school for AIDS orphans, training hospital staff, repairing electronics and tailoring hospital uniforms.¹⁰⁹

8.6.5 Word and Deed Ministries

This is a Christian Ministry organisation that partners with churches in the developing world on a variety of projects including child sponsorship, Christian Education, orphan care, disaster relief and vocational training.¹¹⁰ The organisation mobilises and educates churches of Northern America through updates in the form of presentations, quarterly magazines, church bulletins, emails and website articles in order to raise awareness of the plight of the needy. Apart from its own partnership with Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP, Word and Deed Ministries has also linked the Synod with the Free Reformed Churches of North America.¹¹¹

8.6.6 GZB (Gereformeerde Zendingsbond)

As with the other two Malawian Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre and the General Assembly itself, Nkhoma Synod too is in partnership with the GZB of the Netherlands, which also supports the Synod with funding and personnel.¹¹²

8.7 Harare Synod and its Foreign Partners

Among the five synods of the CCAP General Assembly, the Harare Synod seems to have the least number of foreign partners. In the course of this study only two were identified namely:

¹⁰⁷ www.rca.org/, retrieved 28.4.15.

¹⁰⁸ www.rca.org/, retrieved 28.4.15.

¹⁰⁹ www.rca.org/, retrieved 28.4.15.

¹¹⁰ <http://wordanddeed.org/about-us>, retrieved 29.4.15.

¹¹¹ See: Free Reformed Churches of North America, *Acts of Synod 2011*, Mitchell: Free Reformed Publications, pp. 21-22, 34, 171-173 and *Free Reformed Churches of North America*, Acts of Synod 2012, Mitchell: Free Reformed Publications, pp. 138.

¹¹² See: www.gzb.nl.

Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church (MAPC) in the USA and the Presbyterian Church of Australia. However, on its website the synod only shows MAPC as its partner.¹¹³

8.7.1 Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church (MAPC)

The most important foreign partner the Harare Synod currently has is the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church (MAPC).¹¹⁴ This relationship began in 2007 and it has been signed or ratified twice.¹¹⁵ The 2010 document which contains the current partnership agreement between the two churches is titled “Covenant of Partnership” and its purpose is stated as to “aim to strengthen each other’s ministries and discipleship while developing a shared ministry between us.”¹¹⁶

In this partnership it was initially agreed that the partnership activities would include annual exchange visits between the members of the two churches, including praying for one another. MAPC was also expected to provide organisational and technical support for ministry in Harare Synod while Harare Synod was expected to send a pastor in residence to MAPC in the fall of each year. It was also planned that the youth of the two churches would be exchanging pen-pal letters. As the partnership progressed even the youth had a chance to exchange visits thereby becoming exposed to the different contexts in which the two churches operate.¹¹⁷

8.7.2 Presbyterian Church of Australia

Through the work of its agency, Presbyterian Aid (PresAid), the Presbyterian Church of Australia renders assistance to the CCAP Harare Synod in various ways especially in the areas of relief, infrastructure development and theological education.¹¹⁸

The Harare Synod is yet to establish its own theological college for the training of its pastors. Consequently, its pastors are trained at Zomba Theological College in Malawi and at Chasefu Theological College in Zambia. The Presbyterian Church of Australia helps the Harare Synod

¹¹³ <http://www.ccaphresynod.com/hararesynod>, retrieved 4.4.15.

¹¹⁴ <http://www.ccaphresynod.com/hararesynodandmapc.htm>, retrieved 4.4.15

¹¹⁵ <http://www.mapc.com/outreach/partnership>, retrieved 4.4.15

¹¹⁶ <http://www.mapc.com/files/pages/outreach/PartnershipAgreement.pdf>, retrieved 10.4.15.

¹¹⁷ <http://www.mapc.com/outreach/partnership>, retrieved 4.4.15.

¹¹⁸ <http://presaid.org.au/index.php/the-story-so-far>, retrieved 16.4.15.

by supporting its theological students through the theological education support it gives to Chasefu Theological College besides direct support to the students themselves.¹¹⁹

8.8 The Synod of Zambia and Its Foreign Partners

The Synod of Zambia identifies the following as its partners: the Presbyterian Church in USA, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Australia and a charity organisation by the name Romans One Eleven Trust.¹²⁰

8.8.1 The Presbyterian Church in USA (PCUSA)

In its relationship with the Presbyterian Church in USA, the Synod of Zambia benefits from expert personnel secondment and aid for its various projects. The Presbyterian Church in USA fulfils her duty to her partner church through its international development arm, the Presbyterian Mission Agency. Through the Agency PCUSA has a number of missionaries in Zambia who are serving in the areas of theological education, evangelism, health, agriculture and women and children ministry.¹²¹

8.8.2 The Presbyterian Church of Australia

The Presbyterian Church of Australia fulfils its partnership obligations with the CCAP Synod of Zambia through the work of Presbyterian Aid (PresAid). This agency helps the Synod of Zambia in many ways such as assisting the Zambian Church with infrastructure development, budgetary support for the running of the Synod and theological education support, especially through the assistance rendered to Chasefu Theological College in meeting the college's infrastructure and students' sponsorship needs. Among the students who are sponsored are Zimbabwean students from the Harare Synod of the CCAP.¹²²

8.8.3 The Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The CCAP Synod of Zambia is also a beneficiary of the assistance from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, which also happens to be a partner of all the three CCAP synods in Malawi namely, Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma.

¹¹⁹ See: <http://presaid.org.au/index.php/the-story-so-far>, retrieved 16.4.15.

¹²⁰ <http://www.ccapzambia.org/history.html>, retrieved 10.3.15.

¹²¹ <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections>, retrieved 20.3.15.

¹²² See: <http://presaid.org.au/index.php/the-story-so-far>, retrieved 16.4.15.

The Synod of Zambia's Irish connections started back in the 1960s as the Livingstonia Synod built the Lundazi Mission in Eastern Zambia in 1962 with assistance from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.¹²³ This was before the Synod of Zambia was established but since then the relationship between the CCAP Synod of Zambia and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has continued.¹²⁴

8.8.4 *The Romans One Eleven Trust*

Another interesting partner of the CCAP Synod of Zambia is a charity organisation by the name Romans One Eleven Trust (Romans 1:11). This charity's name came into existence inspired by the words found in Romans 1:11 which the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans:

I long to see you, that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to strengthen you, that is, that we may be mutually encouraged by each other. (Rom. 1:11)

The Romans One Eleven Trust is a charity registered in the UK and currently doing most of its work in Uganda and Zambia.¹²⁵ Our interest in this study is the Trust's work in Zambia as a partner of the CCAP Synod of Zambia. This Trust, among other activities, facilitates exchange visits between Zambian churches and UK churches. The trust assists its Zambian partner in building projects, education sponsorship and general social assistance to the needy.

Romans One Eleven Trust has assisted Rev Kondwani Nkhoma, the first female pastor in the CCAP Synod of Zambia, in building her a retirement home. Another female pastor, Rev Susan Tembo, is having her daughter sponsored in her clinical medicine course in Lusaka by the same organization.¹²⁶ The many activities that the Roman Eleven Trust is doing, both in Zambia and Uganda, are recorded in the Trust's related online newsletter titled *Mutually Encouraged*.¹²⁷

8.8.5 *Conclusion*

The CCAP Zambia Synod is the youngest of the five synods in the CCAP General Assembly but it too has managed to have a good number of foreign partners who are making an impact on the life of the Synod in its work of spreading the Gospel and ministering to whole persons.

¹²³ <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/global/zambia>, retrieved 3.4.15.

¹²⁴ <http://www.ccapzambia.org>, retrieved 17.4.15.

¹²⁵ <http://www.romansoneeleventrust.org.uk/wp/>, retrieved 4.4.15.

¹²⁶ http://www.romansoneeleventrust.org.uk/wp/?page_id=270, retrieved 4.4.15.

¹²⁷ See: <http://www.romansoneeleventrust.org.uk/wp/>.

8.9 Foreign Relations and the Unity of the CCAP Synods

A cursory glance at the various partnerships that the CCAP synods have with foreign churches and organisations shows that these partnerships are formed independent of the other synods in the General Assembly. It is interesting to note that certain churches in the Western world have different partnership agreements with different synods of the CCAP. One church can actually have independent partnership agreements with two or more CCAP synods. Apart from their relationships with the different synods some foreign partners add the General Assembly as a distinct partner on top of the individual synods.¹²⁸

Since the different CCAP synods benefit a lot in terms of money, personnel and other resources through these partnerships it follows that the synods would want to have as many partners as possible in order to maximise their benefits. While there has never been any recorded case of rivalry among the synods due to foreign relations or partnerships it can be argued that the continued separate relationships independent of one another cannot at the same time promote unity among the synods.

8.10 An Evaluation of the CCAP Synods' Foreign Relations

The relationships that the Synods of the CCAP have with their foreign partners are not unique with this federative denomination. Other churches in many parts of the world have similar partnerships. It is therefore not surprising to find that there are similarities in these partnerships.

There are basically two types of partnerships: permanent partnerships and temporary ones. Permanent partnerships in the case of the CCAP are mostly with those Churches that were in the past considered “mother” churches of the synods for example the Church of Scotland in the case of Blantyre Synod. Today the concept of “mother-daughter” relationship is being discarded in favour of the most modern understanding of the kind of relationship that exists between a missionary sending church and a mission turned into a local autonomous church, hence the emphasis on the word “partnership” since the two are now considered equal partners. In the second category we have churches and organisations that form partnerships that exist for a specific period of time, after which the partnership is either reviewed and renewed or concluded. In either case there are two issues to consider: The first issue is whether the partnership is relational or contractual. The second issue considers the question whether the partnership is for the betterment or development of the partner with lesser resources.

¹²⁸ Best examples in this regard are the Church of Scotland and the GZB.

In the first question there is a tendency to associate the thinking of resource-rich partners from the Western world as viewing their partnership with the other churches as mostly based on a contractual kind of understanding while the non-western world partners tend to view the partnership as a relational one. In any case the partnerships that the CCAP synods are participating in make them more contractual than relational, especially when one looks at the partnership agreements that are signed by representatives of the parties as formal legal documents. In the second issue the current study has established that the activities of the partnerships between the CCAP synods and their foreign partners are actually more for development as they are mostly aimed at empowering the resource-poor partner instead of just relieving the partner from temporary predicaments as is the understanding in the concept of “betterment.”

The emphasis on these partnerships is mutuality and equality though practically it is not always easy to have partners who come from two different parts of the world to be equal in everything, especially when we consider that the two worlds in question are poles apart in terms of economic and material differences. This reality makes some observers doubt if the Western churches really benefit anything from these partnerships. It has been observed that the partners from resource-rich countries do not benefit from these partnerships in terms of money and expert personnel but through experiencing the unity of the body of Christ that transcends cultural, racial and national boundaries.¹²⁹ In so doing they grow from cultural isolation to an understanding of how people of other parts of the world live their Christian faith. The partner church from a resource-rich country also expands the ecumenical and missionary horizons of its local churches, enabling them to assume responsibility one for another and in the process learning reciprocally from each other’s faith.¹³⁰

On the other hand the partners that come from resource-poor countries (in our context the CCAP Synods and their General Assembly) benefit from these partnerships in terms of capacity building and economic empowerment. With regard to capacity building, there are a lot of

¹²⁹ *A Global Church Partnership Handbook: Guidelines for Disciples Regions/Areas/Districts and UCC Conferences /Associations in the Pursuit of Vital Reciprocal Relationships with International Partners through Global Ministries*, p. 2. Sourced from http://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/globalministries/legacy_url/534/Revised-GCP-Handbook-for-web.pdf?1419962364, retrieved 28. 4.15.

¹³⁰ *A Global Church Partnership Handbook: Guidelines for Disciples Regions/Areas/Districts and UCC Conferences /Associations in the Pursuit of Vital Reciprocal Relationships with International partners through Global Ministries*, p. 3.

activities that need to be carried out in the various CCAP Synods that need trained and expert personnel. Since churches are not good competitors on the job market for highly ambitious individuals, the coming in of expatriate personnel from partner churches helps the CCAP Synods to enhance their capacity in various departments. With regard to economic empowerment, the CCAP churches receive grants and budgetary support from their partners abroad. When it comes to exchange visits between partner churches and organisations, the CCAP church members benefit through exposure as they travel to different countries where their partner churches are.

As with all manner of things, church partnerships are not immune to criticisms. The stronger partners are sometimes accused of paternalism. According to Gailyn van Rheenen, paternalism occurs when missionaries and their sending churches and agencies consciously or unconsciously assume that they possess superior knowledge, experience and skills and, consequently, exert control over local Christians and their leaders. This control is almost always exerted through financial arrangements and the implicit authority of money.¹³¹ This kind of scenario has the potential to produce the dominance of a sending culture over the mission process.¹³² In that case the partnership would not qualify as a true Christian partnership. Luis Bush describes a partnership as

an association of two or more Christian autonomous bodies who have formed a trusting relationship, and fulfil agreed-upon expectations by sharing complementary strengths and resources, to reach their mutual goal.¹³³

According to Samuel Chiang there are seven principles of effective partnership: 1) agreement on doctrine and ethical behaviour; 2) agreement to share common goals; 3) development of an attitude of equality; 4) avoidance of dominance of one another; 5) ability to communicate openly; 6) demonstration of trust and accountability; and 7) the ability to pray together.¹³⁴

¹³¹ Gailyn van Rheenen, "Money and Missions (Revisited): Combating Paternalism", *Monthly Missiological Refection* # 13. Sourced from http://www.mrnet.org/system/files/library/money_and_missions_revisited_combating_paternalism.pdf, retrieved 24.4.15.

¹³² Gailyn van Rheenen, "Money and Missions (Revisited): Combating Paternalism", *Monthly Missiological Refection* # 13. Sourced from http://www.mrnet.org/system/files/library/money_and_missions_revisited_combating_paternalism.pdf, retrieved 24.4.15.

¹³³ Luis Bush and L. Lutz, *Partnering in Ministry: The Direction of World Evangelism*, Downers Grove: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990, p. 46.

¹³⁴ Samuel E. Chiang, "Partnership at the Crossroads: Red, Yellow or Green Light?", *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (July): 284-89 1992.

With regard to the various partnerships discussed in this chapter between CCAP synods in Central Africa and their foreign partners from the rest of the world, it can be stated that so far there are no tendencies of paternalism on the part of the foreign partners, at least not openly. This may be because the CCAP Synods are no longer younger churches dominated by their leaders; they are complex organisations that have bureaucratized to such an extent that individual whims, if any, play a very insignificant role. In most cases it is the question of money and how it is used that mar partnerships. Van Rheenen has come up with several ways of gauging the rightful use of money in the context of church partnerships.¹³⁵ Firstly, he mentions monitoring whether huge amounts of money are used only for the sake of maintaining local churches instead of planting and opening new ones. Where no new churches are opening it is assumed that resources are only being used to perpetuate or maintain what is there without any growth taking place. In the case of the CCAP, the ever increasing numbers of Christians and new congregations and presbyteries that are being established are an indication of the growth of the churches, hence rightful use of money from both local resources and partner organisations, at least from a missiological point of view.

With regard to support from partners it is necessary to check whether money creates an unhealthy dependence or if it encourages national church initiative. Relating this to the CCAP synods, it is evident that the synods are in many ways able to make their own decisions and even though they still need money from their partners they are not irredeemably dependent upon this kind of outside support to the extent of not initiating new things that they consider important in relation to the mission of the church in their areas of jurisdiction. The three Malawian Synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma are always coming up with new initiatives in various sectors such as health and education. With regard to education all the three Malawian synods keep on establishing new schools in both primary and secondary sections. Of late they are either establishing or expanding their universities. Currently the Synod of Livingstonia has just started developing a third campus for the University of Livingstonia at Lusangazi in the outskirts of Mzuzu City where it wants to develop a faculty of animal science.¹³⁶ Nkhoma Synod is taking strides in developing the Nkhoma University in its two campuses of Nkhoma and Lilongwe while Blantyre Synod is in the advanced stages of

¹³⁵ Gailyn Van Rheenen, *Missions: Biblical Foundations and Contemporary Strategies*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996, p. 202.

¹³⁶ Oral information, Ronald Chibwe, University of Livingstonia lecturer, Mzuzu, 11.4.15.

establishing its own university.¹³⁷ The Synod of Zambia too has its own initiative in combining theological education with agricultural development.¹³⁸ All these initiatives are not coming from partner churches but from the synods themselves which means that the synods are not in partnerships that dictate what they should be doing.

It becomes a snare in some churches when the leadership of a local church which is in a partnership agreement with a foreign partner from a resource-rich country takes advantage of the partnership to close themselves from the scrutiny of fellow leaders. This calls for a national leadership that is ethically, morally and spiritually responsible to other national church leaders who understand their culture as they deal with partner churches. In this case the leadership can easily be monitored so that should there be any anomaly the whole church leadership should be empowered to correct the wrong thing. Within the CCAP Synods the top leadership is openly accountable to the rest of the leadership of the Church. This means that even when temptations are there to abuse positions the system easily catches up with the culprits. In the course of this study, some leaders of the synods were heavily censured on the way they were handling donor money. Consequently, some lost their positions or were unceremoniously removed by their synods' governing bodies.

The other tricky issue with regard to partnerships is the position of missionaries in the local church that is in partnership with a foreign-missionary-sending-church. These missionaries are supposed to be ethically, morally and spiritually responsible to teammates on the field, to national church leaders and to church leaders of their sending denomination or agency.¹³⁹ In the case of the CCAP, especially in the three Malawian synods that were founded by overseas missionaries, it was at first normal for the missionaries to want to solve problems for the local churches in a paternalistic way; treating them as children needing direction, provision and

¹³⁷ <http://www.nyasatimes.com/2015/02/05/university-of-ccap-blantyre-synod-to-open-in-malawi-this-year-rev-maulana/>, retrieved 23.4.15.

¹³⁸ <http://www.presbyterianmission.org/ministries/missionconnections/nancy-collins-201411/>, retrieved 25.4.15. See also www.ccapzambia.org/chunga-chicken-farm.html, retrieved 24.4.15.

¹³⁹ See: Gailyn van Rheenen, "Money and Missions (Revisited): Combating Paternalism", *Monthly Missiological Reflection* # 13. Sourced from http://www.mrnet.org/system/files/library/money_and_missions_revisited_combating_paternalism.pdf, retrieved 24.4.15.

supervision.¹⁴⁰ Some Malawian clergy rebelled against this way of doing things as they felt oppressed by missionary paternalism.¹⁴¹

After the transfer of church leadership from missionaries to indigenous leaders, the missionaries have continued to make their presence in the CCAP albeit in a different manner as they are now not only accountable to their sending churches or missionary organisations but also to the local church leadership. Besides, it is the local church that ensures that the missionaries are working in accordance with the needs and leadership direction of the local church.

Since support cannot be permanent in any church partnership, the partner that benefits in terms of money and resources is expected to grow and develop her own capacity so that she is eventually supported by her own people in future. The CCAP synods here seem to be children of their time with regard to their expectation of continued support from partner churches. While it is true that the CCAP congregants contribute substantial amounts of money for the running of their synods, that money is not enough when it comes to funding programmes and projects, hence the need to continue expecting financial assistance from the partners.

With regard to the life styles of the leaders of the churches it is sometimes tempting to lead a life that is not in line with the local economy but with the level of the members of the supporting partners. To what extent are CCAP pastors living according to the standards of their supporting partners? The study has established that the average CCAP clergy do not live a flamboyant life style that raises eyebrows of the Malawian populace. Granted, there are disparities in the life-styles of the different pastors of the church but these differences do not come in because of money from partner churches, except in very rare cases where certain individual pastors have benefited because of individual connections and personal friendships outside formal church partnership arrangements. In this case there are no observations so far that some pastors are leading a life that is akin to the societies of their partner churches rather than the local societies wherein they are ministering. It has to be mentioned, though, that apart from differences in education and family background, the status of clergy families also differ due to the ability of local congregations they are serving in supporting their pastor with material

¹⁴⁰ Edouard Lassegue, <http://blog.compassion.com/a-strong-partnership-is-about-relationships/#ixzz3Xr48yB5Q>, retrieved 10.4.15.

¹⁴¹ See: Yesaya Zerenji Mwasi, *Essential and Paramount Reasons for Working Independently*, Zomba: CLAIM-Kachere, 199, pp. 16-17.

blessings. Usually the disparities are between urban congregations and rural congregations, hence the reluctance sometimes from certain clergy to transfer from an urban congregation to a rural one when told to do by their synods.¹⁴²

In the same vein there may be disparities between local Christians and the missionaries from partner churches that support the local church financially. Where the disparities are pronounced some Christians may not feel comfortable to fellowship in the homes of missionaries who seem to live in a different world. In the past the missionaries had all the benefits of the advanced material and technological culture of their home societies and the first generation of the CCAP clergy did not find it embarrassing to pose for photographs with their missionary colleagues without wearing shoes while in jackets and ties.¹⁴³ Nowadays due to the influence of globalisation and the modernisation and westernisation of many African societies there are very few things that missionaries have that would look out of this world. Within the CCAP many missionaries from the partner churches live life-styles that are not very different from the average middle class Central African. There are therefore fewer differences in the urban churches between the lives of the missionaries and the average church members. This does not mean that there are more poor people in the rural areas than in urban areas but that there are more people who are financially powerful in urban areas than in rural areas. In this case even for the missionary, an urban congregation would be sociologically more acceptable than a rural one where differences between the missionary and local Christians would be more pronounced and therefore less comforting unless one takes pride in being the odd one out.

In a situation where clear-cut procedures for partnership agreements are not there, it is possible to have one leader being supported more than the other leaders thereby creating jealousy on the part of those who feel left out. In the CCAP synods, with synodical procedures that are beyond individual manipulation, it is actually the Synod that determines who is qualified or not when it comes to benefits that come with various partnerships. In the example of Faithshare visits, say with the Church of Scotland, the synods decide who should go to Scotland for the exchange programme. In this case a minister who is serving a rural

¹⁴² I have witnessed discord in some synods after a pastor had refused to go to a rural parish where the Synod had decided to transfer him/her from an urban one. In certain instances such pastors have been disciplined by their synods. Some have even led breakaway churches with their sympathizers.

¹⁴³ See: John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000. The cover picture depicts the first indigenous clergy of Livingstonia on their ordination with bare feet though wearing formal attire flanked by their missionary colleagues.

congregation and away from the day to day business of the synod can be selected for the programme.

The last thing to consider with regard to partnerships in the CCAP following van Rheenen's observations is whether the support the synods and the General Assembly receive creates hierarchies so that churches and institutions are controlled by the West rather than by local leadership. The study has found out that on the part of the partnerships that are there between the CCAP and its foreign partners there is no direct control from the West. This does not mean that there are no instances where the Western partners want to influence some changes by way of suggestion, especially considering that they do make some financial contributions towards the operations of the synods. For example Myers Park Presbyterian Church recommended to the Synod of Livingstonia the need to abolish payment vouchers/receipts in order to cut expenses. The General Secretary reported this recommendation to the Executive Committee of the Synod but the Executive Committee, while appreciating the recommendation, decided that it would look into it in future.¹⁴⁴ One thing this incident proves is that the CCAP is not under pressure to conform to the wishes of its partners who have a stronger economic muscle.

8.11 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the foreign relations that the CCAP synods have, more especially through partnership agreements. What has been established is that even though the synods graduated from the status of "daughter churches" of the churches that sent missionaries that established the missions that evolved into the CCAP, they are still very much related to these churches. In this regard the partnerships they have with the former "mother churches" are permanent partnerships which have no intention of going away in the foreseeable future. One can therefore argue that the partnerships with former "mother churches" were automatic in that in any case the relationship had to continue despite the changes that have taken place over the decades. The former relationships of sending churches and missions have evolved into some kind of permanent partnership via the once tolerated but now rejected "mother-daughter" relationship.

It has also been seen that these permanent relationships that have evolved from the mother-daughter relationships do not hinder the CCAP synods from seeking new partnerships with

¹⁴⁴ CCAP Synod of Livingstonia, "Minutes of 33rd Synod Assembly held at Karonga Teachers Training College from 10th to 17th August 2012", minute 59/12.

other churches and organisations. Neither do they hinder other Western churches that hitherto had no any relationships with the CCAP from initiating new partnerships with the Central African Church. I argue that this is one instance of proving that the former daughter churches are becoming mature in that they can initiate further relationships without asking for the permission of or even informing the former mother churches, which at one time in history had all the powers to dictate what the daughter churches could or could not do - even their stay in the CCAP union was dependent on the good will of the mother churches.¹⁴⁵

It can also be argued from the discussion of this chapter that the CCAP Synods are not really underdogs when it comes to West-South relations in the body of Christ. Granted, the CCAP synods are not as rich as their western partners, and their contributions in the partnerships are not evaluated in monetary or material terms, but they are able to raise their voice and prove to be equal partners.

Negatively it has been observed that the more partnerships continue to be established the more the CCAP will continue to expect aid from resource-rich partners. While this is no longer a problem at the congregational level, since many congregations are happily fending for themselves, at the presbytery, synod and General Assembly levels the Church is not ready to be completely independent of donor money or support from partners.¹⁴⁶ The implication for this in the wider society is that the churches may not be able to urge their national governments to stop depending on donor aid when they themselves are doing the same and they do not appear to be planning for any economic independence soon.

I therefore argue that if the synods still look up to their partners for financial aid and material support they cannot at the same time be thinking seriously about a closer unity of the CCAP. This means that while foreign relations are assisting the CCAP to carry out its many developmental programmes, they are at the same time hindering the full maturity of the CCAP

¹⁴⁵ See: Christoff Martin Pauw, "Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962", DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, pp. 346-347.

¹⁴⁶ What is actually happening is that new presbyteries that are being formed are being added to the list of beneficiaries of donor aid from partner churches and other well-wishers. In one of the meetings of the General Administration Committee of the Synod of Livingstonia there was a specific request that Lilongwe Presbytery which is in the Central Region should also be covered by donor aid coming to the Synod as is the case with other presbyteries, and the request was accepted. See: Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, Synod of Livingstonia, "Minutes of the General Administration Committee Meeting held at Ekwendeni Mission Station from 26th to 30th August 2011", minute 32/11.

into a true African Church in Central Africa, fully united under one leadership that transcends federal unity.

Chapter Nine: Oneness of the CCAP Synods beyond the Border Disputes

9.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the current relationship of the five synods of the CCAP in what can be termed a “post-border dispute” period, especially considering the stands taken by the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods not to recognize boundaries between them, thereby apparently lessening the tension in the CCAP General Assembly. Many observers, however, are of the view that the border issue is not over but that the two synods have swept the dirt under the carpet; pretending that their declaration of “no more borders” has solved the problem, when in actual fact it is a recipe for socio-theological pitfalls in the sense that matters of ethnicity and the catholicity of the Church will always have a bearing on the Church’s witness to the Kingdom of God. Finally, the chapter presents an ecclesiological evaluation of some proposals being made for the sake of the future of the CCAP. In doing this the chapter tries to show the theological pitfalls that have been dogging and continue to dog the CCAP in this century.

9.2 Oneness of the Synods without Borders

The formation of the CCAP epitomised missionary cooperation in Malawi, at least among those of the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition. It was hoped that the united church would open its arms and embrace new members that would want to join it and that expectation has always been there in the history of the CCAP.¹ However, the CCAP has remained a product of the efforts of the Scottish and Dutch Presbyterian/Reformed missions only without being joined by any other church from other quarters as it was initially hoped. This meant that the union had to continue with the three original members and later the five synods when Nkhoma and Livingstonia gave birth to the Synods of Harare and Zambia respectively. One can therefore only imagine what the CCAP would have been had it been joined by other denominations from a different missionary background.²

¹ Christoff Martin Pauw, “Mission and Church in Malawi: The History of the Nkhoma Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian 1889-1962”, DTh, University of Stellenbosch, 1980, 265.

² In the 1960s there was a renewed discussion for the possibility of coming up with a united denomination from different backgrounds. This initiative included the Anglicans and the Churches of Christ apart from the three Malawian CCAP Synods and Bishop Stephen Neil of the united Church of South India once chaired the deliberations of the Church Union Committee’s consultations at Chilema. This initiative did not work partly because the CCAP Synods themselves could not agree to step into more visible unity because of their own differences. This hindered the progress for further

It can be observed that the five synods are very close to each other in terms of theological and historical roots. As it has been demonstrated earlier on, the history and theology of all the CCAP synods can be traced back to the ministry of the Geneva Reformer, John Calvin, in the 16th century. From the beginning and to a large extent even up to now the CCAP synods devised and followed a method of keeping their oneness intact by respecting one another's sphere of influence in the belief that they were one denomination under the umbrella of the General Assembly. For a synod to go and work into another's territory was considered an anomaly and as an unnecessary duplication of the work of spreading the same gospel that the other synod was preaching in the area. This was the origin of the concept of comity, which was originally started by the founding missionaries of the synods and continued by the local leadership of the synods and the General Assembly when the missionaries handed over the leadership of the Church to the locals. The only development that has disturbed this state of affairs is the boundary dispute between the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma in Malawi, more especially now that the two synods have agreed not to consider or respect boundaries between them and the multiple congregations in South Africa of all the three Malawian Synods. The question one would ask at this stage is: Are the synods still one in as far as denominational identity is concerned since they are now competing among themselves? At least that is the situation between Livingstonia and Nkhoma in Malawi. Besides, the three Malawian Synods have branches in South Africa where they operate side by side using the name of the CCAP but recognising their differences according to Synodical affiliation in Malawi.

All this shows that the oneness of the synods is only in terms of the basics of their theology, historical roots and rudimentary cooperation in the General Assembly. The way the synods are treated and the way they operate make them denominations in their own right. One can therefore argue that the oneness of the CCAP as a denomination can only be in the effective organisation of the General Assembly and the ability of the synods to keep away from their sisters' territories when it comes to establishing churches in those territories, realising that their sister's efforts are their own as they are all one. While this issue currently seems to affect only the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma, in future it is likely to escalate because the context in which the synods operate is always changing. For example the Synods of Livingstonia, Nkhoma and Blantyre are not confined to their areas of influence in Malawi. Livingstonia has churches side by side with Harare Synod in Bulawayo and Harare in Zimbabwe, besides her presence in South

accommodation from other denominations. For a thorough and testimonial treatment of this initiative see: Bill Jackson, *Send Us Friends*, Belfast: Bill Jackson, 1996, pp. 318-329.

Africa. Even though it was decided at the General Assembly meeting of 2007 that the Malawian Synods should pull out of Zimbabwe and South Africa and handover their congregations to churches of the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition, nothing has happened up to now, almost a decade since that decision was made.

It can therefore be concluded that as long as the synods continue to pursue their own synodical agenda, including ignoring their own boundaries, we cannot talk of a unified denomination. However, even if the synods were to surrender their churches and pull out from their encroached positions, there would not be much change in the life of the denomination when the umbrella body is clearly weaker than the synods.

9.3 Consolidating Synodical Independence

The history of the CCAP from the 1970s to date can be described as a history of intended greater unity with the opposite practical results. Each and every General Assembly meeting has witnessed a call to greater unity among the CCAP synods, culminating in the 2002 constitution which went further to outline areas of cooperation and closer unity. However, what is obtaining on the ground, even after the 2002 constitution, is the fact that the synods are becoming more and more autonomous, hence consolidating their independence despite the common use of the name CCAP for all of them. This trend is reflected in the synods' ministries, especially where the synods have congregations side by side with their sister synods as is the case in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

9.4 Foreign Expansion

The CCAP Synods have over the years expanded to foreign countries. The initial expansion was when the CCAP Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma (while they were still missions) established congregations in Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Nkhoma Mission's responsibility over the Mozambican congregations ceased prior to her joining the CCAP family. However, her responsibility over the Zimbabwean churches continued up to the time the Synod of Harare was established. The Livingstonia Synod's responsibility over some of the Zambian congregations also continued until the formation of the Synod of Zambia. As has been seen in these two countries, the churches there grew to such an extent that two new synods of Harare and Zambia were born, making the CCAP to have five synods.

This initial expansion was followed later by the opening of new churches in South Africa. This initiative has seen the Synod of Livingstonia establishing several congregations in South Africa, which form the Johannesburg Presbytery. Previously the Johannesburg Presbytery included the Synod of Livingstonia congregations of Bulawayo and Harare in Zimbabwe but of late, the Zimbabwean congregations have also established their own presbytery in order to reduce transport costs to and from Johannesburg.³ The South African congregations of the Synod of Livingstonia's Johannesburg Presbytery include the following: Johannesburg North, Johannesburg Central, Johannesburg South and Cape Town.⁴ The Synod of Livingstonia has in recent years also spread to neighbouring Tanzania. The churches in Tanzania are under Ngerenge-Mbeya Presbytery and Chitipa Presbytery.⁵ Some observers point out that the CCAP congregations in South Africa and Tanzania should change their names because 'Central Africa' does not exist in South Africa and Tanzania. I consider this to be food for thought that if the CCAP really wants to sustainably expand beyond Central Africa, then it should consider finding a relevant name for the sake of its non-Central African congregations.⁶

While the Synod of Livingstonia has specific presbyteries for the churches under its jurisdiction outside Malawi, the Blantyre Synod's style is to have the foreign congregations placed under the presbyteries that are in Malawi. For example the congregations in Johannesburg are under the oversight of Blantyre City Presbytery.⁷ It therefore follows that whenever there is need for a pastor in South Africa, the church in Malawi sends one.⁸ Nkhoma Synod too has her own congregations in South Africa. The Johannesburg congregation of Nkhoma Synod is actually registered as a company (non-profit company) with its classification as "international church and related activities."⁹ Nkhoma Synod's congregation is under Mvera

³ Interview Rev S. Kadogana, Sunday School and Literature Department Coordinator, Mzuzu, 21.4.16. See also: www.caapsolinia.org/?page_id=63, retrieved 10.4.15.

⁴ See: www.caapsolinia.org/?page_id=63, retrieved 10.4.15.

⁵ Interview Rev M.G.K. Mzembe, former Synod Literature Secretary and Stone House Manager, Khondowe, 31.7.15. Also Rev. Frank S. Kadogana, Phone interview, 9.9.15.

⁶ See: Nafe Immanuel Nyanda, "Blantyre CCAP Synod's Johannesburg Church Marvels Appointment of New Pastor", www.malawivoice.com/2013/08/21/blantyre-ccap-synods-johannesburg-church-marvels-appointment-of-new-pastor/, 12.4.15.

⁷ Info. Rev Innocent Chikopa, electronic correspondence, 2.6.15.

⁸ Currently the pastor is Rev Kutani who is responsible for Turfontein, Boksburg and Sasolburg prayer houses under Berea CCAP Congregation.

⁹ See: "Johannesburg Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Nkhoma Synod in South Africa)", <http://www.zacorporates.com/corp/308471.html>, retrieved 2.6.15.

Presbytery. The idea of having Nkhoma Synod's South African congregation placed under Mvera Presbytery was for the recognition of the importance of Mvera in the history of Nkhoma Synod since that is where the first DRC mission was established.¹⁰

The Synods of Harare and Zambia are yet to open churches in South Africa or in any other neighbouring country. One explanation for the two synods not having churches in South Africa would be that they are still small compared to Malawian synods and therefore they would not be in a position to expand outside their own countries of origin at this stage. The second explanation, at least in the case of Harare Synod, is that it is largely a church of Malawian immigrants in Zimbabwe and it would not be easy for them to go and open another Church of immigrants in South Africa.¹¹ As for the Synod of Zambia, there is a possibility for them also to establish a church in South Africa following their own immigrants there if the Malawian scenario is anything to go by. This must be seen in view of the fact that South Africa is the biggest economy in the SADC region and one of the most prosperous countries in Africa, making it a destination for many that are in search of greener pasture from the SADC region and beyond.¹²

The proliferation of different brands of the CCAP in South Africa, all coming from Malawian synods, was a cause for embarrassment to some in the General Assembly and it was decided that efforts should be made to have the CCAP congregations in South Africa united into one CCAP without the encumbrances of Malawian Synods' names. However, when a General Assembly delegation visited the South African congregations it was told in no uncertain terms that they had no business trying to unite the different synods' congregations in South Africa when they have not been successful in doing the same in Malawi.¹³ Apart from this initiative, the General Assembly also resolved at its 21st Meeting that the CCAP congregations in South Africa be transferred from the hands of the Synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma to South African churches of the Presbyterian/Reformed family.¹⁴ The

¹⁰ Oral information, Rev Dr W.R. Kawale, 9.7.15.

¹¹ See: Joseph Juma, "Immigration and Its Effects on Our Church", *REC FOCUS*, Vol 3 no. 1 March 2003. Sourced from www.ccapharasesynod.com/paperonccap.htm, retrieved 10.5.15.

¹² See: Amos Saurombe, "The Role of South Africa in SADC Regional Integration: The Making or Breaking of the Organization", *Journal of International Commercial Law and Technology*, Vol. 5, Issue 3 (2010).

¹³ Oral Information, Rev Dr W.R. Kawale, 8.5.14.

¹⁴ CCAP General Assembly, Press Release, 25th January 2007.

resolution has never been carried out and it has never been followed. Since the year 2007 when this resolution was made up to the present time (2016) the three Malawian CCAP synods of Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma are still operating their congregations in South Africa unhindered and unperturbed by this General Assembly resolution.

A closer look at this General Assembly resolution reveals that there are actually four conditions that need to be met for it to be successfully carried out. The first condition is the willingness of the congregants to be transferred to the South African churches. It was not considered at that time and it has not been considered up to now if the members of the various CCAP congregations in South Africa would be willing to be detached from their home Synods in order to be under the pastoral oversight of South African Reformed/Presbyterian denominations in obedience to a General Assembly resolution. While opinion is likely to be divided in any congregation, I argue that the majority of the congregants would not want to join South African churches because they are socially and culturally comfortable in their Malawian synods' congregations.¹⁵ Besides, if joining a South African Presbyterian/Reformed Church was an easier option for the Malawian immigrants, why did they not join those churches in the first place? It has to be pointed out that Church affiliation is more than merely an administrative issue. It is spiritual, cultural, emotional, social and otherwise hence it is not a simple thing to make a decision in a lofty committee and assume that the congregants in the various congregations will find it easier to adhere to that decision.¹⁶

Secondly, the other issue to consider was the willingness of the South African churches themselves to take over pastoral oversight of the Malawian immigrant congregations. How would they integrate these whole congregations of Malawian immigrants into their system without creating tensions in their churches? Whatever advantages would be there for the South African churches, implementing this decision would not be an easy thing for them considering matters of the sociology of religion.¹⁷ Rev Dr Kawale is of the view that the South African churches would easily accept the responsibility. Interestingly, in the case of Nkhoma Synod, the Dutch Reformed Church has at one time assisted the Nkhoma Synod pastors in South Africa

¹⁵ This does not mean that segregation is a good thing in the Church but it is to underscore the fact that Christians in many cases behave according to social realities and not in view of the ideal when it comes to their church life.

¹⁶ For a brief but lucid discussion of the correlates of religious affiliation see: Ian Robertson, *Sociology*, New York: Worth Publishers, ²1983, pp. 420-421.

¹⁷ Ian Robertson, *Sociology*, New York: Worth Publishers, ²1983, p. 420.

by providing money for the renewal of their expired work permits in South Africa.¹⁸ This enabled the Nkhoma Synod pastors to continue leading Nkhoma Synod churches in South Africa under the auspices of the South African Dutch Reformed Church but it was not suggested by the South African “mother” church that it should take over the responsibility of caring for the Nkhoma congregations in South Africa.

The third condition to be met is the readiness of the synods to execute such a resolution. Despite the resolution being carried in the General Assembly meeting, how prepared and ready were the synods to do such a thing? The silence on this issue since the resolution was passed in 2007 is clear evidence that it was never in the interest of the synods to attempt such a thing despite the General Assembly’s recommendation or resolution in the heat of debates concerning the Synods’ differences. Ironically, the General Assembly even came up with dates for this process as learnt from the following passage from its press release:

The General Assembly resolved to set up a committee to oversee the implementation of the process of pulling back, a process which should be done by 30th June, 2007. Synods are encouraged to begin the process of consultation, sensitisation and handover at earliest convenience.¹⁹

Almost a decade after the decision, the synods are yet to find it convenient to start the “process of consultation, sensitisation and handover.”²⁰ Consequently, it is business as usual in the South African congregations with pastors going and coming back.

Lastly, the other issue to consider is the capacity of the General Assembly to fulfil such a daunting task within a given period of time; exercising authority over the synods by way of supervision and dealing punitively with defaulting synods. So far, nothing has been done on this issue and it seems the issue has died a natural death after no Synod or General Assembly members mentioned it again in their subsequent meetings. In any case the period between 2007 and 2013 was one of the most trying periods in the history of the General Assembly as the organisation became almost dead due to the disagreements culminating from the Livingstonia/Nkhoma Synods’ boundary dispute. Consequently, the CCAP synods continue to operate their foreign congregations unhindered, emphasising their Synodical differences even in foreign lands. This is another instance demonstrating that the Synods are actually

¹⁸ Oral Information, Rev Dr W.R. Kawale, 9.7.15.

¹⁹ CCAP General Assembly, Press Release, 25th January 2007.

²⁰ CCAP General Assembly, Press Release, 25th January 2007.

independent denominations despite their use of the CCAP name as if they are one denomination.

9.5 Loose Cooperation and Synodical Sisterhood

Despite all their differences and seemingly lack of cooperation, the CCAP synods still cooperate and regard one another as sister synods under the union. It is this fact that makes the General Assembly continue working and sustaining CCAP unity though in itself it is not a force to reckon with. My observation is that the General Assembly is and can be only what the synods allow it to be. Since the General Assembly's very mandate comes from the good will of the synods, it will continue to disappoint those that expect much from it in relation to providing unified leadership to the five CCAP synods.

So far we have seen that the current arrangement of the CCAP synods does not favour a General Assembly that is stronger than the synods. In any case you cannot have people coming from their own synods strengthening the General Assembly when their own welfare is in the hands of their respective synods and not in the General Assembly. The sisterhood of the synods therefore continues without making it stronger and without even trying to make the General Assembly stronger.

The observation therefore is that the synods are in some kind of a loose cooperation as their cooperation does not go the whole way to behaving like one denomination but they do recognise their sisterhood in the General Assembly. That is why even though in some places they are competing for members, when a member of a congregation transfers from a congregation of one synod to another, they are warmly welcomed in the new synod's congregation and issues concerning differences or rivalry among the synods are not raised. I have witnessed in many Sunday worship services in Mzuzu City where the new members of congregations usually referred to as visitors when coming from the Central Region of Malawi explain that they were either members of Nkhoma Synod or Livingstonia Synod in the Central Region and they are welcomed just like anyone else irrespective of which congregation or presbytery or synod they are coming from. The situation is the same when they go to Blantyre Synod.

Such observations make some commentators to conclude that the differences and rivalries among CCAP synods are merely administrative since the grassroots congregations have no problems with synodical differences, as what matters to them is that they belong to the CCAP.

The only exceptions to this observation are those congregations that are in controversial places where belonging to a particular synod sends a message to those that belong to a different one.

9.6 The Synods as Different Denominations

So far, this study has shown that the CCAP synods share the same theological and historical roots back to John Calvin in Geneva, which should be easier for them to be fully united under one denomination whose structure goes beyond the federal structure of the current CCAP General Assembly. However, the Synods are very different from each other due to the influence of churches that established the mission stations that developed into the synods, as we know them. Moreover, the synods do not want to give up their differences, a thing which their foreign partners seem to cherish.

It has to be remembered though that since the Harare Synod developed from Nkhoma Synod and the Synod of Zambia developed from the Synod of Livingstonia, there are more similarities between Nkhoma and Harare on the one hand and between Livingstonia and Zambia on the other. However, despite the closeness in the synods that are more related to each other, the current status of the synods shows that they are all independent denominations and their day to day business is conducted without much ado about the position of the other synods or that of the General Assembly.²¹ In any case apart from the steering committee, the General Assembly only meets once in every four years and sometimes even less frequently when for some reasons the synods fail to organise themselves for a General Assembly meeting as was the case between 2007 and 2013. This means that the cooperation described above works among the CCAP synods in the same way it works for other churches with which the CCAP cooperates. For example someone transferring from the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia going to Blantyre Synod is treated in the same way as someone transferring from, say, the Zambezi Evangelical Church to any of the CCAP synods.²²

This observation proves that apart from the common use of the name CCAP the Synods are indeed different denominations which makes the CCAP under the umbrella of the General

²¹ At the time of gathering information for this study only the Synod of Zambia mentioned the General Assembly on its website and acknowledged the fact that the Synod is under the General Assembly. See: www.ccapzambia.org/organisational-chart.html, 4.6.15.

²² The Synods have lists of churches with which they cooperate and my observation is that these churches are on the same level with sister synods when it comes to their former members in the CCAP congregations.

Assembly not a denomination at all. It is this meta-denominational characteristic of the General Assembly that makes the current study to deny the oneness of the five synods under one denomination. The observation that the CCAP is a mere federation of independent denominations, therefore, makes much sense. It is in view of this observation that one begins to understand the neglect of the General Assembly premises by the synods as well as the lack of vibrancy of the organisation at that higher level because the organisation is practically meta-denominational.

It is this realisation – that the organisation is meta-denominational – that has created two schools of thought with regard to peoples' search for a solution to the problems currently rocking the CCAP. The first school of thought is of the view that the synods are already far advanced in working on their own, so much so that the best course would be to let them continue with that without imposing unnecessary restrictions on them for the sake of the unity of the General Assembly. Practically, this view supports the abolition of synodical boundaries so that the independent synods should continue to operate freely and to be able to open new churches wherever they want even in competition with sister synods. Such a scenario would give chance to CCAP Christians of a particular locality to choose their synod of choice among the five synods of the General Assembly depending on the presence of the synods in the area. The relationship of the synods in this case would continue to be a loose one without efforts to increase the efficiency of the General Assembly since the goal is not to empower the General Assembly for the sake of the unity of the Synods as one denomination. On the contrary, it is to perpetuate and enhance synodical independence and autonomy, thereby respecting the synods as independent organisations, which they have always been.

While the oneness of the synods under the General Assembly has always been seen as a mark of unity in the CCAP, the perpetuation of synodical boundaries among the synods has had its own negatives. For example the differences in the political regions in Malawi are magnified by differences in language and culture. The fact that the CCAP synods roughly correspond to these differences has always made the synods in Malawi to be identified by the differences as observed in the regions. The danger of clinging to Synodical boundaries, therefore, has been that the synods would continue to be associated with certain ethnic groups and their particular

cultures and languages.²³ On the other hand those that are championing for the continued independence of the synods argue that when synods embark on evangelism and discipleship irrespective of their boundaries people will eventually stop associating the synods with particular ethnic groups. This would be enhancing the catholicity of the church since the church is not supposed to be identified with a particular ethnic and or linguistic group. The General Assembly would therefore be an assembly of people from different cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds across all the synods with no any synod being identified with earthly designations of culture, ethnicity and language.

9.7 More Unity of the Synods Reconsidered

Views that lament the CCAP's departure from unity advocate for a stronger CCAP under the revamped General Assembly. How this would actually work is not fully explained by the advocates of this view but the general thinking after observing that there can be no true unity while the synods retain a lot of power, is that the synods should be dissolved so that the presbyteries can be empowered.²⁴ Thereafter the General Assembly would be the assembly of the representatives of the presbyteries rather than of the Synods.²⁵ But what proponents of this view do not say is what would happen to the synods' headquarters when the synods are dissolved. Would they be turned into presbytery headquarters of the presbytery in which geographical vicinity they are currently situated? Who would be empowered to do such a thing since the General Assembly does not have the capacity to do it? Will the synods and their leadership accept to fade into insignificance for the sake of a stronger CCAP under the General Assembly? These are some of the questions to ponder when considering a new post-boundary dispute CCAP and it seems the answers to these questions are currently not available.

In his online news article, Victor Kaonga, muses, by way of suggestion, that perhaps it is time there was a "United Presbyterian Church (UPC)" in order to deal with the problem of unity

²³ See: Hastings Matemba Abale-Phiri, "Interculturalisation as Transforming Praxis: The Case of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian Blantyre Synod Urban Ministry," DTh (Missiology), University of Stellenbosch, 2011, p. 144.

²⁴ See: Lapani Nkhonjera, "The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian: Formation and Impact on its Unity and Disunity", BD, Zomba Theological College, 2008, p. 80.

²⁵ Lapani Nkhonjera, "The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian: Formation and Impact on its Unity and Disunity", BD, Zomba Theological College, 2008, p. 82.

in the CCAP.²⁶ What Victor Kaonga does not explain is whether the United Presbyterian Church he is proposing should rise from the ashes of the old CCAP or it should be a breakaway church that purports to uphold what the CCAP stands for though it is failing to succeed in that position. I think Mr Kaonga's point is the second one since in the same breath he mentions the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Malawi (PCM) which was formed in 1998 due to the resistance of the then CCAP leadership to embrace innovations in the church as introduced by the Charismatic movement.²⁷ When the Presbyterian Church of Malawi was born in 1998 some people were of the view that it was going to replace the CCAP or to cause a serious division in the denomination. However, what eventually happened was that the PCM only proved to be a split-off from the CCAP and over the years it has not been able to exert much influence in the country. As a result, the change the original PCM members were agitating for in the CCAP did not take place. The CCAP has continued up to now and it has over the years made some changes to suit those influenced by the charismatic renewal, but it has not fundamentally changed. It is, however, a force to reckon with in Malawi more than the PCM, which is yet to make its presence felt in many areas. One therefore wonders if the formation of the UPC, as Mr Kaonga proposes, would achieve anything apart from merely causing another split-off denomination from the CCAP in the way it happened with the PCM and other churches that have broken away from the CCAP over the course of history due to what their founders perceived to be negative elements in the federative denomination.

Incidentally, it has to be mentioned that in the history of the CCAP the nomenclature of United Presbyterian Church (UPC or UP) is not a new thing as it is part and parcel of the roots of the Livingstonia Synod back in Scotland. To a certain extent these roots also touch the history of Blantyre Synod by virtue of its being a mission of the Church of Scotland. The name United Presbyterian Church has appeared and still appears in many countries today but at this stage in this study we are concerned with the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland (UP) which existed between 1847 and 1900.²⁸ This church was formed in 1847 when the United Secession

²⁶ Victor Kaonga, "CCAP Crisis: Time for United Presbyterian Church", <http://www.nyasatimes.com/2015/04/28/ccap-crisis-time-for-united-presbyterian-church/1> of 6 6/8/2015.

²⁷ See: Rhodian G. Munyenyembe, *Christianity and Socio-Cultural Issues: The Charismatic Movement and the Contextualization of the Gospel in Malawi*, Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2011, pp. 46-47. Also Patrick M'banga, "The Emergence of Independent Churches: A Case Study of the Presbyterian Church of Malawi", BA, University of Malawi, 2000.

²⁸ See: John McKerrow, *History of the Foreign Missions of the Secession and United Presbyterian Church*, Edinburgh: A. Elliot, 1867; George Robson, *Missions of the United Presbyterian Church:*

Church and the Relief Church merged to form one denomination. In the year 1900 this church merged with the Free Church of Scotland to form the United Free Church of Scotland (UFC). In 1929 the United Free Church of Scotland united with the Church of Scotland.

Interestingly, before the United Presbyterian Church merged with the Free Church of Scotland in 1900, the Free Church had already established the Livingstonia Mission in Malawi since 1875. However, more interestingly, the leader of the Free Church of Scotland's Livingstonia Mission was none other than the celebrated missionary, Dr Robert Laws, who happened to be a church minister originally not of the Free Church of Scotland but of the United Presbyterian Church (UP). It can therefore be argued that the two denominations were united in the person of Dr Robert Laws before they merged into one church in 1900 forming the United Free Church of Scotland. It is this merger of the United Free Church of Scotland with the Church of Scotland that connects the UP with Blantyre Synod.

What this means is that the name UPC or UP and what it stands for as per Mr Victor Kaonga's suggestion, are things that are already in the "blood" of the CCAP through historical circumstances. Therefore, as one commentator argued against Victor Kaonga's proposal concerning the establishment of the United Presbyterian Church, the solution to the problems rocking the CCAP is not in a name, no matter how uniting that name may sound, because even the name CCAP itself was meant to unite rather than divide.²⁹ Mr Kaonga's proposal, though with good intentions, fails to offer something that can really transform the CCAP in its unity because neither new names nor breakaways have proved to be a solution to the problems such as the CCAP is currently facing. This means that with or without Mr Victor Kaonga's proposal there are still only two options for the CCAP at this crossroads: 1) Either let the synods continue to exist as independently as possible as separate denominations with the General Assembly working as a loose umbrella body in which the synods recognise and celebrate their theological and historical togetherness no matter how lackadaisically; or 2) Let the synods pave way for stronger presbyteries that would be united under a stronger CCAP General Assembly. The succeeding sections discuss these two options at length.

described in a series of stories Edinburgh: Offices of the United Presbyterian Church, 1896. Also "United Presbyterian Church", <http://www.grantonline.com/proctor-family-genealogy/places/united-presbyterian-church/united-presbyterian-church.htm>, 23.6.15.

²⁹ See: Straight Talk, "Comment no. 44", <http://www.nyasatimes.com/2015/04/28/ccap-crisis-time-for-united-presbyterian-church/1> of 6 6/8/2015 4:23 PM.

9.7.1 The First Option: More Independence of the Synods with no Boundaries

The question is how can one of the two proposals work in practical terms? Given the present scenario in the CCAP the first option is easier for the Synods than the second one because, in a way, the synods are already trying to achieve the first option, though not all synods are in support of it. On the part of the Synod of Livingstonia the philosophy of “live and let live” is already in operation with their Nkhoma Synod colleagues in Malawi and also with both Nkhoma and Blantyre Synods, by default, in South Africa and with the Harare Synod in Zimbabwe. The issue becomes complicated when Blantyre Synod is brought into the Malawian equation because the Synod of Livingstonia so far has not provided any justification whatsoever to go into Blantyre Synod’s territory and start planting congregations there. Whether the Synod of Livingstonia had other motives for going into Nkhoma Synod’s territory or not, what is known officially is their own testimony that they are now in Nkhoma Synod’s territory because Nkhoma Synod could not withdraw from Livingstonia’s territory into which it had encroached for more than half a century.³⁰ Whether Livingstonia’s move is justified or not in this regard is not the issue at present. The issue is that if synodical boundaries are supposed to continue being respected among the Synods, then both the Synod of Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synod are wrong because they have violated a fundamental principle of CCAP oneness as hitherto understood.

This status, though contrary to the spirit of the General Assembly’s current constitution, gives the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma the freedom to continue planting churches into each other’s territory and thereby promoting the philosophy of “live and let live.” This means that in as far as the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma are concerned the first option for the future of the CCAP is already being practised as these two synods are existing side by side with no respect for boundaries between them as denominations that are different but also one in name under the weak unity that is the CCAP General Assembly. The same scenario is obtaining in South Africa where the two synods have churches under the name of the CCAP with no reference to any territorial boundaries with regard to their influence in that country. Blantyre Synod is a participant in as far as the South African scenario is concerned while in Malawi it is enjoying a neutral position albeit with some apprehension due to the behaviour of the two sister Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma. While Blantyre Synod has some problems with Nkhoma

³⁰ Synod of Livingstonia, “Solution to the Border Dispute between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods”, Press Release Issued at the 30th Synod Assembly Held at Bandawe Mission Station from 22nd to 27th September, 2006.

Synod in some of their shared boundaries, the issue between the two is not as pronounced as is the case with the Livingstonia and Nkhoma boundary dispute.³¹

In any case if the first option of CCAP unity is to be sustained it means that all the boundaries separating the different synods' territories will have to be abolished. Consequently, Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods will have a justification for planting new congregations in the 'former' exclusive territory of Blantyre Synod. On the other hand, Blantyre Synod would also be free to go and establish churches in the Central and Northern Regions of Malawi, which are traditionally known as Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods' spheres respectively. The same would apply to the Synods of Harare and Zambia; they too would be free to plant a CCAP Christianity of their own synod's brand wherever they want, be it in Malawi, Zambia or Zimbabwe irrespective of the presence of one or more of their own sister Synods' congregations in the area. That would be the final nail in the coffin of missionary and synodical comity that has characterised Presbyterian cooperation in this part of the world from the 19th century missionary era.

9.7.2 The Second Option: A Stronger General Assembly and Presbyteries with no Synods

Theoretically, the second option promises to be a better one for the future of the CCAP. It is an option that guarantees the unity of the CCAP under a stronger General Assembly. Secondly, since the proposed major presbyteries will not correspond to regional boundaries and ethnic groups, it is likely to cure the problem of regionalism in the CCAP. However, as already hinted at, who will see to it that synods have completely died in order for the presbyteries and the General Assembly to take full control of the CCAP? This means that while this second option promises better things than the first, it is the most difficult to accomplish given the situation as it is in the CCAP synods at present. The process of de-registering the synods and distributing their property to the presbyteries and the General Assembly would be a mammoth task even if the will to do it were there.

So far the general observation is that no synod is willing to dissolve for the sake of a more united CCAP denomination with a stronger and efficient General Assembly. The positions of the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma are that the boundaries of the Synodical territories

³¹ Cf. Humphreys F.C. Zgambo, "Conflict within the Church: A Theological Approach to Conflict Resolution with Special Reference to the Boundary Disputes between the Livingstonia and Nkhoma Synods in Malawi," MTh, University of Fort Hare, 2011, p. 225.

should be abolished once and for all so that the synods are not restricted by boundary agreements when they desire to go and establish their branches wherever they want. Cautiously, it is being emphasised that this arrangement should currently apply only to the Synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma since Blantyre, Harare and Zambia are not directly involved in the Livingstonia/Nkhoma dispute.

However, as we have seen before, this is a tricky issue because it would not make sense to have a constitution of the CCAP General Assembly that treats the Synods differently on the issue of boundaries because of two synods that have decided not to respect boundaries between them. Moreover, one would question why the boundaries should matter only in Malawi and not in other countries where CCAP Synods are establishing congregations side by side. A good example here is South Africa, where as we have already seen, we have congregations belonging to Livingstonia, Blantyre and Nkhoma Synods with no mention of the issue of synodical boundaries there.

9.7.3 An Ecclesiological Evaluation of the Two Options

While the Synods' observance of boundaries seem not to be a good thing, it has one advantage of making sure that people do not congregate based on regional, ethnic, cultural or linguistic grounds. For example, a member of the Livingstonia Synod who goes into Blantyre Synod's territory automatically becomes a member of Blantyre Synod if he continues with his CCAP affiliation. In his new congregation he is likely to notice that there are people from many corners of Malawi with different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds. By joining this group the new member's experience of being a Christian is enriched. However, if there can be a Synod of Livingstonia congregation in the vicinity such a member would be tempted to join the Livingstonia Synod's congregation rather than the Blantyre one. While that would be quite convenient to the member in question, it would not be a good thing for the Church as a whole. Firstly, by always associating with people from one's own region people tend to become naive, short-sighted and prejudiced, which are things that are against the spirit of Christianity. Besides, by sticking to one's own people group in terms of region, ethnicity or language a Christian community tends to live in isolation, reminiscent of Jewish ghettos in medieval Europe. I argue, notwithstanding sociological pressure, that such a scenario is against the catholicity of the church since earthly designations divide the body of Christ. Not going for this option would be safer in the sense that congregations would avoid the risk of being associated with regionalism,

tribalism and any other form of segregation that is not acceptable in the body of Christ.³² It is unfortunate that the CCAP Synods in Malawi found themselves in this situation by default. The good missionary idea of respecting one another's sphere of influence (comity) while preaching what was believed to be the same gospel message as understood from the point of view of Reformed Theology, eventually made the synods to be associated with the people and regions of their missionary influence.³³ It is for this reason that a Synod can easily operate in its traditional area but when it goes into another Synod's territory the issue of a particular ethnic group invading another group's territory is mentioned. This notwithstanding, when people of other regions are in a region not considered their own they are easily served by that region's synod but it becomes intolerable for that Synod to serve them when they are in their region of origin because it is a synod associated with another group of people. This is the mentality that needs to die if the synods are to pass the test of the catholicity of the Church. It is this observation that makes the establishment of a stronger General Assembly with presbyteries excluding synods a better option because in that case issues of territorial control in connection to ethnic, cultural and linguistic designations would be minimised.

9.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have tried to look at the different proposals that are being suggested as a way forward for the CCAP in this post-boundary dispute era. This has been done from the point of view of ecclesiology in order to show that the issues that affect the church administratively have repercussions in other dimensions of the church's life as it continues with its Kingdom witness. The discussion in this chapter is another instance to show that the Synods are separate denominations that cooperate loosely within the CCAP General Assembly, whose future and welfare does not look very bright at the moment. It has been observed that the unity of the CCAP can continue with a weaker General Assembly while enhancing the independency of the synods or by strengthening the General Assembly while dissolving the synods and empowering the presbyteries. What is coming out quite clearly is that the CCAP is at the crossroads and a decision is supposed to be made by the current leadership to map the way forward for the future

³² Cf. D.D. Phiri, "CCAP Border Dispute a Danger to the Nation (Opinion)," *The Nation*, Tuesday, November 23, 2010.

³³ See: J.L. Pretorius, "The Story of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission in Nyasaland", *The Nyasaland Journal*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (January, 1957), p. 16.

of the CCAP, otherwise the current setup of the General Assembly and its Synods appears to have outlived its usefulness in the history of this federative denomination.

When the early missionaries came to establish the church in Central Africa, their desire was to see the Kingdom of God taking root in this part of the world. Their emphasis of Christianity and Commerce has been criticised by some as being shaped by their own outlook. Nevertheless, theirs was a true endeavour to the promotion of the Kingdom of God, especially with regard to its concept of being the redemptive reign of Christ in people's lives. The early missionaries did their part, and sometimes they had to make a lot of sacrifices for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In certain circumstances even some of the churches to which some of the missionaries belonged had to be dissolved or were swallowed up by other churches in trying to unify the Christian cause for the sake of the Kingdom of God which has priority over denominations. It therefore becomes imperative for the current generation of CCAP leadership to consider their own contribution to the witness of the Kingdom of God in their generation beyond commitments to mere names or physical and administrative structures.

Chapter Ten: Concluding Thoughts

As we come to the end of the discussion on the history of the CCAP as a federative denomination several issues stand out. The formation of the CCAP in 1924 was more like the appearance of the first shoots of leaves from the ground when a seed has just germinated and it is beginning to grow. It is obvious that when we consider other things the life of the new seedling, in as far as its history is concerned, goes beyond what is seen as a new plant shooting out of the ground. It is for this reason that this study decided to go deeper in appreciating the history of the CCAP by going back several steps in the history of Reformed Theology and Presbyterianism in order to show the oneness of the missions that formed the CCAP from the cradle of their theology and history. Hence the treatment of John Calvin and his ministry in Geneva which, as it were, gave birth to Reformed Theology and the Presbyterian System of Church Government, though what is obtaining in the CCAP today has with it some modifications to Calvin's practice. The argument in this regard is that despite whatever has happened in the evolution of the CCAP, it is a given fact that the synods of the CCAP can trace their theology and history back to John Calvin in Geneva, though other figures like John Knox are credited with bringing what came to be known as Calvinism to Scotland while some people, though not well-known in history, carried this brand of Christianity to the Netherlands and eventually to South Africa and Malawi. This should encourage the CCAP synods to consider their oneness seriously as the Church struggles to remain united in view of the independent status of its synods and its experience of unprecedented developments in the course of its history.

The study has also shown that the CCAP is a child of revivals as the missions that gave birth to the denomination were actually influenced by the spirit of revivals. As such the CCAP ought to continue in the spirit of revival by being ever open to spiritual renewal that has the power to rejuvenate the Church and empower it for further devolvement in the course of its history. I argue in this regard that the CCAP synods are one even in the spirit of revival and can therefore deal with their negative differences that try to snuff revivalism by perpetuating traditionalism.

In the formation of the CCAP, there was much cooperation among the missionaries. Even the pioneer missionary parties themselves were highly cooperative in their endeavour to plant the church in this part of the world. This also shows that the synods have always been one in cooperation and not in competition with one another, at least in their earlier history. However, things began to change with the actual process of the formation of the CCAP as the different

attitudes of missionary personnel from the three original missions began to manifest. The result of such differences was that the formation of the CCAP endured many compromises for the sake of the success of the unity. The problem with the compromises that were made for the sake of the ecumenical project of unity was that many things were not ironed out during the formative years of this federative denomination. Besides, the emerging African leadership did not play a significant role in the formation of the union and yet they were the ones to be entrusted with its future life.

As a result of the unfinished business at the establishment of the CCAP and subsequent developments in the federative denomination, the unity of the church that was originally conceived did not really take place. Consequently, the three original synods in Malawi have remained independent of one another, just as it would have been the case if they were different denominations altogether. The same trend continued when the CCAP congregations in Zimbabwe and Zambia attained the status of synods, thereby making the CCAP an umbrella body of five distinct denominations under the names of synods.

In line with the research hypothesis the study has therefore validated the pre-research assertion that the CCAP, with its ongoing inner wrangles and recognition of lack of real unity by its own leadership, has lost its denominational bearings (if it ever had them), having become in fact a loose umbrella body of five distinct denominations though they are considered synods of one denomination. It is in this regard that this study has referred to the CCAP as a meta-denominational organisation in the sense that its nature transcends or goes beyond what would be normally conceived as a denomination. In this case the real denominations are the synods while the General Assembly is a body that comes after the denominational phenomenon, hence meta-denominational.

The study has also validated the second hypothesis by proving from facts from the formative years of the CCAP that the original intention of the founding fathers of the CCAP to retain Synodical autonomy in respect of the mother churches arrested the development of the CCAP into a single united denomination. As we have seen the “mother churches” and other partner churches have thus continued to deal with the different synods individually (sometimes even revealing partiality) though some also deal with them as a group through the General Assembly.

In view of these observations it follows that whatever unity the future of the CCAP holds, it must first of all be acknowledged that there is actually no one CCAP denomination but five denominations. It must also be realised that despite whatever has been said before, the CCAP

has actually never been a denomination. From this premise the position of the negotiators for a closer unity and oneness of the CCAP as a denomination can be considered if that is what the leadership wants.

The efforts of the CCAP to move forward in its unity have often been hampered by references to a history that cannot be fully apprehended as it was beyond the grasp of African leadership to take full control of the CCAP, while the missionaries who were the initiators of the project belonged to their own camp in the church as it were. The onus is therefore on the current leadership to re-orientate the “denomination” since current developments show that it has reached a stage where a drastic landmark decision in its history is supposed to be made. I argue that this re-orientation of the denomination can only be successful if the leaders of the synods are concerned more with the future of the CCAP and its contribution to the witness for the Kingdom of God than with the glorious past of the missionary era from whence the synods are coming. This is not to suggest that history should not matter but rather that mistakes should be learned from history while daring to be original in the present circumstances. If the current generation of the leaders of the CCAP synods fails to do this they can be assured that the future generations will have nothing substantial to write about or recall from it. The responsibility placed upon the shoulders of the leaders of the CCAP calls for great sacrifices in a bid to being an authentic witness to the Kingdom of God in the present generation.

Areas for further Study

Since no dissertation can claim to have exhausted everything in relation to its area of study, there are things which this dissertation has not tackled that are important for our understanding of the CCAP as a federative denomination in Central Africa. For example, further research would look into the area of Church growth among the CCAP Synods and the recent histories of the synods, especially those of Livingstonia and Blantyre, from the time of African leadership. In the case of Livingstonia there has not been any substantial research treating the history of the Synod from 1940, being the year in which John McCracken stopped his story in his most significant publication.¹ The same is true for Blantyre Synod since Andrew Ross' research.²

Apart from issues of Church growth and history, other possible areas of research within the CCAP would be in matters to do with the church's contribution in current social, political, economic and environmental issues. This would be done by targeting the synods' departments that are responsible for various programmes such as the Church and Society and Health departments.

It would also be important to find out how the CCAP synods are being affected by the current developments where some church leaders who are influenced by neo-charismatic spirituality are coming up with prophetic ministries that are attracting large numbers of followers both as committed members and as mere clientele.

¹ See John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in the Northern Province*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000.

² See Andrew Ross, *Blantyre Mission and the Making of Modern Malawi*, Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 1996.

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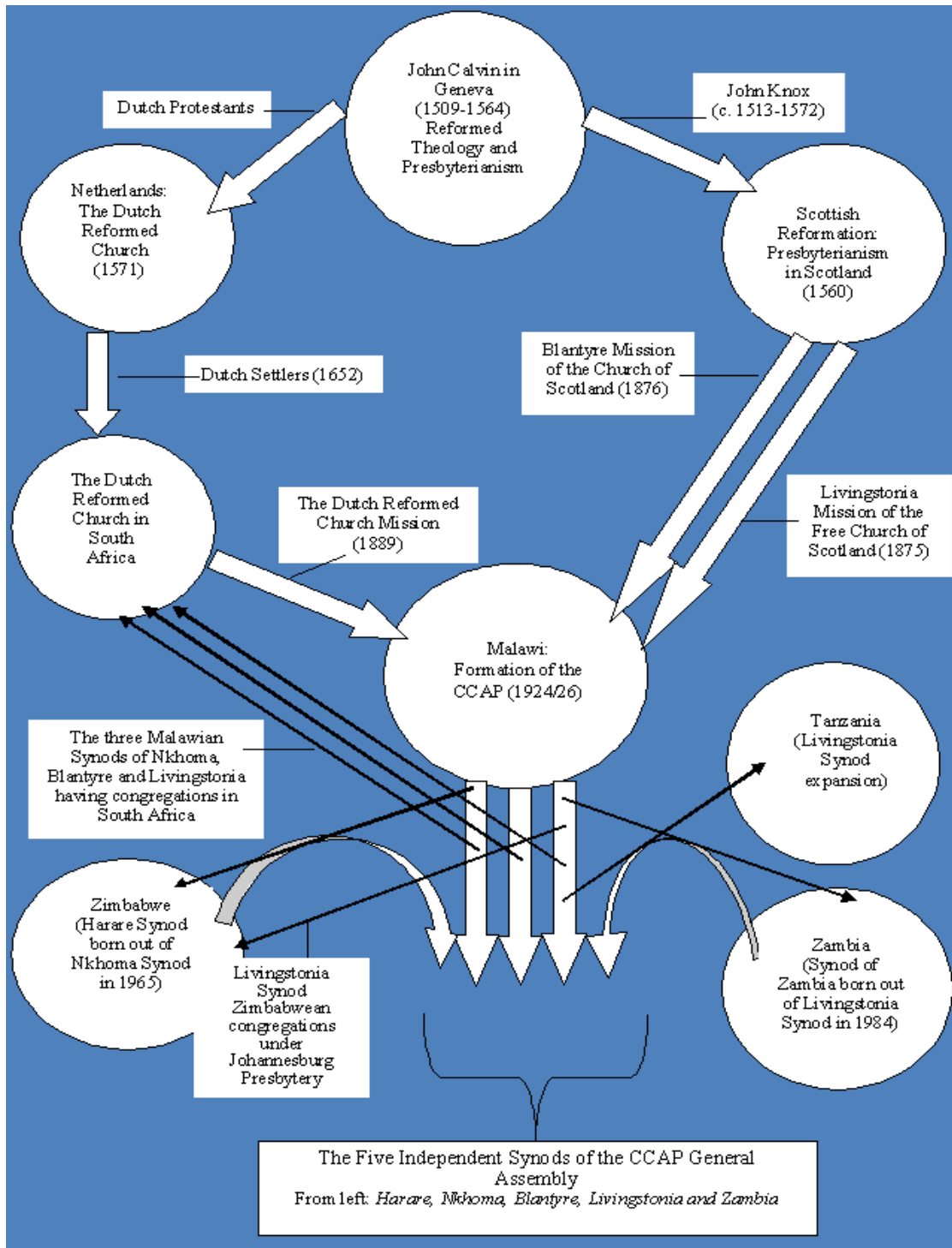
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Appendices

Appendix 1: The Genealogy of the CCAP



Note: At the time of the drawing of the above diagram the Zimbabwean congregations of the CCAP Synod of Livingstonia were still under Johannesburg Presbytery. Now they are under Harare Presbytery.

Appendix 2: *Map of East and Southern Africa showing countries where the CCAP has its presence. (There are only a few congregations in South Africa and Tanzania).*



Appendix 3: *The-not-so-impressive CCAP General Assembly Office as captured by the researcher on 14th May 2015. (Three pictures: sign post, front view and rear view of the building).*



Appendix 4: *List of Research Guiding Questions for some Formal and Informal Interviews*

1. Do you think the CCAP founding fathers achieved the goal of establishing one denomination?
2. Explain what is common in the liturgies of the CCAP synods.
3. What do you think are the major differences in the liturgies of the CCAP synods?
4. What denominational practices do you think are similar among the CCAP synods?
5. Explain what you consider to be differences in denominational practices among the CCAP Synods.
6. Do you think there has been one voice among the CCAP synods in responding to burning socio-political issues?
7. Can you explain the differences in the educational policies of the CCAP synods?
8. What do you think are the major theological differences among the CCAP synods?
9. Do you think the differences in theology affect the way the synods train their ministers?
10. What do you think are the differences in the way women are treated in the different CCAP synods?
11. How would you explain the position of the youth in the CCAP synods?
12. What would be your response to the observation that the CCAP has never been a peaceful Church from its establishment in 1924?
13. What do you think were the weaker areas in the original CCAP constitution?
14. Do you think the unity of the CCAP could have taken a different route than the one it took?
15. What are your views on the Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods wrangle?
16. Where do you place Blantyre Synod in the wrangle between Nkhoma and Livingstonia Synods?
17. Do you think the CCAP is one denomination or five denominations?
18. What do you think will be the future of the CCAP in view of the Nkhoma-Livingstonia wrangle?

19. How would you like the differences among the Synods to end for a more peaceful CCAP?
20. Explain the composition of the General Assembly
21. What is the history of the General Assembly?
22. Why is the General Assembly not known by most CCAP members?
23. How can the General Assembly be empowered in order to be a stronger body?
24. What differences do you think are there between the General Assembly as it is now known and the General Synod as it was known then?
25. How is the General Assembly funded?
26. What is the current position of the General Assembly in relation to the Livingstonia / Nkhoma Border Dispute?
27. What are the challenges of the General Assembly in coordinating CCAP unity?
28. What are the General Assembly's successes so far in fostering this unity?
29. What kind of relationships do synods have with foreign partners? How do the synods benefit from such relationships?
30. What role does the General Assembly play in foreign relationships?
31. Does the General Assembly have its own foreign partners as is the case with synods, presbyteries and some congregations?
32. What do the foreign partners say in relation to the disagreements among the Synods?
33. Why do you belong to CCAP Nkhoma Synod and not Livingstonia Synod or vice versa in areas where both synods are present?
34. What do you think about the issue of synods "quarrelling"?
35. In your view, does the "no border" policy solve the problem of the border dispute among CCAP synods?
36. How would you like the CCAP to develop in future?