The University of Malawi

Church and Politics in Malawi

A Critique Concerning the Living of the Catholic Social Teaching (1964-2004)

Dissertation Presented to
the Faculty of Humanities

Submitted in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the Degree
of Doctor of Philosophy in
Theology (Social-Ethics)

By
Gerard L.M. Chigona

May 2006

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Declaration

Declaration by the Candidate

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for any other award.

Gerard L.M. Chigona

Declaration by the Supervisors

We hereby declare that this dissertation has been submitted with the approval of the supervisors.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Patrick Kalilombe

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Abstract

The interface between the church and state, also called the social mission of the Church, remains a contentious question. It is traceable right back to the days of Jesus himself. For instance, when he was faced with the question about taxation Jesus expressly said: "*give to Caesar what is Caesar's, but give to God what is God's*" (Mk 12: 17; Mat.22: 21). In this reply Jesus shatters the concept of religious and civil inseparability. The political and religious spaces are not identical. The earliest Christian prayer of the church for the state, i.e. the letter of Clement of Rome to the Corinthians: 60:4-6, articulates a deep conviction that God bestows earthly power and authority on civil leaders. Also expressed in the prayer is the clear awareness that in certain instances political leaders have the propensity to pose and demand submission that stands in opposition to the will of God.

Indeed apostle Paul calls for obedience to imperial authorities for there is no authority except from God. Like Clement of Rome, Paul holds the position that God is responsible for the establishment of every kind of authority (Rom. 13:1). The same understanding is found in Peter 2:13-15. However, there is a cloud of ambivalence in the sense that one also notices hostility to the state by Christians (John 18:36). In moments of conflict, for example, Peter and John draw a line between allegiance to the state, on one hand, and to the commands of God, on the other (Acts 4:19). For them and for the Christians, obedience to the commands of God takes precedence.

Since 1891 the Catholic Church has worked out a concise position on the question regarding the interface between the church and state. This is expressed in what is popularly called the Catholic social teaching. **Chapter one** of this study discusses this teaching within the broad tradition of social ethics. However, unlike other trends within social ethics, the Catholic social teaching is characteristically deontological and theonomous. In **Chapter two**, the study has taken the discussion of the Catholic social teaching further. Here focus has been on the specific principles, themes and questions that constitute its preoccupation. **Chapter three** makes an observation that in Malawi, the Catholic Church started to make use of this teaching to address matters of social concern in the early 1960s.

This is evident particularly with the advent of the 3rd wave of the Catholic Action Movement and the 1961 Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter: "*How to Build a Happy Nation.*" However, immediately after independence in 1964 all the way up to early 1992 this tradition seems to blur. One hardly notices any form of engagement by the Catholic Church using its social teaching. Coincidently, this is the period when violation of human rights and all sorts of abuses was rampant. It is precisely here that the problem this study grapples with resides. We observe that despite a well established and elaborate body of teaching on fundamental social ethical issues and attendant experience on social engagement from elsewhere, the Catholic Church in Malawi, for a long time, failed to adequately live and use this teaching to inform and influence public opinion and processes in matters of governance. Consequently, in **Chapter four** the study investigates the reasons that disabled the Catholic Church from living and using its social teaching as an alternative narrative to the autocratic regime at a time when it was most needed.

From early 1992, following the publication of the Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter: "*Living Our Faith*", the study notices a new face of the Catholic Church. This is the rediscovery of its prophetic voice and continued engagement with the state and society in matters of governance. Nonetheless, it is noted that this engagement is not without shortfalls. Critical among them are lack of critical depth, inadequate critical diversity in the modes of engagement; and lack of contextualisation of the teaching itself. Therefore, in order to ensure that the Catholic Church attains the relevance and credibility in as far as social justice is concerned, in **Chapter five**, the study draws two broad proposals that need critical attention. These are structural and theological review, on one hand, and the design and adoption of practical and relevant models of social engagement, on the other. We are of the strong opinion that such structural and theological shifts, together with the adoption of the new models of social engagement would enable the Catholic Church in Malawi to live and make use of its social teaching.

0.0 Acknowledgement

Let us begin by referring to one of the popular proverbs in Malawi which says: *"kunyamula denga lowola, nkuchulukana manja."* The literal translation is like this: *the lifting of a rotten roof is possible if you are many.* What it means is that a difficult task is easily accomplished if there is collaboration from a cross section of people, each bringing his or her skills, insights, knowledge and experiences. A study like this one is such type of tasks that could only be accomplished with support from a wide range of people and institutions. Therefore, in a special way, I would like to express my gratitude to my dear wife and friend, Regina Dalitso whose love has been and is a great source of strength and encouragement. My special thanks and appreciation also go to Rev. Dr. Felix Chingota and Rt. Rev. Dr. Patrick Kalilombe for the meticulous reading of this work in addition to the compassionate guidance.

I also thank Dr. Martin Ott for the assistance in identifying a place for the one-year research and course work I undertook at the **Katholieke Universiteit Leuven-Belgium**. In the same way, I would like to express my gratitude to other members of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies particularly Dr. Klaus Fiedler and Dr. Joseph C Chakanza. I appreciate the great work they have done and continue to do in the development of theological and religious studies in Malawi. While on this note let me also recognise and express my gratitude to Professor De Tavernier and Professor Johan Verstraeten for their periodic input in the designing and development of the dissertation while I was at the **Katholieke Universiteit Leuven**.

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Kadzamira, Dr. Augustine Magolowondo, Fr. P. Gamba, Kizito Tenthani, Mercy Chilunga, Mai Goba, for providing me with various information and logistical assistance. Another popular proverb says: *"kalikokha nkanyama, ali awiri ndi anthu,"* meaning that human life is such only in, with and through a community. Therefore, I would like to extend my thanks to the members of the community of the **Holy Spirit College-Leuven**, where I stayed for one year. I shall always be indebted to their love and support throughout my stay. In this regard I make particular mention of Mr. Luc, the director of the house for the warm and friendly reception upon my arrival.

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List of selected abbreviations

AACC:	*All African Council of Churches*
AAS:	*Acta Apostolicam Sedis*
ADMARC:	*Agricultural Development and Marketing Cooperation*
AMECEA:	*Association of Member Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa*
ANC:	*African National Congress*
CA:	*Centesimus Annus*
CADECOM:	*Catholic Development Commission*
CAG:	*Community Action Group*
CCC:	*Catechism of the Catholic Church*
CCJP:	*Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace*
CDP	*Christian Democratic Party*
CHEAM:	*Christian Educators Association of Malawi*
CHAM:	*Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi*
CSC:	*Christian Services Committee*
CSC:	*Center for Social Concern*
e.g.	*Exempli gratia (for example)*
ECM:	*Episcopal Conference of Malawi*
ed:	*Editor*
ERU:	*Economic Research Unit*
f.	*Following passages/verses*
GDP:	*Gross Domestic Produce*
GNP:	*Gross National Produce*
GS:	*Gaudium et Spes*
Ibid:	*Ibidem (same place)*
IMF:	*International Monetary Fund*
LESOMA:	*Socialist League of Malawi*
LG:	*Lumen Gentium*
MASAF:	*Malawi Social Action Fund*
MCP:	*Malawi Congress Party*
MM:	*Mater et Magistra*
MYP:	*Malawi Young Pioneers*
PAC:	*Public Affairs Committee*

PAP:	*Poverty Alleviation Policy*
PC:	*Privatization Commission*
PLU:	*Public Liaison Unit*
PP:	*Populorum Progressio*
PRGS:	*Poverty Reduction Growth Strategy*
PT:	*Pacem in Terris*
QA:	*Quadragesimo Anno*
RN:	*Rerum Novarum*
SACC:	*South African Council of Churches*
SADC:	*Southern Africa Development Cooperation*
SAP:	*Structural Adjustment Programme*
SCC:	*Small Christian Community*
SECAM:	*Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar*
SJC:	*Social Justice Center*
SRS:	*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*
UDF:	*United Democratic Front*
UDHR:	*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*
UN.	*United Nations*
YCS:	*Young Christian Students*
YCW:	*Young Christian Workers*

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0.0 General introduction

In 1961, three years prior to Malawi's independence, Dunduzu K. Chisiza, one of the leading figures in the nationalist movement visited India under the auspices of the Indian Council for Africa. While in that country and in the course of the symposium he had come to attend, Chisiza made a presentation under the heading: *Africa-What Lies Ahead*? Among other issues the presentation touched on the role of the churches in state and society. It was a startling presentation and in later years it has proved to be radically prophetic. This is the case because of the astounding manner in which political events eventually came to evolve along the patterns he had foreseen in the speech not only with regard to his homeland-Malawi, but also to the entire continent. An excerpt of his speech reads as follows:

> When churches, for whatever reason, slur over and condone social injustice, they remove by that omission a good part of the justification of their existence, and people have then the right to dissociate themselves from such parodies of an otherwise indispensable institution. Africa has groaned in the past, is wailing at present, and will probably yell in the future under the yoke of oppression and exploitation. It should be the duty of the churches to expose these injustices, if not to censure without malice, those responsible. It is that kind of bold vigilance which is likely to raise the churches in the eyes of the Africans and attract them to the fold of religion.[1]

Reading this excerpt, having in mind a clear line and picture of political events as they unfolded over the years from independence in 1960s all the way up to the introduction of political pluralism in 1993, it would be difficult not to appreciate the genius and political realism of Chisiza. Unlike the majority of his compatriots in the nationalist movement, the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), he seems to have had a ground to earth understanding regarding the political realities of the day. Three words in the excerpt are very revealing as they, in a way, summarise the type of politics that has characterised independent Africa for nearly half a century now. In the first place, Chisiza noted that *"Africa has* ***groaned*** *in the past;"* a typical reference to the external forces that, for centuries, plagued Africa through slavery and colonialism.

---

[1] Dunduzu K. Chisiza, "Africa-*What Lies Ahead*," in Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice. Confrontations between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1999, p. 61.

Second, he pointed out, quite boldly, that Africa *"is **wailing** at present, and will probably **yell** in the future."* In this address Chisiza not only highlighted the then struggle for freedom and independence, but also discerned vividly, the emergent forms of internal repressive and exploitative trends that would characterise post-colonial Africa.[2] Within this picture of apocalyptic despair, nevertheless, Chisiza saw in the churches a flare of hope for the suffering people. From that perspective he went on to enunciate what he considered to be the prospective and critical responsibility of the churches, namely: ***exposing*** social injustices and ***censuring*** without malice those responsible. The two constituted his vision regarding the role of the churches in Malawi and independent Africa in general.

0.1 Thesis statement

Experience in Malawi beginning from soon before and after attainment of independence in 1964, shows a picture in stark contrast to the expectations of Dunduzu Chisiza. Gross violation of human rights proliferated before the eyes of the churches that consistently wished and prayed for the prosperity of the leadership that was at the helm of the very system of torture and terror.

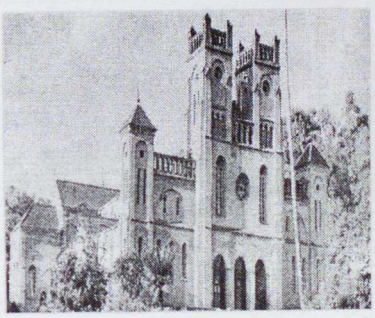


Figure 1: Limbe Cathedral

[2] This point is well illustrated by George Ayittey when he says: "...*colonial subjugation was a cultural and emotional humiliation suffered on top of the pervasive denigration of Africans as inferior. In many places the African people put up a gallant and fierce resistance to colonial rule. Their resistance was crushed with a merciless abandon that resulted in thousands of African casualties. But undeterred by these setbacks and their inferior weapons, Africans persisted with their struggle for freedom and independence. By 1990 most of Africa had been "liberated" from colonial rule except for Namibia and South Africa. But in most parts of Africa independence from oppressive colonial rule was in name only. All that changed was the color of the guards and the masters. A third and far more insidious invasion began under black neocolonialism. Educated abroad and having assumed the trappings of foreign cultures and ideologies, a new wave of invaders struck Africa. They were actually returnees, sons of Africa who briefly left to pursue studies overseas or to go into exile. But they came back with a vengeance to denigrate, to enslave, to destroy, and to colonise by imposing alien ideological systems upon the African people. The economic exploitation and political repression of the African people continued unabated.*" *See*: George Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed*, New York, St. Martin's Press, Inc, 1992, p.7.

In other words, the churches, nearly for a period close to three decades, did not openly censure, expose, let alone protest against the violation of human rights in Malawi. It is this silence that forms the central problem of our study. In particular we would like to examine this silence with specific focus on the Catholic Church.[3] This church is known for its long, well-established and elaborate body of teaching on fundamental social ethical issues about the human person and his life in state and society.[4] This teaching is meant to be a practical guide to the faithful and all people of good will, regarding their life in state and society; as well as on how public and civil authorities can develop policies and programmes that promote the welfare of all, particularly the vulnerable. As such, the common expectation would be a church that is aggressive in promoting human rights. To the contrary the Catholic Church in Malawi, despite this long and elaborate tradition of the social teaching and the attendant experience of social engagement from elsewhere, failed to adequately live and use this teaching to provide an alternative narrative to the gross human rights violation by the autocratic regime (1964 to early 1992).

0.2 Aim of the study

In the light of the above observation, the overall aim of this study is to investigate the reasons behind the failure of the Catholic Church to live and use its social teaching when it was most needed. Further, we would like to explore practical ways the church could use in living and using its social teaching in the process of fostering social justice in Malawi.

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[3] There are many usages or meanings attached to the concept of "Church" in both Catholic and Protestant Ecclesiology (see: Richard P. McBrien, Catholicism, New York, American Press, Inc. 1970, pp. 691ff.). For instance, contemporary Catholic Ecclesiology treats the Church as a Mystery, the Sign and Instrument of the universal salvation of mankind (*see*: *LG*. 1, 9; *GS* 42; *AG* 1, etc). The Church is also said to be the "***People of God***," the "***Body of Christ***," the "***Temple of the Holy Spirit***" (*see*: *A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, San Francisco, Ignatius Press, 1987, pp. 224ff. In this study, the term "*Church*," is used to refer or mean, in the first place, the "***Hierarchy***", i.e. the bishops, the priests. This is in accordance to the *Tridentine-Vatican I Ecclesiology*, which, as we shall see in Chapter four, influenced the early missionary activities in Malawi. In the second place, the term refers or means, the "***People of God***," according to the *Vatican II ecclesiology*. In Chapter four, the two models of the church are discussed with reference to the way they have been experienced in Malawi *vis-à-vis* the Church engagement with political and economic matters.

[4] This teaching has recently been thoroughly documented by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace: *See* "*Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*," Vatican, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004.

Table 1: Total population of Catholic Christians in Malawi (2002)

No	Catholics	Population	Percentage of Catholics	Diocese	Year	Source
1	762,139	4,000,000	19.05%	Blantyre Archdiocese	2002	Ap2003
2	595,395	3,993,000	14.91%	Lilongwe	2002	Ap2003
3	450,000	2,400,000	18.75%	Mzuzu	2002	Ap2003
4	420,088	1,000,241	42.00%	Dedza	2002	Ap2003
5	219,455	672,114	32.65%	Zomba	2002	Ap2003
6	200,547	1,150,500	17.43%	Mangochi	2002	Ap2003
7	156,799	1,105,356	14.19%	Chikwawa	2002	Ap2003

Source: ***Global Catholicism: Portrait of a World Church*****, New York, Orbis Books, 2003, p.218.**

In carrying out this task close attention will be paid on two periods: from 1964 to 1994, and then from 1994 up to 2004. The first period is when the nascent nation in its evolution coincided with those trends that precipitated severe crisis of human rights and dignity. And the second period marks the time when Malawi has been experimenting with liberal democracy within which campaign for human rights has featured prominently. We are interested to see how different has this period been when compared to the previous one both in economic and political terms. In both periods, however, it is also our keen interest to discuss the role played by the Catholic Church based on its social teaching.

0.3 Objectives

In line with our aim, there are four specific objectives to be achieved. First, the study would like to examine the shape and availability of the Catholic social teaching in general. And in relation to this objective, the study intends to describe and discuss the political and economic situations in Malawi that needed to be addressed by the Catholic Church using its social teaching between 1964 and 2004. Further, premised on the two objectives, the study would like to critically assess the way the Catholic Church has been living and applying this teaching to the identified political and economic situations. Finally, on the basis of this analysis, the study intends to draw practical proposals on how the Catholic Church could concretely engage with the public space for greater promotion of social justice.

0.4 Literature review

This work is one out of the many studies that have been conducted by various researchers and scholars over the years. These efforts have generated a considerable body of literature that can be disaggregated into two broad groups: (i) those that relate to the period before 1992, and (ii) those that have emerged between 1992 and 2004. Included in the first group are the works of scholars like George Shepperson, Thomas Price,[5] K. J. McCracken[6]; Andrew Ross,[7] Ian Linden,[8] and Patrick Kalilombe.[9] Although later in this study specific reference shall be made to Linden and Kalilombe, we are not going to review this category as it does not closely relate to issues of governance. The post-1992 studies, on the other hand, include those of Hubert Reijnaert;[10] Matthew Schoffeleers;[11] Kenneth R. Ross;[12] Peter Von Doepp;[13] Martin Ott;[14] Stanslaus Muyebe,[15] and Immink, et al.[16] It is this category that is of particular interest to us since, in some ways, it deals with issues of governance. We shall conduct a snapshot appraisal on each so that we are able to delineate where this study coincides with their findings, as well as where variances exist, hence its unique contribution.

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[5] *See*: *Independent African,* Edinburgh, 1958.

[6] *See*: *Livingstonia Mission and the Evolution of Malawi: 1873-1939*; Doctoral Dissertation, University of Cambridge.

[7] *See*: *Origins and Development of the Church of Scotland Mission,* Blantyre, Nyasaland, 1875-1926; Doctoral Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1968.

[8] *See*: *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland*, London, Heinemann, 1974.

[9] Patrick Kalilombe, *From "Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities". A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*, A PhD Dissertation presented to The Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union, 1982. In chapter four we shall make some substantial reference to both Ian Linden and Patrick Kalilombe, and this shall be followed by a critical appraisal in chapter five.

[10] *See*: *Montfortians in Malawi: Their Spirituality and Pastoral Approach,* Blantyre, (CLAIM), 1997.

[11] *In Search of Truth and Justice .Confrontations between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994*, Blantyre, (CLAIM) 1999.

[12] *See*: *God, People and Power in Malawi*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1996.

[13] *See*: "*The Kingdom Beyond Zasintha: Churches and Political Life in Malawi's Post-Authoritarian Era*", in Kings Phiri and Ken Ross, *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1998, p. 102 ff.

[14] *See*: "*The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)*", in *Malawi's Second Democratic Elections, Process, Problems, and Prospects*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 2000,

[15] Stanslaus Muyebe, et al, *The African Bishops on Human Rights*, Limuru, Paulines Publication Africa, 2001.

[16] *See*: "*Between Apathy and Participation: The Role of Civil Society and Faith Communities*", in Martin Ott, et al, *The Power of the Vote*, Zomba, Kachere Series, 2004.

To begin with Hubert Reijnaert, in his monumental work, specific focus is on the Montfort Missionaries' spirituality and pastoral approach.[17] Among key issues, he discusses the establishment of the Catholic Church in Southern Malawi,[18] its pastoral and social programmes like catechetical work, health care and elementary education.[19] Further, the author recounts the difficulties the early missionaries experienced,[20] their relationship with the Missionaries of Africa, on one hand,[21] and the Providence Industrial Mission of Rev. John Chilembwe, on the other.[22]

In this work, Reijnaerts goes further to examine issues related to the Catholic Action,[23] the nationalist politics in the early 1960s, and the role that the Catholic Church played under those circumstances.[24] Also conspicuous and central in this study, is the discussion of what Reijnaerts calls: "*the innovative genius of Bishop Patrick Kalilombe*,"[25] and the adoption of the small Christian community as a model of the church by the Association of the Member Episcopal Conference of Eastern and Central Africa (AMECEA).[26] Another interesting point the author discusses is the 1992 Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter.[27]

In short, the study discusses exhaustively the work of the Montfort Missionaries in Malawi all the way from their initial entry into the country, through the various stages up to the present. This takes into account issues about the early Montfort Missionaries relationship to other Christian Churches, and the Catholic Church's apparent indifference to politics, and in some cases, its actual collaboration with the colonial state. It is, however, important to note a few limitations to this work.

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[17] Hubert Reijnaert, et al, *Montfort Missionaries in Malawi: Their Spirituality and Pastoral Approach*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1997, p.4ff.
[18] Ibid. p.4ff.
[19] Ibid. p.27ff.
[20] Ibid. p.45.
[21] Ibid. p.101.
[22] Ibid. p.138ff;
[23] See page 213.
[24] See page 320ff, also from page 362ff.
[25] See page 400ff.
[26] Ibid. p.403ff. We shall have an elaborated discussion on this point later in chapter four.
[27] See page 413. Like with other topics, we shall come back to this one in chapter four of this study.

First, Reijnaerts does not discuss the Catholic Church in Malawi as a whole. His primary focus is on the specific contribution of the Montfort Missionaries. It is important to keep this in mind in order to avoid evaluating the entire church from that particular and limited perspective. Again, it is essential to note that in cases where the author discusses the church's involvement in politics, this is more in historical terms and not as a political analysis informed by what the Catholic Church thinks about politics. There is also another issue that seems disputable. This is about what the author cites as the difference between the small Christian community approach in Lilongwe Diocese and that espoused by the Montfort Missionaries. Reijnaerts says:

> Lilongwe Diocese chose the out-station level as the basis of the Small Christian Community, the Montfortian Dioceses of the Southern Region, on the other hand, went to the grassroots village level.[28]

This observation does not reflect the practical experiences of church life in Lilongwe Diocese, and neither does it conform to the model of ecclesiology Patrick Kalilombe discusses in his authoritative research.[29] Actually, as we shall see in chapter four, the concept of "mphakati" that was and is still used in Lilongwe Diocese to designate the small Christian community model of ecclesiology, carries the message of a pastoral policy and strategy that goes far beyond the outstation to the interior of a community, i.e. the grassroots. In summary, Reijnaert has discussed a wide range of issues in his work. However, he is more historical in his approach, and pays focus mainly on the spirituality and pastoral approach that the Montfort Missionaries used since their entry into Malawi.

Matthew Schoffeleers is another scholar who has ably discussed the interface between the Catholic Church and politics in Malawi.[30] He begins his work from the early 1960s and goes on to cover the events that ushered in the present democratic dispensation in the early 1990s.[31]

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[28] See page 440.
[29] From *"Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities": A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*. A PhD Dissertation presented to The Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union, . 1982.
[30] Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice. Confrontations between State and Church in Malawi 1960-1994,* Blantyre, CLAIM, 1999.
[31] We shall conduct a critical appraisal of the church documents in chapter three of the study.

It is important to note that although Schoffeleers gives an excellent narration on the way the Catholic Church has interfaced with politics in Malawi, just like Reijnaert, his approach is more historical than analytical. His discussion is not informed by the thinking of the church about the state and society in general. Kenneth R. Ross is also among the scholars who have significantly contributed to the post 1992 studies on the church and politics in Malawi.[32] In this publication, Ross deals with a wide range of themes all converging on the dramatic events between 1992 and 1994.[33] The book captures the major issues as they emerged in the course of the critical period of Malawi's political transition.

However, what appears to be very critical in his work and for this study is the discussion on the understanding and exercise of power in Malawi in state and society during the one party era. It is from this discussion that Ross proceeds to draw proposals on how to use power in a better way. These proposals are supported by well thought out theological insights. Having said that, like the authors we have discussed already, Ross tackles the church and state question in a general manner. His discussion does not adequately reflect the thinking of the Catholic Church about politics. Peter Von Doepp, like Matthew Schoffeleers, has picked up and discussed the question of the interface between the Catholic Church and politics in Malawi.[34] His point of departure seems to be the insights drawn from scholars like Kenneth Ross.[35]

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[32] See Kenneth R. Ross, *God, People and Power in Malawi*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1996.

[33] These include: the transformation of power in Malawi; the role of the Christian Churches; the use of the Bible in social transformation; young people: participation or alienation? An Anglican case; Muslim perspective on power; Power at the receiving end; the Jehovah's Witnesses experience in one-party Malawi; Christian experience in Malawi prisons; and A practical theology of power for the new Malawi. These articles are by Kenneth R. Ross; F.L. Chingota; James Tengatenga; J.C. Chakanza; Klaus Fiedler, and Hilary Mijoga.

[34] See Peter Von Doepp, "*The Kingdom Beyond Zasintha: Churches and Political Life in Malawi's Post-authoritarian Era*", in Kings Phiri, et al, *Democratization in Malawi: A Stocktaking*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1998.

[35] Peter Von Doepp, p.102. Kenneth Ross discusses similar issues. See "*The Truth Shall Set You Free: Christian Social Witness in Malawi 1992* in Kenneth R. Ross, *Gospel Ferment in Malawi: Theological Essays*, Gweru, Mambo, 1995, pp 1-30; "*The Renewal of the State by the Church: the Case of the Public Affairs Committee in Malawi*", *Religion in Malawi*; No. 5, (Nov. 1995), pp.29-37; Trevor Cullen, *Malawi: A Turning Point*, Edinburgh: Pentland Press, 1994; Jonathan Newell, "*A Moment of truth? The Church and Political Change in Malawi in 1992*", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol. 3312 (June 1995), pp.243-262.

The key argument that Von Doepp advances is that the churches' contribution to political life in Malawi, when assessed broadly, remains ambiguous.[36] To substantiate this thesis, he goes on to analyse the Blantyre Synod of the CCAP, the Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church.[37] Based on this analysis, Von Doepp concludes that while political life in Malawi has witnessed a considerable renewal with the changes from 1992-1994, the transition is far from complete.[38] Von Doepp also investigates the modal relation of power in Malawian society;[39] and goes on to argue, quite strongly, that in speaking of the churches' relationship to the political sphere, it should be remembered that the church is always political, and often in ways which may not appear to be so.[40] Further, Von Doepp delves into conceptual issues regarding church and politics. It is here that he notices the need to be cognizant of the two significant pitfalls that hinge on: (i) what is the church, and (ii) what is political? On the first point, Von Doepp affirms that the church is more than an institution and its hierarchy. He writes:

> A thorough evaluation of the churches' politics demands attention to the action of 'non-elite' church representatives outside of the formal political arena.[41]

The second pitfall that he discusses concerns actions that are to be considered as political. He observes that the political role of the church is multifaceted:[42]

> In one respect, the clergy are political through their *"external" face*-that is through their engagements with the state and societal actors in 'politics' as is conventionally understood. Endorsing a particular type of political regime or government policy, supporting a civic education programme, or serving as advocates for marginalized voices are examples of the church's external politics.[43]

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[36] Peter Von Doepp, p.103. On this point, let us quickly add that there is no explanation attached as to what von Doepp means by "*broad terms*", and as to whether such a "broad term approach" does justice to the nature of the contribution each church makes on the basis of its self-understanding and teaching on social questions.
[37] Peter Von Doepp, p.103.
[38] Peter Von Doepp, p.103.
[39] Op. cit.
[40] Peter Von Doepp, p.104.
[41] Op. cit. This is difficult in practice. For example, it does not necessarily mean that because a particular Christian is involved in politics, therefore, he is doing that under the influence and on behalf of the church.
[42] Ibid. p.105.
[43] Op. cit. This study focuses on this "external face" of the church.

Von Doepp also observes that the churches have political impact through what he calls the '*internal' face*, and this concerns the manner in which the clergy routinely engage and relate to the larger body of the faithful within the institutions.[44] Stated differently, this is about what churches do internally via clerical messages, pastoral priorities, ministerial strategies and techniques.[45] Changes in the practice of religious life itself, he says, have contributed to different understandings of authority in society, unprecedented forms of collective action, and an expanded discourse on political issues.[46] Third, Von Doepp talks about the *'hidden' face* of the churches, which is about the engagement of the clergy in practices that tend to undermine the possibilities for civic and political life.[47]

In terms of the *"external" face* of the church, he notes that following the introduction of the new political dispensation a pledge was made by the churches for a continued active role in national politics.[48] To fulfill this pledge, three areas of engagement were mapped out. First, the churches undertook the *advisory role* and this was largely through the Public Affairs Committee.[49] *Mediation* is the second role the churches undertook in the new dispensation,[50] and finally, the churches embraced the task of *educating* the people to support the democratisation process.[51] Regardless of such well-defined areas of focus, as already noted, Von Doepp contends that the churches' contribution to political life in Malawi remains wooly.[52] Three factors are cited to back up this argument.

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[44] Peter Von Doepp, p.105.
[45] Op. cit.
[46] Ibid. p.106.
[47] Ibid. p.106. Based on these observations, Von Doepp examines what he calls politics in the "new" Malawi vis-à-vis the churches involvement. Von Doepp identifies deeper "logics which informs the politics" that are witnessed on the surface. In this regard, he seems to take the whole business of politics as a superstructure premised on subterranean determinants of corruption, access to state resources, etc,
[48] Peter Von Doepp, p.109. The churches took this stand having observed that "*silence and inaction on matters of public interest was not only bad for the country, but also contrary to the church's understanding of its mission in the world, and that similarly, too close a relationship with political interests compromised the prophetic role of the church*". See Peter Von Doepp, p.109. See also: *The Weekly Chronicle*, pp.8-14, August 1994; *Statement by the Episcopal Conference of Malawi*, 23 June, 1995.
[49] Peter Von Doepp, pp.109-110.
[50] Ibid. p.111.
[51] Ibid. p.112.This role involves nation-wide civic education programmes designed to encourage participation, civic awareness, and the development of viable structures of governance at local level. See page 112.
[52] Op. cit.

The first factor concerns the churches' public discourse which continues to be of a 'watchdog' or reactive character, and is itself limited in the type of issues it addresses. He writes:

> While the churches address issues such as government excesses and corruption, more fundamental matters concerning the accumulation and distribution of wealth in the country remain outside of the churches' public pronouncements.[53]

This deficit, says Von Doepp, suggests two things: (i) that poverty is not a political issue, but a personal problem unrelated to Malawi's class and political system,[54] (ii) that practices whereby individuals use the state for the aggrandizement of resources and the consolidation of elite status are acceptable.[55] Consequently, he concludes, the churches' silence on matters of this nature serves to uphold the widespread perception that the state is the personal property of those on the throne rather than that of Malawi's citizens:

> And to the extent that access to the state is viewed as a means "to eat" rather than to serve others, the obligations of the political elite to the masses remains secondary.[56]

By voicing primarily on issues such as the behaviour of parties or government priorities, Von Doepp further observes, the churches indicate that they are concerned largely with one theatre of political life in the country-a theatre which is perceived as both inaccessible and in some respects, meaningless, by the common person.[57] As a result:

> Church statements on politics, especially through PAC, are biased toward the 'politics', which is immediately relevant only to the actors who have the privilege of playing the high political game. The masses of the poor within the rural areas, themselves victimized-or at least shortchanged-by the routine class and political practices of the power elite, remain without a voice. In this respect,

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[53] Op. cit. Chapter three of this study shall give an adequate and thorough explanation of this point.
[54] Chapter three and four of this study shall demonstrate how public policies on the economy have contributed to the poverty of the majority in Malawi.
[55] Peter Von Doepp, p.113. Here, Von Doepp refers to official corruption by both political leaders and civil servants.
[56] Op. cit. We shall see this point in Chapter three and four, that this scenario has been a long-standing problem in African politics. It is firmly rooted in the history of the immediate post-independence period where "independence" was understood as and transmuted into the inheritance of the colonial state: its institutions of power and control, together with all the accrued benefits and privileges.
[57] Peter Von Doepp, p.113.

> the churches have failed not only to opt for the poor, but to provide a "voice" for the voiceless".[58]

On the overall, the churches' public responsibility, i.e. advisory, mediatory and educative-is still viewed by most inside the church as outside of the routine mission of the institution.[59] Von Doepp adds:

> Though the church embraces some level of social activism, this does not translate into change in how the clergy think about and engage in regular ministerial work. "Politics" is addressed outside of pastoral engagement.[60]

In terms of the "*internal face*," Von Doepp states that politics of the church encompasses more than its external engagements with state and society actors.[61] In his opinion, the churches' impact on society is realised as much via the routine ministerial practices:

> It is in this respect that the church possesses enormous potential to shape political life at the deeper levels of social organisation and culture.[62]

However, contrary to this view, he observes, neither the leaders of these churches nor significant segment of the clergy have adopted ministerial strategies that target social transformation and empowerment as central objectives of their work. Instead, he concludes, the churches are concerned with two issues mainly: (i) the preservation and enhancement of the institutional presence of the church in society (ii) the understanding of mission which places primary emphasis on salvational, pietistic, and moral issues.[63] Finally, Von Doepp talks about *'the hidden face'* of the church and its threats to civic politics. Here, he discusses issues of corruption, abuse of clerical authority, abuse of women, etc.[64] In general, Von Doepp raises pertinent issues, and these are to do with the motives that inform the manner of clerical engagement in society, the extent to which the churches themselves are trapped in a particular social and class context, and the extent to

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[58] Ibid. p. 114. Based on experiences like these, in Chapter five of this study, we are suggesting practical strategies of activism by which the church could enable the poor to voice out their own concerns.
[59] Ibid. p. 115.
[60] Op. cit.
[61] Op. cit.
[62] Op. cit. In Chapter five of this study, there are practical proposals that call for this kind of political engagement.
[63] Ibid. p. 116.
[64] Ibid. p. 120.

which this shapes their behaviour.[65] In his opinion, policy changes within these institutions could be an important step in bringing the churches to a more positive contribution to the current political dispensation.[66] Included in the changes would be the re-conceptualization of churches' mission and pastoral work itself. In our opinion, Von Doepp has provided a cogent overview of the churches' role in Malawian politics during the early years of the new democratic dispensation. In this task he has managed to delineate issues that need critical thinking if the churches are to move forward and effect radical structural and social transformation in favour of the poor.

However, like the scholars we have discussed earlier, Von Doepp is generic in examining the question of church and politics. He lumps together all the churches, thereby blurring their theological and ecclesiological variances. Let us quickly add that in this work there is no reference to the specific thinking of the Catholic Church about politics and neither does he discuss the diverse perspectives or models of the mission of the church in state and society. The singling out and subsequent qualification of the Montfort Fathers (Balaka) as representatives of what he calls *'progressive Catholicism'* is rather problematic.[67]

Again looking at the way Von Doepp discusses the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) one notices a missing critique. Further to this, the author seems to be unaware of the fact that this body is more than Christian in its constitution.[68] Lastly, although Von Doepp mentions in his introductory remarks that his focus is on the Blantyre Synod, the Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church, when it comes to the actual discussion, he is, perhaps inadvertently, silent on the Anglican Church. Besides, his failure to include the synods of Livingstonia and Nkhoma deprives a reader of a comprehensive picture regarding the CCAP's political contribution in Malawi.

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[65] Ibid. p. 125.
[66] Ibid. p. 126.
[67] It would have been helpful to the reader had he spelt out those elements that characterize 'progressive Catholicism'.
[68] The Muslims are also part of the Public Affairs Committee.

Almost following the line of Peter Von Doepp is Martin Ott.[69] Like other scholars, Ott recognises the significant role the churches have played in the democratisation process, as well as being watchdogs of human rights, since early 90s.[70] However, with speed, Ott takes a critical distance and begins to question what nearly every researcher and scholar on the topic seems to take for granted. He writes:

> Any further assessment as to whether the churches have a substantial impact on politics and society in Malawi has to be done on the basis of their ongoing involvement in the "common good" in political structures and institutions beyond a day to day presence in public life, and from a perspective that looks beyond the moral qualities of individual leaders.[71]

Unlike Von Doepp, Ott takes into account theological perspectives with regard to the churches' political involvement.[72] In this analysis, the author concentrates on six areas: (i) the balance between the prophetic and institutional impact (ii) the lessons learnt in politics lobbying (iii) regionalism or the interdependence of social criticism and self-criticism (iv) democracy at the grassroots and the concern for the "common good" (iv) the relation between prayer and politics, and (vi) the public role of academic theology.[73] From this analysis, Ott draws his thesis as follows:

> Despite their undoubted merits and their high moral reputation, the Christian Churches in Malawi have not yet found their public identity, their specific role in a democratic society and how to transmit Christian convictions in the structures and mechanisms of politics and civil society.[74]

This state of affairs, he says, is due to two factors and these are: (i) the dynamics of the changing Malawian society, and (ii) the result of shortfall in theology, ecclesiology, political ethics, and the social doctrine of the church which is still in infancy including the quality of formation of ministers and lay people.[75] Ott recalls two approaches that Christians in history have resorted to in making "effective" the gospel message in the

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[69] Martin Ott, "*The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999),*" in *Malawi's Second Democratic Elections Process, Problems, and Prospects*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 2000.
[70] Martin Ott, p.120.
[71] Ibid. p.121.
[72] Op. cit.
[73] Op. cit.
[74] Op..cit.
[75] Op. cit.

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world. These, he says, are the prophetic and institutional approaches.[76] The prophetic approach is about the courageous and bold proclamation of the word of God in season or out of season, mostly in situations of injustice and oppression. The institutional approach, on the other hand, establishes and contributes toward the social and public order.[77] The two, he observes, are traceable in both the Old and New Testaments.[78] The role played by the churches in the years 1992 and 1993, Ott argues, is a typical expression of the prophetic approach. Nevertheless, while this approach is more suited to situations of oppression, a new role is required for the church in the new democratic dispensation.[79] In his analysis, there are three ways the churches in Malawi strike balance between the prophetic and institutional impact, namely: (i) through the use of institutions,[80] (ii) personal involvement,[81] and (iii) public statements and publications.[82] Ott also talks about lessons learnt from Biblical lobbying. It is here that he discusses the uniqueness of the Public Affairs Committee. He remarks:

> No other country has an institution like PAC been established to channel the churches' impact towards the political scene.[83]

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[76] Ibid. p.122.

[77] This point is comparable to what Von Doepp refers to as the "*external*" and "*internal*" faces of the church.

[78] Martin Ott, p.122.

[79] Ibid. p.123.

[80] In this area, the Public Affairs Committee is highlighted as a main tool for the churches in influencing policies in Malawi. On this point, Ott does not seem to recognise the role of other institutions like the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace, etc. Ott identifies three roles played by PAC, i.e. (i) *advocacy* (ii) *mediation* (iii) *civic education*. Looked at critically, this is what Von Doepp assigns to the three churches he has studied.

[81] In this area, Ott include church leaders like Bishop Mkhori, Bishop Tengatenga, Rev. Kansilanga, Rev. Longwe, Rev. Peter Kaleso, and Rev. S. Ncozana. These individuals in various ways got involved in political issues. See page 106-127.

[82] It is here that Ott highlights the role of pastoral letters, public statements and publications. These, he argues, hold somehow a middle position between the people and institutional approaches. See Ott, p. 127. The following pastoral letters are listed: *Living Our Faith* (1992); *Choosing Our Future* (1993); *Building Our Future* (1994); *Walking Together in Faith* (1996); *Come Back to Me and Live* (1998). In Chapter four of this study we shall examine these letters. In different ways, these pastoral letters deal with themes that are to do with: the dignity of the human person; the relation between the church and state; political participation; education, health; press freedom; the legal system; the growing gap between the rich and the poor; corruption, etc. See page 128.

[83] Martin Ott, p.130.

Nevertheless, although Ott applauds the unique identity and role of the Public Affairs Committee, he quickly points out difficulties inherent in its constitution, and these are about delegation and representation.[84] Ott goes further to discuss pastoral letters. In his opinion, though important, these letters have shortfalls, and key amongst them is the lack of new themes in response to the emergent situations. Related to this problem is the lack of innovations within the churches themselves in order to get rid of what he calls, "*ecclesial Kamuzuism*," authoritarian and clericalism.[85] Regionalism is another problem that Ott dwells on. He observes that the churches continue to play a role that in the end reinforces this trend.[86] Ott also brings into the discussion the concept of the "common good,"[87] and the role of prayer.[88] However, he does not lose sight of how problematic prayer is, especially in how it relates to politics and God's will.[89] In the end, Ott seems to prefer the dissociation of religious belief and prayer from politics as *conditio sine qua non* in the process of establishing true democracy.[90] He writes:

> But one cannot have democracy without its deeper roots in the concept of a secular state.[91]

In agreement with Joachim Chisemphere, Ott reiterates the lack of a shared theological background upon which the churches' common action through PAC finds expression.[92] In order to resolve this shortfall, he proposes a theological reflection focusing on the

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[84] What is central to these problems is the question of "who represents whom" and "with which mandate?" See page 132.

[85] Martin Ott, p.133. By "*ecclesial Kamuzuism*", Ott describes the understanding and use of power as was the case under Kamuzu.

[86] Ott observes that the geographical boundaries of the churches, especially the Anglican and CCAP have reinforced this trend. See page 135f.

[87] Although Ott introduces this concept, his discussion on it lacks critical reflection. Of late the concept has become contentious in that there is no broad agreement as to what it means, and whether it is relevant any more given the diversity of human needs and wants. We shall see this point in Chapter two.

[88] Martin Ott, p.140ff. He sees prayer as having a critical role in politics as a mechanism that brings people together to express unity and to overcome the differences that separate people in parties and churches. See page 146.

[89] See page 150.

[90] Op. cit. This should include, says Ott, "*a clear distinction between the realm of a sovereign God and the responsibilities of a free person.*" He argues that secularisation is a demand in Malawi for the sake of the sovereign God, for the sake of human freedom, and for the sake of democracy in a multi-religious nation: See Martin Ott, p.151.

[91] Op. cit. To this effect, he calls for a correct and proper understanding of secularization.

[92] Ibid. p.153.

concept of the "common good".[93] Up to this point, in our opinion Ott has managed to raise many valuable insights in his work. He has, undoubtedly, taken the discussion on the church and state interface a step further by introducing, among other things, theological and ecclesiological considerations. Nevertheless, like Von Doepp, Ott is general in his approach, and does not articulate the specific theological and ecclesiological distinctions that characterize churches in Malawi although he makes this part of his unique contribution.

In terms of individual persons' involvement in politics, here too, Ott is general. He does not distinguish between those actions individuals undertake as concerned persons and those that are a result of collective position reflecting church policy and mandate. In addition, though plausible, we find his critique against the Public Affairs Committee that it lacks theological and ecclesiological grounding to its involvement in politics, to be improperly placed. The committee as such is not an ecumenical body but rather an inter-religious one. Therefore, issues of common theology and ecclesiology do not arise.[94] Apparently, this critique results from his inadvertent reduction of the committee to a pure Christian entity as evidenced in the following enquiry:

> Where is the qualitative evaluation of civic education programmes conducted in the name of the Churches, i.e. in the name of the Gospel? And how deeply does PAC have its programmes rooted in the life of the Churches?[95]

This reductive image of the committee as a Christian entity comes out vividly where he further says:

> Vested with high moral reputation (and with sufficient donor money), PAC has been entrusted by the Churches to implement the social and political challenges of the gospel.[96]

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[93] This task, Ott proposes, is to be undertaken by institutions like the Department of Theology and Religious Studies; the Diploma Board; and an Institute for Political Ethics to be run under ecumenical cooperation. This is to serve as a think-tank for the Public Affairs Committee and the churches. See page 153.

[94] See Martin Ott, p.130f. The Public Affairs Committee also comprises of the Muslims.

[95] Ibid. p.131.

[96] Op. cit this point paints a different picture of the Public Affairs Committee from what the committee really is and should be. While there is a Christian component in the committee, and thus a channel through

Ott also advances another contentious issue and this is where he argues for the clear-cut separation of morality and politics. He contends:

> In politics, the aspect of the individual life style of a politician does not count. The realm of politics is not a religious congregation.[97]

This argument raises fundamental difficulties in that, although theoretically the distinction is possible, practically it is not. Politics is not an entirely blind-force as Ott seems to imply. The political activity is inherently multifaceted particularly when considered in the light of the "common good," a concept that Ott himself promotes.[98] For example, the appropriation of public resources for personal interests, or the use of public position to advance private ends, all these matter greatly in politics, and yet they are, primarily, about individual life style.[99]

Stanislaus Muyebe is another researcher who has written on the interface between the Catholic Church and politics. His approach, however, is remarkably distinct from the researchers and scholars we have discussed so far.[100] Muyebe diligently identifies key themes in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) principally as they relate to life,[101] physical-psychological factors,[102] intellectual-spiritual factors,[103] politics,[104] the economy,[105] and the social factors.[106] From that note he goes on to relate these themes to specific statements and pastoral letters the Episcopal Conferences have issued over the years.[107]

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which the Christian social and political values can inform the activities of the committee, the apparent reduction of the committee to a Christian grouping reflects a different reality altogether.

[97] Martin Ott, p.142.

[98] See Martin Ott, p.141.

[99] In British politics, a popular politician, David Blanket was twice forced to resign on reasons that are to do with personal life style but with impact on his political career-on one occasion, he was forced to resign because he had given an official train ticket reserved for only spouses of Members of Parliament to a girl friend.

[100] Stanslaus Muyebe, et al, *The African Bishops on Human Rights*, Limuru, Paulines Publications Africa, 2001.

[101] Stanslaus Muyebe, p.23.

[102] Ibid. p.42.

[103] Ibid. p.60ff.

[104] Ibid. p.96ff.

[105] Ibid. p.168ff.

[106] Ibid. p.242ff.

[107] Muyebe has concentrated on the following conferences: Southern Africa; Zimbabwe; Zambia; Malawi; Tanzania; Kenya; Uganda; Sudan; Burundi; Ethiopia, and Eritrea.

With this approach Muyebe demonstrates the practical application of the Catholic social teaching to the concrete lives of the people in the respective countries. This covers the period between 1950 and 1999. That said, Muyebe's work is general since it covers a wide context. Further, it does not adequately articulate social, economic and political factors that prompted the issuing of the statements and pastoral letters.

Following Malawi's third general elections (2004), an assessment was done focusing specifically on the various aspects of the electoral process.[108] In his contribution, Immink examines the role played by civil society organisations and faith based communities.[109] He discusses the role of faith-based communities in relation to prayers and sermons, mediation, public statements in form of pastoral letters and press releases.[110] He observes that during this period the common themes of prayers hinged on the call for violent-free elections and a God-fearing president,[111] a break of all forms of barriers and divisions that exist among the people of Malawi, especially leaders of social, political and religious groups and organisations; a break of the cycle of retribution, regionalism, tribalism, and social and verbal violence then prevailing in some areas of the Malawian society; restoration of mutual trust; peaceful co-existence, social harmony and national unity.[112]

Mediation, on the other hand, focused on coalition building,[113] while pastoral letters, particularly from the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) placed emphasis on the qualities of a good leader.[114] Immink goes further and points out the glaring contradictions regarding the positions taken by different groups within the faith communities on the elections. Of particular interest is the conflicting positions taken by the Association of the Diocesan Clergy of Malawi (ADCOM), and the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), on one hand; and Forum for Reconciliation and Peace (FORPER), and the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), on the other. In his opinion such conflicts proved to be

[108] Political parties; the Electoral Commission; the Media; the Faith Based Organisations, etc.
[109] Immink et al, "*Between Apathy and Participation. The Role of Civil Society and Faith Communities*," in Martin Ott, et al, *The Power of the Vote*, Zomba, Kachere Series, 2004.
[110] Op. cit.
[111] Ibid. p.150.
[112] Op. cit.
[113] Ibid. p.152.
[114] Op. cit.

a source of confusion for the electorate. Although Immink rightly acknowledges the role of politics in religion, there are, nevertheless, a number of difficulties in his work. For instance, Immink treats the Malawi Electoral Support Network (MESN),[115] as an independent entity, and not a loose network of civil society organisations without own mandate.

Again, like Ott, Immink wrestles with a question that is not only subtle but also problematic. This is about representation as it applies to church leaders each time they issue public statements, i.e. when do they do so as private individuals, on one hand, and as representatives of their communities, on the other.[116] Again going through this work, the author seems to have paid little attention to the Subsidiarity Principle that regulates, in particular, the life and operations of the Catholic Church. This is manifested in his critique against the position taken by ADCOM on an issue the bishop had already addressed in the pastoral letter.[117] Let us also mention in this connection that the assessment lacks references to specific theological or ecclesiological thinking on politics.

In conclusion, the gaps we have identified in the works of the researchers and scholars so far discussed constitute the areas where this study will contribute to the existing body of literature on church and politics in Malawi. As it will be noticed in due course, this study is distinctively unique in that in the light of the social teaching, it discusses the question of governance and the role of the Catholic Church in Malawi.[118] And based on this discussion, the study takes a further step to draw practical proposals on how the church could engage with the public space in defence and promotion of the dignity and rights of the vulnerable.

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[115] MESN: *Malawi Electoral Support Network* was a grouping of several civil society organisations that was involved in the 2004 General Elections. Some of the organisations involved in this grouping were: the Public Affairs Committee (PAC); Church and Society Projects; Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM); Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM), etc.

[116] On this point, Immink quotes Fr. B. Tamani and Bishop J. Tengatenga. See page 152.

[117] Immink, p.154.

[118] These are the policies that have been operational during the period under investigation.

0.5 Methodology

One of the key features to be noted in this study is its marked lean towards what we can call the middle-level-social thinking. This is about thinking in the large and complex areas lying between, on one hand, broad values and principles as espoused in the Catholic social teaching, and, on the other, concrete actions and decisions of either civil authorities or the church itself. This has meant the use of models of society, politics and the economy, theories of social, political and economic relationship, empirical observations and analysis; combined with thinking about public policy and improvements. In doing so, various research tools have been used, and these fall into two broad categories.

The first category concerns the gathering of data. This part was done through rigorous desk research and fieldwork. Initially, part of desk research was done in Malawi,[119] and was later continued with intensity during a one-year course work at the ***Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven*** and the ***Library of the Missionaries of Africa-Karibu House***-Leuven-Belgium. This form of research was conducted in order to secure solid theoretical framework on the Catholic social teaching as well as relevant data on Malawi particularly on matters related to political and economic governance.

The desk research was preceded by fieldwork conducted in various parts of the country involving a cross section of people.[120] In this process, a variety of tools and techniques of social research were used. These included semi-structured interviews focusing on carefully selected groups and individuals. Other tools and techniques particular to participatory methodologies were also employed, e.g. triangulation;[121] on spot-analysis; direct observation; individual interviews; key informants; group interviews and discussions; oral history, listening surveys and general observation. The overall objective of this exercise was to capture the views and experiences of the people with regard to matters of economic and political governance and the role of the Catholic Church within

[119] The University of Malawi-Chancellor College Library (Zomba); The National Archives Library (Zomba); Kachere Institute (Zomba); The Episcopal Conference of Malawi Archives (Lilongwe), etc.
[120] Interview Schedule No 3: provides a wide range of people whom the author met and had discussions with.
[121] This is a method deliberately used to check the correctness of information by sourcing it from a number of agents. It works on the basis of comparison of facts.

the period covered by the study. The second category is about the structural arrangement of the dissertation. Strenuous efforts have been done to develop the dissertation along the official methodology of the Catholic social teaching itself.[122] As such the first three chapters form the *"see"* part of the methodology, while the fourth and fifth chapters correspond to the *"judge"* and *"pastoral planning"* aspects respectively. In this regard just as the pastoral circle is not conclusive, but rather generates and leads to higher levels of social consciousness and further action, the same is true with this study. It does not claim to be the last statement on what the Catholic Church could do in the spheres of political and economic governance. What it does is to highlight new insights and propose new ways of fostering social justice in Malawi.

0.6 Conceptual frame

The core problem of this study, as noted earlier, is the inability of the Catholic Church in Malawi to adequately live and make use of the social teaching to inform and influence public opinion and processes in the areas of political and economic governance. Our hypothesis, therefore, is that if the Catholic Church is to radically transform itself into a serious agent of social justice animated by its social teaching it must undertake critical and thorough structural and functional review. And on the basis of such a review, it must create a new vision about its social mission, and corresponding strategies for its sustained engagement with the public space.

This study has five chapters. Chapter one discusses the dominant theories of ethics with the primary objective of locating the specific tradition of ethics to which the Catholic social teaching belongs. Chapter two is a critical discussion on selected aspects of the social teaching. This chapter concentrates on specific themes of the teaching, mainly those that directly relate to human dignity so that we maintain consistence with the topic of this study. By discussing the teaching at this point, we are implicitly saying, here is a tradition the Catholic Church has always possessed. When people in Malawi were being

[122] There are two approaches to the application of the Catholic social teaching. The first one proceeds by: *See, Judge,* and *Act*, while the other one is more analytical involving: *Insertion into Concrete Experience; Social Analysis; Theological Reflection,* and finally *Pastoral Planning*. Cf. Frans Wijsen, et al (eds), *The Pastoral Circle Revisited. A Critical Quest for Truth and Transformation*, Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa, 2006.

deprived of their rights, tortured, disappeared, etc, the Catholic Church has had this teaching all along. So why did it fail to adequately live and make use of this potential in solidarity with the people who were under political and economic siege? Chapter three, among other issues, discusses critical political and economic situations that, in our opinion, needed addressing by the Catholic Church using its social teaching. Chapter four is about the Catholic Church in Malawi as an agent that would have used its social teaching to address the difficult situations.

The chapter looks at this church from its inception into the local society and how it has evolved and in the process impacted on the question of governance. It is in this chapter that reasons behind the silence of the Catholic Church between 1964 up to early 1992 are discussed. Chapter five takes into serious consideration the question that Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum raises: "*Church of Africa, what must you now become so that your message may be relevant and credible?*" [123] Here we are making proposals for a paradigm shift. These proposals are based on the realisation that although in recent times the Catholic Church in Malawi has become more proactive in tackling issues of social justice; the registered impact is still meagre.

As a result, we are suggesting that, in view of the new ecclesiology in Africa: *Church as Family*, the Catholic Church should embark on a creative path. This should be done by designing interventions that will physically draw it more on the side of those whose rights and dignity are deprived. In view of this objective the chapter discusses areas in the life of the church that need the suggested shift. These include adoption of liberating models of theology, contextualising the social teaching, review of pastoral objectives, creation of structures of influence and functions to meet the new challenges. All this should go hand in hand with the promotion of integral formation for the clergy and laity. In addition, the chapter proposes the adoption of practical ways of engagement with the public order in facilitating social justice. These proposals include networking and mobilisation, conscientization, political action, contextual analysis and publication, among many others. We are of the opinion that such strategies, if well utilised, have the potential to assist in transforming the Malawian society along the path of social justice, with greater respect and recognition of the centrality of the human person to the life of the state and society.

[123] A.E. Orobator, *The Church as Family. African Ecclesiology in Its Social Context*, Paulines Publications Africa, Limuru, 2000, p. 11.

0.7 Contribution of the study

In a number of ways, this study is a special contribution to the ongoing discussion on church and politics in Malawi. This is the case because, first, it focuses on the Catholic social teaching and the way it has and is being lived with specific reference to political and economic governance. In that way it is a unique endeavour in Malawian scholarship since no study has ever been done in this manner. Second, the study is important in that Malawi is presently consolidating the democratic form of governance. The Catholic Church has over the years played a critical role in protecting the new political and constitutional order.[124]

Despite this important role one notices deficits in the way the church engages with the public space. Therefore, the study also contributes towards the church's self-understanding. Finally, it is expected that the study will contribute to the facilitation of better and mutual understanding between the Catholic Church and the state, thereby increase space for dialogue in furthering the social, economic and political welfare of women and men, boys and girls in Malawi.

[124] We also recognise that other churches and religious groups have played a critical role in the democratization process over the years, and most certainly, this role will continue for some time.

Theorizing About Ethics

1.0 Introduction

In the general introduction it has been stated that the Catholic Church has a tradition of the social teaching. This is the tradition which we have said the church did not adequately live and make use of to promote good governance in Malawi. In this chapter we would like to discuss the subject of ethics broadly so that we are able to see the kind of the ethical tradition to which the Catholic social teaching belongs. Since time immemorial human societies continue to wrestle with the question regarding what is right or wrong, as well as how community life could be organised so that individuals, families and groups within it are able to find fulfillment and happiness.

It is out of this wrestling that the subject of ethics has eventually emerged in academic investigations. Peter McInerney observes that if everyone knew in every situation the course of action that is morally right, there would be no need for moral theory...and if philosophers could succeed in finding the basic principles and underlying ideas of morality, then people would have an explicit understanding by which to determine difficult cases.[1] This remark shows that the search for the criteria to determine what is right or wrong is something continuous. In short, ethics deals with the values of human life in a coherent, systematic and scientific manner.[2] It is concerned with the type of conduct or character that is approved or disapproved of, in terms of right and wrong, good or bad.[3] It is generally agreed that ethics seeks a critical grasp of the principles and standards that guide a person in making morally right choices in his daily activities, hence the idea that ethical conduct is acceptable from a point of view that is somehow universal.[4]

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[1] Peter K. McInerney, *Introduction to Philosophy*, New York, HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 1992, p.144.
[2] Radoslav A. Tsanoff, *"History of Ethics,"* in William D. Halsey, *Collier's Encyclopedia*, New York, MacMillan, 1986, p.333.
[3] Op. cit.
[4] Peter Singer, *Practical Ethics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1982, p. 10.

Various cultures, world religions and secular ideologies contain the agonizing attempt to address the fundamental question of how to build better communities where human persons would live in peace and realise economic prosperity.[5] In Africa, for example, the narrative tradition of tales, legends, proverbs, songs, etc, serves to educate both the youth and adults on matters of this nature.[6] These communities are so anthropocentric that anything that fails to promote the welfare and integrity of the human person and the community is deemed as evil and destructive. In addition, the worthiness of the individual is seen not as residual in his or her private life or achievements alone, but more in the positive qualitative difference this individual makes to the life of others and the community at large. This is the heart of uMunthu, a concept that is gaining popularity in southern Africa.[7] The idea of approval or disapproval means that ethics is a product of the community's collective wisdom, experience and shared values. Bénézet Bujo says this:

> Ethical insight involves, however, more than just the individual, who depends on others if he is to understand and discern moral norms aright. There is great deal of evidence for the decisive importance of community in regard to morally correct actions.[8]

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[5] World religions like Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity, etc, and secular ideologies like Marxism, have values that seek to provide the basis for the construction of societies that are humane, where men and women, young and adults alike find self-fulfillment.

[6] One of the typical sayings is: "*Kuwongola mtengo nkulinga unakali waung'ono,*" i.e. if you do not train a child in right ways when he is still young, it will be too late when he is already an adult."

[7] Gerard Chigona, *uMunthu Theology. Path of Integral Human Liberation Rooted in Jesus of Nazareth*, Balaka, Montfort Media, 2002. See also Didier Njirayamanda Kaphagawani, "*African Conceptions of Personhood and Intellectual Identities*," in Coetze, P.H. *The African Philosophy Reader*, London, Routledge, 1998; Koka Kgalushi, *The African Renaissance in the Context of African Humanism* ("A People's Humanness"), paper delivered to the workshop entitled: "*uBuntu": From Philosophy to Practice*, organised by the Democratic Development Programme in Association with the Centre for African Humanism, Durban: 5-6 August, 1999; Lovemore Mbigi, *UBUNTU. The African Dream in Management*, Pretoria, Knowledge Resources (Pty), 1997, and by the same author: *UBUNTU. The Spirit of African Transformation Management*, Pretoria, Knowledge Sources (Pty), 1997; John Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969; Ifeanyi Menkiti, *"Person and Community in African Traditional Thought," in Richard Wright, African Philosophy, an Introduction*, 3rd Edition, New York, University Press of America, 1987; Augustine Musopole, *Being Human in Africa. Toward an African Christian Anthropology*, New York, Peter Lang publishing Inc, 1994.

[8] Bénézet Bujo, *Foundation of an African Ethic. Beyond the Universal Claims of Western Morality*, Limuru, Paulines Publications Africa, 2001, p.25.

1.1 Ethics in classical antiquity

A critical study of the history of ethics reveals a shift of emphasis in thought from the study of nature to self-evaluation. This is more evident in ancient Greek thought. Socrates, for example, chose as his precept the words of the Delphic oracle: "*know thyself.*" Self-knowledge or self-understanding is, therefore, the first principle of the philosophy of life. As far as Socrates is concerned, the excellent life, the life really and fully worth living, is the intelligent life, a life based on knowledge of the self. Thus, beyond random generalities there is the seeking of universal principles, a kind of loyalty to the highest and best.

Aristippus, the Cyrenaic (c.435-c.360 B.C.), interprets Socratic teaching as the way to happiness.[9] He declares that practical intelligence and wisdom consist in knowing how to get the most enjoyment out of every passing moment. It is here that we find the primeval roots of ethics of hedonism.[10] Antisthenes, the Cynic (c.444-c.365 B.C.), advocates spontaneous self-expression as the highest good. This line of thought is advanced further by Diogenes (c.412-c.323 B.C). However, all these efforts fail to grasp the importance of universal principles and the emphasis on rational judgment. In matters of politics, Plato (c.427-c.347 B.C) advocates for the rule of the best-the philosopher king. In his opinion, social peace and stability are possible only on condition that philosophers assume leadership.[11]

Plato treats reason as the best principle in human nature.[12] The highest of all cosmic principles, he contends, is the idea of the good, or the principle of value.[13] Plato's ethics, integral in its rationalism with his theory of knowledge and metaphysics, is decisive in his social-political philosophy. His ideal state, as portrayed in *The Republic*, is a society in which each class finds appropriate fulfillment in performing its characteristic part in the social enterprise.[14]

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[9] Op. cit
[10] From the Greek word, *hédoné*, i.e. 'pleasure'.
[11] Philosophers in this case refer to the educated people.
[12] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.334.
[13] Op. cit
[14] See Desmond Lee, *The Republic*, London, Penguin Books Ltd, 1987

Aristotle, a student of Plato, proposes, in *Nichomachean Ethics*, a theory that has been very influential over the time. He claims that the good life for humans, i.e. males, is to fulfill or realize their natural goals.[15] Aristotle derives principles of ethics from biological and psychological investigations.[16] His leading argument is that happiness or "flourishing," is the main goal of human existence. Human persons seek happiness as a final goal, and not a means to something else.[17] This happiness is an "activity" of the soul in accordance with virtue. For a person to be happy is to exercise his basic faculties in conformity with excellence or virtue.[18] In other words, happiness is the goal or right exercise of those features that make a person what he is. Aristotle also recognizes the social dimension to ethics. This is because, according to his observation, human persons are essentially social and subsequently, any person's right emotions, right desires, and right actions, include regarding and treating others in the right ways.[19]

The individual's well being, Aristotle concludes, promotes the well being of the community as well because individuals always live in and are partly defined by their societies. Stoicism, as represented in Cicero, Seneca, Epictetus and Emperor Marcus Aurelius, treats reason as the spark in human nature and that the only good life is the one based on pure rationality.[20] Central to Stoicism is the revision of the cardinal virtues of classical Athens to the effect that justice is interpreted as fair mindedness in social relations. Epicurus (341-270 B.C) quite unlike some of his predecessors recognizes no idea of the good. Instead, he acknowledges only emotions. Stated differently, Epicurean hedonism recognizes only one good and that is pleasure.[21] It cannot be disputed that ethical theories of classical antiquity constitute the firm basis of the modern and contemporary positions on ethics.

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[15] Peter K. McInerney, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p.145.
[16] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.335.
[17] Peter K. McInerney, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p.146.
[18] Op. cit.
[19] Op. cit.
[20] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p. 335
[21] Ibid. 336

1.2 Christian-medieval ethics

The exclusive qualification of a certain tradition of ethics as 'Christian' has become more problematic in contemporary debate. The contention centres on the definition of what is "Christian" about Christian ethics as distinct from the pure human. This line of thought is advanced under the theme of "*autonomous ethics*." Proponents of this trend include Alfons Auer, Joseph Fuch, Bruno Schuller, Charles Curran, and Richard A. McCormick.[22] Autonomous ethics emphasizes two critical points. First, it treats the human person as the discoverer of morality over God as the revealer of it. Second, autonomous ethics argues for the common morality of all people over the specific morality of Christians.[23] The central argument is that every demand of a Christian morality must be accessible to everyone through reason. This is because the content of Christian and non-Christian morality at the level of concrete norms and values is substantively the same. Stated boldly:

> The fact of being a Christian offers no specific content to the moral solutions of human problems, which are not also available to non-Christians. What the Christian faith does do is to provide a distinctive context in which one lives the moral life, a religious motivation for living morally, a self-understanding informed by faith, and a specific religious intentionality, namely union with God.[24]

Typical in medieval ethics is the interpretation and replacement of the cardinal virtues of classical ethics.[25] This reinterpretation is evident in the work of such prominent scholars like Ambrose (c.333-397), Augustine (354-430), and Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Eminent scholars like these have had tremendous influence on both classical Christian theology and the church's social teaching itself.[26] For instance, Thomas Aquinas whose thought not only spans across generations of Christian scholars, but also shows a remarkable continuity with that of Aristotle, acknowledges reason as a reliable guide in

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[22] See Richard Gula, *Reason Influenced by Faith. Foundation of Catholic Morality*, New York, 1989, pp.43-59.
[23] Ibid. p.47.
[24] Op. cit.
[25] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.337.
[26] St Ambrose and St Augustine are among those individuals in Church History known as Church Fathers. In addition to rendering great contribution to Christian theology, they also contributed to the thinking regarding the relationship between the Church and State, and how a Christian is to live his life in State and Society.

every human endeavor. However, unlike Aristotle, this is the case in so far as it proceeds in the right direction.[27] Further, Aquinas treats knowledge and reason as prepaedeutic to faith. On the overall, Aquinas regards the Christian ethics as an ethics of salvation from sin.[28]

1.3 Varieties of modern ethics

Ethicists of different persuasions agree that modern ethics is an evolution, somehow, of classical humanism and naturalism. Marsilio Ficino (1433-1490), for example, strives to achieve a system of ethics by a blend of Christianity with Plato and Plotinus. Similar developments are found in Lorenzo Valla (1406-1457), Giordano Bruno (1548-1600), Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) and Montaigne (1533-1592). In many cases ethical theories are distinguished broadly as *normative-metaethical* and *teleological-deontological.* Normative ethics, briefly, are about the universal principle(s) of morality to which all human persons ought to appeal to guide or justify their behaviour. It is about right and wrong acts, or the good life itself. Metaethics, on the other hand, is about the analysis or description of the way or ways in which moral judgments are actually used.[29] It concerns itself with questions of meaning, truth and method.

Normative ethics may be distinguished as *teleological* or *deontological.* The basic features of teleological ethics are the primary concern with ends or the good rather than with moral obligation, and therefore, value overrides moral obligation. Concepts like duty, ought, or right are definable in terms of value. Right is dependent on, or connected in some way to consequences, hence also known as consequentialism. What is fundamental here is that humans are obliged to act in ways that produce the best consequences.[30] Since the classical antiquity, teleological ethics, or consequentialism, has been expressed in many forms. The most widely advocated one is utilitarianism which claims that people ought to choose the option that maximizes the greatest happiness of

[27] William D. Halsey et al (ed), *Collier's Encyclopedia,* p.337.
[28] Op. cit
[29] Milton D. Hunnex, *Chronological and Thematic Charts of Philosophies and Philosophers*, Michigan, grand rapids, 1986, p.23.
[30] Hugh LaFollette (ed), *Ethics in Practice. An Anthology*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997, p. 9.

the greatest number.[31] In other words, the amount of happiness is the basic moral factor. The moral goodness or badness of anything is a function of the amount of happiness, or utility, that it includes or produces. The morality of an action depends upon its consequences. In general, actions are wrong if they tend to promote unhappiness. Happiness is pleasure and the absence of pain, while unhappiness is pain and the lack of pleasure.[32]

Deontological ethics, also known as formal rigorism, is the ethics of duty and of upright will.[33] The basic argument is that moral judgments must be concerned with the man himself, with the principle on which he proposes to act. The belief is that an act is morally good only if the principle that is manifested in it is right. In other words, deontological ethics is concerned primarily with moral obligation-the right-rather than ends or consequences. Whereas teleologists or consequentialists claim that we should always strive to promote the best consequences, deontologists claim that our moral obligations-whatever they are-are in some sense or to some degree independent of consequences.[34] Moral obligation relates to duty, the ought, rightness, or fittingness. It involves a necessity of doing an act, i.e. it is categorical. With deontological ethics, considerations of moral obligation have priority over considerations of moral value.

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[31] Op. cit Other examples include those of Plato and Aristotle (*Greek eudemonism*), i.e. the good is equated to pleasure, well-being; Epicurus (*egoistic hedonism*), i.e. the good is pleasure, particularly the pleasure of the mind; Bentham and Mill (*hedonistic utilitarianism or universalistic hedonism),* i.e. the good is the greatest happiness of the greatest number; Paley (*theological utilitarianism*), i.e. the good is that which concurs with the will of God; Moore (*ideal utilitarianism*), i.e. the good is indefinable but is related to the 'ideal' rather than to "pleasure" in consequences; Sidgwick (*utilitarian intuitionism*), i.e. the good is happiness, but it cannot be defined in terms of a positive balance of happiness; Spinoza and Spencer (*evolutionary utilitarianism*), i.e. to be virtuous means to perform the specific activities of the species to which you belong efficiently, or better conduct is evolutionarily later and more complex conduct); Hume (*subjective hedonism*), i.e. the good is reducible to the mental attitude of approval in all or most of the social group; Dewey (*instrumentalism*), i.e. the good is that which works in terms of both personal satisfactions and the resolution of group tension.

[32] Peter K. McInerney, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p.150.

[33] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.337.

[34] Hugh LaFollette (ed), *Ethics in Practice. An Anthology*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 1997, p.9f.

Deontological ethics stress the self-evident nature of the right as revealed to reason, intuition, or moral sense.[35] It treats ethics as an autonomous discipline deriving from neither science nor metaphysics. Instead, it stresses the objectivity of moral rightness and goodness, i.e. axiological objection, and non-naturalistic, i.e. irreducible character of moral judgments.[36] Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and Richard Price (1723-1791)[37] developed this form of thinking about ethics further. Price argues that ethics must start with the acknowledgement of right and wrong as ultimate and irreducible qualities of certain acts, known eternally by God and therefore, obligatory.[38] Right is right, and we ought to do it because it is the right irrespective of consequences.

Kant's position can be summarized as follows: morality is based entirely upon rationality. Reason provides moral requirements that all human actions must meet, and this is the moral duty everyone must obey. Acting according to moral duty does not always make a person happy or serve one's ordinary interests. One is required by his essential nature, i.e. rationality, to follow the *Categorical Imperative*, which is the underlying principle of morality.[39] An imperative, says McInerney, is a command, or requirement. A categorical, or unconditioned, imperative is a requirement that does not depend upon any condition. Rational beings are commanded to be moral unconditionally. There are two most important statements of *Categorical Imperative*:

> The Formula of Universal Law, i.e. "*act only according to that maxim whereby you can, at the same time, will that it should become a universal law*," and the Formula of the End in Itself, i.e. "*act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end in itself and never simply as a means.*"[40]

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[35] Milton D. Hunnex, p.25.
[36] Op. cit.
[37] See *Review of the Principal Questions in Morals*.
[38] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.340.
[39] Peter K. McInerney, *Introduction to Philosophy*, p.147.
[40] Ibid. p.148.

Other examples of deontological ethics include stoicism by Epicurus which stresses the point that right is resignation to duty and indifference to consequences, and Royce's idealism, i.e. right it loyalty to loyalty for its own sake.[41] In Georg W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) and F.H. Bradley (1846-1924), one notices a shift in ethical thinking towards social dimensions. Both see the fruition of human character through social participation, something realized through a system of social institutions. The system of personal-social interrelation finds its fuller manifestation in the life of the State. Through the State, the individual attains to the ethical maturity of citizenship. The spirit of social concern and respect for the personality finds firm expression in Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882).[42] A person's morality, says Green, must express his active and responsible self-identification with the public welfare, and that a moral society is one that recognizes explicitly and seeks to preserve and enhance the rights and the well being of its individual citizens.[43] Green places great emphasis on the ideal of the common good and the dignity of the human person.

1.4 Special concerns of ethics

Ethics is primarily concerned with questions that are to do with individual and social behaviour. It rests on questions like what kind of actions, qualities of character, or attitudes, or states of mind mark the admirable person, or how the wrong and the right could be known? Ethics further concerns the solid principles upon which a good social order can be founded, a social order that allows optimum realization of people's potential and happiness. In recent times, critical investigations have also focused on the question about the meaning of existence.[44] In response to such inquiries the tendency it to strike consensus on general principles expressed as cardinal virtues.[45] Traditionally, knowledge of the right and wrong is said to be possible on the basis of conscience.[46]

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[41] Milton D. Hunnex, p.25

[42] See *The Prolegomena to Ethics*.

[43] William D. Halsey, et al, (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.343.

[44] C. Stephen Evans, *Existentialism. The Philosophy of Despair & The Quest for Hope*, Michigan, Grand Rapids, 1984.

[45] These are things like temperance, courage, wisdom, justice, faith, hope and love. See Collier's Encyclopedia, p.343.

[46] In theological terms, this is regarded as the voice of God in a human person.

Further, knowledge of what is right and wrong is possible through intuition, i.e. an innate, universal, and authoritative moral conviction. Empiricists, on the other hand, describe conscience as simply the strong tendency to use past experience as a directive for the future, as a confirmed habit of the will, or a settled customary judgment of a certain society.[47] This is called the historical theory of conscience. Jean Bodin (1530-1596), for example, states that the social and political order has by right an ethical basis. He writes:

> The state is a lawful government...with sovereign power. Its dominion, to be truly effective, must be rightful. It is not imposed by force on its subjects but itself grows out of the tissue of institutions for normal human life.[48]

Conclusion

The church is primarily and fundamentally a community of faith. The self-understanding of the church as a community is firmly rooted in the Old Testament. With regard to interpersonal and social ethics, Old Testament morality is guided by a strong sense of community. The tribes of Israel feel bound together by their common racial origin and by their common history and culture. Above all they feel bound by the religious bond of the covenant. Thus, the sense of community constitutes the central motive in Israel's human relationships.[49]

Community centered thinking exerts a decisive influence upon the manner of life and the moral conduct of the Israelites.[50] The same idea finds continuity in the New Testament under the "new covenant."[51] The concept of covenant, notices Peschke, describes the link between religion and morality.[52] Therefore, Christian ethics, like the Jewish ethics, are *theonomous*. This is because the moral character of human actions is essentially, determined by their relation to God's will.[53]

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[47] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.343.
[48] William D. Halsey, et al (eds), *Collier's Encyclopedia*, p.344.
[49] See: Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics. Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II, Vol. I, General Moral Theology*, Birmingham, C. Goodliffe Neale Ltd, 1989, p.21.
[50] See: 2 Samuel 13:12; Gen.34: 7; Deut. 22:21; Josh 7:15; Jer. 29: 23.
[51] See: MK 14:24; 1 Cor. 11:25; 2 Cor. 3:6; Heb. 8:6-15; 9:15; 12:24; 13:20.
[52] Karl H. Peschke, p.29.
[53] Karl H. Peschke, p.65.

The church remains an integral part of the concrete life of various communities in the world despite its eschatological expectation. This realisation is well expressed in the introductory part of the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* where it is stated:

> The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts. For theirs is a community composed of men. United in Christ, they are led by the Holy Spirit in their journey to the kingdom of their Father and they have welcomed the news of salvation, which is meant for every man. That is why this community realizes that it is truly and intimately linked with mankind and its history.[54]

As a result, inspired by its faith, it equally participates in the discussion on how human persons ought to relate to one another, how they ought to conduct themselves and how public life could be organized politically and economically so as to ensure that people realize their potential and happiness. It is at this point where Christian ethics develops. To either teleological/consequential or deontological ethics, there are a variety of applied ethics corresponding to these distinctions. Typical examples include *bio-ethics* that deal with such questions as the body and bodily life,[55] medical treatments and operations,[56] destruction of human life,[57] sexuality and marriage;[58] *business ethics* that deal with such issues as work and property.[59] The Catholic social teaching, nevertheless, as the name suggests, belongs to the tradition of social ethics. It deals with such questions as the nature and order of society,[60] the family,[61] and the state.[62]

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[54] SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 48: *AAS 58* (1966), n.1.

[55] This concerns issues like nourishment, clothing and housing, recreation and sports stimulants and drugs.

[56] This covers the aspects of medical and surgical treatments in general, moral rights and duties of the physician, ordinary and extraordinary treatments, the duty to preserve life, cooperation in illicit operations, cosmetic surgeries, transplantation of organs, sterilization and castration, operations in cases of difficult pregnancies, psychotherapeutic treatments, experimentation on human beings.

[57] Specifically this concerns suicide and indirect killing of oneself, murder and indirect killing of fellowman, euthanasia, abortion, self-defense, etc.

[58] Key issues discussed here are: the nature and meaning of human sexuality, mastery of sexuality and failures in it, moral responsibility in the marriage state, the nature of marriage, the ends of marriage, etc.

[59] Specifically this centres on the moral order of work, the moral order of property, etc.

[60] Here the focus is on the nature of society, notion of society, the concept of the common good: aim and function of society, the complementary function of society, responsible use of authority, the virtue of obedience, etc.

[61] The teaching here dwells on the nature and functions of the family.

In this study, our interest is on the state with specific reference to political and economic governance. When examined in the light of either teleological/consequential or deontological ethics, although the Catholic social teaching is inherently deontological, at the same time, it transcends this category, as it is also theonomous. We see in the Catholic social teaching, the quest, not only for the basic principles on how human persons could live in state and society, and how state and society could be organised for the happiness and well being of all, but we also see the quest for the ultimate purpose of human life and history as willed by God.[63]

[62] Here focus is on the nature and origin of the state, the tasks and moral duties of state authority which include legislation and administration of justice, promotion of socio-economic welfare and public health, criminal jurisdiction of the state, requirements of a just fiscal policy, the national right to self-defense by war (the moral admissibility of war, conditions of a just war, means and methods of warfare, problems of atomic warfare, participation in war); duties of citizens, Church and State relations. For details see Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics. Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II*, Vol. II, Birmingham, 1985.

[63] Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics. Morality in the Light of Vatican II.* Volume I, p.87.

The Catholic Social Teaching

2. Introduction

From the outset we would like to indicate the place and importance of this chapter mainly in view of chapters three and four. The chapter seeks to assist us understand the Catholic social teaching in the light of what has been said was the failure by the Catholic Church to live and adequately make use of it. In carrying out this task we shall focus on human dignity and rights. And closely related to the two we shall further discuss themes of subsidiarity, option for the poor and solidarity.[1] This shall be done so that we are able to appreciate what is considered to be the proper and respective roles of both the state and the church, the roles which had both played them would have averted or mitigated the crisis of human dignity.

2.1 Towards a working definition

2.1.1 Views of scholars

In general the Catholic faithful know about sacraments, the creed, liturgical details, prayers, devotions, saints and hymns. But this knowledge blurs when it comes to the Catholic social teaching.[2] In many cases the term itself sounds foreign even to the clergy. It could be experiences like these that prompted Edward DeBerri to give it an epithet: *Our Best Kept Secret.*[3] However, very often secrets arouse curiosity. For us the immediate question would be what is this best kept secret? According to Staf Hellemans,

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[1] Although there is a conceptual distinction between these topics, it is generally agreed that in practice, as far as the Catholic Tradition is concerned, they go together especially when it comes to the promotion of human dignity. *See*: Johan Verstraeten, *Christian Political and Social Ethics*, Course Reader, K.U. Leuven, Academic Year 2004-2005, p.134ff.

[2] This body of teaching is also known by other terms, for example: the *Apostolicum Actuositatem*, n.31, refers to it as the "Church's Moral and Social Teaching," *Gaudium et Spes* calls it the "Christian teaching on human society"; in *Inter Mirifica,* n.110, it is called "the Social Teaching of the Church," while in *Unitatis Redintegratio,* n.6, it is referred to as "the Church's Social Teaching and Activity; "the principles of justice and equity demanded by reason for individual and social life worked out by the Church"; in *Gaudium et Spes,* n.63, "the application of the Gospel principles to social life"; in *Unitatis Redintegratio*, n.12; and "the doctrine of the Church on the human person, on liberty"...in *Christus Dominus*, n.12. At the end of Vatican II, Paul VI opted for "the Social Teaching of the Church." This slight change in expression led to some scholars to conclude that this is a break with the past. The impression was created that with the publication of *Pacem in Terris* (1963) and *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), the era of the social doctrine had come to a close. However, Pope John Paul II has adopted and continues to use the expression, "Social Doctrine of the Church." He uses it alongside "Social Teaching," " Social Thought," and "Social Magisterium."

[3] Edward P. DeBerri, et all (eds), *The Catholic Social Teaching. Our Best Kept Secret*, New York, Orbis Books, 2003.

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the classical Catholic social teaching is first and foremost a papal doctrine, forged and proclaimed by the popes themselves in encyclical letters.[4] In his opinion the social encyclicals of *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891*) by Leo XIII,[5] and *Quadragesimo Anno*

[4] Here we are sure that scholars on the Catholic social thought like Johan Verstraeten or Jonathan Boswell, could find this definition very contentious. Verstraeten prefers to classify the teaching into two: *the Official Catholic Social Teaching* (OCST) and *Non-Official Catholic Social Teaching* (NOCST). It could only be agreeable if the definition of Hellemans is restricted to the Official Catholic Social Teaching. *See*: John Boswell, (ed), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p. 59ff; also p. 93ff. It is also interesting to note that the official position of the church seems to dispute the understanding of Hellemans. It says: " *The social doctrine belongs to the Church because the Church is the subject that formulates it, disseminates it and teaches it. It is not a prerogative of a certain component of the ecclesial body but of the entire community; it is the expression of the way that the Church understands society and her position regarding social structures and changes...*" *See*: *THE COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Libreria Vaticana, 2004, p.43.

[5] Almost every Catholic social ethicist accepts the historic place of encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891)* by Leo XIII. This encyclical came at a time of great social difficulties resulting from industrial revolution in Europe in the 19th century. It was a situation that portrayed a crisis of "human dignity" as well as that of the "state". The crisis of human dignity was manifested in the destitution of the masses vis-à-vis the wealth of the few; the decline of public morality; exploitation of workers by greedy employers and public authorities. There was marked failure on the part of the state to protect the interests of the poor. *See*: Edward DeBerri, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003, p.46. Thus, by this letter, the Catholic Church, for the first time in history, took a bold attempt to deal with those social questions in a decisive and systematic manner. In many respects, *Rerum Novarum* (*RN*) was innovative and dealt with a wide range of issues like: (i) the suffering of workers, *see:* Leo XII, Encyclical Letter, *Rerum Novarum*, (1891), *nn. 5, 9, 48, 55, 62, 63, 69;* (ii) property for workers, *see: nn. 8, 9, 36, 72;* (iii) role of the state, (iv) a living wage, (v) right to organise, (vi) role of the Church, etc. In short, *Rerum Novarum* (*RN*) dealt with the "*Social Question*", with decisive focus on the natural right of private property, the mutual rights and duties of capital and labour, the social role of the church, and that of the state, and the workers associations. The encyclical saw the role of the state as that of defending and fostering the rights of families, *see: n.21;* supporting the implementation of the common good: *n. 4;* safeguarding the well-being and rights of non-owning workers. *See: n. 49;* intervening when necessary to prevent harm to individuals or to the common good, *see n. 52*; give special consideration to the rights of the poor, *nn. 51, 52*; uphold rights of property and enable all to possess property, as well as promote the rights of associations and the religious rights of the people, *nn. 55, 65, 69*. With regard to the role of the church, the encyclical argued for its right to speak out because social matters affect religion and morality. The letter also observed that through the use of Gospel principles, the church could help reconcile and unify social classes, and that it is equally the responsibility of the church to educate the people to act justly, *see nn. 25, 33, 41*. For further references on *Rerum Novarum*, *see* the following: A. Abell, *"The Reception of Leo XIII's Labour Encyclical in America, 1891-1919," The Review of Politics 7,* October 1945, pp.464-95; J.-Y. Calvez, and J. Perrin, *The Church and Social Justice: The Social Teaching of the Popes from Leo XIII to Pius XII,* Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1961; R. Camp, *The Papal Ideology of Social Reform: A Study in Historical Development, 1878-1967,* Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1969; E. Gilson, (ed), *The Church Speaks to the Modern World: The Social Teaching of Leo XIII,* Garden City, N.Y., Doubleday, 1954; J. Moody, (ed), *Church and Society: Catholic Social and Political Thought and Movements, 1789-1950*, New York, Arts, Inc., 1953; L. Wallace, *Leo XIII and the Rise of Socialism*, Chapel Hill, N.C., University of North Carolina Press, 1966; P. Misner, *Social Catholicism in Europe: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War*, New York, Crossroad, 1991.

(*QA.1931*) by Pius XI, are largely responsible for having instituted this teaching.[6] Thus since the time of Leo XIII, the modern Catholic social teaching has come to be defined as an accurate formulation of the results of a careful reflection on the complex realities of human existence in society and in the international order. This is in the light of faith and the Church's tradition.[7] The whole reason for this teaching is to interpret these realities, judging their conformity to or divergence from the precepts of revelation and natural law on the human person and his vocation in state and society. Hence, Johan Verstraeten calls the Catholic social teaching, a normative critique, a theology and a guide to Christian behaviour.[8]

This teaching comprises of a particular set of shared understanding about the human person, social goods and their distributive arrangements. As Verstraeten continues to say, this shared understanding is grounded in a living relation to the constitutive narratives provided by the Bible and are integrated in a theoretical framework that makes it remain open to rational explanation and public debate.[9] Alasdair MacIntyre speaks of the Catholic social teaching as an historically extended, socially embodied argument.[10] What it means is that the teaching first and foremost develops out of specific historical circumstances, in response to and influenced by social factors.

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[6] Staf Hellemans, "*Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching After the Waning of Ultramontane Mass Catholicism?*" in Jonathan Boswell, et al, *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p.14.

[7] Johan Verstraeten, "*Re-Thinking Catholic Social Thought as Tradition*," in Jonathan Boswell, p.60. See also: C. Carlen, (ed), *The Papal Encyclicals,* 5 vols, Wilmington, N.C; McGrath, 1981; R. Charles, with D. Maclaren, *The Social Teaching of Vatican II: Its Origin and Development*, San Francisco: Ignatius, 1982; Congregation for Catholic Education, *"Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests,"* Origins 19, no. 11, 1989; C. Curren, *American Catholic Social Ethics: Twentieth-Century Approaches*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1982; C. Curren and R. McCormick, (eds), *Readings in Moral Theology, No. 5, Official Catholic Social Teaching*, New York, Paulist, 1986; David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition, New* York, Paulist, 1979; B. Menczer, *Catholic Political Thought, 1789-1848*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1962; M. Schuck, *That They Be One: The Social Teaching of the Papal Encyclicals, 1740-1989, Washington*, Georgetown University Press, 1991; Carrier Harvé, *The Social Doctrine of the Church Revisited*, Vatican City, Pontificum Consilium de Iustita et Pacem, 1990; Charles Roger, *Christian Social Witness and Teaching: The Catholic Tradition from Genesis to Centesimus Annus*, Vol. 1, Townbridge, Wiltshire, B.A., 140XB, Cormwell Press, 1998; Thomas Massaro, *Living Justice: Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, Wisconsin, Sheed & Ward, 2000.

[8] Ibid. p.64.

[9] Op. cit.

[10] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, London, Duckworth, 1985, p.222.

In this regard the encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum* (*RN*) of Leo XIII is a very good example. Under such circumstances the role of the social teaching is seen as that of providing fundamental principles and general directions,[11] some sort of an indispensable and ideal orientation,[12] or stronger still, a set of principles for reflection, criteria for judgement, and directives for action.[13] In recent times this teaching has also been defined as a body of doctrine articulated in the Church, which interprets events in the course of historical experiences, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the light of what has been revealed by Jesus Christ.[14]

2.1.2 The view of the magisterium

While the Catholic Church shares the above perspectives, its own official position seems to be more pragmatic. It is primarily concerned with what the social teaching does other than what it is. Through this teaching the church proclaims the Gospel and makes it present in the complex network of social relations.[15] The church, by means of the teaching, takes on the task of proclaiming what the Lord has entrusted it. It makes the message of freedom and redemption wrought by Christ, the Gospel of the Kingdom, present in human history.[16] In this case the social teaching is an integral part of its evangelising ministry.[17] It is a valid instrument of evangelisation, a distinctive way for the church to carry out its ministry of the Word and prophetic role.[18]

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[11] Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, (1931), n.11.
[12] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, (1991), n.43.
[13] Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, (1971), n.4.
[14] Jonathan Boswell, p.95. The Catholic bishops of England and Wales describe the social teaching as: " *a set of sign posts, showing the way forward...a set of questions by which we can examine the way we live.*"
[15] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 40: *AAS 58* (1966), 1057-1059; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis, 14: AAS 71* (1979), 284.
[16] *Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2419; John Paul II, Homily at Pentecost for the First Centenary of *Rerum Novarum* (19 May 1991): *AAS 84* (1992), 282.
[17] *Cf.* Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 29: *AAS 68* (1976), 25.
[18] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus, 54: AAS 83* (1991), 860; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, 41: AAS 80* (1987), 570-572; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus, 5: AAS 83* (1991), 799.

Summary

We can summarise the above positions as follows. The social teaching is a clear demonstration of the church's concern with social questions.[19] As such it is an integral part of the Christian faith, a careful reflection and application of the Word of God to people's lives and society. The teaching reflects the understanding of the ecclesial community, an understanding that has evolved over the ages with regard to the life of the human person in state and society:

> To man, "as he is involved in a complex network of relationships within modern societies," the Church addresses her social doctrine. As an expert in humanity, she is able to understand man in his vocation and aspirations, in his limits and misgivings, in his rights and duties, and to speak a word of life that reverberates in the historical and social circumstances of human existence.[20]

The teaching represents, in a very remarkable way, the efforts the church has and continues to make in resolving grave social and economic ills. It expresses, as it were, the fundamental belief that action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of preaching of the Gospel.[21]

2.2 Historical review

Although we have highlighted the historic role of Leo XIII together with the significance of encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum* (*RN. 1891*) in officially instituting the Catholic social teaching, this is far from suggesting that the entire tradition begins at that point. Steady progress in the development of the teaching is discernible through different moments or periods in the history of the Catholic Church. Like with the small Christian community model of the church, we can detect traces of the social teaching in the New Testament Christian communities.[22]

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[19] Paul VI, Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity: *Apostolicum Actuositatem*, (Nov. 18, 1965), n.8.

[20] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, p.34.

[21] Document of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, *Justitia Mundo* (Justice in the World-Introduction).

[22] Richard J. Cassidy, *Society and Politics in the Acts of the Apostles*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987. Cassidy discusses this subject in details based on Luke's narratives about Jesus and Paul.

This is reflected in the teaching of Jesus himself,[23] as well as apostles like Paul and James.[24] From there, significant development of the teaching is noticeable in the Church Fathers, both Greek and Latin.[25] The Age of Mass Catholicism, as Staf Hellemans suggests, would be a third moment in this process.[26]

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[23] Two experts on the Gospel of Matthew provide interesting insights into the political and economic teachings attributed to Jesus. See Warren Carter, Matthew and the Margin. *A Sociopolitical and Religious Reading*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2001; Michael H. Crosby, *House of Disciples. Church, Economics, & Justice in Matthew*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1988.

[24] Typical examples are Romans 13:1; 13:7; 1 Peter 2; 13-15.

[25] These are teachers in the Christian tradition who fall in between the last part of the 2nd century up to 5th century. According to tradition, the group that is immediate to the Apostles of Christ is known as Apostolic Fathers, such as Clement of Rome (ca. 96); Barnabas (ca.130?); Polycarp (ca.130?); Ignatius (1-2c.); Justin Martyr, Irenaeus. Just as the Apostles learnt from Jesus, this group is believed to have learnt the faith directly from the Apostles of Jesus. After this group, then we enter the period of the Church Fathers. Prominent are: Origen (185-254); Tertullian (140-230); Cyprian (200-258); Athanasius (270-336); Augustine (354-430); Gregory of Nyssa (330-395); Ambrose of Milan; Gregory of Nazianzus; Basil the Great; Clement of Alexandria; John Chrysostom. What is unique about the Church Fathers is that they lived at a time when the Christian Faith had started to get consolidated as an official religion of the Roman Empire following the conversion of Emperor Constantine. This change brought with it new questions concerning the relation of the believing community, i.e., the church, vis-à-vis the state and wider society. Thus, these teachers were faced with the task of seeking responses from the Christian perspective. Such questions revolved around the origin; nature and foundation of political power; the object, nature and kinds of laws; the source, tasks, and purpose of justice; the nature and duties of the state; the civil obligations of Christians; the relationship between the church and state; slavery; labour; property and wealth; interest and usury; almsgiving; wars and peace. *See*: Agnes Cunningham (ed), *The Early Church and the State*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1982. See also R. Musto, *The Catholic Peace Tradition*, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 1986; R. Antoncich, *Christian in the Face of Injustice: A Latin American Reading of Catholic Social Teaching*, trans. M. O'Connell, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 1987; A. Carlyle, *The Influence of Christianity upon the Political Ideas*, London, 1912; I. Giordani, *The Social Message of the Early Church Fathers*, Peterson, N.J., St. Anthony Guild, 1944; P. Phan, *Social Thought, Message of the Fathers of the Church 20*, Wilmington, Del., Glazier, 1984.

[26] The period between 16th and 19th centuries is very important in any attempt to understand the later teachings of the Catholic Church in the areas of theology, social teaching, ecclesiology, etc. This is the time of great cultural-historical revolution in Europe, and this had great impact on the Catholic Church itself. Three key features are characteristic of this period. First is *Protestantism* to which the church hand to find a response through the Council of Trent (1545-1563). The second factor is the *Enlightenment,* which marked the breaking in of modernity together with all its assumptions, namely: *rationalism* and *liberalism*. It was in response to the Enlightenment that Vatican 1(1869-1870) was convened. Among its key doctrinal positions, two are relevant to this discussion: *Dei Filius,* which explained the relationship between Reason and Faith, and *Pastor Aeternus*, which established the Papal Infallibility. See: http://atheism.about.com/library/glossary/western/blgf_councilvatican.html, 09/12/2004. Such doctrinal positions generated strong centralization and consolidation of power and authority in the church. It is out of such an environment that the Catholic social teaching flourished further and started to be systematized. Staf Hellemans says: "*The unprecedented centralization of the Church by Rome after 1800 was a predisposing condition for the emergence of Catholic social doctrine. From a distant, relatively unknown figure without much influence on the local Churches, the pope became in the 19th century an all powerful and intensely active leader intervening, if necessary, in the Church affairs of even remote regions. It soon became a habit-encouraged by Rome!-of parties in dispute to invoke Rome in the hope of a Roman decision in their favour.*" *See*: Staf Hellemans, "*Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching After the Waning of Ultramontane Catholicism?*" in Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p.15. Hellemans calls this a period of *Ultramontane*

Thus the radical distinction from these early efforts that Leo XIII introduced with the publication of *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891*) is that for the first in the history of the Catholic Church, clear proposals were laid down for a just solution to serious problems affecting human persons in state and society.[27] From that date onwards, successive pontiffs have given the teaching an organic and synthetic character.[28]

2.3 Concerns of the Catholic social teaching

2.3.1 Fundamental theme

Since the publication of the first social encyclical (*RN.1891*), the concerns of the teaching have become broad and diverse. However, despite the diversity, it is interesting to note that the whole tradition finds harmony, and derives its substance and meaning from one particular theme. The theme, which is so fundamental, is the confession in the inherent dignity of the human person.[29] From this point the teaching progressively spreads to other proximate and distant themes that concern the human person: the family, society, the state, the international community, as well as the natural order.[30]

Mass Catholicism, and it spans across the ages up to 1960. *See:* Staf Hellemans, *"Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching After the Waning of Ultramontane Catholicism?* In Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p.14.

[27] Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno (1931)*, n.1; John Paul II undelivered General Audience Address, 13 May, 1981; *L'esservatore Romano*, English Edition, 18 May, 1981. This address was not delivered because on that day the Pope was an object of an assassination attempt. The text was, however, published by the Vatican newspaper; also see: Efeturi Ojakaminor, *Catholic Social Doctrine. An Introductory Manual*, Makuyu, Pauline Publications Africa, 1996, p.23.

[28] The *COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH,* Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, October 2004, shows how the teaching has progressively developed over the centuries.

[29] It is interesting to note that nearly all the major social encyclicals make references to human dignity. For example, *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891*), nn. 6, 16, 20; *Quadragesimo Anno* (*QA.1931*), nn. 42-43, 49, 136; *Mater et Magistra* (*MM.1961*), nn. 1-5, 18, 33, 37, 68-71, 82-83, 107, 196-199, 219-220, 259; *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963*), nn. 3, 5, 8-10, 40, 44, 50, 54, 157-159; *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS.1965*), nn. 2, 12-17, 22, 26, 29, 34, 38, 40-41, 46, 48-51, 59, 63, 68; *Populorum Progressio* (*PP.1967*), nn. 6, 15-17, 21, 34, 36, 42, 65; *Octogesima Adveniens* (*OA.1971*), nn. 13-14, 37; *Justitia Mundo* (*JM.1971*), pages 289, 293, 296, *Catholic Social Teaching.* Documentary Heritage edition; *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN.1975*), nn. 26, 31, 33, 35, 79; *Laborem Exercens* (*LE.1981*), Intro, nn. 1, 4, 6, 9-10, 12, 15, 21-22, 24-27; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS.1987*), nn. 26, 29-33, 38-39, 41, 46-48; *Centesimus Annus* (*CA.1991*), nn. 3, 6, 11, 13-15, 25, 29, 34, 36, 38, 41, 43-44, 47, 49, 53-55, 62.

[30] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004. This is the most recent comprehensive and official body of the social teaching of the church. It is premised on the following principles: (i) T*he Principle of the Common Good;* (ii) *The Universal Destination of Goods;* (iii) *The Principle of Subsidiarity;* (iv) *Participation;* (v) *The Principle of Solidarity;*(vi) *The Fundamental Values of Social Life;* (vii) *The Way of Love.* See pp.91-116.

2.3.2 Auxiliary themes

Although human dignity is the core of the social teaching, there are, what we can call, supportive themes. Some scholars have done very helpful and impressive work in simplifying the teaching by grouping or clustering the diverse writings spread across the ages around what are considered to be key themes or principles. This makes it very easy to know at one go what the Catholic social teaching is all about, essentially.[31] Here we shall see the efforts of two scholars, namely Edward DeBerri and Thomas Massaro. DeBerri begins by acknowledging the existing efforts to cluster the teaching around key themes or lessons.[32] In his contribution he proceeds from those themes sieved and distilled by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCB). These are about human dignity,[33] the dignity of work,[34] the person in community,[35] rights and responsibilities,[36] option for the poor and solidarity,[37] and finally the care for creation.[38] Thomas Massaro crystallizes the whole tradition into nine themes or principles as he calls them. These are the dignity of every person and human rights, solidarity, common good and participation, family life, subsidiarity and the proper role of government.

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[31] Let us mention that there is no complete agreement among the scholars in terms of the classification. There is tendency to strike agreement on some, whereas on other areas slight differences exist.

[32] His own edition, *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret,* at first identified ten major lessons, and later editions jumped to twelve and then to fourteen. *The Centre of Concern's website, Washington DC,* has recently identified more than twenty themes, while in 1999, the *United States Conference of Catholic Bishops* (USCCB) reversed the trend and distilled seven general principles: *See*: Edward P.DeBerri, *Catholic Social Teaching. Our Best Kept Secret*, New York, Maryknoll, 2003, p. 19.

[33] This centres on all the concerns of authentic human development: (i) *love of God*, (ii) *love of neighbour*, (iii) *love and justice and dialogue*. *See*: Edward P. DeBerri, p.19.

[34] This covers issues of priority of labour over capital, religious and social development. *See*: DeBerri, p.22.

[35] Under it are discussed: (i) *the common good*, (ii) *human freedom and social structures*, (iii) *structures of sin and structures of grace*, (iv) *liberation*, (v) *participation*, and (vi) *the role of the church*. *See* DeBerri, p.23ff.

[36] Under this theme, Edward P. DeBerri discusses: (i) *human rights*, (ii) *responsibilities*, (iii) *private property and social mortgage*, (iv) *resisting market idolatry*, (v) *the role of government and the principle of Subsidiarity*. *See*: p.26ff.

[37] The theme on the Option for the Poor centres on the "Biblical Justice," whereas the theme of solidarity covers issues that are to do with: (i) *the unity of humanity*, (ii) *peacekeeping*, (iii) *pacifism, or no-violence* and, (iv) *Just War*. *See*: Edward P. DeBerri, p.29-32.

[38] The theme talks about respect and sharing of the resources of the earth, since we are all part of the community of creation. By our work we are co-creators in the continuing development of the earth. It is here where major concerns of the environment and ecology find prominent articulation . Ibid. 33.

He also talks about property ownership in modern society, rights and responsibilities, the dignity of work, rights of workers and support for labour unions, colonialism and economic development, peace and disarmament, and option for the poor and the vulnerable.[39]

2.3.3 Points of convergence

A comparison of the two scholars brings to light areas of convergence but also those where there are differences in classification. For instance, both treat the theme of human dignity with prominence, and the same applies to some degree with solidarity and option for the poor. Apart from these areas, the rest are clustered differently. Nevertheless, regardless of differences in classification, scholars concede that the focus of the whole tradition of the Catholic social teaching hinges on human dignity. Those themes that come afterwards only serve to consolidate or promote this dignity.

Summary

As stated earlier, human dignity constitutes the core of this chapter and the entire study. We would like to examine what the Catholic social teaching says about this theme and in so doing be able to relate to those political and economic situations to be discussed later in chapters three and four. Taking into account the critical role the state plays in fostering human dignity, we shall, under the theme of subsidiarity, discuss what the Catholic social teaching considers to be the proper constitution of the state and role of government vis-à-vis the promotion of human dignity. Similarly, in view of what has been pointed out as the church's failure to adequately live this teaching, hence its inability to opt for and express solidarity with the poor, we shall look closely at what the teaching says about option for the poor and solidarity in order to see clearly what the church would have done in promoting human dignity.

2.4 Human dignity

The discourse on human dignity and the corresponding reference to human rights has since the end of WW II in 1945, taken a central stage in world affairs. Like issues of gender, environment, democracy and terrorism, this discourse has become global and

[39] Thomas Massaro, *Living Justice. Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, Wisconsin, Sheed & Ward, 2000, p.158.

multinational. Since 1980s, in the name of democracy, human dignity, rights and freedoms, totalitarian regimes are collapsing, one by one. It is as if the struggle or call for democracy, human dignity and rights, suggests relativism to all other social, cultural, economic, religious and political beliefs and practices. In other words, granted the speed at which secularisation is spreading particularly in the West, democracy seems to be a new religion, with humanity as its deity, and human dignity and rights as creed.[40] This statement is not an expression of pessimism about, or distrust of democracy, human dignity and rights, if anything, it serves to draw emphasis that since 1945 the emergent world order continues taking strides in securing and entrenching its socio-political foundations on the fundamental principles about the human person. A question that is worthy asking, perhaps, would be about the sudden blossoming of these efforts worldwide.

2.4.1 Precipitating factors

One African proverb says: "*the chief does not summon a council of elders unless there is strife in the village.*" The momentum with which nations and states, national and international organisations engage themselves with the question of human dignity and rights partly reflects the nature of our recent history and the ongoing experiences in the world. The just ended 20th century remains scarred with two devastating World Wars, civil wars and conflicts, wars of liberation in the former colonies, and the struggle against apartheid and all forms of discrimination.[41] It is also in the same century the world community came to bear witness to the gruesome and diabolic violations of human dignity and rights through genocides, ethnic cleansing, etc, in many places around the globe. It is estimated that 160 million people died in the wars during the 20th century

[40] This is the dimension that is making other quarters in the world become suspicious of the democracy and human rights talk. The Islamic world, for example, while accepting in principle the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations, has since 1990, promulgated its own *Charter of Rights* that makes all the rights subject to the Sharia Law. This is clearly expressed in the following articles: Article 2a; Article 2c; Article 2d; Article 7b; Article 7c; Article 12; Article 16; Article 19d; Article 22a; Article 22b; Article 23b; Article 24; Article 25. The declaration was adopted on 5th August 1990, by the 19th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers of the States of Organisation of Islamic Conference, OIC (Session on Peace, Interdependence and Development). During the Declaration 45 member states were present. A quick look at this declaration shows that it relativises the UDHR of the UN by subjecting the all the rights to the Sharia.

[41] *The United Nations and Human Rights*, 1945-1995, New York, Department of Public Information of the United Nations, art. 35, p. 8.

alone.[42] Currently, there are new forms of threats to human dignity and rights and these include global terrorism. All this put together, presents to humanity a threat of apocalyptic proportion. Experiences like these demonstrate that the survival of humanity in the present World order is also dependent on safeguarding and promoting human dignity and rights locally and internationally, hence the popularity of the subject. Regardless of diversities in human rights traditions, all converge on the explicit recognition of the dignity of the human person as the founding and harmonising principle of all the rights. Article 126 of the UN Charter audibly states:

> First, human rights are based on the "inherent dignity" of every human person. This dignity, and the rights to freedom and equality which derive therefrom, are inalienable and imprescriptible. They have precedence over all powers, including that of the State, which may regulate but may not abrogate them.[43]

The Charter continues to say: "the dignity of the human person exists and should be recognised without distinction of any kind. It follows that human rights are by nature universal, acquired at birth by all members of the human family whatever the political,

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[42] A sample of wars and genocides that occurred in the 20th century alone: 1904-1905: Japan vs. Russia (*150,000*); 1911: Chinese Revolution (*2.4m*); 1912-1913: Balkan War (*150,000*); 1914-1918: World War 1 (*8m*); 1917-1921: Soviet Revolution (*5m*); 1928-1937: Chinese Civil War (*2m*); 1936: Italy's Ethiopian Invasion (*200,000*); 1936-1937: Stalin's purges (*13m*); 1939-1945: World War II (*55m*); 1948-1973: Arab-Israel Wars (*70,000*); 1954-1962: French-Algerian war (*1m*); 1964-1973: USA-Vietnam war (*3m*); 1970: Nigeria-Biafra civil war (*800,000*); 1969-1970: Idi Amin, Uganda (*300,000*); 1969-1979: Francisco Macias Nguema, Equatorial Guinea (*50,000*); 1972: Burundi's civil war (*300,000*); 1972-1979: Rhodesia/Zimbabwe's civil war (*30,000*); 1974-1991: Ethiopian civil war (*1m*); 1975-1978: Menghistu, Ethiopia (*1.5m*); 1975-2002: Angolan civil war (*500,000*); 1976-1983: Argentina's military regime (*20,000*); 1976-1993: Mozambican civil war (*900,000*); 1976-1998: Indonesia-East Timor civil war (*600,000*); 1976-: Indonesia Aceh (GAM) civil war (*12,000*); 1979-1988: the Soviet Union invades Afghanistan (*1.3m*); 1980-1988: Iraq-Iran war (*30,000*); 1982-1990: Hissene Habre, Chad (*40,000*); 1983-2002: Sri Lanka's civil war (*64,000*); 1983-2002 Sudanese civil war (*2m*); 1987-: Palestinian Intifada (*4,500*); 198-2001: Afghanistan civil war (*400,000*); 1988-2004: Somalia's civil war (*550,000*); 1989-: Liberian civil war (*220,000*); 1989-: Uganda vs. Lord's Resistance Army (*30,000*); 1991: Gulf War-large coalition against Iraq to liberate Kuwait (*85,000*); 1991-1997: Congo's civil war (*800,000*); 1991-2000: Sierra Leone's civil war (*200,000*); 1991-: Russia-Chechnya civil war (*200,000*); 1992-1996: Yugoslavia's civil war (*200,000*); 1993-1997: Congo Brazzaville's civil war (*100,000*); 1993-: Burundi's civil war (*200,000*); 1994: Rwanda's civil war (*900,000*); 1998-: Congo/Zaire war-Rwanda and Uganda vs. Zimbabwe, Angola and Namibia (*3.8m*); 1998-2000: Ethiopia-Eritrea war (*75,000*); 2001: Afghanistan's liberation war-USA & UK vs. Taliban (*25,000*); 2002: Cote d' Ivoire's civil war (*1,000*); 2003: Iraq's liberation war-USA, UK and Australia vs. Saddam Hussein (*14,000*); 2003-: Sudan vs. Darfur (*180,000*). For a complete list, see: http://www.scaruffi.com/politics/massacre.html 23/03/2005. Also: Charney, *Genocide-A Critical Bibliographic Review* (1988); Stephane Courtois: *Black Book on Communism* (1995); Clodfelter: *Warfare and Armed Conflicts* (1992); Elliot: *Twentieth century Book of the Dead* (1972); R.J., Rummel: *Death by Government-Genocide and Mass Murder* (1994).

[43] Ibid. p.24.

jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs."[44] It is not only the charter of the United Nations that emphatically recognises human dignity and corresponding rights. Any political order that espouses democratic governance carries within itself, nuances of human dignity and rights.[45] The belief is that human dignity and rights constitute the proper foundation of the World order and peace.

2.4.2 The view of the magisterium

Fifteen years after the UDHR by the UN (1948), John XXIII issued encyclical letter, *Pacem in Terris* (*PT*).[46] Since then, the encyclical has remained unprecedented in the history of the Catholic Church with regard to its thorough, authoritative and comprehensive discourse on human rights.[47] Unlike the previous social encyclicals, *Pacem in Terris* (*PT*) carries details of human rights, including, for the first time, the rights to religion and conscience.[48] Apart from pastoral exhortations,[49] the encyclical

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[44] Ibid. p.25.

[45] Nearly all the countries that have embraced liberal democracy from mid 1980s, to the present have the Bill of Rights firmly entrenched in their constitutions.

[46] The Latin name *Pacem in Terris* means, Peace on Earth. The encyclical was written and published during the first year of Vatican II. It was issued shortly after the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962 and the erection of the Berlin Wall. It was the first encyclical addressed to "all people of good will".

[47] Upon its publication, commentaries on it came from various quarters. *L'Espresso*, Rome's anticlerical magazine noted this as a new era in the teaching of the Catholic Church. It carried the following commentary: "*By the encyclical of Holy Thursday, 1963, the Church has entered on a new stage of life. No matter what happens, no one can even take credit away from papa Roncalli for having signed this genuine edict of freedom and for having again turned his faithful subjects into citizens of the world.*" April 21, 1963, quoted by Thurston Davis, *"Pope John's Letter,"* America 108, May 18, 1963, p.710. According to John Courtney Murray, the encyclical was publicly praised by the President of the US, on one hand, and the Secretary General of the UN, on the other. It was also positively quoted in the Communist Press.[47] Further, a number of Protestant and Jewish leaders praised the encyclical. For instance, Rev. J. Irwin Miller, president of the National Council of Churches (US) is reported to have said: "*Protestants welcome the historic encyclical, and are gratified at the growing areas of agreement among the leaders...We find remarkable similarities in this statement between Roman Catholic thought and that in our own constituency.*" *See*: Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p. 697. Rabbi Julius Mark, president of the Synagogue Council of America, remarked that the encyclical's reference to religious liberty was "exceedingly refreshing." *See*: *"Praising the Pope," Christianity Today* 7, May 10, 1963, 42 (806).

[48] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.14. Some scholars are suspicious of the Catholic Church's recognition of the freedom of religion. It is argued that this is not about accepting that every religion is true. Rather it was to do with the freedom for the Catholic Church to exist. This was at the rise when Communism was on the rise.

[49] These are found in nn. 147-167. People are exhorted to participate actively in public life, ensure unity between faith and action, need for prudence among Christians in their collaboration with non-Christians; the necessity of truth, justice, charity and freedom as foundations for peace.

focuses on the following themes: (i) order among human persons[50], (ii) relations between people and public authorities within a single state[51], (iii) relations between states[52], and (iv) the relationship between people and political communities within the world community.[53]

2.4.3 The human person

...as the "Imago Dei"

In the course of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-65) deep and intensive reflections were made on the nature of the human person.[54] In these reflections we find profound insights regarding what the Catholic Church understands and confesses about the human person, his dignity and rights, and about his vocation in the World. The reflections further show where the Catholic Church and other institutions converge in their discourse on human dignity and rights, and also where the church registers its uniqueness.[55] For the church:

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[50] Under this theme, the encyclical discusses human rights and the corresponding duties: *See*: nn.9-42. Again for the first time, the expression "*signs of time*" is used (*see*: nn.40-42). This marked a gradual departure from the sole reliance of the social teaching on revelation and the natural law, to "historical consciousness". This expression was finally articulated in full during Vatican II. See the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), n.4, where it reads: " *To carry out such a task, the Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the sings of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the gospel...* "

[51] Here, the encyclical talks about the (i) *nature of authority*: *see* nn: 46-51; (ii) *characteristics of the common good: see*: nn. 55-57; (iii) *civil authority*: *see*: nn.59-77.

[52] Under this theme, the encyclical centres on (i) *truth*: *see*: nn.86-90; (ii) *justice*: *see*: nn.91-96; (iii) *active* solidarity: *see*: nn.98-114; (iv) *liberty*: *see*: nn.120-125.

[53] Here the encyclical talks about the: *interdependence of countries* (*see*: n. 131); *the insufficiency in the structures and forms of national governments to promote the universal common good* (*see*: n. 135); *need for the public authority to have the means to promote the common good* (*see*: n.136); *need to foster the UN* (*see*: nn. 137-145). See also Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p. 697. Further details about *Pacem in Terris* can also be found in the following references: J. Bennet and R. Niebuhr, *"Pacem in Terris: Two Views," Christianity and Crisis,* vol. 23, no. 8, May 13, 1963; R. Camp, *The Papal Ideology of Social Reform: A Study in Historical Development, 1878-1967*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1969; J. Cronin, *The Social Teaching of Pope John XXIII*, Milwaukee, Bruce, 1963; C. Curran, *Directions in Catholic Social Ethics*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1985; T. Shannon, *War or Peace? The Search for New Answers*, Maryknoll, N.Y., Orbis, 1982.

[54]These reflections started with the recognition of the almost unanimous opinion of believers and unbelievers alike, that all things on earth should be related to the human person as their centre and crown. *See:* Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes,* (1965), n.12

[55] This similarity and distinction would be very interesting to be noted by the organs of the church, which promote human rights like the Justice and Peace Commissions. It is here they can distinguish themselves from all other pure civil society organizations.

> The human person is created in the image of God,[56] with the capability to **know** and **love** his creator, and was **appointed** by Him as master of all earthly creatures that he might subdue them and use them to God's glory.[57]

In the Catholic thought the human person is, first and foremost, a creature of God,[58] but quite unlike the rest of the created order, he is distinctively created in the image and likeness of God.[59] This likeness with God reveals that the essence and existence of the human person are constitutively related to God in the most profound manner.[60]

> This relationship with God can be ignored or even forgotten or dismissed, but it can never be eliminated. Indeed, among all the world's visible creatures, only man has the "capacity for God"-*homo est Dei capax*.[61]

...as Relational

From the profound understanding that the human person is, in the first place, the image and likeness of God flow many aspects about him. The human person, the teaching declares, is not a solitary being but "a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential."[62] Thus the relationship the human person

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[56] The designation of the human person as *"image and likeness"* of God has always raised controversial theological and biblical hermeneutical discussions. Scholars like Roger Burggraeve say that careful reading of the Genesis text shows that the human person is only created according to God's image, and not in God's likeness (*Genesis 1, 27a, b*). The distinction of image and likeness is usually attributed to Irenaeus in his '*Against Heresies'* (see: Boff 1981, 177; Cairns, 1973, 86-177). The 'deficiency' in God's creative act is also pointed out by Origen (see: Peri Archon, III, 6, 1; Maloney, 1963, 64). Basil of Caesarea draws our attention to it more explicitly and extensively in his work: On the *Origins of Humans* (see: homily 1, 15-16, 378 A.D). According to Basil, "God's image" is what humans possess through creation, meaning to say, as God's gift, while God's likeness, we acquire of our own initiative. In other words, Burggraeve says: "*creation is about a double work, namely the work of God, on one hand, and the work of humans, on the other: Together, both the acts of God and the acts of humanity comprise the creation according to Gods image and likeness.*"(Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise: Essays in Biblical Thought and Ethics*, Faculty of Theology KU Leuven, 2004, p.57).

[57] This statement is one of the products of the *Second Vatican Council* (1962-65), although this understanding has always been in the church even prior to the council. .

[58] *Cf.* Psalm 139:14-18.

[59] Genesis 1:27; 2:7.

[60] *Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 356, 358.

[61] *COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH,* Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, p.63; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* title Chapter 1, Section 1, Part 1; cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes, 12: AAS 58* (1966), 1034: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae, 43: AAS 87* (1995), 440.

[62] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes, 12: AAS 58* (1966), 1034. On this point it is argued in very clear terms that: " *The human person may never be thought of only as an absolute individual being, built up by himself and on himself, as if his characteristic traits depended on no one else but himself. Nor can the person be thought of as mere cell of an organism that is inclined at most to grant it recognition in its functional role within the overall system." See: COMPENDIUM OF THE*

has with God is equally reflected in the relational and social dimension of human nature. This relationality so imbedded in human nature expresses itself even more profoundly in the sexual difference.[63]

...as Unity and Open to Transcendence

Another aspect about the human person is that he is created as a unity of body and soul.[64] This soul, it is argued, is spiritual and immortal, and is the principle of that unity whereby the human person exists as a whole-*corpore et anima unus*. It is by the unity of body and soul that the person is the subject of his own moral acts.[65] Through his corporeity, it is observed, the human person unites in himself elements of the material world, while through his spirituality, he moves beyond the realm of mere things and plunges into the innermost structure of reality.[66] Thus the human person has two distinct characteristics: he is a material being, mediated to this world by his body, and he is also a spiritual being, open to transcendence, and to the discovery of more penetrating truths.[67] In other words, being human entails constitutive openness to the infinite-God, as well as to others.[68]

...as Unique and Unrepeatable

The human person exists as a unique and unrepeatable being. He exists as an *"I"* capable of self-understanding, self-possession and self-determination. The human person, it is argued, must always be understood in his unrepeatable and inviolable uniqueness:

SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, p.70, n.125.

[63] *Cf.* Genesis 1:27; 2:23. See also: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2334; 371; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae, 19 AAS 87* (1995), 421-422. Roger Burggraeve delineates four implications regarding the sexual difference: (i) *The sexual difference expresses a radical difference between individuals in terms of sexuality and procreation* (ii) *It shows non-omnipotence of individuals* (iii) *It opens up a perspective on dialogue* (iv) *It stands as a symbol for fruitfulness*. See Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise, Essays in Biblical Thought and Ethics,* Course Reader, K.U. Leuven, 2004-2005 Academic Year, p.46.

[64] *Cf.* Fourth Lateran Ecumenical Council, Chapter 1, *De Fide Catholica*: DS 800, p. 259; First Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Dei Filus*, c. 1: *De Deo rerum omnium Creatore*: DS 3002, p.587; First Vatican Council, canons 2, 5: DS 3022, 3025, pp. 592, 593.

[65] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor, 48: AAS 85* (1993), 1172.

[66] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, 14: AAS 58* (1966), 1035.

[67] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p.72.

[68] Op. cit.

> In fact, man exists as a subjective entity, as a centre of consciousness and freedom, whose unique life experiences, comparable to those of no one else, underlie the inadmissibility of any attempt to reduce his status by forcing him into preconceived categories or power systems, whether ideological or otherwise.[69]

The uniqueness of the human person and the freedom that he inherently possesses makes him historic. In freedom, it is asserted, the human person realises his being: "man can turn to what is good only in freedom which God has given him as one of the highest signs of his image."[70]

> For God has willed that man remain 'under the control of his own decisions' (Sir 15:14), so that he can seek his Creator spontaneously, and come freely to utter and blissful perfection through loyalty to Him.[71]

2.4.4 Respect of human dignity

The above constitutive characteristics of the human person are the non-negotiable premises upon which his inherent dignity rests. Again it is from the same that the whole tradition of the church's social teaching develops the principle that affirms the inviolability of this dignity.[72]Although this dignity is discernible through the mediation of the natural law,[73] its fullness is known only in revelation:

> When, further we consider the human person's dignity from the standpoint of divine revelation, inevitably, our estimate of it is incomparably increased. By the

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[69] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p.73.

[70] *Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1705.

[71] *COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p.75; *Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1730-1732.

[72] *Cf.* John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra: AAS 53* (1961), 453, 459.

[73] In the 16th century, Grotius in his work, *ius naturale* defined natural law as a dictate of right reason indicating that an act, on account of its conformity or lack of conformity with rational nature, has in it a quality of moral turpitude or moral necessity, and that consequently such an act is either commanded or prohibited by God, the author of nature. *See*: Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights*, p.327. Natural law denotes binding obligations for the free human person. This stems from the essence of what it is to be human as such. The history of this law is quite long. It can be traced in the New Testament (Rom. 1:18-22; 2:14-16; 12:17; 1Cor. 10:32). We find it also in the great theologians of the 1st century: Augustine and Ambrose. The natural law theory contains some elements from the ancient Greek philosophers mainly Plato, Aristotle, and the Roman Stoics. In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas made efforts to integrate the ideas of the Greek world into Christian philosophy and theology. Other scholars who, at various moments in history, have grappled with this theory are: Cicero, Gaius, Epictetus, Ulpian, Duns Scotus, Francisco de Suarez. In recent times, in the church, we find strong articulation of this law in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965).

> blood of Jesus Christ, human persons have been ransomed, and by grace are made sons and friends of God, and heirs to the eternal glory.[74]

The law and human dignity

Although traditionally, the inherent dignity of the human person is said to derive from his being the image and likeness of God, in the light of Vatican II, this does not seem to be an immediate and given fact. *Gaudium et Spes* (GS) introduces a new and deeper insight on this aspect when it says:

> In the depths of his conscience, man detects a law, which he does not impose upon himself, but which holds him to obedience. Always summoning him to love good and avoid evil, the voice of conscience can when necessary speak to his heart more specifically: do this, shun that. For man has in his heart a law written by God. To obey it is the very dignity of man; according to it he will be judged.[75]

This is a subtle but very crucial point. It levels, quite unequivocally, a radical critique on, and transcends the mere createdness in the image of God as the basis of human dignity. Instead it radicalises human dignity by connecting two movements: the law of God and obedience to it. Thus human dignity derives from the intrinsically constitutive personal relation to God based on obedience to the law in knowledge and freedom:

> Man's dignity demands that he acts according to a knowing and free choice that is personally motivated and prompted from within, not under blind internal impulse nor by mere external pressure.[76]

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[74] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.10. It is worth noting that The Catholic social teaching, or indeed any other teaching of the church, does not see contradiction between the natural law and revealed truths. In fact, the natural law is taken as the beginning of God's self-revelation in Christ. This means, natural law is an analogous participation in the universal law of Christ that governs the world. The law of Christ presupposes logically the natural law antecedent to itself. In the "new law of Christ", the primary element of which is the "grace of the Holy Sprit" (*ST I-II 106-8*), the new law of Christ signifies, as it were, the medium in which the "grace of the Holy Spirit" gives expression to itself in this world. *See:* Judith A. Dwyer, (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.674.

[75] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965), n.16. Here the primacy of obedience to God relativises all other forms of obedience or allegiances. It puts to question all forms of absolutisation that tend to make the human person subservient to systems and institutions.

[76] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes,* (1965), n.17. The concept of obedience here goes beyond hearing. In the biblical tradition it means doing the law, obeying the law, fulfilling the law, and this means practising the good, in short, love. In the Jewish Talmudic Tradition, "*doing is immediately and unconditionally, without preceding introspection and reflection, demanded of the person*" (see: Roger, p.31).

A critical analysis of this point reveals a lean towards the "theosis" tradition, a two way movement, i.e. through creation, we possess God's image, as God's gift, whereas, by our creative act, made possible by the creating activity of God, we ourselves, in obedience, substantiate our likeness with God.[77] As Emmanuel Levinas puts it:

> The 'yes' that needs to be given takes place without further ado and is done directly. Nevertheless, this 'yes' is not stupid or infantile, since it is based on a cognisant surrender that arrives at the knowledge and truth of that which is demanded in the surrender of doing.[78]

Implications

The confession of the dignity of the human person has political and societal, individual and institutional, as well as Trinitarian and eschatological implications. At state and societal level, it means that the social political order and its development must invariably work to the benefit of the human person, since the order of things is to be subordinate to the order of persons.[79] It means that every political, economic, social, scientific and cultural programme must be inspired by the awareness of the primacy of each and every human being over the state and society:[80]

> A just society can become a reality only when it is based on the respect of the transcendent dignity of the human person. The person represents the ultimate end of society, by which it is ordered to the person.[81]

At the level of the individual and institutions the confession of human dignity implies the duty to ensure its defence and promotion.[82] In *Gaudium et Spes* (GS), it is stated:

> ...whatever insults human dignity, such as subhuman living conditions, arbitrary imprisonment, deportation, slavery, prostitution, the selling of women and children; as well as disgraceful working conditions, where men are treated

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[77] Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise: Essays in Biblical Thought and Ethics*, K.U. Leuven, 2004, p.57. Burggraeve says that in the Christian Orthodox tradition, this is called "*theosis,*" the process of '*divinisation*'.

[78] Emmanuel Levinas (1994, 41-48) quoted in Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise*, p. 31.

[79] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes: AAS 58* (1966), 1046-1047.

[80] *Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2235.

[81] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p.74. This means in no way should the human person be manipulated for ends that are foreign to his own development, or be treated as means for carrying out economic, social or political projects

[82] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, (1987), n.47; *Catechism of the Catholic Church* nn.1929; 2158; 2235; 2238; 2267; 2279; 2284; 2304; 2402; 2407; 2479; 2494; 2521; 2526.

> as mere tools for profit, rather than as free and responsible persons; all these things and others of their like are infamies indeed. They poison human society, but they do more harm to those who practice them than those who suffer the injury. More over they are a supreme dishonour to the creator. [83]

Precisely because human dignity also concerns the intimate transcendental relationship the human person has with God, anything that violates it turns out to be a direct attack on God himself. Hence, the groaning of the victim of such violations is a cry in vengeance to God.[84] Again human dignity has Trinitarian and eschatological implications: *"The person is called to be a child in the son and living temple of the Spirit, destined for eternal life of the blessed communion with God."* [85] Jesus Christ, the true God and true human person, by his death and resurrection has once and forever opened and assured entry for humanity into the Triune life of God. Through and in Jesus Christ, there is "humanity" in Trinity; a piece of humanity and human history has become an integral part of the Triune life of God. It is precisely because of this that any harm on the human person turns out to be harm against God.

The position of the Catholic Church is that human persons, irrespective of race, gender, social status, etc, are all equal in dignity as creatures made in the image and likeness of God. [86] In the Christ's event is also demonstrated the equality of all people with regard to dignity: *"there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."* [87] Thus the dignity of every person before God is the basis of the dignity of the human person before others.[88]

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[83] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, n.27. Teachings like these ones would have inspired the Catholic Church in Malawi to raise an alternative voice against the political and economic abuses by the one party state.

[84] John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Christifideles Laici*, (30 December 1988), n.37. Time and again, we see this cry in vengeance to God expressed in the Bible. Whenever the oppressed raise their eyes to God and cry, that is the beginning of the end of the reign of those who oppress them, it marks the beginning of the liberation of the poor from their oppressors.

[85] Robert Sirico (ed), *The Social Agenda: A Collection of Magisterial Texts*, 00120 Citta Del Vaticano, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000, p.22.

[86] *Acts* 10:34; cf. *Rom* 2:11; *Gal* 2:6; *Eph* 6:9.

[87] *Gal* 3:28; cf. *Rom* 10:12; 1 *Cor* 12:13, *Col* 3:11.

[88] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, 29: AAS 58* (1966), 1048-1049.

2.4.5 Human rights

It is evident in other traditions of social ethics that the concept of human dignity easily turns out to be elusive in terms of what it means if, on one hand, its proper basis are not secured, while on the other, there is no clarity on what it concretely represents. So far we have secured the first position on what the Catholic social teaching means when it talks about human dignity. From here we would like to move one step further in order to see how this dignity finds practical expression. Like human dignity itself, the discussion on human rights has taken a central stage in world affairs.[89] Individuals and groups in their respective ways are claiming their rights, or defending what they consider to be their rights.[90]

The classical understanding is that human rights are the entitlements that every man, woman and child has by virtue of being human. These entitlements are part of what it takes to define a human person and as such, they are basic moral guarantees in ensuring

[89] At the international level, the UN stands as a symbol of the world's consensus on the centrality of human rights to the life of states and nations and the corresponding demand for their protection and promotion. We should also be mindful of the traces of the awareness of human rights in the predecessor charters to the United Nations Declarations, for instance, the *Atlantic Charter of August 14, 1941*; the *Declaration by the United Nations of January 1, 1942*, and the *Dumbarton Oaks Proposals* of September and October 1944. Presently, the institutional framework of the UN is such that it tries to facilitate a comprehensive approach to the task of protecting and promoting human rights in the world. These institutions include: (i) *the General Assembly*; (ii) *the Security Council*; (iii) *the Economic Council*; (iv) *the Trusteeship Council*; (v) *the International Court of Justice*, and (vi) *the Secretariat*. The UN has also specialised bodies in the field of human rights. These are: (i) *the Commission on Human Rights;* (ii) *the Commission on the Status of Women;* (iii) *the Sub commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities;* (iv) *the Sub commission on Freedom of Information and of the Press.* Human rights are also a major concern of regional bodies such as the Council of Europe, the Organisation of American States (OAS), and the African Union (AU).

[90] The proliferation of these claims has now amounted to what Johan Verstraeten calls, "*the inflation of human rights*" (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 14 February 2005). In recent times the discourse on human rights is increasingly turning out to be very fluid. The introduction of the talk about "group rights" such as the "gay" or "lesbian," including nudist rights, etc has complicated all standard moral considerations presupposed in the traditional understanding and definition of human rights. We seem to be heading for a major revision of the definition of human rights to either incorporate the new developments or delineate human rights from those developments that are claiming equal status and recognition. This confusion seems to be due to an inadvertent schizophrenia introduced in the discussion itself between *human dignity* and *human rights*. The severing of the linkage between the two concepts has made human rights talk lose its proper basis, and hence susceptible to all forms of manipulative interpretations to suit various moods and interests, while at the same time, human dignity talk has been deprived of its concrete manifestation in the life of the individual and society. The linkage between human dignity and human rights is an essential necessity since the two bear mutual qualifications towards each other. Human dignity qualifies what constitutes a human right, and simultaneously, a human right is a manifestation of human dignity.

that human life remains human.[91] The human rights tradition is premised on key concepts and principles. These are about the equality of all people, the universality, inalienability and indivisibility of these rights, as well as their interdependence and interrelatedness.

The human rights talk in the Catholic Church

Despite the popularity of human rights, their incorporation into the mainstream language and life of the Catholic Church is not without frequent expression of reservations and resentment. Reasons for the resistance range from the sincerity of the church in terms of putting into practice what it claims to promulgate, to the problematic nature of the human rights language itself.[92] The human rights talk in the Catholic Church, first and foremost, encounters a historical problem. There are those who argue strongly against the naked and glaring disparity between the church's bumper claims on human rights, on one hand, and the meagre yields in actual practice, on the other. These critics contend that looking at the history of the church, cases like the crusades, the inquisitions, slavery,[93] and colonialism, show that the church has been either an ardent beneficiary or an actual participant in human rights violation and not the champion.[94] The list of sceptics

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[91] Bigi Stephen, *Seminar Presentation on Human Rights*, Catholic University of Leuven, 7 October 2004.

[92] What we have already discussed in chapter one and partly two could be evidence of this ambivalence between what the Catholic Church teaches in its social doctrine, and what it does on the ground.

[93] In the 19th c. the standard Catholic teaching was that the social, economic and legal institution of slavery was morally legitimate as long as slaves were properly cared for materially and spiritually. *See*: Francis Maxwell, *Slavery and the Catholic Church*, Westminster, MD: Christian Classics, 1975, pp.10-12. *See* also: Joseph D. Brokhage, *Francis Patrick Kenrick's Opinion on Slavery, Washington*, Catholic University Press, 1955. In America, it was common for Catholic laity, bishops, priests and religious orders to be slaveholders. In this case examples include: the Jesuits, the Capuchins, Ursulines. There were also individual bishops who owned slaves. For example, Bishop John Carroll had two black servants-one free and one, a slave. *See:* Jamie T. Phelps, "*Caught Between Thunder and Lightening: A Historical and Theological Critique of the Episcopal Response to Slavery*," Secretariat for Black Catholics, Many Rains Ago, p.30. See also George Cummings, "*Racism in the US from 1492-1992: A Theological Critique of the Context of Contemporary Ministry,*" in T. Howland Sanks and John Coleman, (eds), *Reading the Sings of the Times: Resources for Social and Cultural Analysis*, New York, Paulist Press, 1993, pp.85-86. Even after Urban VIII had condemned slave trade in 1639, a thing that was repeated two hundred years later by Gregory XVI, in America, this was far from putting a stop to the "lucrative" trade. Northern and Southern bishops such as John England in Charleston, South Carolina, continued with the practice. *See*: The US Catholic Miscellany (October 10, 1840), as quoted in Maira Genoino Caravaglios, "*The American Catholic Church and the Negro Problem," in the XVIII-XIX Century*, Rome: Tipografia delle Mantellate, 1974, p.89, cited by Phelps, p.24. Even during the war for the abolition of slavery, church leaders like Archbishop John Hughes of New York was not supportive. *See*: Marvin Mich, p.137.

[94] It is generally accepted that the Church is not the "original" champion of human rights. Rather, history proves that the church, for a long time, had been resisting many of the fundamental rights of the human person. For an overview of the documents on human rights since John XXIII, see G. Filibeck (ed), *Human*

continues to grow. The participation of the church in human rights talk faces not only historical problems but also contemporary ones. There are those who argue that the church has not really changed. It still carries within its structures elements that promote violation of human rights. Mazgebu Kassa observes that while the church authorities denounce general societal abuses including the abuse of power and the oppression of human persons, the structures of the church continue to display authoritarian and oppressive character.[95] Presently, he continues, the practice of "obligatory" celibacy and the marginalisation of women in terms of priestly vocation and decision making in the church are clear examples of this disparity between words and action.

Added to the above problems is the language factor. There are critics who strongly argue that as a matter of fact, the whole human rights language is improper for the church. Paul Viler doubts the sanity of including the human rights talk in the language and life of the church. He queries: "how dare one speaks about human rights in the church? Human rights have to do with torture, barbed wire and blood on the stake".[96] And along similar lines, Alasdair MacIntyre contends:

> Rights language operates as both tool and weapon for those seeking to protect their interest and asset their will in the basically hostile social environment which characterises post-Enlightenment modernity.[97]

As Julie Clague observes, MacIntyre seems to attribute the phoney nature of human rights discourse to the dislocation of the concept itself from its classical locus, and its counterpart, the dislocation of the individual from society.[98] Another critic is Ernest Forlin. Like MacIntyre, he remains unconvinced of the wisdom of integrating the language of rights into church statements. His disputation is that the rights-talk takes its

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Rights in the Teaching of the Church: From John XXIII to John Paul II, Vatican City, 1994; See also R. Traer, *Faith in Human Rights: Support in Religious Traditions for a Global Struggle,* Washington, D.C., 1991, pp.33-48.

[95] Mazgebu Kassa, *"Human Rights in the Church": A Matter of Credibility and Authenticity*, Seminar Paper, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 16 December 2004, p.1.

[96] Paul Vilery, quoted by Mazgebu Kassa, *"Human Rights in the Church,"* seminar paper, 1§ 16 December 2004.

[97] Julie Clague, *" A Dubious Idiom and Rhetoric: How Problematic is the Language of Human Rights," in Catholic Social Thought?* in Jonathan Boswell, et. al., *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p.125.

[98] Op. cit

bearings, not from what human beings owe to their fellow human beings, but from what they can claim for themselves.[99] Thus the two extreme positions, one concerning the lack of harmony between the human rights claims of the church and its praxis, and the other, concerning the suitability of the human rights language itself, make the human rights discourse in the ambit of the Catholic Church somehow ambivalent.

2.4.6 The view of the magisterium

Regardless of such critical reservations, since the publication of *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963*), human rights have emerged in the Catholic social teaching as the criterion for determining the justice of any given social order.[100] Julie Clague provides a better perspective on this revolution within the Catholic Church. She writes:

> After a century of official hostility human rights language is now fully incorporated into mainstream Catholic tradition, and the central role that has been allocated to it mirrors its wider importance as the common currency of social and political life.[101]

Modern Catholic social thought expressly states that every human being is a person endowed with intelligence and free will, has universal and inviolable rights and duties:[102]

> Every human being is a person, that is, his nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. By virtue of this, he has the rights and duties of his own, flowing directly and simultaneously from his very nature. And as these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable so they cannot in any way be surrendered.[103]

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[99] Ernest Fortin, *Human Rights, Virtue, and the Common Good. Untimely Meditations of Religion and Politics. Collected Essays*, J. Lanham, MD, Rowman & Littlefield, 1996, p.304.

[100] Efeturi Ojakaminor, *Catholic Social Doctrine: An Introductory Manual*, Makuyu, Paulines Publications Africa, 1996, p.18.

[101] Julie Clague, *"A Dubious Idiom and Rhetoric: How Problematic is the Language of Human Rights in Catholic Social Thought?"* in Jonathan Boswell, p.125.

[102] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.9.

[103] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, n.9: Note the anthropological bias towards the Greek Aristotelian understanding of the human person. Other related references to the topic on human rights, see the following: David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition*, New York, 1979; J. Waldron, (ed), *Theories of Rights*, Oxford, 1985; I Browne, (ed), *Basic Documents on Human Rights*, 2nd ed., Oxford, 1981, T. Buergenthal, (ed), *Human Rights, International Law, and the Helsinki Accord*, Montclair, N.J., 1977; P. Sieghart, *The International Law of Human Rights*, Oxford, 1983.

Just as the church sees human dignity firmly rooted in the human person's being the image of God and his subsequent obedience to the law, human rights are equally seen to be irretrievably rooted in this dignity, which belongs to each human person:[104]

> The ultimate source of human rights is not found in the mere will of human beings, in the reality of the State, in public powers, but in man himself and in God his Creator. Human rights are characteristically universal, inviolable, and inalienable.[105]

Human rights are universal because they are present in all human beings, without exception of time, place or subject. They are inviolable insofar as they are inherent in the human person and in human dignity,[106] and they are inalienable insofar as no one can legitimately deprive another person, whoever they may be, of these rights, since this would be violence against their nature.[107]

Some specifications

Although these rights are multifaceted it is realised that over and above anything and everything else, the human person has the right to live.[108] This right presupposes the right to bodily integrity and to the means necessary for the proper development of life, particularly food, clothing, shelter, medical care, rest, and the necessary social services. The respect of this right, it is argued, is an indicative sign of man's authentic progress in any regime, in any society, system or milieu.[109] The human person has also the right to be looked after in the event of ill health, disability stemming from his work, widowhood, old age, enforced unemployment, or whenever, through no fault of his own, he is deprived of

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[104] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes, 27:AAS 58* (1966), 1047-1048; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1930.

[105] *Cf.* John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 278-279.

[106] John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 3: *AAS 91* (1999), 379; Paul VI, Message to the International Conference on Human Rights, Tehran (15 April 1968): *L'Osservatore Romano*, English edition, 2 May 1968, p.4.

[107] John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 3: *AAS 91 (*1999), 379.

[108] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (1963), 11. The Right to Life is understood to be from conception to its natural end. Thus the church is against every form of procured abortion and euthanasia. *See*: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae, 2: AAS 87* (1995), 402; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, 27: AAS 58*, (1966), 1047-1048; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor, 80: AAS 85* (1993), 1197-1198; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae, 7-28: AAS 87* (1995), 408-433.

[109] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis, 17: AAS 71* (1979), 300.

the means of livelihood.[110] By his natural constitution, it is further argued, the human person has a right to respect and this respect includes having a good name. Good name here means reputation.

A name carries very important and sometimes serious implications. It creates relations and determines how the individual will relate to the community and vice versa.[111] The right to a good name is, therefore, fundamental to ensure the protection and integrity of the individual. Further, the human person has the right to freedom in investigating the truth, and-within the limits of the moral order and the common good-to freedom of speech and publication, and freedom to pursue whatever profession he may choose. He has the right also to be accurately informed about public events.[112] Again the church clearly expresses its views on the importance of culture and its central place in the life of people.[113] The participation of the individual, therefore, in the benefits of culture, is not a luxury, but a right.[114] Prominent in these benefits is education. It is the right of every person to receive good education, and technical and professional training consistent with the degree of educational development in his own country.[115] A simple relay of this to what shall be described in chapter three on the education policy framework during the

[110] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n. 11. Other rights articulated in the encyclical are about: (i) *moral and cultural values (see:* nn. 12-13*); (ii) respect for one's person and one's good reputation;(iii) (iv) religious rights (see:* n.14*); (v) family rights (see:* n.15-16*),* i.e. to choose to set up a family, right of parents to educate their children, equal rights for men and women); (vi) *economic rights (see:* nn.18-24*), e.g.,* the right to work; right to humane working conditions; to appropriate participation in management, etc); (vii) *political rights (see:* nn.26-27*), e.g.* right to assembly and association, right to participate in public affairs, etc); (viii) *rights of freedom of movement and immigration*, etc. *See* Marvin Mich, p.103. In discussing these rights we should be able to spontaneously relate to situations we have narrated in chapters one and two with regard to how the majority of the people in Malawi were deprived of these rights by the state *vis-à-vis* the silence of church.

[111] During the period between 1964 and 1992, once a person was perceived not to be following the party line, he was immediately referred to as a rebel, "*Chigawenga*". This apparently simple reference meant a lot. A person was made susceptible to loss of close relations, employment, property, etc. Under this labeling, anything done to the person was acceptable including killing.

[112] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.12. The tendency particularly in absolutist states is to keep tight control on the flow of information and also distort whatever is passed on to the public. In the end, people are kept in darkness and naturally they become dependent on the system. The way the means of communication have been and still are controlled by the government shows that tendency to keep people under conditions of little or no knowledge at all. This is the practice most favoured by regimes that are oppressive, corrupt, or both.

[113] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), nn. 55-62. What is discussed here under culture could be related to what we shall discuss in chapter three on how culture was used to entrench Banda and his absolutist regime.

[114] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.13.

[115] Op. cit

one party state explains how this right was grossly violated. Very pertinent and also related to this study is the clear realisation and proclamation in the teaching about the rights that concern the economic life. The human person has inherent right to work and to exercise personal initiative in the work that he does.[116] We should take note of the term "inherent". This means something that the human person has to necessarily do.[117] To be truly human is also to work. Work is not accidental but integral to the fact of being human. It is part of the human person's dignity as a participant in the creative act of God.[118] Therefore, the structures and policy framework of the social order, it is argued, must be such that they encourage the creation of employment opportunities within the national territory.[119]

In addition, an employee is entitled to a just wage and this must be such that it allows him and his family a standard of living consistent with human dignity.[120] Here, we see very plainly the natural linkage between human dignity and human rights:

> Nature imposes work upon man as a duty, and man has the corresponding natural right to demand that the work he does shall provide him with the means of livelihood for himself and his children. Such is nature's categorical imperative for the preservation of man.[121]

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[116] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.18. See also: Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, 26: AAS 58* (1966), 1046-1047; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 9, 18: *AAS 73* (1981), 598-600, 622-625; John Paul II, Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences (25 April 1997), 3: *L'Osservatore Romano,* English edition, 14 May 1997, p.5; John Paul II, Message for the 1999 World Day of Peace, 8: *AAS 91* (1999), 382-383.

[117] *Cf.* Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*: *Acta Leonis XIII,* 11 (1891), 128.

[118] According to Catholic thought, human work is understood as (i) *a contribution to the development or fulfillment of human persons*; (ii) *participation in God's creative act;* (iii) *a way of providing human needs;* (iv) *a way of giving service to God and neighbour* (v) *contribution to the glory of God and the preparation for our Lord's glorious coming* (vi) *contribution to the expiation of sin. See*: William May, "*Theology of Work,*" in Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *A New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p. 997ff.

[119] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH, p. 167.* This is a very serious point for Malawi. Between 1994 and 2004 we have witnessed sloth and a culture of begging setting in. This is because the administration failed to promote the spirit of work. Instead, for its own reasons, it promoted a culture of handouts, hence the flourishing of dependency. These are some of the things the Catholic Church would have easily spoken against for they are contrary to the social teaching and even to what can be established by reason alone.

[120] *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2434; cf. Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*: *AAS 23* (1931), 198-202. See also: *COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, Chapter Four (nos. 65-76) of Part Two.

[121] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, n.20. On this point, John XXII quotes Pius XI. *See*: *Quadragesimo Anno, AAS 23* (1931), nn. 58-75. This piece of teaching, just as we have seen in other

The Catholic social teaching also understands that the human person is constitutively social,[122] and that the rights he possesses are realisable in fullness only in an environment of communion with others.[123] From this specific understanding arise such rights as the right to congregate and to form associations.[124] Through these associations human persons are able to promote their needs and interests.[125] Experience shows that in any situation and context, these groups or associations are absolutely essential for the safeguarding of man's personal freedoms and dignity.[126] The reality of man's social constitution provides the basis for the next point and this is about political rights.[127] In the *De jure belli*, Grotius (17th century) just like Suarez and Vitoria (16th century) argued strongly for the social nature of the human person as the basis of community life.[128] With contributions from such traditions the Catholic Church has come to the conclusion that the social nature of the human person is indeed the basis of political order.[129] It is out of this aspect that arises the right of the individual to active involvement in the politics of

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places, would have motivated the church to speak out against the exploitative tendencies like the unjust structure of remuneration that we have talked about in chapter one.

[122] *Cf.* Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, 12: AAS 58* (1966), 1034; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1879. See also: Pius XII, Radio Message of 24 December 1942, 6: *AAS 35* (1943), 11-12; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 264-265.

[123] *CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH*, Instruction *Libertatis Conscientia*, 32: *AAS 79* (1987), 567.

[124] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 20: *AAS 73* (1981), 629.

[125] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.23. See also: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens,* 20: *AAS 73* (1981), 630.

[126] Ibid. n.24. In Malawi, for many years, the environment for the full blossoming of groups and associations of this nature was extremely prohibitive. Only those that were to do with sporting activities, cultural performances and religious ones were somehow able to exist, though under the constant political surveillance. As an absolutist state, then, it dispelled any other type of power formation that carried the suggestion of competition against its monopoly.

[127] The concept and practice of political rights, like other concepts in the human rights tradition has evolved over time. The modern understanding contains elements that reflect the thinking of the medieval times. This is the case when seen from the emphasis placed on the social nature of the human person as the basis of the body politic. Leading scholars of this period like Vitoria maintained that a commonwealth, or a state for the modernists, was a result of the association of individuals. Closely related to this thinking is Suarez who comes with an argument that the power to form political societies was inherent in human nature from the beginning. Also related to this line of thought is Grotius whose reasoning was that whatever rights the community might have, these derive from the individual. In that case, he implied the priority of the individual to the community. *See*: Brian Tierney, *The Idea of Natural Rights*, p.333.

[128] Brian Tierney, *The Ideas of Natural Rights*, p. 334.

[129] The Catholic social thought clearly states that: " *the human person is the foundation and purpose of political life*". *See*: Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes, 25: AAS 58* (1966), 1045-1046; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1881; Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Doctrinal Note on Some Questions regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life* (24 November 2002), 3: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2002, p.8.

his community and the general public life, and to make his own contribution to the common welfare of his fellow citizens:

> Man as such, far from being an object, or as it were, an inert element in society is rather its subject, its basis and its purpose; and so he must be esteemed.[130]

To crown it all, let us mention here that the Catholic social teaching also realises the strategic role of judicial institutions in the protection and promotion of these rights. This is based on the understanding that a human person has a right to legal protection and this protection must be effective, unbiased, and truly just:

> In consequence of that juridical order willed by God, man has his own inalienable right to juridical security. To him is assigned a certain, well-defined sphere of law, immune from arbitrary attack.[131]

Summary

On the overall these are the rights the Catholic social teaching annunciates in various social encyclicals and official church documents. Here we have tried as much as possible to be discrete on those rights that relate to our discussion, particularly those that concern political and economic governance. The human dignity we have talked about finds concrete expression through rights like these ones. Any violation of these rights, whether through physical suppression of persons, groups, or by means of public policies and legislation, amount to a direct attack against the dignity of the human person.[132] Thus by suppressing these rights: political, economic, cultural, etc, the one party regime in Malawi waged a direct attack on human dignity, which in principle, was its sole function to protect and promote. Second, by not coming out into the open and speak against such abuses the Catholic Church failed to give witness to the very core of its mission, namely the integral salvation of the human person who is the image of God.

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[130] This quotation in encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris*, n.26, is taken from Pius XII.
[131] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.27.
[132] This was the situation during the one party state and also part of the period between 1994-2004.

2.5 Government

This section links to the crisis of the state we shall discuss in chapter three. Our intention is to see what the Catholic social teaching says with regard to the proper constitution of the state and the role of government that would adequately secure and promote human dignity. There are two main parts to the discussion. The first part is about government and its reason in the life of the individual and society. The second part deals with the subject of subsidiarity. This provides insights into how the state should be constituted if human dignity is to be preserved and promoted. On this basis we should be able in the coming chapters to see in what way the one party regime was a distortion of government. And at the same time we should be able to note those areas the Catholic Church would have used as entry points in arguing for an alternative model in favour of human dignity. In the previous section we have discussed and seen that the Catholic social teaching recognises and firmly maintains its belief in the social nature of the human person, and the regard of the same as the basis for life in community either in form of associations or state.[133]

The social ties of family, associations and political community are all essential for the proper development of human persons.[134] The natural inclination or tendency in the human person towards community provides the very foundation of the state, a political entity that wields particular importance in the overall development of the individual and society:

> Human being's social nature makes it evident that the progress of the human person and the advance of society hinge on one another. This social life is not something added on to the human being. Among those social ties which the human being needs for one's own development, some, like the family and the

[133] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum*, (1963), nn.37-38. See also Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 25: *AAS 58* (1966), 1045-1046; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1881; *CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH, Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life* (24 November 2002), 3: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2002, p.8; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra: AAS 55* (1963), 258.

[134] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965), nn.24-25.

> political community, relate with greater immediacy to one's inner most nature.[135]

4.5.1 The Common Good

The state deriving as it were from the nature of the human person finds the reason of its existence not outside the human person but in the human person himself. John XXIII expressly states:

> The whole *raison d'etre* of the state is the realisation of the common good in the temporal order. The state must do all in its power to promote the production of a sufficient supply of material goods. It has a duty to protect the rights of all its people, and particularly of its weaker members, the workers, women and children.[136]

However, at present the common good as the definitive reason for the state and government has increasingly become problematic among social ethicists within and outside the Catholic circle. The centre of this contention is on the meaning of the concept itself. [137] Therefore, before we go further, let us try to see whether there could be a central

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[135] John XXIII, Encyclical Letters *Mater et Magistra*, n.219; *Pacem in Terris*, n.23; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965), n.25.

[136] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter, *Mater et Magistra,* (1961), n.20. In a related manner, it is also said: "*Considering the human person as the foundation and purpose of the political community means in the first place working to recognise and respect human dignity through defending and promoting fundamental and inalienable human rights. In our time the common good is chiefly guaranteed when personal rights and duties are maintained.*" *See*: John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 273; see also: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2237; John Paul II, Message for the 2000 World Day of Peace, 6: AAS 92 (2000), 362; John Paul II, Address to the Fiftieth General Assembly of the United Nations (5 October 1995), 3: *L'Osservatore Romano,* English edition, 11 October 1995, p.8.

[137] This concept has a long history. Classical Greece viewed the *polis* and "the common" as the sphere of human flourishing. The private domain was a zone of deprivation and incomplete humanity. Aristotle saw the human person as "by nature a social and political being" whose happiness is achieved in the exercise of the public virtues of citizenship. *See*: *Nichomachean Ethics* 1097b, 1.10. In his opinion, " *a state exists for the sake of good life, and not for life only...Political society exists for the sake of noble actions, and not for mere companionship.*" *See*: *Politics* 1280b, II.6-7; 1281a, II. 3-4. For the Romans, as far as Cicero is concerned, a commonwealth-*res republica*- was: "*not any collection of human beings brought together in any sort of way but an assemblage of people in large numbers associated in agreement with respect to justice and a partnership for the common good.*" *See*: *De republica* I, XXV, I. For a Christian, according to Augustine of Hippo, the *polis* is not supreme as the domain of final human fulfillment. The City of God, the heavenly Jerusalem-is the ultimate good for every person. *See*: *Thomas Aquinas*, ST I, II, 19 art.10, 1. Although the commandment to love one's neighbour, as oneself demands commitment to the common good, this commandment does not make the neighbour-individually or collectively- a surrogate for God. Thus, respect for the transcendent dignity of the person is a precondition for the attainment of the earthly and political good that recognizes its own limitations. *See*: Judith A. Dwyer, (ed), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought,* p.194. Thus, while the Greeks and Romans saw the common good facilitated by the state as the ultimate end, early Christian thinking started to relativize it in the sense that while

point where the diverse views can find harmony. In this debate there are those, like Jane Mansbridge, who question the validity of the concept itself. These critics point out what they see as inherent dangers in the concept:

> The public good is a dangerous concept. Asking people to act in the public good and not in their self-interest asks them to leave a terrain in which their everyday experience gives them relatively reliable messages on what is good for them and to enter a terrain in which, because uncertainty is far greater, authoritative others play a far greater role in suggesting what the public should be. In the continuing conflict over meaning, two sources of influence have greater weight than they should: individuals and groups who appeal to the exclusivity and hatred that may be part of group loyalty and individuals and groups whose privileged social positions allow them to use force and the threat of sanctions as well as unequal deliberative resources to promote their opinions and interests...[138]

Many neo-liberals favour this position. They simply do not see how given the plurality of goods a notion of the common good can be constructed. The centre of their argument is that goods are simply plural, perhaps radically antagonistic as well, and cannot simply be aggregated, let alone conjoined in some larger sense of public purpose and good.[139] There are also those who understand the concept in terms of the social good, meaning that as an individual, one might not yield benefit but the society as a whole does. P. Selznick contends:

> The common good is served...by institutions that provide collective goods, such as education or public safety. The strength or weakness of these institutions is a common attribute, not an individual one. Furthermore, it is not necessarily in every individual's interest to support such institutions. They may be better off, as individuals, if they can avoid paying taxes for school or other services they do not use but which are important for society as a whole. Similarly, a major collective good is social integration. When social integration is measured, the measure will take account, at least indirectly, of individual attitudes, behaviours, opportunities and affiliations. And a connection is likely between personal and social integration. People can live more coherent lives

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acknowledging the duty of the state towards the realization of the common good, the material common good in itself was not the ultimate. In that way, early Christian thinkers did not nullify the Greek and Roman positions, but built on it further. It is along these lines that modern Catholic thinking on the nature and role of state proceeds.

[138] Jane Mansbridge, "*On the Contested Nature of the Public Good*," in W.W. Powell & E.S. Clemens (eds), *Private Action and the Public Good*, New Haven, CT, Yale University Press, 1998, esp. p.17.

[139] John Boswell et al, (eds), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven University Press, 2000, p. 289.

and have more coherent personalities when they belong to coherent social worlds. [140]

The view of the magisterium

In an attempt to reconcile such opposing views, leading Catholic ethicists like Johan Verstraeten have come to interpret the common good as those societal and economic conditions which *a*) guarantee access to any goods which are, as such, public goods; and *b*) enable true social participation in the goods of society; and *c*) establish the possibility for human (at least minimal) flourishing both as individuals and in one's own fated or chosen groups. Thus the common good is an ensemble of enabling conditions for the societal flourishing of human potential.[141] About this concept, the social teaching begins from the realisation that human beings are created by God not to live in isolation but for the formation of social unity.[142]

The social and communitarian character of human existence means that the good of each person is bound up with the good of the community. In this case, the obligations of justice and love will only be fulfilled when each person contributes to the common good in accord with his or her abilities and in the light of the other.[143] Taking all this into consideration, the Catholic social teaching understands the common good as the sum total of those conditions of social living, whereby human beings are enabled more fully and more readily to achieve their own perfection. [144] Stated differently, it is the sum of those conditions of social life by which individuals, families, and groups can achieve their own

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[140] P. Selznick, *The Moral Commonwealth. Social Theory and the Promise of Community* (Centennial Books), Berkeley, CA, University of California Press, 1992; p.422.

[141] John Boswell, et al, (eds), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance*, p. 289. The following can also be consulted for further references: D. Christiansen, *"The Common Good and the Politics of Self-Interest: A Catholic Contribution to the Practice of Citizenship,"* in D. Gelpi, (ed), *Beyond Individualism: Toward a Retrieval of Moral Discourse in America*; C. Curran, *"The Common Good and Official Catholic Teaching," in* O. Williams and J. Houck, (eds), *The Common Good and U.S. Capitalism,* 1987; H. Daly and J. Cobb, *For the Common Good: Redirecting the Economy toward Community, the Environment, and a Sustainable Future*, (1989); D. Hollenbach, *"The Common Good Revisited,"* TS 50, 1989; J. Maritain, *The Person and the Common Good*, trans. J. Fitzgerald, 1947; M. Novak, *Free Persons and the Common Good*, 1989.

[142] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965), n. 32. See also: John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*: *AAS 53* (1961), 417; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, 46: *AAS 63* (1971), 433-435; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1913.

[143] Ibid. n.30.

[144] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*, (1963), n.65.

fulfilment in a relatively thorough and ready way.[145] This thinking unites the extremes of individualism and collectivism in that the common good by definition flows back to the good of the individual and thus brings together the good of the community and the good of the individual.[146] What is good for the community is also good for the individual. In other words, the good of the person is bound up with the good of the community. It is precisely here that the reason of government derives:

> The responsibility for attaining the common good, besides falling to individuals, belongs also to the State, since the common good is the reason that the political community exists."[147]

Government's role is perceived in instrumental terms, something at the disposal of the human person (s) for purposes of fulfilling his welfare particularly that, which belongs to all. Paul VI says:

> The state is charged with the responsibility of protecting the "public order," public order understood as the basic degree of social union that is necessary for a genuinely civil society to exist at all. This union is premised on three prerequisites (i) justice, i.e. which secures for people what is due to them, namely human rights, (ii) public peace, i.e. which will only be genuine peace when it is founded on justice, (iii) and public morality, i.e. the standard of public behaviour on which consensus exists in society.[148]

The spotlight that focuses on the common good as the reason for the existence of the state and government is a safeguard against extreme positions of neo-liberals and socialists. For neo-liberals there are only individual goods that each person pursues as best as she or he can. There is no concern for the society or the totality. For the socialists there is only the good of the collectivity, hence no concern for the good of the individual.[149] It is precisely where the private and the collective good crisscross that the role of the state

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[145] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965), n.74. See also: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1905-1912; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra: AAS 53* (1961), 417-412; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS 55* (1963), 272-273; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, 46: *AAS 63* (1971), 433-435.

[146] Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis*, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002, p. 145.

[147] *Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1910.

[148] Paul VI, The Declaration on Religious Liberty: *Dignitatis Humanae*, (*DH*.1965), n. 7.

[149] Op. cit

derives in order to balance the two.[150] This means, although the state is necessary for the promotion of the common good, it is limited. This limitation is imposed by two factors: first, by the fact that it derives its existence from the human person, therefore, subservient to him, and second, that its sole purpose is to facilitate the realisation of those goods that the individual on his own cannot manage or fulfil. The first factor makes it clear that the individual is not at the service of or subservient to the state, while the second factor draws clear limits in terms of the interface between the individual and the state. Paul VI again says:

> Government does not have the responsibility of promoting the full common good of the people, for doing so would lead to massive intervention in spheres such as family life, education, religion, etc. Each of the sectors of civil society has its own proper contribution to make to the common good, and government must respect and encourage these contributions. But government is responsible for the achievement of that part of the common good that enables society to function as a community of fellow citizens.[151]

2.5.2 Subsidiarity

In order to achieve the overall objective or purpose of government, which is the common good, there must be a proper correspondence between that objective and the way the state is constituted. This is about the way power, authority, functions and responsibilities are distributed. This brings us to the principle of subsidiarity.[152] The term *subsidiarity* is a derivative from the Latin word *subsidium*, which means help.[153] It is a traditional principle implied in Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum*, [154] and Thomistic thought on

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[150] The teaching on the Common Good as the sole reason of government marks clear rejection of both positions of neo-liberalism, on one hand, and socialism, on the other. It is worth noting that although this theme was vigorously pursued in the light of socialism following the end of WW II, it remains central to the teaching as a counter-balance to the neo-liberal position, with its emphasis on the individual.

[151] Paul VI, *The Declaration on Religious Liberty: Dignitatis Humanae, (DH.1965)*, n.7.

[152] Again, Subsidiarity is another key principle in the Catholic Social Teaching and is found in many papal social encyclicals and church documents. For example: *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891*) nn. 13, 19, 27-28, 37-39, 41, 43; *Quadragesimo Anno* (*QA.1931*) nn. 25, 78-80; *Mater et Magistra* (*MM.1961*) nn. 43, 59-67, 88; *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963*) nn.23-24, 35, 44-45, 60-61, 64-66, 69, 140; *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS.1965*) nn. 25-26, 75-76; *Populorum Progressio* (*PP.1967*) nn. 39-40, 54; *Octogesima Adveniens* (*OA.1971*) nn. 23-29, 51; *Justitia Mundo*, page 291; *Laborem Exercens* (*LE.1981*) nn. 17-18; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS.1987*) nn. 39; *Centesimus Annus* (*CA.1991*) nn. 10-11, 13, 15, 40, 44, 48; *Economic Justice* (*EJ.1986*) nn. 18, 99-100, 124, 297, 308, 314, 317.

[153] Charles Curren, p.142.

[154] *Cf.* Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes,* 74: *AAS 58* (1966), 1095-1097; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis*, 17: AAS 71 (1979), 295-300. See also:

the nature of the state. According to Pius VI, the principle is rooted in the role of assistance and help, i.e., intermediate groups should provide for individuals.[155] It is a call for the establishment of intermediary groups between individuals and the state, and means so that the higher levels (the state) should never intervene when economic, social and political realities can be handled adequately at the local level.

Hermeneutical problem

As is the case with the concept of the common good, often debates have been on the correct interpretation of subsidiarity. Scholars like Michael Novak argue for a minimalist role for the higher levels, trusting the market forces to adequately fulfil the needs of the individual and the common good.[156] In his opinion the state plays only a negative role of protecting threatened individual rights. On the other hand, there are individuals like David Hollenbach who argue that the Catholic tradition has seen a positive role for higher levels of the state in promoting the common good in the economic and political spheres.[157] As Marvin Mich observes, an interpretation like this one leads to a more activist role of government in economic issues.[158] According to the Catholic social teaching, subsidiarity is about a proportionate distribution of duties, resources, privileges and obligations in society.[159] It is very important that we grasp the essence of the term "*proportionate*." This term explains nearly everything that *subsidiarity* entails or stands

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Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum: Acta Leonis XIII, 11* (1892), 133-135; Pius XII, Radio Message for the fiftieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum: AAS 33* (1941), 200.

[155] Marvin Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, New York, American Press Inc., 2000, p.81.

[156] *See*: Michael Novak's works, e.g. *Freedom with Justice, Catholic Social Thought and Liberal Institutions*, San Francisco, Harper & Row, 1984; *The Catholic Ethic and the Spirit of Institutions: Freedom with Justice*, New Brunswick, NJ: Translation, 1989. The thinking of Michael Novak represents the position of neo-liberal capitalism with its strong belief in the free market economy. But this is not entirely accepted by the Catholic social teaching. The main contention of the social teaching against neo-liberal capitalism is that its central idea, i.e. the market forces alone can be trusted with the task of supplying every category of goods, cannot be shared because such an idea is based on a reductionist vision of the person and society. *See*: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus, 34: AAS 83* (1991), 835-836.

[157] *See*: David Hollenbach, *Claims in Conflict: Retrieving and Renewing the Catholic Human Rights Tradition*, New York, Paulist, 1979.

[158] Marvin Mich, p.82.

[159] J. Boswell, et al, (eds) *Catholic Social Thought. Twilight or Renaissance?* p.51. The current effort on decentralization in Malawi is a glimpse of subsidiarity: the distribution of power, duties and responsibilities and corresponding resources to various layers of society to ensure the active participation of the majority: See the *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* s.146; the *Local Government Act*, 1998, the *National Decentralization Policy*, 1998.

for. In it are ideas about the recognition and respect of the initiatives of the individual or groups, the spirit of shared responsibility, active participation of all and the existence of interrelationships among various organisations in society. The coordination and regulation of individual, group and organisations' initiatives so that in the end they serve the common good constitute the role of government. In this regard, the role of government is not about control but coordination, facilitation and regulation in the interest of realising the common welfare. Government fulfils this role by means of public policies and all forms of regulatory measures.[160] It was Pius XI who openly articulated the subsidiarity principle for the first time in the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (*QA.1931*).[161] This is what he says:

> This is a fundamental principle of social philosophy, unshaken and unchangeable...Just as it is wrong to withdraw from the individual and commit to a community what private enterprise and industry can accomplish, so too it is an injustice, a grave evil and a disturbance of right order, for a larger and higher association to arrogate to itself functions which can be performed efficiently by smaller and lower societies. Of its very nature the true aim of all social activity should be to help members of the social body, but never to destroy or abolish them.[162]

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[160] This understanding of government is in extreme contrast to the way the situation was in Malawi particularly under Banda, and we must say that till now, the old understanding of government as control continues to dominate.

[161] The encyclical was in commemoration of forty years since the publication of first social Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* in 1891 by Leo XIII.

[162] Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, (1931), n.79. See also: John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra, n. 53*. A review of the historical background can furnish us with insights on reasons that necessitated a proclamation of the subsidiarity principle in such a strong manner. The encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno* (*QA.1931*) appeared in the interim period between WW I and II. In modern history, this period is known for its special characteristics. It was during this time that occurred the historic economic recession often referred to as the Great Depression. Again it is during the same period that the consolidation of the first communist regime in history took place in the former Soviet Union. This event coincided with the rise of fascist regimes in Italy and Germany. The common characteristic of the three regimes, communist Russia on one side, and fascist Italy and Germany, on the other, was their tendency to subsume the individual into the ambit of the state. The individual had value only in relationship to the interests of the state. In situations of this nature, the discussion or expectation of human rights was dispelled. As an all encompassing and embracing reality, the state tended to instrumentalise the human person. It occupied all and every space, political and economic alike, leaving very little or nothing at all for the individual. Thus the theme of subsidiarity emerged as a rallying point in attempts to rescue the individual from totalitarianism. Over the years, this theme has remained integral to the social teaching of the Catholic Church.

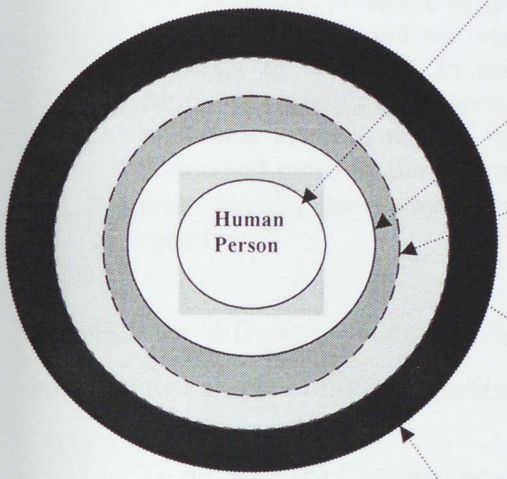
Key aspects

The key argument underlying this principle is that when we take society as such, it is broader than the state itself. By the state, we do not mean the limits of the geo-space upon which political jurisdiction is exercised but rather the social, cultural, etc events that characterise human life in society.[163] In other words, political life, which is the main concern of the state, is just but one out of the many aspects of life in society. This is what we mean by society being broader than the state. Therefore, a well functioning society must recognise and employ all the different mediating institutions or structures in promoting the common good.[164]

[163] This is the realm of civil society, understood as the sum of the relationships between individuals and intermediate social groupings, which are the first relationships to arise and which come about as a result of the creative subjectivity of the citizens. *See*: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis,* 15: *AAS 80* (1988), 529. See also Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno: AAS 23* (1931), 203; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*: *AAS 53* (1961), 439; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 65: *AAS 58* (1966), 1086-1087; *CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH*, Instruction *Libertatis Conscientia*, 73, 48: *AAS 83* (1991), 852-854; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1883-1885.

[164] Such mediating institutions include: trade and commerce unions; professional groups like teachers' unions, nurses' unions; cotton growers associations, tobacco growers associations; football associations, netball associations; athletics associations; boxing associations, vendors associations; youth clubs, debate clubs; drama clubs; associations of musicians; traditional dances associations, herbalist associations; HIV/AIDS clubs; people living with cancer associations, family associations; private schools associations; private hospitals' associations; minibus owners associations; taxi owners' associations; fishermen associations; brick layers associations; plumbers' associations; legal practioners' association, etc .

Figure 1: An illustration of the principle of subsidiarity



Layer I: At the very centre of society stands the human person, with God-given dignity and rights. The person is prior to the state and cannot be subordinated to the state or the collectivity, although the person is still social by nature.

Layer II: Next comes the family, which is the basic unit of society for the development of human beings. As a natural society, the family comes before the state and cannot be absorbed by the state.

Layer III: On the next level are institutions or structures such as neighbourhoods or extended families. We live in and through these realities.

Layer IV: Then come somewhat independent structures and institutions that are necessary for any society. Think, for example, of the role of the press and the media. Cultural institutions of all kinds abound for the development of the higher goods of the individual. Educational groups of great variety exist to foster the education of the people. Religious groups, mosques, and churches bring people together for religious purposes. Professional societies and labour unions work for the good of their members. Such groups that people freely join are called voluntary groups.

Level V: Only then come the different levels of government: local, state, and national as the case may be.[165]

Source: Charles Curren, *Catholic Social Teaching 1891-Present: A Historical, Theological, and Ethical Analysis*, Washington, DC, Georgetown University Press, 2002, p.142.

In a properly organised society all the disaggregated layers have their respective and recognised roles to play in accordance to needs and competencies. Pius XI further says every social activity ought of its very nature to furnish help to the members of the body social and never destroy and absorb them.[166] Without each layer carrying out its proper function society comes to miss something of great importance and even necessity. This understanding is in recognition that social living requires much more than just the political order as represented by the state.[167] The public or social order embraces many realities beside the political-social, cultural, educational, associational, and so forth. Subsidiarity demonstrates utmost rejection of every form of totalitarianism which makes

[165] The figure constructed based on the analysis made by Charles Curren illustrates the proportionate break down of duties, responsibilities, resources, privileges and obligations in real life situation in state and society based on subsidiarity.
[166] Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, (1931), n. 79.
[167] Charles Curran, *Catholic Social Teaching*, p.142.

the state attain undue supremacy and in due course annihilate the basic rights and roles of individual persons, families, groups and all mediating institutions:

> The principle of subsidiarity is opposed to certain forms of centralisation, bureaucratisation, and welfare assistance and to the unjustified and excessive presence of the State in public mechanisms. By intervening directly and depriving society of its responsibility, the Social Assistance State leads to a loss of human energies and an inordinate increase of public agencies, which are dominated more by bureaucratic ways of thinking than by concern for serving their clients, and which are accompanied by an enormous increase in spending[168]

Through the different layers, individuals or groups find space for active participation in social, cultural, economic and political life of society:

> To promote the participation of the greatest number in the life of a society, the creation of voluntary associations and institutions must be encouraged at both national and international levels, which relate to economics and social goals, to cultural and recreational activities, to sport, to various professions, and to political affairs.[169]

Excessive intervention by the state in the life of the various layers of society poses a threat to personal freedom and initiative.[170]

> The principle of Subsidiarity protects people from abuses by higher-level social authority and calls on these same authorities to help individuals and intermediate groups to fulfil their duties. This principle is imperative because every person, family and intermediate group has something original to offer to the community. Experience shows that the denial of Subsidiarity, or its limitation in the name of an alleged democratisation or equality of all members of society, limits and sometimes even destroys the spirit of freedom and initiative.[171]

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[168] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus,* 48: AAS 83 (1991), 852-854.

[169] *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Part III, *Life in Christ, Section One: Man's Vocation Life in the Spirit;* Chapter 2, *The Human Communion: Article* 1: *The Person and Society*, n.1882.

[170] *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n.1883.

[171] *COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p.105f. The principle of subsidiarity is said to be discernible even in the natural order. Through both reason and experience, it is argued, it is evident that God has not willed to reserve to himself the all exercise of power. Instead, he entrusts to each creature the function it is capable of performing in accordance to the capacities of its own nature. This model of governance, concludes the argument, ought to be followed in social life: "*The way God acts in governing the world, which bears witness to such great regard for human freedom, should inspire the wisdom of those who govern human communities. They should behave as ministers of divine providence.*" *See*: *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n.1884.

MALAWI COLLECTION

Because subsidiarity creates and permits space for the active participation of all players according to their comparative requirements and endowments, the Catholic social teaching treats it as an enabling principle for the integral development of society as a whole. This is the case because it provides the environment in which to harness and nurture the diverse talents so that they flourish and blossom without undue interference from or by the state. Paul VI says:

> Experience has shown that where personal initiative is lacking, political tyranny ensues, and, in addition, economic stagnation of the production of a wide range of consumer goods and of services of the material and spiritual order-those, namely, which are in a great measure dependent upon the exercise and stimulus of individual creative talent.[172]

We need not go far afield in search for evidences for the validity of this observation. Experience in Malawi under the one party state provides all the materials that one might need to prove the above correct. The political absolutism that was characteristic of that time denied space to the sprouting of individual talent or initiative in many areas, not only in politics. It dispelled the spirit of creativity and bold experimentation in economic life, art, sport, etc. The political system, premised as it were, on the absolutist ideology ensured perfect uniformity while erasing diversity and differentiation on the ground.[173] The state took up every space. As a result, the individual and the most critical entities of the civil society were simply absorbed, displaced, killed or not even allowed to emerge. With very insignificant exceptions, the state wielded monopoly over public services and the entire economic life of the nation by means of absolute centralisation and bureaucratisation of state and parastatal institutions.[174]

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[172] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*, (1961) n.57.

[173] Up to this day some of the most critical challenges that Malawi faces is to move quickly in the direction of ensuring the flourishing of vibrant diversity particularly in the development of life support skills and also the adventurous spirit of risk taking in investment entrepreneurship. These are among the critical areas that failed to develop under the previous system. That failure has resulted in having a larger part of the population unable to be effectively "functional" in the current economic set up.

[174] For a very long time, government was the sole provider of such services like education, health, agriculture, transport, communication, etc. consequently, people could not acquire skills in these areas, and neither could they develop a culture of investing. Since change in 1994, there is growth in public-private partnership. However, the quality of services in such areas like education, transport, etc is yet to improve.

Summary

In sum, subsidiarity radically opposes every form of totalitarianism or collectivism. It establishes clear limits for state intervention and aims at harmonising the relationships that exist between the individual, society and the state.[175] The key point is that neither the state nor any other larger society should substitute itself for the initiative and responsibilities of individuals and intermediary bodies.[176] In this way, the theme captures the idea of power sharing in that it helps to establish the autonomy of groups and to specify the correct relationships that ought to exist between different organisations and associations within society.[177] Jonathan Boswell argues that in respect of this theme, power is to be diffused, spreading out both *vertically*, meaning from citizen, through locality, or region, to nation state, and supranationally and *horizontally*, i.e. in terms of a plurality of political, cultural and economic forms. Subsidiarity creates pre-conditions for social-unity-in diversity or relational ends.[178] According to John Coleman, it is fundamentally a plan for pluralism, while for Brian Stiltner this plurality of associations, which is championed by subsidiarity, is clear consequence and expression of human finitude and a guard against hubris.[179]

2.6 Preferential option for the poor

In chapter three we shall analyse how public policies in such areas like agriculture, labour and education contributed towards the creation of poverty in Malawi. In this section we would like to link the forthcoming discussion to the two themes, namely "*option for the poor*" and "*solidarity*". This will demonstrate the crisis of the Catholic Church which occurred due to its failure to identify concretely with those whose rights were deprived by the state. The concept of the preferential option for the poor is relatively recent in the

[175] John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*, (1961), n.1885.
[176] Ibid. n.1894.
[177] Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno*, (1931), n. 49. Here, like elsewhere, we see pieces of teachings that would have been very instrumental at the hand of the Catholic Church in Malawi to seriously pose a challenge to the way Banda and his administration suffocated all initiatives of individuals, civil society organisations, etc.
[178] Jonathan Boswell, p.107.
[179] John Coleman, "*Retrieving or Re-Inventing Social Catholicism. A Trans-Atlantic Response*," in Jonathan Boswell, p.275.

Catholic social teaching.[180] The notion originated in Latin America as church leaders began to implement the renewal sparked off by Vatican II. At the heart of the concept are three fundamental factors. First is a commitment by the church leaders to campaign actively for structural justice in society and to take the risk of throwing the authority of the official church behind efforts to resist oppression and exploitation. The second factor is a belief that the key agents in bringing about such change must be the poor, the oppressed and the marginalised themselves, and therefore a commitment to work from below for and with these groups, actively supporting and empowering them. The third factor is a commitment to make the church itself more just and participatory. In this way the poor and oppressed groups and individuals could have their dignity and value by being empowered through active participation in decision-making. [181]

The notion has attained wider popularity outside the official circles of the Catholic Church. Inside, it is fiercely resisted. Hostile critics dismiss it as unlikely cross between Latin American Catholicism and Marxism.[182] The concept is also rejected on the grounds that it implies discrimination against the rich, and therefore not compatible with the Christian message which is intended for all.[183] There is also reluctance to speak of the "option for the poor". Instead, there is tendency to speak about "option for those in poverty,"[184] or "a preferential but not exclusive option for the poor".[185] Notwithstanding the controversies surrounding the concept, it is generally understood that preferential

[180] It appeared in no papal social encyclicals until 1987, and in no church document until 1979. *See*: Thomas Massaro, p.158. The concept is decipherable in earlier social encyclicals, but is more explicit in the encyclicals after 1987: See *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.*1891) nn. 19-20, 23-24, 29, 41, 54; *Quadragesimo Annus* (*QA.* 1931) nn. 25, 59-60; *Mater et Magistra* (*MM.* 1961) nn. 1-6, 16, 20, 68; *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.* 1963) nn. 56, 64, 125; *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS.*1965) nn. 1, 27, 66, 69, 88; *Populorum Progressio* (*PP.*1967) nn. 1-4, 43-55; *Octogesima Adveniens* (*OA.*1971) nn. 10-12, 15, 23, 42; *Justitia in Mundo* (*1971*), pages 288, 293, 295, 298-300; *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN.*1975) nn. 6, 10; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS.*1987) nn. 31, 39-40, 42-43, 47, 49; *Centesimus Annus* (*CA.*1991) nn. 10-11, 36, 49, 57-58; *Economic Justice* (*EJ.* US. Catholic Bishops, 1986) nn. 4, 8-10, 16, 27, 48-52, 55, 74-75, 77, 82-92, 94, 119, 123, 170-215, 258, 260, 319, 331, 356, 365.

[181] Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor. A Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis, 2003, p.2

[182] Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, p.1

[183] Ibid. p.2

[184] Edward DeBerri, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Teaching. Our Best Kept Secret*, New York, Maryknoll, 2003, p.29.

[185] Donal Dorr, *"Option for the Poor Revisited,"* in J.S. Boswell, et al (ed), *And Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p.255,

option for the poor is firmly rooted in the biblical tradition. From the Jubilee vision laid out in the Book of Leviticus through the passionate proclamation of the Hebrew prophets and Jesus' identification of his vocation as bringing good news to the poor...and proclaiming the year of God's jubilee,[186] people in poverty have been at the heart of the Judeo-Christian social vision. Roger Burggraeve summarises this point very well:

> According to the words of Jesus, this preferential love for the small and for people in need goes even to the extent that God commits Himself to them in a special way, as is indubitably apparent from Jesus' story about the establishment of God's Reign during the end-times in Matthew 25. God not only takes the side of the naked, the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, the poor and prisoners, but He identifies with them...God commits Himself directly to the suffering other, and stronger still, the suffering other is-according to Jesus' proclamation-the presence of God Himself. In this sense, we can even state that the humiliated other is the first Eucharist, meaning to say the first transubstantiation or 'real presence,' which precedes the liturgical and sacramental Eucharist and grounds it as well. To see the naked other is to see God Himself, who has committed Himself radically to the fate of the other. In other words, Matthew 25 expresses, in an unparalleled way, the core of the Beatitudes-namely that God's rule and greatness consists in the linking of His own fate to that of the poor; the weeping, the persecuted, the desperate and the weak.[187]

Simply defined, the poor are the individuals, families, communities, etc, whose rights, in various ways, have been deprived. In talking about this deprivation of rights Engelbert Mveng calls goes deeper and speaks about anthropological poverty. This is what he says:

> When persons are deprived not only goods and possessions of material, spiritual, moral, intellectual, cultural, or sociological order, but everything that makes up the foundation of their being-in-the-world and the specificity of their "ipseity" as individuals, society, and history-when persons are bereft of their identity, their freedom, their thought, their history, their language, their faith universe, and their basic creativity, deprived of all their right, their hopes, their ambitions (that is, when they are robbed of their own ways of living and existing)-they sink into a kind of poverty which no longer concerns only exterior or interior goods or possessions but strikes at the very being, essence, and dignity of the human person. It is this poverty that we call anthropological poverty; this is an indigence of being.....[188]

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[186] Luke 4, 16-19.

[187] Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise: Essays in Biblical Thought and Ethics.* Reader, K.U. Leuven, Academic Year 2004-2005, p 69f.

[188] , *See*: Engelbert Mveng, "*Impoverishment and Liberation: A Theological Approach for Africa and the Third World*", in Gibellin R., Paths of African Theology, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1994, p.156.

Edward DeBerri says the experience of the poor reveals the failings and shortcomings of our social systems. These experiences, insights and concerns offer important evidence in the search for the more just systems of social life to which God is calling the human community.[189] The biblical tradition demonstrates God's option for the poor. He chooses the weak to confound the strong and the foolish to show up the wisdom of the wise, etc:[190] Preferential option for the poor, therefore, reveals three things: first, that those who are poor are concrete individuals, families, groups, communities or nations; second, that their basic existential condition is that of deprivation of dignity by the institutions and systems that deny them their rights. Finally, that either as individuals, groups, organisations, church or government, we are under obligation to ensure that what is unjustly withdrawn from the poor is restored.

2.6.2 Restorative justice

Preferential option for the poor is not about works of charity involving the distribution of food, medicines, clothes, or almsgiving/aid to the poor, whether as individuals, groups or nations.[191] Instead, it presupposes a radical inherent demand for critical experiential analysis of the situations that lead to the poverty of the majority. On this note Donal Dorr says:

> An authentic option for the poor has two equally important aspects: "solidarity" aspect, which is about life-style, and a political or quasi-political aspect, which has to do with analysis and action. The solidarity aspect involves a deliberate choice to enter in some degree into the world of those who have been left on the margins of society, to share in a significant way in their experience of being mistreated, by-passed, or left helpless. This choice of a different life-style springs from compassion, a word that means, literary, suffering with others, and it involves a choice to deepen this compassion by sharing to some extent in the suffering of the poor. By entering the world of the deprived people, one extends and deepens his experience of "suffering with" those on the margins.[192]

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[189] Edward P. DeBerri, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Teaching. Our Best Kept Secret*, New York, Maryknoll, 2003, p 29. See also Engelbert Mveng, "*Impoverishment and Liberation: A Theological Approach for Africa and the Third World*", in Gibellin R., Paths of African Theology, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1994, p.156.

[190] 1 Corinthians 1, 27-28.

[191] This is not to discount the their importance, but only to indicate that "option for the poor," goes beyond such acts.

[192] Donal Dorr, *"Option for the Poor Revisited,"* in J. *Boswell et al (ed), Catholic Social Thought. Twilight or Renaissance?* p.252.

Further, this critical experiential analysis demands that there be concrete personal, group or institutional commitment to those actions that will ensure the restoration of the rights to those who have been deprived. Dorr observes that one has to understand the core of the issue, that is, the fundamental reasons why this group of people has been left on the margins, and the depth of the pain this inflicts on them. Together with this analysis should be an attempt to ensure that one is not unconsciously colluding in this process of marginalisation.[193] The analysis of the situation surrounding the poor should give the basis for concrete challenge against their marginalisation. Donal Dorr continues:

> It is not enough that a protest is made on behalf of those who have been marginalized; the protest must come from the groups themselves. Marginalized groups who begin to stand up for themselves are profoundly changed by their actions. This inner change is probably more important than any change in behaviour and attitude in those who are being challenged.[194]

It is also clear that preferential option for the poor demands radical and realistic alternatives based on the strong belief and conviction that a better community is possible. Such alternatives should entail the restructuring of institutions, policies and programmes that perpetuate the hardships of the people by depriving them their rights and in due course violate their dignity.[195]

Summary

In summary, preferential option for the poor is a demand for a less unequal division of resources, a calling to account on the part of the rich and powerful, a raising-up of the poor. According to Jonathan Boswell, justice for the poor is a corollary of solidarity, in the sense that for some people to be left out or marginalized is offensive to community. He further says, justice alone for the poor is insufficient for community. In addition to resource redistribution, there should also be an assurance of their self-organisation, representation and participation.[196] Perhaps in no other place than the salutation of the

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[193] Ibid. p.253.
[194] Op. cit.
[195] In the light of the forthcoming chapters these would be things like the economic policies that have all along disabled the majority of the Malawian people. See Chapters three and four.
[196] Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed) p.107.

Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1962-65), *Gaudium et Spes*, does the Catholic Church's intimate and profound concern for the poor find radical expression. It is stated:

> The joys and the hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the men of this age, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.[197]

2.7 Call to solidarity

The term solidarity, widely used by the magisterium, expresses in summary the need to recognise in the composite ties that unite human persons and social groups among themselves, the space given to human freedom for common growth in which all share and in which they participate.[198] Solidarity has close relationship to preferential option for the poor and all principles of the social teaching:

> The message of the Church's social doctrine regarding solidarity clearly shows that there exists an intimate bond between solidarity and the common good, between solidarity and the universal destination of all goods, between solidarity and equality among men and peoples, between solidarity and peace in the world.[199]

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[197] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (1965), n.1.

[198] Solidarity, though not explicit, is one of the basic principles in Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* (cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra: AAS 53* (1961), 407. "*What we nowadays call the principle of solidarity... is frequently stated by Pope Leo XIII, who uses the term "friendship", as a concept already found in Greek philosophy. Pope Pius XI refers to it with the equally meaningful term 'social charity*". Paul VI, expanding the concept to cover the many modern aspects of the social question, speaks of a 'civilization of love' (John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, 10: *AAS 83* (1991), 805. Solidarity is one of the basic principles of the entire social teaching of the Church (cf. *CONGREGATION FOR THE DOCTRINE OF THE FAITH*, Instruction *Libertatis Conscientia, 73: AAS 79* (1987), 586. Starting with Pius XII (cf. Encyclical Letter *Summi Pontifcatus*: *AAS 31* (1931), 426-427, the term solidarity is used ever more frequently and with ever broader meaning: from that of "law" in the same encyclical to that of "principle" (cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra: AAS 53* (1961), 407, that of "duty" (cf. Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio,* 17, 48: *AAS 69* (1967), 265-266, 281, and that of "value" (cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38: *AAS 80* (1988), 564-566), and finally that of "virtue" (cf. John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 38, 40: *AAS 80* (1988), 564-566, 568-569. For further references see also: *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891*) nn. 1-2, 13, 15, 17-19, 21, 32, 34-35, 41, 43; *Quadragesimo Anno* (*QA.1931*) nn. 5, 10, 57, 63, 69, 81-88, 114-115, 137, 140, 147; *Mater et Magistra* (*MM.1961*) nn. 6, 16, 21, 23, 38-40, 59-60, 68, 75, 90-93, 97-103, 114-155, 146; *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963*) nn. 23-24, 26, 31-33, 35, 64, 73-74, 98-100; *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS.1965*) nn. 1, 3, 24, 31-32, 68, 73-75, 88; *Populorum Progressio* (*PP.1967*) nn. 3, 5, 12-13, 28, 29-32, 35, 43-55; *Octogesima Adveniens* (*OA.1971*) nn. 1-5, 10-12, 23, 40, 42, 50; *Justitia in Mundo* (*JM.1971*) pages 289, 291, 294, 297, 300; *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN.1975*)) nn. 6, 20-21, 58; *Laborem Exercens* (*LE.1981*) nn. 6, 8, 14, 18-19, 22, 26; *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS.1987*) nn. 6, 9, 14, 17, 26, 32, 38-40, 43, 49; *Centesimus Annus* (*CA.1991*) nn. 10, 22-29, 35, 49, 51, 54, 59; *Economic Justice* (*EJ.1986*) nn. 8-11, 15-16, 55, 64-67, 71, 77, 82, 85, 88, 90-92, 114, 187, 258, 297.

[199] *Cf.* John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Re Socialis*, 17, 39, 45: *AAS 80* (1988), 532-533, 566-568, 577-578. International solidarity too is required by the moral order. Peace in the world depends in large part

2.7.1 Manifestations of solidarity

Like with other key concepts of the Catholic social teaching, solidarity continues to attract the interests of diverse social ethicists. Johan Verstraeten, for example, locates the significance of solidarity beyond the meanings and usage it has acquired in contemporary popular political discourse. Over and above all this, he says, solidarity:

> Signifies an attitude which finds its image in the common fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of all in Christ-a solidarity which finds concrete expression in bearing radical witness to our love of our neighbour, so that it makes us ready for sacrifice, even the ultimate one, to lay down one's life for the brethren. This type of "warm" solidarity is not a substitute for political forms of solidarity, but brings in a radicalisation and dynamism which go beyond every attempt to base solidarity on some form of enlightened self-interest.[200]

Jonathan Boswell portrays solidarity as something that is inclusive of many pale, crude approximations to love, or what he calls *Vestigia Trinitatis*: relationships of community, sociability, conviviality, civility, fraternity, civil friendship, social consciousness, public spirit, etc.[201] In his view, at almost every turn, solidarity in social Catholic terms imparts to the other values a distinctive character, to the extent that it is not too much to say that without it an understanding of the values of justice, human rights, freedom, subsidiarity itself, etc, in Catholic social teaching is impossible.[202] John Coleman, just like Johan Verstraeten, locates solidarity in God's covenant in creation, and God's universal salvific will for redemption, as well as in our common solidarity in the sordidness of sin, and preferential option for the poor.[203]

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on this: *Cf.* Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, 83-86: *AAS 58* (1966), 1107-1110; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, 48: *AAS 59* (1967), 281; PONTIFICAL COMMISSION " JUSTITIA ET PAX", *At the Service of the Human Community: an Ethical Approach to the International Debt Question* (27 December 1986), I, 1, Vatican Polygot Press, Vatican City 1986, p.11; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1941, 2438.

[200] Johan Verstraeten, "*Re-Thinking Catholic Social Thought as Tradition*," in Jonathan Boswell et al (ed), p. 75.

[201] Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), p. 105.

[202] Ibid. p. 106.

[203] John Coleman, "*Retrieving or Re-Inventing Social Catholicism. A Trans-Atlantic Response*," in Jonathan Boswell, et al, (ed), p. 276.

Accordingly, Max Scheler sees the expression of solidarity in family situations, community, workplace, civic life, politics, the supranational spheres and national economy.[204]

Summary

Human existence is co-existential, an existence that makes sense and is possible only in togetherness with other persons. Previously we have seen that the human person is constitutively social, that he or she alone is the cause and end of every social institution. Humanness is not realised in loneliness but only in communion with the other. Hence individualism, in whatever form and fashion it takes, poses as a grave distortion of God's creation and severe degradation of humanity:

> God, who has fatherly concern for everyone, has willed that all men should constitute one family and treat one another in a spirit of brotherhood. For having been created in the image of God, who "from one man has created the whole human race and made them live all over the face of the earth",[205] all men are called to one and the same goal, namely God himself.[206]

Because the human person is social, he or she is able to express reciprocal duties and through interaction, she or he makes progress. It is noteworthy that in treating this subject, or when the Catholic Church talks about the social nature of the human person, its interconnectedness and all the interactive aspects, this is not narrowed down to only the here and now. In solidarity, there is also recognition of the past, just as there is clear projection into the future.[207]

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[204] *See*: Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, London, Routledge and Kegan, 1954; and also his monumental essay, "*Christian love in the 20th century*," in *On the External Man*, London, SCM Press, 1960.

[205] Acts 17: 26.

[206] Robert Sirico (ed), *The Social Agenda*, p. 29.

[207] This point is reflected where the teaching openly says: "*We have inherited from past generations, and we have benefited from the work of our contemporaries. For this reason we have obligations towards all, and we cannot refuse to interest ourselves in those who will come after us to enlarge the human family.*" *See*: Robert Sirico (ed), *The Social Agenda*, p.31; Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Popolorum Progressio*, (1967), n. 17.

2.7.2 Solidarity as commitment to justice

There is a link between solidarity and justice. For Tarcisio Agostoni, solidarity is the realisation and constant awareness that we are one family. By simply being born into this world, he argues, we are of one inheritance and one stock with every other human being.[208] Consequently, we have to deal with one another in fairness and justice. Solidarity is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, the good of all and of each individual.[209] It is a commitment to justice according to the role of each individual, vocation and circumstances.[210] For the church, this means being bound and committed to the living problems of those whom she serves.[211]

It means walking alongside the poor of society, making a choice in support of their course, being with them in their struggle to attain their economic, social and political liberation and development in accordance to their aspirations.[212] Efeturi Ojakaminor looks solidarity as faith seeking justice.[213] To fight injustice, he argues, implies committing oneself to changing the structures of society so as to obtain a more just distribution of power: economic, social or political.[214] John Paul II calls solidarity an option against the structures of sin.[215] For Donal Dorr, solidarity is an act of entering, in some degree, into the world of those who are poor and oppressed, so as to share in a

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[208] Tarcisio Agostoni, *Every Citizen's Handbook*, Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa, 1987, p. 50.
[209] Robert Sirico, (ed), *The Social Agenda*, p 66.
[210] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (1987)*, §. 41.
[211] Efeturi Ojakaminor, p.78. This is the same point that is made in the opening statement of the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), n.1: " *The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these too are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.*" This point is again reflected in the address of the Synod of Bishops: Justice in the World (1971), where it is said: " *Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or in other words, of the church's mission or the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.*" *See*: Justice in the World (1971), Introduction.
[212] By development is meant a transition from the less human conditions to those, which are more human. *See*: Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Popolorum Progressio* (*PP.1967*), n.20.
[213] Efeturi Ojakaminor, p. 79.
[214] Ibid. p. 79.
[215] John Paul II, *Encyclical Letter Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (1987)*, §. 36.

significant way in their experience of being mistreated, bypassed, or left helpless.[216] It is an act of identification with the poor, and through this identification and participation in their joys and hopes one becomes a true agent of change together with the poor themselves.[217]

Summary

In summary, solidarity is about the concerns that we all ought to have for the well being of each other and the wider community. In his three social encyclicals: *Laborem Exercens (LE.1981); Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (SRS.1987),* and *Centesimus Annus (CA.1991)*, John Paul II repeatedly calls solidarity an essential virtue of social life. His argument is that God not only allows us to depend upon each other, but also absolutely wills us to share ourselves in the context of intimate as well as larger groupings of our neighbours.[218] In essence, solidarity is an ontological ethical potential of being-for-the-other. It testifies to the co-existentiality of human persons, that human persons are constitutively the concern of each other even long before they come to the conscious realisation and decision to show or express that concern.[219]

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[216] Donal Dorr, *The Social Justice Agenda*, Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1991, p. 109.

[217] Efeturi Ojakaminor, p. 80.

[218] Ibid. p. 120. For further details on the subject of solidarity, see the following references: G. Baum, *Compassion and Solidarity: The Church for Others,* Toronto, CBC Enterprises, 1987; C. Baum and R. Ellsberg, (eds), *The Logic of Solidarity: Commentaries on Pope John Paul II's Encyclical "On Social Concerns,"* Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989; D. Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1983; M. Lamb, *Solidarity with Victims: Toward a Theology of Social Transformation,* New York, Crossroad, 1982; B. Lonergan, *The Metaphysics of Human Solidarity: An Early Manuscript,* to be published in vol. 14 of his collected works, Toronto, University of Toronto Press; J. Segundo, *The Humanist Christology of Paul,* Maryknoll, Orbis, 1986; J. Sobrino and J. Pico, *Theology of Christian Solidarity*, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1985; K. Wojtyla, *Toward a Philosophy of Praxis*, New York, Crossroad, 1981; K. Wojtyla, *The Acting Person,* Boston, D. Reidel, 1979; O. Jackson, *Dignity and Solidarity: An Introduction to Peace and Justice Education,* Chicago, Loyola University Press, 1992; E. Loewy, *Freedom and Community: The Ethics of Interdependence*, Albany, SUNY, 1993.

[219] This is what Roger Burggraeve calls: "*Heteronymous responsibility arising from the epiphany of the other, from the outward radiation of the other towards me on being-on-my-own way*". *See*: Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise. Essays in Biblical Thought and Ethics*, Reader, Leuven, Catholic University of Leuven, 2004, p.96. The same point is referred to by Emmanuel Levinas as: "*an-archaic and pre-original event, something which does not commence from personal freedom.*" *Cf.* Roger Burggraeve, p.96. In the African context, this is about a quality of life that is to do with the welfare of the other. This is expressed by the concept of *uMunthu,* which means: *being-one-of-with-and for-others.* This concept carries a sense of spontaneous and voluntary assumption of a self-imposed sense of duty towards the other, especially the needy, the destitute or bereaved. It is a way of experiencing one's life and humanity in fellowship with others. According to Augustine Musopole, this is the basic anthropological framework within which a person is qualified, and also a proper community is built. He writes: "*To be human in Africa is to be a reconciled person-in-community-and-communion responsibly living out the integrity of one's humanness in all spheres of life and thus contributing to the development and realisation of what we have*

In conclusion, the discussion that we have had on human dignity and rights will enable us in chapter three to see how this aspect was repressed under the one part regime, while the discourse on the role of government, subsidiarity, preferential option for the poor and solidarity, will reveal the crisis of the state and that of the church in their failure to promote human dignity and rights according to their respective mandates.

2.8 Critical appraisal

We have discussed the Catholic social teaching in historical and thematic aspects. Particular focus has been on those themes that bear immediate relevance to this study. It is this teaching we believe had the Catholic Church in Malawi lived and made use of it, there would have been an alternative narrative to the political and economic repression that raged between 1964 up to early 1992. It is the same teaching, again, that is inadequately being lived now. However, having reached this far, we feel it is important to draw a few critical observations about this teaching. There are two reasons for this critique. In the first place, the teaching has its own shortfalls, and currently, there are calls to seriously revisit some of its key positions. Second, we would like to prepare the reader for what we shall later suggest as a way of ensuring that the identified shortfalls find proper mediation. The critical remarks here together with those in chapter four on the ecclesiological model that has been operative in Malawi over the years, are vital in view of what we shall subsequently propose in chapter five regarding the appropriate model of the church that would be a conduit for the actual modalities of living this teaching in Malawi.

2.8.1 Areas of strength

Social integration

Over the years, through various stages of reflection on the social question, there has grown awareness in the Catholic Church on the need to become an integral part of social-political processes. It is only in that way that the church could be the salt and light of the

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called the Good Village or Community and harmony in the cosmos". *See*: Augustine Musopole, *Being Human in Africa: Towards an African Christian Anthropology,* Maryknoll, Peter Lang Publishing Inc., 1999, p 179.

World, and through its social teaching contribute towards the promotion of human dignity, political and economic rights of the vulnerable groups in state and society. The understanding that the church is a 'separate and perfect society,' therefore, should remain restricted to things spiritual and heavenly, is no longer entertained.[220] This, undoubtedly, is a significant shift in terms of the social mission of the church.

Centrality of the human person

Another very important strength in the social teaching is the recognition of the centrality of the human person to the life and operations of the state and all social institutions.[221] This recognition is very important in the face of the common temptation to sacrifice human persons for political and economic ends.

Firm foundations

Again, of critical importance in the social teaching is the firm grounding of human rights in human dignity. Presently, with all the competing claims on the meaning and nature of human rights, the church's strong affirmation of human dignity, a dignity that arises from the theological anthropological confession of the human person as created in the image of God, provides solid and secure foundation to the discussion.

Communitarian nature of rights

This is another important aspect as far as the modern debate on human rights is concerned. Under the influence of neo-liberal thinking, particularly in the developed world, there is now prevalence of an extreme sense of individualism. Thus the recognition of the communitarian nature of human rights in the teaching, through such principles as solidarity, stands as a critique against such distortions. These are some of

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[220] Perhaps more than any other document of the church, the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), n.1; expresses the church's readiness to engage with the world.

[221] *Cf.* John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra: AAS 53* (1961), 453; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus 54: AAS 83* (1991), 859-860. The teaching holds that the pastoral activity of the church in the social sector must bear witness to the truth of the human person. It is observed that Christian anthropology permits a discernment of social problems that will never find an adequate solution if the transcendent character of the human person, fully revealed in faith, is not safeguarded. Therefore, the social action of the Christians must be inspired by the fundamental principle of the centrality of the human person. See also: Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, 76: AAS 58* (1966), 1099-1100.

the important lessons we need to keep in mind as we contemplate on how the social teaching can be made integral to the life of the church and society in Malawi.

2.8.2 Critical challenges

End of mass Catholicism

Early in the chapter we have seen how the reformation and later the enlightenment drove the Catholic Church to a position where, through the Councils of Trent (1545-1563) and Vatican I (1869-1870), had to redefine its position vis-à-vis the theological and secular ideological challenges of the time. In the course of redefining itself, we have seen that the church became highly centralised in terms of power and authority, and this was coupled with heavy institutionalisation and systematisation of doctrine both theological and secular. We have also seen that out of this process, emerged what Staf Hellemans calls a hierarchy-driven mass Catholicism, expressed through various social programmes, health, education, charity works, etc.[222] The social teaching happened to have been hosted by this hierarchy-induced mass Catholicism, which came to an end in the early 1960s. The end of mass Catholicism meant the weakening of the social teaching itself.[223]

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[222] Staf Hellemans, "*Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching After the Waning of Ultramontane Mass Catholicism*?" in Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), pp.23-24.

[223] Two events are very important to explain the decline of mass Catholicism beginning from early 1960s. The first one is the Vatican II (1962-65). The council marked a radical turning point in Catholic theology, ecclesiology, etc. In the area of ecclesiology, for example, there was significant reduction in centralisation and institutional nature of the church, at least in principle. This meant reduced role of the Vatican on local churches. Second, early in 1960s, for the first time the Catholic Church openly recognised the rights to religion and conscience. *See*: John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*, (1963), n.14. This recognition proved significant in the sense that it broke the long held belief in the monopoly of salvation by the Catholic Church. By this recognition, the church affirmed the salvific import of other religions as well, and in that case, its own position was relativised. It no longer presented itself as an absolute proprietor of God's truths. But, perhaps, with hindsight, this position was modified during the Vatican II (1962-65) as is stated in subtle terms in *Lumen Gentium*: "*This Church, constituted and organised in the world as a society, subsists in the Catholic Church, which is governed by the successor of Peter and by the bishops in union with that successor, although many elements of sanctification and truth can be found outside of her visible structure.*" *See*: Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*, (1965), n.8. These two events contributed to the end of the mass Catholicism that had emerged since the 19th century and which had proved host to the social teaching. As Staf Hellemans puts it: "*The ultramontane mass Catholicism, a religious formation within which classical social doctrine had emerged and prospered, slid into a deep crisis after 1960.*" *See*: Staf Hellemans, "*Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching After the Waning of Ultramontane Mass Catholicism?*" in Jonathan Boswell et al (ed), p.21. The end of mass Catholicism has left the Catholic social teaching open to every attack. It is sometimes regarded as a conservative ideology, something moralist instead of emancipatory. *See*: M.D Chenu, *La "doctrine sociale" de l'E'nglise comme ide'ologie (Essais)*, Paris, Cert. 1979.

The fading of neo-Thomism and natural law

Closely related to the collapse of "ultramontane mass Catholicism" are the waxing and waning of two very important factors: neo-Thomism and the natural law doctrine. For a long time Catholic theology and the social teaching, have been premised on Thomistic thinking and the natural law. However, of late these have come under harsh criticisms and are almost discarded from theological and ethical discourse. However, as Hellemans rightly observes, the vacuum resulting from the removal of this theoretical framework has not been filled yet by a new theological and ethical paradigm equally shared. Instead of one dominant theory as was the case previously, theological and ethical currents of a wide variety are in competition, and since Rome can no longer draw on one dominant theological and ethical language game, the possibility of developing a doctrine, which aspires to stand above the quarrelling parties, has seriously become problematic.[224]

Anthropological relativism

There is realisation that the Catholic social teaching proceeds from particular anthropological considerations, namely that the human person is created in the image of God and that his dignity derives from this specificity. While this theological confession is meaningful and acceptable, and provides the bulwark to wild interpretations of human rights, it does so only within the ambit of the church. Taken outside, the position becomes difficult to attain especially when confronted with other anthropological claims and convictions. Therefore, the anthropological presuppositions upon which the Catholic social teaching is based create limits with regard to the extent the church would enter into dialogue with other traditions of social ethics.

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[224] Staf Hellemans, "*Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching After the Waning of Ultramontane Mass Catholicism?*" in Jonathan Boswell, p.24. To appreciate the seriousness of this moral or ethical relativism, one just has to study works like these ones. T. Deidun, "*The Bible and Christian Ethics*," in B. Hoose (ed), *Christian Ethics. An Introduction*, London, 1998, pp.3-46; Richard Gula, "*Scripture in Moral Theology*", in ID, *Reason Informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, New York-Mahwah, 1989, pp. 165-184; Richard Gula, "*Faith and Morality*", in ID, *Reason Informed by Faith. Foundations of Catholic Morality*, New York-Mahwah, pp.43-59; Charles E. Curran, "*Dialogue with the Scriptures: the Role and Function of the Scriptures in Moral Theology*," in ID, *Catholic Moral Theology in Dialogue*, Notre Dame, 1972, p.24-64; J. Gustafson, *The Place of Scripture in Christian Ethics: A Methodological Study*", in *Interpretation 24* (1970) 430-455, reprinted in J. Gustafson, *Theology and Christian Ethics*, 1974; Joseph Fuchs, "*Is There a Specifically Christian Morality?*", in C. Curran & R. McCormick (eds), *The Distinctiveness of Christian Ethics* (Readings in Moral Theology no 2), New York-Ramsay, 1980, pp.3-19.

Theoretical and universalistic tendency

There are also critical remarks regarding the nature of this teaching. It is seen to be weak especially in its tendency to be over theoretical and universalistic, a feature that makes it fail to appreciate the hard facts of concrete life situations. In that way it frequently fails to provide practical alternative proposals to what it identifies as problematic and infringements of human dignity.[225] For instance, the social teaching does not have much to offer in terms of practical alternatives to unemployment, exploitative global financial operations; the aspects of buying and sailing of shares, privatisation, etc, which very often exert severe impact on many people particularly in poor countries.[226] In the similar vein, the teaching is accused of being too moderate in its dealings with structures of oppression; that it tends to condone and even maintain unjust structures mainly because it hesitates getting involved in politics.[227]

Dogmatic and paternalistic tendency

As we have seen in the introductory part of this chapter, the social teaching is commonly associated with the hierarchy of the church. It is top-heavy, meaning that it is very often crafted, pronounced and then handed down from the top. This easily creates the feeling from the wider membership in the church that it is part of dogmatic pronouncements on social questions just as there are dogmatic pronouncements on theological matters.[228] Certainly, such a position generates dissidents. A clear example is when encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra* (*MM*), appeared in 1961. Some people, like William F. Buckley, a prominent Catholic intellectual and political correspondent in the US openly commented:

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[225] This problem finds official admission even in the encyclicals like *Quadragesimo Anno (QA.1931)*, nn.41-43; John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS.1987*), n.41.

[226] Jean-Yves Calvez, "*Things Old and New. Catholic Social Thought in Retrospect and Prospect*," in Jonathan Boswell et al, (ed), p.10.

[227] This is particularly the case when one reads the earlier social encyclicals of Leo XIII such as: *Quemquam Pluries (1889), BP II, 256-8*; *Quod Multum (1886), BP II, 88*; *Quod Apostolici Muneris, BP I, 34*; Great Ency 28.

[228] This feeling has been heightened recently following the publication of the: *COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, October 2004. By referring to the teaching as "doctrine", others see this as giving it a dogmatic character, meaning, it cannot change and neither can it be questioned. It sounds like part of the revealed truths, no longer something discernible by or through reason through historical experiences.

"Mater si, Magistra no", meaning he would continue to consider the church his spiritual "mother," but no longer a reliable "teacher" on social issues.[229]

Optional extra status

In principle, it is understood that the Catholic social teaching is an integral part of the Gospel of Christ being its practical expression. However, when it comes to concrete life, the teaching can hardly be said to have entered the public stage. Externally, it is all too often ignored, and inside the Catholic Church itself, it is more frequently neglected than vigorously adopted or put into action.[230] On this note, Jonathan Boswell says:

> Even among interested parties, it labours under certain crisis of identity. On a wider canvas, the social teaching finds itself in a vortex of challenge paused by liberal individualism and crude capitalism, by widespread social injustice and division in contemporary society, and by dominant currents of thought which, while sympathetic in some ways to Christian values, do not seem to want or need the sacred or the ecclesial.[231]

Going together with the treatment of the social teaching as an optional extra is lack of wide knowledge about it. Jean-Yves Calvez observes:

> The Catholic social teaching proper, with its foundations, nuances, is unfortunately not widely known. Of the major authoritative statements of the Church's social teaching, even the educated people hardly read them more than two or three sentences reported in the newspapers.[232]

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[229] Thomas Massaro, *Living Justice. Catholic Social Teaching in Action*, Wisconsin, Sheed & Ward, 2000, p.136.

[230] *See*: Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching,* p.9. In Malawi, this is seen in lack of enthusiasm to the activities done by the Justice and Peace Commission, an arm of the church that directly takes lead on issues that relate to the social teaching. It is only in recent times that the Justice and Peace Commissions have been established in Mangochi, Zomba and Chikwawa. In those dioceses where these commissions are long established, sometimes, the parish committees find it hard to fulfill their work. For example, in 2003, in Lilongwe Diocese a parish committee of the commission at Mtima Woyera was dissolved by a parish priest because of its critical stand on the way parish resources were being managed.

[231] Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, xiii.

[232] Jean-Yves Calvez, "*Things Old and New: Catholic Social Thought in Retrospect and Prospect*," in Jonathan Boswell, et al, (ed), p. 9. This problem is a common problem. In Malawi, there is very little attention even amongst the clergy to read statements on social issues by the Episcopal Conference, let alone those coming from the Vatican.

Historical relativism

Paul Ricoeur makes a very critical observation regarding ethical traditions. He says "none of us finds himself placed in the radical position of creating the ethical world *ex nihilo*".[233] This is a very humbling and at the same time critical statement against any monopolistic or totalitarian conception of ethics. Quite contrary to this, however, there is a veiled assumption in the Catholic social teaching of a pure ethical tradition generated so independently from the surrounding cultural milieu. There is no acknowledgement of the cultural and historical conditions out of which this teaching has evolved hence its own limitations.[234] It does not take long when one goes through various papal encyclicals or indeed any other literature on the social teaching before realising its Euro-centricism in concepts, content, etc. Thus Calvez and Perrin are right in calling the teaching, "*an historical answer to an historical problem.*"[235]

2.9 Paradigm reconstruction

The apparent decline in the prominence of the Catholic social teaching, on one hand, is coupled with critical reflections that are meant to construct a fresh paradigm for the teaching, on the other. Despite the enormous challenges being confronted, there is still strong belief that the teaching has a vital place in the life of the church and the individual believer in state and society. These efforts are evident in a number of areas. But for our purposes we shall only focus on three. First, there are efforts to widen the scope for the teaching by creating new themes.[236] And second, there are also efforts at what we can call

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[233] Paul Ricoeur, "*Ethics and Culture*, Habermas and Gadamer in *Dialogue," in Philosophy Today*, 17 (1973), pp.153-165, especially 159.

[234] The "*ultramontane mass Catholicism*," as an environment within which the teaching evolved and got systematised, is clear evidence of cultural and historical limitations.

[235] Jean-Yves Calvez, & J. Perrin, E'glise et socie't'et'e 'economique, L'enseignement social des papes de Le'on XIII, a'Pie XII, 1878-1958, Paris, Aubier, 1959, p.22. Jean-Yves Calvez & J. Perrin, *Englise et société économique. L'enseignement social des papes de Léon XIII à Pie XII, 1878-1958,* Paris, Aubier, 1959, p.22.

[236] The classical social teaching had dwelt largely on the "*the social question*," but after 1960, new themes have emerged which concern issues of third world development. These include: (i) *popular participation*, (ii) *disarmament and global world order*, (iii) *ecology and feminism*, (iv) *consumer society*, (v) international social justice and option for the poor. Nearly all the social encyclicals that have come after 1960, e.g. John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (*MM.1961*); John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963*); Paul VI, Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, *Gaudium et Spes,* (*GS.1965*), Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio* (*PP.1967*); Paul VI, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Octogesima A*dveniens (*OA.1971*); John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens* (*LE.1981*); John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*SRS.1987*); John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus* (*CA.1991*); carry themes like these ones in one way or the other.

the *"declericalization"* and *"dehierarchization"* of the social teaching. The objective of these efforts is to reduce the identification of the teaching with the church hierarchy. It is argued that there was a time when the laity and secular institutions played a very critical role to the thinking and popularisation of the social teaching. One of such critics is John Coleman who says:

> From the beginning, social Catholicism was always more than "official Catholic social teaching" as found in the encyclicals. Unofficial social thought and action profoundly fed into and was spawned by the "high" tradition as its originating charter. [237]

What is being advanced is that the Catholic social teaching should not only be associated with those statements uttered by the popes and other officials in the Vatican, or the bishops and clergy. Instead, the efforts of the laity and secular organisations should also be seen as agents that feed into, as well as live the teaching in concrete situations. Third, in the light of the above, there are efforts to review the role of the hierarchy. This new role is seen as defined by the realities of greater pluralism and semi-autonomy experienced globally. In this environment, Staf Hellemans proposes, the hierarchy's role should be more to do with issues of promotion and coordination of worldwide discussions and experiences and synthesizing them into major documents.[238]

Conclusion

In this chapter, so far, we have looked at what is generally understood by the Catholic social teaching. We have discussed the social, historical and cultural factors out of which this teaching took its form, shape and character, and eventually attained its prominence till early 1960s. From there, we have seen the critical challenges the teaching now faces and the various attempts being made to redefine its place in the life of the Catholic Church, the individual, state and society. In the course of the discussion, we have deliberately made a choice regarding the themes for discussion. Our interest has been on those themes deemed to be relevant to the overall study.

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[237] John Coleman, *"Retrieving or Re-Inventing Social Catholicism. A Trans-Atlantic Response,"* in Jonathan Boswell et al, (ed), p.265.

[238] Staf Hellemans, *"Is There a Future for Catholic Social Teaching After the Waning of Ultramontane Mass Catholicism?"* in Jonathan Boswell et al, (ed), p. 31.

The idea behind such a selection is that the reader should be able, by studying them here, to understand what the Catholic Church teaches on those specific themes, and having done so, relate them to the situation in Malawi as we discuss chapters three and four. In addition, by discussing these themes in this chapter it is our intention to prepare the reader for chapter five where we are exploring how best the Catholic Church in Malawi could minister to the public on social-political matters using this teaching.

The Re-Making of an African Society

3. Introduction

This chapter sets out the context of the entire study. In a broad way it discusses the gradual evolution of the Malawian society from the pre-colonial, through the colonial, the one-party to multiparty periods. In this process the chapter highlights specific situations, particularly with focus on the one-party state, where the dignity of the human person in Malawi was grossly abused by the state. These are the situations the Catholic Church would have addressed using its social teaching. Now in order to have a proper appreciation of the interaction between the Catholic Church and the state in Malawi over the years in matters of political and economic governance, we find it appropriate to start with a historical background concerning the Malawian society itself as it has evolved from the distant past to the present.

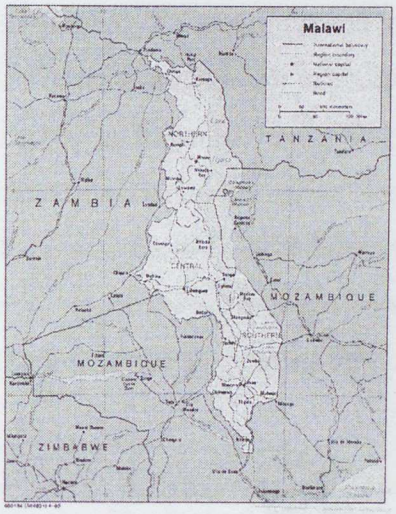


Figure 2: Map of Malawi

This is important because the Catholic Church did not just drop from elsewhere into an empty space. Upon arrival the early missionaries encountered societies that had been in existence for generations and were at the same time under the colonial rule. As we shall see, this has had long-term impact on the church in Malawi. In undertaking this task the immediate temptation would be to begin with a generous introduction, providing geographical and historical details about the land and its people from pre-colonial times to date. Although this would be an interesting exercise to embark on, when one turns around, all over, there are credible studies precisely on such introductory details like: the geographical size, physical features, weather and climatic conditions, natural resource endowments, population spread and density, ethnic and racial composition.

Therefore, to avoid duplicity, we find it convenient to provide some references where this kind of information can be accessed.[1] Although details are left to these sources, sketchy remarks are still appropriate for smooth entry into the discussion. With these, we hope to proceed from a fairly common ground so that when we agree or differ in the course of the discussion, at least we know where we had started, and in case of need, we can easily retrace the footsteps.

3.1 Pre-colonial society

History has it that a bout two million years ago, Hominids inhabited the area now called Malawi. Archaeological evidence in form of remains of settlements of modern humans dating back some 100,000 years have been found on the shores of Lake Malawi.[2] This evidence suggests that these were the same Boskopoid people who inhabited much of this part of Africa, the ancestors of the pygmies in Central Africa and the San of Southern Africa. Often they are referred in both oral and written history as *Akafula,* sometimes as *Abatwa,* or *Amwandionerapati.*[3] About 2000 years ago, pressure started to bear on them.

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1 Bridglal Pachai, Malawi. *The History of the Nation*, London, Longmans, 1972; Bridglal Pachai, (ed), *The Early History of Malawi*, London, Longmans, 1972; E. Jefferson Murphy, *The Bantu Civilization of Southern Africa,* New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1974; J.D. Fage, *A History of Africa,* London, Hutchinson, 1978, pp.20-33; 110-140; J. Vansina, *"Inner Africa",* in A. Adu Boahen, et al., *The Horizon History of Africa,* New York: American Heritage Publishing Company, 1971, pp.261-273; John G. Pike, *Malawi. A Political and Economic History*, London, Pall Mall Press, 1969; Frederick A. Praeger, 1968, p.38; Kings M. Phiri, *"Northern Zambezi 1500-1800",* in *The Society of Malawi Journal*, vol. 32, 1979, n.l. pp.6-22; Matthew Schoffeleers (ed), *Guardians of the Land: Essays on Central African Territorial Cults,* Gweru, Mambo Press, 1978; Philip Curtain, et al., *African History*, London, Longmans, 1978, pp.249-276; Roderick J. MacDonald, (ed.), *From Nyasaland to Malawi, Studies in Colonial History,* Nairobi, East African Publishing House, 1975. Let us also add the unpublished work of Patrick Kalilombe. In some parts of his PhD dissertation: *"From Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities". A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*, The Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, 1982, Chapter 1, pp.9-14; esp. Annex II, pp.1-34; Kalilombe gives very good information on the geographical, demographic, historical factors of Malawi, although, some of the details need to be upgraded, for instance on population. All these pieces of literature, and of course there are still many more, contain well-researched data on various aspects regarding the history of Malawi starting from pre-colonial period to the present.

2 htt://www.lonelyplanet.com/destinations/Africa/Malawi/history.htm. 29/12/2004.

3 The literal translation of this term is, *"from where have you been able to notice me"*? This is an inquiry. Oral tradition has it that these were very short and small people, but quite tough compared to the Bantu. Each time they could meet a Bantu, they would ask, *"Mwandionera-pati*?" Any answer indicating that he had been taken note of just here and now would immediately attract a fight as away for them to prove strength. For the sake of peace, the Bantu would always answer, *"I have seen you from that far"*, meaning you are tall enough to be noticed from distances away. The Batwa are now found in Eastern Africa. For example, in Burundi, they comprise 1% of the national population, as well as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

This was exerted by a race that can be considered to have been a second layer in the social stratification. These were the Bantu who were progressively migrating into the area.[4] These people were comparatively advanced technology wise. They brought with them knowledge of iron smelting which turned out to be advantageous over the *Akafula* in both agriculture and warfare. Thus with time they dominated the earlier inhabitants completely.[5] Further waves of migration brought the Bantu from the Congo region through modern Tanzania into northern Malawi. In the south and centre, groups came from present day Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and established a kingdom that ruled the central and southern part of the country including parts of modern Mozambique and Zambia.

Later in the 19th century two significant migrations took place. The Yao from western Mozambique invaded the highlands of southern Malawi, killing the more peaceful local inhabitants as they went, or capturing them for sale into slavery. About the same time, the Ngoni from present-day South Africa began moving into southern Malawi, eventually spreading across the country, overpowering many local tribes. We shall come back to this particular group in chapter four. Despite having come to the new homeland these groups in many respects retained their distinct cultural, social and political identities. There was no assimilation with respect to political structures or institutions to form a state according to the classical understanding. In other words, nothing like central authority and political institutions to which each cultural nation would find alignment evolved. The diverse groups were not yet cast into a single society, economy and political system.

3.1.1 Contact with the outside World

Like with many other parts on the continent, we cannot say with certainty the exact period when societies in this area started to get into contact with the outside world, and by the outside world we mean the Arab world and Europe. What we can be sure of, nevertheless, is that in history trade has always played a big role in linking societies both

[4] The word "*Bantu*"means people. These are the groups of people whose term for a person carries a root-word, "*ntu*".

[5] This would be an interesting area for research. How did these people, the "*Akafula" disappear*? Did they disappear through the process of assimilation through intermarriages, or there was some form of genocide, or they just got scattered to distant parts of southern and eastern Africa?

near and far. Given the presence of Lake Malawi and its potential to be a strategic point of connection to far and distant places, we are certain that this area has been in contact with far off places much earlier than what modern history says.[6] However, in respect of historically verifiable narratives we see initial contacts with the Arab world through trade in slaves and ivory from 18th to 19th centuries. The Yao we have mentioned earlier, brandishing firearms supplied them by Arab traders on the east coast, were one of the several local tribes that supplied slaves by raiding the interior. In case of Europe, the first to arrive were the Portuguese explorers who reached the African interior from the east coast of present day Mozambique. Nonetheless, of all the early external contacts, it is only that of David Livingstone, a Scottish Missionary in 1850s that paved way for the trends that have had historic impact on the Malawian society.

Following his footsteps the missionaries came to be established. And in 1889 the British government made the Shire Highlands a protectorate as a way of counterchecking the expansion of Portuguese influence in the area. Later this was extended to include much of the land on the western side of Lake Malawi, calling the colony Nyasaland, thereby for the first time creating a modern state. In 1896 the country was divided into twelve districts. The administration of the districts was in the hands of the collectors, later called district commissioners, and all of them were Europeans. In addition to collecting custom duties and hut taxes, they exercised police and magistrate duties of law and order in their respective areas. At the national level the highest colonial officer was the Commissioner and Consular General, later called Governor. From 1907 executive and legislative councils provided assistance to him. All the members of these councils were Europeans.[7] In brief this is the type of state administration that was inherited at independence on 6 July 1964.[8]

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[6] Steve Sharra gives very interesting information on this point. He quotes scholars like Christopher Ehret, who in his work, " *An African Classical Age: Eastern and Southern Africa in World History, 1000 B.C to A.D. 400,*" alludes to the fact that this area was part of the ancient trade route connecting the south to other regions in the north and east of Africa and beyond. *See*: Nyasanet, 6 June 2005.

[7] Patrick A. Kalilombe, *From "Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities". A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese:* PhD Dissertation, Berkeley, California, 1982, p.33.

[8] Cynthia A. Crosby, *Historical Dictionary of Malawi*, Metuchen, N.J. and London, The Scarecrow Press, 1980; Bridglal Pachai, (ed), *The Early History of Malawi,* London, Longmans Group Limited, 1972; Bridglal Pachai, Malawi: *The History of the Nation,* London, Longmans Group Limited, 1973; B. R. Rafael, *A Short History of Malawi*, Limbe, Popular Publications, 1980.

3.1.2 Religious trends

Since early 19th century, there have been waves of foreign religions into this area, the earliest being Islam by Arabs from the eastern coast. Their main interest was neither the spread of Islam nor colonial conquest. Instead, trade was the sole motive, particularly in human cargo in form of slaves, and also in ivory that was found in abundance in the region at that time. The local people who converted to Islam did so either as collaborators in sourcing the human cargo or as part of attaining freedom since the faith dissuades the servitude of fellow Muslim(s).[9]

The point that missionary activity was not part of the Arab agenda is further confirmed by the fact that presently, Islam is popular mainly where the purchase and dispatch of the human merchandise was taking place like Mangochi in the south, Nkhotakota in the centre, and Karonga up north. Christianity was the second foreign religion to be introduced. Initially, it was the Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA-1861) that commenced missionary work as a follow-up to David Livingstone. Later, other Christian missionaries followed, like the Scottish Presbyterian Missionaries, the Roman Catholic Missionaries, the Dutch Reformed Church, etc. All these went on to establish mission stations in different parts of the country. Meanwhile, over and above Islam and Christianity, there are other foreign religions like Hinduism and Buddhism.

3.2. Western education

3.2.1 Early missionary initiatives

The introduction of western education in Malawi is mainly due to the initiatives of early Christian missionaries. Almost all of them took it as indispensable in the process of planting the faith and western civilization. A few examples will illustrate this point. John McCracken informs us that:

[9] The history of slavery in the Islamic tradition shows that children born to parents who were slaves could spontaneously be treated as slaves. People could also become slaves by capture (*see: Sura 33.50*). These could be freed only on condition that a price was paid, while others could be freed upon conversion to Islam. It appears, therefore, that for Malawi, the conversion to Islam by the larger part of the Yao population, initially, was not a result of Islamic mission activities, but as an incorporation which ensured mutual benefits: the Arab slavers would easily obtain their cargo through the cooperation of the local tribe-the Yao, whilst the Yao could be spared of slavery itself. In other words, by converting to Islam, they became middlemen in the business of slave trade.

> All missions in the 1890s recognised that the prime task of religious conversion could not be achieved without the introduction of at least a modicum of Western education: all that were Protestant shared Henry Venn's ideal of a self-governing, self-supporting native church. Where they differed most markedly was on the type of society they wished to create and on the means at their disposal for carrying those wishes into effect.[10]

The Catholic missionaries who, initially, had little interest in education for the local communities changed their stance, and came to accept the complementary role of education to pastoral work as evidenced by statements like this one:

> We are surrounded on all parts by Protestant ministers. Let me put it this way rather: in quite a few places we are side by side with them, and we are obliged to contest each village foot by foot with the heresy, almost struggling for each individual. In order to fight with success we must employ the same weapons, that is the school. Perhaps in other regions it is permissible to dream about our catechists assuming the role of the 72 disciples, going two by two across the countryside sowing the word of God. Here, whether we like it or not, it is necessary to use the school: it is an indispensable arm. Victory will be on the side of the more flourishing schools. The catechist, therefore, must be a teacher.[11]

Patrick Kalilombe analyses five different missionary trends each with its subsequent impact on the Malawian society. In this analysis it is evident that the Scottish Presbyterian Missionaries were clear in their linkage of evangelisation and modernisation particularly through education. They assumed that their role was that of tutors of the Africans, charged with opening up for them the access to modern civilization and progress.[12] It does not come as a surprise that later, according to Mafuka, Scottish missions figured prominently in the development of African nationalism and independence.[13] The most outstanding features of their efforts in education are evident in the institutions they managed to establish both in the north and south of Malawi.

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[10] John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875-1940: Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in Colonial Malawi*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1977, p.176.

[11] Rapports Annuels 1908, in Nyassa, vol.3, pp.233-234, quoted in Patrick Kalilombe, *"From Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities,"* PhD Dissertation, p.134. This is a 1910 report from Kachebere Mission in Mchinji District. However, the actual change in Catholic policy on education towards the local people came much later. Kalilombe indicates that it was only in 1928 that it changed, and then only on the express order from Rome through the apostolic visitor Mgr. A. Hinsley. Rome wanted education to be taken seriously as a means of preparing citizens to take their right share in the country's development. *See*: Patrick Kalilombe, p.65.

[12] *See*: Patrick Kalilombe, p.52.

[13] Ibid. p.53.

The Livingstonia Mission under Robert Laws established what came to be called bush schools in the north, including what is regarded to have been the first modern institute of high education in Central Africa, the Overtoun Institute.[14] In the south, the Church of Scotland also established bush schools and a similar institute of higher learning, the Henry Henderson Institute.[15] Interestingly, no similar institution was established in the central region at this early date.[16] Another missionary group worthy mentioning is the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA). Views from various scholars, however, suggest that an adequate study on its impact has not yet been carried out.[17] On this point, nevertheless, Elston is of the opinion that although such an assessment has, indeed, not been made, still:

> At the material level it (Anglican Missions) laid the foundations, with other missions, of educational and medical work that form part of their common heritage to the people of Malawi. Although the mission was not directly responsible for the extinction of the slave trade, it was instrumental in showing, by precept and example, that 'the brotherhood of man' was not a pious phrase but a viable alternative to tribal warfare.[18]

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[14] The term bush school is popular in the history of education in Africa. In Malawi, they were sometimes called, unaided school. In many cases, these schools were opened by missionaries in remotes parts of the country as part of their evangelisation outreach. With time, these schools could get upgraded to junior and later full primary schools, either by the missionaries themselves or government, colonial and later nationalist. About the Bush Schools in Malawi, Ian Linden says, " *...in 1897, the Livingstonia mission, now at the north end of the lake, had seventy-eight bush schools plus the well-equipped Overtoun Institute which taught English and Theology to advanced students".* See Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, 1974, p.43.

[15] The Church of Scotland ran *fourteen* schools from their Blantyre mission, and eight from Domasi mission near Zomba. See Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, 1974, p.43.

[16] Apparently, such lack of institution of higher learning was a result of a deliberately crafted policy strategy by the type of missionaries who were dominant in the region. According to observations by Leroy Vail: "*All education was controlled by French-speaking Roman Catholics and Afrikaans-speaking members of the South African Dutch Reformed Church, both committed to policies that de-emphasized the use of English because of a fear that its use would encourage labour migracy.*" *See*: Leroy Vail (ed), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, California, University of California Press, 1991, p. 174. This single factor has had far reaching negative impact for the residents of the central region when examined against the backdrop of retardation of social-economic development and more importantly, participation in political life before and after colonial rule.

[17] Patrick Kalilombe, p.55.

[18] Op. cit.

Another group is the Dutch Reformed Church. Unlike the other missions these came from South Africa. As is the case with the Anglican missions, there is an impression that not much was done by the Dutch Reformed Missions in the area of education. However, this opinion is challenged by Mtalimanja who argues that the mission had done a lot in the areas of communication, transport, industry, agriculture, education, medical work in the Central Region:

> However, it must be admitted that the Dutch Reformed Church Mission had done a lot to the development of the Central Region economically and physically, and has changed the social and political life of the local people to some degree. This has been achieved through the construction of roads, the missionaries' own agricultural plots and the valuable instructions they gave to the local people, the industries they introduced beside those they had found, the education system and the medical services.[19]

Nevertheless, the general consensus remains that the mission did not have much influence in many respects. As Nyamayaro Mafuka says, the South Africans had less enthusiasm to confront a government with which their own country had been at war.[20] These missionaries, Mafuka further observes, lacked empathy with the local people.[21] John McCracken holds similar position and he writes:

> Its agents in the first place were predominantly of rural stock...compared with the emphasis placed by Livingstone and the Scottish Missionaries, with their largely urban background, on 'Commerce and Christianity' their slogan was that of "the Bible and the Plough". Again, the doctrine to which they ascribed of the natural diversity of races, while it implied much genuine concern with improving the conditions of the existing society and raising the moral and

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[19] B. Mtalimanja, *"The Dutch Reformed Church (Nkhoma Synod) and the Development of Rural Society in the Central Region of Malawi,"* in Final Year History Seminar Paper: History Department: Chancellor College, University of Malawi, 1972/73, paper CC/H/455, p.1-12. Perhaps Mtalimanja can further be vindicated by Ian Linden who speaks of the domination of the Afrikaner missionaries in the Central Region. He says that for thirteen years, prior to the coming of the Catholic missionaries in the region, the Afrikaner missionaries could claim over 80 schools with almost four hundred baptized church members. *See:* Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants, and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, 1974, p.49.

[20] In history this is known as the Anglo-Boer War (1899-1902). It was fought between the two former Boer republics: Transvaal and the Free State, and the British Empire. The war broke out on 11 October 1899. As it progressed, Britain brought reinforcements from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, as well as fighter from other colonies. *See*: The Centenary of the Anglo-Boer War, 1899-1902: http://www.icon.co.za-dup42:abw.htm; 23/01:2005. See also K. Nyamayaro Mafuka, *Missions and Politics in Malawi*, Ontario, The Limestone Press, 1977.

[21] Nyamayaro K. Mafuka, *Missions and Politics in Malawi*, Kingston, Ontario, The Limestone Press, 1977, p.34-35.

> physical standards of African villages, ensured that no attempt was made to revolutionise that society itself.[22]

The last group comprises of the churches with comparatively small membership and those often referred to as African Independent Churches. Their impact has not been sufficiently assessed despite plausible attempts by Chaphadzika Chakanza.[23] Detailed discussions on the Catholic Church are reserved for chapter four.

Summary

Although differences exist in terms of motives and quality, three things are evident. The early missionaries' initiatives on education succeeded to produce an educated class that went to take up skilled jobs within Malawi and abroad. In addition, the initiatives, inadvertently though, managed to prepare future nationalist leaders. Precursory movements for independence revolve around individuals with deep educational roots in missionary institutions.[24] Related to this point, is the fact that these efforts were equally preparatory, in midwifery terms, for the birth of a modern African society and nation.

3.3 Towards nationhood

3.3.1 Invention of ethnicity

Discussions on the concept and reality of nations in the African context cannot bypass the subject of ethnicity. Diverse scholars identify Western influence, particularly colonialism, as the cradle of ethnicity. According to Ekeh, this influence produced enduring social formations which fall under three distinct categories: (i) the transformed indigenous

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[22] John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi, 1875-1940: Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in Colonial Malawi,* p.178.

[23] *See: Annotated List of Independent Churches in Malawi: "Sources for the Study of Religion in Malawi",* n.3; Compiled by J.Chaphadzika Chakanza, Zomba: University of Malawi, Chancellor College, Department of Religious Studies, 1980.

[24] For example, Elliot Kamwana received his education at Bandawe and Livingstonia before his association with Joseph Booth; Charles Domingo, a Mozambican brought to Malawi from Qu'eilimane by William Koyi had his education through the Livingstonia system; John Chilembwe, the architect of the 1915 uprising had his education through missionary system. The same can be observed of the founders of the Native Associations, which were preparatory movements to the emergence of a national political movement for independence: e.g. Simon Chiukepo Mhango, Levi Zililo Mumba, Lewis Mataka, James Frederick Sangala, Kanyama Chiume, Masauko Chipembere, and Kamuzu Banda.

social formations,[25] (ii) the migrant social formations,[26] and (iii) the emergent social formations that were neither indigenous nor foreign, but evolved from colonialism. This includes ethnic groups and ethnicity.[27]Critically observed, contemporary ethnic groups and ethnicity as transformed as well as emergent social formations constitute presumptions or building blocks in the political evolution of modern African nations. Seth Chachage, a Tanzanian intellectual and fierce critic of such identities, observes that the invention of ethnicity and tribe had become a popular theme in historiography in Africa in the 1970s following the studies of scholars like Ranger and Iliffe.[28]

These studies, Chachage contends, reveal that particular ethnic identities have come into existence in the relatively recent past as a colonial creation, that these ethnic categories are constructs, which have been changing over time given the nature of the state.[29] It is further argued by primordialists that for centuries the invention of ethnicity and tribe had been the task of ethnologists, travellers and early missionaries in particular.[30] These were preoccupied with the definition of the cultural characteristics of members of various social groups. The overarching objective was to secure sufficient understanding as the basis for entry into dialogue. This task produced racial categories,[31] and crude ethnic ideologies that in the end contributed to the provision of those factors upon which the

[25] These are the ones which though having existed already in the pre-colonial period were transformed by the wider framework of social existence introduced by colonialism and imbued with the new meanings and symbols.

[26] These are the formations, which were imported wholesale from the colonial centre and consisted mainly of the state apparati and modern institutions such as universities, banks, etc.

[27] See Eghosa H. Osaghae, "*Ethnicity in Africa or African Ethnicity*," in Ulf Himmelstrand, et al, (eds), *African Perspectives on Development*, Harare, St. Martin's Press, 1994, p.143.

[28] Seth Chachage, *Nation Building and Ethnicity: Towards a Re-conceptualisation of Democracy in Africa;* paper prepared for the *Pan-African Civic Educators Network* (PACE-NET) Conference, Durban, South Africa; 7-10 September 1999. p.2. See also John Iliffe, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1979; T.O. Ranger, *"The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa,"* in T.O. Ranger & E. Hobsbawn (eds), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1983.

[29] Ibid. p.2

[30] H. Kjekshus, *Ecological Control and Economic Development In East African History*, Heinemann, London, 1977.

[31] Seth Chachage observes that the elevation of racial categories to science found its culmination in the writings of Robert Knox, the Scottish anatomist and Arthur de Gobineau, the French pseudo scientific racist in 1850 and 1853-55 respectively. See also S.L. Millbury-Steen, *Europe and African Stereotypes in Twentieth Century Fiction*, Macmillan Press, London, 1980.

colonial state was determined and founded.[32] Perhaps a question that would be of interest is precisely how the early missionaries feature in this enterprise. The first factor to be critically considered is what is taken as African history. Leroy Vail astutely observes:

> First, missionaries themselves were often instrumental in providing the cultural symbols that could be organised into a cultural identity, especially a written language and a researched written history.[33]

Two things are fundamental here. Language and shared historical experiences, according to popular consensus among socio-political scientists, are essential to the definition and political evolution of society towards nationhood.[34] It is precisely here that, in Malawi, and elsewhere in Africa, we discern the critical role of the early missionaries. At the back of our minds we should have their efforts in the field of education, particularly the grassroots-bush school system that we have talked about. Adrian Hastings says this:

> It was missionaries who originally took the lead in teaching Africans mathematics, biology, history and the rest, and the effect of the injection of such teaching on a large scale into a pre-scientific society is obviously to break up very much of its traditional way of life and culture. The children with their arithmetic books and their homework have no longer the time or inclination to learn the old songs and the old ways of singing or the laborious old technical skills.[35]

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[32] By ideologically disaggregating the people, it became easy to control communities by instituting, or recognising and strengthening the traditional leadership structures on the basis of ethnicity. In Nigeria, Oliver A. Onwubiko points outs that: "The *colonial administrator dabbed into local affairs uninvitedly under different guises. Convinced that he had a mission of 'putting order' where he thought non existed, he began to set up his own pattern of administration. It was imperative and necessary for him to institute a body of persons who would see to his interests and to the effective execution of his orders. This led to the birth of the Warrant Chieftaincy.*" *See*: Oliver A. Onwubiko, *The African Thought, Religion & Culture*, Enugu, SNAAP Press Ltd, 1991, p.117.

[33] Leroy Vail (ed), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, California, University of California Press, 1991, p. 11.

[34] In summary, in classical terms, a nation is defined as a community of people, who feel deeply rooted in the laws and results of history (see Lord Acton, *Nationalism and Gender*, p.112), based on common memory of, and common feeling for the past. Ahad Ha'am, a Jewish nationalist, defines it as what individuals feel in their hearts, a kind of a soul, a spiritual principal (*See*: Ernest Renan, "*Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?*" in *Nationalism, Nation and Gender, Democracy and Diversity*, Cape Town, 2000, p.1). It is argued that a nation is constituted of the past; i.e. history and the present; i.e. the actual consent and desire to live together, the desire and will to continue to value the legacy and heritage held in common.

[35] Adrian Hastings, *Church & Mission in Modern Africa,* London, Burns & Oates, 1966, p.29.

The early missionaries had the discretion in terms of social groups to write history on and the local language to use.[36] Through this, they facilitated, on one hand, cohesion and identity, whilst on the other, division by constructing conceptual boundaries through written histories of particular social groups.[37] Thus the initial boundaries are not physical as known today but psycho-socio created by written tribal histories.[38] The written languages and tribal histories with specifications of customs and traditions of social groups were key factors that went into the creation and consolidation of ethnic and tribal identities. It was partly around these identities the colonial structure subsequently came to be established. Leroy Vail further says:

> Once these elements of culture were in place and available to be used as the cultural base of a distinct new, ascriptive ethnic identity, it could replace older organising principles that depended upon voluntary clientage and loyalty and which, as such, showed great plasticity.[39]

The creation of ethnicity included the incorporation of ethnic identities into the curricula of mission schools. The graduates of these schools, quite naturally, turned out to be impetuous emissaries of ethnic ideologies to their communities and the world around. In some cases these graduates assumed the responsibility of deepening the ideologies through research on the supposed primordial glories of the former ages, together with stories of heroes and triumphs.[40] However, it is the same education that, though at the root of ethnicity, later turned out to be an inadvertent seed to the invention of modern nations as a collective reaction against imperial and colonial aggression in search for nationhood.

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[36] In his article, "*Language Policy and Tribalism in Malawi*", in *Lamp Magazine*, No. 55, September-October, 2005, p.20ff, Paul Kishindo discusses this point very well with regard to the situation in Malawi.

[37] Leroy Vail, p. 11.

[38] Atypical example is the three administrative divisions of Malawi into Northern, Central and Southern Regions. What determined the divisions was mainly the language factor. In the north, the missionaries took one language and used it as a medium in education and religious instructions, while the center and the south was grouped under one language-Chinyanja. With time, these languages have degenerated into social, political divisions.

[39] Leroy Vail, p. 12.

[40] The works of Edward Bote Manda and Saulos Nyirenda in reviving the defunct Chikulamayembe chiefdom in the area of Nkhamanga in the process of recreating the Tumbuka ethnic ideology serve as good examples; see Leroy Vail, *The Seeds of Tumbuka Ethnic Identity*, p. 153ff.

Summary

In summary, it is clear that early missionary education prepared ground not only for evangelisation, which was its primary and direct objective, but also for the gradual evolution and birth of modern African nations. This was, among other things, done through the creation of ethnic identities, which in the long run turned out to be the building blocks of modern nations at the hands of nationalists. Another important lesson from this is that through this early education, the missionaries succeeded to a great extent, in planting among the local people a new cosmology out of which grew new values, attitudes, social relationships and history. All this put together constitute an irreducible contribution to the re-making of an African society.

3.4 Nation building in Malawi

3.4.1 Effects on human dignity

In many African countries independence was attained prior to full-fledged nationhood.[41] Consequently, nation building was adopted as an overarching policy within which social, economic and political life was organised.[42] In Malawi, says D.D. Phiri, it can hardly be established that people had that feeling and understanding of being a nation in a strict sense prior to independence. Nevertheless, Phiri adds, there was a pervasive revulsion, a kind of anti-colonial nationalism against the oppressive colonial regime and the common desire to get rid off it.[43] This theme or policy, as far as Malawi is concerned, coincided with a particular notion of power and authority. To understand this point better, let us

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[41] In his comment Leroy Vail says that nationalism, not only in Malawi, but in many other areas of Africa as well, had been a basically negative force, directed against colonialism, with little positive vision about the nature of the new society after colonialism's demise. 'Tribalism', that troubling enemy of the dominant party's programme of 'nation building', had quickly come into the open after Malawi's independence. *See* Leroy Vail (ed), *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa*, California, University of California Press, 1991, p. ix.

[42] Francis Fukuyama makes a distinction between State Building and Nation Building. State Building is about constructing or strengthening the formal institutions that make collective life in society possible, for example; the police, institutions of public services, etc; whilst Nation Building concerns a process, often spontaneous as a result of certain given conditions, of welding diverse ethnic groups into one identity. *See*: http://www.jhu.ed/humag/0904/fukuyama.htm. Henry Okullu also talks about Nation Building as a theme that surmises everything that every African president or prime minister is bent on achieving. *See*: Henry Okullu, *Church and State in Nation Building and Human Development*, Nairobi, Uzima Press, 1984, p.28.

[43] Interview with D.D. Phiri, Blantyre, 12/09/2003. The same point was expressed during the interviews with Rt. Rev. Dr. James Tengatenga, Bishop of the Anglican Church, 12/09/2003; Dr. Wiseman Chijere Chirwa, 25/03/2004; Prof. Dr. Zimani Kadzamira, Mangochi, 06/04/2004.

review one of the enduring political symbolisms, the black cockerel.[44] Two meanings are decipherable from it.[45] The first refers to the dawn of freedom in Malawi and entire Africa.[46] The other one, not so explicit, symbolises a particular notion of power and authority and is well illustrated in a popular proverb that says: *"atambala awiri salira mkhola limodzi,"* which literary means, never do two cockerels crow in the same house. The real and deeper meaning, however, is that never can two competing powers or leaderships operate at the same time and in the same community.[47] This reflects, as William Murray Kanyama Chiume points out, a general trend in Malawi by which power is understood to be residual and inherent in the leadership.[48] Thus the cockerel, in this particular case, symbolises inherent rejection of pluralistic and competitive power politics which, in the words of John Milbank, could be referred to as a "dismissal of the sociality of harmonious difference,"[49] quite similar to what Bratton and de Walle describe.[50] This is the model that guided social, economic and political life from 1964-to early 1992. The results, as documented elsewhere, were the erosion of human rights and absolutisation of the state, making the human person subservient to it. This model was seen to have had

[44] To this day, the Malawi Congress Party maintains a cockerel as its key political symbolism.

[45] We should bear in mind that a symbol is a living reality and expresses or points to something real and experiential.

[46] This meaning is widely known.

[47] This sentiment was firmly expressed by Aleke Banda few years before independence. *See*: *Malawi News*, 26 November 1960. In this statement, he categorically rejected multiparty system. As a matter of fact, this was a common trend in Africa at that time. In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah expounded a similar view: *See*: George Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed*, p. 65; and Mobutu Seseko in Zaire echoed the following criticisms against democracy: "*Democracy is not for Africa. There was only one African chief and here in Zaire we must make unity*". *See*: *Wall Street Journal*, October 14 1985, p.1.

[48] Interviews with William Murray Kanyama Chiume, Nkhatabay Boma, 16/03/02. The research established the same view during interviews with Nelson Mwambungu, Karonga-Ngerenge, 19/09/2003; Emmanuel Kachale, Sun 'N' Sand, Mangochi, 05/04/04; Christopher Chisoni, Lilongwe, 17/04/2004. See Part II, Interview Schedule 1, pp.255-256.

[49] See John Milbank, *Theology & Social Theory. Beyond Secular Reason*, Oxford, Blackwell Publishing, 1993, p.5.

[50] Bratton and De Walle say: "*The right to rule...is ascribed to a person rather than to an office, despite the official existence of a written constitution. One individual (the strongman, 'big man' or 'supremo') often a president for life, dominates the state apparatus and stands above its laws. Relationships of loyalty and dependence pervade a formal political and administrative system, and officials occupy bureaucratic positions less to perform public service, their ostensible purpose, than to acquire personal wealth and status. Although state functionaries receive an official salary, they also enjoy access to various forms of illicit rents, prebends, and petty corruption, which constitute a sometimes-important entitlement of office. The chief executive and his inner circle undermine the effectiveness of the nominally modern state administration by using it for systematic patronage and clientelist practices in order to maintain political order.*" *See*: Michael Bratton and Nicolas van de Walle, *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transition in Comparative Perspectives*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p.62.

full expression in Kamuzu Banda. In the sections that follow we are going to examine it from a number of perspectives, with simultaneous analysis on what the Catholic Church, inspired by its social teaching did or would have done specifically in areas of political and economic governance in defence of human dignity.

3.5 Political disenfranchisement

The World over, leadership tends to tilt in favour of male folks and preferably those with considerable leverage of age. Underneath are assumptions that the older, then the higher the probability of wisdom. Precisely due to this kind of reasoning, Kamuzu Banda was perceived to have had the required qualities for the leadership of the nationalist movement.[51] We should also not lose sight that although Banda had been away for a long time he had not ceased to nurture keen interest in the political developments back home.[52] All this summed up made his candidature undisputable when compared to the rest.[53] He augured well with what leading nationalists, like Henry Chipembere, thought to be the proper model of leadership for the struggle.[54] Apparently, the thinking was that to have such a vastly educated, experienced and grown-up man at the helm would be double gain. The usually conservative traditional leadership would see in him an undisputable equal, hence would take him seriously and render the required support. The same would apply to the administrators of the colonial state. They too would be reduced to size. It is almost logical that Banda ended up to be the sole player with the rest as errand boys. As an elder in an African community, from onset, he knew almost instinctively that he had the responsibility to run the show:

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[51] He was a cultured man with wide exposure internationally and equipped with the best education obtained from the following schools and university colleges: Wilberforce Academy in Ohio; Indiana University; University of Chicago; Meharry Medical College; University of Edinburgh, and Liverpool University: *See*: hhtp://www.greatepicbooks.com/epics/may2000.html .17/05/2005.

[52] This can be confirmed by what he at one time wrote to Mrs. Hilda Selwyen-Clarke, a member of the House of Commons then, on the question of federation, saying: "*I write to you thank you for raising the question in the House of Commons on the proposed Conference on Central Africa. Dr. Rita Hinden wrote, quoting to me the question and the reply to it. I am now satisfied. This is more so as, when she, wrote, Dr. Hinden added that she had a talk with one, at least, of the officials at the Colonial Office and she was assured that neither sir Stewart Gore-Browne nor Mr. Roy Welensky would attend the Conference. This satisfies me more than anything else could. We (the Africans of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia) shall now wait and see what happens at the Conference when it meets. But we shall at the same time go on with our preparations to oppose it, if federation is recommend by the Conference and accepted by the Imperial Government. We simply will not have it. If it comes, it will have to be enforced by means of guns and machine guns. We shall oppose it and, if necessary, resist it. We do not want any union with Southern Rhodesia, federal or otherwise.*" *See*: Hastings K. Banda, 8 Aylester Avenue, Brondesbury Park, London N.W. 6, *Letter to Mrs. Hilda Selwyn-Clarke*, 11 Darmouth Street, London S.W. 1, 14th December 1950.

[53] For example, those who were very prominent in the movement like Kanyama Chiume, Masauko Chipembere, Dunduzu Chisiza, etc, although they were young and bright, they could hardly measure to the stature of Kamuzu Banda.

[54] Henry Chipembere, one of the key architects of Malawi's independence, in a written invitation to Banda then in Ghana, urging him to come and lead the struggle, articulated the leadership model that was most appropriate for the occasion. He argued that human nature is such that it needs a kind of hero to be worshipped if a political struggle is to succeed. *See*: Harri Englund, in Richard Werbner and Terence Ranger, *Postcolonial Identities in Africa*, London, Zen Books, 1996, p. 108.

> No! I told them all forcefully and emphatically, individually and together, that I came home to do a difficult job and I expected to complete the tasks, to be completely successful and then spend the rest of my life practising medicine. They all said, "Yes Doctor", "Inde Atate", "Of course Doctor". I told them that I was elected to run the show, not to be a "front man" to be run by young people no matter how brilliant they were.[55]

The point is that the foundation of the new nation in Malawi was firmly premised on the notion by which Banda, true to the cockerel model, had to occupy the central stage, with the rest displaced to the role of political acolytes. The terms "rest" and "political acolytes" here should be understood very critically. They apply not only to the nationalist leaders at that time, but also the whole national population and the various mediating institutions of civil society, including the church. This particular experience of being displaced and reduced to political acolytes is what we are referring to as political disenfranchisement. This trend, in the long run, became a watershed characterising latter day politics. It is worthy noting, however, that, shortly before independence in 1964, the trend attracted serious attention from the Catholic Church. In the two sections that follow we are going to see in brief, how the church reacted to what was perceived as an emergent autocracy.

3.5.1 First confrontation

For a long time the Catholic Church in Malawi avoided "meddling in politics".[56] But shortly before independence there was a marked shift in the understanding of the mission of the church from the strictly conversional to sacramental model, i.e. the church as a symbol and continuation of salvation in history. In this shift the church started to get drawn into the politics of the colony. The church's involvement in politics at this time would be a reflection of an emergent consciousness of its identity and role in state and society, some sort of the result of what had been going on in previous years under the Catholic Action Movement. This movement was essentially about the apostolate of the laity, their active participation in the life of the church and society. It was Pius XI who

[55] *The 1966-1967 Hansard,* National Archives, Zomba.
[56] Patrick Kalilombe, *From "Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities". A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*, PhD Dissertation, California, Berkeley, 1982, p.65.

initiated this thinking,[57] and in later years received support from John XXIII.[58] It was, however, not until Vatican II (1962-1965) that a radical revolution on the role of the laity occurred.[59] Denis E. Hurley writes:

> Vatican II was a watershed in the history of the Catholic Church. We leave on the far side of the watershed a Church gazing heavenwards, wrapped in her isolation and identified with her bishops, priests and religious. On this side of the watershed we are swept along in somewhat a turbulent Church, still gazing heavenward but taking in as well the terrestrial scene, shedding her isolation and recognising that the burke of herself is made up of the laity.[60]

In Malawi this movement can be traced to as early as 1928. Three developments that took place between 1928 and 1945 exerted great influence on Catholic Action in Malawi. First is the 1930 education ordinance,[61] whilst the second and third developments concern the first and only synod of the Shire Vicariate in 1928, and the Central African Bishops' Conference at Cilibula in 1935.[62] As Reijnaert notes, two factors account for these developments: (i) the growing political consciousness among the population, on one hand, and (ii) the inevitable developments arising from the intrinsic needs of the maturing population of African Catholics, on the other.[63] Catholic Action evolved first as the active participation of the laity in the pastoral ministry of the church as catechists and "*akulu a mpingo*".[64] Later, an increase in responsibilities necessitated a third portfolio: the

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[57] *See* Pius XI, *Quadragesimo Anno, AAS 23* (QA.1931), nn.31-33.
[58] *See*: John XXIII, *Mater et Magistra* (*MM. 1961*), nn. 178-179; John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, (*PT. 1963*), n.147.
[59] See: "*Decree on the Apostolate of Lay People*," in Austin Flannery, *Vatican Council II. The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, New York, Costello Publishing Company Inc., 1984, p. 766ff.
[60] Denis E. Hurley, "*Catholic Social Teaching and Ideology*," in Andrew Prior, ed., *Catholics in Apartheid Society*, Cape Town: David Philip, 1986, p.35.
[61] Hubert Reijnaert, et al, *Montfortians in Malawi. Their Spirituality and Pastoral Approach*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1997, p.213.
[62] Op. cit.
[63] Op. cit.
[64] Among the key functions of these ministries were: eradication of bad customs; settle family problems; solve various difficulties, or bring them to the attention of priests; inform the priests the various aspects of public life; give good example of Christian life. See Hubert Reijnaert, p.231. With time, additional functions for "*akulu a mpingo*" evolved: these included looking after Christians' and Catechumens of one or more villages associated with a particular school; ensuring that Christians and Catechumens went to church on Sundays; bringing all marriage cases before the priest; leading Sunday prayers in places far from mission station and the out-church, etc. See Hubert Reijnaert, p.264.

"*agulupa*" or "*akapitao,*"[65] whose primary responsibility was that of overseeing the work of "*akulu a mpingo*" in the villages.[66] Second and third waves of Catholic Action emerged with the coming of the Legion of Mary,[67] and the introduction of the Catholic elite, respectively. While the first and second waves leaned much on the involvement of the laity in pastoral ministry and acts of devotion, the Catholic elite acted as an interface between the church and the public space. It evolved, initially, among the graduates of two Catholic institutions: the Catholic Institute in Blantyre and Zomba Catholic Secondary School.[68] Most of the graduates from these institutions ended up picking jobs in the colonial civil service administration. It was hoped that in that way they would begin to translate the social teaching of the church into concrete life situations thereby be able to influence the general public.

Archbishop Theunissen

The increased tilt of the balance of power against pluralistic competitive politics in favour of the reductive-exclusivist model for the eventual establishment of the Banda hegemony seems to have been the main reason for the first confrontation. This prompted a few Catholic elite to constitute a political alternative to which Archbishop Theunissen is alleged to have rendered support.[69] As Bishop Joseph Fady later suggested,[70] for him, coming from Holland where the formation of political parties on religious grounds was common,[71] he did not see it strange to support initiatives of this nature.[72] There are also other opinions on the initiative. For instance, the archbishop might have been concerned

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[65] The title of "*agulupa*" was used in Nyasa Vicariate of the White Fathers, while in Shire Vicariate, the same portfolio was called "*akapitao.*"

[66] Hubert Reijnaert, p.262.

[67] The Legion of Mary was introduced in Malawi by Edel Quin, an Irish lay apostle based in Nairobi from 1936 till her death in 1944. She came to Malawi in 1940. See Hubert Reijnaert, p.238ff.

[68] Institutions like these were seen as preparatory to the emergency of a class of educated Catholic laity that would play a critical role in the public sphere.

[69] This political alternative was the Christian Democratic Party founded by John Chester Katsonga, and his colleagues Odilo Mabangwe, Gilbert N. Pondeponde and Adriano Maiden. Some of these individuals were products of the Catholic Social Action. For details, see: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice. Confrontations between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994;* Blantyre, CLAIM, 1999, pp. 31-56.

[70] Ibid. p.41.

[71] We can also see argue that the archbishop was building on the tradition that had been in practice in Europe after WW II. As we shall see in Chapter five there was close collaboration between the Catholic Church and political parties after 1945. In this collaboration, the interest of the church was to influence political parties adopt "Christian" values into their party manifestos and programmes.

[72] Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, p. 41.

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with the welfare and future of the Catholic Church. The 1960s marked the heightening of the cold war and newly independent states tended to align themselves with either of the power blocs. It is possible that there was fear that Malawi under Banda would simply slide into the communist bloc. This opinion seems to be validated by the nationalist movement itself. In one instance it issued a statement against a Catholic missionary who had purportedly told his congregation in a sermon that the leadership of the Malawi Congress Party had communist leanings:

> You fear communism but do not fear political, economic, and social injustices, which you practice and to which the African people (including the so-called good Catholics) are subjected. We want practical Christianity as taught by Jesus Christ Himself. In the name of God untold injustices are meted out to us by the so-called European Christians. It is fantastic that you wanted us to rally behind you in condemning the leaders of the Malawi Congress Party...People of all faiths accept the leadership of the Great Kamuzu. He is our national leader and there is no doubt about it.[73]

Whatever the actual motives, we see in this action, first, a serious attempt to draw the Catholic Church into the national political sphere, something that had not been the case before. Second, we discern in it serious attempts to promote freedom and rights through political diversification, something that, naturally displeased the Malawi Congress Party.[74] This confrontation, which was initially between the nationalist movement and the archbishop, prompted the first official public statement from the Catholic hierarchy on political issues.[75] The statement dispelled allegations that the church was against independence.[76] Instead, it expressed full support to the legitimate aspirations of the people. While indicating readiness to cooperate with any type of government, charity and justice were stressed as cardinal preconditions.[77] Further, the statement presented human rights to be the basic law upon which, according to the designs of God, every society

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[73] Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Trust and Justice*, p.52. Further, this opinion gains additional weight from the fact that when the new party was finally launched on 17 October 1960, it carried the name of Christian Democratic Party (CDP). See Ibid. p.31.

[74] *Malawi News*, 12 November 1960. *See also*: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, p. 48. See also the editorial by Aleke Banda: *Malawi News*, 22 October 1960.

[75] *See*: "*Roman Catholic Bishops' Reply to Attach by MCP*", in *Nyasaland Times*, 1 November 1960.

[76] Op.cit. It was stated: " *...We, the bishops of Nyasaland, have not, do not and never will oppose the legitimate aspirations of the people of Africa; having so much at heart that this country of Nyasaland and its people be free, enlightened, prosperous and great, We fully encourage and support their legitimate desires for independence*". See also Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p.39.

[77] Op. cit. Also Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p.40.

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[77] Op. cit. Also Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p.40.

must be built.[78] It was also argued in the statement that the church has the duty to protest whenever these rights are not respected.[79]

3.5.2 Second confrontation

March 1961 marks a second encounter between the Catholic Church and the nationalist movement. This time the hierarchy was motivated by the need to enlighten people on critical issues regarding the imminent independence. One would regard this as a contribution towards social reconstruction. It took the form of a well thought out and discussed pastoral letter bearing the title: *How to Build a Happy Nation.*[80] Critical examination of this letter suggests remote inspiration from earlier papal social encyclicals like *Rerum Novarum* of Leo XII *(RN.1891)* and *Quadragesimo Anno* of Pius XI *(QA.1931).* It is also in the same year *(1961)* that John XXIII published the social encyclical letter *Mater et Magistra (MM)* which contained critical references to issues of human rights and the role of the state and public institutions. We might as well assume that preparations for *Vatican II Ecumenical Council (1962-1965)* were already underway at this point in time. Thus this environment might have had influence in the preparation of this pastoral letter. The letter addressed many pertinent issues but for purposes of this study, we shall concentrate on selected themes.

On Church and State

From onset, the letter profoundly affirms the centrality of the human person as the sole reason of the state and government. In accordance to God's designs, it says, the human person lives in three societies: the family, the church and the state. Here the letter carries an implicit reference to the natural law. It is very important to know that nearly all the social encyclicals that appeared before 1971 are heavily influenced by the natural law theory. For a very long time this theory has been regarded as one of the key sources of

[78] Op. cit. The statement stated: "*...But it is definitely Our obligation to make known to all the laws upon which every society must be built and to safeguard the human rights that have been given to all by God and which no ruler can take away from his people...*" See also Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p.40.

[79] The statement further said: " *...Not only are we bound to advise on these laws and rights but We are also obliged to oppose any action contrary to them...*" See Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p.40.

[80] This letter was published by Likuni Press of the White Fathers, Lilongwe, March 1961.

the Catholic social teaching. It was only in 1971 that Paul VI accepted openly that due to diversity of situations in the world, historical experiences ought to be taken into serious consideration when exploring solutions to social problems. [81] In this case Paul VI initiated a remarkable shift in the methodology of the social teaching from the traditional deductive approach to the inductive approach.[82]

The state and church, the letter argues, come from God: the former indirectly when God created man naturally sociable and the latter directly when Christ, its Founder and Head, delegated his authority over the church on earth to St. Peter.[83] Subsequent to this common origin, the bishops concluded, civil society must acknowledge God as Founder and Father and must obey and reverence his power and authority.[84] Justice and reason itself, they went on to say, forbid the state to be godless or to adopt a course of action that would be godless.[85] Clearly, underlying this point is the allusion that one of the possible factors that had prompted Archbishop Theunissen to provide support to the formation of the Christian Democratic Party was the concern that under Banda the country would slide into communism.[86] This observation is strengthened further by the statement that says the state has the duty to care for religion, but cannot legislate on it.[87]

On mutual duties and responsibilities

The letter explicitly stated that the church must strictly admonish rulers to be mindful of their duty, i.e. to govern without injustice or severity, to rule their people kindly and paternally.[88] The church and the state must work together as their functions, though

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[81] *See*: Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971) *n.4*. This consciousness started to form with John XXIII, especially in his encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris (1963)* as evidenced by his frequent reference to the expression "*Signs of the Times.*" *See*: *nn. 40; 41; 42.*

[82] John Paul II seems to have reversed this shift in the process of asserting more control of the Vatican.

[83] Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, p.57.

[84] Op. cit.

[85] Op. cit. One can read between lines the hierarchy's strong opposition to communism, which they feared would be introduced in Malawi under Banda and the Malawi Congress Party upon independence.

[86] *Cf.* Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p.52.

[87] Op. cit.

[88] Op.cit. It is important to note that the Social teaching of the Catholic Church as it has developed all the way from Leo XIII (1891), holds an organic view of society. Its position can be surmised as follows. First, God is the Creator of the world and all that exists. Second, He is the foundation of authority that is to be used in running the affairs of this created order. Third, He has given precise moral order upon which the personal and social affairs of human persons have to be conducted. Four, the Church has a clear

distinct, are nevertheless, complementary. In case of conflicts, the bishops stated, there must be mechanism to resolve them in order to secure harmony. Here we see a direct reference to the events that followed the first confrontation. On the question of church and politics, it was pointed out that the church is above political parties. As such, it does not conceal any political aim or political activity under the cloak of religion.[89] As long as the rights of God and the church in all human activities: social, political, economic; are upheld, the church would not intervene.[90]

To all, a call was extended for patriotism. Independence was hailed and described as a normal consequence of a nation's development.[91] While accepting honest differences of opinion, intolerance, hatred and violence were discouraged. The letter also spelt out the proper responsibilities of citizens including lay Catholics. It was stated that they were to be obedient to lawful authority as to the ministers of God, binding themselves to their rulers not merely by obedience but also by reverence and affection.[92] Catholic Christians were encouraged to join any political party provided it was not anti-Christian.[93]

A feature that runs through and through this pastoral letter is the centralisation of the human person to the life of the state and society. The human person is defined as the reason of everything about politics and the economy. Reading this letter in the light of political developments of the time, the form of argumentation creates the impression of a veiled call by the Catholic hierarchy for a liberal form of democracy vis-à-vis the then increasing tilt of power towards autocracy.[94]

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understanding of this moral order and communicates to all so that they can build their lives on it. Because of this view, the church tends to see the role of the state and its own in a paternalistic way. Nevertheless, this position is gradually changing in current moral discourse.

[89] This is again a veiled refutation of the Malawi Congress Party that Archbishop Theunissen was behind the formation of the Christian Democratic Party.

[90] This is a very clear position on where and when the church would be forced to intervene. Thus we can see here a readiness to continue with the tradition of engagement, which sadly never happened.

[91] Ibid. p.57.

[92] Op. cit.

[93] Here again, we see the reservations the bishops had towards the Malawi Congress Party vis-à-vis its possibility to take the path of communism. By this statement, one notices a veiled advise to the Catholic Christians to dissociate themselves from the Malawi Congress Party.

[94] The process of consolidating the unitive power paradigm and subsequent creation of a strong centre state was, even prior to independence, already turning the individual and the major part of society into political pawns. The state and the leadership had begun to take the central stage. This phenomenon was not

Critical appraisal

This letter, essentially, reflects the classical Catholic social teaching. Its arguments derive mainly from three sources: the natural law tradition, Thomistic thought, and the proof-text approach to scriptures.[95] Thus the letter gives rise to a number of difficulties when appreciated from the contemporary developments in Catholic social teaching. The first difficulty arises from the three-tier theory. This is about the three societies, which the letter says, are divinely established, each complete with specific rights, duties and functions.[96] We find this classification very problematic. While it is easy to argue for the family and state as products of the laws of nature, it does not seem to be the case with the church. The church is a historical organisation and its membership is based on free choice. Another difficulty is discernible in the seemingly dogmatic and paternalistic way the letter presents its position. Among the places this is evident is where it cites Leo XIII:

> The Almighty has proportioned the charge of men to two powers, one ecclesiastical, the other civil, the former dealing with matters of the soul, the later with temporal affairs...Whatever in things human is of sacred character, whatever pertains to the salvation of souls or the worship of God is subject to the authority and judgement of the church. Whatever is assigned to the civil and political sphere is rightly subject to the civil authority.[97]

While this dualism was acceptable during the time of Leo XIII, the notion does not seem relevant anymore for the 1961 audience. In every sense, given the 1961 historical and political context, even as Orton Chirwa pointed out in his remarks, this was a shortfall in

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particularly unique to Malawi. It was a common pattern cutting across the board of African politics, as noticed by Francis Nyamnjoh who says: "*Various rhetoric informed by exigencies of nation building and economic development had served to excuse the edification of one party or military dictatorships around the continent, virtually suffocating liberal democracy with personality cults, kreptocracies and impunities.*" *See*: Francis Nyamnjoh, *Liberal Democracy in Africa: The Need for Alternatives*, paper prepared for the Conference on *From Freedom to Empowerment-Ten Years of Democratisation in Malawi*, 4-6 June, 2003, p. 2. The radical contestation by the Catholic Church at this early hour, for the human person as the locus of everything about politics and economy, was, in our view, an attempt to rescue this human person from abuses and distortions by which he was assumed to be subservient to the state and means towards the existence and reasons of the state. The centrality of the human person is firmly asserted where the bishops said: "*God our Father, created man, body and soul, in His own image and likeness and placed him in this world to Know Him, to Love Him and to Serve Him.*" *See*: *How to Build a Happy Nation*, p.2.

[95] This is an approach that takes scripture at face value, i.e. the literal sense of the word.

[96] *How to Build a Happy Nation*, p. 2.

[97] *How to Build a Happy Nation*, p. 3.

the line of thought.[98] Not only is the distinction artificial, above all it legitimises the separation of the political podium from the pulpit, the church from the state, the dismissal of religion from politics. It constitutes the solid premises upon which the dismissal of God and the church from the public sphere rests. Again, veiled in its language is the assumption of one state-one-church. This shows an oversight of the evident religious pluralism in Malawi even at that time. Related to this are nuances of institutional ecclesiology that set the church apart from the state and society.[99] The other difficulty is where the letter discusses leadership. For example, it argues that rulers and chiefs in a country are trustees of the lawful authority, and that even if they happen to be chosen by people, their authority is from God.[100]

This is not easily agreeable. The immediate problem that a modern socio-political scientist is likely to face is that of checks and balances. If indeed the leaders are trustees of the authority from God, unless this is strictly understood in terms of principle, people have absolutely no role in ensuring checks and balance to the use of that authority. Here, the whole business of transparency and accountability collapses. It simply becomes illusory, devoid of practical substance whatsoever. This way of thinking turns leaders into

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[98] This is what he said in his remarks: "... *We in the Malawi Congress Party thank the bishops for this clear statement, although we may not agree with everything they say... especially to some of us who were brought up as Presbyterians, and not every political scientist would accept the idea of a state steeped in theocracy...*" *See*: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p. 59, also *Malawi News*, 13 April 1961.

[99] This comes out distinctively where the bishops referred the church as above political parties, and that priests and members, though permitted to vote, the church forbids them to take part in party politics. See: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p. 58. This position stems from a particular way of understanding the "*Social Mission*" of the church as *Social Teaching and Lay Apostolate*". The primary preoccupation of this model has been the application of the church's social teaching, particularly the teaching elaborated in the 19th and 20th centuries in the papal documents. This teaching pointed out errors of specific social and economic systems such as communistic socialism, liberal individualism, or the unrestricted free market of capitalism. This model sees the actual involvement in the world and in politics as the task of the laity. See Judith A. Dwyer (ed) *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.157f.

[100] *How to Build a Happy Nation*, p. 8. As indicated earlier, this position comes directly from Leo XIII's Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum (1891)*. In this letter, Leo XIII expressly says that the authority of civil rulers must be accepted because it comes from God himself. This teaching is also found in other social encyclicals related to *Rerum Novarum*. See: Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Quod Apostolici Muneris, BP I,* 28; Great Ency 23; Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Diuturnum* (1881), *BP I, 144-6, 154, 150-52*; Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Auspicato Concessum* (1882), *BP I, 176;* Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei* (1885), *BP I, 18*; Great Ency 109.

the line of thought.[98] Not only is the distinction artificial, above all it legitimises the separation of the political podium from the pulpit, the church from the state, the dismissal of religion from politics. It constitutes the solid premises upon which the dismissal of God and the church from the public sphere rests. Again, veiled in its language is the assumption of one state-one-church. This shows an oversight of the evident religious pluralism in Malawi even at that time. Related to this are nuances of institutional ecclesiology that set the church apart from the state and society.[99] The other difficulty is where the letter discusses leadership. For example, it argues that rulers and chiefs in a country are trustees of the lawful authority, and that even if they happen to be chosen by people, their authority is from God.[100]

This is not easily agreeable. The immediate problem that a modern socio-political scientist is likely to face is that of checks and balances. If indeed the leaders are trustees of the authority from God, unless this is strictly understood in terms of principle, people have absolutely no role in ensuring checks and balance to the use of that authority. Here, the whole business of transparency and accountability collapses. It simply becomes illusory, devoid of practical substance whatsoever. This way of thinking turns leaders into

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[98] This is what he said in his remarks: "... *We in the Malawi Congress Party thank the bishops for this clear statement, although we may not agree with everything they say... especially to some of us who were brought up as Presbyterians, and not every political scientist would accept the idea of a state steeped in theocracy...*" *See*: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p. 59, also *Malawi News*, 13 April 1961.

[99] This comes out distinctively where the bishops referred the church as above political parties, and that priests and members, though permitted to vote, the church forbids them to take part in party politics. See: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p. 58. This position stems from a particular way of understanding the "*Social Mission*" of the church as *Social Teaching and Lay Apostolate*". The primary preoccupation of this model has been the application of the church's social teaching, particularly the teaching elaborated in the 19th and 20th centuries in the papal documents. This teaching pointed out errors of specific social and economic systems such as communistic socialism, liberal individualism, or the unrestricted free market of capitalism. This model sees the actual involvement in the world and in politics as the task of the laity. See Judith A. Dwyer (ed) *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.157f.

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God's executives. And naturally, a position like this one drains power and at the same time confiscates political trust from the people.[101]

Summary

Despite this deconstructive analysis, it is evident that shortly before independence in 1964 there was a remarkable shift in the way the Catholic Church understood its social mission. While in the past it had refrained from engagement with politics, this time around we see clear commitment to political issues under the inspiration of its social teaching. Out of this, a tradition of the church's engagement with the political space had started. In this regard, the Catholic Church was proactive both in safeguarding human rights and in drawing practical proposals on how to build that kind of nation that would ensure the minimum welfare and happiness for the majority.[102]

[101] As a matter of fact, this is exactly what happened when Banda was declared as Life President in 1971, following the adoption of a Republic Constitution in 1966, which unlike the Independence Constitution of 1963, gave the Executive/Presidency supreme powers over and above Parliament.

[102] The way the bishops concluded their letter shows this desire for a nation that would guarantee the minimum welfare and happiness to all. They wrote: " *We send you this letter as a token of the heartfelt desire we have to cooperate in helping your country to become a nation of truly free men*". *See* Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice*, p.59.

3.5.3 From 1964-early 1992

A retreat into silence

The immediate period after independence in 1964 is very crucial for our discussion at this point. First, this is when the drive to have Kamuzu Banda as a sole player in national politics was concluded. Second, it is during the same period that the Catholic Church silently withdrew from political engagement, a tradition it had started shortly before independence. These events, in their respective manner, ended up paving way for gross violation of human rights in the years that followed till early 1992. It comes as a surprise to see that unlike before 1964, the period that follows independence coincides with a reinvigorated tradition of the social teaching so evident in many social encyclicals and papal documents bearing updated thinking on the social question.[103] These documents in various ways and intensities articulate, elaborately, fundamental issues about political and economic governance, human dignity and the corresponding rights. In the face of all this, we return to our founding question: why did the Catholic Church in Malawi after independence in 1964, unlike few years before, given all this rich resource, fail to raise the alarm in the face of abysmal human rights violation that characterised the one party state?

The nationalist state

We shall figure out the response to the above question later in chapter four. Meanwhile, it is essential that we examine the subtle strategies by which Banda and the nationalist state succeeded to disenfranchise every actor in society, and this includes the Catholic Church. Politics in the immediate postcolonial Africa reveals a common pattern. In all, one notices steady inclination towards thoroughgoing political absolutism. Francis Nyamnjoh

103 For example: John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (*MM.1961*); John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963*); Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* (*GS.1965*); Paul VI, *Encyclical Letter Populorum Progressio (PP. 1967);* Paul VI, Apostolic Letter, *Octogesima Adveniens (1971);* Statement of the Synod of Bishops, *Justitia* in *Mundo (JM.1971);* Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Nuntiandi (EN.1975); John Paul II, Encyclical Letter Laborem Exercens (LE.1981);* John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (SRS.1987);* John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus (CA.1991).*For details see: Edward P. DeBerri, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret,* New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003; David J. O'Brien, et al, (eds), *Catholic Social Thought: A Documentary Heritage*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003.

articulates this point very well.[104] No sooner had independence dawned upon many African countries than the nationalist leaders went on to relieve themselves of the independence constitutions, which in many respects espoused the ideals of liberal democracy.[105] In various instances, as George Ayittey says, these were deemed inconvenient to their strategic interests once they had grip on power.[106] The model that was seen to be favourable and expedient was that with strict centralisation of governance and state administration, culminating into an interventionist and all embracing state, controlling and owning everything.[107] To quote Nyamnjoh: "they were happy to combine governing through the old colonial institutions,"[108] other than through the instruments of independence which would have otherwise facilitated popular economic and political participation.

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[104] Francis Nyamnjoh raises so many questions. For example, he asks: "A *number of questions have always plagued me whenever I read about liberal democracy or lack of it in postcolonial Africa. Why the volte-face, when the very nationalist leaders who presided over the postcolonial state had during the struggle, committed themselves to the general principles of social justice and had constantly attacked the injustices, oppression and autocracy of colonial rule? Why the sudden abandonment almost everywhere of the liberal democratic principles adopted at independence or shortly before? Why is it that once in charge the nationalist leaders tended to favour power for life and went about modeling themselves after the very colonial dictators they had so vigorously resisted? Why did even elected governments eliminate democracy by means of executive coup d'etas or by tinkering with constitutions? Why was priority given to refining the methods of repression rather than to strengthening the mechanisms of active participation in national and local affairs for the populations who had sacrificed in the struggle against colonialism?* For more details, see: Francis Nyamnjoh, *Liberal Democracy in Africa: The Need for Alternatives*, p. 2ff.

[105] In many instances, these constitutions were made with input from the former colonizers, and adopted in European capitals. For example, Malawi, Zambia, Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya adopted the Westminster model at independence, but these were soon modified or completely changed. *See*: Rungano J. Zvogbo, *State, Ideology and Education*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1997, p.11. It is interesting, however, to note that departing colonialists whose colonial state was the very opposite of a parliamentary mode of politics were the ones pushing for the variant of that mode through the constitutional frameworks they elaborated for the new independent countries. See Ulf Himmelstrand, et al (eds), *African Perspectives on Development*, Harare, St. Martin's Press, 1994, p.251.

[106] George B.N Ayittey gives an interesting remark on this point. He says: "*Inchoate democratic structures, hastily erected by the departing colonialists were perceived by the new leaders as "Western". They were quickly uprooted and replaced with systems that were, in many cases, far more repressive than the hated colonial system. The constitutional democracies installed in Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia soon degenerated into one-man dictatorship built on personality cults. Winners of the elections held on the dawn of independence subsequently used their parliamentary majorities to subvert the constitution and declare themselves presidents-for-life. Elsewhere, the rulers built a political system of patronage that served their predatory instincts. In the Ivory Coast, Malawi, and Zaire, state power was effectively and personally monopolized*". See George B.N. Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed*, New York, St. Martin's Press Inc. 1993, p.100.

[107] This was typical of the Banda regime. He had the ultimate ownership of everything. Private property was at times put to the service of party activities.

[108] Francis Nyamnjoh, p.2ff.

Inherited autocracy

One of the key points Francis Nyamnjoh brings out clearly in his critique is that, in the first place, autocracy was not a specific invention of the nationalist governments. Rungano Zvogbo shares this opinion, when, after critically analysing the nature and legal order of the postcolonial state, he concludes that:

> Two characteristics dominated this order. The more visible was its labyrinthine bureaucracy and the other was its coercive orientation. These were the pillars on which colonial policy and administration rested. Control and coercion rather than management and persuasion were the hallmarks of the colonial order. Without exception, independence instruments (order-in-council) in the case of English speaking Africa preserved that order intact as the foundation of administration in the postcolonial state.[109]

In this case the excesses of the nationalist state were not the specific and original designs of the nationalist leaders in the first place. Whatever these were and came to be reflects what the colonial state itself was initially, something inherently repressive and exploitative. Mahmood Mamdani shades more light on this issue as he writes:

> The phenomenon of despotism was the principle legacy of colonialism. Successive post-independence governments in Africa have either reproduced this form of power as a decentralised despotism (after the British model of indirect rule) or reorganised it as a centralised despotism (the French model of association). Direct rule was the form of urban civil power. It was about the exclusion of natives from civil freedoms guaranteed to citizens in civil society. Indirect rule, however, signified a rural tribal authority. It was about incorporating natives into a state-enforced customary order. Reformulated, direct and indirect rule are better understood as variants of despotism: the former centralised, the latter decentralised.[110]

What would be accredited to the nationalists, however, is the thorough modification, not for the better, of that repressive function, a priority, according to Nyamnjoh: "given to refining the methods of repression rather than strengthening the mechanisms of active participation in national and local affairs for the populations who had sacrificed much in the struggle against colonialism."[111] Mamdani further observes that at the end of colonialism the decentralised form of despotism became the dominant socio-political

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[109] Rungano Zvogbo, p. 13.
[110] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1996, p.18.
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[111] Francis Nyamnjoh, p.2ff.

dispensation in Africa.[112] Thus independence did not translate into the deconstruction of pre-independence institutions and structures of political and economic governance, the very institutions and structures that wielded the repressive function. Instead, at independence, Zvogbo says, the nationalist governments merely expanded the role of the state, without creating or recreating it at all.[113] In practical terms this meant mere inheritance of the autocratic instruments of political and economic governance. It meant continuation of absolute centralists regimes characterised by centralized governance and administration with subsequent demobilisation of the populace.

3.5.4 Consolidating inherited autocracy

Governance through old colonial institutions constitutes a key feature of inherited autocracy. In Malawi this coincided with the traditional notion of power that dispels competitive political pluralism as said earlier. The two, as we shall soon see, blended to produce the regime that proved deterrent to issues of good governance: rule of law, transparency and accountability, popular participation, human rights and the regard of the human person as central to the state and society. In order to properly appreciate this point, we are now going to see five critical areas of public life in Malawi that were conveniently manipulated in the process of consolidating the absolute centralist state.

Absolute centralisation

As a starting point, the consolidation of inherited autocracy required securing and simultaneously perpetuating the colonial legacy of absolutisation of governance and administration, and together with this, the politicisation of public services.[114] This ensured the deposit of all decision-making powers and public service delivery at a single point. In many former British colonies this translated into the demise of local

[112] Mahmood Mamdani, pp. 37-61.

[113] Rungano Zvogbo, p. 14.

[114] In many cases this started with the adoption of new constitutions replacing the ones upon which independence was attained. In Malawi, the *1963 Constitution* upon which independence was attained in 1964 was soon replaced. A new Constitution was adopted in 1966, which provided for the legal premise to the declaration of a *Republican State*. One of the remarkable differences between the 1963 and the 1966 Constitutions was that while the 1963 enshrined a *Parliamentary Model*, i.e. recognising the supremacy of Parliament as the house where the population is represented, the *1966 Constitution* introduced a change to this rule. Instead, a *Presidential Model* was adopted, virtually enshrining all powers and authority of governance and administration into the Presidency. That act alone laid the firm ground for the dictatorship that was to torment the people for a period close to three decades.

governments.[115] Under this model, nation building, which became synonymous to developmentalism, typically neo-colonial, was premised on the need to concentrate power in the executive arm of the state and within that, the presidency, with a simultaneous pledge to deliver social services, like healthcare, education, agricultural development, industries and infrastructure to the people. According to Seth Chachage:

> In return, people were expected to accept a high degree of social and economic control at the same time offer unified political loyalty. In practice, this meant erosion of political space for the masses to exercise their rights. Bureaucratic reproduction of laws rather than popular participation and political representation without hindrance became the norm. Within such perceptions, the party and the government apparatuses became the central organs in the struggles against "poverty, ignorance and disease". Development could only be effected if there was unity among the people, expressed in the form of state project. Conflicts and opposition to state were foreign elements as far as nationalists were concerned. The state had to become monolithic on the one hand and it was necessary to weaken the organisational capacities of the "civil society"-the very basis under which these ruling parties emerged.[116]

Worthy noting is that most of the nationalists and founding leaders of the modern African nations were products of the western education of the time, and their model of development was within the framework of what was prevalent at the time-the developmentalist perspective or modernization paradigm. Since then this has become the

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[115] For example, in Malawi, although there existed some form of local government during the colonial era, soon after independence this was rendered ineffective by the introduction of central government institutions into the districts, the creation of *District Development Committees* (1967), alongside the *Local Councils*, among other things. These took away the responsibilities for local planning and implementation with all decisions coming from the center. This placed the people outside government structures, only waiting for government to deliver development to them.

[116] Seth Chachage, *Nation Building and Ethnicity: Towards a Reconceptualization of Democracy in Africa*, paper prepared for the Pan-African Civic Educators Network (PACE-NET) Conference (7-10 September 1999, on behalf of Tanzania Gender Networking Group Programme (TGNP), p. 10. Following the end of WW II, three schools of thought on development emerged at various periods. There is the *"developmentalist perspective"* or *"the modernist paradigm"*. Its central assumptions are that development and economic growth are synonymous. The other one is *the dependency school* by the Latin American social scientists. Their main contention is that the uneven development in the Third World is fundamentally due to unjust relations between the core nations, on one hand, i.e. Western Europe, USA and Japan; and nations found on the periphery of the world economy, on the other, i.e. Latin America, Asia and Africa. For details, *see*: Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p. 279. The third school is *the world-system approach.* It is attributed, primarily, to Immanuel Wallerstein. Its main argument is that there is one world economy, a capitalist economy, which initially emerged in the 16th century. It is composed of core states, semi-peripheral, and peripheral nations, and a few areas of the world as yet untouched by capitalism. For details, *see*: M. Bromstrom and B. Hette, "*Development Theory in Transition: The Dependency Debate and Beyond: Third World Response*," London, Zed, 1984, in Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.279.

founding model.[117] The thinking was, as Chachage further says, for this development to take place rapidly, it was necessary to defeat the masses by concentrating power in the state, and simultaneously erode the independence of the civil society, including the churches.[118] As such public servants, workers, etc, were not supposed to ask for more wages as this endangered capital investment and accumulation; peasants and farmers were supposed to desist from demanding for better prices and better conditions of production for the sake of nation building. Further, they were expected not to defend their lands and resources when they had to be expropriated for the interests of the state, or investor-foreign and local.[119] Additionally, it was in the similar manner that the powers of parliament were broken alongside the independent mass and political movements and all other autonomous local forms of self-determination so as to create unity and tranquillity.[120] In arguing for this model in 1966, Banda had the following to say:

> Malawi is a country comparatively under-developed and inexperienced in nationhood, and therefore, needs a form of government, which will afford the necessary degree of unity, stability and resolution and permit the maximum fulfilment of the country's human and physical resources in the short period of time. Under the new Republican Constitution, we have established, in my view, such a strong government, a government for all the people in the country irrespective of race, colour or creed. If the country is to grow and the standard of living of its people is to be raised, a new concentration of the nation's energies and efforts is needed, aimed at increasing national development, productivity and prosperity under conditions of maximum political unity and stability.[121]

[117] To prove this point, a quick survey of various political party manifestos would show how political leaders and the general population understand development as simply modernizing.
[118] This was what happened in Malawi, and it will become much clearer as we progress with the discussion.
[119] It is very easy to relate these observations to the situation of land in the districts of Mulanje, Thyolo, Lilongwe West, Mchinji, Kasungu, Dowa, Ntchisi, etc where vast tracks of land was taken away from the people by local and foreign individuals and organizations in the name of national development. In most cases this was done with very little compensation or nothing at all.
[120] Kamuzu Banda used to remind the people of Malawi that he wanted that in the country the prevalence of Law and Order. Regardless of the meaning, it law and order was according to the interests and terms of the regime.
[121] *1966-1967 Hansard*, National Archives, Zomba.

There are key words in the passage that markedly demonstrate the absolutisation of governance and administration, and at the same time, disenfranchisement of all possible alternative voices and options.[122] We see in this model, radical distortion of the role of the state, something Nzongola Ntalaja calls, the crisis of the state.[123] This is because, contrary to classical understanding, the state ceased to be responsive and accountable to the subjects.[124] Instead, with all thoroughness and impunity, it demobilized all organisational capacities of the masses and civil societies, politically and socially, leaving very little or no space at all for alternative voices. Thus we see in this act, contrary to the social teaching of the church, the substitution of the human person with the state, making him not to be the reason and end of the state itself.[125]

Culture politicisation

In recent times, there has emerged intense interest within and outside the Catholic Church to study and understand culture from many perspectives. Through these investigations, culture is increasingly been seen as strategically essential not only in matters that are to do with attempts to understand people and societies, but also in those that concern social-economic transformation, evangelisation, etc. Scholars like A.L. Kroeber, C. Klucklohn, M. Azevedo and G. Clifford, share profound regard of culture as something essentially value loaded. [126] As a value system culture shapes people into what they are, just as much

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[122] For instance: *"the necessary degree of unity, stability"; "maximum fulfillment of the country's human and physical resources"; "a strong government"; "under conditions of maximum political unity and stability"*.

[123] Nzongola-Ntalaja, *"The African Crisis: The Way Out,"* African Studies Review, Vol. 32 No. 1, 1989, p. 118.

[124] As we have seen in Chapter two, the Catholic social teaching takes the state as subservient to the human person, hence those who run the affairs of the state are necessarily duty bound to be answerable to the people.

[125] The social teaching regards the human person as the foundation and purpose of political life (the state). See: *Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, 25: AAS 58* (1966), 1045-1046; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1881; *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Doctrinal Note on Some Questions Regarding the Participation of Catholics in Political Life* (24 November 2002), 3: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 2002, p.8. See also John XXXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 258.

[126] A.L. Kroeber and Clyde Klucklohn look at culture as: "*...consisting of pattern, explicit, and implicit, of and for behaviour or acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievement of human groups.... with its essential core consisting of traditional, i.e., historically derived and selected ideas and especially their attached values. Thus cultural systems may, on the other hand, be considered as products of action, on the other, as conditioning elements of further action.*" *See*: A.L. Kroeber, Clyde Klucklohn, *Culture: A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, New York, Vantage, 1952, p.66. M.

as they in turn make culture what it is. It is within a cultural context that persons discover meaning and purpose in life. Within the overall spectrum of what constitutes culture is the name giving tradition. In Malawi, this has great significance.[127] Great value is attached to names originating from people's own experiences in families, communities and society at large. They are, like cultural symbols, information reservoirs for individual and collective histories. Added to this, they tend to surmise the character and attributes of individuals.[128] These names convey what a community believes in, values about, and aspires for; as well as indicate what is disapproved. It is precisely this tradition that was conveniently highjacked in the process of consolidating the inherited autocracy. Simply put, culture was instrumentalised to deny and dispel competitive politics.

Kamuzu Banda
Symbol of collective meaning

As it is widely known Banda had innumerable names and titles. These derived from the cultural diversities of the Malawian society. From almost every culture, he assumed monopoly over and appropriated every name, title, sign and symbol. These fell into two categories: (i) those that were under the protection of the party constitution,[129] and (ii)

Azevedo sees culture as a vast array of feelings, values, and approaches to life shared by human beings. *See*: M. Azevedo, *Inculturation and Challenges of Modernity*, Rome, Gregorian University Press, 1982, pp. 53-55. For more details see also: Geertz Clifford, *"Religion as a Cultural System,"* in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York, Basic Books, 1973, chapter 4; Allan Figueroa, *"Culture"*, in Judith A. Dwyer, *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Teaching*, p.257; Pius XII, *Apostolic Constitution Exsal familia* 653; Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Teaching*, p. 259; P. Surlis, *"The Relation Between Social Justice and Inculturation in the Papal Magisterium,"* in A. Roest Crollis (ed), *Creative Inculturation and the Unity of Faith*, Rome, Gregorian University Press, 1986, p.12; Leo XIII, *Inscrutabili* (1878); Benedict XV, *Maximum illud* (1919); Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones* (1951); John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Asia* (1999), *n.21*.

[127] Generally, one gets a name (s) immediately after birth. In the Chewa Culture, this is called, "*Dzina la pa Mchombo*". The wider community seldom knows this name. Often it is given either by a grandparent, an uncle or ant. Then there is a name that one is given for common use in the community. When a person comes of age, whether as a boy or girl, he or she is free to take a name of his or her choice. This shows growth and symbol of self-determination. Apart from these names, others may be acquired for many other reasons. For example, one can acquire a name due to his interest in a particular trade, e.g. "*Kambuzi*", meaning seller of goats. A name can also be acquired for purposes of self-promotion either in sports, politics, etc. But, there are also times, when a community gives a person a name (s). These are very important because they indicate how the community perceives and judges that person. Our discussion shall concern this last category.

[128] See Gerard Chigona, *uMunthu Theology. Path of Integral Human Liberation Rooted in Jesus of Nazareth*, Balaka, Montfort Media Studies, 2002, p. 81.

[129] *The 1966 Malawi Congress Party Constitution* under *article 15* unequivocally declares: "*The following titles and slogans shall be used exclusively in honour of the Life President*: *Ngwazi,* (heroic warrior), *Mkango* (Nkharamu), *Mpulumutsi* (Mtaski), *Saviour*, *Mesiya* (Messiah), and *Moto*!"

those that were conventionally known to be his prerogative.[130] This is not all. Closely examined, there is a line of discretion in that it was not just any other name, title, sign or symbol that was appropriated. It was only over those that depict virtues of excellence, awe, prowess, might, dynamism, strength, knowledge, wisdom, and above all, salvific import.[131] It is around such cultural milieu that the personality cult emerged. By wielding such monopolistic and exclusive usage of cultural and traditional names, titles and symbols, and combined with absolutisation of governance and state administration, Banda managed to hold in sway the institutions of the modern state, on one hand, and those of traditional African society, on the other, as a political synthesis in the dialectic triad of national history. Writing about this trend in Africa, George Ayittey says:

> Political power thus became dangerously concentrated in the hands of one person. The head of state became the chairman of the only legal party, the supreme commander of the armed forces, the chancellor of the universities, the chief judge, and so on. To emphasize their omnipotence and omniscience, heads of state took new names for themselves. For example, President Joseph Désiré Mobutu changed his name to Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbendu Wa za Banga, which translates to "the earthly, the peppery, all-powerful warrior who, by his endurance and will to win, goes from contest to contest leaving fire in his wake".[132]

The retrieval and appropriation of all that is best, supreme, noble and reverential in the cultures and traditions of the people had deep implications. It meant that Banda was cast into and projected as the concrete anthropological summation and representative principle of the supreme unifying good in the Malawian society.[133] As such no one other than him could derive or provide full meaning to the cultures and traditions of the nation. On the question of culture, however, the Church's social teaching affirms that: "...culture is that through which man, as man, becomes more man, is more, has more access to being..."[134] The teaching further says: "...the integral perfection of the person and the good of the

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[130] Like *Nkhoswe ya Amai No. 1; Mchikumbi No. 1; Ngwenyama; Chirerawaranda; Tate; Chief of Chiefs*; *Mose wa kuMalawi* (the Malawian Moses), etc.

[131] It can be argued that to an ordinary person, these names and titles engendered awe and reverence, precisely because they are the summation of what is traditionally or culturally reverential, valuable and noble.

[132] George B.N. Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed,* New York, St. Martin's Press Inc., 1993, p.105.

[133] He was, in this case, the supreme good that had happened to the Malawian society.

[134] See John Paul II, Address to UNESCO (2 June 1980), 7: *L'Osservatore Romano*, English Edition, 23 June 1980, p.9.

whole society are the ends of culture..."[135] In this case the appropriation of all that is good in culture by one person turned out to be an implicit denial for the possibility of fullness of meaning and identity to the rest of the people.[136] Culture politicisation, just like absolute centralisation of governance and state administration, ended up disenfranchising and demobilising the people for both, in their respective ways, retrieved power, values, identity and meaning from the people and had these deposited at one single point-the national leadership. Thus culture was transformed into an instrument that impoverished the humanity of the majority of the national population.

Politicisation of time and history

Time and history, just like culture, has increasingly become a subject of critical studies. Scholars in theological investigations, for instance, continue to pay keen attention on this subject and the bearing it has on such themes as salvation, eschatology and ethics.[137] Cullman, for example, treats salvation as something incorporated in both the present and the future, in both existential time and chronological time, in both personal and public history. [138] Telhard de Chardin relates the sense of cosmic history within the sense of an open-ended future in a cosmic process that finds its ultimate fruit in the mystery of Christ.[139] Vatican II (1962-1965) introduces a special linkage between time and history, and eschatology. This linkage is mediated by an eschatology that regards the church as the historical instrument of the kingdom.[140] Thus time and history constitute the indispensable milieu upon which the human person not only unfolds his being in the world, but also encounters God. John Milbank puts this quite well when he says:

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[135] See Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, 59: AAS 58 (1966), 1079-1081.

[136] Others had only partial identity and partial meaning; in other words, these only had a share in various degrees in the meaning and identity that had its fullness in Kamuzu Banda.

[137] For detailed discussion regarding time and history, vis-à-vis its relation to eschatology and ethics, scholars like O. Cullman; Karl Rahner; Johann Baptist Metz; Telhard de Chardin; R. Pendergast; T. Berry, Joseph Fuch; Charles Curran; R. McCormick; V. Genovesi, have done deeper investigations. *See*: Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p. 346f; The Catholic Church has also its position on the subject. See also C. Braaten, *Christ and Counter-Christ*, Philadelphia, 1972, p.131; S. Hauerwas, *The Peaceable Kingdom*, Notre Dame, 1983.

[138] Judith A. Dwyer, (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.345.

[139] Ibid.p.346.

[140] See Second Vatican Ecumenical Council *Lumen Gentium (LG.1965) nn. 8; 44; 48-5; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution Gaudium et Spes, (GS.1965), n.39.*

> A politics of time seeks, first of all, to ritualise life as a passage, in order to capture in this passage certain traces of the eternal. In this sense, it (time) is fundamentally liturgical.[141]

A critical relay of these to the experiences in Malawi during the one party state reveals a disconcerting picture. Just as power and what is valuable in culture had been retrieved from the people, the same happened with regard to time and history. These came to revolve around the leadership.[142] As a result the entire population became immersed into one objective consciousness.[143] This deprived historical consciousness from individuals, communities, and institutions. All these could not make their histories.[144] Given that culture, time and history constitute the very ground upon which God encounters the human person, as it has been argued elsewhere, we believe that, inspired by the social teaching, there was and to this day, remains an urgent task for the Catholic Church to problematize time and history as used in politics. Experience shows that politics had turned out to be a competitor for this space.

Figure 3: Kamuzu Banda



Political continuum
Messianic concept relativised

Another interesting feature in the process of consolidating inherited autocracy was the creation of political continuum. This involved use of an old popular story about Rev. John Chilembwe.[145] The story

[141] John Milbank, *The Politics of Time*, in Teles, 1998, n.113, p.61.
[142] Like other countries, following independence in 1964, the nationalist government in Malawi came up with special days for purposes of marking essential events that had happened in the course of the struggle. For example, there was 3rd March, which was a Martyrs' Day; and 6 July, which was for the commemoration of Independence and Republic. Additionally, this arrangement was meant to enhance the shared political consciousness. However, with time these efforts contributed towards the consolidation of a paradigm of power that dismissed competitive politics.
[143] Here, we are referring to the fact that people, communities, institutions, etc, all had to focus on Banda, even compose songs, poems, stories, etc, about Banda. Apart from God and Banda, people did not really have other stories to tell or songs to sing.
[144] It is not surprising that in Malawi, there is not yet a strong culture of individual, community, or institutional histories, since for a long time there had to be only one history in service of the one unitive political paradigm. This danger still lingers as long as the leadership is taken to be the only maker of history with the rest as chariot cheerers or acolytes.
[145] Rev. John Chilembwe is widely known in some parts of eastern and southern Africa as the first person to launch a rebellion against the settlers' government in Malawi, then Nyasaland in 1915. He remains a very important historical figure in the history of Malawi.

was carefully transformed into a national political myth. Through meticulous reconstruction, space was created whereby Banda came to be inserted and portrayed as a logical political continuum and eventual fulfilment to the dream of John Chilembwe.[146] A curious factor in this reconstruction is where the story purposefully incorporated ingredients from the Christian tradition. The precise point where this occurred was on the formulation of the Chilembwe-Banda linkage alongside John the Baptist and Jesus messianic pattern.[147] It is here that the political messianism was premised. It should be recalled that Banda was not widely known in Malawi prior to his return. Therefore, the concept of coming from outside fits squarely with the popular messianic idea.[148] This parallelism served strategic objectives.

By getting linked to Rev. John Chilembwe, as a fulfilment of the old dream, Banda achieved two important things. First, he succeeded to attain acceptance and eventual integration into national politics. This was very important especially after the evaporation of anti-colonial nationalism.[149] Second, the relegation of Chilembwe to the role of prophecy and the simultaneous elevation of Banda as its fulfilment, managed to diminish the historical stature of Chilembwe and the significance of his activities in 1915. Concurrently, this served to raise the profile of Banda and his mission. The implicit understanding was that Banda had managed to achieve what Chilembwe had failed, i.e. liberating people from colonial oppression.

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[146] This dream was about the liberation of the people from colonial oppression.

[147] The radio programme that was annually featured on 3rd March, on the Malawi Broadcasting Co-operation (MBC) called *"Adaferanji"*; meaning, why, or for what did they die, in song and message clearly contained and expressed the political messianism of Banda.

[148] That is someone who comes from outside to save

[149] For a very long time, there were allegations that Kamuzu Banda was a foreigner, that he was in fact a Black American by the name of Richard Armstrong. The allegations went on to say that the real Kamuzu Banda who happened to have been a friend to Armstrong died in America. But, knowing the ambitions that he had, namely to fight for the independence of Malawi, Armstrong changed his name to Kamuzu Banda and decided to come under that guise to lead the struggle for independence. I remember, in 2003, during a visit to Zambia, a ward councilor at Mfuwe asked me about the truth of this story. This shows how widely the story had circulated. Of course, this was purposefully done by opposition groups who were operating in countries like Zambia and Tanzania as one way of creating dissent within Malawi.

Role of religion: disenfranchised

There is a third lesson from this parallelism. Perhaps, quite unintended, the messianic ascription and its scriptural parallelism turned out to be a radical critique on the prominence of religion itself, especially Christianity. By appropriating the messianic concept politics came to be portrayed almost as another religion, with Banda as its messiah who had successfully liberated his people from colonial oppression.[150] Thus nationalist politics came to compete with religion for space on the national platform. In other words, it radically relativised religion and its claims so that no longer would Christianity with Jesus or Islam with Muhammad, claim more space. In that way religion was silenced and disenfranchised, and would no longer be a source of critique as it did a few years prior to independence. About this kind of messianism, Matthew Schoffeleers, in agreement with Short, observes that due to the MCP's intensive propaganda campaign, Banda came to be regarded by the general public not only as a political superman, but also as a kind of religious hero. He was, says Schoffeleers:

> ...the Moses, come to lead his people from bondage; the messiah; the Christ figure who would deliver Nyasas from oppression. It was a process, which stopped not for short of deification. [151]

And true to this observation, this trend grew even stronger after independence. Schoffeleers recounts a story about a Christian who for a while had stopped going to attend church services in 1969, citing the following reason:

> The black preacher, who preached in English that day, devoted the whole sermon to Dr. Hastings Banda. He referred to him as a messiah and a saviour who had been sent by God to save the people of Malawi. Jesus hardly got a mention in that sermon. Elevating a fellow human being to the level of divinity was something I was totally incapable of appreciating. To me the church had

[150] We should recall that another name for Banda was the "Moses of Malawi". There was even a song by women, "Mbumba," from Blantyre District, which said: "Kamuzu *ndi Mose wa kuMalawi*", i.e., Kamuzu Banda is the Moses of Malawi. The song paralleled the liberation of the Malawian people from colonialism along the story of the liberation of the Israelites from the Egyptian bondage. In the song, the attainment of independence was equated to the crossing of the River Jordan by the Israelites. In this song, one can appreciate a theology of liberation by ordinary women, only that it was perverted where it recognised Banda as the liberator, instead of God. This shows that politicians were doing more theology than pastors, reverends and priests.

[151] Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice. Confrontation between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994*, p. 24.

> been prostituted for crass political ends. It could not give me the spiritual strength I needed anymore. I never told anyone, but that day I stopped going to church, any church.[152]

State Terrorism

Kim Nossal treats terror as a political tool.[153] It is one of the ways of wielding power and ensuring that one's interests prevail over those of others. The most common terrorists in world politics, Nossal says, are governments and their agents: members of armed forces, secret intelligence services, internal security forces, public safety agencies and police.[154] It also includes political leaders who direct their activities, approve their operations, or simply choose not to know what their agents are doing.[155] State terrorism, therefore, means the paralysing bureaucratic harassment meted out on the population by agents and institutions of the state.[156] Although the state wields the monopoly of violence within the legal framework, there are times when this violence goes beyond the limits imposed either by law or reason.[157] In Malawi this form of violence permeated every action done in the name of the party, the state and the leadership. It regulated compatibility with the overarching goal of nation building and was conveniently institutionalised with executive spontaneity.[158] Of all the state agents the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP) was most vicious as it enjoyed unprecedented support from the leadership:

> The Young Pioneers cannot be arrested by any policeman without my consent...If a Young Pioneer arrests anybody and brings them to the police

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[152] Op. cit. See also Sam Mpasu, *Political Prisoner 3/75 of Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda of Malawi*, Harare, African Publishing Group, 1995, pp. 58-59.

[153] Kim Richard Nossal, *The Patterns of World Politics*, New Jersey, 1998, p.151f.

[154] Op. cit.

[155] Op. cit.

[156] This is where human rights are grossly violated to protect the interests of the leadership.

[156] Everywhere in Malawi people knew what to do, when and how when it came to loyalty to the leadership, the party a

[157] This is where human rights are grossly violated to protect the interests of the leadership.

[158] Everywhere in Malawi people knew what to do, when and how when it came to loyalty to the leadership, the party and the state. One of the prominent songs in the villages illustrates this points very well: *"Uyu akana Ngwazi lero kuli chiswe chodya M'mera, 2x;* (The one who rejects Ngwazi should know there are vicious termites); *Adzalira 2x; Adzalira mayi kalanga ine m'mera wanga wokulakula 2x* (He shall weep and wail for the slashed fields of maize). The termites referred in the song were members of the League of the Malawi Youth, a subsidiary of the Malawi Young Pioneers at village and area level. They were extremely vicious and perpetrated acts of violence with utmost impunity. They would beat, maim, burn houses and destroy maize fields of anyone thought to be a rebel. It was an outlaw institution that knew no boundary of violence. The Jehovah's Witnesses are an example of what it meant to be treated by the members of the league.

> station, the police officer-in-charge of that station must not release them...if he does release them, he is committing a crime.[159]

What Seth Chachage says about African politics in general surmises our point here. By the end the 60's, he observes, with the passage of time and the withering of modernist conceptions of development, people had been left defenceless vis-à-vis the state. They had reached a position where they could not fight against the arbitrary actions of the state and the violation of the independence contracts, or defend their living standards, wages, prices of their produce, working conditions, etc.[160] It is this degeneration that Henry Odera Oruka, calls the "Uncivil Republic," where the average man and woman fails to exercise the right to liberty, the liberty that embraces the freedom of thought and opinion, freedom of speech and assembly and freedom of emigration. He writes:

> Those who live below the economic base line of humanity are denied the right to liberty. The average person in the uncivil republic has no complicated thought and opinion. They have but one concern: they are hungry and jobless. This is what he or she wants to express but which they cannot express because they lack the means and the right to liberty. Those who stand up to speak for them are easily silenced or wiped out by the tools of legal terrorism.[161]

In our view, it is evident that those who manned the state power did so not by popular consensus but by a form of conquest of internal opposition, political and civil alike, coupled with all sorts of repressive forms, corruption, nepotism and arbitrariness. Back in 1961, Frantz Fanon had predicted such a state of affairs. He foresaw the tendency of the nationalist states to disarm everybody politically, bully them around, and finally institute the single party system that was to be the modern form of dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, unmasked, unpainted, unscrupulous and cynical. But, the same Fanon was quick to add the following warning:

> Such a dictatorship does not go very far. It cannot halt the process of its own contradictions. Since the bourgeoisie has not the economic means to ensure

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[159] *Africa Watch, Where Silence Rules*, 1990, p. 15. This was Banda's speech in the Legislative Assembly on 10 November 1965.

[160] Seth Chachage, *Nation Building and Ethnicity: Towards a Reconceptualization of Democracy in Africa*, p. 12.

[161] Henry Odera Oruka, *Punishment and Terrorism in Africa*, Nairobi, Kenya Literature Bureau, 1985, p. 117-118. By legal terrorism Oruka is referring to the state.

> domination and throw a few crumbs to the rest of the country; since moreover, it is preoccupied with filling its pockets as rapidly as possible, the country sinks all the more deeply into stagnation.[162]

Summary

In summary, it is our strong opinion that the situations we have discussed were not isolated events. Rather they reflect a particular pattern of national politics that served to disarm and harass people into submission. We believe that the Catholic Church would have detected these situations. And inspired by its social teaching, it would have gone on to articulate an alternative voice in defence of human dignity and rights.

[162] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin, Harmmondsworth, 1974, p.133.

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[162] Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin, Harmmondsworth, 1974, p.133.

3.5 Economic disenfranchisement

So far up to this point the discussion has centred on political disenfranchisement. We have argued that this occurred as a result of absolute centralisation of governance and state administration, politicisation of culture, time and history, creation of political continuum, and state terrorism. We believe that these events rendered significant contribution to the denial of human dignity from the populace through deprivation of the fundamental rights and freedoms. The task of promoting human dignity and rights, however, does not end with politics. Another facet, equally crucial, is the economy.

Economics is a strategic variable to every society. It is not surprising that historical materialism makes out of it the basis of its political ideology. Scholars like Karl Marx, tend to explain society and politics on the basis of economics. As its major task economics deals with fundamental ways people organize life in society. And depending on how this is done, there is always danger that millions end up getting hurt. It is for such concerns that James Cochrane advises that if our lives are to be shaped by our Christian commitments and values, economics needs to be given serious attention.[163] How we obtain, share and use material goods is central to economics. In short, economics is a theory of scarcity. Kohler tells us that the whole sphere of economics is largely based upon two fundamental social realities, scarcity and human wants.[164]

3.5.1 Essence of economics

To any economic model there are three fundamental factors and these are production, distribution and consumption. The creation of both private and public wealth relies on production. The distribution factor becomes possible only on condition that there is production, to say nothing about consumption. Production itself presupposes associated

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[163] Charles Villa-Vicencio, et al (eds), *Doing Ethics in Context. South African Perspectives;* New York, Maryknoll, 1994, p. 193.

[164] Kohler, *"Microeconomics"* in Stuart Bates, *Understanding Human Society,* Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa, 2003, p. 61. For a more exhaustive discussion on the Catholic thinking on economics, the following references can provide some valuable information: J. Haughey (ed), *The Faith That Does Justice*, New York, Pauline Press, 1977; B. Gordon, *The Economic Problem in Biblical and Patristic Thought,* Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1989; C. Avila, *Ownership: Early Christian Teaching*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis, 1983; F. Mueller, *The Church and the Social Question (1963)*, Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1984.

factors such as resources. These resources are in three categories: human resource which is about the availability in required quantity of skilled and knowledgeable people, i.e., professional competencies; natural resources, like land, minerals, water, animal and plant life and weather conditions; and finally social capital, such as structures, institutions and tools of production.[165] Of the three, production and distribution constitute the basic problem of economics.

While the production problem is about the effective management of society's resources so that non are wasted and the maximum quantity of goods and services are produced at the minimum amount of resource consumption, the distribution problem is primarily about people receiving a share that they consider to be proportional to the effort they have put in.[166] Associated to the distribution problem are concerns of how goods and services are made accessible to the people. Since economics concerns scarcity and human wants, it is natural that interwoven in this are issues of social justice. Like with politics, the Catholic social teaching treats the human person, particularly the poor, as the reason and end of the economic order.[167]

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[165] Stuart Bates, pp. 66-67.

[166] Stuart Bates, pp. 69-70.

[167] The Catholic social teaching on economics is linked to experiences of poverty in the world. Its discussion departs from the OT and runs through the NT up to the Magisterium. The leading idea is that the poor are God's chosen ones. *See:* Ex 3: 7f; Lk 4: 18-19; Lk 16: 19-31; Mt. 25: 31-46; Acts 2:44-45; 4:36-37; 2 Cor. 8:8; 1Cor. 10; James 2:5-6; Rev. 2:9, 3:17. The Catholic Magisterium in many ways discusses the issue of poverty and economic structures. *See*: Leo XIII, *RN (*1891), *n.2*; Pius XI, *QA (*1931), *nn. 10, 59, 77, 97-9888, 112, 127*; Pius XI, *DR (*1944), *n.50.* Pius XI rejects liberal capitalism, *see:* Pius XI, *QA (1931), n. 88*. He defends labour unions, *see*: *QA. nn. 30-35, 74,82-85,87*, also *AAS:* 31, May 31, 1931, *n. 231*. Pius XII highlights the common good and the equitable distribution of goods, *see: AAS*, 36, August 1, 1944, *nn. 252-253*. John XXIII treats industrial development as the solution to poverty, *see:* John XXIII, *MM (*1961*), nn. 59-60, 68, 115, 116-117154, 163*, also *PT (*1963), *nn. 62; 109*. Paul VI reiterates the right of all to share in the goods of the earth, *see: GS (*1965), *nn. 69,71,86*. He calls for a new economic order, *see:* Ibid. *nn. 63,85-86*. Further, Paul VI recognises the worldwide nature of the problem of poverty due to the imbalance in power and neocolonialism, *see*: Paul VI, *PP (1967), nn.3; 7; 57; 58-60*. He rejects claims of free capitalism, *see*: Ibid. *n. 26*. He is critical of the transnational corporations, *see:* Paul VI, *OA (*1971), *nn.41; 42; 44*. And he proposes a shift in approach in the Catholic social teaching on poverty from exhortatory through doctrine to concrete engagement through social analysis. He sees poor people and nations as the "voiceless of injustice". This, he argues, is the result of oppression, something that cannot be tackled by the trickle-down theory of development. He cites the concentration of wealth, power, and decision-making in the hands of small groups as the root cause of the real problem. *See*: *JM (*1971), *nn.9; 10; 16; 20*. He proposes that the poor should form "new political groupings", and this should be coupled with an educational process awakening a critical sense of injustice. *See*: Ibid. *nn. 17; 40; 52; 77;* also John Paul II, *SRS (*1987), *n. 12*. John Paul II draws a critical assessment on the phenomenon of poverty, noting that the hopes and expectations of *Populorum Progressio* (*PP.1967*); are far from realized. *Cf. SRS* (1987), *nn. 13; 17-18*. He mentions issues of shelter, unemployment and debt as indicators. *Cf.* Ibid. *nn. 22, 37.*

3.5.2 Malawi

Economic justice and poverty

Our interest in this section is to see how historical, structural and public policy factors in the area of economy have, since independence, operated vis-à-vis the majority of the population in Malawi. Simultaneously, we intend to see whether the Catholic Church, inspired by its social teaching, would have played a role in promoting the socio-economic rights of the disadvantaged groups. To begin with, Malawi's economy, as is the case with most of the African states, is integral to the colonial legacy. As a result, its primary character is that it is inherently peripheral and extroverted. What this means is that its proximate objectives are still not concerned with domestic interests. Factors like these, as Bill Freund argues, [168] make Malawi's poverty partly historical. However, this is not all. In economics, like with politics, we see the failure of the nationalist leaders as well. For them, independence meant inheritance of the colonial state together with the privileges it offered. René Dumont tells it all:

> Too many African elites have interpreted independence as simply meaning that they could move into the jobs and enjoy the privileges of the Europeans. Along with high salaries often go beautiful houses, completely furnished, sometimes palaces for governors and a large domestic staff, on the expense account, and cars usually with chauffeurs. [169]

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[168] Freund says: "The *colonial rule began with an act of political expropriation, with the use or threat of force, to extract surplus from Africa in the form of either direct labour or the product of labour that could then be commoditized. The state acted as a tribute-taker.*" Bill Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa*, p.111. See also: Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Nairobi, Heinemann, Kenya Ltd, 1989, p.224; see also: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/4232603.stm. 3/02/2005, Nelson Mandela: "*Make Poverty History in 2005*".

[169] René Dumont, *False Start in Africa*, London, Cox & Wyman Ltd, 1988, p. 86. Ayittey shares this point when he says: "*True freedom never came to much of Africa after independence. Despite the rhetoric and vituperations against colonialism, very little changed in the years immediately following independence. For many countries independence meant only a change in the colour of the administrators from white to black. The new leaders began to act in the same manner as the colonialists. In fact in many places they were worse than the colonialists.*" *See*: George B.N. Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed,* New York, St. Martin's Press Inc. 1993, p.100. The same point is echoed by Antjie Krog who says: " *After the oppressor left, the structures of oppression were intact except for the colour-the oppressor was no longer white but black.*" See *The Sunday Independent*, 8 August 1999, Zimbabwe.

3.5.3 Malawian city and village

A critical analysis of the economic situation shows a scaring gap between the city and the village. Poverty in Malawi is officially described as widespread, deep and severe.[170]

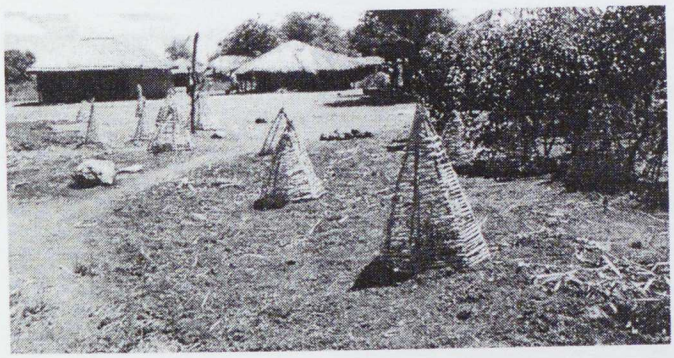


Figure 4: A typical Malawian village

These three words in the description are crucial and substantively definitive of the experience of many people. The phenomenon of poverty is not defined in spatial or social stratification terms. Rather, it is an experience intensely pervasive and systemic, typifying a larger part of the Malawian society.

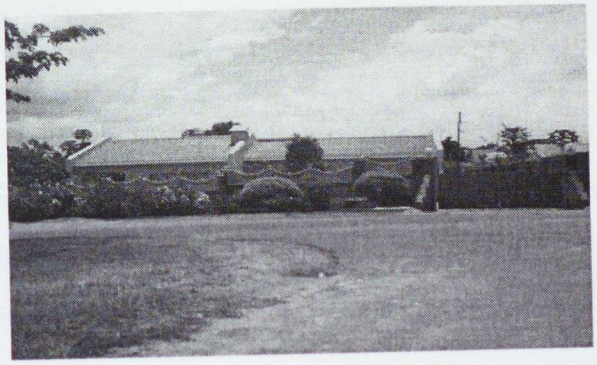


Figure 5: A typical city residential area

This poverty is not only about the lack and dysfunctionality of public infrastructures and institutions, but also touches on the very capacity for the majority to function in the modern economy. The 1998 Integrated Household Survey (IHS) consumption data indicates that *63.3%* of the population is poor. In ordinary numerical terms this translates to approximately 7 million people.[171] The poor are defined as those whose consumption of basic needs both in food and none food terms is below the minimum level estimated at Mk10.47 per day.[172]

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[170] Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, section 2.1; April 2002, p.5.
[171] *Government of Malawi (2000), Profile of Poverty in Malawi: Poverty Analysis of the Integrated Household Survey, 1998.*
[172] 1998 Average Exchange Rate of Mk 31.1=1US$.

Further, indications are that in 1997/98 the richest *20%* of the population consumed *46.3%,* while the poorest *20%* consumed only *6.3%* of total reported consumption of goods and services. In urban areas, the richest *20%* consumed *58.4%* while the poorest *20%* consumed only *4.5%.*[173] In terms of Gini Co-efficient, consumption demonstrated unequal distribution within urban areas where 0.52 was recorded as opposed to 0.37 in the rural areas:

Table 2: Indices of inequality on consumption

	Gini Co-efficient 14	Consumption of group as percentage of total consumption of population	
		Poorest 20%	Wealthiest 20%
National	0.40	6.3	46.8
Rural	0.37	6.7	44.3
Urban	0.52	4.5	58.4

Source: Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2002, p.5

The disparity that we see in this brief analysis is a concrete cumulative effect reflecting, in part, the type of socio-economic policies, and corresponding institutional operations that have been in existence from the colonial days, through the thirty years of Banda, and in some respects, to the present just as we shall see in chapter four.

3.5.4 Poverty

Policy instrumentation

Beginning with the colonial state, the vast majority in Malawi have, progressively, been under economic disenfranchisement, effectively barred and kept out of the highways and corridors of the national economy. This single factor has been contributory, in a significant way, to the scandalous economic disproportion between the city and the village, the poor and the rich. Earlier, we have highlighted three aspects characteristic of any economy. Whether at domestic or international frontier, the control over the means of production and distribution thereof is always a key issue.[174] In Malawi, the control over the means of production and distribution has always been in the hands of the minority.

[173] *Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, April 2002, p. 5.
[174] The current struggle for dominance of international market between America, the European Union, China and Japan clearly confirms this point.

Initially it was the settlers, but with time, the Asians introduced by the British as middlemen in the racial stratification of the colonial state joined. And following independence, few Malawians, particularly those with political links, have managed to secure a relatively firm grip over these means. Since the dawn of the modern state, Malawi's economy has continued to revolve around agriculture. About *30-40%* of the Gross Domestic Produce (GDP) and *90%* export revenues come from agriculture. The estate sector that occupies about *1.15m ha* of leasehold and freehold land, accounts for almost all export production: tobacco, tea and sugar.[175]

The large percent of the population, about *85%* survives on subsistence agriculture on the average of *1-2 ha* plots particularly in the densely populated southern part of the country. This means right from its historical foundations, the country's only hope for economic development has rested on its land and labour. In the sections that follow, we shall focus more on the impact macro-economic policies and institutions have had on the majority of the population since then. We shall do this by critically analysing three key policy frameworks that we believe have been very crucial to the creation and aggravation of conditions of poverty particularly at household level in the countryside.

3.5.5 Agriculture policy framework

In the early years of the Nyasaland Protectorate, a deliberate link was introduced between the cash economy, taxation and labour. As Patrick Kalilombe observes, the introduction of the modern type of money economy by the early European missionaries and planters was one of the events that touched the very core of Malawian society. Commercial agriculture had immediate linkage, as it still does, to the fundamental question of land-ownership and utilisation.[176]

[175] Malawi Fact File: http://www.iss.co.za/AF/profiles/Malawi/malawi1.htmi, p.3. Other export crops include coffee, cotton, groundnuts and sunflower seed.
[176] Patrick Kalilombe, p.38.

Land tenure

As mentioned earlier, Malawi's economy, both at national and household level, is firmly rooted in pre-independence history. Colonial and postcolonial agricultural policies have had inextricable ties to land tenure system. During the colonial times, under a number of Orders-in-Council by the Protectorate Government, land was divided into three main categories. There was trust land that comprised *87%* of the total area under colonial rule. This was vested in the secretary of state for the colonies and administered by the governor.[177] Then there was public land comprising of about *10%* of the total land area including forest reserves and other land used for public purposes. Finally, there was freehold land, and this comprised of *3%* of the total land area of the country. Commercial agricultural development concentrated on the freehold land tenure system, and flourished with support from cheap labour provided by indigenous people under draconian labour and agricultural regulations and controls.[178]

A special feature of this model was its exclusive focus on major crops like tobacco and tea. Trust land tenure system was a reserve largely for food production by subsistence agriculture. By and large this is the model of economy that was inherited at independence in 1964. The new government started from here and went on to refine it to ensure the protection and advancement of the economic interests of the minority. According to Peggy Owens, Banda's development strategy focused mainly on expansion of the estate sector and agricultural exports. Therefore, trade; macro-economic and labour policies were all orientated towards that end.[179] Postcolonial agricultural policy framework, on one hand, enhanced private accumulation of the minority group of commercial estate and smallholder, while on the other, the interests of the state in acquiring investible surpluses and foreign exchange.[180]

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[177] John Pike, *MALAWI: A Political and Economic History*, London, Pall Mall Press, 1969, p. 186.
[178] Guy Mhone, *MALAWI AT THE CROSSROADS: The Post-Colonial Political Economy*, Harare, SAPESBOOKS (1992), p. 3.
[179] Peggy Owens (ed), *When Maize And Tobacco Are Not Enough*, p. 25.
[180] Ibid. p. 17.

Social production units

Figure 6: Maize, Malawi's main food crop



Just as land had been subdivided according to various layers of economic use, with regard to society, the refinement of the inherited economic model involved the stratification and segregation of people into production units: as commercial estate agriculture, responsible for production of export crops;[181] smallholder agriculture for domestic cash crops;[182] and subsistence agriculture specifically for food production, mainly maize.[183] It is here economic structural exclusion can, with all luminosity, be delineated. Under this arrangement, for a long time, subsistence agriculture has been the supplier of labour reproduced and sustained by its own maize for larger smallholder farmers, estates and industrial sector.[184] This stratification in practical terms meant tight restriction on popular economic participation at domestic and international level in favour of the minority. This is one of the key explanations of the severe poverty in Malawi. The immediate question might be how?

Restricted production



Figure 7: Tobacco, Malawi's main cash crop

To answer the above question, let us revisit the three ingredients of economics: production, distribution and consumption. Our immediate interest is on production and distribution. As an agro-based economy, all along, Malawi has had priority crops and these could only be grown on leasehold land, a singular factor that effectively barred all subsistence farmers.[185]

[181] Flue-cured Virginia and burley tobacco; tea and sugar.
[182] For example, groundnuts, maize, cotton and in a limited way, tobacco.
[183] It was the government policy under Banda, to ensure that maize is grown countrywide irrespective of variances in weather and soil conditions.
[184] Guy Mhone, p. 17.
[185] Peggy Owens (ed), *When Maize and Tobacco Are Not Enough*, p. 25.

The two crops presented above, i.e. maize and tobacco; their difference in economic value explains, to a great extent, the difference in economic status between the city and village. While a large sector of society was conveniently restricted to the production of maize for physical survival, a tiny slice wielded monopoly over the production of the most lucrative crops like Burly and Oriental tobacco.[186] A stringent measure that was imposed towards wide access to this crop was the *1963 Special Crops Act*, amended in 1969 and 1972 respectively.[187] Such public policies and ensuing legislation have had far reaching implications in facilitating poverty, economic exclusion and eventual economic stagnation of many people, particularly the rural population. In many instances they were barriers towards access to facilities like soft credit and bank loans for agricultural production.[188] Thus left without any meaningful alternatives, the large percentage had to congregate around and scramble for bits and pieces in the domestic economy as subsistence cultivators.[189]

Restricted marketing system

There is another irony to this model of economy. Land tenure and production wise, having had the majority relegated to subsistence agriculture, the next step was to control their access to the market. Until 1994, the bulk of smallholder and subsistence cultivators had only one marketing system open to them all over the country, the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC). This was due to the absence of public policy on economic liberalisation.

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[186] It has always been referred to as Malawi's green gold. Seed of Virginia type was introduced in 1891 and the first recorded export of tobacco from imported seed amounted to 40 lb in 1893. For along time, only top politicians, distribution and retail entrepreneurs, top bureaucrats and management in statutory bodies have had access to the production of this crop.

[187] Others were Cashew, Coffee, Cotton, Groundnuts, Macadamia, Tea, and Tung. See *Laws of Malawi, Special Crops Act*, Chapter 65: p. 5-9.

[188] There could be reasonable arguments in favour of the intentions in those policy and legislative restrictions as having been meant for purposes of protection and maintenance of quality production. We agree that quality control is one of the central rules that govern the world of production and marketing. Nevertheless, the argument we are advancing is that on the overall this has proven to be extremely tragic to the majority in terms of their economic rights.

[189] This was a typical feature of command economies where the organization of a social system is in accordance to the orders of an economic commander: a central authority with mandate to decide what is to be produced by society, how it is to be produced and how the production is to be distributed. *See*: Stuart C. Bates, *Understanding Human Society*, Limuru, Paulines Publications Africa, 2003, p. 74.

This factor erased prospects of competition and fair price.[190] Such arrangement, in addition, enabled the institution to extort profit from the subsistence and smallholder cultivators. This was done, as Peggy Owens notes, through the levying of implicit tax by paying them substantially below the world price for most of their products. In turn, the bulk of the resulting surpluses made by ADMARC were reinvested, directly or indirectly, in the estate sector.[191] In other words, as George Ayittey says, subsistence and smallholder cultivators through implicit taxation levelled on them, provided subsidy to the sector of commercial agriculture that was dominated by a minority.[192] On the same point, Harrigan makes the following observations:

> This structure (ADMARC) was used to siphon profits into the estate and agro-industry sectors whilst Press, with easy access to financial resources, borrowed heavily domestically and abroad often under Government guarantees, in order to finance Banda's control over tobacco estates. Press influence over the commercial banks was similarly used to encourage politicians and bureaucrats to follow Banda's example and establish themselves as pioneering tobacco farmers assisted by easy access to commercial bank funds.[193]

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[190] This institution was partly inherited from the colonial government. At first it was known as "Farmers' Marketing Board-FMB". Like in some cases, the author here has personal experience. He was born and brought up in a family that at later point took up farming. Like many farmers in those days, whatever was produced had to be sold to ADMARC. In terms of distances, it was total hell because in some cases farmers had to travel long distances over fifty kilometers-one way just to sell a few kilogrammes of their produce and very often at a negligible price rate with implicit taxation. The centralization of the marketing system was a sure and definite means of exploiting the local people since they were virtually denied competitive alternatives. In practical terms, this system meant that subsistence cultivators were actually home-based tenants of Banda.

[191] Peggy Owens (ed), p. 26.

[192] George Ayittey makes a very good observation here. He says: " *A more glaring example of the relationship between Banda's personal interests and those of the state is a curious figure in the annual financial reports of the state agency Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC). For a number of years now, more than K 35 million have been included as unsecured loans to Press Holdings Ltd. It is clear that no other Malawian capitalist could even dream of having such a line of credit. ADMARC is the linchpin of the Malawi Government's relationship with the peasants. The corporation enjoys a monopoly on the purchase of virtually all-marketable peasant produce. The rich farmers, on the other hand, have direct access to the world market through the auction floors. ADMARC buys crops from the peasants at very low prices and sells them at higher prices on the world market to earn large profits. Between 1983 and 1987 profit margins on crop trading averaged 32% of net sales. In some years the profit margin has been as high as 42%. These profits have not been invested in the peasant sector, but instead have been invested in estate agriculture and industry.*" *See*: George B.N Ayittey, *Africa Betrayed,* New York, St. Martin's Press Inc. 1993, p.249.

[193] Harrigan J. "*Malawi*" (chapter. 15), in P. Moseley, J. Harrigan and J. Toye, *Aid and Power: The World Bank and Policy-Based Lending*, Vol. 2, *Case Studies*, London: Routledge, 1991.

The double feature characterising the national economy ended up having the ordinary citizens severely incapacitated and exploited in terms of production and marketing. In his assessment of the economic situation in the late 1970s, Patrick Kalilombe noted:

> The promotion of commercial farming is essentially an element in the country's pursuit of economic growth. But it is possible only for a limited number of people since it assumes the possibility of accumulating capital in cash and a degree of acculturation to modern capitalistic practices and skills. The large majority of Malawian peasants do not posses either of these. The consequence is that a differentiation is developing on one hand between the small group of commercial farmers and estate owners on one hand and the general subsistence cultivators on the other.[194]

Despite political independence, a situation that could have meant an opportune time to widen the economic base for broader participation, the new regime, with few modifications, proceeded with the colonial exclusive model of the national economy. It wielded control over land tenure, the production of cash crops, and marketing. Although the state did not practice thorough going collectivisation, what was left for the ordinary people was negligible. We are left to imagine how such a punitive economic model would have naturally aroused the interest of the Catholic Church given its social teaching that, essentially, insists on the moral connotation of the economy.[195] To the contrary, we observe, the church never critically analysed this model to establish its conformity to social justice.

3.5.6 Labour policy framework

Labour is another area that merit critical investigation in order to understand the root causes of poverty in Malawi. In any discussion of the economy the question of labour correlates immediately to that of capital. Ordinarily, capital is regarded as an asset owned by an individual as wealth.[196] Marxist scholars, however, treat capital not as a thing, but a definite sort of social relation between those who control the means of production and those who do not.[197]

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[194] Patrick Kalilombe, p. 39.
[195] See Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno: AAS 23:* (1933), 190-191.
[196] Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.516.
[197] Bottomore, T. (ed), *A Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, Harvard University Press, 1983, p.60.

For capitalists, capital is just that portion of wealth that is reinvested in productive activities, or as Michael Novak puts it, the socially beneficial margin of new wealth created by the prudent investment of old.[198] In the Catholic social teaching, as Donal Dorr observes, the relation between labour and capital is often interpreted to be a feature of a "third way," institutionally, to embody political and economic justice beyond Marxist and Capitalist positions.[199] The discussion here shall concentrate on labour and not so much on capital. In this case, like the ones discussed earlier, we notice, in the colonial model of economy, a close link between land and labour policies.[200] Many times this labour was mobilized with assistance from the police officers and officials on the pay roll. On the overall, cheap labour came into existence by colonial laws, the threat and actual use of force.

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[198] Michael Novak, *Freedom with Justice*, Harper & Row, 1984, p.11.

[199] Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor: A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1992. The Catholic social teaching on labour begins systematically with Leo XIII. *See:* Leo XIII, *RN (1891)*, nn *2; 15; 32; 34;* Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor*, p.17. William Werperhowski, *"Labour and Capital in Catholic Social Thought"*, in Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p. 521; Pius XI, *QA (1931)*, *nn. 61; 79;* John XXIII, *MM (1961)*, *n. 53;* Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes (GS.1965)*, *nn.25, 34; 39; 69*; Paul VI, Populorum Progressio *(PP.1967)*, *n.27;* John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens (LE.1981)*, *n.4*. In summary, the Catholic position from Leo XIII to John Paul II, is that labour or work, is humanly and theologically meaningful in so far as it: (*i*) *contributes to the development of the human person;* (*ii*) *enables human beings to exercise their dominion over the created universe and in this way participate in God's creative work;* (*iii*) *allows them to provide for human needs;* (*iv*) *gives service to God and neighbour;* (*v*) *contributes to the glory of God and the preparation for the Lord's glorious coming,* and (*vi*) *plays a role in expiation of sin. See*: A. Rodriguez, *"Trabajo", humano.v1. Doctrina Social Cristiana, Gran Enciclopedia Rialp*, Madrid, 1975, p. 653-654. Further, human labour has links to the building of the universe: *Cf.* Gen. 1:27-28; 2:15. Work/labour is a personal vocation sharing in Christ's redemptive work: *Cf.* Mt. 5:48; 1 Th. 4:3; Eph. 1:4; 1 Pt. 1:14-16; Col.1: 24; Phil. 3:21; *GS (1965), n. 43*; *RH (1979), n.71*. The Catholic thinking deciphers a direct link between work and eschatology. In Vatican II there is assertion of a real continuity between God's kingdom or reign as already present in our midst and the fullness of the kingdom that will be realized at the eschaton: Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, (GS.1965)*, n. 39. *See also* Judith, A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p. 1000.

[200] The economic system of early colonialism rested on nothing else other than compulsion. Bill Freund accordingly notices that in virtually every territory from 1900 onwards was the most intense phase of forced taxation, forced cultivation and forced labour. This is one of the things that many people in the rural side of Malawi still remember especially the old generations. This was the period of the Nthangata System one of the reasons behind the 1915 Uprising of Rev. John Chilembwe. To substantiate this position, Bill gives a very spectacular case study and this is about a rail that linked the French side of Stanley Pool on the Congo River to the sea, the Congo-Ocean that was completed in 1930. Here, some 20,000 conscript workers perished. *See*: Bill Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa,* p. 115.

Labour exploitation

In Malawi, since the colonial times, strong inclination towards cheap labour exists in both formal and informal sector. In fact, in the SADC region and for a variety of reasons, Malawi has been a steady supplier of cheap labour to mineral rich countries like Zambia, Zimbabwe and principally South Africa for generations.[201] Just like with agriculture, cheap labour is firmly rooted in historical experiences, which include, slave trade, early planters, colonizers, and to some extent missionaries. The much applauded anti-slavery campaign by Sir Harry Johnstone between 1891 and 1896, for example, was not entirely selfless, as it also served to secure the steady supply of cheap labour for the plantations then being established in the Shire Highlands.[202]

The law on wage

The current labour law does provide standards upon which wages ought to be considered.[203] In minimum terms this must take into account the needs of workers and their families, the general level of wages, the cost of living, social security benefits and the relative living standards of other social groups, and economic factors. It is also supposed to take into consideration the requirement of economic development, levels of productivity and any effect the wage might have on employment.[204] The question of wages is integral to the Catholic social teaching in its pursuit of social justice.[205] The church does not talk of wages *per se;* rather it talks in qualitative terms, namely *just*

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[201] Here we refer to the sources already used by Patrick Kalilombe: F.E. Sanderson's M.A. Thesis, "*Nyasaland Migrant Labour in British Central Africa*", Edinburgh University, 1960, available in Syracuse University, microfilm n.1912. As Pachai shows (pp.119-27), the main labour recruitment organizations were WNLA (in vernacular "Wenela", but its real meaning was: Witwatersrand Native Labour Association) of South Africa, and the Rhodesian African Labour Supply Commission (in vernacular called "Mthandizi", i.e. the helper, and the Employment Services Division of the Malawi Government. According to Pachai (p.127), at the end of 1970 WNLA was employing 92,169, Mthandizi 2,514, and the Employment Services Division 10,629. The total figure of 105,312 would be an average number for the Southern African-bound Malawian workers in the 1960s and 70s. In 1975, the estimated number was 250,000 (cf. *Commonwealth Fact Sheet: Malawi 1975,* p.8). Kalilombe says that outside the official figures it is difficult to arrive at anything more than an educated guess about the total number of Malawians in South Africa and Zimbabwe. If one were to include matchona (i.e. non-returnees) and their descendants one should speak of millions.

[202] Malawi Fact File: http://www.iss.co.za/Afprofiles/Malawi/malawi1.html, p.4. For example in places like Zomba, Mulanje, Thyolo.

[203] *Republic of Malawi: Labour Relations Act, No. 16 of 1996*

[204] *Employment Act,* No.16 section 54, ss. 3a & b, p. 25.

[205] It is argued that remuneration is the most important means of achieving justice in work relationships. *See*: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, 19: *AAS 73* (1981), *nn. 625-629.*

wages.[206] A just wage ought to ensure adequate remuneration for the support of the family, a social insurance for old age and unemployment, and adequate protection for the conditions of employment.[207] The church further considers a just wage to be a legitimate fruit of work,[208] and that remuneration for work should guarantee the human person the opportunity to provide a dignified livelihood for himself and his family on the material, social, cultural and spiritual level.[209]Again the church believes that the remuneration for labour should be such that the human person may be furnished the means to cultivate worthily his own material, social, cultural, and spiritual life and that of his dependants.[210] The need for improvement of the capacity of workers through training is also highlighted. This is to ensure that their work is more skilled and productive.[211]

The experiential disparity

The two criteria are very similar. Both contain clear intentions for economic development of people including those least qualified. But, human experience is often replete with disparities between good intentions and practice. It is one thing to wish the disadvantaged well, but quite another to concretely implement those steps that lead to their economic development. This disparity is what is real in Malawi. For the majority, the wage structure is far from any closeness to the criteria of both government and that enunciated in the Catholic social teaching.[212] During Banda's time, wages were structured to discourage migration to urban areas and to guarantee cheap labour primarily in commercial agriculture. To illustrate this point, minimum wages were constant in the decade of the 1970's while retail prices almost doubled during the same period.[213] Cheap labour has all along proved extremely exploitative that every effort at self-economic development for the majority continues to be a futile exercise and complete economic mirage. The historic 1992 pastoral letter of the Catholic Bishops rightly observed this sad reality, when it pointed out:

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[206] Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno, AAS 23*, (*QA*. 1931), n. 63.
[207] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (*CA*.1991), n.34.
[208] *See*: *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 2434.
[209] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*, (*GS*.1965), n. 67.
[210] Op. cit.
[211] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus (CA*.1991*)*, n. 15.
[212] The average wage for the unskilled labour in Malawi is 2000MK, an equivalent of 18US$. This is far from the 1999/2000 *Chatsika Report* that recommended an average salary of 50US$.
[213] Guy Mhone, p. 15-16.

> In our society we are aware of a growing gap between the rich and the poor with-regard to expectations, living standards and development. Many people still live in circumstances, which are hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Their life is a struggle for survival. At the same time, a minority enjoys the fruits of development and can afford to live in luxury and wealth. We appeal for a more just and equal distribution of the nation's wealth. Though many basic goods and materials are available, they are beyond the means of many of our people. One of the reasons for this is the deplorable wage structure, which exists.[214]

Taking into account the political situation of the time, this was a powerful statement based on very solid assessment regarding the prevailing conditions. Nearly every sector of society received it with great applause. However, the aftermaths of this passionate appeal revealed two things. First, it was discovered immediately that the picture portrayed in the statement was equally true and in certain cases even worse within the Catholic Church itself.[215] Second, that the church was not ready or capable to face up to the challenge for a just wage structure towards its own workforce.[216] Thus, although the alarm for just wage was raised loud and clear, and presumably with good intentions, the church could not take heed of its own call.[217] Experience shows that the promotion of economic rights is unattainable without corresponding attention paid towards economic structural reconstruction. The labour policy conditions promulgated by the colonial administration, then inherited by the one party state, are clear examples of social structures, institutions and practices, very harmful towards the majority. Over the years they facilitated the degradation of human dignity through poverty. In all this, however, we do not see any engagement from the side of the Catholic Church on behalf of the voiceless despite its impressive social teaching.

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[214] Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Pastoral Letter, *Living Our Faith*, March 8, 1992.

[215] For example, it was discovered that people who work at church premises like cooks, cleaners, gardeners, catechists, etc are poorly paid and have no terminal benefits when compared to the same ranks in government.

[216] The common argument the church gives for its inability to pay competitive wages is that it is not a profit making organization. In other words, it does not generate profit out which it can easily increase the wages of its workforce.

[217] The church hardly had courage to attempt taking its own prescription. Consequently, this is one of the subjects the Catholic Church in Malawi feels not confident and comfortable enough to discuss for fear of revealing its internal contradictions.

3.5.6 Education policy framework

Generally speaking, the Catholic Church has always been one of the champions in promoting education. This commitment stems from the self-understanding that it is also a teaching body. The church treats education as an instrument that seeks to draw out the potential good in all human persons, replacing error with truth, assisting persons move from ignorance and incompetence to knowledge and competence. It is the belief of the church that beyond knowledge, education should lead to wisdom, which is the foundation of all human good and happiness.[218]

Legacy of restricted access

When we look at education policy framework stretching all the way from pre-independence up to the late 1980s, what we immediately notice is the restriction imposed towards wider access.[219] The nationalist government was not keen to introduce radical reforms in education policy especially to ensure broader participation.[220] This strongly suggests, as Patrick Kalilombe seems to say, that education was not a priority for the Banda administration just like it was the case with the colonial government.[221] As an agro-based economy, the bulk of it being subsistence, policy purposefully discouraged the expansion of education facilities and enrolment. Among other aspects, it included a mechanism of progressive selection through qualifying examinations at determined points.[222]

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[218] Theodore M. Hesburgh, *"Role of Education,"* in Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.330.

[219] For the colonial administration, it was not in its interest to promote the education of the local people. Subsequently, this facilitated their economic underdevelopment, on one hand, and the sustenance of steady and cheap supply of labour to estates and households, on the other. Additionally, it ensured the easy administration of the colonial state itself.

[220] There is an argument that generally Malawi, in the SADC region, has had an impeccable track record of high and quality education prior to political liberalisation in the early 90s. Malawians working in some countries in the region are taken as indicators of those high standards.[220] Nonetheless, what appears not to be reflected upon critically is the fact that, former governments in some SADC member countries, like Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, pursued policies that were extremely unfavorable to the education interests of the local people. Therefore, the comparatively poor education in those countries does not necessarily justify the argument for quality education in Malawi.

[221] Patrick Kalilombe observes that during the time of Kamuzu Banda, education was neither universal nor free. *See*: Patrick Kalilombe, p.40.

[222] To get selected from standard eight for form one, for example, it was not easy. There are people who had to repeat standard eight for many times before getting selected. This was not the end, at form two; there was another screening criteria, the *Junior Certificate Examination*. Out of the class of eighty people who had made it for form one; forty were bound to be dropped. Only forty would make it to form three and four.

The rationalisation was, says Guy Mhone, that this would constrain the economic expectations of the populace within the limits of the economy's labour absorptive capacity and government's limited budget.[223] A few facts shall serve to demonstrate the crippling effects of this policy. By 1977, i.e., over a decade after independence, *54.1%* of the population above the age of five years had never attended school, and of the *45%* that did attend, *96%* were in primary school.[224] On comparative assessment, Guy further observes, the total primary enrolment rate in Malawi at *64%* in 1986 was way below the average for sub-Saharan Africa at *73%*; and so was the secondary school enrolment rate at *4%*, only higher than that of Somali, while the average for the continent was *20%*. The Malawi's secondary school enrolment rate in 1986 at *4%* was equivalent to the average in sub-Saharan Africa in 1965.[225] The inaccessibility to education by the majority served two interests. First, it ensured the availability of cheap labour for the growing commercial agricultural sector, and second, it created an economically and politically docile labour force and citizenry that would not place demands on the economy and the polity. Restricted education contributed to very limited participation by the majority in the national economy due to lack of the necessary skills and knowledge.

Summary

In summary, the economic model espoused by Malawi from independence up to 1994, can only be qualified as predatory. It registered clear failure over the years to sustain increase of per capita in real incomes as well as to promote a minimum degree of equity by safeguarding the assets and income entitlements of the majority.

And at form four, only a small number would proceed to the university with most of them ending up getting only diplomas. This tight system; much as it contributed to quality graduates for a while, it discouraged serious interest in education since generally children and parents alike saw it as something only for those specially gifted or lucky.

[223] Guy Mhone, (ed), *MALAWI AT THE CROSSROADS: The Postcolonial Political Economy*, Harare, SAPESBOOKS, 1992. p. 16. See also The *Malawi Yearbook*, 1978, p.70. Here a similar point is expressed.

[224] Op.cit.

[225] Op. cit.

The model was predatory, as Guy Mhone says, precisely because its structures and mode of economic interventions had, for a very long time, been predicated on the skimming of surplus from the majority of the populace in both the realm of circulation through differentiated impact of inflation and through the extraction of surplus by the marketing agency.[226] This kind of arrangement made the dominant minority of political elite and economic agents prey on the rest of the populace, quite contrary to the thinking of the Catholic Church as reflected in its social teaching.[227]

Conclusion

Thus far, in this chapter we have looked at many key issues. We have discussed the early missionary education and its influence. We have seen how this education played a role in the creation of ethnicity the basis upon which the colonial state found easy establishment. We have also seen how, inadvertently, the same education prepared a people for the self-understanding as a nation and to fight against colonial oppression as one. From there we have concentrated on issues of political and economic governance under the one party state. Through this assessment we have come to note that, despite independence, political and economic disenfranchisement for the larger section of the national population continued.

Absolute centralisation of governance and public administration, coupled with the politicisation of the strategic aspects of people's public life, all ended up demobilizing people politically. We have also seen that during the same period, public policy framework in vital areas like agriculture, labour and education, were essentially a continuation, with very little modification, of what used to be the case during the colonial rule. These instruments effectively barred the majority from participation in the economy just as was the case with the political space. Thus politically and economically, the majority were subjected to systemic exclusion, without much space to realise their

[226] Guy Mhone, (ed), *MALAWI AT CROSSROADS*, p. 16ff.

[227] The Catholic social teaching states that the moral dimension of the economy shows that economic efficiency and the promotion of human development in solidarity are not two separate or alternative aims but one indivisible goal. If economic activity is to have a moral character, it must be directed to all men and all people. See Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral *Constitution Gaudium et Spes, 65*: *AAS* 58 (1966), 1082-1087.

political and economic rights. This comprehensive disenfranchisement ended up reducing them to the social status where they could not make individual or collective history. In the midst of it all, we have noted also that although the Catholic Church had initiated a tradition of social engagement few years before independence as a way of promoting human rights based on its social teaching, this was short lived. It did not continue after independence in 1964.[228] As D.D. Phiri remarks, the Catholic Church did not have a clear position or programme to contribute towards political and economic governance.[229]

[228] Thus from 1964 up to early 1992, we see what can be termed as the triple crisis: *the crisis of the state*, in that it substituted the human person and turned him subservient to it; *the crisis of the church*, in that it could not give an alternative voice to the repression based on its social teaching, and in the midst of all this, *the crisis of human dignity*.

[229] Interviews with D.D Phiri, Blantyre, 12/09/2003. The same was reiterated by Nelson Mwambungu, Karonga-Ngerenge, 19/09/2003.

The Catholic Church in Malawi

4. Introduction

In the general introduction it has been stated that the Catholic Church failed to adequately live and make use of its social teaching between 1964 up to early 1992 to protect and promote human rights in Malawi. In other words, the church, as far as its social mission is concerned, was at this time in a state of crisis. It failed to be the bulwark against the abusive and dehumanising operations of state power and institutions despite having a rich tradition of social teaching. In chapter two this teaching has been discussed with specific focus on the key themes that relate to this study. And in chapter three situations that required the Catholic Church to intervene using this teaching have been highlighted. This chapter discusses the Catholic Church in Malawi focusing on its history and ecclesiology. In the process it argues and eventually establishes the factors that disabled the Catholic Church from living and making use of its social teaching at a time when it was most needed. In addition, the chapter discusses the discovery of the prophetic voice by the church early 1992 and its subsequent social engagement in governance between 1992 and 2004.

4.0 A Centenary of Catholicism

In 2001 the Catholic Church was proud to celebrate a hundred years of mission work in Malawi. During these hundred years the church has flourished and grown in membership, functions and institutions all over the country.[1] There are now altogether seven dioceses, and of these, five are under the leadership of indigenous ordinaries.[2] The church has a membership of close to three million in a country with a national population of not less

[1] These are well documented in the Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Pastoral Letter, *Celebrating the Centenary*, 2001. Among the achievements are those in the areas of education, health and governance. The church has education facilities all over the country, i.e., Nzama, Mua, Zomba Catholic Secondary School, Likuni Boys Secondary School, Mtendere Secondary School, St John's Secondary School, formerly Teachers' Training College, Likuni Girls Secondary School, Nkhamenya Girls Secondary School, Bembeke Girls Teachers Training College, Likulezi Teachers Training College, Montfort Teachers Training College, Stella Marist Secondary School, St. Mary's Secondary School, Ludzi Girls Secondary School, etc.

[2] Here we mean indigenous bishops. Currently, these are in the dioceses of Mzuzu, Lilongwe, Zomba, Blantyre and Chikwawa.

than eleven million people. Therefore, proportionally this means about one in every three persons is a Catholic Christian. There are also many religious congregations of both women and men. Some are local, whilst a considerable number of them are international, like the Society of Jesus (SJ), the Missionaries of Africa (MA), the Franciscans, the Montfort Fathers, the Marist Brothers, Medical Missionaries of Mary (MMM), Comboni Missionaries and the Carmelites. Over the years various institutions have been established. In addition to those for purposes of providing social services in education and healthcare, there are also those catering for various pastoral needs of the faithful. Prominent amongst them are formation houses for both male and female aspirants to both diocesan and religious congregations.[3] The seed of all this impressive dossier of achievements is rooted in the humble initiatives of the early missionaries towards the end of the 19th century.[4]

4.1 A brief history

4.1.1 Missionary mandate

Briefly, the Catholic Church established itself permanently in many parts of Malawi beginning from early 20th century.[5] Right from the beginning, as Ian Linden says, the missionaries operated on a discrete mandate. This mandate focused exclusively on the teaching of the Catholic Faith to the natives, agricultural development, contribution to the cessation of slave trade by all means at its disposal, building of schools, churches,

[3] For example, there are four Major Seminaries in Malawi. The first to be established is Kachebere Major Seminary, also known as St. Anthony of Padua, by the Missionaries of Africa in 1939 in Mchinji District. Initially, this seminary served three countries: Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi. The seminary has an extension in Zomba where students proceed with theological studies after three years of philosophy at Kachebere. Another seminary is new, called St. John the Baptist Major Seminary. It was built in the early 1990s by the Diocese of Mangochi; and a fourth one is the Inter-Congregation Seminary serving three religious congregations in Malawi: the Montfort, Carmelite and Comboni.

[4] This point takes into consideration the very first efforts at Mponda Mission in late 1880. *See*: Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants, and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, p.13ff.

[5] Prominent individuals in this enterprise include: Dupont, Fr. Mathurin Guilléme, Pierre Bourget, Winnem and Auguste, Prezean, Afred, Honore, Fr. Louveau and Brother Wilfrid Perrot, Perrot, Frs. Billiere Dequeker and Brother Sebastian; Frs. Braire, Tellegan and Ter Naat and Brother Willbroard. For detailed account, refer to Ian Linden, *The Catholics, Peasants, and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, 1974.

chapels, etc.[6] The official decree of the mission's foundation signed by King Luiz of Portugal on 12 August 1889 reads:

> The obligations of civilizing the tribes in question by means of the propagation of the Catholic Faith among them, by inspiring them with an attachment to labour, by making use of the great efforts and exertions with a view to suppressing the slave trade, and finally by abolishing their barbarous usages and customs by means of instruction, and especially by teaching them Christian morality.[7]

This mandate given to the early missionaries by both religious and civil authorities back home shows clearly that right from the beginning the Catholic Church excluded itself from any involvement in the political and economic governance of the colonial state.[8] This is a very important point to grasp and periodically recall in the course of this study. The made has had impact on the subsequent stages in the evolution of the Malawian society. For instance, Ian Linden observes that in the Chilembwe rising of January 1915 there was almost complete absence of the Catholics in the ranks of his followers.[9] Matthew Schoffeleers recounts a similar event with regard to the March 1959 state of emergency imposed by the British colonial administration. He says that of 1000 hard core Nyasaland African Congress (NAC)) in Kanjedza detention centre, over 700 were CCAP, and nothing is said about Catholics.[10]

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[6] Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland*, p. x.

[7] Ibid. p.20.

[8] Let us bear in mind that in some ways such apolitical stance won the Catholic Church great appreciation from colonial officials as evidenced in the following remarks: "*I should be sorry to say that any missions in the protectorate are a cause of trouble to the government officials, but it is certainly the fact that the White Fathers are working in more complete harmony with district officials of the protectorate than the members of any other mission in it. They confine themselves entirely to their mission operations and have been so far noticeable for their refusal to enter into questions with natives, which in a way touch on administrative or judicial work. This cannot be said of all the other mission societies in British Central Africa.*" See: Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland,* p. 49.

[9] Ian Linden, p.91. See also Landeg White, *Magemero. Portrait of an African Village*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1987.

[10] Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice. Confrontations between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1999, p.26.

4.2 Political indifference

4.2.1 Late arrival

The exclusive mandate, nevertheless, is not the only factor to account for the seemingly political indifference of the early missionaries. There are additional factors that contributed to this scenario. A glimpse at the history of the Catholic Church in Malawi shows immediately that it arrived late when compared to other Christian traditions particularly the Presbyterians and the Anglicans. In the words of Ian Linden: " by the time they arrived in 1901-1902, the Christian bodies already in Nyasaland had divided up the country among themselves into zones of influence...the cake was divided up in their absence".[11] This factor had several implications on their work, as Patrick Kalilombe points out:

> The Catholic missionaries had to content themselves (at least initially) with the second-best choices of places to settle in or people to evangelise. The Protestants had had the time to make first choices for strategic geographical positions and promising areas of population. The Catholics were often reduced to go for the remote and less accessible areas, and to those communities, which, for various reasons, had been passed over as less attractive or as singularly resistant to evangelisation.[12]

Similar observations are made by Linden and Schoffeleers who say that: "on the whole their converts came from the edges of African society, the marginal men and late-comers to Nyasaland like the immigrant Alomwe and Sena."[13] Although Kalilombe tries to moderate this observation by contending that the Catholic missionaries had activities also in more influential sectors of population like the Ngoni,[14] he immediately admits that even here, they could hope for success only in so far as these places had been bypassed by the Protestant missions, or because these people felt the need for an alternative sponsor among the missionary bodies, for one reason or another.[15] Therefore, what this

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[11] Ian Linden, quoted by Patrick Kalilombe, in *From "Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities": A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*, A PhD Dissertation presented to The Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union, 1982, p.61.
[12] Patrick Kalilombe, *From "Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities": A Comparison Between Two Pastoral Methods in Lilongwe Diocese*, p. 62.
[13] Op. cit.
[14] Op. cit.
[15] Op. cit.

means it that with regard to the politics of the colonial state, the Catholic Church was in the periphery.

4.2.2 The nationality factor

The early Catholic missionaries, unlike the Presbyterians and the Anglicans, came largely from nationalities other than that of the administrators of the colonial state. In that case, their relationship to the state lacked a sense of natural political rapport, something that, presumably, would have been the basis for dialogue with the colonial administration especially on those sensitive matters that had to do with the welfare of the indigenous people like grievances about taxes, land, forced labour, or other expressions of African national consciousness.[16] Kalilombe notices this factor as well, and he writes:

> The Scottish missionaries were in stronger position for having been on the spot before the coming of colonial rule. They were also quite acquainted with the intricacies of British politics both domestic and colonial since they themselves were British too. On the contrary, nearly all of the early Catholic missionaries were non-British: they were mostly French and Dutch. They knew very little English and had reason to avoid being misrepresented as agents of foreign powers.[17]

4.2.3 The competency factor

A third reason centres on the type or quality of the early Catholic missionaries themselves. With few exceptions, it could appear as if many of them were not adequately qualified, hence lacked the ability to articulate pertinent issues before the colonial administration as compared to the Protestant missionaries. The following statement from an early missionary diary is quite revealing:

> We do not speak English well enough to enter debates to prove the purity of our teaching and the unselfishness of our work, and so put ourselves on an equal footing with the Dutch Reformed and other missions.[18]

These factors, apart from strengthening political indifference, also did influence, in someway, the early missionaries to focus more on the rural side of the country, unlike the

[16] Patrick Kalilombe, p.63.
[17] Ibid. p. 62.
[18] *Mua Mission Diary*, 12 July 1908.

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Presbyterians who were more urban oriented.[19] This is one of the reasons that seem to explain why Catholicism in Malawi, for quite a long time, has been more of a rural religious manifestation than an urban one.[20]

4.2.4 The concept of Church and State relation

A fourth reason could be the understanding of the church and state relationship, coupled with the precise concept of the social mission of the church the early missionaries had in mind. Added to this are the pastoral methods used, on one hand, and the church model that subsequently emerged out of the encounter between that conceptual framework and the local community (ies), on the other. With regard to pastoral methods, for example, Piet Wels draws a comparison between those used by the Protestant missionaries and those of the Catholics and he concludes as follows:

> The pastoral approach was also rather different in the two groups. The Protestant missionaries, in my opinion, have from the very beginning paid more attention to the material milieu. The Christian must conduct himself also as a gentleman in his immediate surroundings. The idea of creating elite groups, springing from the theology of predestination, strongly influenced the Protestant missionary work. On the Catholic side more attention was paid to the transmission of religious knowledge, to moral (prescriptions), to the hereafter, which the Christian must be solicitous about, and to the incorporation into the church through baptism.[21]

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[19] Nearly all the earliest mission stations were founded in rural areas. It was only later that mission stations started to be opened in the main urban centers.

[20] This statement does not represent the findings of a specific study but is based on my personal experience as a former Senior Seminarian from St Peter's Seminary. I have had the opportunity to work, and also visit a number of Catholic Parishes in Malawi. Some of the parishes are: Mkanda in Mchinji, Guilléme in Mchinji, Kachebere in Mchinji, Nathenje in Lilongwe, Mtima Woyera in Lilongwe City. Parishes visited in various parts of Malawi include: Ludzi Parish, Kapiri Parish, both in Mchinji, Namitete Parish, Likuni Parish, Mlale Parish, Maula Cathedral, St. Patrick's Parish, Kaggwa Woyera Parish, St; Francis Parish, all in Lilongwe, Madisi Parish in Dowa, Salima Parish in Salima, Mua Parish in Dedza, Mangochi Cathedral, Nankwari Parish, Namwera Parish, Balaka Parish in Mangochi Diocese, Zomba Cathedral in Zomba Diocese, Neno Parish in Mwanza, St Peter's in the Diocese of Mzuzu, etc. It is important to note that by concentrating in the rural other than the urban centres, which were kind of political hotspots in the colony, this contributed to the deprivation of their converts the opportunity to be integrated into the nationalist politics later.

[21] Piet Wels, "*The Christian Community in Malawi: A Missionary Community Coming from Tradition-Continuity-Renewal*"-An unpublished essay presented to the Theological Faculty of the Catholic University of Nijmegen, Holland, for the closing of the Missiology Course: 1975-1976, p.12-13, quoted in Patrick Kalilombe, p.64. You can also find in Patrick Kalilombe, the critical remarks of George Simon Mwase about Catholic education that it was the "*least weak*," it did not teach "*high standards*"; it emphasized on "*heavenly reward*", a reward that "*no one can tell about...in terms of how big, long, deep, wide or how many lbs in weight*". For him, it was good for a person, while waiting the heavenly glory, to do something which, will make him to satisfy, that as the earth produces such fruits, ..."

What Wels describes about the Catholic missionaries reflects to some extent pastoral methods resulting from a specific understanding of the church and state relationship. This comes quite clearly if one analyses the directives to the mission fields by superiors of congregations. Typical in this case is Cardinal Lavigerie, then head of the Congregation of the Missionaries of Africa. Like most of his contemporaries, he took colonialism for granted, as an opportune time for the civilizing mission of the peoples of Africa. It is said about him:

> That the peoples of Africa are very much below the level of Europe in their traditional customs and that this justifies colonisation, was held by Cardinal Lavigerie as a fact beyond discussion, provided that the European Powers assumed a real 'paternal' responsibility for these backward peoples. On the other hand, the Cardinal attributed the remarkable superiority of European civilisation principally to the influence that Christianity has exercised over its development ever since the fall of the Roman Empire. In the same way, he claimed that the evangelisation of the colonial countries is indispensable to the progress of primitive societies existing there. It is noteworthy, however, that, quite contrary to what he called the 'common error' of his day, he did not concede that it was the right of missionaries to give themselves out, nor act as, the agents of European civilization, under the erroneous pretext that, because the laws and customs of European civilization are impregnated with Christianity, it is therefore a suitable medium for bringing pagan peoples rapidly to the Christian religion. On the contrary, he ordered us to respect all legitimate customs, and constrained us to become barbarians with the barbarians, as St. Paul expressed it.[22]

As a result, just like many others, Lavigerie did not see the need for the church or missionaries to intervene in matters that were political in nature:

> In a word, then, everything having a direct bearing on the temporal welfare of the people in any territory comes within the specific domain of the colonial government administering it. That is indeed a vast domain and, if we are the 'true missionaries' our Founder wished us to be, concerned only with the salvation of souls, we shall be glad to leave it to their care.[23]

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[22] Joseph Maze, "*Our Vocation as taught by Cardinal Lavigerie,*" Rome: Society of Missionaries of Africa: White Fathers, 1954-According to Patrick Kalilombe, this was a translation from the original French *Le P'ere Blanc 'a l 'ecole du Cardinal Lavigerie, Namur: editions GrandsLacs,* 1948, p.240; *see* Kalilombe p. 87.

[23] Ibid. p.238.

Here we can distinctively notice the clear-cut separation between the role of the church, on one side, and that of the civil authority, on the other.[24] The church was not to intervene in the temporal order, and even in those cases where it were to get involved in order to promote the temporal welfare like education, healthcare, orphan care, etc, that was to be with the specific objective of manifesting Christian charity. The instructions of Mathurin Guilléme to the missionaries after WW I comprehensively surmise this kind of understanding of the church and its relationship to the colonial administration. He wrote:

> (Missionaries) are to serve loyally the cause of Government in whose country we live; to remind Christians and even pagans under our influence of the legitimacy and necessity of taxation, and to press them to pay their taxes on time. To show by deeds more than by words that the Catholic missionary is primarily a man of God dedicated to the cure of souls, that he is always and everywhere respectful of lawfully constituted authority, and ready to give all, irrespective of nationality, his dedicated and zealous co-operation.[25]

Summary

These four factors, together with the official mandate and periodic instructions from the superiors contributed significantly at this early date, in making the Catholic Church in Malawi espouse a separatist approach between the spiritual and the material. Whatever pertained to the material was not integral to the objectives of its mission. As a result, the politics and economics of the colony were not part of its primary concern, especially as they affected the local population.

[24] The same attitude is discernible in the social pastoral letter the Catholic bishops wrote before independence in 1964 as we have seen in Chapter three.

[25] Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants, and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland 1889-1939*, London, Heinemann, 1974, p.89.

4.3 Missionary Ecclesiology

The fourth factor mentioned in 4.2.4 concerning the prevailing understanding of the church and its relationship to the state is very important for further progress in this discussion. This is because it makes explicit a feature that is fundamental to the pastoral efforts of the early missionaries, namely, their ecclesiology, and how this gave rise to a specific type of the local church, a church that would not easily provide the conduit for the living of its own social teaching. In this regard, one of the key observations Ian Linden makes about the early Catholic missionaries in Malawi is that they:

> ...were products of Tridentine Catholicism. With their French Catholic values of loyalty and obedience, the priests brought to the African societies of Nyasaland a Christianity filtered through centuries of European culture.[26]

What is of great interest to us is the subtle linkage Linden draws between the Tridentine Catholicism and the French values of loyalty and obedience, and some unspecified values of the local communities where the missionaries struck their foot first. In our opinion the intermarriage between the two is very crucial to understand the subsequent nature, or the ecclesiology, of the Catholic Church in Malawi.

4.3.1 Tridentine Catholicism

The term Tridentine Catholicism refers to the teaching that came as a result of the Council of Trent in 16th century. The council is seen in the annals of the Catholic Church as historic and epoch-making. This is because of the conditions that precipitated it and the impact of its decrees on the latter periods in the history of the church.[27] Three hundred years later, another council followed: the Vatican I (1869-1870), which, in its

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[26] Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland*, Heinemann, 1974, x.

[27] The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was held in successive sessions in order to react to specific questions raised by the Reformation beginning with Martin Luther in 1522. A brief review shows that the central arguments of the reformers revolved around the questions of sacraments, justification, power and authority. As a counter-reformation, Trent proved to be more defensive seeking to consolidate the Catholic position, other than offer new theological insights or innovations. As Avery Dulles points out, "*theologians and canonists in their response merely accented precisely those positions that the adversaries were denying, like the belief and teaching that the seven sacraments and hierarchy consisting of bishops, priests and ministers were all instituted by Christ; that the dogmas of the modern church were part of the original deposit of faith, complete with the apostles of Christ.*" *See*: Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, New York, Image Books, 1987, p.36ff.

own way, sought to respond to the challenges that had arisen at that time.[28] Thus the two councils have had, over the subsequent centuries, tremendous impact on the nature of Catholic theology in general, and ecclesiology, in particular, right up to Vatican II (1962-1965).

Tridentine-Vatican I Ecclesiology

According to Anton, the post Trent-Vatican I ecclesiology bears five most critical and distinctive features. First, this ecclesiology takes authority as decisive and central. This came in response to the perceived errors of the time.[29] Second, there is strict understanding of the church as an institution based on the notion of a separate and perfect society.[30] And along with the affirmation of authority, as J. Neuner alludes to, there is the assertion of the principle that this authority is identified with the monarchical form of government in the person of the pope.[31] This directly leads to the priority of the

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28 Vatican 1 (1869-1870) was prompted by the *Enlightenment*, the *French Revolution*, the struggle between the Pope (*both as spiritual head of the church and as sovereign of the Papal states*), and several European nations and churches. Other factors included the various movements that posed threat to the Catholic Church like *Gallicanism* in France, *Kulturkampf* in Germany, and *Risorgimento* in Italy. *See* Kalilombe, p.92.

[29] *Cf.* Anton, *"Lo sviluppo della dottrina sulla Chiesa nella teologia dal Vaticano I al Vaticano II", in G. Thils, A.. Anton, et alii, L'ecclesiologia*, pp.47-49, passim: *See*: Patrick Kalilombe, *From "Outstation" to "Small Christian Communities,"*pp.93-94.

[30] The understanding of the church in strict institutional categories is well expressed by Robert Bellarmine, a 17th century scholar. He says: "*The one and true church is a community of men brought together by the profession of the same Christian Faith and conjoined in the communion of the same sacraments, under the government of the legitimate pastors and especially the one vicar of Christ on earth, the Roman Pontiff.*" *See*: Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, New York, Image Books, 1987, p.16. In this definition there are three key elements: (i) *profession of the true faith, (ii) communion in the sacraments,* and (iii) *submission to the legitimate authority. See also: Vatican 1 Schema,* Chapter 7, NR, 365. Church as institution places great emphasis on the "*separateness*" of the church as a "*perfect society*". The 1st Schema of the *Dogmatic Constitution* on the church prepared for Vatican I, contains a very clear expression of this model: "*We teach and declare! The Church has all the marks of a true society. Christ did not leave this society undefined and without a set of form. Rather, he himself gave its existence, and his will determined the form of its existence and gave it its constitution. The Church is not part nor member of any other society. It is so perfect in itself that it is distinct from all human societies and stands far above them*". *See: The Primum Schema* or first draft of the Constitution on the Church is in Collectio Lacensis (Freiburg: Herder, 1890), vol. 7, pp. 567-78; also J.Neuner and H.Roos, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, N.Y.: Alba House, 1967), No. 361, pp. 213-214.

[31] Anton quoted in Patrick Kalilombe, p.93. J. Neuner observes that between Trent and Vatican II, the church is not conceived as a democratic or representative society at all, but as one in which the fullness of power and authority finds concentration in the hands of a ruling class that perpetuates itself by cooption: *See*: J. Neuner and H. Roos, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, N.Y. Alba House, 1967), No. 369. This notion of the "unequal society" is even more strongly put by Pius X in *Vehementer nos*, *Acta Sanctae Sedis 39* (1906-7), pp.8-9. *See* also: Avery Dulles, *Models of the Church*, p.37.

hierarchical structures in the church.[32] Finally, as Anton further points out, the Tridentine-Vatican I ecclesiology was typically apologetic.[33]

Summary

We can see that starting from Trent (1545) all the way through Vatican I (1869-70), up to the doors of Vatican II (1962-65), the insistence in the understanding, defining and living the church had dwelt on the aspects of visibility, structures of governance, rights and powers of the office bearers. What Eugene Fairweather says on this point provides a well-condensed summary of the type of ecclesiology that has been dominant in the Catholic Church and to some extent still exerts its influence to this day. He explains:

> The typical ecclesiology of Counter-Reformation Roman Catholicism-that is to say, of the Roman Church from Trent to the eve of Vatican II-viewed the church first and foremost as an institution to be reverenced, supported and (if need be) defended. The one point about the Church, which apparently interested the authors of theological manuals, was its authority as doctrinal instructor and moral mentor. Being a member of the Church meant being a subject of the institution's official approach to God. The aim of the missionary enterprise was to make the institutional means of salvation available to human beings.[34]

When it comes to missionary work, what this means is that the early missionaries were principally the products of this ecclesiology. It determined in a very significant way, the

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[32] In speaking further about this model, Anton uses three expressions coined by Bishop Emile De Smedt in his description of this church model during Vatican II: "*Clericalist*: meaning that it views the clergy, especially higher clergy, as the source of all power and initiative. The Church is presented according to a "*pyramidal pattern in which all power is conceived as descending from the Pope through the bishops and priests, while at the base the faithful people play passive role and seem to have a lower position in the Church. Juridicist: meaning that it conceives of authority in the Church rather closely on the pattern of jurisdiction in the secular state, and amplifies the place of law and penalties. Triumphalist: It dramatizes the Church as an army set in array against Satan and the powers of evil.*" See: Anton quoted in Patrick Kalilombe, p. 95. Yves Congar holds the similar view and says: "*Modern Roman Catholic ecclesiology has been marked by a tendency to regard the church as machinery of hierarchical mediation, of the powers and primacy of the Roman See, in a word, " hierarchiology". On the other hand, the two terms between which that mediation comes, the Holy Spirit on the one side, the faithful people or the religious subject on the other, were as it were kept out of ecclesiological consideration.*" See: Yves Congar, *Lay People in the Church*, Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1965, p.45.

[33] Anton says that: "b*etween a theology depending more on the mystery of the church in the context of Trinitarian and especially a Christo-centric theology, as was that of the Tubingen and Roman schools, and another, extrinsicist, theology, the conciliar assembly opted for the ecclesiological tendency of an apologetic stamp*". *See*: Anton quoted in Patrick Kalilombe, pp. 93-94.

[34] Eugene Fairweather, *"The Church,"* in Bernard C. Pawley, (ed), *The Second Vatican Council*: Studies by Eight Anglican Observers, London, Oxford University Press, 1967, pp.57-58.

mission of the church in general and the social mission of the church, in particular.[35] In Malawi, it is this model of the church that came to be premised on the local society (ies), and in due course evolved additional characteristics that we shall discuss. All this put together, as we shall later argue, created the type of the church that was structurally and functionally disabled to play adequately its role of defending and promoting social justice despite having a rich tradition of the social teaching.

4.4 Early ecclesial communities in Malawi

4.4.1 The founding ecclesiology

Although presently there are many religious congregations in Malawi, the initial work of "planting the church," to use Pierre Charles' expression,[36] is attributed to two prominent congregations, namely the Missionaries of Africa and the Montfort Fathers. The Missionaries of Africa concentrated much of their efforts in the central region and also in the north partly, while the Montfort Fathers paid much focus in the south. Like in other instances, our interest here is not in the historical details of their respective initiatives, but rather to decipher the type of ecclesiology that grew up as a result of the dialectic interaction between the early missionaries, with their institutional understanding of the church, and what we can call the primary ecclesial communities.[37]

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[35] Some scholars in ecclesiology and missiology as well make two distinctions about the mission of the church. They speak of the "Mission of the Church," to refer to the general mission of the church, which is, religious in nature, and "Social Mission," to refer to the church's role in social matters like politics, economic, etc, which is particular. For a detailed discussion, refer to Francis Schussler Fiorenza, "Social Mission of the Church," in Judith A. Dwyer, (ed), *A New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Doctrine,* Minnesota, Liturgical Press, 1994, p.151ff.

[36] Pierre Charles developed a theory that looks at the mission of the church as primarily about the "spread of the church as an institution". This is also known as the "planting theory of the Louvain school". He developed this theory as a contrast to that of Munster Institute. *See: Les dossiers de l'action missionaire: Manuel de missiologie, Louvain and Brussels: Desclee*, 1939. The heart of his argument was that conversion does not provide adequate grounds for mission. Instead the church's mission has the primary purpose of spreading the church and establishing the visible church in all countries where it is not yet present. Therefore, the formal objective of missionary activity is to establish a local and native church, hence the "planting of the churches". *See*: Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of the Catholic Social Thought*, p.155.

[37] Here we mean those communities, which heard and accepted the Christian Faith in the first place, in short, the first converts.

4.4.2 The founding communities

A very interesting feature to know and understand regarding the strategy of the early missionaries is how they managed to enter and establish working relationships with totally alien communities. Of course, Ian Linden reliably informs us that upon arrival in Malawi, the missionaries received initial support from resident lay Catholics.[38] But what is still of great interest to us is how they were able to strike root, get established and work in particular communities and cultural set-ups, and not in others, and how that aspect inadvertently came to determine the subsequent model of the local church. This prompts us to look carefully at the missionary strategy itself in the context of Malawi, especially at this initial period.

Strategic discretion

As far as the data we have managed to lay our hands on is concerned, the earliest mission stations to be established in Malawi were Nguludi and Nzama (1901).[39] These were later followed by Likuni, Kachebere, (1903), and Mua.[40] Further expansion saw the opening of mission stations at Neno (1906), Ntakataka and Utale (1908). A close examination of the pattern reveals a very interesting feature about the missionary strategy itself almost comparable to that of Apostle Paul.[41] With Paul it is very clear that nearly wherever he

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[38] On this point Linden says: " *When the Montforts reached Njobvuyalema's on 25 July 1901 their gaining of a first foothold in Nyasaland had been entirely due to resident lay Catholics. They had been provided with a cook and interpreter by Nunan, and one of the employees of the African Lakes Company, whose wife was a Catholic, had gone so far as to offer to build them a brick house at Njobvuyalema's and a church at Mpimbi. There were even possibilities for missions at Lunzu on Besselling's estate, and a hundred acres near the Melotta estates.*" *See:* Ian Linden, Catholics, *Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland*, Heinemann, 1974, p. 47. Linden also speaks of other lay Catholics like Griffin (See: Linden, p. 48); MacDonald, who was a Collector in Dowa, and is accredited with the responsibility of settling the White Fathers in the Central Region, see Linden, p. 49. On this point, Fr. Peter Assenga of Tanzania, (M.A. student in Pastoral Theology)-Catholic University of Leuven-adds that the early missionaries prior to their coming had always tried to acquaint themselves with particular countries and their societies through the writings of earlier historians, travellers and anthropologists. Therefore, they had always an idea about the societies to be encountered. Discussions on 20 May 2004, K.U. Leuven-Belgium.

[39] These were staffed by the Montfort Fathers.

[40] These mission stations were opened and staffed by the Missionaries of Africa.

[41] Paul is well known as the apostle to the gentiles, i.e., someone who introduced the Christian Faith outside the Palestine communities. His first missionary journey is believed to have taken place between 46-48 A.D. The following passages speak about this journey: Acts 13:1-4; Acts 13:5; Acts 13: 6; Acts 13:13; Acts 13:16-51; Acts 13:51; 14:1, Acts 14:5,6; Acts 14:8; Acts 14:20; Acts 14:24-25. His second journey took place between 49-52 A.D, and it is mentioned in the following passages: Acts 16:1-5. Acts 16:6; Acts 16:7-8; Acts 16:11-39; Acts 17:1-9; Acts 17:10-15. His third journey was between 53-57 A.D from Antioch. It is stated in the following passages: Acts 19:1-4; Acts 20:1-3; Acts 20:13-16.

travelled for the first time his entry point was a Jewish community.[42] It was to this community he preached the message first before witnessing to the gentiles.[43] Now what we see in this approach is a factor of continuity between his message and the primary audience, the Jews. Between the two was a *familiar preparatory ground,* namely, Judaism and its messianic promise on which Paul could build his contact and message. It is this *familiar ground* as a link point that we would like to establish between the early missionaries and the society where they established themselves initially. The early missionaries did not just go to any other community or social grouping. Like the Apostle Paul, there is a clear line of discretion in terms of the communities they came into contact at this early date.

The Ngoni factor in the early missionary strategy

A very striking feature in the early missionaries' strategy is that, nearly all the eight earliest mission stations, except for one, that we have mentioned previously, were founded in the areas which at that time were under the jurisdiction of the Ngoni people.[44] Only Likuni mission station was founded in a non-Ngoni area at this early period, and Linden acknowledges the difficulties that were faced among the Chewa people.[45] The conclusion we can draw from this is that the founding ecclesiological model of the Catholic Church in Malawi was a product that evolved out of the early missionary-Ngoni cultural encounter in the course of evangelization, and it is the same model that has remained dominant, in a substratum form, over the years.[46] The immediate question

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[42] It is commonly known that the Jews, as a result of many historical factors had even by this time already dispersed widely in many parts of Asia and Europe.

[43] This is not to say that Paul was always welcome by the Jews. There are many instances in the Book of Acts that show that the Jewish communities rejected, harassed, and even persecuted him for what he preached.

[44] These are Nguludi in Chiladzulu, Nzama in Ntcheu, Neno in Mwanza, Utale in Balaka, Ntakataka and Mua in Dedza and Kachebere in Mchinji. *See* Ian Linden, p. 59. Historically, the Ngoni trace their origins to South Africa-the present KwaZulu-Natal Province. Their dispersion was a result of the wars known in African history as *Mfacane* that were sparked by Shaka Zulu, King of AmaZulu in his quest for territorial expansion towards the end of the 19th century. From the point of their dispersion, the Ngoni went about conquering local tribes along the way up to the point they reached some parts of present Malawi, finally settling in present districts of Mwanza, Ntcheu, parts of Dedza, Dowa and Mchinji in the central region, and Mzimba in the north. Some of the breakaway groups are found in northern Zambia, southern Tanzania and also in some parts of Kenya.

[45] *Cf.* Ian Linden, pp.59-60.

[46] This point should also be considered from the fact that most of the early catechists were drawn from amongst the Ngoni, at least as far as the Central Region is concerned. These assisted to open mission

would be what, precisely, is it that form (s) the ground of familiarity between the early missionaries and the Ngoni communities? Or asked differently, what is it in this encounter that worked in a similar way to the Jewish factor in the recited Pauline missionary journeys? In answering this question let us see two factors.

The power and hierarchy factor

Traditionally the Ngoni society bears specific characteristics that revolve around militaristic and aristocratic forms of power organisation in its governing structures. In other words, the configuration of power and authority is hierarchical and centralized reflecting stratified chain of command. This feature arises from the fact that, historically, unlike other societies around, the Ngoni, as a warrior people, very often thrived on raids and conquests. To the early missionaries these features represented a society that was easy to work with. It was well prepared both in organizational and ideological sense. This experience is similar to what Richard Pablo narrates with regard to the Latin American context. He notes:

> In its effort to 'Christianize' society, the church relies primarily on political society (specially the state) and on those classes that have hegemony in economics, political, social, cultural, and ideological life in a particular country. The aim is to guarantee the church's presence and missionary activity by Christianizing those "on top", those "in charge", the elites, the social and political leaders of a nation.[47]

In comparison to other societies around, for instance the Chewa, the Ngoni sufficiently represented a society that bore the prerequisites that Pablo talks about, namely, political hegemony and ideological life. Previously, we have concluded that the early missionaries were products of Tridentine Catholicism which, among other things, placed strong emphasis on the primacy of hierarchical and centralized authority according to the institutional model of the church. This is the authority that required, and it still does, absolute loyalty and obedience. Therefore, the centralized aristocratic authority of the

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stations in non-Ngoni areas. A typical example is Likuni, a predominantly Chewa area, where the Ngoni Catechists, though with difficulties assisted to open a mission station: *See*: Ian Linden, p. 59. Presently, it is also interesting to see that a lot of elements that are being incorporated into the local church under the theme of liturgical inculturation in fact derive from the Ngoni culture, e.g. shields, spears, regalia, certain form of dancing, music, etc.

[47] Richard Pablo, *Death of Christendom, Birth of the Church*, New York, Maryknoll, 1987, p.86.

Ngoni society, on one hand, and the centralized hierarchical authority in the church, on the other, proved to be a natural point of continuity between the two groups. On this particular point, Ian Linden has the following remarks:

> Reared in an authoritarian environment themselves, the early Fathers were at home in the precise hierarchy of the Ngoni society. They believed, not without reason, that a society in which orders came from the top and authority was universally acknowledged was one in which Catholicism could thrive. They were therefore happier in Ngoniland, where the chiefs were willing to comply with most of their wishes, than among the small Chewa villages where authority was diffuse, society lacking centralization, and the missionaries regarded as a threat.[48]

The minority factor

Another factor that merits serious consideration in attempt to unravel specific points of continuity between the two groups is that although the Ngoni had fairly succeeded to conquer and subdue other tribes around and got established, they remained, some how, an alienated social-cultural minority in comparison to the Chewa. Again, early in the discussion, both Linden and Kalilombe have clearly informed us that the Catholic missionaries were latecomers when compared, for instance, to the Presbyterians and the Anglicans.[49] In this respect, the two sides: the early missionaries, on one hand, and the Ngoni communities, on the other, shared one very profound social identity in that both were comparatively minorities on the edges of the wider society: the early missionaries constituted a religious minority vis-à-vis the other Christian churches, on one side, while the Ngoni constituted a cultural minority vis-à-vis the Chewa and other tribes, on the other. Thus the minority factor provided another natural point of linkage between the two sides. While the missionaries found it easier to associate and work within the set-up of the Ngoni society, on their part, the Ngoni, as Linden says:

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[48] Ian Linden, p. 59. We can say that in addition to the hierarchical and centralised constitution of power in the Ngoni society as a factor of attraction, the early missionaries might have also been more comfortable in this society because the Ngoni are traditionally patrilineal, and as such power is male dominated, just as is the case in the church. This is very unlike other social groups like the Chewa where authority is not only diffused, but is predominantly centred on women, as a matrilineal society. Although men frequently do exercise this authority, it is always by proxy.

[49] Patrick Kalilombe, p.61ff. Linden further says the Catholic missionaries: *"...were marked by a background as 'émigrés' within their own countries and their position on the edge of colonial society. In their relations with the Protestants they found themselves in the position of a sect with the Protestants as the Established Church."* *See*: Ian Linden, p.90.

> ...saw the Catholic priests as potential supporters in the political and cultural fighting in which they had to engage to keep a hold on their Chewa villages.[50]

Summary

The argument being advanced here is that the founding ecclesiology that has evolved over the years is a product of the early missionary-Ngoni cultural interaction. We contend that this early contact produced an original and irreducible contribution to the subsequent model of the Catholic Church in Malawi. We are convinced that the first converts did not just passively apply themselves to the message. Instead, they were simultaneously founded by the message itself. There was mutual predilection between the founding message and the local community, and out of this was born a particular understanding of the church and its mission in state and society.[51]

We further submit that this founding model bears two distinctive features, and that these features are fundamental and crucial when it comes to assessing the Catholic Church's involvement in matter of governance in Malawi. The first of the two is about strict authoritarian and centralized constitution of power and authority; and the second feature concerns the experience of social alienation with regard to church's engagement with the socio-political environment.[52] Whilst the first feature reflects continuity in the

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[50] Ian Linden. p. 59.

[51] This point is similar to what Patrick Kalilombe says that: "*The African communities had expectations vis-à-vis the missionaries, and looked in the message and activities of the new religion for answers to their needs. But on their side the missionaries had their own understanding of the aims and objectives of their work, and expected from the evangelized peoples the responses corresponding to their own expectations*". *See*: Patrick Kalilombe, p.24.

[52] This social alienation was the basis upon which Catholic Christians were deprived of the opportunity or possibility to develop a historical consciousness and sensitivity to their social political environment. On this point Linden says: "*Catholicism had not replaced an African past with an African history of salvation; it had merely opposed that past with a heavenly future*". *See* Ian Linden, p.91. The early events of political struggle in Malawi clearly demonstrate this lack of historical consciousness and sensitivity to the socio-political environment. A very illustrative case is the position of the Catholic Church in 1915. It is said that in the Chilembwe rising of January 1915, the political consequences of the different theologies taught in Nyasaland became apparent. There was almost complete absence of Catholics from the ranks of Chilembwe's followers. *See* Linden p. 91. About forty-four years later, when the British imposed a state of emergency in Nyasaland on 3rd March 1959, a very similar situation occurred. It is recorded that amongst those who were detained, there was a visible absence of the Catholics. Matthew Schoffeleers narrates: "*The old Nyasaland African National Congress (NANC) had been born from within the Blantyre and Livingstonia CCAP. We did not align ourselves with it; we were part and parcel of it. Of the 1000 hard core NANC in Kanjedza detention centre over 700 were CCAP*". *See*: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice. Confrontations Between Church and State in Malawi, 1964-1994*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1999. p.26.

understanding of power and authority between the early missionaries and the Ngoni society, the second feature flows directly from both groups as religious and cultural minorities respectively. Thus, in conclusion, we argue as follows: The model of the church that has been operative in Malawi for a long time bears the typical characteristics of authoritarianism with regard to the exercise of power within its structures.[53] On the other hand, true to the assessment of Ian Linden,[54] the model demonstrates social alienation with regard to active participation in the affairs of governance in state and society.

4.5. Review of Catholic Ecclesiology

As mentioned earlier, consequent to Vatican II (1962-1965), there has been serious rethinking about the various aspects of the church. One of such aspects is the institutional model of ecclesiology. *Lumen Gentium, AAS 57(LG. 1964)*) provides a contemporary position which shows a shift from the Tridentine-Vatican I Model. Where this shift is more evident is on the way the church is understood and defined. There is a marked departure from the trappings of institutionalism centring on power and authority. Instead, there is more inclination towards service, communion and sacramental nature of the church expressed through biblical imageries.[55] Thus, inspired by this new ecclesiology, individual dioceses, national and regional Episcopal conferences have, in various parts of the world,[56] taken up the challenge to reconstitute local churches. In this section we are

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[53] Patrick Kalilombe in his research gives the following remarks. " *The faithful are expected to treat their priest as the source of their Christian life, as their teacher in the faith, and as their guide in Christian living. The required attitudes on their part are dependence, obedience, submission, and respect. When there are questions or problems connected with their life of faith the Christians are likely to have recourse to their priest rather than venture on their own initiative. This attitude could develop into a fear to think for themselves in matters of religion or to attempt to organize their life and plan their activities independently of an explicit approval from the minister.*" *See*: Patrick Kalilombe, p.76.

[54] Ian Linden articulates this point as follows: "*By directing the attention of peasants to the Church rather than to any other aspect of life, and by making the Church an all embracing corpus Christianum extending its influence into as many parts of daily life as possible, missionary teaching diverted the Catholics from any quest for political kingdom. It put them into a vertical relationship with God at the expense of a horizontal relationship with their fellow man.*" *See*: Ian Linden, p.90.

[55] For example, the Church is said to be: *a sheepfold whose one and indispensable door is Christ; a flock of which God Himself foretold He would be the shepherd; a piece of land to be cultivated, the village of God, the building of God, the house of God, the dwelling place of God among men, the holy temple, the New Jerusalem, our mother, the spotless spouse of the spotless Lamb*, *See*: The Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium AAS 57* (1964), *n.6*.

[56] Asia, North America (US and Canada), Australia and New Zealand, Europe, Latin America and Africa,

going to discuss some of such efforts. Nearly everywhere, these efforts have pursued the key theme of active participation, i.e. the participation of the laity in the inner life of the church, and external participation, i.e. the involvement of the church in state and society. This new model is expressed through the small Christian communities.[57]

4.5.1Return to the New Testament Heritage

The small Christian community model

There is broad consensus among ecclesiologists that the popularity presently being accorded to the small Christian community, as an alternative to the institutional model of the church, does not imply that it is a totally new discovery or invention. The history of this church model goes far back to the early communities of the New Testament. James O'Halloran, a scholar who has done impressive studies on small Christian communities, makes the following observation:

> In a sense the communities are as new as the shopping mall, yet as old as the gospel. They have their origins in the itinerant community that trod the dusty roads of Palestine with Jesus, in the gathering of the early Christians, which formed in Jerusalem after the first Pentecost (Acts 2:42-47; 4:32-37); and in all those groups that sprang up in the gentile world largely as a result of Paul's work.[58]

Many texts in the New Testament indicate the existence of small communities in places like Jerusalem,[59] Antioch,[60] Ephesus,[61] Corinth[62] and Philippi.[63] In all this the model of the small community overrides any other kind of model that may be found in the New Testament. This model is based on the understanding of the community as made of persons and guided by the Holy Spirit. Whatever authority is mentioned, it is not with the intention of dominating, rather it is for purposes of service.[64] Eduardo Hoonaert says:

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[57] In other parts of the world, like Latin America, they are known as Basic Christian Communities (BCC).
[58] James O'Halloran, *Small Christian Communities. A Pastoral Companion*, Dublin, The Columba Press, 1996, p.13.
[59] Luke 24:52-53; Acts 2:22-6:15; 7:54-8:4; 11:22; 11:27-30; 15:1-31; 21:7-20.
[60] Acts 11:19-20; 13:1-3; 14:21-28; 15:1-35; Galatians 2:11.
[61] Acts 18:19-28; 19:1-41; 20:16-38; Ephesus 1:1-12; 6:21-24; 1 Corinthians 15:32; 16:8; 1 Timothy 1:3-4; Revelation 2:1-7.
[62] Acts 18:1-11; 19:1; 1 Corinthians 1:10-31; 3:3-9; 3:16-23; 4:17-21; 5:1-2; 6:5-11; 8:4-13; 9:1-7; 9:11-16; 10:14-22; 11:17-34; 12:4-31; 13:1-13; 14:1-33; 15:3-19; 16:10-12; 16:13-20; 2 Corinthians 1:12-24; 2:4.
[63] Acts 16:11-24; Philippians 1:3-14; 2:25-30; 4:14-23; Thessalonians 2:2.
[64] James O'Halloran, p.14.

> Nothing could have been further from the spirit of primitive Christianity than the notion of a power or authority that would not be one of sisterly or brotherly service. The principle of a community of brothers and sisters forbade any arrogance of power and held up before the eyes of all the example of Christ: "Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather he emptied himself and took on the form of a slave..." (Philippians 2:6-7).[65]

Apostle Paul treats the church as the body of Christ,[66] a clear indication of the community bound together by the spirit of service. Paul appears to have understood community or being together in Christ as living as a single, united body. This is the body where the spirit of God brings forth the fruits of the Spirit,[67] is able to discern matters for itself with the help of the Spirit,[68] is responsible, or faithful to its call,[69] capable of drawing others to Christ,[70] is ready to get involved with the groaning of all creation,[71] struggles with various issues like the fact that the Kingdom of God is already existing, yet will only be fully realised in the world to come,[72] the delay in Jesus' Second Coming, or the Parousia,[73] and anxiety over death.[74] On the overall, in the New Testament Christian communities, it is the people who are important. Organisational, structural and all procedural aspects that reflect power and authority are secondary. One of the most remarkable features of small Christian communities in the New Testament is that they reflect a church that lived and survived mostly under the circumstances of persecution by civil and political authorities.[75] However, with time, social-political conditions changed,

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[65] Eduardo Hoonaert, *The Memory of the Christian People*, New York, Orbis Books, 1988, p.198.
[66] 1 Corinthians 12:27.
[67] Galatians 5:16-25; 5:1; 5:13-15.
[68] 1 Corinthians 2:6-16; 4:6-7; 6:1-8; 7:10-12; 12:4-11.
[69] Galatians 3:1-15.
[70] 1 Thessalonians 4:9-12.
[71] Romans 8:18-25.
[72] 1 Corinthians 15:12-28.
[73] 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11; 2 Thessalonians 2:1-12.
[74] 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Corinthians 15:12-28; also see: Michael Connolly, *Lecture*, Pauline Centre, Sydney, Saturday, November 14, 1992.
[75] One of the key reasons that ignited the persecution of the early church was the assertion of its autonomy from the imperial administration. The persecution started sometime between the reign of Nero (A.D. 54-68) and that of Trajan (A.D.98-117). It took the forms of harassment, imprisonment and condemnation to death. Decius (A.D. 249-251) tried to crush Christianity throughout the empire. This was followed by the Great Persecution of Diocletion (A.D 303). His hope was to restore the internal unity to the empire through the establishment of religious uniformity. *See*: Agnes Cunningham, (ed), *The Early Church and the State*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1982, p.3.

particularly with the conversion of Emperor Constantine (288-337 C.E), and this in turn affected this model of the church.[76]

4.5.2 An overview of contemporary SCCs

Latin America

Although this model is accepted universally, for purposes of this study, our overview shall be limited to Latin America and Africa.[77] In Latin America, small Christian communities started somewhere in 1956.[78] As Frank Ponce explains, historically, small Christian communities begun in Brazil as movements for educating masses of poor people, by bringing them into small groups where they knew each other and had more courage to speak out.[79] But they didn't stop there.[80] Gradually, church leaders and

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[76] Following the conversion of Emperor Constantine, Christianity was assured certain support and security. It became possible for the church to proclaim the gospel widely. Its influence was welcome in such areas as education, law, language and art. Thus the day of house-church gave way to the era of the basilica. The friendship extended by Constantine to the church, however, came at a price of dependency and subservience, which fostered political, rather than spiritual values in the church. As the opportunists hastened to join the newly favoured religion, the ranks of Christians were increased too quickly and too easily. As persecution came to an end, Christians demonstrated less fervor and enthusiasm in their commitment, less heroism in their witness. It is not surprising that later, in the twelfth century, Bernard of Clairv was to complain that the pomp of the papal court went back to Constantine, not to Peter. However, it is worth noting that it was only with Theodosius (A.D. 390-395) that Christianity was proclaimed the official religion of the empire. This change influenced even the self-understanding of the church from *small communitarian model* to a *hierarchical structure* with institutions of power and procedures, subsequently introducing patriarchy. Later in the 4th century, the bishops were installed by the civil authority and acted as public officials. As it is true with all hierarchical and institutional organisations, emphasis shifted from service to power, authority and the accompanying bureaucracy. The household or community church model ceased and was supplanted by structures. It is this model that started to evolve during the period of Emperor Constantine that has prevailed for centuries, periodically receiving reinforcement through ecumenical councils like Trent (1545-1563) and Vatican 1 (1869-1870). *See*: Agnes Cunningham, (ed), *The Early Church and the State*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1982, p.12. *See also*: James O'Halloran, *Small Christian Communities. A Pastoral Companion*, p. 17.

[77] This is because of social, economic and political conditions that are very similar to Malawi.

[78] Leonardo Boff, a prominent liberation theologian attributes the birth of these communities in Brazil to an expression of despondency by a humble old lady: "*Christmas Eve, she complained, all three Protestant Churches were lit up and full of people...And the Catholic Church closed and dark...Because we can't get a priest*". *See*: Leonardo Boff, *Ecclesiogenesis: The Basic Communities Reinvent the Church*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1986, p.6. Implied in the above narrative is the question, why should everything come to standstill simply because there is no priest? Such experiences ignited and propelled the initiatives on community catechetical movement in Barra do Parai, leading to the eventual birth of small communities.

[79] This education hinged on "*conscientization," promoted by Paul Freire. It was a process of consciousness-raising, by which the poor were assisted to move from being "objects" to "subjects" who no longer passively and fatalistically accepted life nut now, as subjects, wanted to help shape life. Hennelly summarizes the situation: " in the process of teaching literacy to peasants, Freire intended also to liberate them from their social-cultural enslavement by becoming aware of their own dignity and rights, aware too,*

organizers realized that here was really the seed for the building of genuine communities rooted in Christ.[81] In the main, what prompted the flourishing of these communities was the consecutive open encouragement expressed during the meetings of the Latin American bishops at Medellin, Columbia, 1968, Puebla, Mexico, 1979, and at Santo Domingo in 1992. Medellin in particular, presents small Christian communities as essential to the renovation of pastoral structures.[82] Right from the beginning, the preoccupation of these communities has been dictated by the practical socio-political realities of Latin America, realities that revolve around issues of justice and peace, and option for the poor.[83]

Small Christian Communities: Africa

Our next context to review is Africa, particularly the AMECEA region.[84] In 1973 a decision was made to begin the process of restructuring the Catholic Church and reorienting pastoral activity as it were according to the concept of small Christian communities as a way of rooting the church in the very lives and experiences of the peoples of Africa:

> We are convinced that in the countries of Eastern Africa it is time for the Church to become really "local," that is: self-ministering, self-propagating, and self-

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of the real causes of their oppression, and of the urgent need to become active agents of their own destiny in seeking avenues of change". *See*: Marvin L. Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements,* New York, American Press Inc., 1998, p.261.

[80] From Brazil, small Christian communities started to spread to other countries like Chile, Honduras, Panama, and finally to the entire Latin American context. *See*: James O´Halloran, p. 18. See also W.E. Hewitt, Base Christian Communities and Social Change in Brazil, Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 1991. Some studies indicate that there are now between 180,000 and 200,000 groups in the sub-continent. *See*: Joseph G. Healey, *AFER,* Eldoret, Kenya: GABA Publications, vol. 30, no.2, p.76, April 1988.

[81] Frank Ponce, *"Building Basic Christian Communities: Communidades eclesiales de base in the U.S. Experience,"* in *Developing Basic Christian Communities: A Handbook*, Chicago, National Federation of Priests' Councils, 1979, p.25.

[82] *See*: *The Church in the Present-day Transformation of Latin America in the Light of the Council*, 2 vols, Washington: Division for Latin America-USCC, 1973, second edition, quoted in Patrick Kalilombe, p.148.

[83] James O´Halloran, p.18. The term "*Option for the Poor*" is controversial in the church. It is not readily accepted. Some authors, including James O´Halloran prefer to speak of "*Option with the Poor*" and not for the poor. Donal Dorr points out the ambivalence associated with the use of this term even in the Catholic social teaching. He says that there is consistent effort especially from the Vatican to "tone-down" the language, for instance, by using the cumbersome phrase "*a preferential but not exclusive option for the poor,*" or by putting an "*option for youth" alongside it*". *See*: Donal Dorr, "*Option for the Poor Revisited,"* in Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p. 255.

[84] AMECEA: Association of Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa.

> supporting. Our plan is aimed at building such local churches for the coming years. We believe that in order to achieve this, we have to insist on building Church life and work on the basic Christian Communities, in both rural and urban areas. Church life must be based on the communities in which everyday life and work takes place; those basic and manageable social groupings whose members can have real inter-personal relationship and feel a sense of communal belonging, both in living and working. We believe that Christian communities at this level will be best suited to develop really intense vitality and to become effective witnesses in their natural environment.[85]

During the 1974 synod, and later at the 1975 fourth general assembly, the theme of the small Christian communities was taken up by SECAM.[86] In due course clear recognition of and option for small Christian communities were made.[87] Finally the resolution of the 1975 SECAM plenary assembly endorsed the decisions of the previous years.[88] Thus based on the recommendations of these conferences and even those that were convened later,[89] the small Christian community model has come to be adopted as a fitting model of

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[85] AMECEA Bishops: *"Planning for the Church in Eastern Africa in the 1980s," African Ecclesia Review*, 16/1 and 2, 1974.

[86] SECAM: Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar.

[87] In their declaration during the 1974 synod, the bishops expressed their option for and outlined their programme of small Christian communities as follows: "*The Bishops of Africa and Madagascar emphasise the essential and fundamental role of living Christian Communities: priests, religious, and laity united in mind and action with their bishop. It is the clear task of these communities rooted and integrated as they are in the life of their peoples, to search deeper into the Gospel, to set the priorities of pastoral planning and activity, to take the initiative called for by the mission of the church, to discern, in a spirit of faith where there can be continuity between culture and Christian life and where cleavage is necessary in all aspects of life that hinder the penetration of the Gospel.*" *See*: The report of Archbishop J. Zoa to the 1975 SECAM meeting held in Rome, "*A Panoramic Approach of the 1974 Synod,*" in *ACTS of the Fourth Plenary Assembly of SECAM*, Accra: SECAM Secretariat, 1975, p. 73.

[88] It was declared as follows: "*SECAM points out strongly that the Church of Christ is a communion and that this aspect of her life, which is the visible sign of the charity which animates her members, must be shown at all levels of the great ecclesial family. SECAM desires that particular attention be given to what are known today as, "small communities," where each Christian, finding himself in a milieu suited him, can live out his faith responsibly. One can note the following among the advantages of these small communities; fraternal communion is easier to achieve and live; they open the way for the incarnation of the Gospel message even in the simplest cultural background; this, however, requires, whether they be spontaneous or contrived, that they: Remain open to all other communities in ecclesial communication; be founded on the Word of God; be based on the Eucharist.*" *See*: Acts of the Fourth Plenary Assembly of the SECAM, pp.296-297.

[89] See the following conferences and events: the *Fifth AMECEA Plenary Conference* in Nairobi (1973); the *Sixth AMECEA Plenary Conference* in Nairobi (1976), the *Seventh AMECEA Plenary Con*ference in Zomba-Malawi (1979); the *Apostolic Visit to Kenya* by Pope John Paul II (1980); the *SECAM Assembly* in Yaounde, Cameroon, (1981) and Kinshasa, DRC, (1984); the *First Plenary Session of IMBISA* (Inter-Regional Meeting of Bishops of Southern Africa), Chishawasha, Zimbabwe, (1984); the pastoral letter of the Kenyan bishops entitled *Centenary of the Evangelisation in Kenya* (1889); the *Eleventh Assembly of the AMECEA bishops*, Lusaka, Zambia (1992); the *African Synod of Bishops*, Rome, (1994). This is where the notion of "Family Church" emerged.

the Catholic Church in an African context. In 1976 AMACEA officially confirmed and adopted the small Christian community ecclesiology and pastoral plan.[90]

4.5.3 Small Christian Communities: Malawi

The case study of Lilongwe Diocese

Malawi happens to be one of the countries that started the implementation of this model in early 1970s, under the inspiration of Vatican II, SECAM and AMECEA. The overall objective, in short, was to reconstitute the church along the values of coresponsibility, service, subsidiarity and active participation. From here we can already see that this was a departure from the institutional ecclesiology that was espoused by the early missionaries and on which the local church had subsequently evolved. Let us point out, however, that not all the dioceses in Malawi started at the same time to implement the new model. It was the diocese of Lilongwe,[91] then under the leadership of Patrick Kalilombe that took the lead as it were.[92] In 1975 a decision was made to adopt and pursue the pastoral policy of basing the church life and witness on small Christian communities. And as Kalilombe says: "such a decision implied a major shift in ecclesiological thinking and also a change

[90] Since then, there is wide accord on small Christian communities as a priority and relevant model for the church in Africa. During the African Synod (1994), Bishop Jodo Siloto of Mozambique spoke in very uncertain terms on the importance of this model in the process of realising the African church. In his opinion, any pastoral strategy that omitted small Christian communities would be creating a church without a future. *See*: *Tablet*: London, 23 April 1994, p.500. James O'Halloran confirms this point when he says: "*Indeed I feel that it was a pity that our missionaries did not go to Africa with a communitarian model of Church in the first place, because traditionally there was a great sense of family and community there before we arrived.*" *See*: James O'Halloran, p.26. Estimates indicate that there are about 10,000 small Christian communities in East Africa alone, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo taking a considerable proportion *See*: *AMECEA Documentation Service*, Nairobi, January 28, 1985, p.1. In West Africa, the phenomenon is quite strong in French-speaking countries like Burkina Faso. *Cf.* Ibid. p. 113. In Sierra Leone, prior to the civil war, there were about 300 cells of small Christian communities. In South Africa it is said that about *70%* of the parishes are working towards the establishment of small Christian communities. *See*: James O'Halloran, p.25.

[91] Briefly, Lilongwe diocese occupies most of the central region of Malawi sprawling on a geographical area of 24,025 sq. Kms. The area was declared Prefecture Apostolic of Nyassa on 31 July 1889. Through successive changes over the years, on 25 April 1959, the area was finally declared a diocese.

[92] Kalilombe was consecrated Bishop of Lilongwe diocese on 6 May 1972, and ministered as such for a period of seven years up to December 20, 1979. Since establishment the following have presided over it as bishops: Bishop Dupont: 1902-1913; Bishop Mathurin Guilléme: 1913-1935; Bishop Oscar Julien: 1935-1951; Bishop Joseph Fady: 1951-1972; Bishop Patrick Kalilombe: 1972-1979; Bishop Matias Chimole: 1972-1994; Bishop T. Ziyaye: 1994-2001; Bishop Felix Mkhori: 2001 to date. Kalilombe was the first indigenous ordinary and succeeded Joseph Fady whose ministry covers the period between 12 July 1951 to 25 April 1959-as Vicar Apostolic, and from 25 April 1959 to 6 May 1972 as Bishop.

in the pastoral and organisational practice of the diocese as compared with what had been traditional until then".[93] The change of pastoral policy in 1975 was not only in response to the new ecclesiological thinking in the universal and regional church. It was also a practical response to real challenges faced in the diocese. Among these was the great disproportion between the faithful,[94] and the ordained.[95] Corresponding to this was the factor of dependence on foreign money and outside personnel and expertise. All this was judged to be a fragile basis for the survival of the church in the long run. [96]

Table 1: Details about the growth of the Diocese of Lilongwe

Year	Catholics	Total population	Percent of Catholics	Diocesan priests	Religious priests	Catholics per priest	Male Religious	Female Religious	Parish (s)
1970	175,614	1,200,000	14.6%	11	55	2,660	74	126	16
1978	257,179	1,627,179	15.8%	15	49	4,018	62	102	22
1990	482,492	2,511,000	19.2%	32	58	5,361	70	158	25
1999	446,488	4,000,000	11.2%	42	51	4,800	62	210	32
2000	567,395	4,000,000	14.2%	41	50	6,235	61	215	32
2001	561,395	3,630,000	15.5%	40	51	6,169	67	224	33
2002	595,395	3,993,000	14.9%	36	52	6,765	69	238	33

Source: http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dlilo.html/stat.

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[93] Patrick Kalilombe, p.1. The shift was from the parish/mission-outstation, to small Christian communities. Instead of seeing the church as based primarily on the "parish/mission" of which the "outstation" was simply organisational subdivision, the church was henceforth to be based on "small Christian communities.

94 *See*: http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/diocese/dlilo.html//stat. Presently, the diocese of Lilongwe has a total population of slightly above half a million. The table gives some statistical information about the beginning from 1970. The table is very interesting as it raises many questions. The percentages give the impression that the church made a big jump in its growth, whether organically or by conversion between 1978 and 1990, registering a growth margin of *4.6%* apparently representing the highest point of growth in the history of the diocese. Between 1990 and 1999, there is a remarkably sharp drop of *8%*, and to this day, it would be difficult to out-rightly claim that there is remarkable growth. The sharp growth so far noted between the years 1978 and 1990, could be accounted for by several factors. For example, the relocation of the national Capital from Zomba to Lilongwe in 1971, the booming of the agricultural sector thereby attracting more people to the central region which has for a very long time been the main stay of the agricultural industry, the war in neighbouring Mozambique leading to the swelling of population in the surrounding district of Mchinji and the south-western boarders of Lilongwe district. Having said that, it is of great interest to note that the *4.6%* represents a growth rate that coincides considerably with the change in the pastoral policy. It would be worthy exploring the extent to which this phenomenon could, in part be, reflective of the long-term impact of this change. Additionally, it would be of great interest to find out whether the apparent status quo and symptoms of decline and stagnation since 1990 to date reflect a change in that policy.

[95] By 1978, the ration was about *1:4000* by 1978; while at present it is about *1:7000*.

[96] Simon Bryden-Brook; Article from the Internet on Bishop Kalilombe, *"Is the Church an Organisation or a Communion"?* See: http://www.c-c-c.freeserve.co.uk/nr16-07.htm 12/04/2005. Patrick Kalilombe seems to have had a clear understanding regarding the reasons that caused the collapse of the church in the Mahgreb-North Africa: Tripoli, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. There, the church was not firmly planted in the day-to-day lives of the people, and so when Islam came, it managed to wipe out the leadership of the Church, leaving body of Christians unable to proceed.

4.5.4 Vision of the new local ecclesiology

The new pastoral policy envisioned a local church modelled no longer on institutionalism, as was the case with the early missionaries, but on the features of the New Testament, like communion, Body of Christ, etc, espoused by Vatican II, as well as SECAM and AMECEA. A church of that nature, so it was understood, had to have service as its defining mission and character,[97] and not authoritarianism.[98] In order to realise this vision the policy saw the need for a reversal of roles in that the people themselves were to be the church in place of the clergy.[99] What it means is that under this new arrangement the clergy were to assume a supportive role, quite contrary to the then prevailing situation. For this to happen three major things were proposed and these were to be the trademarks of the new ecclesiology.

Active participation

In the first place, the new policy envisaged a church that would thrive on the active participation of all its members. As Simon Bryden puts it, the unhealthy days of the simple faithful, passive and immature, docile and obedient to "Father," i.e. the priest, had to be consigned to the past.[100] In their place, he says, laymen and women, and youth, were to grow up and come to accept their active adult role in the church.[101]

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[97] *Pastoral Guidelines: LILONGWE DIOCESE MINI-SYNOD*, 24 November 1973-24 August 1975, p.9.

[98] The focus on service is very crucial here. It marks radical departure from the dominant model of the church at that time, namely the Church as an institution, with its centring on power and separateness. *See*: Simon Bryden, "*Is the Church an Organisation or a Communion*?"http://www.c-c-c.freeserve.co.uk/nr16-07.htm 12/04.2005.

[99] As we have already seen, the tendency of institutionalism has been to divide the church into two: the teaching, sanctifying and governing church, on one side, and the taught, sanctified and governed church, on the other. *See*: J. Neuner and H. Roos, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, N.Y., Alba House, 1967), No. 369. This notion of the "unequal society" is strongly articulated put by Pius X in *Vehementer nos, Acta Sanctae Sedis 39* (10906-7), pp.8-9. In the division, the name "church" has often been associated with the former, with the latter relegated to the status of mere auxiliary or support church. This point is well articulated by Bishop Mwoleka of Rulenge Diocese, western Tanzania, who, speaking at the 1975 SECAM, said: "The *root of the trouble is that we have a fixed idea of the church. At meetings like this everybody seems to agree that the church, of course, means all the faithful. But at the back of our minds and in our imagination, almost instinctively, the Church is always the Church of the clergy. The disease is incurable.*" *See*: Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *A Listening Church. Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, New York, Maryknoll, 1996, p.120.

[100] Simon Bryden, "*Is the Church an Organisation or Communion?*" *See:* http://www.c-c-c.freeserve.co.uk/nr16-07.htm. 12/04/2005.

[101] There is repeated emphasis even in the Pastoral Guidelines on the point of "active adult role", as an expression of a truly "LIVING and ADULT" church. *See: Pastoral Guidelines*, pp. 18; 32.

Coresponsibility

Second, the new ecclesiology was to be premised on the aspect of coresponsibility. This meant creating institutions of power sharing and decision-making at various levels in the church,[102] as well as adopting a culture of mutual consultation. Again, on this point, we see a significant reduction of clericalism as typified in the institutional model of the church.

Subsidiarity

Finally, the adoption of active participation and coresponsibility inevitably meant accepting the principle of Subsidiarity by which various layers of the diocese were encouraged to do and manage those things commensurate with their abilities without undue interference from, or reference to the higher levels. In this model of the church, the policy further foresaw a reformed role of the bishop. As opposed to that of chief legislator, judge and executive of the diocese, now the bishop would be more of a coordinator and link person to the wider and universal community of believers.[103]

4.5.5 Implementation

The new ecclesiology was popularised through a metaphor.[104] In order to realise its vision and true to the spirit of its metaphor,[105] a diocesan Mini-Synod was organised comprising

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[102] For example, local church councils, committees on specific responsibilities, like development, finances, etc. *Cf. Pastoral Guidelines*, pp.23, 36.

[103] Op. cit.

[104] This was the metaphor of the wasp-"mabvu". About metaphor, Johan Verstraeten says that they: "*are vehicles of transcendence and freedom. Their imagery awakens human energies, generates a world of meaning and opens new vistas of human possibilities. Metaphors make a deeper understanding of reality possible by producing an emotional shock "by an intentional misuse of language," an impertinent addition to "normal" understandings*". *See*: Johan Verstraeten, "*Re-Thinking Catholic Social Thought as Tradition*," in Jonathan Boswell, et al., *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance*? Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, p.72. In a similar line of thought, says Paul Ricoeur: "*Metaphors make a deeper understanding of reality possible by a 'kinship where ordinary vision does not perceive any relationship,' or 'new predicative pertinence...a pertinence within impertinence*". *See*: Paul Ricoeur, "*The Function of Fiction in Shaping Reality,*" in M.J., Valdez (ed), *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, New York, Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1991, pp.125 and 127. In another edition, Paul Ricoeur describes metaphors as: "*...based on calculated error which brings together and, by means of this apparent misunderstanding, cause a new, hitherto unnoticed relation of meaning to spring up between the terms and that previous systems of classification had ignored or not allowed.*" *See*: Paul Ricoeur, *Interpretation and Theory. Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, Forth Worth, TX, Texas Christian University Press, 1976, p.51. *See* also: E.R. MacCormac, *Metaphors and Myth in Science and Religion*, Durham, NC, Duke University Press, 1976, p.76; Max Black, *Models and Metaphors*, New York, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 1977, p.37.

[105] The key lessons that could be deciphered from this metaphor are (i) *call to active participation* (ii) *respect of unity in diversity* (iii) *promotion of the spirit of consensus.*

of five sessions interspaced over a period of about two years.[106] The main purpose of the Mini-Synod was to facilitate the involvement of the whole diocese in the formulation of the diocesan pastoral plan within the framework of the new ecclesiology. The plan, among other things, envisaged institutional reforms,[107] and promotion of collective leadership.[108] One of the key values upon which the local ecclesial community was to be founded was unity. This unity, so it was stated, would be forged on the basis of mutual Christian love, respect, trust and forgiveness. The unity would further be fostered by regular meetings for purposes of deepening the knowledge of one another, fraternal sharing of ideas and experiences, as well as for common prayer.[109]

Functions and responsibilities

Through the newly created structures, the laity in local Christian communities would become responsible for many functions, no longer occupying the back seat in passivity. Earlier we have seen that according to the institutional model, the functions of teaching, sanctifying and governing are exclusively identified with the clergy.[110] The lay faithful are not supposed to be involved in these functions. However, the new ecclesiology created room for the participation of the laity in these functions.[111] There was also

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[106] The first session took place from 24 to 28 November 1973, the second was from 23 to 27 March 1974; the third session was from 17 to 21 August 1974; the fourth one was from 19 to 23 April 1975, and the last took place from 23 to 24 August 1975. These sessions and the subsequent promulgated resolutions came to bear the name of *Mabvu,* and so there was: *Mabvu I; Mabvu II; Mabvu III; Mabvu IV*, and *Mabvu V,* respectively. *See*: *Pastoral Guidelines*, Lilongwe Diocese Mini-Synod, 24 November 1973 –24 August 1975, Likuni Press and Publishing House, p. 7

[107] The policy saw the need to introduce structural and functional reforms in order to accommodate the new ideas and plans although this did not mean a total break with the then existing structures. *See*: *The Pastoral Guidelines, LILONGWE DIOCESE MINI-SYNOD*, p.8

[108] In the previous sections, we have noted that the new ecclesiology was premised on three principles enunciated by Vatican II, and one of them was coresponsibility. This means collective leadership, a leadership that was to include the laity. The effectiveness of the structures to be introduced was seen to be dependant on the ability of the leaders at all levels to perform, understand their role as "service," and act in the manner and spirit of true representatives of the people. The creation of new administrative structures was one way to ensure active participation of the laity in the governing function of the church, quite contrary to the previous institutional model. This pattern was to apply even at main parish churches: *See*: *Pastoral Guidelines, Lilongwe Diocese Mini-Synod*, p.10.

[109] *Pastoral Guidelines: LILONGWE DIOCESE MINI-SYNOD*, p. 10.

[110] J.Neuner and H.Roos, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, N.Y., Alba House, 1967), No. 369.

[111] The following functions were to be performed by the laity (i) *Liturgy and Sacraments*. These were to include: Presiding over prayer meetings; leading the church choir; liturgical functions at funerals; providing pastors with the necessary information for baptisms, marriages, the Sacraments of the Sick, and also for cases which come under the jurisdiction of a priest; publication of marriage banns; choice of catechumens

particular consideration for special ministries within the new ecclesiology to be performed by the local ecclesial communities.[112]

4.5.6 The problem of dependence

Self-supporting

Dependence remains one of the chief problems affecting not only the Catholic Church but also nearly all the churches that trace their historical origins outside Malawi.[113] Thus, in dealing with a challenge like this one, the diocesan pastoral plan was designed on the premises of the famous three **"Ss"** that had been adopted by AMACEA in 1973. The theme of self-supporting was about cultivating the spirit of self-help amongst the faithful. Right at its core was realistic planning with concrete steps to be undertaken by the diocese with its local Christian communities. Self-support was to be seen, by all members of the church: clergy and laity, as one of the marks of the church that was fully alive and had attained the status of adulthood, able to provide from its own local resources the funds needed for the management of the local Christian communities, parishes and the diocese at large.[114]

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for baptism; seeing to the good order on Sunday services. (ii) *Deepening and confirming the Christian life.* These included: Teaching of children; youth counseling; visiting the less fervent Catholics and those who cannot receive the sacraments; settling cases of the Christians; collecting of church tithes; raising and administering local church community funds; teaching catechumens; visiting non-Christians and Christians of other denominations; promoting the spreading of Christian literature; promoting the reading of books and newspapers. (iii) *Participation in the Development of the country.* This included: Building and upkeep of schools, hospitals, bridges and roads; fund raising for development initiatives; visiting and caring for the sick, the poor and aged; organizing sporting activities and good dances; welcoming and caring for visitors, including priests, religious and new-comers. (vi) *Specialized Groups within the local Christian community.* These were to be involved in things like: Leading in prayer groups; leading in singing; teaching children; teaching of catechumens; youth counseling; animating people on matters of local development; promoting Christian life in the family; promoting sporting activities, etc. *See*: *Pastoral Guidelines*, p.11ff.

[112] These special ministries concerned Christians in urban areas, migrant workers, those working in estates, those believed to be under the possession of spirits (this was a common phenomenon in some parts of Mchinji Districts), and those caught up in the habit of drugs, gambling and beer drinking, lapsed Christians, and cooperation with other Christian denominations. *Cf. Pastoral Guidelines*, pp. 13-18.

[113] There is a story often told that thirty years ago (1974), the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) decided to take a radical stand saying that enough was enough, and opted for a call for moratorium on sending of foreign missionaries and aid. The understanding and conviction was that the church in Africa would not be truly local until it enjoyed autonomy, responsibility and self-reliance. But it appears that this was not pursued further in both the Presbyterian and Catholic Churches. *See*: Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, p.89.

[114] *Pastoral Guidelines*, p.33ff. The operational side of this theme called for the proper implementation of provisions of the diocesan law on tithes and creation of local community church funds. Each Christian community was expected to establish a special fund to cover its local management expenses. Money for this fund was to be generated through such efforts as collections during religious services, offerings in kind, profits accrued from community gardens, remunerative projects like building houses to be let out, making bricks and planting tress for sale. The management of these funds was to be done by a special committee on

Self-ministering church

On **Self-ministering,** the central feature was leadership. From within itself, the local Christian community was to find, foster and promote the leadership necessary for the services, which its very life and mission called for:

> Our local Church will be truly LIVING and ADULT when it is adequately self-ministering, by producing from its own ranks the necessary leaders for its various services".[115]

Each local Christian community was accorded the mandate and responsibility to select its own leaders who would be responsible for the different groups. In this exercise, there was clear statement that there should be avoidance of those situations where a few persons would be responsible for everything. In choosing people for various positions, the principle of inclusiveness was to be properly observed and adhered to.[116] The theme of self-ministering also took serious consideration of the role of the family as the cradle of future Christian leaders. The need to promote local vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life,[117] and the training of church leaders, were all taken on board as necessary in ensuring the realisation of a self-ministering church.

Self-propagating church

The theme of **Self-propagating** hinged on missionary responsibility. This is what was said: "as an adult member of the Universal Church, the church of Lilongwe Diocese and therefore each local Christian community in it, wishes to accept its missionary responsibility."[118] Self-propagation was about evangelisation, attracting new members to the church. Among many other aspects, this was to be founded on the good example of Christian living and unity by working together in a true spirit of fraternal charity, the care for the sick and the poor without prejudice about their religious convictions, contacts with non-Christians, showing them sincere respect and kindness. Again there were to be

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finances in each parish and local community. To further ensure that total self-support at local community and parish levels is realised, in each parish, the Finance Committee was mandated to workout a five-year plan. *Cf.* Ibid. p.36.

[115] *Pastoral Guidelines*, p.18.

[116] Ibid. p.19. In this case, women and youth were specifically mentioned.

[117] It is at this time that the term *"ansembe a chibadwiri"* was popularised, i.e. meaning the indigenous priests as contrasted to the missionary priests.

[118] *Pastoral Guidelines,* p. 32.

occasional public meetings to proclaim the Good News to anyone who was interested to hear it.[119]

Participation in state and society

The responsibility of Catholic Christians was seen not only with reference to the church, but to the state and the wider society as well. It was declared: "the salvation of man has to include all the spheres of his life and activities. The Christian will fully exercise his calling by being actively involved in the different forms of development work open to him."[120] In this respect, Catholic Christians were expected to be actively involved in working for more fully human conditions which concern the whole person, participating in such projects as construction of schools, ensure proper dealings in all business transactions, pay adequate remuneration to workers, carrying out faithfully all contractual obligations and agreements.[121] It was also regarded to be the duty of Christians to ensure collaboration with those in charge of development work by seeing to it that they rendered support and promoted self-help projects in their community in partnership with local government. Catholic Christians were further encouraged not to flinch from taking social responsibilities that were to do with development work whenever called upon to do so.[122]

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[119] Ibid. p.32ff. Other aspects of self-propagating were to do with demonstration of real concern for the formation of the catechumens providing them with good and zealous teachers, taking seriously the responsibilities of Godparents to help the catechumens, promoting the spread of Christian literature and the reading of religious books and newspapers. The occasional public meetings mentioned here were known in vernacular as: *"Chitsitsimutso"* which means The Awakening! Lay preachers became responsible for evangelical work deep in villages where very rare a priest managed to reach. Very often they used to organise open gatherings on Sundays in various parts of parishes. These activities were part of the parish monthly programme so that people could know in advance where and when they would be taking place.

[120] *Pastoral Guidelines*, p.37. Here one notices the spirit of Vatican II in which the Church is called upon to be involved in the world. *See*: The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, (Dec. 7, 1965), *n. 1*, *AAS 58* (1966).

[121] The call on Catholic Christians to pay adequate remuneration to their workers confirms what he have adequately discussed in chapter one regarding the tendency of cheap labour in Malawi

[122] Ibid. p.38. We can see this point as an attempt to officially prompt Catholics to actively participate in public affairs, something that had not been the case for quite a long time. This meant Catholics, like other members of communities being able to accept positions like chairpersons of development committees, etc. However, there was one problem which was common, and that was about whether a Catholic Christian could be a Malawi Congress Party Chairperson etc. As we can recall, the problem of the day was that the party was associated with all sorts of brutal acts. It was almost impossible for a person to be a chairperson or holder of any party position without participating in human rights violation at any level of society. This was what proved troubling to many Catholic Christians. There were no clear guidelines on this aspect as far as it can be recalled.

Summary

The overall image that comes out of the efforts so far analysed, is that of a church going through a radical process of structural and functional transformation from an authoritarian and socially alienated institutional church, to that which allows broader active participation within itself. This is in terms of the sanctifying, teaching and governing functions, as well as that which takes itself as part of the wider society. By the time we reach close to the end of 1970s, the Diocese of Lilongwe had succeeded to make operational the concept of the small Christian communities as a new model of the church. The term of *mphakati* which was used to designate the small Christian community was not only popular, but also carried a powerful symbolic meaning, i.e., taking the faith to the very root, the core cultural values of the people.[123]

4.5.7 Conflict with state

The 1970s just like the late 60s, and early 80s, are when there sprout incessant political agitation from the exiled opposition in neighbouring Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia, against the autocratic one party state.[124] One of such opposition leaders who seemed to have been more strategic thereby posing formidable threat was Attati Mpakati, leader of the Socialist League of Malawi (LESOMA) then based in Mozambique.[125] We are not so much interested in his personal details, but the coincidence between the time, the name and his rise to popularity in neighbouring Mozambique, on one hand, and the popularity of Kalilombe and the concept of *mphakati* in Malawi, on the other. This historical coincidence made the absolutist regime suspect Kalilombe to be an agent of Attati

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[123] In this respect we can also say the small Christian community model in Lilongwe Diocese was looked upon as instrumental to inculturation. This can be confirmed by this statement: "Christian *Laity has the responsibility to improve the Malawian expression of their Christian life, so that it may be really grafted upon their traditional culture and not remain something foreign. The local Christian communities are encouraged to find and tryout more adapted ways for the expression of their faith, but they will take care that all Christians understand the aim and meaning of any such experiments.*" *See*: Pastoral Guidelines, p.133.

[124] Former leaders like Orton Chirwa, William Murray Kanyama Chiume, and many more were a constant taunt to the Banda regime.

[125] For a full account on the regional politics during those years up to early 1980s, refer to a book by Ellert Henrik, *The Rhodesian Front War*, Gweru, Mambo Press, 1993. Henrik gives very interesting accounts about the wars in Mozambique, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and the role-played by the Banda Regime in Malawi and that of Kenneth Kaunda in Zambia. It is within this description of events that he narrates the events surrounding the rise and assassination of Dr. Attati Mpakati in Harare-Zimbabwe, early 1880s.

Mpakati. As a result, even the emergent small Christian communities came to be perceived as disguised preparatory structures of LESOMA.[126]

Church and state alliance

The brilliant and vibrant vision of a new ecclesiology that carried the promise of a local self-supporting, self-ministering, self-propagating, and participatory church in state and society got struck in mid-flight. On 20 December 1979, Bishop Kalilombe resigned and subsequently left the country. It is not part of the objectives of this study to investigate in detail the reasons behind his resignation. Nevertheless, it is possible to draw some conclusions based on the nature of the pastoral policy Kalilombe sought to promote and the new ecclesiology that had started to emerge. It is evident that on the overall the policy aimed at empowering the laity who were and are in majority so that they could take active roles in the church particularly in the three core functions of the priestly ministry, i.e. teaching, sanctification and governing. In this case the emergent ecclesiology was inevitably set in direct collision with the institutional model of ecclesiology, a model whose emphasis all along has been on the separateness of the church from society,[127] with the clergy, especially the higher clergy, as the source of all power and vested with the mandate to teach, sanctify and govern.[128]

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[126] Whatever was being done by and through these structures was suspected as mere cosmetic, the actual implication was ground clearing for the operations of the Socialist League of Malawi (LESOMA). We can also speculate that even without the connection of these small Christian communities to the activities of Dr. Mpakati, the Banda regime would have still been suspicious. The reason is that similar structures in places like Latin America through the processes of conscientization had become so empowered politically so that they eventually became agents of political struggle against the autocratic regimes. Cf. Marvin L. Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, New York, American Press Inc., 1998, p; 259ff. Banda might have feared the similar situation in Malawi. There is a story that at a certain time during those years, one of the senior cabinet ministers of Dr. Banda, Aaron Gadama, himself a Catholic, and also Regional Minister for the Centre; one day approached Bishop Kalilombe and inquired about the thinking and some reading materials on Socialism. There have been speculations that his enquiry was actually deliberate, that his real motive was to establish whether there was indeed a link between what Kalilombe was doing under *mphakati* and the agenda of the rebel leader Dr. Attati Mphakati in Mozambique. It is also said that just prior to his departure, Bishop Kalilombe was pressurized to clarify to the people what he meant by *mphakati*. This is said to have occurred at Ludzi Parish in Mchinji District: Interview with Mai. Poulin Tasiyano, Mchambo Village, Traditional Authority Zulu, Mchinji. At that time she was a chairperson of marriage counselors at Kathyuka, an Outstation of Guilléme Parish. Date on interview: 12 September 2004.

[127] *See The Primum Schema, Collectio Lacensis* (Freiburg, Herder, 1890, vol.7, pp.567-78.

[128] J. Neuner and H. Roos, *The Teaching of the Catholic Church* (Staten Island, N.Y. Alba House, 1967), No. 369.

It can also be deciphered that the empowering of the laity in the church had the potential to have similar repercussions in the wider society. [129] In that way the institutional model of ecclesiology, on one hand, and the absolutist state, on the other, were problematised. As Simon Bryden remarks, the government was scared of a mature people, while the Vatican felt threatened by a supposed breakdown in the Church organisation and confusion over the role of the priest.[130] In essence, therefore, the pastoral policy and the emergent ecclesiology relativised both. It demonstrated in very subtle but radical manner, that their models of power and authority by which the majority were virtually excluded and consigned to the periphery, were in fact, not the only models, and that there was an alternative. The small Christian community model provided that alternative in which the majority were recognised as persons able to think and contribute to the church, state and society. In that way the policy was a serious contradiction and reversal to institutionalism in the church directly, and the absolutist one party regime, by implication.[131] We are of the opinion that had this initiative prevailed it would have subsequently created a favourable ecclesiological framework that would have enabled the Catholic Church to live and use its social teaching thereby provide an alternative narrative to the repressive regime.[132]

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[129] We should also bear in mind that although the Catholic Church arrived late, its concentration in the rural proved to be advantageous since that is where the majority of people still live. Therefore, the empowerment of the Catholic Christians has the potential of effecting change since they can easily form the required *critical mass* in any change. For example, the momentum generated by the 1992 Lenten Pastoral letter that ignited change did not only hinge on the fact that the issues raised there were real and true, touching on the feelings and concerns of many people, but also because they were raised by a church that easily constitutes the *critical mass* in the Malawian society.

[130] Simon Bryden-Brook, *"Is the Church an Organisation or a Communion?" See*: http://www.c-c-c.freeserve.co.uk/nr16-07;htm 12/04/2005.

[131] Although Vatican II had, in theory adopted a new ecclesiology, which among other things recognises the significant role of the laity, the prevailing model of the church then was not ready to accommodate this new thinking and approach.

[132] The critical lesson here is that the living of the Catholic social teaching also presupposes a particular type of ecclesiology, i.e. the understanding of what the mission of the church is for in state and society, as well as the way of constituting power and authority in the church.

4.6 The silence of the church revisited

4.6.1Reasons for the silence (1964-1992)

The failure of the above initiative means that in Malawi, there has never been a serious and significant change in Catholic ecclesiology, whether at national or diocesan level, despite Vatican II, and the subsequent positions taken by SECAMA and AMECEA. Institutional ecclesiology of the early missionaries has, by and large, remained intact. Based on this understanding, therefore, in this section, we would like to provide what we consider to have been some of the key factors that facilitated the silence of the Catholic Church during the one party regime, despite having a rich tradition on issues of political and economic governance. To do this, we shall carefully draw links to a number of factors we have already discussed in chapter three.

Precedence vis-à-vis the nationalist movement

The first factor that comes to mind is that of precedence. In chapter three we have narrated two incidences where the Catholic Church engaged with politics shortly before independence. In the same chapter we have also noted the results of this engagement, especially the first one in 1960, which was in form of harsh reaction from the nationalists.[133] We are of the opinion that such a reaction created precedence, a sort of an indelible mark in the memory and consciousness of the Catholic Church with regard to what the political establishment was capable of doing if its strategic interests were seen to be under threat.[134] That experience, in a way, made the church flinch from matters of

[133] Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice. Confrontation between Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994,* Blantyre, CLAIM, 1999, p.36ff.

[134] We can easily confirm this by looking at a snapshot of reactions from a cross section of the members of the Malawi Congress Party in 1992 after the publication of the pastoral letter: *Living Our Faith,* on 8 March. There is not much difference with the reaction the same party gave in 1960, (*cf.* Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, pp.31-56), following the alleged support given by Archbishop Theunissen to the formation of the Christian Democratic Party. During the deliberations by delegates called to the Extraordinary Convention at the MCP H/Quarters on what to do with the Catholic Bishops, the following were some of the comments and proposals: "*These bishops are just like Judas Iscariot. If only the President could allow us to go to these Bishops' houses and tear them apart so that there would be no Malawian Bishops, we would do so. These Bishops are finished*" (Mr. Wadson Deleza, Administrative Secretary MCP); "*Right now we cannot allow Bishop Chimole and Chiona to come in here, because we will certainly kill them. We don't want to go into where these bishops preach. If they are going to disappear, those concerned will have to look for them wherever they think they would find them. According to our tradition, once we have killed someone we don't go back to the President to announce that we have done so; we just keep quite*" (Mr. Wadson Deleza); "*These bishops should be killed, that is the*

governance especially during the early years of independence. However, D.D Phiri, while accepting that the severity of the repression somehow crippled the church so that it was unable to take a public stand in defence of the people, he still contends that something could have been done through openings like the Church Relief and Development Programmes. In his view, the church failed to make use of such openings to create a broad critical consciousness among its membership.[135]

The nationality factor

Early in this chapter we have noted that the early missionaries expressed indifference vis-à-vis the politics of the colony, and we have cited nationality as one of the factors that made them assume such a position. In some way this continued after independence. For quite some time, the leadership of the Catholic Church was white and foreign both at diocesan level, and in many instances, the parish as well. This factor proved disabling in terms of their aggressive and passionate pursuit and engagement with the nationalist government in the face of human rights abuses. There was a gap, a sort of emotional alienation from the regime, and as such, the hierarchy must have felt lack of any legitimizing factor to their action despite the possession of the knowledge of the social teaching.[136]

Precedence vis-à-vis the colonial state

Again the indifference of the Catholic Church during the colonial days in the face of social injustices perpetrated by the colonial administration towards the local population could be another factor. It came back to haunt it during the struggle for independence and even afterwards. In the minds of many nationalists was a view that the silence in those

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agreement we have made. Whoever has gone against Kamuzu should be killed. The Administrator and Treasurer-General should report to the President that we, the Malawi Congress party, have agreed that we don't want to see these seven bishops in the country." (Mr. Katola Phiri, Minister of Local Government), "*In conclusion, I would say that these seven people are finished, they will be killed. They should not be found anywhere in this country because they will be killed. In this country there is no one who can go against Ngwazi Kamuzu Banda and be alive while we see him. Today these seven people are going. They will be killed*" (Mr. Wadson Deleza). For more details, see: Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search of Truth and Justice. Confrontations between the Church and State in Malawi 1960-1994*, Blantyre, CLAIM, 1999, pp.132-136.

[135] Interview with D.D. Phiri, Blantyre, 12/09/2003.

[136] The race question resurfaced in 1992 following the publication of the pastoral letter: *Living Our Faith*, with part of the hierarchy being accused of trying to introduce religious conflicts in Malawi. See Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p. 134.

past days was an endorsement of the colonial regime by the Catholic Church.[137] Therefore, upon independence, the church found itself awkwardly positioned in that any radical stance against the excesses of the nationalist government had the potential of being conveniently crafted and manipulated to mean its nostalgia and sympathy for the colonialists.[138] Given such delicate situation, it bears the semblance of prudence for it not to have stuck its head out in vigorous engagement with the nationalist regime particularly soon after independence.

The localisation factor

The three factors mentioned above concern the immediate postcolonial period. Let us now turn and look at the possible effects of independence on the Catholic Church itself, i.e., what independence meant for the church in Malawi, and the implications it exerted on its life in terms of the configuration of power and authority within its national, diocesan and parish structures. To begin with, there is a school of thought in Africa that insistently argues that the church partly watered down and softened the spirit of resistance as a precursor to the colonial agenda. The church is some times suspected of having been a collaborator and bedfellow of colonizers and in certain instances an actual sharer in the booty and exploits that followed. The missionaries, so it is said, precisely because of the non-revolutionary nature of their approach facilitated the domestication of the majority of the African men and women to an extent that their ability to resist colonial aggression was wobbled. For instance, Elochukwu Uzukwu says:

> The machine for the realisation of the colonial ideology was both technical (colonial military superiority) and religious (Christianity). Even if some missionaries opposed the methods of the colonizers, evangelisation and colonization were linked; this link was even foreseen in the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, where Africa was partitioned...Western Christian cosmology and notions of human person and community were introduced to compete with or displace the local African cosmologies. This close link between the Christian

[137] See the statement of Henry Chipembere in reaction against Archbishop Theunissen. It shows the general attitude among the leaders of the nationalist movement that the Catholic Church was not interested in the social-political welfare of the local people during the colonial administration. *Cf.* Matthew Schoffeleers, *In Search for Truth and Justice*, p. 48.

[138] In the language of the day, it would have been labelled as *"Kapirikoni,"* i. e. a traitor to the national course.

> religion and the political powers in the conquest of Africa must not be forgotten in the struggle for the reconstruction of the continent.[139]

Some veteran African novelists express deeper resentment against the missionary enterprise. For instance, Chinua Achebe, a celebrated novelist brings in the debate of colonialism and culture, the role of missionaries:

> I would be quite satisfied in my novels (especially the one set in the past) did more than teach my readers that their past-with all its imperfections was not one long night of savagery from which the first Europeans acting on God's behalf delivered them...[140]

The same insistence that Christianity was nothing but a right arm of colonialism appears vividly in Aluko's *One Man One Wife*, where he says:

> When we, in our camp, refused to listen to the white man, it was a big clergyman that begged us to listen to him. It was he who persuaded us that the white man was our friend...that was the beginning of our slavery in Asaland...our slavery to the cunning white man...We were sold to the white man by the clergy man.[141]

The ambivalent role of Christian missionaries has led some scholars not only to be critical against the missionaries, but also to openly hate Christianity and the Church altogether. A typical example of this group of scholars is Ngugi *wa* Thiong'o, who at one time was called James. He declines to be called a man of the Church, let alone, a Christian, saying:

> The European missionary had attacked the primitive rites of our people, he condemned our beautiful African dances, the images of our gods recoiling from their suggestion of satanic sensuality. The early African convert did the same, often with even greater zeal, for he had to prove how Christian he was through his rejection of his past roots. So that in Kenya, while the European settler robbed people of their land and the products of their sweat, the missionary robbed people of their soul. Thus was the African, body and soul bartered for thirty pieces of silver and the promise of a European heaven.[142]

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[139] Elochukwu E. Uzukwu, *A Listening Church. Autonomy and Communion in African Churches*, New York, Maryknoll, 1996, p.30.
[140] Chinua Achebe quoted in Oliver A. Onwubiko, *African Thought, Religion & Culture*, Enugu, SNAAP Press Ltd, 1991, p. 110.
[141] Asante, S.K.B, *Pan-African Protest: West Africa and the Italo-Ethipian Crisis 1934-41*, London, Longmans, 1777, p.10.
[142] Ngugi *wa* Thiong'o, *Home Coming*, London, Heinemann, 1982, p.31f.

Whatever would be our perspectives on this line of thought, the point we want to underline is that this kind of thinking brought a particular colour and flavour to the question of independence in Malawi. There was strong belief especially in the lower ranks of the nationalist movement, that upon the triumph of the nationalist forces, the church together with everything European would finally wane and wither.[143] In their place, the full restoration of African traditions and way of life would be on the way. Independence for ordinary people was interpreted to mean a return to the past, some sort of a watershed marking the end of white man's activity on the African soil.[144]

Although the postcolonial reality certainly demonstrated something quite contrary to such belief, independence raised seriously the question of leadership in the structures of the local church beginning with the parish. The feeling and eventually the demand emerged that power in the church be transferred to the indigenous clergy, something like a bloodless *coup d' état* in the temple of God. Now, here begins the conflict. Just as it had proved difficult for the white leadership in the church to live and make use of the social teaching during the colonial regime, the same was the case with the indigenous clergy. The indigenous leadership seems to have been more interested, especially during the early days of independence, to provide moral support to the nationalist government.[145]

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[143] In Mchinji District, there was such a belief around Guilléme Parish. This belief in some cases led to verbal and even physical harassment of the white missionaries, together with some local Catholic Christians, e.g. Mr. Anaclet Meleke, a primary school teacher at the Catholic school, who appeared to be sympathetic to the Catholic Church and the missionaries. This seems to have been the case in other countries in Africa. For example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, the missionaries were actually pushed out because during the colonial days, they were seen to have been part and parcel of the colonial administration. Discussions with Hatege Seba Tunzi, M.A. Student in Applied Ethics, K.U. Leuven, 26 May 2005.

[144] Interviews with Mr. Mathias Layton Mbewe, Mchambo Village, Sub-traditional Authority Simphasi, Mchinji, 15 September 2004.

[145] There was a feeling that the government needed to be given a chance, no need to rock the boat at such as early hour. This is comparable to the current situation in post Apartheid South Africa of which Ramphele labels as "misguided loyalty": "*...White academics do not speak out on issues of national concern anymore because they are afraid they will be labeled racist. Black academics do not criticize the government because of misplaced loyalty born out of comradeship with its roots in the struggle against apartheid-they can't be seen to be criticizing their own.*" See: Francis B. Nyamnjoh, *Liberal Democracy in Africa. The Need for Alternatives*, paper presented at the international conference: *From Freedom to Empowerment: Ten Years of Democratisation in Malawi*, 4-6 June 2003, Lilongwe.

The founding ecclesiology factor

Early in the chapter we have discussed and concluded that the model of the Catholic Church that finally grew in Malawi out of the interaction between a local society and the early missionaries turned out to be an authoritarian and socially alienated one. This type of church model has over the years proved not capable of allowing the church and its members to vigorously translate the social teaching in public life especially in areas of political and economic governance. This is because, among other things, the model tends to set the church apart from society, on one hand, and to demobilize the laity internally, on the other.

The secrecy of the social teaching

It has been pointed out in chapter two that the Catholic social teaching is not popularly known.[146] In Malawi, right from the beginning, the pastoral approach does not seem to have integrated the social teaching either in Christian formation or that of indigenous clergy.[147] Therefore, although the Catholic social teaching has been available all along, this is only in principle and not a lived experience of the entire church. What this means is that the indigenous clergy that has come to assume leadership at a various times since independence, as well as the general memberships of the church, have not been well prepared to handle economic and political issues from the perspective of the Catholic social teaching. Consequently, over the years this has deprived them the opportunity to develop the necessary sensitivity towards the social environment and the ability to adopt, where necessary, practical options in promoting social justice.

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[146] *See*: Edward P. DeBerri, et al, (eds), *Catholic Social Teaching: Our Best Kept Secret*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003.

[147] The author himself has undergone the formation to the priesthood in Malawi for five years. During those years, there was nothing on the seminary curriculum indicating courses offered on the Catholic Social Teaching. This was from 1988 to 1993. The same author was later a member of staff of St John the Baptist Major Seminary in the Diocese of Mangochi for a period of two years (1995-1997), again, there was nothing on the subject of the Catholic Social Teaching. We understand that in recent years, according to Fr. Dr. J. Chakanza (discussions on 28 July 2005, in Mangochi), Catholic Social Teaching had been integrated in the formation programmes at the Inter-Congregation Seminary-Balaka. It is worth-noting that the Congregation for Catholic Education has: *Guidelines for the Study and Teaching of the Church's Social Doctrine in the Formation of Priests*: See *THE COMPENDIUM OF THE CHURCH4S SOCIAL DOCTRINE,* Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, p.303.

Global politics

There are also specific factors that have to do with the international political framework during the concerned period. Usually, scholars and commentators have tended to focus more on internal factors that precipitated and consolidated the Banda hegemony. However, experience demonstrates that local political developments are not isolated from international political patterns. In many cases the survival of regimes in weak states leans so much on that framework. The striving of autocracy in Malawi is partly explainable on the basis of the hostile climate within which the new nation was born.[148]

The post WW II relations between the east and the west proved conducive for the thriving of autocracy because by being pro-west, Malawi became a buffer state against the spread of communism in the region.[149] Therefore, despite the naked human rights abuses at home, the regime continued completely unperturbed wearing the garb of legitimacy internationally. It enjoyed stable flow of economic support from western governments, international development banks and institutions of credit.[150] This factor alone was a strong stabilizer to the regime because it proved to be an effective deterrent to any voice of political dissent whether from the clergy, university lecturer or student, politician or human rights activist, to emerge and attract world attention and sympathy.[151] In other words, global politics then dispelled the possibility of international solidarity in the name of human rights and good governance. The prevailing international political framework conditions were permissive and conducive for autocracy in service of strategic interests within the competitive bi-polar global power politics.

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[148] Sometimes autocracy, like any other ideology, never flourishes unless there are certain strategic reasons that can only be served well by such a regime. The international political framework is not all that democratic, and its agenda is very often about global competition for supremacy and the subsequent consolidation of power and strategic interests. All this shows the relativity of ideologies.

[149] Some countries in the region like Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Angola, as well as freedom movements like the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC), had strong pro-Communist elements.

[150] Some time in the 1980s Malawi was accorded the title of a "Star Performer" by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

[151] For example, the death of three senior cabinet ministers and a member of parliament (Dick Matenje, Aaron Gadama, Twaibu Sangala and Chiwanga) in very dubious circumstances never received attention from both local and international organisations. This is because at this time, Malawi was still politically useful to the campaign against the spread of Communism in the region and the stabilization of the Apartheid Regime in South Africa. Therefore, the question of human rights was not a priority to the international community, particularly the West.

Summary

In summary, among other key points, all the way from chapter three, we have noted that the Catholic Church prior to independence initiated a tradition of engagement with the public sphere. However, progressively in the discussion, we have also noted that this tradition did not continue beyond independence. After independence, the church retreated, as it were, and for a long time, it remained silent despite its tradition on the social teaching. This has prompted us to examine many aspects about this church, including its ecclesiology, in an attempt to pin down some of the key reasons behind that silence.

4.7 From the periphery to the centre

4.7.1 Breaking the silence (1992-2004)

In the political annals of Malawi, the year 1992 marks, on the part of the state and society, a cutting point between the absolutist state of Banda and the introduction of liberal democracy, while on the part of the Catholic Church, the rediscovery of its prophetic voice and the renewal of the tradition of political engagement.[152] The most remarkable thing to any keen observer is that since then, the church, unlike before, has made considerable strides in keeping pace with matters pertaining to political and economic governance. The new political dispensation that was inaugurated in 1993 in a national referendum is very unlike the previous one in many respects.[153] While the former was typically insolvent of universal rights and freedoms, particularly the political and economic ones,[154] the new is firmly founded upon a legal order that, above everything else, recognises the sanctity and centrality of the human person to the state and all public institutions.[155] We shall see a few of the features that markedly differentiate the old system from the current one, and also how the Catholic Church, inspired by its social teaching, has contributed to the sustenance of the new order.

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[152] Many factors account for this dramatic shift in both church and state. At least four factors are evident. (i) *The end of the cold war between the Capitalist West and Socialist East* towards the end of 1980s marked a shift in international politics and relations. It heralded the era of political pluralism and liberal democracy. Thus the relationship of Banda to the Western governments that had stabilized his dictatorial style of rule changed. This left him open to criticism and open opposition. (ii) *The visit of John Paul II* is another factor that contributed to the shift. The visit brought renewal of faith and mission amongst the Catholic faithful and the leadership. Additionally, the visit strengthened the international dimension of the church, which later proved very important in terms of solidarity following the pastoral letter and the subsequent threats on the lives of the bishops from the regime. (iii) *Political changes within the region.* Early in the 1990s, Zambia had changed towards political pluralism, and in South Africa, the Apartheid regime was coming to an end. Such changes generated questions and suspicions towards the legitimacy of the Banda regime. In the districts that share boarders with Zambia like Mchinji, critical literature against the Banda administration started to be in circulation. (iv) *New consciousness in the Catholic Church.* Within the Catholic Church, especially among the new generation of priests, and also major seminarians, there was a new consciousness about issues of social justice. This was partly due to scanty literature then available on experiences of Liberation Theology in Latin America, as well as workshops on Training for Transformation using the methodology of Social Analysis conducted by the Episcopal Conference of Malawi towards the end of 1980s, and early 1990s. Two people were instrumental in this, late Fr. Makilika, and Sr. Doles.

[153] This was following the Catholic Bishops' Lenten Pastoral Letter of March 1992.

[154] This is clear from our discussions in Chapter three.

[155] This is a central teaching in the Catholic social thought on the nature of the state and its relationship to the human person. This point has been discussed adequately in Chapter two.

MALAWI COLLECTION

4.7.2 The people: source of authority

The current political order derives from and consequently rests on the constitution that, first and foremost, clearly recognises that the people are the ultimate foundation of the political community, and as such are the source of political power and authority, and not the leadership anymore, or the state itself. It is stated: "all legal and political authority of the State derives from the people of Malawi and shall be exercised in accordance with this Constitution solely to serve and protect their interests".[156] And subsequent to this profound recognition, the Republican Constitution continues:

> All persons responsible for the exercise of the powers of State do so on trust and shall only exercise such powers to the extent of their lawful authority and in accordance with their responsibilities to the people of Malawi.[157]

This fundamental recognition that the people are the ultimate source of power and authority in the state provides firm grounds to the demands of trust, transparency and accountability to the use of that power and authority by the leadership. As we have seen in some detail in chapter two, this position resonates perfectly with the Catholic social teaching. For the Catholic thought, briefly, political authority must guarantee an ordered and upright community life, guided by moral law, recognising the people as the sovereign, seeking to respect and promote essential human and moral values.[158] This it

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[156] *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* 1995, Chapter III, s.12, ss. i.

[157] Op. cit.

[158] The church has always considered different ways of understanding authority, taking care to defend and propose a model of authority that is founded on the social nature of the human person: "*Since God made men social by nature, and since no society can hold together unless some one be over all, directing all to strive earnestly for the common good, every civilized community must have a ruling authority, and authority, no less than society itself, has its source in nature, and has, consequently, God for its author*". *See*: John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 269; Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Immortale Dei*, in Acta Leonis XIII, V, 1885, 120. The church treats political authority as necessary, *See*: *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 1898; St. Thomas Aquinas, *De Regno. Ad Regem Cypri*, I, 1: Ed. Leon, 42, 450. Also in *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1897; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 279; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes, 74: AAS 58* (1966), 1096; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus, 46: AAS 83 (*1991), 850-851); John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 271; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes 74: AAS 58* (1966), 1095-1097; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 270; cf. Pius XII, *Christmas Radio Message of 24 December 1944: AAS 37* (1945), 15; *Catechism of the Catholic Church,* 2235; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra: AAS 53* (1961), 449-450; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 269-270; *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1902; John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris: AAS 55* (1963), 258-259; Pius XII, Encyclical Letter *Summi Pontificatus*: AAS 31 (1939), 432-433; John Paul II,

ought to do, by enacting just laws, i.e., laws that correspond to the dignity of the human person and to what is required by right reason.

4.7.3 Human dignity and rights

Again, the current political order, premised on the 1995 Constitution, recognises the inherent and inalienable dignity and worthiness of every human person. To this effect, so it pledges, that the state and all persons shall recognise and protect fundamental human rights and afford the fullest protection to the rights and views of all individuals, groups and minorities.[159] Further, the constitution secures and entrenches all the rights and freedoms of the individual under the Bill of Rights.[160] In this regard, the new order is again in harmony with the key positions of the Catholic social teaching.[161]

Summary

In recognising people as the source of political power and authority,[162] in addition to enshrining the Bill of Rights, by these two acts, not only does the human person now substitute the state, but also the state itself is made subservient to the human person. This is a profound correction of the distortion that reigned all the years prior to 1994. It can be argued further, that, for the first time, this marks a serious attempt to deconstruct the form of governance through the old colonial institutions. It is with this background in mind that this part of the discussion re-examines issues of political and economic governance in order to appreciate how, in comparison to the period before, they have evolved since 1993/94 and the role of the Catholic Church therein.

Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae, 71: AAS 87* (1995), 481-483; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor, 97, 99: AAS 85* (1993), 1209-1211.

[159] *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* 1995, Chapter III, s. 12 ss. iv.

[160] *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* 1995, Chapter IV, ss: 15-46. There are also corresponding bodies to the promotion and protection of Human Rights. For example, the Malawi Human Rights Commission. *See*: *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi*, 1995, Chapter XI, ss.129-136. It is very interesting to note how the current regard of people as the ultimate source of power and authority, and the recognition of the importance of Human Rights coincides with what the Catholic social teaching promotes as requisites of good government, namely, (i) *The presence of the charter of human rights*, (ii) *A written constitution,* (iii) *Relations between people and the authority/government to be on the basis of rights and duties. See* John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris*: *AAS 55* (1963), nn. 75, 76, 77.

[161] Issues of human rights and dignity are fundamental to the social doctrine of the church. See *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 00120 Citta' del Vaticano, 2004, pp. 84-88.

[162] *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi,* 1995, Chapter III (i), (ii), (iii).

4.8 Political governance

Political governance is about the process of decision-making in formulating public policy and legislation.[163] Among other things it focuses on public policy formulation, review and reform, legislation and judicial reform, human rights, civil representation and strengthening of democratic processes.[164] In short, under political governance, we are essentially talking about the exercise of public power and authority in the process of promoting the common good, which includes rights and freedoms of the citizenry.

4.8.1 Comparative analysis

When compared with the experiences between 1964 and early 1992, presently political governance, with respect to inclusive public legislation and policy making, human rights, civil representation and strengthening of democratic processes, demonstrates remarkable improvement both institutional and process wise. These improvements are more evident in the areas of popular participation.[165] This is in addition to constitutionalism,[166] and rule of law.[167]

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[163] http://www.sagric.com.au/governance/ 17/03/2005.

[164] Op. cit.

[165] Unlike the period before 1992, there is now a considerable level of political participation by the people and civil institutions in the life of the state and society, thus gradually bringing an end to the long-time political disenfranchisement. This participation is both direct and indirect, and in both ways it safeguards the understanding that the authority to govern derives from the people. There are Constitutional Bodies that entrench and promote the value of popular participation. These are like the *Legislature*, which is a house of the representatives of the people. *See*: *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi*, Chapter V, *ss*. 48-67; and the *Local Governments*, where people participate through their elected representatives at a local level. *See*: *The Constitution of the Republic of Malawi*, Chapter XIV, *ss*. 146-151. Popular participation is also provided for by the Constitution through periodic national elections, and there is also a constitutional body that makes this operative-The Malawi Electoral Commission.

[166] Since 1994, there is in Malawi, under the current political order, clear guarantee on the separation of powers for purposes of checks and balances. The separation of the three arms of government: the *Executive*, the *Legislature*, and the *Judiciary*, guarantees that no official or state body from one branch interferes with the decisions and operations of another. Again, under this order, there are guarantees of sustained respect for and reference to the constitution in all aspects of governance. In accordance to the *Principle of the Separation of Powers*, the *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi* sets the functions and responsibilities of each arm of government as follows: *Legislature*-Chapter V, ss. 48-67; *Executive*-Chapter VIII, *Ss*. 78-91; *Judicature*-Chapter IX, *ss*. 103-119.

[167] Rule of law sets the parameters through an established set of legal principles and norms within which government and society must function. Since 1994, there is a comparatively respect of this principle in all matters concerning disputes between individuals or institutions. *See*: *Malawi 2003 State of Governance Report*, p.24.

There are also institutions of oversight such as transparency and accountability.[168] All these demonstrate the remarkable difference between the political order prior to 1993/94, and the one that has ensued thereafter.

4.8.2 Threats and response of the Catholic Church

Notwithstanding the existence of such enabling legal and institutional framework conditions and the upcoming civil society, appropriate political governance is still along way. Several factors account for the situation. There have been and are constant threats to the new political and constitutional order. These include resource constraints,[169] neopatrimonialism,[170] ethnicity,[171] culture of political intolerance,[172] retrogressive pieces of legislation that have tended to subsequently undermine the new constitutional order.[173]

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[168] Transparency and accountability alongside efficiency in public institutions and effectiveness in the delivery of public services, legitimacy and predictability, are generally taken to be indicators of good governance. Again, unlike in the past, there are clear efforts, especially at institutional level, to make this operational. Clear examples are the presence and efforts of institutions like the Office of the Ombudsman. For details, *see* the *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi*, Chapter X, ss. 120-128.

[169] The enterprise of cultivating liberal democracy in resource poor countries like Malawi faces the daunting challenge of sustainability due to fragile economies. Lack of resources constrains the operations of democratic institutions, and even leads to the demise of political parties. This point is also highlighted in the Malawi: *2003 State of Governance Report: Cf.* p. 30f.

[170] This is about the tendency of the founders of political parties to own those parties indefinitely. For example, Aford by Chihana, UDF by Muluzi, NDA by Mpinganjira, MAFUNDE by George Mnesa, MDP by Kamlepo Kalua, Social Democratic Party by Kakhome, Republican Party by Gwanda Chakuamba, the newly formed Democratic Progressive Party by Bingu wa Mutharika, Movement for Genuine Democracy by Mwamondwe and his breakaway group from Aford, etc. This easily creates a relationship whereby the members of the party do not really count on how the party is run and crucial decisions made.

[171] Due to the absence of clear political ideologies, parties tend to constitute themselves around identities like ethnicity. This was manifested as early as 1994 during the first multiparty election: The elections saw Chakufwa Chihana of Aford taking *85%* of the votes in his northern stronghold, against *8%* in the centre and *7%* in the south; Kamuzu Banda of the Malawi Congress Party getting nearly *70%* of the votes in the central region, against *16%* in the south and *9%* in the north; and Bakili Muluzi of the United Democratic Front getting *75%* of the votes in the southern region, against *23%* in the centre, and *7%* in the north. *See*: *Daily Times*, 20 May 1994.

[172] This intolerance is often a result of the serious confusion in the exact meaning of democracy to many people. The confusion tends to surface where the classical *democratic majoritarian principle* is uncritically equated to any form of majority including ethnicity. The concealed regard and ensuing practice of *demographic ethnic majority* as *political democratic majority* has, for a long time, fuelled intolerance in the politics of Malawi. Since demographic ethnic majority constitutes the basis of respective parties, these parties have found themselves incapable to decisively deal with issues of violence and political intolerance for fear of demobilising own power base.

[173] Since 1995, political governance has repeatedly been affected negatively by pieces of legislation meant to entrench and consolidate sectional power interests. Typical examples in this regard are: the *Constitution (Amendment) Act, 1995*: Act No. 6 of 1995 "the Recall of Members Provision"; the *Constitution (Amendment) Act 1999*: Act No. 4 of 2001. This amendment in effect abolished the Senate as a second Chamber of the Malawi Parliament. The Act amended sections 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53; 54, 55, 56, 57, 60, 61, 63, 66, 86, 89, 189, 212, and 213, and repealed sections 68, 69, 70, 71 and 72, of the Constitution to

Right from the introduction of the new political system, such retrogressive elements have been a concern also to the Catholic Church. Since 1992, the church, inspired by its social teaching, has periodically taken firm and decisive positions on political and legal activities that are seen to be detrimental to the emergent political and constitutional order. These activities include what has been discussed, namely, the tendency to create political parties on the basis of parochial identities like ethnicity.[174] And in addition to the above, the prevailing culture of political intolerance,[175] the wanton and retrogressive pieces of legislation,[176] and attempts to undermine the present constitutional order.[177]

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remove from the Constitution all references to the Senate. There have also been Constitution (Amendment) Bills of the similar nature that have been defeated in the National Assembly. E.g. the *Constitution (Amendment) Bill No. 1 of 2002* commonly referred to as the "*Open Term Bill*" which ought to amend section 83 (3) to remove the limitation on the number of terms that President may serve; *the Constitution (Amendment) Bill No. 14 of 2004* which sought to amend section 83 (3) to allow any President of Malawi to serve a maximum of three consecutive terms; and, second, to entrench section 83 by listing that section in the Schedule of Constitution so that in future any proposed amendment of section 83 would only be done with approval of the majority vote of Malawi expressed in a referendum. *See* Anthony Kamanga SC, *Amendments to the Constitution Since 18th May 1994*. Paper presented at the Constitution Review Conference 28th-31st March 2006, Capital Hotel, Lilongwe, pp. 3; 7; 16.

[174] In 1994, the Catholic hierarchy called on all political parties to embrace the challenge to build a vibrant inclusive democracy: "All *political parties must strive to be truly national and reject any faint of regionalism or tribalism. By national we mean that they draw their support from all sectors and groupings in the country. It would be a betrayal of the democratic ideal if a government were to favour people of one tribe or the people of a particular region at the expense of other tribes or regions. Tribalism and regionalism are serious evils.*" *See*: Episcopal Conference of Malawi, *Pastoral Letter, Building Our Future*, 1994, p.7

[175] In 1999, in readiness for the second general election, the bishops took a stand against political intolerance. "We *have noted that of late political violence is on the increase. What is even more sad is that no body is accepting responsibility. We are all claiming to be victims and not authors of this violence*". *See*: Episcopal Conference of Malawi, *Pastoral Letter, Walking Together in Faith, Hope and Love*, February, 1999, p.3.

[176] On this issue the church decisively contended that, "*The government ought to hold referenda for matters of greater importance so that it knows the opinion of its citizens before deciding on critical, substantive matters especially when fundamental aspects of the nation's Constitution are at stake.*" *See*: Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Pastoral Letter, *Celebrating the Centenary*, 2001, p.13.

[177] On this contentious matter, the bishops took the following stand: "*We would like to appeal to the governors and leaders that they respect the Principle of Separation of Powers so that the three arms of government: the Executive, the Legislature and the Judiciary competently and freely exercise their constitutional powers with the necessary, legitimate checks and balances, one on the other, without intimidation, interference or undue influence, on and of the other. If we do not respect democratic processes and principles, we shall be reverting and backsliding to a one party system where the independence of the judiciary and legislature was systematically compromised by design. Some of the trends we see today are quite worrisome and deserve immediate redress.*" *See*: Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Pastoral Letter, *Rejoicing and Vigilantly Living in Hope*, 2002, p.6ff.

Summary

These are some of the indicators showing that the Catholic Church has somehow, since 1992 accompanied the process of political reconstruction in Malawi. Such engagement, we believe, remarkably demonstrates the gradual recovery of its prophetic voice and commitment to live its social teaching in promotion of the dignity and rights of the vulnerable groups. However, let us keep at the back of our mind the key question of the nature and quality of this engagement.

4.9 Economic governance

Economic governance is about decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and relationships with other economies. It focuses on such aspects as economic polices and planning, regulatory bodies and policies, public sector restructuring, trade and policy procedures, public sector financial management, revenue raising, taxation, banking and financial system reform. It also involves reforming institutions to bring the informal sector into the economy, private sector development-strategies, policies, modalities and procedures, etc.[178] Included in economic governance are considerations of socio-economic rights which concern the enhancement of popular participation in accessing vital services and goods in a sustainable manner.

4.9.1 Comparative analysis

Co-current to the liberalisation of the political space has been an accelerated shift in the model of the national economy to a neo-liberal one.[179] The thinking behind this shift, it is argued, is to create the enabling environment for broader economic participation. Out of this model there has been an accelerated flow of policies and subsequent programmes under Structural Adjustment Programmes popularly known as SAPs. Essentially, these programmes are a prescription of the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), mainly the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), based on particular historical conditions and ideological presuppositions.[180] The ideological and theoretical basis of

[178] http://www.sagric.com.au/governance/ 17/03/2005.

[179] See *Section 13 (n)* of the Constitution of Malawi.

[180] The historical background to SAPs show that economic stagnation and decline commonly experienced in many parts of Africa today reached alarming proportions beginning from early 1970s and continued through the early years of the 1980s. It is recorded that within this time bracket, *Gross Domestic Produce* (GDP), i.e. the total amount of goods and services produced by a given economy by both residents and non-residents, fell to very low levels relative to population growth. Statistics for this period also indicate a similar trend with regard to *Africa's Gross National Produce* (GNP), i.e. the total value of economic output or production per person per year per capita income. Economic analysts say this situation was further exacerbated by a sharp decline in the prices of tradable agricultural products and primary export commodities, leading to serious balance of payment problems and trade deficits, i.e. between commodity-led exports of most African countries and industrial-and manufacture-based imports from northern trading partners, budgetary deficits and spiraling inflation. Thus the combination of these factors meant that African countries required an immediate solution to reverse the course of stagnation and decline of their economies. According to World Bank reports, by 1991, at least 29 sub-Saharan countries had embarked on the task of restructuring their economies. *See*: World Bank, *Adjustment in Africa: Reforms, Results, and the Road Ahead,* New York, Oxford University Press, 1994; Donald L. Sparks, "*Economic Trends in Africa South of the Sahara 1994*," in *Africa South of the Sahara 1995*, 24th Edition.

SAPs, Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator observes, are on the neo-liberal policy of macroeconomic adjustment which places emphasis on: market oriented development strategies, a minimal role of the state, free trade, financial discipline, comparative advantage and prosperity through economic growth.[181] Key features or conditionalities of this programme include: reduction of inflation rates, reduction of budget deficits through drastic cuts in government spending, competitive exchange rates through devaluation, privatisation of loss-making public enterprises, and liberalisation of trade barriers.

4.9.2 SAPs in Malawi

To date, Malawi has implemented series of structural adjustment programmes with the sole purpose to address structural weaknesses and adjust the economy to attain sustainable growth and poverty reduction.[182] In the main these initiatives have focused on the liberalisation of the agriculture sector, parastatals sector reform, privatisation, trade liberalisation, financial sector reform, exchange rate liberalisation, interest rate liberalisation, and the rationalisation of the budget.

The agriculture sector

As an agro-based economy, many of these reforms have largely focused on the agriculture sector. Some of the key reforms in this regard include *price decontrol* that has aimed at allowing market forces to drive resource allocation in production. *Market liberalisation* has been intended to foster competition to ensure that smallholder farmers get good input and producer prices. A special feature in this particular reform has been the repeal of the *Special Crops Act* in 1995 that had previously put restriction on smallholder production of burley tobacco, and this has allowed smallholder farmers to generate more income.[183] Initially, reforms in the agricultural sector brought about a substantial increase in the production of tobacco as well as private sector participation in

[181] He quotes Dixon, Simon and Narman, *"The Nature of Structural Adjustment"*, 3; see also: ECA, *African Alternative Framework*, 17-18; Peter J. Henriot, "SAP: *What For?"* in *New People*, July 1995, p.13-21.
[182] *Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, April 2002, p. 11.
[183] This can be contrasted to what we have said about this Act in Chapter three.

marketing the produce.[184] Thus in principle and to some extent, unlike before wider space is available for the integration of the population into participatory economic structures.

4.9.3 Threats and response of the Catholic Church

Although the new economic policies and programmes initially brought some positive results, a large part of the national population remains confined to the periphery of the national economy.[185] The present apocalyptic proportion of poverty threatens not only the new political order, but also the very dignity of human persons. Perhaps, the immediate question would be why has the economic situation that initially generated great optimism suddenly become hostile? In our opinion, at the core of the present economic conditions are issues that reflect policy failure and lack of institutional ethics at various levels of government.

Inherent policy contradictions
At micro-level

A quick snapshot assessment brings to light inherent contradictions in the national economic policies and programmes championed since 1994. For instance, the almost wholesale adoption of SAPs with subsequent removal of subsidies from vital and strategic sectors like agriculture, has systematically wiped out the household's, i.e. micro-level, capacity among the rural population for food security and income, subjecting them,

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[184] The liberalization of burley tobacco production alone generated around **US$ 185** million of revenue for rural sector-*World Bank* (2000), which stimulated the growth of trading, transport and other income.

[185] According to the *1998 Integrated Household Survey* (IHS), *65.3%* of the population is registered as poor, and *75%* of these are women and that *40%* survive on an income of less than US$0.30 per day. The survey further reveals that *28.7%* of the poor live in extreme poverty. All these are individuals and families who are not able to meet minimum nutritional and essential non-food requirements equivalent to $ 40 per capita/per annum, as defined by the World Bank, *See*: Peggy Owens (ed), *When Maize and Tobacco Are Not Enough*, p. 22. Additionally, these individuals and families constitute a sector of the often publicised US$170 per capita income and a life expectancy of 38.2 years, an infant mortality rate of 114 per 1,000 live births, and a *48%* under-five malnourishment; a US$ 3.04 per capita expenditure on health against the World Health Organisation recommended US$ 13.40. Again it is the same sector that benefits from a *54%* of GNP expenditure on education; but contributes to a *47%* proportion of GNP debt servicing. This sector further constitutes the *55%* of the national population without access to safer water and a high unemployment rate. *See*: Khwima Nthara, "*Malawi's Economic Development since 1994: Implications for Democratisation*," in Martin Ott, et al (ed), *From Freedom to Empowerment- Ten Years of Democratisation in Malawi*, Balaka, Montfort Media, 2003, p.112.

i.e. about 85% of the entire national population, to food aid.[186] Martin Dent and Bill Peters in their 1997 report on Malawi made the following observation:

> There is real hunger among the families and labourers and other workers made redundant from government service as a result of structural adjustment...[187]

At macro-level

At the national level, i.e. macro level, there have also occurred serious policy failures. Here the uncritical adoption of policies on privatisation pursuant to the private sector driven model of economy has meant a substantial loss of capacity on the part of government to generate own resources at national level, as well as regulate the market forces to safeguard the interests of the most vulnerable.[188] In this situation, a large part of the national population is trapped between two hostile positions.

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[186] This is because the lifting of price controls and elimination of fertilizer subsidies has in the end contributed to increase in input costs making it extremely difficult for the average farmer in the village to access. *See*: *Malawi Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper*, April 2002, p.15.

[187] Martin Dent and Bill Peters, in *The Society of Malawi Journal*, 1997, p. 6.

[188] Under the *Privatisation Policy* the following is a snapshot: *(i) Companies privatized*: Auction Holdings; Central Tobacco Properties; Chemicals and Marketing Limited; Chillington Agrimal; Commercial Bank of Malawi; National Bank of Malawi; Malawi Daily Industries; Malawi Lake Services; Malawi Railways Ltd; National Insurance Company; New Building Society; Optichem Malawi Ltd; Import and Export; Portland Cement; Smallholder Sugar Authority; SUCOMA; Dwangwa Sugar Company; Malawi Book Service; Packaging Industries; Government Hostel; Encor Products Ltd; Finance Corporation Ltd; Kaombe Farm; Kasungu Inn; Ngabu Inn; Kuti Ranch; Likhubula Lodge; Chigumukire Lodge; Kachere Lodge; Ntchisi Lodge; Mangochi Lodge; Limbe Rest House; Blantyre Rest House; Viply Ltd; Vipcor; Zomba Trout Farm; Brick & Tile Company; Chiphazi Farm; Choma Ranch; Mchenga Coal Mine; Mining & Investment Development Corporation; Mpwepwe Boatyard. *(ii) Parastatals under privatisation now*: David Whitehead & Sons; ESCOM; Leopard Match Company; Malawi Catering Services; Malawi Finance Company; Malawi Rural Finance Company; Malawi Tea Factory Company; Smallholder Coffee Authority; Smallholder Tea Authority; Kasungu Flue Cured Tobacco Authority; Lifidzi Farm; Meru Ranch; MPICO Ltd. *(iii) Parastatals to be privatised*: ADMARC; Bata Shoe Company; Shire Bus Lines; Blantyre Water Board; Lilongwe Water Board; Dzalanyama Ranch; Malawi Development Corporation; Kamuzu International Airport; Malawi Housing Corporation; Government Press; Indefund; Mzuzu Smallholder Poultry Project; Plastic Products Ltd; Stockbrokers Malawi Ltd; Sunbirds Tourism. By the year 2002, government had sold about forty-two companies, and out of this, the total sum of 1.67bMk was raised. This is an equivalent to about US$ 20 Million. This money has been used not for viable investment, but rather for the running of the Privatisation Commission (PC) itself in terms of: restructuring, making the other prospective parastatals 'viable for privatisation'; support payments for retrenchment, redundancies and in funding social projects within the government development plans. Due to privatisation, there have also been associated negative effects, and these include loss of employment for many people. For example, since the commencement of the policy, not less than 322 jobs have been lost at Malawi Railways Ltd; 220 at Portland Cement; 130 jobs at Malawi Book Service; 45 jobs at the Government Hostel, and 25 at Malawi Daily Industries. *See*: *Malawi Economic Justice Network Issue 16,* October 2002, Lilongwe-Malawi.

At micro level, they have lost the economic productive capacity, hence not able to properly access goods and services, while at the macro level, the state is severely disabled so that it can hardly exercise regulatory measures over the market forces in the interest of the same poverty stricken sector of society. Mahmood Mamdani detects an inherent defect in this economic model. Because the thinking behind it is that in the course of improving an economy, he observes:

> ...there should be a transfer of resources from those classes which tend to consume to those classes which have a tendency to invest, from the majority workers and peasants and civil servants to the minority of entrepreneurs, from the working majority to the propertied minority, from the poor majority to the rich minority.[189]

As a result, true to the words of John Pendergast, the ordinary man and woman in Malawi has become a real victim in this economic experiment:

> The poor-the most vulnerable during an economic decline-bear the brunt of adjustment: with regard to subsidies, cuts in government spending, rising unemployment and high inflation.[190]

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[189] Mahmood Mamdani, "A Critical Analysis of the IMF Programme in Uganda", in Ulf Himmelstrand, et al, (ed), *African Perspectives on Development*, New York, St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1994, p.128.

[190] John Pendergast, *Crisis and Hope*, 35; see also: *Religious Working Group on the World Bank and the IMF, "Moral Imperatives"*, p. 246. It is worth noting that nearly every country that has adopted *Structural Adjustment Programmes* (SAPs) in Africa has ended up in far worse conditions than before. For example, spending on healthcare in Zimbabwe fell by over *30%* in the six years following the introduction of the *Structural Adjustment Programmes* in 1990; Zambia, once a rich copper-exporting country, with the fall in the price of copper on the world market, debts accumulated. Now every Zambian citizen owes the country's creditors some *$570*, more than three times the average annual salary; Kenya pays out a quarter of the value of annual exports in debt servicing, more than *$4* for every *$1* received in grants. To earn hard currency to pay off its debts, Kenya's deforestation has increased with an annual loss of *3,000 hectares* of forest. Mozambique has been forced to delay universal primary school until 2010 because of its repayments of debts that are a consequence of the apartheid regime in South Africa. In Ghana, school fees have been introduced as part of SAP, leading to a drop in primary and secondary school enrolment. In Tanzania, charges have been introduced for health care thus depriving the poor of health care. In 1997-98 the Tanzania Government spent *$9* per person on its debt, *$3* per person on health. Insufficient health spending failed to halt the spread of infectious diseases following the disastrous floods of 1996-97. In three heavily indebted countries, Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso, primary school attendance is under *30%*. Of 46 African countries, 8 have a debt less than *$200* per capita, 22 countries have a debt between *$200* and *$500* per person. More heavily indebted are 10 countries that owe between *$500* and *$1,000* for each citizen, while Cote d' Voire, Angola, Tunisia and Mauritania owe between *$1,000* and *$1,500* per person. The Republic of Congo has an estimated debt of almost *$2000* per citizen and Gabon suffers under an estimated debt of *$3,500* per person. *See*: Peter Kanyandago (ed), *MARGINALIZED AFRICA: An International Perspective*, Limuru, Paulines Publications Africa, 2002, p.55.

4.9.4 Associated factors

The debt crisis

There are other factors that are associative to the policy failures which are equally aggravating the economic situation of the majority. Chief among these are debts and taxation. The loss of capacity to generate substantial amounts of own revenue has driven government to depend on borrowing from domestic and international institutions of credit, on one hand, and a draconian regime of wild taxation on investments of companies and individuals, on the other. A few words will assist to put us into proper perspective.

Foreign debt

Without going far back in time,[191] records show that by the end of 2003, the total debt stock of medium and long-term amounted to US$2,480.0 million. Of this amount US$2,388.2million was owned by central government and parastals, while the Reserve Bank of Malawi owned US$91.8million from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in respect of the *Poverty Reduction and Growth Strategy Facility* (PRGF).[192] The table below shows the progression of the external debt situation covering the period from 1997 to 2003:

[191] Let us point out that the existing bilateral and multilateral debt situation, both foreign and domestic, is not entirely ascribed to the period after 1994. Rather it is cumulative of an evolution that dates back as early as the 1960s when the country had just emerged out of the British colonial rule. For instance, Harrigan (2000) quoted in Hastings Kafundu, shows that the total interest payment on public debt rose from US$7 million in 1977 to US$24 in 1979 whilst over the period 1978-1980 the actual debt service ratio stood at *20.3%* compared to *8.0%* over the 1972-9174 period. *See*: Hastings M. Kafundu, *External Debt Sustainability Analysis: Theory and Application to Malawi,* University of Bradford, September 2003, p.24. There are multiple factors that have exacerbated the debt situation over the years. These include economic pressure arising from increased population growth, the oil crisis of the 1974/75, which adversely affected the oil importing countries, the civil war in Mozambique, which led to the disruption of the cheap and most convenient Nacala-Beira corridor. Added to this is the devastating drought of the 1980 to 82, which led to the large importation of maize and exchange rate misalignment, and perpetuated the balance of payment. *Cf.* Hastings M. Kafundu, p.25. Malawi's medium and long term disbursed outstanding debt stock amounted to US$0.63 billion by the end of 1991 and grew to almost US$2.8 billion by the end of 1998, representing an increase of over *100%.* Other factors that account for the sharp increase in debt are to do with accumulation of arrears due to poor fiscal position and foreign exchange squeeze consequently leading to cuts in aid flows.

[192] Hastings Kafundu, *Report on External and Domestic Debt Situation in Malawi*, p.3.

Table 2: Malawi's debt profile (1997-2003)[193]

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Central Gov	2,053.20	2,179.00	2,450.70	2,512.90	2,449.00	2,335.80	2,324.90
Parastatals	35. 2	34.4	71.7	62.3	74.4	44.6	63.3
Reserve Bank	105. 8	117.3	87.6	82.6	77.8	92.8	91.8
Total	**2,194.20**	**2,330.70**	**2,610.00**	**2,657.80**	**2,601.20**	**2,473.20**	**2,480.00**

Source: Reserve Bank of Malawi. Note that these figures are in billions.

Domestic debt

At domestic front, the debt by central government has seen a steady increase over the time. For instance, by the end of December 2003, the total debt stock stood at Mk50, 563 million of which Mk43, 492 million was in form of Treasury Bills. The debt/revenue and Debt/GDPP rations have also been increasing over the years. The debt/revenue ratio has increased from *144.6%* in 2002 to *162.1%* in 2003, implying that the total debt stock exceeds the total domestic revenues.[194]

Taxation and Corruption

In addition to borrowing externally and domestically, the government has over the years relied heavily on taxation. In principle, the duty to pay tax is recognised in the social teaching.[195] This duty derives from the citizen's obligation to contribute their share to the necessities of the state, whose help they need, by which they profit, and which also assumes certain obligations in the citizen's place and stead.[196] For this reason, each citizen is in justice and charity required to contribute to these goals and is consequently

[193] This table does not cover latest figures because this study goes as far as 2004.

[194] Kafundu indicates some of the reasons for this upward trend. These include (i) *irrational public expenditure and borrowing practices on the part of the government itself*, (ii) *escalation of recurrent expenditure from general and local government elections during the same period, i.e. 1999 and 2000*; (iii) *withholding of donor aid due to poor governance related issues*, (iv) *poor commodity prices on the international markets which drastically reduced domestic savings and foreign exchange earnings*. Other factors include drought effects, which put up government expenditures beyond its revenues through importation of food items, and inflationary pressures largely due to fiscal adjustment and monetary liberalisation of some of the structural adjustment conditionalities of the IMF and the World Bank. *See*: Hastings Kafundu, *Report on External and Domestic Debt Situation in Malawi*, p.2.

[195] Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics. Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II, Vol. II: Special Moral Theology*, Birmingham, C. Goodliffe Neale Ltd, 1990, p. 284f. See also MK 12:13-17; Rom. 13:7).

[196] Op. cit. The purposes of taxes include: the maintenance of the machinery of the government and its institutions like the police, the army, provision for the common needs of the community, such as roads, ports, schools, etc.

conscience bound to pay *just taxes*. However, taxes are unjust if they distribute the burdens unfairly, if they stagnate the will to economic venture, impair capital formation, cause inflationary pressure and cripple economic productivity.[197] In the light of the above, the taxation system in Malawi could, somehow, be qualified as unjust.

On the overall, it has a retarding effect on economic progress manifested in the frequent closure of businesses both macro and micro, and the deterring of potential investments by local and external entrepreneurs. Added to the above factors, endemic and systemic corruption, a culture of fraud and embezzlement is also taking a deep tore.[198] Since 1994, corruption has set in and become a malignant economic ganglion on the body of the Malawi nation.[199] Again in 1997, Martin Dent and Bill Peters made the following observation:

> The political changes associated with the end of the period of dictatorship and one-party rule under Banda had been profound and extremely beneficial in terms of human rights and democratic procedures; (*nevertheless, the two also noted*)...a steady decline in fiscal discipline and in fairly wide spread corruption at a number of levels of government.[200]

In sum, the major and most crippling threats and challenges with regard to economic governance revolve around economic policy failures, increasing debts, both foreign and domestic, as well as wild taxation and a growing culture of fraud and corruption in the public sector. Our assessment shows that unlike with political governance, these matters have not received the attention of the Catholic Church since change in 1994, apart from the issue of fraud and corruption.[201] One would, for example, expect that the

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[197] Karl H. Peschke, p.275.

[198] This observation is also made in: Malawi: *2003 State of Governance Report*, section 6.5, p.46.

[199] The 1995 sharing of public funds among the UDF and Aford members of Parliament in the name of loans which up to now nobody has given back (each member got *50,000MK*); the Field York notebook scandal by a cabinet minister allegedly Sam Mpasu; the Petroleum Commission Case involving a cabinet minister late Dumbo Lemani, a UDF regional governor late Davis Kapito, and a public servant, Kambalame; the *187mMk* financial scum in the Ministry of Education involving cabinet ministers, senior public servants and Members of Parliament; the multimillion Kwacha "Maize Scam" involving a former minister of finance-Friday Jumbe, etc.

[200] Martin Dent and Bill Peters in *The Society of Malawi Journal*, 1997, p. 4.

[201] The following are the reactions of the church towards the deepening culture of corruption. In 1996, i.e. two years after change, issued the following statement: "*Corruption is an enemy of justice and peace. Our new Malawi is becoming more and more stained by corruption, "Katangale", which takes many new forms today. No level of society is immune. Corruption is never for the betterment of all and it undermines the*

entrenchment of the neo-liberal economic model in the Republican Constitution would have aroused strong and critical objection from the church.[202] This is because the position of the social teaching is that:

> The action of the State and of other public authorities must be consistent with the principle of subsidiarity and create situations favourable to the free exercise of economic activity. It must also be inspired by the principle of solidarity and establish limits for the autonomy of the parties in order to defend those who are weaker.[203]

That notwithstanding, the frequency of the church's statements on corruption still indicates the growing interest on the part of the church to be an integral player in the promotion of economic justice in state and society. Further, it proves the point that from onset the new regime seems to have set itself on the path of economic pillage. This was done even with much ease by the repeal of the *Forfeiture Act*.[204] To this day corruption continues to pose as a menace and factor of retrogression to the realisation of socio-economic rights, mainly by the poor. Despite the enabling legal instruments and corresponding institutions for the promotion of political governance, the same is not the case with regard to the economy.[205] There are no adequate legal instruments and institutions to protect and promote the economic interests of the poor.

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common good." *Cf.* Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Pastoral Letter, *Walking Together in Faith*, 1996. And two years later, the Catholic Church made similar denouncement calling on, "all *Christians to shun away from corruption and to condemn it.*' The church described corruption, '*as sin, a deplorable crime with drastic evil effects, something that robs the nation of scarce resources and hurts the poor and the less powerful who are in majority.*" *See*: Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Pastoral Letter, *Come Back to Me and Live,* 1998. In 2001, the Catholic Church again issued another statement condemning corruption with clear concern over the plight of the poor, saying: "*In spite of all the efforts to alleviate poverty, for many of our people life seems to have become more difficult. During the electoral campaigns, politicians were promising a fair distribution of riches that is slow in coming and at times it appears only very few are benefiting...The recent revelations of wide spread corruption and fraud in the public sector have undermined the trust of the people in those they have elected.*" *See*: Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Pastoral Letter, *Celebrating the Centenary,* 2001.

[202] See the *Constitution of the Republic of Malawi*, Section 13 (n).

[203] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus, 15: AAS 83* (1991), 811-813; Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno, (QA.1934)*, n. 88.

[204] This was repealed in 1994 soon after the introduction of political pluralism. As a matter of fact it was one of the laws that were repealed with unanimity by the Members of Parliament.

[205] For example, unlike the area of *Political Governance* where vibrant and aggressive civil society groups, including the Catholic Church continue to defend and promote political rights, in the area of *Economic Governance*, there is not much happening. Trade and Labour Unions, and all interest groups in this area have not flourished sufficiently. The deterrent factor towards their emergence and operations is not legal but rather politics of neutralization and assimilation. Soon after the change of government in 1994, Malawi

Summary

It is evident that since the adoption of political pluralism in 1993, and the subsequent election of a democratic government in 1994, various instruments and institutions have been developed for purposes of broadening the political and economic space to facilitate popular participation as a way of translating political and economic rights in concrete practice. In this process the Catholic Church has continued to contribute to the realisation of these ends.[206] However, great difficulties still remain. This is the case particularly with regard to economic governance. The majority continue to live on the fringes of the national economy somehow fenced out by contradictory public policies and exploitative tendencies of various economic actors both local and foreign.

Conclusion

In this chapter we have discussed a wide range of things about the Catholic Church and the way it has evolved over the years with special focus on its relation to the socio-political sphere. Among many things, we have looked at its ecclesiology from a number of perspectives including the aspects of institutionalism, the attempts at contextualisation, reasons behind the church's inability to be an alternative voice during the Banda regime, the discovery of its prophetic voice in the early 1990s. From there, we have seen how the church has accompanied the political and economic reconstruction. Through these investigations we can finally say that the engagement of the church with the public order, though consistent, unlike the period before 1992, still lacks depth and diversity. In addition, as Wiseman Chijere Chirwa notes, this engagement is biased towards political issues and mainly at the top.[207] Over the years, its denouncements or pronouncements have proved inadequate. Based on this, we are of the opinion that radical changes are

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experienced a stint of trade and labour unionism, e.g. *Malawi Congress of Trade Union, Teachers' Union of Malawi*, etc. Within a short time, however, these lost their influence, leaving the majority in the labour industry with no real alternatives in dealing with government or other employers regarding working conditions. The same is the case with the farming industry. For sometime there have been a variety of associations whose overall objective has been to ensure that the agricultural industry is developed and brings better returns to producers, e.g. *Farmers' Association of Malawi* (FAM), *Tobacco Association of Malawi* (TAM), etc. But like their counterparts in the professional sector, these too are virtually ineffectual.

[206] This contribution includes the activities of the Justice and Peace Commissions (national and diocesan), which we have not included here.

[207] Interview with Wiseman Chijere Chirwa, Zomba, 25/03/2004. There is not much done to create a critical popular political consciousness in society.

needed in the way the Catholic Church intervenes on issues of governance. This is the line of discussion we shall pursue in Chapter Five.

Towards A Vigilant and Prophetic Church

5. Introduction

Early in the discussion we have indicated that this study has proceeded on the approach of the Catholic social teaching.[1] Chapters two and three, therefore, form the *see* or *experiential* component of this methodology.[2] In chapter one various theories on ethics have been discussed and from there we have seen that the Catholic social teaching belongs to the tradition of social ethics. We have also noted that unlike other traditions, the Catholic social teaching is characteristically deontological and theonomous. Chapter two discusses this teaching with specific focus on the themes that relate directly to this study. In chapter three, among other things, we have seen the role of early Christian education in the gradual evolution of the state of Malawi and the birth of the new nation.

In the same chapter we have noted a brief moment of political engagement by the Catholic Church. This was a few years before independence in 1964. This was preceded by a long period of silence until early 1992. In the course of this silence political and economic repression flourished. These, we have argued, were the situations that needed addressing by the Catholic Church using its social teaching. Chapter four, which is the *judge* part, discusses the Catholic Church in Malawi, its theological and ecclesiological perspectives, and the attempt to introduce the small Christian community model of ecclesiology. It is here that we have discussed the factors that made the Catholic Church fail to adequately live and make use of its social teaching. We have also discussed the

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[1] The traditional approach of the Catholic social teaching is discussed by John XXIII in his encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961). There he says: "*The teachings in regard to social matters for the most part are put into effect in the following three stages: first, the actual situation is examined; then, the situation is evaluated carefully in relation to these teachings; then only is it decided what can and should be done in order that the traditional norms may be adapted to circumstances of time and space. These three steps are at times expressed by the three words: observe, judge, act.*" *See:* n.236.

[2] This depends on whether one follows the Traditional or Analytical Approach. The Analytical Approach draws some features from the Marxist social analysis as used in liberation theology. It involves four steps: (i) *Self-Insertion into Concrete Experience* (ii) *Social Analysis* (iii) *Theological Reflection* (iv) *Pastoral Planning.*

role of the Catholic Church since 1992. It is on this note that we come to this chapter, which, in accordance to our methodology, is about *pastoral planning and action.*[3]

5.1 A call for novelty

Ernest Troeltsch presents a challenging call for novelty and creative thinking to the global ecclesial community. In this call he proposes a decisive epistemological rupture with the familiar traditional patterns of thought. The purpose for this it to ensure that we are able to embrace a complete paradigm shift in the way we think about and live the Christian faith. This is to be the case if we are to match up to the exigencies of the contemporary World order. Troeltsch says:

> If the present situation is to be controlled by Christian principles, thoughts will be necessary which have not yet been thought, and which will correspond to this new situation as older forms met the need of the social situation in earlier ages. These ideas will have to be evolved out of the inner impulse of Christian thought, and out of its vital expression at the present time, and not exclusively out of the New Testament.[4]

With this attitude and frame of mind we would like to explore in this chapter two things. First, we would like to explore the models of ecclesiology and theology that would adequately support the living of the Catholic social teaching in Malawi, and second, how this teaching could be applied with the possibility of wide and intensive consistency in order to promote social justice in state and society. An exercise of this nature, nevertheless, compels us to begin with a few disclaimers: *i*) that our concern here is with broader direction of local church policy and not detailed blue prints, *ii*) that such a vision is personal, therefore, subjective, and *iii*) that it makes no pretence of finality or exhaustive coverage.

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[3] At this point we shall not engage in pastoral planning. We consider this not to be a proper place for that task. Nevertheless, we shall outline aspects that could go into a practical pastoral plan that takes issues of economic and political governance seriously.

[4] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches*, Chicago, IL, University of Chicago Press, 1981, pp.1012-1013.

5.1.1 An ecclesiological challenge

In the course of the African Synod (Rome 1994), Cardinal Hyacinthe Thiandoum presented a challenge to the African church. This is reflected in the question that he posed: "*Church of Africa, what must you now become so that your message may be relevant and credible*?"[5] Undoubtedly, this is one of the most profound challenges that theologians and ecclesiologist continue to face regarding the church and its mission in Africa. Presupposed in this challenge, so it seems, are experiences of alienation and irrelevance arising from the model of the church that, for ages, has been dominant in Africa.[6] Adrian Hastings notices that the Catholic Church inherited a judicial type of ecclesiology rather than a Eucharistic or sacramental one, and in his opinion this is a defective ecclesiology.[7] In agreement to this observation are Frederick Chiromba,[8] and Mercy Amba Oduyoye.[9] This defect is more vivid and explicit in the inability of the church to realistically understand and effectively respond to practical questions that bother ordinary African women and men. Hence, Jean-Marc Éla, perhaps, one of the fiercest critics of this model asks:

> What does it mean to be Church in Africa today when we know that the Body of Christ…is composed of the sorrows of men (and women) crushed by injustice? It

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[5] Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *The Church as Family. African Ecclesiology in Its Social Context*, Limuru, Paulines Publications Africa, 2000, p.11. Cardinal Thiandoum is from Dakar, Senegal.

[6] Scholars like Diana Hayes, Cyprian Rowe, Desmond Tutu, Augustine Musopole, have expressed similar experiences. As noted in Chapter four, these stem from the structural and functional constitution of the church.

[7] According to Hastings, this ecclesiology is formed on the exact canonical model of the Catholic Church in Europe. The ecclesiology has made the African Church either a silent or yes-church, a church that is praised for its great obedience and conformity, but never for its courageous innovation and creativity, its identity or its relevance. *See*: Adrian Hastings, *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, London, Burns & Oates, 1967, p.20; 32. See also New People Media Centre: *"An Analysis of the Church in Africa*," in Africa *Faith and Justice Network*, The African Synod, p. 17.

[8] In his satirical analysis of the church in Africa, Frederick Chiromba illustrates this preponderance of irrelevance and alienation as follows: "*So far, the way the Church has often been viewed in Africa can best be compared to staying in a hotel room. A person can go to a hotel, smartly dressed, with necessary cash and time to spare. Once there one often experiences great difficulty in feeling at home in a hotel room. The layout, the decorations, the furniture, everything, in fact, is imposed on you by the management…Feeling at home cannot come from the management; it can only come from the grassroots, your background and the person or people you are*." *See*: Frederick Chiromba, *"The Life of the Church,"* in *Africa Faith and Justice Network,* compiled under the direction of Maura Browne, SND, *The African Synod: Documents; Reflections, Perspectives,* New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1996, p.10.

[9] Similarly, Mercy Amba Oduyoye says the church in Africa tends to be a rear-action church, rarely visible on the frontlines, and often delayed in arriving on the scene afterwards to pick-up the pieces. *See:* Mercy Amba Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1995, p.184.

> seems to me that only a church which considers her duty to be the total liberator of the African will have meaning for tomorrow's generation of Africans...We Africans are in search of a church that involves itself more and more with the concrete question, a church that places in evidence the socio-political and economic dimensions of the goodness of liberation in Jesus Christ. [10]

The growing opinion among African theologians and ecclesiologists, Catholic and non-Catholics alike, is that the much sought after credibility and relevance of the church in Africa rests on its ability to decisively address in concrete and effective manner, precisely those issues the current model has failed. And these are real and felt issues of social injustice, poverty, socio-economic stagnation and marginalisation, bad governance and political instability. Emmanuel Martey expressly says:

> The Church that is called by Christ's name cannot find a comfortable home in an oppressive and dehumanising situation. The Church as a liberating community cannot attach itself to the oppressive status quo, resisting and resenting change...If political instability is a great contributing factor to Africa's predicament and suffering, then the churches cannot shy away from political issues. They must be in the forefront in the struggle against poverty and injustice in Africa.[11]

5.1.2 The Church as Family

One of the notable innovations in ecclesiology resulting from the African Synod has been the way of thinking and speaking about the church, and the yearn for the practical way of living it in Africa. This sounds like a response to the question of Cardinal Thiandoum. This novelty is reflected in the metaphor coined by the synod itself-the Church as Family. In chapter four we have seen that for years there have been efforts in many parts of the World at large and Malawi in particular, to redefine and constitute the church along small

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[10] Jean-Marc Éla, "*The Church-Sacrament of Liberation,*" in *Africa Faith and Justice Network*, The African Synod, p.133-134.

[11] Emmanuel Martey, *African Theology and Liberation*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1993, p 145. George Ehusani articulates a similar point. He says: "*We need a Church that is committed to the interest of the poor, oppressed and marginalized people, and of those who struggle for justice. We need a Church that comes to the aid of those who hunger for bread as well as those who hunger for justice in solidarity with those hungering for bread. We need a Church of Service, one that ministers to the profound needs of the people, including their spiritual, moral and material needs. We need a Church that is committed in word and deed to the ideals of the Kingdom of which Jesus Christ preached and for which the Church itself was established. We need a Church that shines out as the beacon of light in the midst of the darkness of sin, corruption, oppression and despair. We need a Church that is an embodiment of hope for a people living on the verge of despair.*" *See*: George Ehusani, *A Prophetic Church.* Ede, Nigeria: Provincial Pastoral Institute, 1996, p.26.

Christian communities. The new talk about Church as Family, therefore, arouses curiosity as to whether this marks a departure from those earlier efforts.[12] In our opinion this is not the case. To the contrary, the Church as Family deepens and enriches the small Christian community. As is known, small Christian communities are not typical to a particular country, region or continent. Rather, it is a desired model that cuts across the Universal Church: Asia, North America, Latin America, Europe and Africa. Now, in Africa, the deepening of this model finds particular expression through the new metaphor of Church as Family. In this way Church as Family gives the small Christian community model a specific character typical to the African social, cultural, economic and political milieu. It acts as a soul, animating it, thereby giving it life and feelings within its immediate environment.

5.1.2.1 Distinctive characteristics

An African proverb says: *"when an old man hears the dance he knows, his old age disserts him."* The key lesson is that the African people, women and men, will be enticed into, and eventually feel very much at home and have enthusiasm and excitement to participate only in that kind of the church that embodies the aspirations, expectations and values that are familiar and relevant to them. Church as Family is a familiar metaphorical expression embodying all that is valued about the human person and the community in the African context. Among such values are solidarity and service premised on communitarian life. The African human person, it is often said, is socialized towards communitarian life, that in and with the community, he finds his humanness and meaning.[13] In other words, being human in Africa is to be communitarian and relational,

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[12] The research so far conducted through interviews and deskwork has not showed us as to whether the question regarding the relationship between the new model, i.e. *Church as Family,* and the *Small Christian Community* was ever raised and debated during the *African Synod* in 1994 in Rome. Similarly, the discussions and subsequent resolutions reached during the AMECEA 14TH PLENARY, in 1994, Dar es Salaam, do not show that this was discussed. For this reason, we shall make our own reflection on the relationship between the two.

[13] For an exhaustive study on the subject, the following editions provide good information: Anyanwu, K.C, "*The African World-View and Theory of Knowledge*," in Richard Wright, *African Philosophy: Introduction*, New York, University Press of America, 1984; Coetze, P.H., *The African Philosophy Reader*, London, Routledge, 1988; Didier N. Kaphagawani, "*African Conceptions of Personhood and Intellectual Identities*," in Coetze, P.H., *The African Philosophy Reader*, London, Routledge, 1998; John Mbiti, *African Religion and Philosophy*, London, Heinemann, 1969; Ifeanyi Menkiti, "*Person and Community in African Traditional Thought,*" in Richard Wright, *African Philosophy. Introduction* (3rd edition), New York,

imbued with the values of togetherness, popular consensus, active participation, service, mutual sharing and interdependence, empathy, conviviality, solidarity and option for the dispossessed in material, physical, or indeed in any other conceivable way. In short, it means the feeling that you are ethically and ontologically predisposed to be your brother's keeper.[14] The family metaphor highlights these values, takes up and purifies them as basis for the new way of understanding and living the church. Deriving its qualities from the good and familiar in the natural African family, the new ecclesiology would distinctively be about a caring community in the spirit of service and togetherness, active participation, mutual sharing, interdependence, solidarity and option for those deprived of rights and dignity.

It is in that way the church would constitute an alternative or contrasting community in accordance to the Gospel metaphors of salt and light.[15] It is precisely in its being an *alternative community,* alternative not in the sense of physical separateness from the rest of society, but *in terms of the founding and inspiring values* that the church would challenge secular institutions, public policies, etc, particularly where and when they become instruments of oppression and exploitation. In the coming sections we want to see how this alternative community could engage in concrete terms with the public sphere.

University Press of America, 1984; Augustine Musopole, *Being Human in Africa. Toward an African Christian Anthropology*, New York, Peter Lang Publishing Inc. 1994.

[14] The 14th Plenary of AMACEA under the theme: "*Deeper Evangelisation,*" said the following about this model: "*By expressing the desire to be the family of God, the Catholic Church wants to manifest in a special way this fundamental reality by being a community in which the links to God and to others are explicitly accepted and lived according to the teaching of Christ*: '*All those who do the will of my Father are my sisters, my brothers and my mother' (Mt 12:50)...the interior life, relationships and structures of the Church have, therefore, to reflect the love, unity and communion of God himself, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*" *See*: *African Ecclesial Review* (AFER), AMECEA 14TH PLENARY, *"DEEPER EVANGELISATION IN THE 3RD MILLENNIUM: A CHALLENGE FOR AMECEA*, October-December 2002-Vol.44-Numbers 5 &6, p.266.

[15] Matthew 5: 13-16, "*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. Your are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven.*"

5.1.3 Embracing the challenge in Malawi

The major concern here is to see how the Catholic social teaching that has been neglected for so long, as evidenced in chapter three and partly in chapter four, can be lived in Malawi by the church that understands itself as a family. In carrying out this task we would like to be guided by what Ian Linden proposes that:

> ...the Church in Malawi needs an objective historical consciousness. Without this, the real needs of peasants and subsistence farmers cannot be served, nor will the local leadership be forthcoming that will enable them to "make their own history".[16]

In this statement two issues are critical. The first is about the objective historical consciousness, while the second lies in his reference to the peasants' and subsistence farmers' being enabled to make their own history. We want to appreciate the two within the historical framework of the discussion that we have had so far regarding the Catholic Church in Malawi. Experience indicates that although since 1992 there is persistent engagement by the church on issues of governance, the impact is less noticeable.[17] For this reason we think it is time a shift was made and new approaches espoused, consonant with the new ecclesiology and the political order.

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[16] Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland,* London, Heinemann, (1974), p.x i.

[17] One of the key factors is that since 1993, Malawi is a multipolar society. The new environment has bred divergent political beliefs, practices, interests, options, allegiances, etc. Therefore, the church does not have an immediate attentive audience. To the contrary it has an obvious substantive proportion of dissidents to its proposals. Consequently, it has become increasingly difficult for it to speak in a convincing and representative manner. Therefore, the prevalent multipolarism demands that the Catholic Church review its prescriptive position and move towards an approach that presupposes objectivity.

5.1.4 Areas of imperative shift

5.1.4.1 A shift in theology

Vatican II and recently the African Synod have in their respective ways, accorded the African church new impetus. There are tangible opportunities for new thinking and creativity in church life like theology and liturgy.

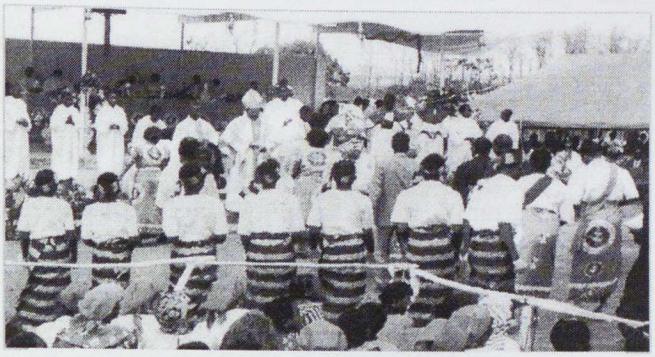


Fig.1 Liturgical Inculturation

Under these circumstances we think the Catholic Church in Malawi should make a theological shift in response to the new challenges. In our opinion while classicist theology remains important in its own way, for practical purposes and in view of the social political factors characteristic of Malawi, it would be proper to promote theological reflection along liberation theology.[18] We are mindful that the social and historical circumstances that gave rise to liberation theology in Latin America are quite distinct from the African context in general, and Malawi, in particular. Colonisation and the attendant historically interrelated factors are central to the emergence of liberation theology in Latin America. Guillermo Cook cites these factors as follows:

> (i) ...the "spirit of the Crusades," which had as its constant goal the forcible conversion of infidel gentiles to the Christian faith, was based upon the Christendom worldview...(ii) ...the royal patronage system...By papal decree, it granted to the monarchs of Portugal and Spain both temporal and spiritual authority over all the lands that they would conquer (iii) the imperative of

[18] For detailed discussion on Liberation Theology, the following books can be consulted: Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology,* New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987; Gustavo Gutiérrez, *"Toward a Theology of Liberation,"* (1986), in Afred T. Hennelly (ed), *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1990; Phillip Berryman, *Liberation Theology: The essential Facts About the Revolutionary Movement in Latin America and Beyond*, New York, Pantheon Books, 1987; Marvin L. Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, New York, American Press Inc.; 2003, Chapter 9.; Judith A. Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1994, pp.548-553; Christopher Rowland, (ed), *Liberation Theology*, Cape Town, Dock House, 1999.

> defending doctrinal orthodoxy…its instrument was the Inquisition, put in effect to defend the religious, political, and economic hegemony of the crown.[19]

Thus the historical context of liberation theology in Latin America can only be appreciated by looking at these intersecting economic, political, cultural, and ecclesial perspectives. In the midst of all this the Catholic Church, particularly that layer often referred to as the "colonial church", is unlike in Malawi, irretrievably linked to the history of colonialism, exploitation, oppression and domination in Latin America.[20] We are also aware that liberation theology is still contested in the official circles of the Catholic Church. Although in principle it is not rejected,[21] controversies have always been on its reliance on Marxist social analysis in terms of methodology,[22] and what is considered to be the danger it possesses of identifying the kingdom of God with a political realm.[23] Regardless of all this, we still hold the opinion that liberation theology is well suited to the prevalent socio-political environment and historical experiences of poverty and oppression of the majority of people in Malawi.[24] Given its specific characteristics, it has the potential to assist in the development of the people's historical consciousness and sensitivity to situations and experiences of social injustice.[25] These specific characteristics are historical consciousness,[26] victim centeredness,[27] affirmation

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[19] Guillermo Cook, *The Expectation of the Poor. Latin American Basic Ecclesial Communities in Protestant Perspectives*, New York, Orbis, 1985, p.27.

[20] Ibid. p.31f.

[21] Christopher Rowland (ed), *Liberation Theology*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, (1991), p.181f.

[22] Ibid. p.182f.

[23] *Puebla Conclusions*, London, CLLR, 1973. See also: *The Instruction on Certain Aspects of the "Theology of Liberation"*, September, 1984; *Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, April, 1986.

[24] In Latin America, a similar shift was made in recognition of the fact that classical or traditional theology with its abstract concepts had subverted the original spirit of the Gospel message and was irrelevant to the conditions of the Third World masses. See: http://academics.smcvt.edu/relstudies_courses/RS130/Introduction%20to%20Liberation…11/04/2005. Adolphe Gesché further adds to this point by saying that: " *the West has not had a theology of the evil of misfortune, the evil suffered by the innocent. In my view, the basic importance of the theology of liberation, that which gives it a major importance that I hope it will not lose, is that it takes into account the widespread, objective evil that entails no fault in the sufferer.*" *See*: "*Le probléme du mal, probléme de société,*" in *Théologie de la liberation* (Louvain-Neuve: Annales Cardijn, 1985), p.33; also Gustavo Gutiérrez, p.XV.

[25] One of the major limitations of classical theology is that it is over theoretical and otherworldly oriented, hence fails to be affirmative of the incarnated existence of the human person and reliable critique of social injustice. It does not easily make the linkage between the confession of the faith and practical action.

[26] Typical of liberation theology is its sensitiveness to concrete history. This is partly due to its reliance on "*social analysis*". Gustavo Gutiérrez sees liberation theology as premised on the methodology whereby

of eschatology in history,[28] and inherent solidarity.[29] These are the key characteristics that, as Desmond Tutu also notes, make liberation theology comparatively most suitable to the pastoral needs in situations characterised by social injustice.[30] In Africa attempts at models of liberation theology, or what we can call liberating theology, are already available and these, in our opinion, would be inspirational to similar efforts in Malawi.[31]

5.1.4.2 A shift in the Catholic social teaching

The Catholic social teaching as a tradition of social ethics is essentially a product of a particular value-system, firmly based on particular cosmological and anthropological assumptions, and responding primarily to concrete historical social, economic and political situations.[32] It would be out of proportion to argue, for example, that each time a papal social encyclical is being prepared and later promulgated; in the mind of the incumbent pontiff, or whoever is called upon to assist in drafting, is an indefinite audience, situation and time. Certainly, as Peter Hebblethwaite notices too, there is historical and cultural relativism in the teaching.[33] In view of this it would be helpful to think of contextualising it in Malawi. Such a process, as Johan Verstraeten says, would

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theology is defined as: "*...critical reflection on praxis, and praxis understood as action that attempts to transform social injustice*". *See*: Marvin Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, p.264. See also: Gustavo Gutierrez, *The Power of the Poor in History*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1983Villa-Vicencio, *A Theology of Reconstruction: Nation-Building and Human Rights*, Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 1992, p. 40; Jean-Marc Éla, *My Faith as an African*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1988, p. 161.

[27] In both Testaments, God reveals himself to be inclined towards the poor in a liberatory action. See: Ex.3: 7ff; Lk 4:18-19; Lk 16:19-31; Mt 25:31-46. See also Leonardo and Clodovis Boff, *Introducing Liberation Theology*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987, pp.1-2; Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise: Essays in Biblical Thought and Ethics*, Faculty of Theology, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2004, p.70; AMECEA, *14TH PLENARY*, Vol. 44, October-December 2002, Numbers 5 & 6.

[28] Roger Burggraeve, p. 67. See also Gustavo Gutiérrez, *"Toward a Theology of Liberation,"* (1968), in Alfred T. Hennelly (ed), *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History*, Maryknoll, NY, Orbis, 1990, p.71.

[29] The eschatological and historical linkage present in liberation theology makes it incline towards solidarity with the oppressed, those whose justice is denied. And because of this, liberation theology tends to be inherently combative in favour of social justice.

[30] *See*: "*The Theology of Liberation in Africa*," in Kofi Appiah-Kubi and Sergio Torres, (eds), *African Theology en Route: Papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third-World Theologians*, December 17-23, 1977, Accra (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1979, p.163; Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1989, p. XIV.

[31] A good example in Jean-Marc Éla, *African Cry*, New York, Orbis, 1980.

[32] Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue. A Study in Moral Theory*, London, Duckworth, 1985, p.222. See also: Jean-Yves Calvez & J. Perrin, *E'glise et soci'ete eté economique, L'enseignement social des papes de Léon XIII, a' Pie XII, 1878-1958*, Paris, Aubier, 1959, p.22.

[33] Peter Hebblethwaite, "*The Popes and Politics: Shifting Patterns in Catholic Social Doctrine*," in Curran & McCormick, *Official Catholic Social Teaching*, (n.12), p.268.

evolve along the thinking and feelings of the local ecclesial community.[34] This would entail local creativity and generation of options that reflect the felt needs of particular communities just as Paul VI rightly counsels.[35] This task would take into account the culture and historical experiences of the local ecclesial community. As is known, ethical traditions, being expressions of collective wisdom are a product of shared understanding, hence inseparable from their founding communities.[36] In other words, as Joseph Selling rightly argues, moral rules are always imbedded in a context.[37] As such issues of language, concepts, values, etc have always a contextual bearing reflecting particular experiences and worldviews. In this regard the social teaching, as a tradition of values, needs to enter into dialogue with a local ecclesial community through its culture to explore its concepts, thought categories, signs and symbolisms, sayings and metaphors, expressions and proverbs. A very good practical example when the bishops in Malawi used local proverbs and sayings to highlight specific values is the March 8, 1992 Lenten Pastoral Letter. This is what they said:

> …the strength of any society resides in recognizing the gift of all and allowing these gifts to flourish and be used for the building up of the community-"*Mutu umodzi susenza denga"* (One head cannot carry a roof). No one person can claim to have the monopoly of truth and wisdom. No individual-or group of individuals-can pretend to have all the resources needed to guarantee the progress of a nation-"*Mtsinje wopanda miyala susunga madzi*" (A river without rocks does not hold water). The contribution of the most humble members is often necessary for the good running of a group-"*Wopusa anaomba ng'oma wochenjera nabvina*" (The fool beat the drum to which the clever one danced).[38]

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[34] Verstraeten says: "*Catholic social thought, as a tradition of reflection and practices, cannot be articulated in a way which would deny the diversity of modes of social and moral life in different contexts, unless one is prepared to say that one single Catholic community culture for the whole world is still possible.*" *See:* Johan Verstraeten, "*Re-Thinking Catholic Social Teaching as Tradition*," in Jonathan Boswell, p.66.

[35] Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971), n.4. Here Paul VI says: "*In the face of such widely varying situations, it is difficult for us to utter a unified message and to put forward a solution which has universal validity. Such is not our ambition, nor is it our mission. It is up to the Christian communities to analyze with objectivity the situation which is proper to their own country, to shed on it the light of the Gospel's unalterable words and to draw principles of reflection, norms of judgment and directives for action from the social teaching of the Church.*"

[36] Johan Verstraeten says: "*If a vibrant Catholic social teaching is to continue and develop, two aspects of the tradition are important as we search for a renewed approach: the connection between traditions of inquiry and communities, on one hand, and the necessity of meeting epistemological crisis, on the other.*" *See:* Verstraeten in John Boswell, p. 65.

[37] Joseph Selling, a presentation on *"Developments in Moral Theology,"* Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 23 February 2004.

[38] See The Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), *Living Our Faith*, n.10

These proverbs were used in arguing for subsidiarity and popular participation in public life. It was a radical critique against the absolutisation of the public space by the one party regime and the political disenfranchisement of the rest in state and society. The use of these proverbs made the message easily understood and appreciated by the ordinary men and women. Thus an interactive process of this nature would prove to be vital for a contextualised tradition of Catholic social teaching. Nevertheless, this is not to suggest absolute ethical relativism. This hardly reflects the reality of human experiences. There are often situations that demand collective responses. Hence, ethical provisions that express universal character cannot be ruled out entirely.

This understanding resonates very well with another African proverb that says: *"a stranger brings a sharper blade."*[39] We believe that in both traditions are valuable insights that need blending in a form of *ethical perichoresis*"[40] A contextualisation of this type, a view equally shared by J. Boswell,[41] would have an added advantage. For instance, it would enable the teaching take risks and enter areas it can hardly do in its current form, like traditional institutions and practices.[42] Sometimes just like certain public polices and laws of the modern state, these exert negative impact on human persons.[43] Thus so far, our first and second proposals are that the Catholic Church in Malawi should seriously consider taking the path of liberation theology, on one hand, and to contextualise its social teaching, on the other hand, so that it enables the faithful, laity and clergy alike, become more integral to social-political processes.

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[39] In vernacular it is: "*Mlendo ndi amene amadza ndi kalumo kakuthwa,*" meaning an outsider, i.e., somebody who is not part of the situation, sometimes brings new vital dimensions or insights to our thinking and experiences in the process of meeting the exigencies of life. There is always need that dimensions of experiences and insights from outside break into our context so that in the process of this interaction we are able to generate new insights, knowledge and solutions.

[40] It is here, for example, that the founding anthropological concepts like *uMunthu* could prove strategically instrumental as a summation of all that is noble about the human person.

[41] Boswell says: "*The drive and inspiration which comes from the Church's official social teaching, essential and vital as it is, particularly in proclaiming over-arching values and guidelines, needs to be complemented and carried forward by thinking which is able to adapt to varying geographical and cultural contexts, to take greater risks (including political risks), to offer alternative approaches to policy or prescriptions for social, political and economic improvements, and hence, often, to be prepared to be controversial among Catholics as well as in the world outside.*" *See*: Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University Press, 2000, xiv.

[42] These areas would be like traditional social institutions, cultural beliefs and practices.

[43] Such aspects would include cultural practices on property rights, traditional power structures, etc.

5.1.4.3 A shift in pastoral objectives

The proposed paradigm shift in theology and social teaching respectively, calls for renewed thinking about the church's pastoral objectives. Traditional wisdom rightly says:

> "The sibling of a crocodile never grows to adulthood while confined at one place," or better still, "prolonged stay at one place made the pumpkin rotten."[44]

The Catholic Church in Malawi needs to shift from its preoccupation with primary objectives in its pastoral work. Perhaps the narrative in Luke 5: 14 would help us to illustrate well the thinking here.[45] In 2001 the Catholic Church celebrated a hundred years since the commencement of mission work. Now given the meagre results being experienced in its social mission particularly in matters of governance the question would be whether, like the disciples of old, this church has not reached a stage where it is toiling with the public order almost to no avail! Our observation is that the church is stuck in primary objectives mainly concerned with infrastructure, liturgical order and practice. These are affairs typical of primary ecclesial communities. Therefore, just like in the areas of theology and the social teaching, we propose that the church, in the spirit of "deeper evangelisation," make a shift in its pastoral objectives.

In this shift, as AMECEA resolutely says,[46] it ought to seriously concern itself with questions of social justice, human rights, political and economic governance, domestic and foreign debt, domestic and international trade, fraud and corruption, social instability, unemployment, public policies and legislation, etc. While these were not of immediate concern to the early converts, now are central to the experiences of present day Christians. That the church should concern itself with questions of this nature, Moses Mkandawire argues, is on the understanding that it is integral to the social order, and that

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[44] In vernacular, the two proverbs are expressed as: "*Mwana wa ng'ona sakulira dziwe limodzi,*" and "*Pamodzimodzi panawoletsa dzungu,*" respectively.

[45] The narrative tells a story about Simon and his companions who had toiled on the Lake of Gennesaret all night long but without catching any fish. Later, however, in obedience to Jesus' call on them to cast the nets into deep water, they in the end, we are told, realised a big catch.

[46] "*A deeper evangelisation aims at the interior transformation of the world and its social, cultural, political and economic structures inspiring it with the values of the kingdom of God.*" *See*: African Ecclesial Review (AFER), 14TH PLENARY. *DEEPER EVENGELISATION IN THE 3RD MILLENNIUM: A CHALLENGE FOR AMECEA*, p.265.

whatever affects society affects it too because its members belong to the society.[47] We believe that only when the church will have started to concern itself with matters like these ones, will it begin to transform and attain the yearned for relevance and credibility in accordance to the question of Cardinal Thiandoum.

5.1.4.4 Creation of structures of influence

The proposal for a shift in mission objectives necessarily requires creation of relevant institutions in the church. J. Verstraeten says that ideas have impact in history and on society only through a distinctive institutionalisation of carrier units.[48] Therefore, through a set of relevant institutions, we think, social Catholicism in Malawi would generate the middle axioms to guide public policy, which flow from its unique understanding of the human person and society. John Coleman shares this opinion. He says:

> Policy generation usually stems from institutions that have both a legitimate interested stake in the outcomes of, and an expertise and experience to bring to, questions of social policy and national legislation.[49]

These institutions would act as carrier units of values and skills upon which the church would be able to raise the consciousness of society on public issues, provide technical contribution to public policy, as well as explore and propose creative ways of responding to situations of crisis and injustice. We have in mind innovations in form of *Social Justice Centres* (SJC); *Public Liaison Units* (PLU); *Economic Research Units* (ERU). These would work alongside the existing initiatives such as the *Justice and Peace Commissions* (JPC) at national, as well as diocesan level, depending on issues and needs.[50] Particular to these innovations, however, would be the creation of think tanks. The history of social Catholicism shows their strategic importance as far as the social teaching is concerned.[51]

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[47] Interview with Moses Mkandawire, Mzuzu, 22/04/2004.

[48] Johan Verstraeten quoted by John Coleman in "*Retrieving or Re-Inventing Social Catholicism. A Trans-Atlantic Response*," in Jonathan Boswell et al, (ed), p. 275. See also: *AFER*, October-December 2002, Vol. 44, Numbers 5 & 6, p268, n.2.

[49] John Coleman, "*Retrieving or Re-Inventing Social Catholicism. A Trans-Atlantic Response*," in Jonathan Boswell et al (ed), p.285.

[50] A very interesting innovation in this direction is what the Missionaries of Africa are doing since 2002. The creation of the *Centre for Social Concern* (CSC) is a major innovative step in promoting social justice in Malawi. Currently, it is situated at St. Francis Parish-Kanengo, in the Diocese of Lilongwe.

[51] The history of the Catholic social movements shows a remarkable diversity of ways by which people have sought to promote social justice. In France, for instance, at one time, two military officers, Albert de

A typical and enduring example in this case is the Fribourg Union.[52] In the church, as George Ehusani proposes, think tanks, as bodies of experts cutting across various disciplines, would be charged with the task to provide theological readings to socio-economic and political issues on the national agenda. Think tanks, Ehusani concludes, would be engaged in an ongoing study and reflection on the values of society, the politics of government, the implication of new laws and decrees on the church and society at large.[53]

5.1.4.5 Integral formation

The proposed institutions and functions bring to light another dimension. This is about competencies. Relevant skills and knowledge components would be required. Although it is not feasible that the church has all the skills and knowledge required, the need that it

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Mun and Rene de la Tour du Pin in 1871, were able to organise a *Catholic workers' club* in Paris under the name, *L'oeuvre des Cercles Catholiques d' Ouvriers,* i.e. Society of Catholic Worker Circles. These clubs spread rapidly throughout France, and by 1884, there were 400 clubs with 50,000 members. *See*: Edward Cahill, *"The Catholic Social Movement, Historical Aspects,"* in Charles Curran and Richard McCormick, (eds), *Readings in Moral Theology, No. 5, Official Catholic Social Thought,* New York, Paulist Press, 1986, p. 5. The concept of *social Catholics* went on to spread to other countries in Europe. In Italy, Leo XIII established a *Circle of Social and Economic Studies* in Rome. While in Austria, Karl von Voglsang, a convert of Ketteler, led the German and Austrian study group known as the *Freil Vereinigung Katholische Sozialpolitiker*, i.e. Catholic Social-Political Free Union. *See*: Marvin Mich, p 8. In Germany, in 1892, Fr. Hitze and the industrialist Brandt, leaders of *Volksverien,* conceived the idea of inaugurating "*practical social courses*". Later these were known as "*Social Weeks*". Distinguished leaders and dignitaries addressed these conventions and gave theoretical as well as practical instructions. From Germany it was copied to other countries such as France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain and Italy. In France it was initiated by M. Savatier, editor of *L'Association Catholique,* who founded *Union des Catholiques Sociaux* as a centre of both study and propaganda in 1901. For details on "Social Weeks," see Daniel-Rops, *A Fight for God 1870-1939*, pp. 158-159, 277-278.

[52] This was formed by a group of laymen and bishop Gaspard Mermillod of Lausanne in Switzerland. *See*: Marvin Mich, p.1. The union also tackled the "social question" touching on the aspects of social justice, just wage, state intervention, private property, corporatively organised society, etc. Through the writings of August Lehmkuhl, basic principles on "work" and wages were set up. There is wide consensus among scholars in the Catholic social teaching that the findings of the *Fribourg Union* contributed significantly to the contents of the first social encyclical, *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891).* The *Fribourg Union* discontinued its sittings after 1891. Another international union was established in Malines in 1920 under the presidency of Cardinal Mercier, called '*The International Union for Social Studies*'. Edward Cahill says that it consisted of Catholic scholars from all countries of Western Europe, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland, Italy, Spain, and England. After the death of Cardinal Mercier in 1924, Archbishop Van Roey continued the presidency. The most important contribution of *'Malines Union'* was the issue, in 1927, of a compendium of Catholic principles and conclusions applicable to the then post-war conditions of Europe and America. The little book: *Code Social, Paris*, 1927 (ET: *A Code of Social Principles*, Oxford, (1929). *See:* E. Cahill, "*The Catholic Social Movement: Historical Aspects*," p.14.

[53] George Ehusani, *A Prophetic Church.* Ede, Nigeria: Provincial Pastoral Institute, 1996, p. 124. A similar point was also raised by the AMECEA during the 14 Plenary. In explaining the mandate of AMECEA, one of the functions included was that of, "*undertaking research into areas of common interest and analysis of important data for the region*". *See*: *AFER*, October-December 2002, Vol. 44, Numbers 5 & 6, p.269.

has in those areas most critical to the protection and promotion of human dignity and social justice remains. What comes to mind are competencies in areas like politics, economics, public administration, public policy and legislation, advocacy and lobbying, public budget, accounting and financial management, public and international relations, conflict resolution, counselling, mediation and peace building.

These are essential to ensure the effectiveness and relevance of the church today. Without them, the church risks being crippled in its ability to detect the effects of public and private institutions on the life of the vulnerable groups. Another important aspect in this regard is research and investigation in relation to human rights. Violation of human dignity does not always occur with fanfare. It equally does so in very latent and subtle forms. Therefore, investigative skills in order to discern justice in public policies, laws and institutions are pertinent.[54] Cross cutting to these disciplines, as the AMECEA proposes, should be the church's social teaching itself.[55] Such an integral approach to formation has the potential to assist the pastors and religious develop thorough knowledge of the church's teaching and its pastoral concerns in state and society.[56]

Christian formation

Just as we propose for the integration of the social teaching along other disciplines in the formation of priests and religious, the same should be considered for the lay faithful. The discipleship of the lay faithful, says the magisterium, is carried out in the concrete world.[57] Therefore, in preparation for this discipleship the social teaching should be integral to Christian formation as well. It is only in that way the laity would competently live their apostolate:[58]

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[54] These skills could be developed in existing institutions like the Justice and Peace Commission (JPC).

[55] This is what is proposed: "*The Social Teaching of the Church should be a compulsory subject in all AMECEA Institutions, in Major Seminaries and in all Religious houses of formation in the Region.*" *See: AFER*, October-December 2002, Vol. 44, Numbers 5 & 6, p.281, n.61.

[56] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004, p.303. See also: 30 December 1988, Vatican Polygot Press, Rome 1988.

[57] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Dogmatic Constitution, *Lumen Gentium, 31: AAS 57* (1965), 73.

[58] It is said that the insistence of the Magisterium in proposing this doctrine as a source of inspiration for the apostolate and for social action comes from the conviction that it constitutes an extra-ordinary resource for formation. See also: John Paul II, Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christifideles Laici, 60: AAS 81* (1989), 511.

> The Church's social doctrine must be the basis of an intense and constant work of formation, especially for the lay faithful. Such a formation should take into account their obligations in civil society...It belongs to the layman, without waiting passively for orders and directives, to take the initiative freely and infuse a Christian spirit into the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the community in which they live.[59]

For the lay faithful, integral formation is realisable by means of ongoing catechisis provided through small Christian communities. It is here that the social teaching of the church would be directed towards motivating action for the evangelisation and humanisation of temporal realities.[60]

Summary

Up to this point, our attention has been on the need for a paradigm shift. Proposals have been made on five areas. These are a shift in theological models from classical to liberation, contextualisation of the social teaching, shift in pastoral objectives, creation of structures of influence, coupled with the integral formation of clergy and laity. We believe that these are strategic prerequisites within the internal life of the church prior to its engagement with the outside. In the sections that follow, we would like to see how a church of this nature would in concrete terms engage itself with the public order on the

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[59] Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio, 81: AAS 59* (1967), 296-297. It is proposed that the first level of the formation of lay Christians should be able to help them to become capable of meeting their daily activities effectively in the cultural, social, economic and political spheres and to develop in them a sense of duty that is at the service of the common good. A second level concerns the formation of a political conscience in order to prepare lay Christians to exercise political power: "*Those with a talent for the difficult yet noble art of politics, or whose talents in this matter can be developed, should prepare themselves for it, and forgetting their own convenience and material interests, they should engage in political activity*": See Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes, 75: AAS 58* (1966), 1097-1098.

[60] Through this doctrine, the church expresses a theoretical and practical knowledge that gives support to the commitment of transforming social life, helping it to conform ever more fully to the divine plan. *See*: *COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p. 301; *CONGREGATION FOR THE CLERGY, General Directory for Catechisis,* 30, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, Vatican City 1997, p.33; Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Declaration, *Dignitatis Humanae, 8: AAS 58* (1966), 935; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Vartatis Splendoris, 107: AAS 85* (1993), 1217. AMECEA during its 14th Plenary made a similar call when it was stated that: "*extension courses and workshops on the same Social Teaching should be made available to Christian political leaders, professionals, business people, the security personnel, forces and juridical institutions.*" See *AFER*, October-December 2002, Vol. 44, Numbers 5 & 6, p.281f.

basis of its social teaching and in living the values of the Church as Family.[61] In this task we shall make concrete proposals commensurate with the fact that matters of solidarity and option for the poor demand practical expression of vigilance.

[61] These are like the values of sharing, interdependence, mutual concern, fairness, solidarity, option for the disadvantaged.

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5.2 Practical means of engagement

A vigilant and prophetic church requires, over and above the proposed internal preparations, practical strategies of engagement. Such vigilance means that the Catholic Church should design or adopt aggressive ways in living its social teaching, a teaching that necessarily includes risks. As Karl Rahner points out, this is a risk that must be taken if the church is not to be seen to be pedantic, to be living in a world of pure theory, remote from life, making pronouncements that do not touch the stubborn concreteness of real life.[62] Strategies of this nature are inescapable in the course of promoting social justice. This is what we would like to explore from now onwards.

5.2.1 Networking and mobilisation

Integral to the history of the Catholic social teaching is the culture of networking. At various moments the teaching has always received influence from unofficial and independent sources like social movements,[63] labour unions,[64] journals of opinion, political parties, spiritual justice movements.[65] All these are historical and practical examples the Catholic Church in Malawi could build on in its efforts to promote human

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[62] Karl Rahner, *The Shape of the Church to Come*, London, SPCK, 1974, p. 79.

[63] For example, behind *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891*) were movements like the Fribourg Union around Cardinal Gaspard Mermillod; the working-class pilgrimages to Rome of Leon Marmel; the Opera dei Congress; Cardinal Manning's championing of the London Dock Strikes; Baltimore's Cardinal Gibbon's interventions in Rome in defense of the American Knights of Labour. See John Coleman, "*Retrieving or Re-inventing Social Catholicism*," et al (ed), in Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), p.268. For *Quadragesimo Anno* (*QA.1931*), much of it is due to the close collaboration of its author, Oswald von Nell-Breuning, with German Catholic labour unions and the Centre Party, as well as the thinking of the remarkable network of economists, historians and ethicists of inter-disciplinary seminar, the Konigswinter Circle School, and, more largely, the social-economic thought of the Munchean-Gladbach school. *See: Nelli-Breuning and Quadragesimo Anno*, in J.A., Dwyer (ed), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought*, Colleville, MN, Liturgical Press, 1994, pp.676-678, and 802-813; Nell-Breuning, *"The Drafting of Quadragesimo Anno,"* pp.60-61; *See*: Marvin Mich, p.243.

[64] For instance, in post 1945 Europe, Christian trade unions campaigned for worker participation, etc. Again, economic co-operation and mutuality were fostered by organisations of farmers; credit or banking, civic participation by movements like *Jeunesse Ouvrié Chretienne*-**JOC.** Joseph Cardijn, together with Ferdinand Tonnet and Jacques Meert, started a study group called the "*Social Secretariat*" and a journal named *Jeunesse Syndicaliste* in 1919. They also founded *La Jeunesse Ouvrié Chrétienne* (JOC) in 1924, to enable the workers to be conscious and responsible apostles, and to work for the spiritual and material well-being. This group was called "*Jocistes*". In 1929 about twelve hundred "*Jocistes*" visited Pius XI under the leadership of Cardinal Van Roey: See Daniel-Rops, *A Fight for God 1870-1939*, pp. 294-295.

[65] John Coleman also mentions individual scholars like J. Maritain, Mounier, Barbara Ward, John Courtney Murray. *See*: John Coleman, "*Retrieving or Re-Inventing Social Catholicism. A Trans-Atlantic Response*," in Jonathan Boswell et al (ed), p.265ff.

dignity and social justice.[66] Networks, partnerships, alliances, etc, create space and ensure the sharing of synergy, experiences, skills and knowledge based on comparative advantages of the various actors.[67] Closely related to networking is popular mobilisation. Again, we find in the history of Catholic social movements, cases of mobilisation around popular issues. While it is true, as R. Aubert indicates, that very often the ecclesiastical authorities are slow to recognise such trends,[68] individual priests in collaboration with the laity, or the laity on their own, have been seen to take leading roles in activism. Typical examples are Fr. Emmanuel von Ketteler in Germany,[69] Mary Harris Jones,[70] and the Labour Priests in the US.[71] Such historical examples would be inspirational in the living of the social teaching in Malawi.

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[66] In Malawi, networking is firmly striking root in education and health sectors as evidenced by the ecumenical bodies like the Christian Educators Association of Malawi (CHEAM) and the Christian Hospitals Association of Malawi (CHAM). And since 1993, an ecumenical body on governance, the Public Affairs Committee (PAC), has been created comprising of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM); the Christian Council Association of Malawi (CCAM); the Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM), and other Pentecostal Churches. However, this is not yet the case with organisations like trade and labour unions, professional societies, various associations and social welfare groups, etc.

[67] For instance, in the fight for the rights of the workers in America, in 1910, an influential priest, Peter Dietz, was able to organise the *Militia of Christ for Social Service,* composed of union workers to build bridge between the church and the labour unions. *See*: Jeffrey Burns, *"Knights of Labour,"* NDCST, p. 342.

[68] The Catholic Church in the 19th century resisted the advances of the French Revolution of 1789 and its *Declaration of the Rights of Man.* It is also said that the popes viewed with disapproval the struggles for independence in Latin America.

[69] Fr. Emmanuel von Ketteler, in Germany (19th c.), through his preaching and writing on social problems, managed to awaken the conscience of the people and ignited a modest, yet effective movement known as the *Social Catholics*. His main concern was about the difficulty of reconciling the interests of the new classes of industrial bourgeoisie with those of industrial workers, the question of the new mode of production which, while efficient, resulted in a benefit for the few and the social and economic decline or exploitation of the many. It was the belief of Ketteler that the church had to address this problem. See Paul Misner, *Social Catholicism: From the Onset of Industrialization to the First World War*, New York, Crossroad, 1996, p.7. Daniel-Rops provides a detailed discussion on the history of mobilisation for lay movements generated out of this concern. *See*: H. Daniel-Rops, *"The Triumphant March of Social Catholicism," in A Fight For God 1870-1939,* New York, Image Books, 1967, p.128-167.

[70] In America, Mary Harris Jones, also known as Mother Jones, is well known for her activism in promoting workers' rights, children's rights, etc, through such means as strikes, demonstrations, etc. In her days, she scorned the Catholic Church when it offered only relief in the next life and did little to lighten the workers' load in the here and now. *See*: Marvin Mich, p.38. For more details, see also: Dale O. Fethering, *Mother Jones the Miners' Angel: A Portrait*, Carbindale University of Illinois, 1974, Mary (Harris) Jones, *Autobiography of Mother Jones*, Chicago, Charles H. Kerr & Co., 1975.

[71] These were supporters of the rights of the oppressed people, especially the workers. During the *Coal Strikes of 1902*, practically all the priests in the Pennsylvania Mining Region rallied solidly behind the strike. Fr. John Curran of Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania stands out as "the miners' friend". He worked closely with the leadership of the United Mine Workers. The same was the case in Chicago where priests in the stockyard neighborhood supported their *parishioners' strike in 1904*. And during the *Steel Workers' strike in 1919*, Adelbert Kazincy, a Slovak priest in Braddock, Pennsylvania, lifted the morale of the hundreds of workers who came to his morning mass and evening talks. One of the most effective and

5.2.2 Popular conscientization

Experience shows that successful popular mobilisation for or against a particular cause, requires proper conscientization. It is here the small Christian communities (SCC) become extremely strategic. As AMECEA points out, deeper and creative thinking needs to be done on these communities vis-à-vis their role in promoting human rights and social justice.[72] Experiences from other parts of the world, Latin America in particular, show that the small Christian communities were constituted, not only for prayer and devotions, but also as channels of bringing power to the poor in the process of promoting human rights and social justice.[73] Radical and lasting social transformation very often has roots among the most vulnerable social groups. In Malawi, the small Christian communities are very strategic for that role. Through the decentralised groups subsisting within,[74] ample room exists to promote human rights and social justice from below. These groups would act as nuclei infused with the social teaching on particular issues that affect the community and society at large. In this way, small ecclesial communities would indeed be alternative or contrasting communities within the overall local community, where they would act as the "salt" and the "light" in living the demands of social justice enlightened by the social teaching.

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celebrated labour priests was Peter Yorke of San Francisco. He helped to plan the strike strategy for, and wrote much of the published material on the *1901 port workers' strike in San Francisco*. As a gifted orator he "packed the halls" during these strikes, giving the admission fee to the strike fund. Yorke used *Rerum Novarum* (*RN.1891*) as his labour bible. For him, organizing unions was not just a pragmatic, expedient strategy for the workers, but also a protection for their dignity and natural rights. In America, there were also groups of social studies and social workers to which individuals like J.A. Ryan, J. Husslein, Cardinal Gibbons, Dorothy Day, belonged. For further reading on these, see: J.A. Ryan, *A Living Wage: Its Ethical and Economic Aspects*, New York, 1906; C.E. Curran, *American Catholic Social Ethics: Twentieth Century Approaches*, Notre Dame, London, 1982, esp., pp. 30-91 on the works of and activities of J.A. Ryan; Marvin Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements,* New York America Press Inc., 2003, p. 30ff.

[72] The 14th Plenary of AMECEA adopted the following as one of its resolutions: "*We reiterate and reconfirm the pastoral option made by AMACEA since the mid 70s. It is our conviction that, despite the unavoidable human limitations, Small Christian Communities are one of the best means to fight ethnocentrism, to promote justice and peace and to implement our option for deeper evangelisation*". *See*: *AFER*, October-December 2002, Vol. 44, Numbers 5 & 6, p.277.

[73] In one of the regional conferences, the Latin American Bishops noted that: "*It is necessary that small basic communities be developed in order to establish a balance with minority groups, which are the groups in power...The church-the people of God-will lend its support to the downtrodden of every social class so that they might come to know their rights and how to make use of them*". See Marvin Mich, p.243.

[74] These include Catholic Women Organisations (CWO); Legio Maria; Amai Achifundo; youth groups; choir groups; Bible study groups; development groups; devotional groups; ana a Tereza; Young Christian Workers (YCW), etc.

Through conscientization, the small ecclesial communities would also act as solid basis for mobilisation on issues critical to the community. On the overall, conscientization stimulates people, educates and galvanizes them around social concerns. It is very essential to know that everywhere, local communities are primary casualties of negative public policies and legislation. They suffer the heaviest burden of social injustice, and therefore, are more prepared and open to the message and actions that seek liberation.

5.2.3 Non-violent resistance

Non-violent resistance is another aspect that needs careful study and incorporation as means of promoting human rights and social justice. Time and again experience shows that even with best efforts and good intentions, there are limits to dialogue and negotiation.[75] Once a public authority gets embroiled in greed very rare does it hearken unto the voice of a pacifist. As a matter of fact, there is always danger for such voice to give the oppressive order an apparent legitimacy, hence maintaining the status quo. We believe, under freedom of expression, people have a duty to demonstrate against conditions that violet their dignity.[76] It is here the Catholic Church needs to come in as evidenced in cases of South Africa,[77] Poland and East Germany,[78] and the Philippines.[79]

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[75] For instance, marches and demonstrations against the negative behaviour of public authorities and institutions, policies and legislation, are universally accepted as means of promoting social justice and safeguarding human dignity.

[76] See Karl H. Peschke, *Christian Ethics. Moral Theology in the Light of Vatican II. Vol II: Special Moral Theology*, Birmingham, C. Goodliffe, 1990, p.291f.

[77] After years of appeal, but all in vain, in 1986, the Catholic Bishops in South Africa finally opted for a stance of non-violence resistance: "*The South African Catholic Bishops' Conference sees no choice but to envisage forms of non-violent action such as passive resistance, boycotts and economic pressure to move our country away from its present state of racial conflict and set it firmly on the road to justice.*" *See*: Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, p. 103. In view of the current difficulties in Zimbabwe, Archbishop Pius Ncube made a similar call not long ago. He said: *"I hope that people get so disillusioned that they really organise against the government and kick him out by a non-violent, popular, mass uprising. Because as it is, people have been too soft with this government. So people should pluck just a bit of courage and stand up against him and chase him away."* *See:* http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/4386343.stm 27/03/2005.

[78] In Poland, in 1952, eight bishops and over 900 priests were imprisoned. A year later, Cardinal Stefan Wyszynski, the Archbishop of Warsaw, was declared an enemy of the state and imprisoned; in East Germany, resistance to Communism came from both the Lutheran and Catholic Churches through such efforts as, "education for peace," prayer and repentance, discussion groups on peace, public candle-lit processions through the streets; in the Philippines, already in 1970s, Francisco Claver, the bishop of Bukidnon, was working to convert his fellow bishops and their people to active non-violence as the only legitimate Christian response to both the violence of the Marcos regime and the Communist New People's Army (NPA). For details, see: Marvin Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, New York, American Press, 1998, p.303-308.

Malawi is an emergent democracy and as such, people's confidence and tools of activism are yet to fully develop. It is here we believe the church would greatly assist to facilitate the evolution of the political consciousness and appreciation of tools of activism.



Figure 2: Demonstration in Blantyre Streets

Granted its extensive outreach structure, the tradition of the social teaching, and experiences from other parts of the world, plus the trust it enjoys from the public, particularly the marginalised groups, the Catholic Church is well qualified to carry out this task.[80] As Donal Dorr says, through animation, people would develop sensitiveness to the world around them, and cease to take things for granted. Instead, they would be encouraged not simply to wait patiently for justice but rather to confront the rich and the powerful when this proves necessary. In this process, Dorr continues:

> It should also be the task of the church to assure them that God is the God of the poor, who supports those who feel called to act like Moses in challenging the injustice of the powerful. [81]

It is significant to take note that non-violent active resistance can be organised within the framework of law, but it can also involve the breaking of unjust laws.[82] As is known, the

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[79] With the church's involvement, under *People Power 1* and *2* revolutions, Ferdinand Marcos and Joseph Estrada were brought down in 1986 and 2001 respectively.

[80] Tools of activism are legitimate means in enforcing rights and affirming human dignity. Actions like protest meetings, petitions, marches and demonstrations enhance transparent and accountable use of public authority and resources. They are effective in amplifying the course and increasing public awareness on the prevailing injustices thereby exerting pressure on public authority. Mass action begins with awareness raising, making people sensitive to the political, social-economic situation around them. For Paulo Freire, this is about helping people to move from being "objects" to "subjects" who no longer passively and fatalistically accept life. On this point, Hennelly says: "*In the process of teaching literacy to peasants, Freire intended also to liberate them from social-cultural enslavement by becoming aware of their own dignity and rights, aware too, of the real causes of their oppression, and of the urgent need to become active agents of their own destiny in seeking avenues of change. Obviously, this did not please governments that preferred peasants to accept passively their designation as brutes or animals, and Freire has been exiled from a number of Latin American countries, including his homeland, Brazil.*" *See*: Marvin Mich, p.261.

[81] Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor. A Hundred Years of Vatican Social Teaching*, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1983, p. 19.

[82] Tissa Balasuriya, *Planetary Theology*, p. 109.

primary objective of the law is not the enforcement of moral ideals. Therefore, there are times when it falters in upholding the integrity of the human person. It is here that it must as of necessity be called to question, and it is also in that sense that civil disobedience becomes legitimate.[83] In both Old and New Testaments, time and again, we come across cases of disobedience to earthly powers when these disregard the word of God.[84] This is the consciousness people ought to develop.

5.2.4 Political action

Increased engagement requires also that the Catholic Church be able to undertake specific political actions depending on issues and circumstances. In South Africa, for example, this was the case during the struggle against the apartheid regime.[85] Jonathan Boswell speaks of similar experiences following the end of WW II in Europe. He writes:

> In Western Europe after WW II, Christian political influences played a major part in promoting Franco-German reconciliation and early moves towards the European Economic Community (EEC). Christian democrats worked alongside

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[82] Shadrach, Misheck, and Abednego disobeyed the king's law when they refused to bow down before the graven image made by Nebuchadnezzar-Daniel 3, 16-18.

[83] Johan Verstraeten points out that it is not always self-evident to be obedient to rules and authorities. There is need for rules and authorities to be justified, since sometimes these can conflict with the values of society. In a democratic order, it can be useful to be disobedient in order to restore democratic order. However, this is only possible in a constitutional democracy as a way of preserving the fundamental or basic principles of the constitution, and not in an autocracy. Civil disobedience should be premised on rational argument that merit public debate, it must be the ultimate means of protest, chosen after other means of protest like legal parliamentary opposition, have failed, it should necessarily be non-violent, and that participants should be prepared to accept the judicial consequences of their act like punishment. Civil disobedience is justifiable when (i) *when the state does not protect life* (ii) *when the state does not protect property* (iii) *when the state systematically manipulates the truth.* See Johan Verstraeten, *Christian Political and Social Ethics,* Course Reader, Catholic University of Leuven, Academic Year 2004-2005, p.128ff.

[84] Mark 15,1-5; Luke 23, 6-12; John 18,8-11. Also Acts 4: 5-12; 19-20, and Acts 5: 29, are among the classic examples of civil disobedience. Jesus himself challenged state authority and did not always demonstrate obedience to it when it was obviously expected of him. Before Herod, Jesus did not answer a word; before Pilate, he also chose not to reply, and at the same time, according to John, Jesus reminded Pilate of the truth that every Christian and every bearer of authority must remember or be reminded of: *"...you would have no authority at all over me if it had not been granted to you from above.* John 19, 11; also see: Alan Boesak, "*What Belongs to Caesar? Once Again Roman 13,"* in *A Call For An End to Unjust Rule*, Edinburgh, The Saint Andrew Press, p. 147.

[85] During the struggle against the apartheid regime in South Africa the Catholic Church, for some time, was timid. It was not until late 1970s that it too a bold and decisive stand to be on the side of the poor and oppressed South Africans. *See*: "*Catholics in Apartheid Society*," p. 187 in Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *The Church as Family*, p 100. Soon this commitment found expression through intensive collaboration with such bodies like the South African Council of Churches (SACC); the United Democratic Front (UDF), political groupings, trade unions, labour unions, churches, community and sporting organisations; the African National Congress (ANC) in exile. *See*: Agbonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, p. 104.

> social democrats and liberals to exorcise Fascism and to hold at bay a militant, Soviet-dominated Communism. In Italy, Christian democrats broadly saw off both the far right and the extreme left; in the Low Countries they were flywheels for advanced civic consensus and social welfare; in the (then) West Germany they fostered both political devolution and a "social market" economy not without some affinities with Catholic social thought.[86]

Such historical models should prompt the regard of political action as integral to the church's promotion of social justice in Malawi. Tissa Balasuriya tells us that politics influences human lives and decides whether persons will have food, houses, jobs, education, civil rights, freedom, water, energy, clothing, etc.[87] Thus politics touches on the very basic needs of the people, their very fundamental rights. By its confession of human dignity and rights, the Catholic Church cannot refrain from political involvement. The church, says John De Gruchy, is not just the priestly and prophetic servant of the state; it is also the servant of the people, especially of those in need. In its priestly service of the nation, therefore, as in its witness of the kingdom of God, the church cannot be neutral. It has to take the side of justice and of the needy.[88] The church has to identify with the victims of oppression of whatever kind in their struggle even if, in the process, it appears that it is identifying with a particular political programme or policy.[89] Political action is about active involvement in the powers and machinery of the state.

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[86] Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), *Catholic Social Thought: Twilight or Renaissance?* Leuven, Leuven University, 2000, p. 100. Similarly, John Coleman comments that John XXIII's famous opening to the left and socialism in the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963*), was closely articulated with moves by the *Italian Christian Democratic Party* to find new support from *Italian Socialist* and *Marxist groupings. See:* John Coleman, "*Retrieving or Re-Inventing Social Catholicism. A Trans-Atlantic Response*," in Jonathan Boswell, p. 269.

[87] Tissa Balasuriya, *Planetary Theology*, p. 227.

[88] John De Gruchy, *"Prayer, Politics and False Piety,"* in Allan Boesak & Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed), *A Call For An End to Unjust Rule,* Glasgow, Bell and Bain Ltd, 1986, p. 108.

[89] John De Gruchy, in Allan Boesak & Charles Villa-Vicencio (eds), *End to Unjust Rule*, p. 108. Events in Malawi in the run-up to the third presidential and parliamentary elections showed the importance of this point although gross misunderstandings arose over the same. In attempt to forge a formidable united front of the opposing parties, the churches played a facilitation role in view that the contesting parties on their own volition create a coalition. The reason was that without such a move, the party in government would easily continue denying people fair and balanced competition.

5.2.5 Radical prophetic vocation

To be prophetic is inherent to the church. This implies the duty to expose and censure. Michael Walzer speaks of prophets as paradigmatic connected critics.[90] In their critique against social injustices, they make appeal to the community's shared past.[91] They speak the language of the people, particularly the disadvantaged based on the covenantal relationship with God. For the church, this means being imbedded in the community it serves and sharing in its difficulties,[92] in addition to actively opposing and denouncing the structures that destroy human dignity.[93] As a connected critic, the demand on it is that it recognises structures and social groups that perpetrate oppression, naming and effectively opposing them.[94] Nevertheless, the church is not only to remain an immanent critic. Its dangerous memory refuses it to succumb to that temptation. In liturgy and player, the church relates to another dimension that reveals its constitutive messianic and eschatological nature.[95] This constitutes a point of reference upon which it radically relativises the world together with all institutions of power and control. For the church, the world and history are not ultimate, and neither are they the destiny of human existence.[96] Therefore, in situations of social injustice, liturgy and prayer is constitutively

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[90] Tyler T. Roberts, "*Michael Walzer and the Critical Connections,*" in Johan Verstraeten, *Christian and Political Social Ethics*, Course Reader, Catholic University of Leuven, 2004-2005, p. 338.

[91] Op. cit.

[92] The connected critic can become a detached critic in the sense of being marginalized or out of voluntary renunciation of excessive power-Johan Verstraeten, 14 April 2005, K.U. Leuven.

[93] Hosea 1:2-9; 3:1-5; Ezekiel 4:1-5; 4; 12:1-20; 21:23-32; 37:15-28; 1:20; Jeremiah 13:1-11; 19:1-15; 2 Samuel 12:1-15.

[94] This is what the prophets did. They were neither general nor vague, but named specific institutions, social groups and situations that were oppressive and exploitative of the people of Israel. The same pattern is seen in John the Baptist and Jesus of Nazareth: "*Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices-mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law-justice, mercy and faithfulness.*" *See*: Matthew 23: 23-36 (New International Version). In the case of Malawi what comes to mind immediately are trade and economic policies, the big business community, the tobacco, tea and coffee industries, etc.

[95] *World Council of Churches: Faith and Order; Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry: Faith and Order Paper No. 111*, p 5, n. 23. In *Lumen Gentium*, the following metaphors are used extensively in speaking about the church: the *Kingdom of Christ present now in Mystery;* the *People made one with the Unity of the Father*, the *Son and the Holy Spirit*; a *Sheepfold whose one and indispensable door is Christ* (n.26); a *flock of which God Himself foretold He would be the Shepherd* (n.27); the *Church is a Piece of Land to be cultivated, the Village of God* (n.30); the *building of God* (n. 34); the *House of God* (n.37); the *Household of God in the Spirit* (n. 38); the *dwelling place of God among men* (n.39); the *holy Temple, the Holy City, New Jerusalem* (n.5); *"Our Mother"* (n.42); *spotless Spouse of the Spotless Lamb* (n.43); the *Mystical Body of Christ* (n.51), etc.

[96] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council Pastoral Constitution, *Lumen Gentium*, n. 9, says: " *That Messianic people has Christ as its head, "who was delivered up for our sins and rose again for our justification, and now, having won a name which is above all names, reigns in glory in heaven. The state of this people is*

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subversive.[97] In liturgy and prayer, the church, not only remembers and lives its eschatological vision, but also simultaneously wages radical protest reminding the world and the powers that be about their contingency and temporality. Perhaps more than any other scholar, Karl Barth expresses this point in a very powerful way when he says:

> To clasp hands in prayer is the beginning of an uprising against the order of the world...[98]

We find this understanding of liturgy and prayer as protest against social injustice in the experiences of the church in South Africa during apartheid.[99] Here liturgy and prayer turned out to be a passionate a call upon God to replace the structures of oppression with the just ones, and to remove from power those who persisted in defying his laws, installing in their place leaders who would govern with justice and mercy.[100] A call to prayer, in the face of injustice is to demonstrate to the oppressor and his instruments of torture that things could be different, it is rebellion, a clear testimony that indeed time comes when the church must cease praying for an oppressive and intransigent regime, instead that it must pray for its end. After all, this is the essence of the Lord's Prayer, the prayer of Our Father, the prayer for the kingdom to come, and by implication, it is a call for an end to evil and its mediating institutions.[101] De Gruchy agrees:

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that of dignity and freedom of the sons of God, in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells as in His temple. Its law is the New Testament commandment to love as Christ loved us. Its end is the kingdom of God, which has been begun by God Himself on earth, and which is to be further extended until is brought to perfection by Him at the end of time."

[97] When the early Christians openly confessed in faith: "*We believe in One God; the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen...*" that was, and remains a radical protest against any attempt to exalt the earthly authority above God, or to divinise politics and leadership. The message is clear, although political leaders preside over states and nations, and wield power and authority over people, in the end they are not makers of whatever exists. See: Agnes Cunningham, *The Early Church and the State*, Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1982, p.2

[98] John De Gruchy, "*Prayer, Politics and False Piety,*" in Allan Boesak & Charles Villa-Vicencio (ed), *A Call For An End to Unjust Rule*, Glasgow, Bell and Bain, Ltd, 1986, p. 107.

[99] On 16 June 1986, marking the tenth anniversary of the 1976 Soweto uprising and massacre, a group of church persons issued a: *"Theological Rationale and a Call to Prayer for the End of Unjust Rule." See:* Allan Boesak and Charles Villa-Vicencio, *A Call for an End to Unjust Rule*, Edinburgh, The Saint Andrew Press, 1986; Villa-Vicencio, *"Trapped in Apartheid,"* p.153-158.

[100] Op.cit.

[101] Michael H. Crosby discusses this in greater detail. In one passage he states: "*the call for God's kingdom to come on earth as in heaven-possibly more then any other words-testifies to our thesis that, for the first Christians, the Our Father was a subversive prayer. The early community viewed themselves as residing in Babylon where the politics of emperor worship and the economics of exploitation had become united in the oppression of the poor. As followers of the one who was crucified on contrived charges of subversion of the*

> Prayer related to the Kingdom of God therefore, cannot be neutral. The church can no more pray for the flourishing of injustice than it can for the flourishing of sin, which means that in praying for salvation of the world, it must also be asking God to bring about an end to those structures and policies which impoverish and oppress people.[102]

According to William R. Domeris:

> "Your Kingdom come" is a revolutionary prayer. It attacks the heart of evil in this world; it sounds the death knell for all forms of oppression and looks forward to the establishment of a new kingdom here on earth...When we pray, "your Kingdom come", we look for the end of this age, but at the same time, if we are to be true to the teaching of Jesus, we must work for the development of the Kingdom as a physical reality".[103]

Recent experiences in Malawi show that, unlike prior to 1993, the ecclesial community, collectively, is getting transformed both in its being a connected critic and in its liturgy and prayer. For a very long time it had offered public prayer only in thanksgiving for the wise and dynamic leadership in the person of Banda.[104] Presently, the churches together

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political and economic forces of his day, these Christians knew that it was impossible to separate the religious realm from the politico-economic realm when they considered the infrastructures of their reality." *See*: Michael H. Crosby, *Thy Will Be Done: Praying The Our Father As Subversive Activity*, New York, Maryknoll, 1983, p.59ff. See also: Leonardo Boff, *The Lord's Prayer: The Prayer of Integral Liberation*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1988.

[102] John De Gruchy, "*Prayer, Politics and False Piety,*" in Allan Boesak & Charles Villa-Vicencio, *A Call for an End to Unjust Rule*, p.109. In a similar way, Rosemary R. Ruether, says: " *Jesus envisages a new era of God's justice and peace coming about only when all the systems of domination of money, rank, and religious hierarchy are overthrown, when those who wish to be first are willing to be last and servants of all, and in which those who are nothing in this present system are lifted up.*" *See*: Rosemary R. Ruther, *To Change the World: Christology and Cultural Criticism*, London, SCM Press, 1981, p. 17

[103] William R. Domeris, in Allan Boesak & Charles Villa-Vicencio, *A Call for an End to Unjust Rule*, p. 109.

[104] A notable instance to this effect is a scriptural densely worded statement issued jointly on 6 July 1974 as part of commemoration of 10 years of independence. See: *Joint Message From the Churches of Malawi on 10th Anniversary of Independence*, 6 July 1974. For the full text of the message, see Annex III. The statement is based of scriptures and has great praises for the Life President Ngwazi Dr. K. Kamuzu Banda. Nevertheless, the very first ten years of independence constitute a framework within which gross human rights violation occurred, with the Jehovah's Witnesses as an unprecedented example. According to some reports, shortly before independence on 6 July 1964, 1081 houses and not less than 100 prayer houses belonging to members of Jehovah Witnesses were burned down, and 588 fields destroyed. On October 23, 1967, the Jehovah Witnesses, following a party resolution, were effectively proscribed. It is also reported that following the ban, in October, a large number of women in Mulanje were assaulted and raped. On October 25, 1967, it is also reported that a 15-year girl was tied to a tree and raped for six times at Makuwila Village for her refusal to renounce her religious beliefs. In November, the same year, it is said that 3000 members were brought before the court in Lilongwe to answer charges of belonging to an unlawful society. Of these 2,400 were committed to prison, while 800 were detained at police station. In the following year, 1968, it is reported that in one instance, 170 houses were burnt down in Lilongwe within three nights, while in the neigbouring district of Mchinji, 34 houses were burnt down together with 18 food

are able to also offer liturgy and prayer in protest against social injustice.[105] However, this plausible shift needs to be accompanied by deep theological reflection. It needs to be understood and appreciated as subversive and protest against injustice. We are of the opinion that understanding liturgy and prayer in this way would contribute significantly to the living and application of the social teaching in the process of transforming society along the path of social justice.

5.2.6 Social analysis

More than ever before, the human reality is now very complex. To gain sufficient understanding, particularly in the course of seeking solutions to social problems, multiple perspectives are unavoidable. It is for this reason we find the integration of social analysis necessary in Malawi. This position has repeatedly been advocated in the Universal Church itself.[106] Francis McHugh confirms:

> When positivist methodology took hold, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s, Catholic social teaching *eo ipso* became more objectivist. Whereas at first social sciences were seen as harsh critics of the abstract and a-historical metaphysics of Catholic social teaching and as a relativist corrective of the static and universalist ethics deduced from natural law, later on they strengthened the "expertise" of the Catholic social thought and added to the *nil sine episcopo* mentality of the magisterium.[107]

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storages. In all these instances, men and women were brutally harassed and beaten. *See*: http://www.jwiles.com/malawi.htm 5/04/2005. See also: Adam D.C. Finnerty, *World Citizen: Action For Global Justice*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis books, 1982, p.65; Tony Hodges, "*Jehovah's Witness in Central Africa*," Report §. 29 of the Minority Rights Group, London, 1976.

[105] The prayers that were time and again organised at Njamba-Blantyre during the campaign against attempts to amend the *Constitution of Malawi* to allow Bakili Muluzi to continue are clear testimony.

[106] Pope Benedict IX (1920) issued recommendation for close attention to social sciences in the course of seeking solutions to social problems. The same was reiterated by Pope Pius XI (1930s), and further elaborated by Pope Paul VI in *Octogesima Adveniens* (*OA.1971*).

[107] Francis P. McHugh, *The Social Role of the Roman Catholic Church in England, 1958-1982,* Cambridge University, unpublished thesis, 1983. The Vatican II document, *Gaudium et Spes*, is again clear on this point. This is what it says: "*...It is sometimes difficult to harmonize culture with Christian teaching. These difficulties do not necessarily harm the life of faith. Indeed they can stimulate the mind to a more accurate and penetrating grasp of the faith. For recent studies and the findings of science, history, and philosophy raise new questions which influence life and demand new theological investigations...In pastoral care, appropriate use must be made not only of theological principles, but also of the findings of the secular sciences, especially of psychology and sociology...Through a sharing of resources and points of view, let those teaching in seminaries, colleges and universities try to collaborate with men well versed in the other sciences.*" *Gaudium et Spes*, Vatican II Documents, pp. 268-270.

This shows, as Jonathan Boswell points out, the magisterium alone can hardly address all the relevant tasks.[108] Cross fertilisation of ideas and solutions from other fields of knowledge is essential. Walter Lesch rightly observes that:

> There is no privileged access to truth in matters of society, economy and politics. If the Catholic social teaching wants to be more than just another private ideology, it has to take part in the process of democratic deliberation on the basis of empirical evidence. This does not mean that the background of its religious convictions and anthropological presuppositions does not matter. But they have to be articulated in a language that reaches those who are not convinced by religious faith.[109]

Similarly, Alois John Buch proposes:

> If the Catholic social thought is to be effective in the face of the pivotal problems and questions posed by contemporary ethical imperatives, it must remain internally and externally open-minded. Nothing less than this kind of effectiveness can facilitate the contribution, which Christianity, from its perspective of eternity, brings to making life more humane.[110]

From these observations, we underscore that social analysis is very essential not only for purposes of cross fertilising insights from other social sciences, but also for unravelling of root causes beneath people's historical experiences so as to be able to generate realistic solutions.[111] Social analysis based on the methodological approaches of the Catholic social teaching would ensure that the results so far obtained are technically scientific, i.e.

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[108] Jonathan Boswell et al (ed), p. 98. Christine Gudorf points out that in order to analyze the world for the "historical project" of theological praxis, the church must make "use of the tools of social science-of sociology, economics, psychology, and political science-to analyze the world". See Judith A. Dwyer, (ed), *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Teaching*, Minnesota, The Liturgical Press, 1994, p. 700.

[109] Walter Lesch, "*Towards an Ethics of Reconstruction and Mediation*," in Jonathan Boswell, p.91.

[110] Alois John Buch, "*Catholic Social Thought in Transition: Some Remarks on its Future Communicability*," in Jonathan Boswell, et al (ed), p.146.

[111] Joe Holland et al, state: "*It is not sufficient to lament the global miseries of hunger, poverty, and oppression. It is similarly insufficient to urge, '...let's do something!' We need adequate analysis to pinpoint the deepest roots of the problem and to shape the most effective responses.*" *See:* Joe Holland, and Peter, J. Henriot, *Social Analysis. Linking Faith and Justice*. Washington D.C., Maryknoll, Orbis Books and Center of Concern, 1983, p. 51. This point is in harmony with what is stated in the Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (*CA. 1991*) that: "*...the practical and experiential dimensions of the teaching is to be found at the cross-roads where Christian life and conscience come into contact with the real world.*" *See:* John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, (1991), n.59

objectively verifiable, well interpreted in accordance to the fundamentals of the teaching itself.[112]

5.2.7 Social research and publication

The promotion of social justice, among other aspects, requires good and sustained publicity. Often times, silence tends to be favourable for human rights abuses. Publicity campaign for or against specific causes in public policy or legislation, etc., is one way of safeguarding social justice. Publication amplifies causes and brings them to the wide attention. Although the Catholic Church is one of the pioneers in this sector in Malawi, till now publications are mostly on religious issues.[113] No adequate attention is paid on social-political matters.[114] As the church progresses deep into the 21st century, it is time it started to do research, data analysis, documentation and publication on abuses and injustices.[115] In this regard, the proposed institutional and human capacities are a matter of urgency. The church needs to be scientifically skilled in such areas like information gathering and analysis, research, documentation and publication.[116] This is essential if it is to engage and influence the public and manage to win the hearts and minds of the wider audience. With the increasing trends of secularisation and subsequent privatisation of religious belief, the unaided moral authority upon which the Catholic Church relies so much is not adequate to win the hearts of those who do not share its religious beliefs.

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[112] This requirement also affects the universal dimensions of the social teaching as Francis McHugh further indicates: "*Lack of intellectual quality is surely a threat to the future of the Catholic social teaching. People have a right to expect rigorous answers to real questions. Shallow thinking can be countered only by more international and interdisciplinary co-operation between social scientists and theologians to include significant Third World countries and interests, and to encompass the perspectives of an impeding world wide modernity, with its many concomitant problems*". See Francis P; McHugh, "*Muddle or Middle-Level? A Place for Natural Law in Catholic Social Thought*," in Jonathan Boswell, p 31.

[113] The Catholic Church in Malawi owns the following Press and Publishing Houses: *Likuni Press and Publishing House* in Lilongwe (the oldest); *Montfort Press* (Blantyre); *Montfort Media House* Balaka.

[114] The only effort so far is that of the *Lamp Magazine* published by the *Montfort Media House* at Balaka in the Catholic Diocese of Mangochi.

[115] Periodic publication on abuses of power, violation of human rights and freedoms, fraud and corruption, statements by the hierarchy and other voices within the Catholic Church is very crucial in the sustained campaign for social justice.

[116] By scientific we mean that the church's stance, as much as possible, must be factual, verifiable and objective, at the same time able to propose realistic alternatives. Anything short of this makes it susceptible being discredited.

5.2.8 Active solidarity with victims

5.2.8.1 Special pastoral counselling ministry

In addition to the above proposals the Catholic Church needs to avail its physical presence to concrete victims in the local communities. In mind we have the possibility of a special pastoral ministry centring on counselling of the victims of injustices and human rights abuses. It is said that:

> The Church's social teaching is the indispensable reference point that determines the nature, modality, articulation and development of pastoral activity in the social field...It is the expression of the ministry of social evangelisation, aimed at enlightening, stimulating and supporting the integral promotion of the human person through the practice of Christian liberation in its earthly and transcendent dimension.[117]

The rationale for such ministry would be to provide an opportunity for individuals who, in one way or another, would be victimised by the community, workplace, political institutions, etc, to seek and find space where they could get relief by having someone who, with empathy, would listen to them tell their story. A ministry of this nature in the church would assist victims to overcome the physical, social, psychological, emotional, etc, damage that they have suffered. In that way, it would help them regain their human dignity and respect. Further, allowing the victims tell their story is a very important step towards personal healing, reconciliation at individual level, and the wider community. It could also be part of sensitizing the community at large to make sure that such abuses do not happen again.

5.2.8.2 Collaboration

We are mindful that since 1994 there are public bodies,[118] and a number of civil society organisations,[119] that in one way or another could already be doing some of what is being suggested here. While these could be partners, we see the church providing a different

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[117] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p.299. See also: John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptoris Missio, 11: AAS 83* (1991), 259; Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens, 51: AAS 63* (1971), 440; John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus, 57: AAS 83* (1991), 862.

[118] These are the *Malawi Human Rights Commission* (MHRC), *Office of the Ombudsman,* etc.

[119] For example, the *Centre for Human Rights and Rehabilitation* (CHRR); Malawi Carer; Civil Liberties Committee (CILIC); etc.

quality in the way of dealing with the victims. In many instances religious institutions, more than any other, represent the values that victims of human rights abuses need. These values include love, acceptance, care, understanding, empathy, comfort, assurance and encouragement.[120] A religious person or institution, in a special way, symbolises the highest imaginable point in our life to which victims can seek and find solace because they stand in the name of God in whom people tend to rely for such assurance, acceptance and consolation when everything in their personal world seems to crumble. In Malawi to this day, are people who suffered greatly under the one-party regime, but also not long ago during the first ten years of multiparty politics, either directly, or indirectly through what had befallen their loved ones. Due to lack of a ministry of this nature either in the church or society, they still remain wounded, not yet reconciled within themselves and with the community.[121]

5.2.8.3 Physical location

The proposed counselling ministry would be located at different levels in the Catholic Church depending on needs and availability of human capacities, as well as taking into account easy accessibility by individuals who live in the countryside.[122] We are aware

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[120] This is with particular reference to Malawi. We are aware of the difficulties regarding the relationship between religious people like priests and the laity or children in Europe and America, with cases of child abuse, etc. So we do not make this a universal observation.

[121] We cannot build a society or communities of peace if due attention is not paid to the individual. In modern studies more and more importance is being attached to the individual person as a critical player in the processes of forgiveness and reconciliation towards peacemaking and peace building. Authors like J. Monbourquette, J. Barudy, J. Herman, L. Martin-Baro, Muller-Fahrenholz, and D. Shriver have in their respective ways developed clear theories on psychological and political dimensions of forgiveness and reconciliation. Although their theories seem to concern victims at macro-level, elements of it appear to be relevant even at the level of the individual or community. As a matter of illustration, Monbourquette talks of thirteen steps through which the forgiveness process goes when seen from the victim's point of view: (i) *refusal to vengeance,* (ii) *acceptance of the wound and the personal limits to heal it* (iii) *sharing the wound with someone* (iv) *identification of the loss to go through the process of mourning* (v) *acceptance of the anger and desire to revenge* (vi) *self-forgiveness* (vii) *understanding the offender* (viii) *finding sense in the offence* (ix) *knowing that oneself is worthwhile of forgiveness and that one has been forgiven already* (x) *leave any abstention to forgive and be open to the gift of forgiveness* (xi) *accept the joy of forgiveness* (xii) *take the decision to renew the relationship or not* (xiii) *celebrate forgiveness.* See: Johan Verstraeten, *Ethics of Peace, War and International Relations*, Reader, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2004-2005, p 206.

[122] We emphasize the aspect of the countryside because that is where many people in Malawi live, and coincidently, these people do not have easy access to counseling services since most if not all the providers of such services are resident in the urban areas. The Catholic Church, with its outreach structure that extends within reach of the majority of the rural population is ideal to provide such pastoral counseling service to the rural population.

that the church has various pastoral ministries on counselling like youth, marriage, HIV/AIDS, etc. Therefore, a proposal for a special pastoral ministry on counselling of the victims of various human rights abuses in society is not out of step with the church's overall pastoral ministry.[123]

5.2.9 Legislation and public policy dialogue

5.2.9.1Discussion forums

Public policy and legislation dialogue presumes two things. First is the need for the collective leadership of the Catholic Church in Malawi to initiate a culture of interaction with various stakeholders in state and society. It is said:

> The Church's social doctrine is a privileged instrument of dialogue between Christian communities and the civil and political community. It is an appropriate tool for promoting and cultivating attitudes of authentic and productive cooperation in ways adapted to the circumstances. The commitment of civil and political authorities, called to serve the personal and social vocation of mankind according to their own areas of competence and with the means available to them, can find in the social teaching of the Church an important support and a rich source of inspiration.[124]

In mind are key actors in the management of financial institutions both national and international,[125] multinational co-operations, and the big business community, media institutions, top-level politicians, youth and women groups, diplomats and the NGO sector. Arrangements of this nature are essential to reduce gulfs, opacities or secrecies. Further, we find them helpful in bringing the powerful to account for their actions vis-à-

[123] As people become more and more aware of their rights, the greater the need for institutions that can promote and protect these rights, and at the same time provide rehabilitation in a multifaceted way whenever violations are experienced. We believe that the Catholic Church, and indeed any other church stands in a very special way in this regard and has a special comparative advantage because of its nature and mission in society. Its counseling ministry would be very much unlike any other by government or non-governmental organisations.

[124] *Cf. COMPENDIUM OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH*, p. 303.

[125] International Financial Institutions like the *World Bank, International Monetary Fund* (IMF), *African Development Bank* (ADB); *International Development Agency* (IDA), etc; and also local bodies like the *Reserve Bank*, and all commercial banks.

vis the hardships of the majority, in addition to promoting a higher visibility and public profile for the course of the poorest groups, or victims of social injustice.[126]

5.2.9.2 Technical contribution

Second is the possibility of technical input. Discussions in chapters three and four have shown how public polices and institutions could contribute to the deprivation of dignity from the majority. And still in chapter four we have seen that the Government of Malawi has, over the past years, initiated public policy reforms in many fields including the national economy. What remains doubtful is to whether the Catholic Church has had any input in such vital processes. We believe that in its task of promoting social justice, the church should interest itself with public policies and legislation on strategic areas like education, health, land, labour, agriculture, commerce and trade, national budget, domestic and international debts. Through the proposed institutions the church would proactively contribute on the basis of its social teaching to such critical areas.[127]

5.3 Creating countervailing power

At times, promotion of social justice requires radical options. As Abgonkhianmeghe E. Orobator says, the mere offer of hope and encouragement to the oppressed people, if prolonged and without any practical and workable proposals; soon degenerates into palliatives which facilitate social withdrawal and reinforce fatalism and quietism.[128] Likewise, Jonathan Boswell observes the tendency whereby:

> To avoid structural or systemic issues, politics and the economy slides easily towards acceptance of the status quo. It neglects ideas of 'structural sin' or

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[126] Johan Verstraeten says: " *...Society has the face of its victims. Very often technology, ideologies, policies, laws easily mask realities on the ground. There are always serious and deep perversions in technological, policy and ideological prescriptions that in the end make some people victims.*" Class notes, March 2005, K.U. Leuven. This point fits very well into our discussion in chapter one and also two on the way through legal and policy means the majority of the Malawian people have always been marginalized economically.

[127] In this regard, it would also require the church to work closely on specific issues with civil society organisations as well as respective committees of the National Assembly. We have in mind the Budget and Finance Committee, Public Accounts Committee; Public Appointments Committee; the Legal Affairs Committee, etc, as well as the respective committees of the cabinet

[128] Abgonkhianmeghe E. Orobator, *The Church as Family: African Ecclesiology in Its Social Context*, p. 117.

> pervasive injustice, as also efforts at improvement through collective agency, legislation, organised public pressure, parties or movements…[129]

In the presence of unyielding resistance against change we are of the opinion that another alternative that merits thorough consideration is the building up of countervailing power based on subsidiarity. Without sufficient checks and balances, power tends to degenerate and become despotic. Institutions of civil society, both national and local, play the mediating role in balancing power and ensuring its proper use by the state. Thus in promoting human dignity and social justice, the Catholic Church needs to encourage the emergence of bargaining power blocks in local communities. Entities such as trade and labour unions, professional associations like farmers' associations, teachers' unions, journalists' associations, law society, society of accountants, are vital in advocating specific interests. Added to this schedule would be grass-root movements. These are often devoid of remedial means to deal with situations where violation of rights occurs such as poor public services,[130] exploitative economic activities of traders, etc. In order to empower grass-root communities the Catholic Church has to encourage formation of community action groups within the ambit of the small Christian communities. These would be trained in knowledge and skills to defend and promote common interests. Action groups are vital in influencing public opinion, amplifying popular consciousness and power, and in that way put pressure on public authorities and institutions.

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[129] Jonathan Boswell et al, (ed), p. 102.

[130] People in rural areas are in many cases worst victims of poor service provision like agricultural extension services, healthcare, education, etc, as well as exploitation by middlemen traders. This is because, they are not well protected, and neither are they accustomed to a culture of cooperatives where they can collectively bargain for fair terms of trade, or mobilize to demand for better social services. These people need to be made aware of such approaches like collective bargaining, petitions, boycotts, etc so that where needed, they can make use of them to protect and promote their rights. In conditions of political and economic extremism, sometimes people are pushed to the limits of tolerance and endurance. Hence it becomes almost natural to react, sometimes forcefully against the pressure of unjustified denial of one's dignity. It appears to us that failure to stand-up in the face of severe oppression amounts to implicit collusion with processes or forces that promote indignity and it is to dishonour God whose image each one is. Laying flat in idleness in the face of extreme oppression puts the oppressed and oppressor at par as both bring dishonour to God. To react against oppressive situations is an honour to God and affirmation of one's dignity. With benefit from its long tradition of Catholic social movements as we have seen in places like Europe and America, the church is well placed to assist the Malawian society to come to the realisation that variegated forms of activism are permissible as tools of liberation. They are effective enough in bringing society to an awareness of its social responsibilities, and contain an educational value in making people aware of issues. We are aware that these tools, many times have detestable side effects. Nevertheless, there is nothing more detestable than destroying human dignity.

5.4 Active resistance

Since 9/11 the old question has returned on the academic and political agenda. This is about the legitimacy of force as means towards establishing peace and social justice. It is on this note we would like to windup the discussion. At a glance, the subject appears remote, and not so relevant. But although Malawi has enjoyed a comparatively long period of stability and social peace, conditions in many countries in Africa continue to show the speed at which peace and stability can deteriorate.[131] Therefore, we find it essential to examine the different thoughts on force and its role in promoting social justice as far as the Catholic social teaching is concerned.[132]

5.4.1The exodic memory

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, there is recognition that force and war are very much present in the history of the people of God.[133] This is the case from the exodus through the period of the judges to the establishment of the monarchy. In all these episodes God is portrayed as one who leads the Israelites in battle, he protects and makes them victorious over their enemies.[134] In fact, their liberation from Egypt is shrouded in force wrought by the hand of the angel of God after the failure of protracted persuasive and dialogical

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[131] Even in Malawi, the protests that followed the results of May 20, 2004 General Elections provide a glimpse on the fragility of peace and stability.

[132] The thinking that we shall follow is somehow reminiscent to the Just War Theory. Augustine of Hippo (354-430) is generally acknowledged as the first to offer a sustained treatment of war and justice in his work: The City of God. His theory was, further formalized, by Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274). Some of influential thinkers who have significantly contributed to the development of the theory include Francisco de Vitoria (1492-1546); Francisco Suarez (1548-1617); Hugo Grotius (1583-1645); and Emerich de Vattel (1714-1767). In summary, a war is considered to be just on condition that: it is declared by a legitimate authority; there is a just cause; it is fought with the right intention; it is waged as a last resort; there exist a reasonable chance of success, and there has to be a degree of proportionality, meaning a government must respond to aggression with force only when the effects of its defensive actions do not exceed the damage done by the aggression itself. And in course of the war, there has to be respect to the noncombatant immunity and proportionate means used in terms of specific tactics of warfare seeking as it sere to restrict unnecessary use of force. For a thorough study on the theory, we suggest the following literature: J.B. Elshtain (ed), *Just War Theory*, Oxford Blackwell, 1992; J.B. Hehir *"Just War Theory in a Post-Cold War World,"* in *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, 20 (1992), pp.237-258. See also: Lisa Sowle Cahill, *Theological Context of Just War Theory and Pacifism: A Response to J.B. Hehir*, ibid; pp. 259-266; S.O. Ilesanmi, *"Just War Theory in Comparative Perspective,"* in: *Journal of Religious Ethics*, 28 (2000), 1, 139-155; J. Johnson, *Ideology, Reason and the Limitation of War: Religious and Secular Concepts 1200-1740,* Princeton, 1975; J. Johnson, *Just War Tradition and the Restraint of War: A Moral and History Inquiry*, Princeton, 1981.

[133] David J. O'Brien, et al., *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003, p. 598.

[134] For example, *see*: Deuteronomy 1:30; 20:4; Joshua 2:24; Judges 3:28; Judges 4:4-16; 5:2-31.

missions to pharaoh to let them leave.[135] Incidences like these provide the material for some social ethicists to argue that force is equally admissible in promoting social justice; that oppressed people can liberate themselves through violence in order to create their own future and identity in history.[136]

5.4.2 The ambivalence of the magisterium

5.4.2.1 John Paul II

When it comes to the Catholic social teaching, there is evident ambivalence on the subject. The immediate and very explicit position of the teaching is that force or violence is not the right way to proceed. John Paul II strongly argues:

> When people think they possess the secret of a perfect social organisation which makes evil impossible, they also think that they can use any means, including violence and deceit, in order to bring that organisation into being. Politics then becomes a "secular religion" which operates under the illusion of creating paradise in this world. But no political society-which possesses its own autonomy and laws-can ever be confused with the kingdom of God. The Gospel parable of the seeds among the wheat (cf.Matt.13: 24-30; 36-43) teaches that it is for God alone to separate the subjects of the kingdom from the subjects of the Evil One, and that this judgment will take place at the end of time. By presuming to anticipate judgment here and now, man puts himself in the place of God and sets himself against the patience of God.[137]

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[135] Without getting into Biblical Hermeneutics, we see that prior to liberation, God visited Pharaoh with different types of plagues as a way of forcing him to let the Israelites go, but he could not. These plagues were: (i) *the Plague of Blood, (ii) the Plague of Frogs, (iii) the Plague of Gnats, (iv) the Plague of Flies, (v) the Plague on Livestock, (vi) the Plague of Boils, (vii) the Plague of Hail, (viii) the Plague of Locusts, (ix) (x) the Plague of Darkness*. See Exodus 7:14-8:25-9:1-10:1-11:1-10. Nine plagues were visited on the land of Egypt but Pharaoh could not release the Israelites until the tenth plague, i.e. *the death of the first born of man and beast*. We see here a progression in intensity of the force used to make Pharaoh release the people. All this build up eventually leads to violence by which the Israelites are allowed to go. In modern thinking, we can see here a pattern of negotiation to bring about peace and justice in a non-violent manner. However, we also see the limitations to these tools, thus violence or preferably, force, becomes a last resort. What is remarkable here is that with this story, as Johan Verstraeten says: "*for the first time an idea has entered human history, an idea that people can change oppressive structures through violence, that they can liberate themselves through violence in order to create their own future*." Class presentation on *Christian Political and Social Ethics*, K.U. Leuven, March 2005.

[136] *See*: Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *On Earth as it is in Heaven: Jews, Christians, and Liberation Theology*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1987, Chapter Four.

[137] John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus*, (CA.1991), quoted in David O'Brien, et al, *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003, p. 457. In other places, violence is said to be evil, a lie for it goes against the truth of our faith, the truth of our humanity, it destroys what it claims to defend: the dignity, the life, the freedom of human beings. *See:* John Paul II address at Drogheda, Ireland (29 September 1979), 9: *AAS 71* (1979), 1081; John Paul II, *The Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation*, 1986, §. 78. The same is clearly stated in earlier encyclicals of Leo

5.4.2.2 Paul VI

Reacting to situations in Latin America where under nuances of liberation theology, poor people had started to mobilise against the oppressive military and civil regimes, Paul VI in the encyclical letter *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN.1975*) mounted a strong and categorical rejection of violence particularly when it comes to the use of arms. He said:

> The Church cannot accept violence, especially the force of arms-which is uncontrollable once it is let loose-and indiscriminate death as the path to liberation, because she knows that violence always provokes violence and irresistibly engenders new forms of oppression and enslavement which are often harder to bear than those from which they claimed to bring freedom…We exhort you not to place your trust in violence and revolution: that is contrary to the human spirit, and it can also delay instead of advancing that social uplifting to which you lawfully aspire. We must say and affirm that violence is not in accord with the Gospel, that is not Christian; and that sudden or violent changes of structures would be deceitful, ineffective of themselves, and certainly not in conformity with the dignity of the people.[138]

5.4.2.3 John XXIII

In the encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* (*PT.1963)* the position of the magisterium on the use of force is again that of clear rejection. John XXIII advises that to proceed gradually is the law of life in all its expressions, that in human institutions too, it is not possible to renovate for the better except by working from within gradually.[139] Here, he reiterates the position of Pius XII, who in 1943 stated:

> Salvation and justice are not to be found in revolution, but in evolution through concord. Violence has always achieved only destruction, not construction; the kindling of passion, not their pacification; the accumulation of hate and ruin, not the reconciliation of the contending parties. And it has reduced men and

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XIII. For instance: Encyclical *Quod Apostolici Muneris BP I, 34*; Great Ency 28. In the face of severe injustice and oppression, Leo XIII advocates Christian patience and prayer as the best way to lessen the undying struggle between the rich and the poor. See also Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor. A Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching*, p.39.

[138] Paul VI, apostolic Exhortation Encyclical *Evangelii Nuntiandi* (*EN.1975*), n.37. See also David O'Brien at al, *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage*, New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003, p. 316. Paul VI articulated this position with specific reference to the *Campesinos* of Colombia, August 23, 1968. It reflects the situation of the severity of oppression by the military and top class, and the increasing militancy among the ordinary people with some support from the local church to change the situation by means of violence. We should also recall that this is the period when liberation theology was gaining ground in Latin American.

[139] David O'Brien, *Catholic Social Thought. The Documentary Heritage*. New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 2003, p. 158.

> parties to the difficult task of rebuilding, after sad experience, on the ruins of discord.[140]

5.4.2.4 Grave injustice acknowledged

Although the general line of thinking in the magisterium is against use of force as one way to establish and promote social justice, the ambivalence remains. This is further made complex by the Catholic Church's own open acknowledgement of the reality of grave economic inequalities in society and the danger this presents to social peace and stability. The same Paul VI says the following:

> There are certainly situations whose injustice cries to heaven. When whole populations destitute of necessities live in a state of dependence barring them from all initiative and responsibility, and all opportunity to advance culturally and to share in social and political life. Recourse to violence, as a means to right these wrongs to human dignity, is a grave temptation.[141]

Here we see the acknowledgement of economic imbalance and the propensity it has to generate violence. However, there is no immediate acceptance of the use of counter-violence or force as means to rectify the situation. Once again Paul VI warns that violence breeds new injustices, imbalances and disasters.[142] Clearly, there seems to be a dilemma in his mind because although violence is rejected as means to address social injustices, on the other hand, he acknowledges that unjust situations must be changed, that they must be fought against and overcome.[143] It is on the basis of this ambiguity that we are persuaded to conclude that his position against the use of force is not cast in absolute terms. This is more the case in the light of what he further says:

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[140] David O'Brien, *Catholic Social Thought*, p. 158, see also: Address to workers from the dioceses of Italy gathered in Rome, Pentecost, June 13, 1943, *AAS XXXV*, 1943, p.175. It is worth noting that these positions were partly influenced by particular immediate historical experiences. For instance, beneath the position of Pius XII are the experiences of WW II, while John XXIII in *Pacem in Terris* (*PT*), was heavily influenced by the Cuban Nuclear Missile Crisis of 1962.

[141] Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio*, (*PP.1967*), n.30. The Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith, September 1984, expresses similar acknowledgement in the *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation.* It reads: "*The scandal of the shocking inequality between the rich and the poor-whether between rich and poor countries, or between social classes in a single nation-is no longer tolerated. On the one hand people have attained an unheard of abundance that is given to waste, while on the other hand so much live in such poverty, deprived of such basic necessities, that one is hardly able to count the victims of malnutrition.*" *See*: I, 6; also: I, 4.

[142] Ibid. 31.

[143] Ibid. 32.

> We know, however, that a revolutionary uprising-save where there is manifest, long-standing tyranny, which would do great damage to fundamental personal rights and dangerous harm to the common good of the country-produces new injustices, throws more elements out of balance and brings on new disasters. A real evil should not be fought against at the cost of greater misery.[144]

Certainly, here force is not rejected in absolute terms, rather receives strict qualification. Donal Dorr argues that force or violence under certain conditions, in spite of the negative side effects, can be a means for liberation.[145] Marvin Mich observes that the phrase between the dashes in the quotation shows that, according to the Catholic Church's social teaching, there may be times when force or violent revolution may be morally permissible.[146]

5.4.3 A new hermeneutic

We would like to deepen this point a little more by reflecting on the Jesus Event. The Christian tradition is founded on the confession that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ; that out of his life, death and resurrection ensued new life, the new creation. For the apostle Paul, the new creation is a theme that runs through and through many of his epistles.[147] We would like to investigate a form of social ethics that relates to the idea of the new creation and at the same time could be contributory to the liberation of the victims of social injustice. Central to the reflection are the three confessions: creation, the mystery of Christ and the kingdom of God. In the Old Testament, as Roger Burggraeve says, at the heart of the creation narrative is God's conquering of chaos, of the powers of darkness and evil, bringing order out of disorder, distinction and differentiation out of

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[144] Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor. A Hundred Years of Catholic Social Teaching*, p. 146.
[145] Op. cit.
[146] Marvin L. Krier Mich, *Catholic Social Teaching and Movements*, New York, American Press Inc., 2000, p.160. Mich adds: "*This teaching is more than an abstract ethical discussion. It was later put to use in various Latin American countries to justify violent overthrow of government. For example, many in the Nicaraguan Catholic Church came to this conclusion after fifty years of the Somoza family dictatorship. Another case where a revolution was also deemed justifiable was in the Philippines. What is clear here is that although the use of violence in revolutionary situation remains a very complex question, the Catholic social teaching, while showing preference for non-violent means, still sees revolutionary violence as acceptable.*" *Cf.* Ibid. p.161.
[147] Ephesians 2:15; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10; 2 Corinthians 4:16; Galatians 6:15; 2 Corinthians 5:17; etc.

indifference and sameness.[148] The Old Testament presents creation as the revelation of separation and distinction, a dynamism in which the beings that are established acquire meaning in a specific way both towards the whole as well as towards each other. In this dynamism, each being receives its distinguishing separateness, its own time, space, role and meaning.[149] Consequently, anything structural or ideological, that contradicts or eliminates this order, seeks a return to chaos, indifference and sameness. The revelation of separation and distinction continues. In the New Testament, creation is revealed as the kingdom or the reign of God, and is irretrievably linked to Jesus.[150] Specifically unique is that the kingdom of God is revealed as an eschatological ethically qualified experience.[151]

As an eschatological ethically qualified experience it refers to practical service to the destitute both physical and spiritual: the blind receive sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the good news brought to them. Stated differently, it is the concrete breaking in of the fully not yet, i.e. the kingdom, in the realm of history.[152] It is precisely at this point that we encounter the kingdom of God or reign of God. Jesus rules over the powers of destruction manifested in illness and sinfulness, the powers that are always poised to bring creation back to chaos, i.e. to the state of nothingness and sameness. Jesus brings back or restores the wholeness, the identity and integrity of the individual from the brink of disintegration. This marks the beginning of the new creation that culminates into his death and resurrection.

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[148] He writes: "*The original state of creation is sketched as the 'tohu bohu'-indicating chaos. Chaos is not a so-called mythical remnant, but an ever recurring experiential given, in the sense that we are time and again confronted with a condition or an absence of difference. Literary, we are faced with a situation wherein differences exist no more. That is why it is not coincidental that chaos is characterised by darkness. In darkness, everything disappears into nothingness...nothingness as the absence of beings.*" *See*: Roger Burggraeve, *To Love Other-Wise*, p. 35.

[149] Ibid. p. 41.

[150] Again Burggraeve points out: "*One first datum, over which all exegetes are in agreement, is that the core of Jesus' proclamation consists of the proclamation of the coming Kingdom of God: "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news. Mark 1:15. Seen from a purely external static point, the formula, 'Kingdom of God' or 'Kingdom of Heaven' appears around a hundred times in the synoptic gospels. In the rest of the New Testament, mention of the formula and its variations are made only around twenty-five times.*"

[151] Mt. 11,4-5. See also: Lk. 4:18f.

[152] This position is typical of liberation theology. It treats experiences of love, justice, goodness in history are concrete manifestation of the kingdom of God and not shadows.

5.4.3.1 Ethics of the promise

Just as we see in the exodic memory an ethics of the promise,[153] we discern in Jesus an eschatological ethics. This constitutes the basis of his engagement. Thus we contend that while Jesus was indeed not a zealot, neither was he a pacifist. In other words, Jesus does not submit in passivity hoping that evil will be eliminated by God or will evolve itself away,[154] and neither does he stage a pure physical historical resistance with the expectation of bringing about the fullness of the kingdom.[155] Jesus goes deeper. He proceeds by way of eschatological ethically qualified engagement with the organised political and religious violence of his day, and through that a new creation comes into being.[156]

5.4.3.2 The space of the possible

5.4.3.3 Beyond the moral

That Jesus realises the kingdom in a complete but not universal manner, is prima-facie, something troubling. We are accustomed to the belief that in his life, death and resurrection, Jesus wrought salvation universally, and that we are only to appropriate it through faith. However, this thinking often creates despair in the face of continued

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[153] By an ethics of the promise we mean the way of behaviour that approximates the vision. The promise of the good and spacious land to the Israelites marked a change in their mind and behaviour that relativised the immediate social political conditions. *See*: Exodus 3:8-9.

[154] Here, we strongly disagree with scholars like Samuel Rayan, who see in Jesus a model of a pacifist. Citing a cross section of New Testament passages, Rayan argues that: "*Jesus stood for complete non-violence not only of the hand and outward deed but also of the heart as well as inward dispositions…*" *See*: Samuel Rayan, S.J., "*Peace: Biblical Perspectives*," JPJRS4/2/(2001), 101-120, p.113.

[155] Here we agree with the critique in the *Instruction on Certain Aspects of the 'Theology of Liberation'*, September 1984, especially where it notes a tendency to identify the kingdom of God with the human liberation movement, thus make history itself the subject of its own development, as a process of self-redemption of humanity by means of the class struggle. *See*: IX, 3.

[156] On this point, once again Burggraeve remarks: "*In his various and hard confrontations with all sorts of afflictions, suffering and evil, Jesus did not let himself to be driven to a ruthless passion against evil and for the good. He has not at all changed everything; he has not developed structures and institutions to tackle problems 'from their very roots'. He 'went around doing good'; in other words, he did something good here and there according to the circumstances at hand, to one or the other person. His involvement with people was not an obsessive drivenness that spares nothing in tackling evil, possessing the final solution up his sleeves. In his ethical commitment against affliction, suffering and evil, Jesus remains quite modest: here and there a healing, a word of liberation, a touch, arousing. Almost timidly, without a 'plan de campagne' or a 'global plan,' he entered into situations that presented themselves to him 'as he went by'. By means of his ethical parsimony, which never strove for the total good, only the 'finite good', he kept open the perspective on the good as grace*". See: Roger Burggraeve, p. 115.

suffering and evil in the world.[157] Closely examined, the understanding that Jesus realises the kingdom in a complete but particular, and not universal manner, reveals another dimension, and this is the *space of the possible*. This is about the vocation of human persons based on eschatological ethics of Jesus, the ethics that made the kingdom in him possible. Every human person has the historic opportunity to realise the kingdom in each social, cultural, etc, context. Richard Kearney expresses this point very well:

> God will be at the eschaton. That is what is promised. But precisely because this promise is just that, a *promise*, and not an already accomplished possession there is the free space gaping at the very core of divinity: the space of the possible. It is this divine gap, which renders all things possible, which would be otherwise impossible to us-including the kingdom of justice and love. But because God is *posse* (the possibility of being) rather than *esse* (the actuality of being as fait accompli), the promise remains powerless until and unless we *respond* to it. Transfiguring the possible into the actual, and thereby enabling the coming kingdom to come into being, is not just something God does for us but also something we do for God.[158]

The complete but particular event that has happened in Jesus is for each and every person a vocation, a call to contribute towards the realisation of the kingdom in history. Kearney continues:

> For it is the divine "perhaps", hovering over every just decision or action that ensures history is never over and our duty never done. The *posse* keeps us on our toes and reminds us that there is nowhere to lay our heads for long. God depends on us to be. Without us no Word can be made fresh. If Moses, for example, had not listened to the voice of the burning bush, there would have been no Exodic liberation. If the Shunamite woman had refused Solomon's advances, there would have been no theo-erotic song of songs. If a young maid from Nazareth had not said yes to the annunciating angel, there would have been no Christ. And if we say no to the kingdom, the kingdom will not come.[159]

Likewise we argue that if we fail to stand up, for example, against social-economic injustice, all forms of injustices and inequalities, then the kingdom will not come. This space of the possible premised on the eschatological ethics will always vary in concrete

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[157] This predicament makes the old problem of theodicy resurface: either God is so *loving* but *powerless*, or not so *loving* but *powerful*, or further, that the confession of salvation having been wrought by Christ is either pure spiritualistic and futuristic, or it is altogether a mirage.

[158] Richard Kearney, *The God Who May Be: A Hermeneutics of Religion*, Bloomington and Indiana polis, Indiana University Press, p. 4.

[159] Op. cit.

engagement with particular historical circumstances. We can compare this to what Max Weber discusses concerning *ethics of conviction*, which is to do with rationality of value, and *ethics of responsibility*, which concerns instrumental rationality.[160] A radicalism of eschatological engagement has the potential in specific situations to relativize classical or standard moral prescriptions. We can capture this point also by thinking alongside the experiences of martyrdom, something that is pre-moral in the sense that the physical event is only a result of bearing witness to the eschaton.[161] It is in this sense alone that force or violence could be considered as means towards social justice in extreme conditions of repression. David Nungu states:

> It situation of entrenched and unyielding repression, the church should be able to adopt radical options. Initially, this would be about conscience formation. There is need for people to develop the spirit of courage based on truth. It should be the task of the church to assist people to get rooted in truth as this is the sure basis upon which people can struggle for change...The church should, to some extent, be able to mobilise for social transformation. It should be noted that the Bible, which is a source of the church's teaching, contains the basic principles upon which a fair and just social order can be built. The church should begin to look upon and regard itself as Moses who led the people out of the condition of repression to freedom. On this basis, the church should lead people in rebellion against unjust social order.[162]

Conclusion

In concluding this section, it is evident that no one can be non-violent in an unjust society. What is decisive for the church is the question- whose violence to support-that of the oppressor or oppressed? While the violence of the oppressor is essentially degrading and dehumanising, that of the oppressed is a response in an attempt to restore his marred dignity. In other words, it is a violent way of getting rid off one's shoulders the weight of oppression; or stronger still, it is a violent way of snatching the victim from the mouth of

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[160] "*Value Rationality*" is typical of a harmonious and ethical universe in which fundamental goal or an interrelated cluster of goals is striven after by way of an appropriate cluster of means. On the other hand, "*Instrumental Rationality*", in contrast, belongs to a relativistic universe; one cannot pass a final judgment...where means are chosen in function of their effectiveness with respect to the achievement of the goal or end in question. *See*: Johan Verstraeten, *Ethics of Peace, War and International Relations*, Reader, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, 2004-2005, p 181.

[161] This is a form of protest against an unjust order, inspired by the eschatological visions, imageries or metaphors.

[162] Interview with David Nungu, Mangochi, 05/04/2004.

a marauding oppressor. While it is unacceptable to treat the use of violence as a principle, we hold the opinion that there is space for apparently illegal violence to rightly challenge the injustice of those who exercise monopoly over legal violence through state apparatus.[163] On this point Cyril Desbruslais agrees:

> It should be clear enough that one cannot make a commitment to violence as a strategy to be used whenever any injustice confronts us. But neither can one assert that never, under any circumstances, can one use violence to protect the weak or restore the balance of justice from the proud and the arrogant.[164]

To argue and rule out any legitimacy to the use of force in the process of effecting the liberation of the oppressed, Jean-Paul Sartre rightly observes, is to accept and buy into the values of the oppressor.[165] Martin Buber, writing to Gandhi on this point, had this to share:

> I cannot help withstanding evil in the world, just as the evil within myself. I can only strive not to have to do so by force. I do not want force. But if there is no other way of preventing the evil destroying the good, I trust I shall use force and give myself up into God's hands...If I am to confess what is truth to me, I must say: There is nothing better for a man than to deal justly-unless it be to love; we should be able even to fight for justice-but to fight lovingly.[166]

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[163] For example, if the state uses the police to suppress the legitimate expression of the people, in the end, people are morally right to violently challenge the police.
[164] Cyril Desbruslais, "*The Ambivalence of Violence,*" JPJRS 4/1 (2001) 79-85, p.84.
[165] Jean-Paul Sartre says the following in his preface to Frantz Fanon: " *...try to understand this at any rate: if violence began this very evening and if exploitation and oppression had never existed on earth, perhaps the slogans of non-violence might end the quarrel. But if the whole regime, even your non-violence ideas, are conditioned by a thousand-year-old oppression, your passivity serves only to place you in the ranks of the oppressors.*" *See*: Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, London, Penguin Books, 2001, p.21.
[166] Martin Buber, *Pointing the Way*, New York, Harper; 1963, p. 146.

5.5 Critical appraisal

5.5.1 Major findings

In this study, we have established that, along colonial administration, Christianity and modern trade, early education was equally influential in the re-making of African societies like that of Malawi. The early missionary education in particular, was extremely transformative of the local communities due to the grass-root approach through the *Bush School System*. From this experience, we conclude that the church still has a vital role to play in the current democratic reforms, based on its social teaching and with particular interest in human dignity and social justice. Again, in the discussion, we have found out that in Malawi, just as is the case in many African countries, independence did not translate into the deconstruction of the colonial state, but merely inheritance of that state together with its repressive function. As a result, the majority of the national population has continued to suffer from political and economic disenfranchisement.

In the same study, we have found that the Catholic Church in Malawi, despite having a rich tradition of the social teaching and accompanying experience of engagement with the state from other parts of the world, did not adequately live and make use of this teaching from 1964 up to early 1992 so as to be an alternative voice in defence of human dignity when every other voice had been silenced. We have gone further to delineate what we consider to have been the key reasons for this failure. In the same vein, we have noted that since 1992, the Catholic Church has been consistent in its engagement with the state on issues of economic and political governance. However, we have quickly noted also that this engagement lacks depth and diversity, hence our proposal for a paradigm shift as discussed in this chapter.

5.5.2 Specific findings

Here we are more interested in the specific findings that are to do with the ecclesiological model that has been dominant in Malawi, together with the attempt to contextualise it as reflected in the 1975 pastoral policy of Lilongwe Diocese. Therefore, although we are indebted to many scholars and interviewees whose views and ideas are greatly

appreciated, we shall limit our commentary to two scholars whose works reflect the question we have grappled with. These are Ian Linden and Patrick Kalilombe.

5.5.2.1 Ian Linden

First, we find Ian Linden right in identifying the absence of an objective historical consciousness and lack of the ability on the part of the Catholic Church to make its own history in the Malawian context.[167] We also agree with him in his attribution of this situation to the institutional model of the church itself that was espoused by the early missionaries, a model that received further alienating influence from the local societies. We further agree that this church model coupled with lack of historical consciousness has for a very long time made the church and its membership alienated from the social-political environment.[168]

That notwithstanding, we are of the opinion that while Linden has made very cogent observations, he has not succeeded to offer alternative practical suggestions with regard to the model that would enable the Catholic Church in Malawi evolve the objective historical consciousness through its engagement with the state and the general public. Having ably diagnosed the problem, he has fallen short of providing clues to what would be the viable alternative model of the church in response to the problem, on one hand, and how such ecclesiology would enable the church interact with the public sphere, on the other.

5.5.2.2 Patrick Kalilombe

We also find in the pastoral policy of Lilongwe Diocese then under Patrick Kalilombe very practical and relevant efforts that sought a radical shift from institutional "outstation" based model of the church, to small Christian community model. We see that to have been a practical conduit in ensuring active participation of the laity, the realisation of coresponsibility and sharing of powers, duties and functions in accordance with subsidiarity.

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[167] Ian Linden, *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland*, London, Heinemann, 1974, pxi.
[168] These points have been adequately discussed in Chapter four.

We observe that this was one step further in the process of bridging the gap between the church as an institution and society, thereby creating space for its participation in the execution of its social mission. We are also of the opinion that, analysing this policy within the political dynamics of the day, Kalilombe happened to have been a radical but veiled critique to the exercise of power both in the Catholic Church and the state of Malawi, and in that sense, the church was made to draw near to where it would have been a critical prayer in matters of social justice.[169]

Nevertheless, we note that the policy, perhaps, dictated by the political environment of the day, seems to have promulgated a church model whose overall content on the surface appears to have lacked explicit reference to social witness particularly in terms of political and economic governance. In the programmes that were to be the preoccupation of the laity in the small Christian communities, there is no reference made to issues of social justice or programmes on the social teaching of the church. We are, therefore, left with doubts as to whether the model, particularly from the content point of view, was adequate enough to champion the course of social justice in Malawi thereby contribute to the evolution of the objective historical consciousness in response to the problem identified by Ian Linden.

General conclusion

Based on this assessment we believe that in order to resolve the socio-political alienation that has been the chief characteristic of the Catholic Church in Malawi and facilitate the process of developing a church with an objective historical consciousness, we need to be as practical using various tools and strategies. It is on this understanding that we have proceeded to draw concrete proposals on what the church would do to enhance its engagement with the public order.[170]

[169] Here, we are looking at what Kalilombe did in the Diocese of Lilongwe had it been it was allowed to grow and influence the rest of the dioceses in the country.

[170] As it has already been discussed these proposals are a shift in the models of theology, the social teaching, and mission objectives, coupled with the creation of new pastoral institutions and promotion of integral formation of both the clergy and lay faithful. Corresponding to this, we have proposed the adoption of multiple strategies in order to engage with the public order.

Like any other institutions, the church exists in time and space. Its worthiness derives from the way it responds to the demands arising from the historical conditions of the people, hence the need for continued resistance to what is unjust and false, and continued protest on behalf of what is just and true, says De Gruchy.[171] Promoting social justice is not an easy task for the church. But it is worthy calling to mind that the Church of Christ is also the church of martyrs, those who struggle for the sake and on behalf of justice. Any moment the church seeks its own safety and material comfort at the expense of the disadvantaged, it acts in betrayal of its Master. It is important to realise that like Jesus, the church always faces the temptation to choose between World grandeur and committed service to the voiceless. Secular establishments will always allure it in various ways and with various means, while underneath the rights and freedoms of the people; their very dignity is violated. What De Gruchy says in this regard deserves deeper reflection:

> When she fights in the secular field, it must be with the secret knowledge that she is fighting for her own mystical significance. Whatever crushes human personality, whatever breaks human fellowship is her foe, because she is the mother of souls and their home and city. [172]

[171] John De Gruchy, "*Being Church in SA Today,*" in James Tengatenga, *Church, State and Society in Malawi: An Analysis of Anglican Ecclesiology*, PhD Dissertation, University of Malawi, Chancellor College, August 2002, p.196.

[172] John De Gruchy, "*Being Church in SA Today,*" in James Tengatenga, *Church, State and Society in Malawi: An Analysis of Anglican Ecclesiology*, PhD Dissertation, University of Malawi, Chancellor College, August 2002, p.196.

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This bibliography is in two main parts reflecting the methodology used: desk research and fieldwork. Part one consists of selected literary sources that include books, articles, official reports, documents, papal encyclicals, pastoral letters, unpublished researches, etc. Part two are oral sources reflecting the results of the interviews carried out during fieldwork.

Part I

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Part II

Annex I: Oral sources

Interview summaries

This part is about the experiences of the fieldwork and augments desk research. The aim of the fieldwork was to gather as much data as possible related to the experiences of people with regard to the role played by the Catholic Church during the Banda regime, and how it could contribute to the current democratisation process.

Interview schedule No.1
Invention of a nation state-nation building

As discussed in the main body of the study, nation building was a dominant agenda during the immediate postcolonial period in Africa in general, and Malawi in particular. This schedule comprises of views and perspectives on various political aspects of state and nation from a cross section of the population. Specifically, information has been sought from selected members of the general public, professionals, selected religious leaders and politicians:

Questions for Discussions	Summary Responses
(i) In your opinion who owns political power and authority in a state? Is it the president, God, Traditional leaders or people in general?	It all depends on the system you are dealing with. In a democracy, power and authority belong to the people. This is not the case in, say a monarchy or dictatorship. However, universally, consensus is that power properly belongs to the people and that leaders exercise it only as a matter of delegation.

(ii) Depending on how question (i) is understood, what has been your experience of politics in Malawi?	Ordinarily, in Malawi power is understood and taken to be residual and inherent in the leadership be it political or religious. And this power is understood to originate from God.
(iii) Strictly speaking, was Malawi a nation at the dawn of independence? If the answer is no; what would have been the implication with regard to the integrity and stability of the new state?	It is difficult to say that Malawi understood itself to be a nation at independence in a strict sense of the term. However, there were common feelings of nationalism, the desire to be rid off of the colonial system and structure. Once that was done, divisions emerged, e.g. the 1964 Cabinet Crisis.
(iv) What is your understanding about nation building?	Nation building is about national matters, cementing national feelings, nothing revolutionary about it. It was about the welding of the various tribes into one nation, the feeling that we are one people (D.D. Phiri). Nation building was a central theme for the Malawi Congress Party. Some understood it as building a new politically appropriate system for the country. It was meant to make people united as one. Nation building was founded on the Four Corner Stones: *Unity, Loyalty, Obedience* and *Discipline*. The current multiparty system has fragmented unity. There is no longer politics of nation building (Mwambungu Nelson). In Malawi, the nation building agenda started in 1960s. Nation implies common heritage, experiences, ancestry, etc. It is interesting to note that African states were a combination of nations in them. What the nationalists did was to invent a nation. They used different criteria selectively common historical experiences, e.g. slavery, colonialism, racism, common oppressive-cohesive measures. This was to justify the fight against the occupier. Nevertheless, these experiences were not crosscutting, hence were not legitimate basis. Currently, politics of nation building has evaporated. There has never been deliberate effort to destroy particular identities and strengthen alignment to national symbols like flag, court of arms, national anthem, national currency, heroes, museums, slogan, etc. Luck of all this has meant loss of national pride, lack of protection of the public property, no interest towards the generation of public wealth, increase in the levels of corruption, (Dr. Wiseman Chirwa), etc.

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(vi) Do you see any role of the church in nation building in such aspects like: health, education, agriculture, political and economic governance?		The church has never had any particular policy on nation building especially in political-economic governance. Nevertheless, there has been some contribution through bodies like the Council of Churches, Episcopal Conference of Malawi, Christian Service Committee, etc. The Christian Service Committee in particular has been a development desk, the expression of the Church-State partnership. However, during the time of Banda, that, to some extent, made the church sideline the abuses of the regime.
(vii) In your view, why does it often prove difficult to accept the church's involvement in political and economic governance?	This is because the church as an authority in moral issues is always bound to pass critical judgement on political practices particularly where the interests of vulnerable groups are not respected.	

Interview schedule No.2
Church and Politics-Interface

The question of church and state is a perennial one. Over the ages, various positions have been articulated either in support of the church's involvement or non- involvement in matters of political and economic governance. Whichever direction the debate takes, what is always at stake is the common good, the rights and freedoms of the individual. This schedule gathered views people have on the church and its expected role in state and society:

Questions for Discussions	Summary Responses	
(i) What do you understand by the term church and what has been your experience in terms of its involvement in the public sphere?	The church is a group of people holding specific set of religious belief and convictions.	The church might have found it difficult to react to the oppression in the early days of independence because of the severity of repression. But, still something would have been done through such openings like the church relief and development services. The church failed to use these openings to create consciousness in the people. It failed to engage with society. Between 1992 and 1999, there was an attempt to engage with

		the state, but it was largely at the top. But from 1999 to date, there have been attempts to engage society. This is clear in debates like those on local government policies, campaign against the open/third term constitutional amendment. However, still the church engages more with the state at the top. There is not much done to create popular consciousness in society.
(ii) In your opinion, who speaks for the church? The bishop(s), the clergy together with the bishops? The laymen and women with positions in the church?	In the first place, the church as a body of believers, anybody can speak for it. However, depending on issues, the leadership such as the bishops, clergy, can speak certain things and even the laity can speak depending on their knowledge and with permission by the leadership.	
(iii) What do you consider as the church mandate/mission in the world in general, and Malawi in particular? Should the church preach and administer sacraments only?	No. The church should not only concentrate on spiritual matters. It should also be involved in political affairs.	
(vi) Or should it preach, administer sacraments and participate in political and economic governance as well?	This is true. The church should also engage with issues of political and economic governance. It is essential to take note that the church is part of the world and part of society.	
(vii) Why should the church be involved in political and economic governance?	It should be engaged because whatever affects society for good or bad, in one way or the other affects the people because they are the same people who are part of the church	
(viii) Alternatively, why should it not be involved in political economic governance?	Amongst those interviewed, there was no one who had the view that the church should not be involved into matters of economic and political governance	
(ix) If the church is to be involved in politics should it be in terms of: Civic education only? Advocacy and lobbying only; pastoral letters only? Use of any type of strategy of activism? All the above?	All this could be part of its strategy. However, the interests of the church should also be to ensure the emergence of credible leadership in society. This is where the church is very strong. In Malawi, the larger percentage subscribes to the Christian Faith. It can be argued that logically, people who happen to be Christians also commit many wrong doings. Now it should be the duty of the Church to assist the cultivation of the spirit of sincerity among its members.	

Social-economic problems like corruption can be fought against if leaders are properly trained and informed in their conscience. This is about formation of conscience.

(x) Some times the state becomes so intransigent in its abuse and violation of human rights to such an extent that peaceful means are hardly effective. Under such conditions, is it legitimate for the church to support or facilitate violent confrontation with the oppressive state?

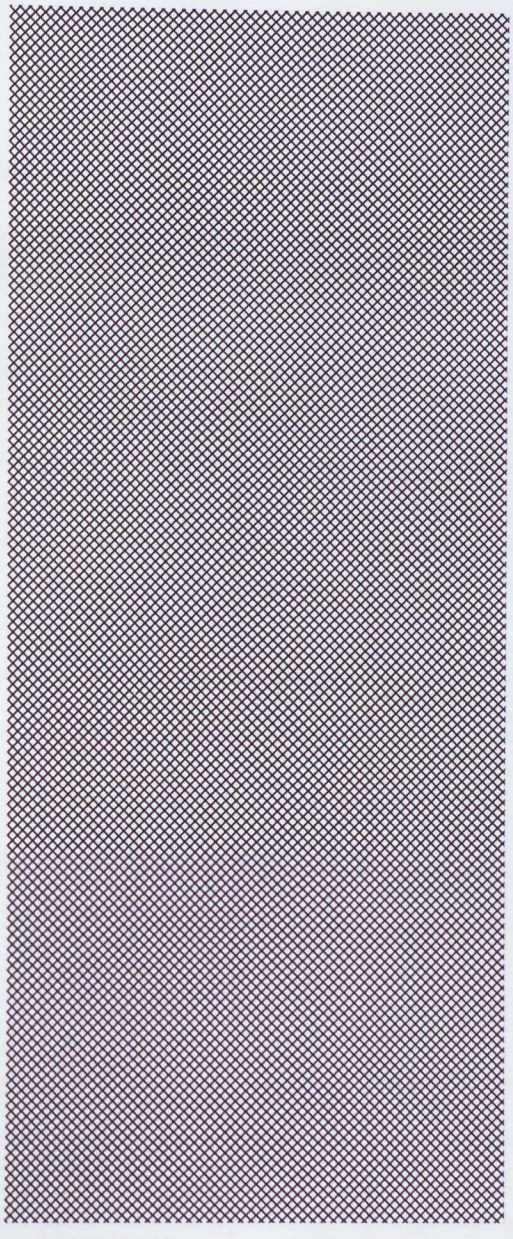
The church should not engage into promotion of violent activities in the struggle for social justice. However, in situations of entrenched and unyielding repression, the church should be able to adopt radical options. This should be more to do with the process of conscience formation, as well as sensitisation. There is need for people to develop the sprit of courage based on truth. It should be the task of the church to assist people to get rooted in truth, as this is the sure basis upon which people can struggle for change. The members of the church should also decisively speak against social injustices, and the church should even demand this from the members. While radical options need not be mobilised by the church as leadership, the church's role should be that of sensitisation on the social conditions, animate them for self-mobilisation. To some extent, the church should also be able to mobilize for social transformation. It should be noted that the Bible, which is the source of the church's teaching, contains the basic principles upon which a fair and just social order can be built. The church should begin to look upon and regard itself as Moses who led the people out of the condition of repression to freedom.
On the basis of the Moses model, the church should lead the people in rebellion against unjust social order.

The church should be more creative in its approaches. And this cannot rule out radical options. There is a school of thought that argues that a good Christian is the one who passively suffer under naked abuse of power. However, this does not seem to conform to the biblical teaching particularly the Old Testament. The liberation of Israel from the Egyptian bondage happens within the context of violence. Democracy is not totally against the use of force to change an illegitimate regime. In fact, a regime that loses its legitimacy is not fit to be there and there is no way democratic means can be used to remove it because it has not to be there in the first place. Indeed between 1992 to date, the church has sustained engagement with the public sphere, but it does not go deeper. Usually, the church highlights public issues, but fails to accompany society to the end. If the church takes note that a particular regime is bad, then it should equally take the responsibility to see that that regime does not continue. In this case, it should be known that what is being removed is evil. The involvement of the church should be guided by two major concerns: theological and common sense. From a theological point of view, Jesus Christ did not restrict his mission to the spiritual aspects of the human person. He also touched on political matters. Therefore, the church should as much as possible concern itself with the political questions as well. In terms of common sense, it should be borne in mind that where people are oppressed, they have to be liberated. Now, depending on the nature and extent of oppression, sometimes, the church has to be prescriptive. In other words, it should be able to tell people what to do in a particular situation. However, in case of situations that are not extremely repressive, the church can dwell on preaching the values upon which people can make better choices.

(xi) In your own assessment, what are the weaknesses and strengths of the Catholic Church in Malawi when it comes to dealing with political and economic governance matters?

In terms of the strengths of the Catholic Church: these are quite multiple. Among theme are its accomplished and expansive out reach capacity and the trust and confidence people have in it. These are very important resources in its mission. Other strengths include radio stations and the already existing programmes on governance. In terms of weakness, well, the geographical configurations of dioceses that some time seem to coincide with major tribes does at certain times enhance regional and tribal alignment when serious political decisions are at stake.

Further, the civic education provided by the church is often reactive.
Related to this difficulty is the concentration of the social teaching in the hierarchy of the church. There is very little, and in many cases nothing at all in terms of knowledge of the teaching among the ordinary Christians-men and women alike. The continued entertainment of the old dualistic world-view is another set back in that it easily dismisses the church's engagement with the public sphere in favour of the spiritual. Over the years since 1994, the church has also experienced a substantial loss of its critical distance because of close association with the party in government.



Annex II

Interview schedule No. 3

Details of interviewees

Name	Gender	Age	Religion	Academic qualification	Profession	Date	Venue
William Murray Kanyama Chiume	Male	70+	Presbyterian	B. Ed.	Teacher and later nationalist politician	16/03/02	Nkhatabay
D.D Phiri	Male	65+	Presbyterian	PhD (Hons)	Academician	12/09/03	Blantyre
James Tengatenga	Male	45+	Anglican	PhD	Anglican Bishop	12/09/03	Blantyre
Nelson Mwambungu	Male	70+	Presbyterian	Not Known	Veteran Politician - Karonga District	19/09/03	Karonga
Wiseman Chirwa	Male	50+	Presbyterian	PhD	University Professor- University of Malawi	25/03/04	Zomba
Emmanuel Kachale	Male	23	Catholic	O' Level (MSCE)	Conference Attendant	05/04/04	Mangochi
David Nungu	Male	35+	Assemblies of God	M.A. (Economist)	Director of Investigations- Malawi Human Rights Commission	05/04/04	Mangochi
Zimani Kadzamira	Male		Presbyterian	PhD	University Professor	06/04/04	Mangochi
Ms. Catherine Chisala	Female	-	Anglican	-	Opposition politician- executive member People's Progressive Movement	06/04/04	Mangochi
Christopher Chisoni	Male	30	Catholic	M.A (Humanities)	Social Researcher	17/04/04	Lilongwe
Nelson Gomonda	Male	34+	Charismatic Pentecostal Church	M.A.	Policy Analyst	17/04/04	Lilongwe
Winstom Khamula	Male	-	Charismatic	B.A.	Town Planner		
Newton Kamchetere	Male	-	Presbyterian	BEduc.	Educationist	05/05/04	Lilongwe
Aretha Kamwendo	Female	32	Catholic	B.A	Manager	21/04/04	Lilongwe
John Chome	Male	-	Catholic	M.A	Urban Planning Expert	21/04/04	Blantyre
Shenard Mazengera	Male	-	Presbyterian	LLM-Human Rights	Human Rights Expert	22/04/04	Blantyre
L. C. Chikadza	Male	-	Catholic	O' Level	Secretary General of the Teachers Union of Malawi	21/04/04	Lilongwe

Christopher Mabwera	Male	35+	Catholic	Diploma Theology	Training for Transformation Expert and Social Analyst	21/04/04	Lilongwe
George Liwimbi	Male	-	Catholic	LLM	Legal Practitioner	21/04/04	Lilongwe
M. Mkandawire	Male	-	Presbyterian	BSc	Social Scientist	22/04/04	Mzuzu
Tapiwa Nyasulu	Female	26	Living Waters	B.A (Humanities)	Film Radio and Television Producer	22/04/04	Rumphi
Hastings Bota	Male	33+	Presbyterian	M.A.	Chief Monitoring & Evaluation Officer-Ministry of Local Government	26/04/04	Lilongwe
Tiyese Mtande	Female	27	Catholic	B.A.	Nurse	26/04/04	Lilongwe
Patrick Kasiya	Male	30+	Catholic	B.A.	Computer Scientist and Teacher	02/05/04	Mitundu-Lilongwe
Billy Mayaya	Male	38+	Presbyterian	B.A (Theology)	Theologian-Rights Activist	03/05/04	Lilongwe
Olivia Liwewe	Female	-	Anglican Church Elder	M. Phil (Education)	Gender Expert	05/05/04	Lilongwe
George Sambo	Male	-	Catholic	Diploma (Theology)	Ex-Catholic Priest	05/05/04	Lilongwe
Patrick Mawaya	Male	37	Catholic	B.A. (Business Studies); and M.A. Student	Free Lance Consultant and part-time journalist with the Catholic Diocesan Radio Station	06/05/04	Lilongwe
Tobias Jere	Male		Catholic	B/Education	Ex-Marist Brother and Human Rights Activist with the Centre for Social Concern	06/05/04	Lilongwe
Cyprian Chipala	Male		Catholic	Diploma (Theology & Liberal Arts)	Catholic Priest	06/05/04	Namitete Catholic Parish-Lilongwe Diocese
Peter Chinoko	Male		Catholic	Degree in the Catechesis	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace-Lilongwe Diocese	06/05/04	Lilongwe
Robert Mwaungulu			Catholic	Doctor of Philosophy-Canon Law	Secretary General of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi	07/05/04	Lilongwe
John Nyongani	Male		Catholic	Diploma (Theology & Liberal Arts)	Priest-In-Charge	08/05/04	Salima
Alpheous Zikomankhani	Male		Catholic	Diploma (Theology & Liberal Arts)	Priest-In-Charge	09/05/04	Madisi Catholic Parish-Dowa
Viator Malijani	Male		Catholic	Diploma (Theology)	Teacher /Politician	09/05/04	Mponela-Dowa

Annex III

The Joint Message From the Churches of Malawi on 10th Anniversary of Independence, 6 July 1974

It is now ten years since Malawi attained its independence. So much has taken place during this period in all fields of development that we have no better words to express our thanks to God for his loving care and protection than those of the Psalmist. "It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to thy name, O Most High: to declare thy steadfast love in the morning, and thy faithfulness by night, to the music of the lute and the harp, to the melody of the lyre. For thou, O Lord hast made me glad by thy work; at the works of thy hands I sing for joy. How great are thy works, O Lord! Thy thoughts are very deep!

The dull man cannot know, the stupid cannot understand this: that, though the wicked sprout like grass and all evil doers flourish, they are doomed to destruction for ever, but thou, o Lord, art on high for ever. For lo, thy enemies, O Lord, for lo, thy enemies shall perish, all evildoers shall be scattered. But thou hast exalted my horn like that of the wild ox; thou hast poured over me fresh oil. My eyes have seen the downfall of my enemies; my ears have heard the doom of my evil assailants. The righteous flourishes like the palm tree, and grow like a cedar in Lebanon. They are planted in the house of the Lord; they flourish in the courts of our God.

They still bring forth fruit in old age, they are forever full of sap and green, to show that the Lord is upright; he is my rock and there is no unrighteousness in him" (Ps. 92). What has been achieved during this period in all fields is so unbelievable that it confounds even the most optimistic expectations of most of us and there is no doubt that all this achievement is due to the untiring efforts, dedicated, selfless, and responsible leadership of His Excellency the Life President Ngwazi Dr. K. Kamuzu Banda. If this country has grown from the ranks of poor nations into a nation with viable booming economy, with a healthy educated people, it is due to His Excellency's own dynamic leadership and the stable and peaceful conditions that leadership has created.

The development that has taken place in Malawi during the past ten years has not been limited to the temporal order only. It has also been manifested in the spiritual sphere where the number of Malawian Spiritual Leaders has grown greatly since independence. This spiritual leadership

would not have been possible if conditions of stability, peace, tranquillity and religious freedom had not prevailed throughout the country. For all the peace and stability that exist in this country to permit freedom of worship, and for all the development that is taking place in Malawi, the CHURCHES in Malawi would like to salute Malawi and pay tribute to its leadership just as they did in 1964 when the country became independent.

The many thousands of Christians represented by the Catholic Church, Presbyterian Church and Churches of other denominations in Malawi are united and take pride in sending very heartfelt congratulations to His Excellency the Life President Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda personally, to the Malawi congress Party and to the Government of Malawi and pray incessantly for a happy Malawi Nation for continued development and for a bright and prosperous future of this beloved motherland under the guidance of God.

If we put our faith in God we will have nothing to fear.... Again the psalmist says: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; he makes me lie in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters"(Ps.23). Also "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain" (Ps.127). It is our sincere hope that all the people of this country, whatever their creed, will continue to rally behind the leadership of His Excellency the Life President in the spirit of Brotherhood and work together in harmony in all fields to ensure that peace and calm are maintained so that more development can continue to take place.

We pray that the Christian Service Committee of the Churches in Malawi, which itself is a product of independence and a symbol Christian unity, will continue to supplement Government efforts in the overall development of this country. It is our sincere wish and hope that we as Christians will continue to help building this nation under God through cooperation, reliance and worship, and through charity and understanding. In the human society of today the churches cannot afford to operate in isolation.

They must be seen to be part and parcel of the people they serve if they are to be relevant and meaningful institutions. Inspired by no earthly ambition the churches seek but a solitary goal: to carry forward the work of Christ Himself under the lead of the befriending spirit. And Christ entered this world to give witness to the truth, to rescue and not to sit in judgement, to serve and not to be served.

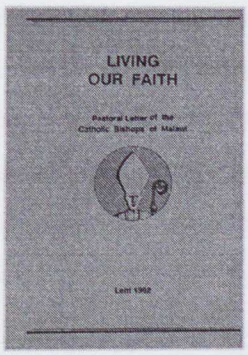
The leaders of the Churches of Malawi, once again, join together in urging everyone to adopt the same spirit of unity, cooperation, dedication and devotion to duty so that the Malawi Nation may continue to grow from strength to strength under God to ensure the survival of a society in which all are needed and in which all have a place in which respect for the dignity of the human being and the sanctity of his personality shall be recognised to be the sacred fountain of democratic principles, in which legitimate human basic rights shall be guaranteed, a society that shall ensure religious, political, social and economic justice to every citizen; a society whose people are welded together by a singleness and unity of purpose, a loyalty and dedication to a cause, respect for and obedience to established authority, a discipline of the mind, and by sound Christian ideals under God.

Let us pray for His Excellency the Life President that God may give him good health and long life so that he may with joy see the realization of his plans for the development of this county. May God also give him good and dedicated helpers in this task.

Annex IV

The 1992 Historic Pastoral Letter: Living Our Faith

In Malawi, the first Catholic Bishops' pastoral on record is that of 1961, entitled, "**How to Build a Happy Nation**". After that letter, there is nothing in between suggesting that after independence in 1964, the Catholic Church continued that tradition. It is only in 1992 that the church "returned" to the public through the publication of the pastoral letter, **"Living Our Faith".** Because of the historic importance of this pastoral letter, we would like to reproduce it here. The letter marks a rediscovery of the prophetic role on the part of the Catholic Church. Secondly, it is the same letter that heralded the introduction of political pluralism and the accompanying rights and freedoms:



MALAWI COLLECTION

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we commence this time of the Lord's favour, we, your bishops, greet you in the name of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As a community journeying in faith and hope we recognize and accept the Lord's invitation proclaimed again in this time of Lent. On Ash Wednesday we receive ashes with the prayer: 'Repent and believe the Good News.' This prayer introduces the period of Lent when we shall enter once more into the saving mysteries of the Lord's death and resurrection. Christ began his public ministry by proclaiming: 'Repent and believe the Gospel' (Mk 1.15).

In this proclamation he states the programme of his ministry; to call all human kind in and through His life, death and resurrection to conversion and witness. People in every age and culture are called to this conversion and to respond in commitment and faith. In this conviction we, your leaders in the faith, come to share with you what this faith invites us to as a church in the Malawi of to day. We place this exhortation under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the patronage of Mary, Queen of Malawi and of Africa.

Rejoicing in this truth we proclaim the dignity of every person, the right of each one to freedom and respect. This oneness of the human race also implies equality and the same basic rights for all. These must be solemnly respected and inculcated in every culture, every constitution and every social system.

Because the Church exists in this world it must communicate its understanding of the meaning of human life and of society. As Pope Paul VI says: 'the Church is certainly not willing to restrict her action only to the religious field and disassociate herself from man's temporal problems (The Evangelisation of Peoples, no. 34). In this context we joyfully acclaim the progress, which has, taken place in our country, thanks in great part to the climate of peace and stability, which we enjoy. We would, however, fail in our role as religious leaders if we kept silent on areas of concern.

In our society we are aware of a growing gap between the rich and the poor with regard to expectations, living standards and development. Many people still live in circumstances, which are hardly compatible with their dignity as sons and daughters of God. Their life is a struggle for survival. At the same time a minority enjoys the fruits of development and can afford to live in luxury and wealth. We appeal for more just and equal distribution of the nation's wealth.

Though many basic goods and materials are available, they are beyond the means of many of our people. One of the reasons for this is the deplorable wage structure, which exists. For many, the wages they receive are grossly inadequate, e.g. employees in some estates, some domestic workers, brick-makers, etc., and this leads to anger, frustration and hopelessness. Another example of glaring injustice is the price paid to producers, especially subsistence farmers, for some of their crops. We wish to state that every person has the right to a just reward for work done, a wage which will ensure a dignified living for his or her family.

Not only has the worker a right to be paid justly by his employer, but he also has a duty honestly and responsibly to do the work for which he is employed. We would like to remind all Christian workers that their first duty on receiving their earnings is to look to the adequate support of their family. All to often workers spend their salaries for selfish purposes.

Bribery and nepotism are growing in political, economic, and social life. This causes violence and harm to the spirit of our people. Honesty, righteousness, respect, equal opportunity for all: these must be the qualities which guide our nation as it grows and develops into the future. One of the corner stones of the nation is "unity". This reflects the will of our Creator that we live in mutual respect and oneness. Tribalism, apartheid (whether economic or social), regionalism and divisions are contrary to the call and truth of humankind. We call all the faithful to celebrate our common birth and destiny in mutual respect, acceptance, justice and love.

A society, which values its future, affords the highest priority to providing education for all its young people. As it is commonly put: "Young people are the future of the nation". A sound education will aim at the following:

i) creating an environment favourable to the physical, emotional, intellectual, relational and spiritual development of pupils.

ii) developing in each student a respect for others and a recognition of civic responsibilities.

iii) promoting the creative potential of students. The unique and diverse talents of every individual are recognized and encouraged.

iv) instilling an appreciation of the students' cultural heritage, i.e. the linguistic, musical and artistic legacy inherited from the past.

v) providing the students with appropriate training and skills which will equip them to make a living in the actual circumstances of our country.

vi) seeking excellence, while aiming to provide education for everyone

At the outset, we wish to record how greatly we esteem and applaud the efforts, which have been made by government to provide education at all levels. The work of the Churches in this field has also contributed greatly to the advancement of our people. Nevertheless we feel it necessary to draw attention to some of the problems, which beset our educational institutions at present:

a. Illiteracy

Illiteracy is one of the principal causes of poverty and lack of development. it cannot be said that we have succeeded in promoting the creative potential of our citizens while there remains a large scale problem which cannot be solved by state initiatives alone.

Since a great responsibility lies with parents, we urge them to recognize their duty by sending their children to school.

b. Falling Standards, Overcrowding and Shortage of Teachers and Materials

It is more and more widely recognized that standards of education are not only rising, but are actually falling. Clearly there can be little hope of creating an environment favourable to the emotional, intellectual and spiritual development of pupils when schools are grossly overcrowded and suffer from a serious lack of teachers.

While the present acute shortage has been made much worse by the policy of requiring all teachers to remain in their own regions, final solutions to these problems will also demand generous increases in the resources made available to education. This will have very practical implications for the way in which our national priorities are established and the budget distributed.

c. Unequal Access to Education

The criteria used in selection of pupils for secondary schools and third-level institutions should be known to all and be seen to operate fairly. Nor should they work to the disadvantage of particular individuals or groups. Access to education should not depend on whom the candidate knows nor on how much money he possesses.

d. Discipline

We believe that discipline is a major problem in secondary schools. It will not be solved by threats of punishments. There is need to examine the underlying reasons for this state of affairs. Among them are;

i) failure of parents to exercise their responsibility towards their children as they grow older
ii) lack of co-operation between parents and school authorities
iii) frustration due to poor or uncertain job opportunities
iv) manipulation of the selection process to include undeserving students
v) lack of support from higher authorities when action has been taken, or needs to be taken, by the school

Improvements will come about in the educational system only is there is mutual trust and genuine partnership between the different interested groups in society, i.e. parents, teachers, the Church and State. In particular, we recognize the importance of Church-State participation in this area. On the one hand, the Church has responsibility to support in every way possible the educational goals of the government. On the other, the government has a duty to respect the rights and legitimate aspirations of the Churches. Only through such a mutual recognition of rights and responsibilities will a fruitful partnership between Church and State be realized in practice. Equality among citizens and the demands of justice call for policies, which aim to provide adequate health care for all without distinction. The following principles have always guided us in this vital area of concern:

i) Life is sacred. It is a gift from God to be valued from the moment of conception until death.
ii) Human beings can never be reduced to the status of objects. We recognize that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit.

iii) Every person is of equal dignity. The value of life is not to be measured by one's age, possessions or position in society

We wish to pay tribute to the achievements of the government of Malawi in extending health services with the aim of providing the best possible care for all. Particularly worthy of mention has been the establishment of an excellent system of primary health care. The notable contribution of the churches through their extensive network of hospitals and health centres is deserving of special praise. At the same time we are aware of the severe difficulties, which the health services are experiencing at present.

a. Overcrowding and Lack of Personnel

Without doubt the most serious problem is the acute shortage of health centres to cater for the population. One cannot claim to uphold the principle of sanctity of life if provision has not been made for even minimal health care for every person. This is a priority, which a society cannot ignore if it wishes to be a caring and compassionate community. It must be recognized that if this problem is to be tackled, it will demand the allocation of more resources from the state.

b. The Vocation of Caring for the Sick

Caring for the sick is a calling from God of a special dignity and importance. It can never be seen as just another job or another way of earning one's living. While we greatly value the generous dedication to service of many of those who work in the medical field, we cannot ignore that the quality of medical care is often seriously inadequate, e.g. patients being unattended to for long periods of time; the lack of commitment on the part of some personnel; the failure to recognize each patient s one's brother or sister in need, etc. We therefore invite all health workers to serve every patient without exception with responsibility and true dedication.

c. Inequality in Medical Treatment

Absolute equality of access to health care for all citizens is difficult to achieve. However, this is an ideal, which must always be striven for. The guiding principles determining whether a patient will receive priority treatment ought not to be his apparent usefulness or his position in society. Rather, every person, whether rich or poor, educated or not, blood relative or not, has equal right to receive health care. The practice of stealing and re-selling medicines seriously threatens this right.

It is heartening to note the extensive health education programmes currently in operation in the state. One cannot fail to stress the importance of preventive measures particularly in respect of contagious diseases. The current epidemic of AIDS is case point. All recognize that in the present circumstances where no cure for AIDS is available, prevention in the form of health education is the only way of combating this problem.

We want to encourage the efforts undertaken in that direction and hope they can still be intensified: true facts about the disease should be made public more readily; information made available to all; personnel and resources freed for the treatment and counselling of the victims and their families. However, preventive methods must respect God's law and enhance the dignity of the human person. It is most regrettable that little attention is paid to the fact that faithfulness to the Gospel's teaching on conjugal fidelity is the single most effective methods of preventing the spread of this tragic illness. We strongly object to the dissemination of the view that the use of condoms is the remedy against this epidemic.

Besides the immorality involved in the indiscriminate distribution and use of condoms, we must be aware how much they contribute to spreading a false sense of security and encouraging a promiscuity which can only aggravate the existing problem. We appeal to Christian parents to protect and counsel their children against such practices and to guide them to a true Christian understanding of sexuality. In their writings to Christians, both the apostles Peter and Paul note how the Holy Spirit grants the members of the Christian community gifts of all sorts for the benefit of the community. *" One each one of us God's favour has been bestowed in whatever way Christ has allotted it...To some his gift was that they should be apostles; to some prophets; to some evangelists; to some pastors and teachers..." Whatever the gift, the purpose is one: "to knit God's holy people together for the work of service to build up the Body of Christ"* (Eph, 4 7-16;cf 1 Peter 4, 10-11).

African society has traditionally recognized that what is true of the Church is also true of any society: its strength resides in recognizing the gifts of all and in allowing these gifts to flourish and be used for the building up of the community. "Mutu umodzi susenza denga". No one person can claim to have monopoly of truth and wisdom. No individual-or group of individuals-can pretend to have all the resources needed to guarantee the progress of a nation. "Mtsinje wopanda miyala susunga madzi." The contribution of the most humble members is often necessary for the good running of a group. "Wopusa anaomba ng'oma wochenjera navina".

Moreover human persons are honoured-and this honour is due to them-whenever they are allowed to search freely for the truth, to voice their opinions and be heard, to engage in creative service of the community in all liberty within the associations of their own choice. Nobody should ever have to suffer reprisal for honestly expressing and living up to their convictions: intellectual, religious or political.

We can only regret that this is not always the case in our country. We can be grateful that freedom of worship is respected; the same freedom does not exist when it comes to translating faith into daily life. Academic freedom is seriously restricted; exposing injustices can be considered betrayal; revealing some evils of our society is seen as slandering the country; monopoly of mass media and censorship prevent the expression of dissenting views; some people have paid dearly for their political opinions; access to public places like markets, hospitals, bus depots, etc., is frequently denied to those who cannot produce a party card; forced donations have become the way of life.

This is most regrettable. It creates an atmosphere of resentment among the citizens. It breeds a climate of mistrust and fear. This fear of harassment and mutual suspicion generates a society in which the talents of many lie unused and in which there is little room for initiative. We urgently call each one of you to respond to this state of affairs and work towards a change of climate. Participation in the life of the country is not only a right; it is also a duty that each Christian should be proud to assume and exercise responsibly. People in positions of authority, in government and administration, have a particular duty to work for the restoration of a climate of trust and openness. However, participation will remain a fiction without the existence of adequate channels of expression and action: an independent press, open forums of discussion, free association of citizens for social and political purposes, and the like....

A first step in the restoration of the climate of confidence may be taken by recognizing the true state of the nation. *"The truth will set you free"* (Jn 8, 32). These words of Christ do not have an exclusively religious meaning. They also express a deep human reality. For too long we have refused to see that, besides the praiseworthy achievements of the last decades, our country still suffers from many evils: economic and social progress does not trickle down to the mass of the people; much still remains to be achieved to make adequate education and health services

available to all; the AIDS problem presents an incredible challenge; recurrent unfavourable climatic conditions often account for poor crops and subsequent misery for the people...

People will not be scandalized to hear these things; they know them. They will only be grateful that their true needs are recognized and that efforts are made to answer them. Feeding them with slogans and half-truths-or untruths!-only increases their cynicism and their mistrust of government representatives. It gives rise to a culture of rumour mongering. Real progress can only be attained when the true problems and real needs are identified and all resources are channelled towards solving them.

Let us add here that people in positions of responsibility have an obligation to know the actual conditions in which their people live and to work tirelessly for their betterment. They should be willing to allow their performance be judged by th4 people they serve. Accountability is a quality of any good government. People are entitled to know how their representatives fulfil their duties. No disrespect is shown when citizens ask questions in matters, which concern them.

We would like to draw your attention to another area of life in our society. We cannot ignore or turn a blind eye to our people's experience of unfairness and injustice, for example those who, losing their land without fair compensation, are deprived of their livelihood, or those of our brothers and sisters who are imprisoned without knowing when their cases will be heard. In a just society, a citizen must have easy access to an independent and impartial court of justice whenever his rights are threatened or violated. In particular, before a penalty is imposed, it is in the interest of justice and human dignity that the accused be informed in good time of the charge against him and be granted opportunity for a fair trial, and where necessary, the possibility of legal counsel.

We call upon all and particularly those responsible for the administration of justice to ensure not only that procedures are respected but also that impartial judgement is rendered to the accused person. This will only be possible if the administration of justice is independent of external influence, political or other. Our bond of brotherhood and sisterhood in the one body of Christ and our solidarity as a people should, in love, compel us to hunger for the justice and righteousness of the Lord in our society. In this context, we recall the words of Jesus at the beginning of his ministry:

> "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, for he has anointed me to bring the good news to the afflicted. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year of favour from the Lord" (Luke 4, 18-19)

This appeal for fair treatment should also be heard within the Church. We want to recall the importance of adhering to procedures, which have been instituted to promote justice and protect the rights of the faithful. Our Church communities do need well-established and competent forums for hearing various cases, complaints and grievances of their members. Those of us who have to pronounce judgement on persons and situations are to view the exercise of their authority as a service of the truth for the common good as well as for the well being of the individual. In particular, we exhort the people of God to respect the right of defence of those accused of having committed offences.

Conclusion

The issues raised in this letter will obviously require an ongoing and more in depth reflection. It is the Church's mission to preach the Gospel, which affects the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation, be it hunger, ignorance, blindness, despair, paralysing fear, etc. Like Jesus, the advocate of the poor and the oppressed, the believing community is invited, at times obliged in justice, to show in action a preferential love for the economically disadvantaged, the voiceless who live in situations of hopelessness. The human rights and duties identified in this pastoral letter for our reflection are only some of the issues that our God invites us to consider seriously. In our response to God, we humbly recognize that though a gifted and blessed people, we are not a perfect community. If some of our personal weaknesses, biases and ambitions are not purified by the word of God and just laws, they can very easily destroy peace and harmony in our societies and communities.

We hope that our message will deepen in all of us the experience of conversion and the desire for the truth and the light of Christ. This will prepare us for the worthy celebration of Easter, the feast of the risen Lord in whom we see ourselves as a risen people with dignity restored.

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Bishop:	A. Assolari
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