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# Contextual Factors in Church Growth in Malawi

Philip L. Capp

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CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN CHURCH GROWTH IN MALAWI

A Research Project

Presented to the Faculty of  
Western Evangelical Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Divinity

by  
Philip L. Capp  
May, 1979

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## ABSTRACT

The general purpose of this study has been to select and present contextual factors from the past and present in Malawi that provide insights into the process of the growth of the Church in Malawi and in particular the growth of the Free Methodist Church. The study is done with the understanding that it is preliminary to a field study which will provide the basis for decision making by both the Church and Mission.

Past contextual factors discussed are the geographical setting, the acculturating agents and effects of acculturation with emphasis on the four major intrusions of the 19th century, and the influence of Dr. Banda himself. Present factors discussed include the social structures, religious structures, economic structures, education, population patterns, public health, and theological and spiritual factors. From these background discussions numerous questions are raised to be answered in additional research.

A history of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi based on original documents and the author's personal participation is included both as a contribution to knowledge and as further background for understanding what is happening in the Free Methodist Church.

Available statistical data on Church membership in Malawi is presented in tables and graphs and analysed in the text. The picture

of slow growth and the apparent boundaries between the Christian, Muslim and Traditional communities are quantified.

Tentative conclusions of the study suggest that the positive call of a particular man by God and intervention by the Holy Spirit have combined with the spiritual vacuum created by undershepherding in the larger denominations and the leadership opportunity vacuum created by the cutting off of traditional opportunities plus the high degree of control in both the political and religious spheres. Small receptive pockets of population are being discovered and led to Christ. Half or more of the membership appears to be by conversion from the non-Christian population reservoir. Mission intervention should take seriously the fact that the Church began with a black man whom God called. The offer of resources to help should not become the assumption of control and responsibility.

The final result of the study is a proposal in detail for a field evaluation study utilizing a team comprising students pastors and professional consultants.

## CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

### BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

In January 1974 Moses Phiri, a graduate of the Lundi Bible School of the Free Methodist Church in Rhodesia began to plant the Free Methodist Church in Malawi. In May of 1978 Phiri reported a church of over 1,000 members with 15 organized societies. These are distributed in the central and southern regions of Malawi among several of the major ethnic groupings and in at least ten different administrative districts. The northernmost congregation at Kasungu is nearly 300 miles from the southernmost congregations near Blantyre.

This widespread and quite rapid spread of a new denomination in the context of Malawian history raises several questions. The primary question is what factors best account for this growth. The corollary, but even more crucial question, is what part can and should the Free Methodist Church, individual missionaries and the founding leader, Moses Phiri, play to encourage continued growth. And finally what actions that could slow or stop growth should be avoided?

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

To attempt an adequate answer to these questions would require a full scale church growth survey (cf. Smith 1976).

Since this task would require some considerable time spent in instruction and research in Malawi such a survey is impossible for the author at this time.

However, an important part of such a survey is research into the total context of the area of growth and potential growth. The object of the research would be to pinpoint those aspects of the present and the past which are significant for church growth understanding. This will include factors rising from the geography and communications structures, the population distribution and stratification, the social structures, the political, the economic and the religious factors together with some understanding of their inter-relationships.

Therefore, this study is primarily a library research project to supply answers to the above questions from existing data as a beginning point. The study is hopefully enlightened by the author's personal experiences while teaching Malawian Bible School students at Lundi Bible School over a period of five years. In addition he made two tours in Malawi, one an extensive evangelism tour visiting all the areas of the church during a five week period in 1975 and the other a one week journey with the entire student body and their families (35 persons) when it became necessary to repatriate the Malawi

students in 1976 due to war conditions in Rhodesia.

In addition, this study will present an introductory history of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi 1974-1978 based on original documents -- letters, reports and observations -- by the author and others intimately involved in this period of the church. It is the author's hope that this section will provide an important and original piece of work from which to proceed in future studies.

It is a further purpose of this study to set up a working hypothesis and a somewhat detailed plan of procedure for gathering data in order to provide an adequate answer to the questions raised.

#### SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE

It is not the purpose of this section to review the entire literature of the history of Malawi, nor even the range of literature dealing with the history of missions. The focus is recent studies which have reference to the planting and growth of the churches in Malawi with some analytic insights.

To my knowledge there is no published work in English which deals comprehensively and specifically with the history of missions in Malawi and the growth of the Church into recent years.

In "Missions in Malawi", an unpublished master's thesis for Fuller Theological Seminary, George Alexander did a church growth



study in 1969 focusing on the Churches of Christ in Malawi. As part of that study he produced a brief history of missions which is based on secondary sources and not a serious attempt at in depth treatment by his own statement. However, he has a good section on the people of central and southern Malawi, a good section on Bantu traditional religion and philosophy, as well as some helpful information on the growth of the churches. A major section of his thesis is devoted to a theoretical treatment of church growth principles from which he hypothesizes about the future of church growth in Malawi. The bibliography is useful. The work lacks definition because of lack of field data, a deficiency Alexander recognizes in the beginning.

In 1958, George Shepperson and Thomas Price published an exhaustive and definitive study on John Chilembwe that includes the major available data on the origins of the introduction of independent churches in Malawi. This book documents that independency had its beginnings in Malawi as a result of a deliberate missionary thrust rather than as a result of protest, fission or nativistic movements which have been described in other parts of Africa. The full title of their work is *The Independent African: John Chilembwe and the Origins, Setting and Significance of the Nyasaland Native Rising of 1915*. The book contains a wealth of helpful data and insights for church growth history, although little statistical information for comparative or analytic study. The focus of the book is in terms of nationalistic politics not church expansion. There is a very helpful bibliography and a good index.

To follow the independent churches theme, R.L. Wishlade has a small volume, *Sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland*; published in 1965; it is the result of studies done in the late 1950's. He treats both white and black led churches found in the Lake Chilwa area. He has a good section on geographical and cultural background. He has done an in depth study of the relationships and the source of converts for The Faithful Church of Christ with scattered data about the growth of the church. The focus is on the kinship factors and the structures of leadership. There are some very helpful insights as a result of thorough research in a specified area. More similar studies would make comparative studies possible for matters which are mostly conjecture at present. The bibliography is useful. The book is well-indexed.

A work which helps to set the early thrust of the major European missions of East Africa into perspective is Roland Oliver's *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* published in 1952. The emphasis is on the missionary penetration from, and to, the East African countries in terms of the main European mission agencies. The book is valuable for studies into the vision and thrust of European mission agencies, but does not contribute much to the contextual factors of church growth in Malawi today. The data is more about the expansion of the missions than the expansion of the Church. Both bibliography and index are useful.

John McCracken has produced an in depth study from primary sources on the Livingstonia Mission in Malawi from its beginning until 1940. *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940* was published in 1977 and is the result of a Ph.D. dissertation for Cambridge University. While the study focuses on the social change resulting from the impact of Livingstonia Mission in the northern region, it makes frequent references to other mission activity of the time. There is only cursory data concerning growth, but much analysis, anecdote and direct quote of early missionaries and African church leaders. The main focus is political in the broader sense. As in Shepperson, the emphasis is on Christianity and its development of nationalist consciousness among the Christian elite. There is an extremely helpful bibliography and the index is thorough.

The final major study that the author found important is Jan Linden's *Catholics, Peasants and Chewa Resistance in Nyasaland*. Published in 1974 it analyzes the expansion of the Roman Catholic Church from its first entry to 1939 and the establishment of a church with over half a million members -- nearly half of all Malawi Christians are Roman Catholic -- among the peasantry with virtually no significant contribution to the political upheaval in terms of elitist leadership either among the missionaries or the Africans. Linden's study provides excellent insights into the educational evangelistic methodology of the Roman Catholic mission, the tension between Roman Catholic goals and the goals of the Scottish Mission, the changes

in relationship between settlers and Catholics after 1915 that helped growth for the Catholics and the tensions between traditional religion and Catholic faith. Linden's work is indispensable for an understanding of the other side of the story of Christianity in Malawi in balancing the studies surrounding the Scottish, South African and British missions. The growth of the Roman Catholic Church is essentially ignored in other studies. The index is excellent. Unfortunately there is no bibliography and one must fumble through the attributive notes to find his sources.

Finally two studies published in *The Early History of Malawi* edited by Bridglal Pachai should be mentioned. The first is Philip Elston's, "A Note on the Universities Mission to Central Africa, 1859-1914". He summarizes the "civilizing" nature of the mission in all its aspects, indicates the expansion of mission stations and contact, but discusses almost not at all the interaction between the mission and the African or the expansion of the African church as such. The paper documents the Universities Mission's contribution toward a Europeanized segment of Malawi with little regard for African culture and religious belief. He uses primary resource material almost exclusively.

The second paper in Pachai is J.L. Pretorius' "An Introduction to the History of the Dutch Reform Church Mission in Malawi, 1889-1914". Pretorius mentions the origin of the mission in the spiritual awakening of the mid-1880's in the Dutch Reform Church in Cape Colony and that sense of spiritual life that

dominated the early mission in Malawi. Pretorius describes the educational methodology intent on development of a family centered church that would be economically viable without destroying the African social structures. There are some good data on the growth of the Church. The paper indicates the expansion beyond Malawi as well as including activity among migrant laborers. This paper is an important balance to the emphasis in works about the Scottish Missions. Nearly all the reference is to primary source material.

Not related to the growth of the Church as a study, but very important for its well done and usually accurate information about Malawi is the *Area Handbook for Malawi* edited by Harold Nelson and others and produced by the Foreign Area Studies department of The American University in 1975. It is published by the Government Printing Office in Washington, D.C. It has no specific religious or even interpretive bias and presents in clear concise terms a vast wealth of information about Malawi both past and present. As a descriptive reference source it is excellent. The bibliography is extensive except for little specific interest in the mission and church aspect of Malawi history. One drawback for academic research is that the book, obviously the result of well done research, is not documented except through its bibliography. Comparison with the text and the sources reveals high correlation and it appears to be reliable. It would be a basic tool for building an initial understanding about Malawi from which to proceed into further study.

## STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

This study is projected with the following working hypothesis to explain the growth of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi.

Population growth has resulted in the formation of many new rather homogeneous units of society based on authority or social groupings. Existing churches have not planted new churches amongst these new societal units and have not met their spiritual needs. The growth of the Free Methodist Church is fundamentally a result of the dynamics of spirit filled leadership finding a religious vacuum in the societal pattern and offering a structure and faith that meets that need.

This hypothesis will be tested provisionally in this study and refined or reformed as a part of the projections for further study in the final chapter.

## DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It would be impossible to present any adequate general account of the history or the current setting of Malawi within the limited pages and scope of this project. Furthermore, considerable work of this sort has already been done and some of this was discussed in the section on the literature.

Therefore, the general background part of this study is limited to a highly selective presentation of the factors the author believes to be important for church growth understanding. There is no attempt to write another history of Malawi.

The history of the Free Methodist Church will be treated in somewhat more detail as an original contribution to future studies of the Free Methodist Church.

The matter of statistics of growth of the Free Methodist Church and other religious bodies will only be given enough attention to illustrate the questions that need to be answered.

This study is essentially limited to the preparations required to ask the right questions and how to proceed in order to get answers.

## DEFINITION OF TERMS

### Bantu People

The term *Bantu people* refers to the racially mixed black peoples who moved out of north central Africa south of the Sahara over successive centuries dating from before the Christian era. These peoples spread east, west and south in Africa. Not identifiable as a race, they are closely united linguistically by several unique characteristics of language. Most notable is the noun classification system which requires a subject concord which appears in adjectival and

pronoun forms that agree throughout a sentence or paragraph.

In spite of the unity in language structure there is great diversity in culture. There are many many distinct languages.

The term Bantu derives from the term used by a great number of these peoples to distinguish themselves from other kinds of people.

In this study the term is used consistently to denote the black Africans in preference to the common term *African* which has confusing connotations in the South African context since other groups of people consider themselves to be African but not Bantu.

### Church Growth

The term *church growth* is encountered in various forms. When both words are capitalized the formal definition is intended. When growth is not capitalized the concept of adding members is emphasized. When Church is capitalized it refers to denominations, when not capitalized it refers to local congregations.

The formal definition is that of the School of World Mission, Fuller Theological Seminary:

Church Growth is that science which investigates the nature, function and health of the Christian Church as it relates specifically to the effective implementation of God's commission to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt. 28:19). Church Growth is simultaneously a theological conviction and an applied science striving to combine the eternal principles of contemporary social and behavioral sciences, employing as its initial frame of reference the foundational work done by Donald McGavran. (Wagner, Peter 1978: Dictated in unpublished class lecture, Fuller Theological Seminary)

While the nuances of the term as used in this paper are particularly oriented to the priority concerns of continued harvest in



Malawi, the total context of the word in its formal meaning should always be understood.

### Culture

The term *culture* in all its forms is used in the context of the following definition given by Charles Kraft, Fuller Theological Seminary.

Culture is the integrated system of learned behavior patterns, ideas and products characteristic of a society (Kraft 1978: Unpublished Lecture Notes).

### Contextual

The author uses the word contextual to describe the complex total set of factors in which a society exists. This includes the anthropological, the economic, the social, the psychological, the religious, and the historical factors. It includes factors internal and external to the society. It includes the fact of change.

As used in this paper the term is not the equivalent of indigenous. In contrast to the rather static content of the idea surrounding indigenous, the term contextual as used here takes into account that culture is dynamic, always changing -- and in today's world -- always in the process of interaction with external cultural forces.

The contextualizing of the Church, of the gospel, of theology, of training for ministry has not been the issue in focus in this paper. Contextualization has to do with results of the process by which the gospel of Jesus Christ moves from the advocate to the societal group

who become the body of Christ. Contextualization is concerned with both the process by which this takes place and the forms which are a result of the process -- not only in terms of the receptor, but also of the advocate. In contextualization is the understanding that both are changed.

This distinction should be held in mind in reading this paper. The concern here is with contextual factors not the contextualizing process. This is not because contextualization is not important but because this study is background for a study of contextualization. The study itself should move on from where this paper stops. It is that kind of study which is proposed for further study.\*

#### Church/church

As explained above, the term Church capitalized is used when a denomination or the universal Church is implied. The term church, uncapitalized, implies a local congregation.

#### Church Community

This term is used to describe the total number of people who think of a Church as their own, but are not necessarily communicant members.

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\* See *The Evangelical Missions Quarterly*, January 1978, for a lucid set of articles on contextualization.

### Church Membership

This term is used to describe the communicant, and usually adult, members of a Church.

### Nyasaland/Malawi

There is some inconsistency to the way in which these terms have been used. In general, when there has not been a quotation, reference, or historical reason for using the term Nyasaland, the term Malawi has been preferred, even when it is obviously anachronistic.

## METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The background study is library research enlightened by personal insights developed over eighteen years of working with Bantu people in Rhodesia plus a year of intensive graduate studies in missiology.

The history of the Free Methodist Church is a combination of narrative and reflection based on documents in the author's possession plus personal participation. It is partly a monograph and partly documented observation by other participants.

The method of procedure for future study is based partly on understandings of methodology gained from studies in Church Growth Science at Fuller Theological Seminary under Dr. Peter Wagner and

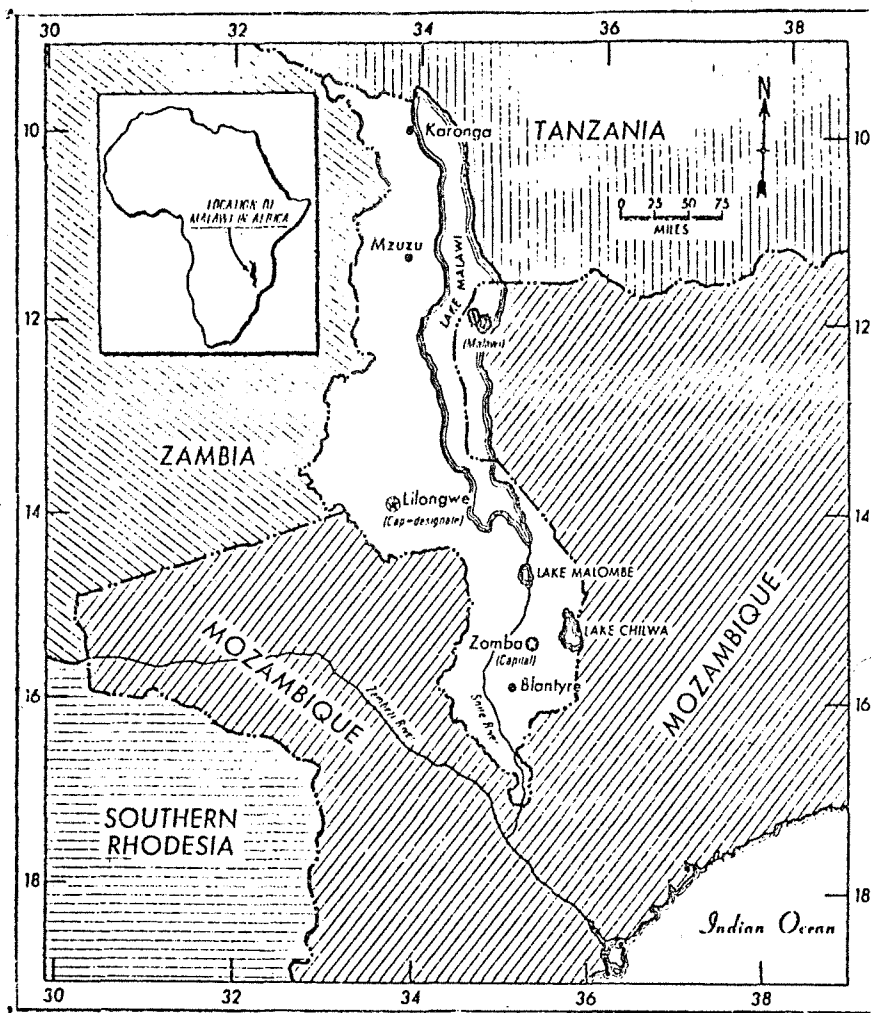
partly from consultation with a personal friend, Dr. Charles W. Dohner, who is a nationally recognized consultant and Director of the Office of Research in Medical Education at the University of Washington.

Documentation has been used except in the case of standard information about Malawi readily available in secondary sources.

The material in the author's personal files that forms the basis of the history of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi rises out of correspondence and reports to which he was party or had access because of his position first as Mission Superintendent of the Free Methodist Mission in Rhodesia and, from 1 June 1975 to 31 December 1978, as Area Administrative Assistant for Southern Africa under the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church.

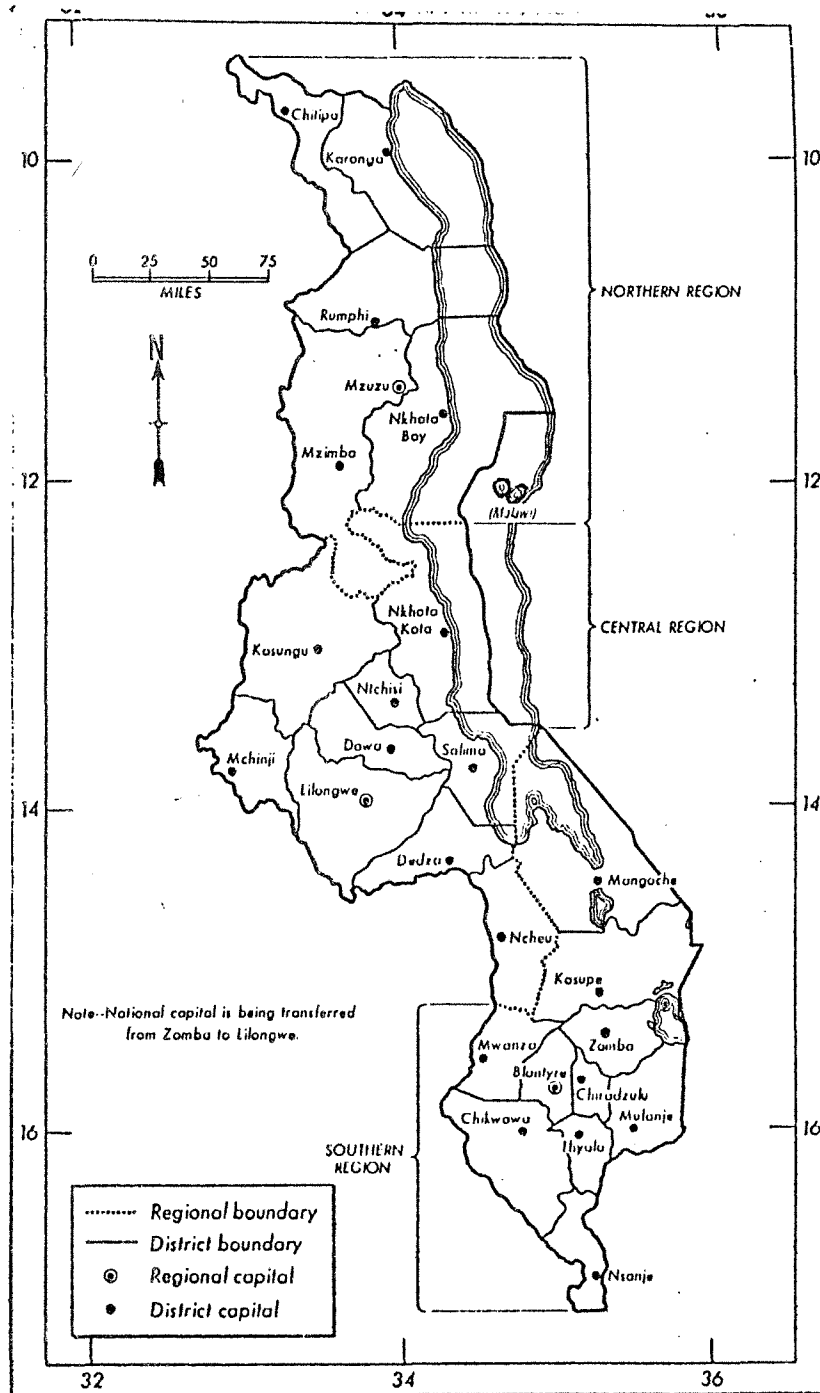
## MAP 1

## The Republic of Malawi



Source: from Harold D. Nelson, Area Handbook for Malawi, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975, p. xiv.

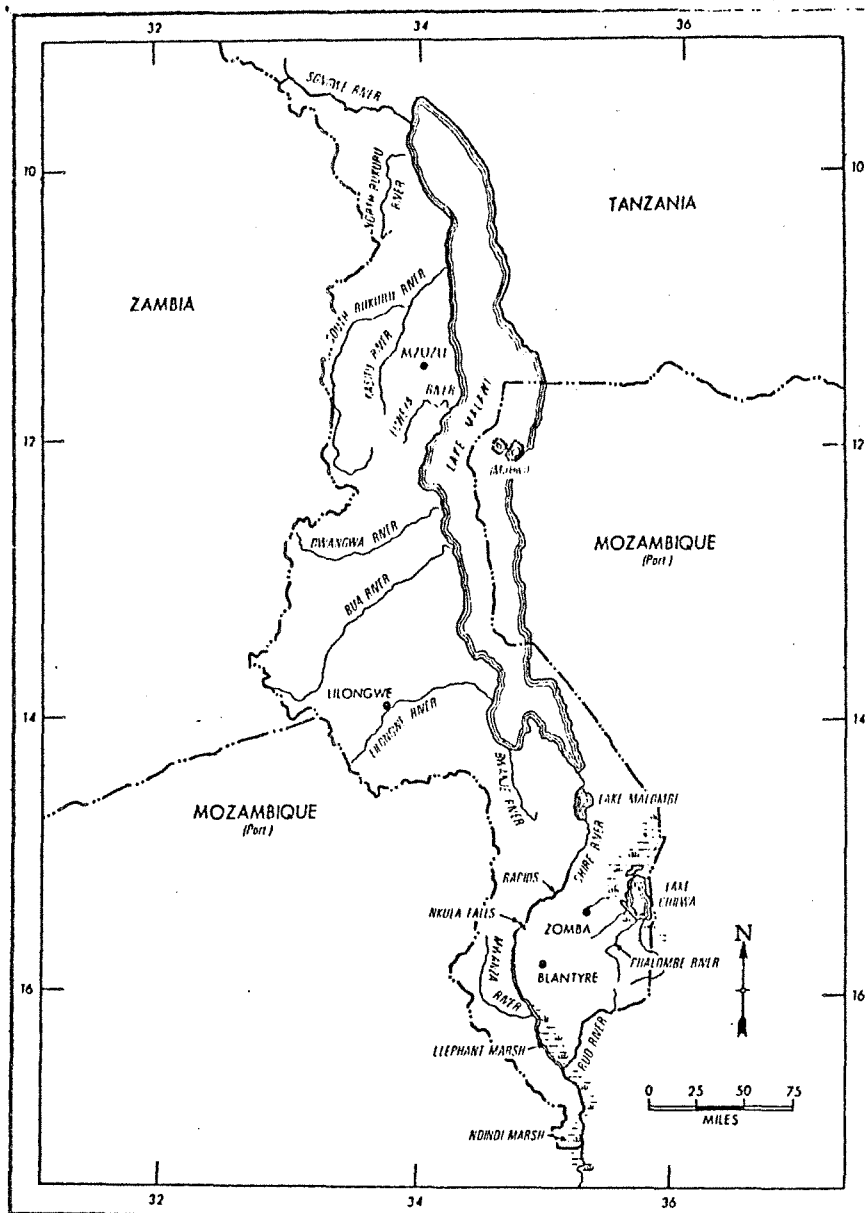
## Administrative Regions and Districts, Malawi



Source: Adapted from Malawi, Department of Census and Statistics, *Malawi Population Census, 1966: Final Report, Zomba, 1970.*

Reproduced from Harold D. Nelson, *Area Handbook for Malawi*, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975, p. 49

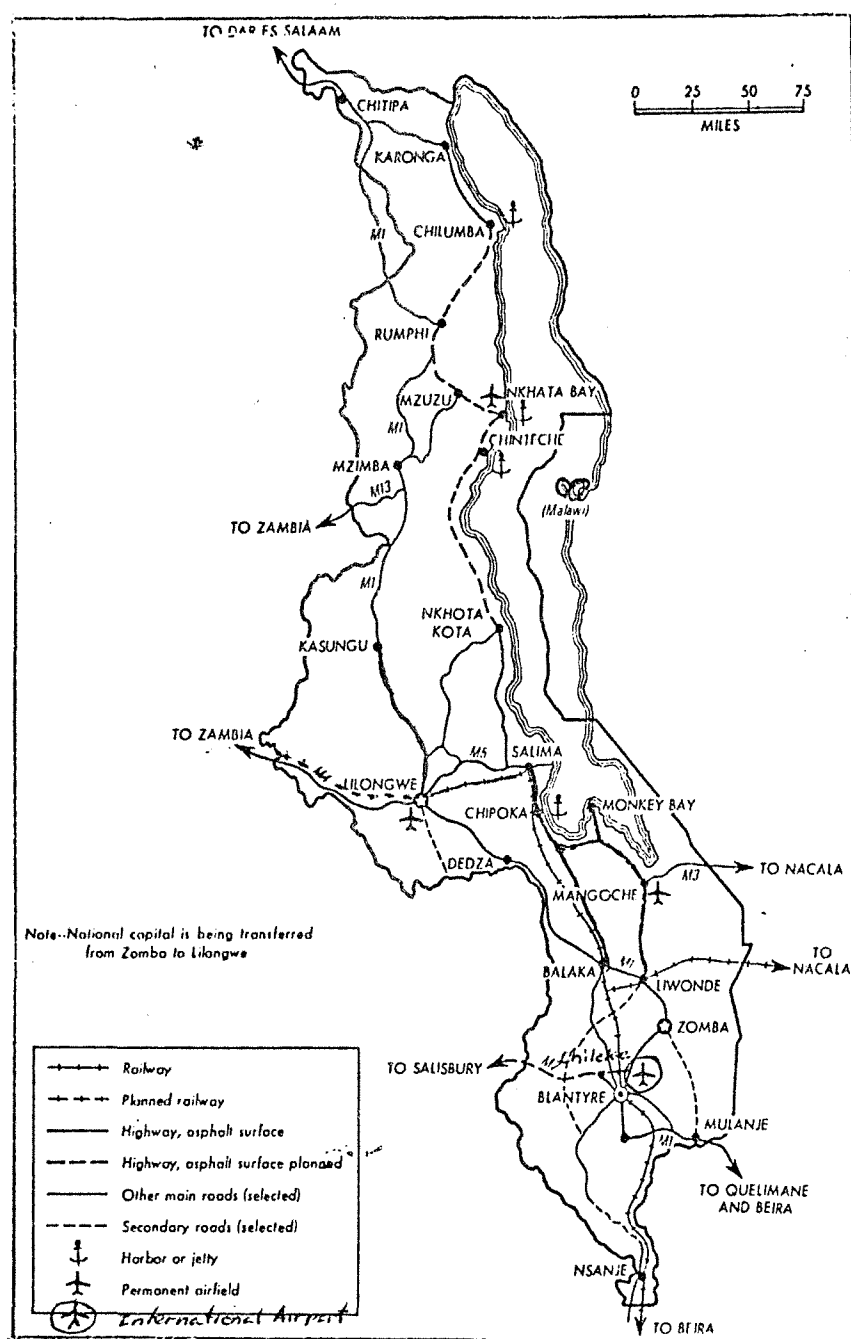
MAP 3  
Drainage Systems, Malawi



Source: Adapted from Anthony Young and Doreen M. Young, *A Geography of Malawi*, London, 1964, p. 16.

Reproduced from Harold D. Nelson, Area Handbook  
for Malawi, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government  
Printing Office, 1975, p. 54

## Transportation System, Malawi



Reproduced and adapted from Harold D. Nelson,  
Area Handbook for Malawi, Washington, D.C., U.S.  
 Government Printing Office, 1975, p. 291



## CHAPTER II. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS IN CHURCH GROWTH: HISTORICAL

## GEOGRAPHIC FACTORS

Malawi is a long narrow section of the lower end of the Rift Valley. It comprises a land area of 36,325 square miles and water area of 9,425 square miles. Lake Malawi extends 350 miles southward opening into its only outlet, the Shire River, which runs another 250 miles to the south before plunging into the rugged Zambezi gorge 58 miles from the mouth of the Zambezi on the Indian Ocean.

Because of the natural barriers created by lakes and rugged mountains the only land pass from East Africa into Central Africa is north of Malawi. This area, the wasp-waist of Central Africa, also opens a route into Malawi and its fertile soils. Malawi is open from the west across the Luangwa River depression but from the south only via the uplands ridge route east of the Luangwa confluence with the Zambezi or up the Zambezi and Shire river in small boats (Agnew 1972: 30-32).

All but five per cent of the land area of Malawi has at least 30 inches of rainfall per year, the minimum for secure dry land farming in Central Africa. However, the lakes, the rapid change of altitude and the many rivers that cut the watershed create a great diversity of climate and ecosystems. Fifty-three natural regions have been identified and mapped (Agnew 1972: 33).

With water communication north and south, rich agricultural soils and large areas of tsetse-free grass lands Malawi became a crossroads between the cultural regions of eastern, central and southern Africa (Agnew 1972: 46). Cole-King notes the comments of Gasper Bocarro, early 17th century Portuguese traveller, concerning his journey from Tete to Kilwa. Passage was handled in a businesslike way and copper from Tete was accepted readily as payment for porters, guides and supplies. Travel was along well-used routes (Cole-King 1972: 75).

Widespread cultural diffusion in Malawi is illustrated by the wide variety of traditional crops which are either marginal to or outside the main distribution areas for those crops in Africa. Cassava, rice, bulrush millet, finger millet and, more recently, maize are examples. On the other hand, sorghum, the main indigenous crop of much of Africa, is only important in the lower Shire Valley (Agnew 1972: 45).

East coast trade reached Malawi as early as the 12th century A.D. In Livingstone's day of the mid-nineteenth century there was extensive trade in iron, tobacco, salt and skins, baskets, nets and fish locally plus cloth, guns and beads in exchange for ivory, copper and slaves on the east-west trade routes in the north and south of Malawi (Cole-King 1972: 72,73).

British colonial government cut off the northern trade routes and concentrated on Rhodesia, Mozambique and South Africa. Trade moved via rail to Beira and Nacala and via land and rail to

Rhodesia. However, moving the capitol to Lilongwe, development of a new international airport, rail lines to Zambia from Lilongwe and roads throughout the whole of Malawi will lead to greatly increased trade and relations with countries to the north and west (Tanzania and Zambia). The early connections of Malawians with these cultures will be reaffirmed and the position as a crossroads may be regained (Cole-King 1972: 47). A recent trade delegation from Tanzania spent five days talking to government officials, industrial leaders and business men. The leader described the trip as an "eye-opener". (*This is Malawi* 1977: 7(3), 9).

The geography of Malawi determines three influences important for Church growth insight. The land bridge between East and Central Africa north of Malawi made Malawi a crossroads of cultural diffusion and movement of people north and south. The transportation facilities of rail and water make communication easier. The many small natural ecosystems generate communities of rural peoples with common economic relationships. Agnew notes that traditionally these valleys were in communication with one another as well because the valleys lead upward to the plateau and thus are interconnected (Agnew 1972: 39).

In addition, the extension of the rail link from Lilongwe to the border of Zambia will greatly extend the contact possible between peoples closely related to the Malawians, who speak the Chewa language and were separated only by an accident of political history in the division of boundaries in the 19th century.

It should be noted that Malawi has no significant mineral resources aside from the Mlanje bauxite deposits. This has determined the nature of development in Malawi in terms of agriculture and industry. The fact that Malawi has a rural agriculture based economy is also, in part, a function of the geography and is important to Church growth insight (*Statement of Development Policies 1971-1980* 1971: 1).

## AGENTS OF ACCULTURATION

### Early Movements of Bantu

As early as 300 A.D. there were settled communities of agriculturalist iron workers in Malawi (Robinson 1969: 3,8; Tobias 1972: 10). They were widespread from the northern region to the south end of the lake in the lowlands along the lake shore. There seem also to have been agriculturalist, cattle keeping iron workers in the highlands of the central and northern regions. They persist in oral tradition as the Akafula and were closely related to the Bantu (Rangeley 1960: 18-20; 1963: 40-42; Nurse 1970). Clark identifies these people with the rock paintings of Malawi (Clark 1973: 28-46).

Sometime in the 11th to 13th centuries A.D. groups of Bantu<sup>\*</sup> calling themselves Maravi began to immigrate from the lower Congo lakes region. They came into what is now central and southern Malawi. Recent studies indicate that the later emigrations of these people were united to a degree under the authority of the Phiri clan with the title of Kalonga. In Malawi they allied themselves with the earlier migrations of the Banda clan who were the "owners of the land" and served a priestly function in relation to the ancestral guardian spirits. In this alliance Phiri males and Banda females in the royal line consolidated, to a certain extent, the political and the religious authority (Langworthy 1972: 107; Nurse 1977: 398). This pattern was complicated by clan subdivisions and union. Nurse suggests there may have been some non-negro clans assimilated (Nurse 1977: 398). From these early migrations developed the Acewa, the Amang'anja and the Anyanja (referred to in general, in this paper, as the Achewa). The Phiri clan was probably distributed among them all as a ruling clan (cf. Schoffeleers 1972: 91-100; Price 1963: 74-77). The word Maravi and the Phiri clan are closely identified with fire (cf. Schoffeleers 1972: 91-100).

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\* Pike, and others, indicate that the Bantu are not an ethnic group genetically but are a linguistic group united by the noun class prefixes and the necessary prefixal agreement of adjectives, pronouns and verbs with the noun that controls them -- two features not found in other African languages (Pike 1965: 27; cf. G.W.B. Huntingford in *History of East Africa* 1963: 80). The Bantu are descendants of an intermingling of Bushman, Pygmy, Cushite and Negro stock rising from a small nuclear area in the Cameroun on the edge of the equatorial forest.

The central power of the early Kalongas was established through control of the religious ritual, economic and judicial services, as well as marriages of alliance that gave Phiri status to heads of non-Chewa clans. One Kalonga extended his authority for a while clear down to the east coast in the vicinity of Quelimane north of the Zambezi mouth. However it decentralized rapidly under external pressure in the 19th century as other alliances became more credible, convenient or expedient (Langworthy 1972: 104-120).

Somewhat later than the Maravi migrations was another movement of people from the northeast -- the Nyakusa-Ngonde. These people settled in the northern region of Malawi in the Nyakusa Valley, in the area of present-day Karonga, under the dynasty of the Kyungu. They were agriculturalists, industrious and advanced for their time. Instead of slash and burn they returned waste to the soil and left well-drained, well cleared fields (Terry 1961: 27). They were also involved in trade with the east coast from their arrival probably in the 15th century. They mingled with and consolidated to their authority other Bantu groups (Wilson 1972: 140-142).

Also migrating into the northern region were a group of clans without central leadership. They were loosely referred to as the Tumbuka (Langworthy 1970: 38). Sometime in the 18th century a group of Swahili ivory traders led by the Mlowoka (the ones who crossed over) moved into the Tumbuka area and gradually established a central authority called the Chikulamayembe. This has been described by Vail as an "economic hegemony" rather than a political dynasty (Vail 1972:

155-163). Their main interest was establishing trade routes into the interior and to the east coast. They imposed a patrilineal pattern on the matrilineal Tumbuka and began the export of ivory, regarded as useful for domestic use by the Tumbuka who were unaware of its trade value. In return the people received cloth, beads and other material goods previously lacking.

Even in this fragmentary and over simplified sketch it can be seen that the early history of Malawi was one of continual contact, movement, growth and change. Aside from the Nyakusa-Ngonde, the peoples of Malawi were subject to constant acculturative pressures. They were linked with trade to the east coast Arabs and Indians from very early years and were acquainted with a great variety of plants and crops. They were basically agriculturalists skilled also in working with iron, cotton, basketry and pottery (cf. Wills 1973: 12-16, 91).

## Nineteenth Century Intrusions

### The Chikunda

Four alien acculturative forces were brought to bear on Malawi in this short period. Toward the end of the 18th century the Chikunda traders began to settle in Malawi. Descendents of Portuguese and Bantu intermarriage, and originally involved in large agri-estates, they had long been in the slave, ivory and gold trade centered among the Shona of Zimbabwe (Wills 1973: 77). With the loss of trade to the south, the Chikunda moved to the north. From their long interaction with the Shona they brought Shona derived spirit mediums which Kings Phiri describes as introducing male possession "by aggressive lion spirits (*mhondoro* or *ziwanda za mikango*)" (Phiri 1977: 8).\*

The introduction of male spirit possession produced a new feature in the religious system of the Chewa matrilineal system which featured female mediums for the lineage guardian spirit.

However, since most Chewa chiefs based their political action on the exhortations and other utterances of spirit mediums, the distinctive impression one gets is that religious changes of the nature just described had a bearing on politics at chiefdom and kingdom level as well. (Phiri 1977: 8)

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\* This is an interesting reference because I am not aware of any Shona group which associates lion spirit possession with the *mhondoro* cult. The *mhondoro* is the cult of the guardian ancestral spirit of the lineage and has mediums, both male and female. Possession by a lion spirit is usually associated with the Shave spirit possession which involves a variety of non-ancestral spirits both of human and non-human origin. Michael Gelfand has written extensively on this subject (cf. Gelfand 1962; Gelfand 1966).



The Chikunda extended the Portuguese slave trade into southern Malawi as well.

### The Ngoni

A second intrusion was the migration of two groups of the Ngoni<sup>\*</sup> from South Africa into Malawi just after the middle of the 19th century. One group, the Jere Ngoni, a branch of the Zwangandaba migration, settled among the Tumbuka and Tonga of northern Malawi. Another group (cf., Linden 1971), the Maseko Ngoni, settled first to the west of Lake Malawi and then moved south into the southern region of the Chewa.

The Ngoni lived by cattle raiding and also took captives who were incorporated into their lineages. Thus a small group of military and politically centralized elite established themselves over the loosely knit clan of the Malawian people. The result was a two-way acculturation. The military system and political centralization as well as Ngoni clan names and marriage customs were adopted by the Malawi clans. While Ngoni language and other features of Ngoni culture gave way to Chewa and Tumbuka features. The Jere Ngoni became associated with the Phiri clan and the Maseko Ngoni with the Banda clan (Nurse 1973: 10). Much of the ceremonial and ritual as well as

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\* Many of the Ngoni peoples were united under Shaka in the Zulu empire. A large segment resisted and fled Shaka's military regime. The core of the groups which migrated to Malawi originated in the southeastern Transvaal area of South Africa. They moved east to Swaziland and north into East Africa.

the regimental performances of the military were appealing to the Tumbuka. In addition, the Ngoni patrilineal system offered a husband higher status potential than in traditional Chewa society. Probably the procedure by which a husband could obtain control of his wife and family in traditional matrilineal Chewa culture was greatly strengthened (Phiri 1972: 9; cf. Wills 1973: 65-68).\*

### The Slave Traders

Coming about the same time as the Ngoni and building up intensity toward the end of the century were the slave traders. These were of three kinds -- the white Arabs, the Swahili Arabs and the Ayao.

White Arabs.

The white Arabs tended to settle under the authority of a chief and did not attempt to disrupt the political power directly. Their main objectives were slaves and ivory in exchange for cloth, beads, guns and gunpowder. If the Arabs did not affect the political balance personally, the guns did and chieftainships rose in power and declined based on the new military factors.

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\* It was a matter of great interest to me that one of the seven Malawian Bible School students at Lundi Mission in 1975-76 was careful to designate himself as Ngoni. He spoke Chewa and did not recall any of the old Ngoni language, though his parents used some. He mingled easily and well with the other students and considered himself as a Malawian. Yet there was a sense of sophistication and pride of lineage that seemed to set him apart from the other students. Although there was some dissent -- which the class never revealed to me -- he was chosen by the students to represent them as student leader and representative to the faculty.

Swahili Arabs.

A second kind of slave trader were the Swahili Arabs who came about 1880. They established several bases in the north near Karonga and a base at Khota Kota. At first cooperative with the Africa Lakes Company and European traders, Mlozi, the leading slave trader at Karonga, initiated war in 1887 that lead to his defeat and execution by the British in 1895. The Jumbes at Nkhota Kota were another important Swahili slave trade dynasty that was eliminated by British intervention (Shepperson 1966; cf. Macmillan 1972: 263-282).

Page cites Nkhota Kota as an example of restructuring of the social system. Salim bin Abdullah after the middle of the 19th century using a few *wawungwana*,<sup>\*</sup> who were mostly Yao and Nyamwezi, dismantled the social hierarchy and installed himself jumbe or principle headman. He offered protection to refugees from Ngoni disruption among the Tonga and Chewa population who joined him. Islam appears to have been a way of differentiation from the local political and cultural scene. The *wawungwana* had status in their community above the traditionalists and were recognized and used by the British in their administration after the Jumbe was deposed (Page 1974: 83, 84).

While it seems as though the Jumbe did not proselytize yet Islam was firmly imbedded in Nkhota Kota and this is a traditionally important Islamic community in Malawi (Shepperson 1966: 19).

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\* Literally freed men but in fact fringe or detribalized Africans, sometimes volunteers and sometimes slaves who had been Islamized by circumcision, some rudimentary instruction and status in the Swahili east coast culture.

In addition to the material quality of life attractive to the Africans, the Jumbe was contrasted with the British as a man of mercy who did not oppress his people (Shepperson 1966: 198-200).

It is interesting to note that at first the slave trade was welcomed by many of the African chiefs. It gave them a way to get rid of criminals, malcontents and other undesirable people in their midst -- at a profit instead of maintaining them at a loss to their food supply (Rangeley 1963: 12).

Shepperson indicates that Islam did not grow stronger in Malawi because Western Christianity under British rule presented a more powerful way of material benefit and differentiation. When anti-white feelings might have made possible a consolidation of Arab Islamic influence disassociated from British rule, the need was displaced by a son of the Achewa, Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda (Shepperson 1966: 202-204).

Ayao.

The final group of slave traders to be considered here are the Ayao. Historically a Bantu people involved in trade between the east coast and the Congo Basin but not involved in the slave trade except to buy slaves which they used as carriers in their trade and as domestic help, the Ayao were forced out of their country between Lake Malawi and the east coast by the Ngoni. They moved into Mang'anja territory south and east of Lake Malawi and became more involved with the slave trade as the demand grew in the last decades of the 19th century. They traded with both the Arabs and the Portuguese (Rangeley 1963: 9-13).

The Ayao adopted many of the characteristics of the east coast Islamic culture, but Rangeley states that Islam did not become strong among them until the 1870's when the Arabs came to live among them as the slave trade increased (Rangeley 1963: 25). Shepperson comments:

If this assertion is correct it suggests that, until a powerful foreign standard of comparison was available in the interior, the Yao had no social incentive to follow Islamic practices. (Shepperson 1966: 195)

In the process of the migrations and slave trade that developed, including raiding each other as slave supplies dried up, the Ayao chieftains developed as tightly distinct units often differentiated by sectarianism within Islam. Because of their high regard for the chieftainship which has become combined with religious leadership, deviation from Islam is, today, regarded as an attack on the chieftainship. Rangeley suggests that the Christian tendency to destroy the power of the chiefs increased resistance among Islamic Ayao (Rangeley 1963: 26). McCracken establishes that in the early experience of Livingstone Mission among the Ayao at Cape McClear their belief that only separation from the tribal chief could make the people open to Christianity and their practice of setting up an alternative temporal authority for persons on the urban fringes and refugees from the local chiefs and slave traders resulted in a consolidation of the Ayao into Islam which in 1875 was not well established and made Christianity still a viable option for the Ayao (McCracken 1977: 39,48-51,55).

It is through the Ayao that Islam spread among Malawi people as did other east coast Arab customs, including the square house which

has almost totally replaced the traditional round hut in central and southern Malawi. Rangeley says, however, that Islam is a thin veneer of the chiefs and royal houses and that they are regarded as infidels by coastal Arabs (McCracken 1977: 39,48-51,55).

If the Ayao are today regarded as infidels by the east coast Islamic community, and if they have held such an influential position among Malawi people as seems evident it would also seem true that penetration of the 500,000 strong Islamic community (cf. Coxill 1968) by Christianity in a way that did not threaten their unity of social structure and authority patterns would result in large scale conversion especially if it offered more acceptance in a large, stable and respected community than their tenuous position in the Muslim community would indicate.

The fact that the Free Methodist Church at Chia Lagoon is in a Muslim community raises the question of significant Free Methodist penetration of the Muslim population of Malawi. This is further enhanced by the fact that Moses Phiri's father was a religious teacher -- *mwalimu* or *sheke* -- which was a highly respected position in the Muslim community (cf. Appendix: The Transcription of a Speech by Moses Phiri's Father; Rangeley 1963: 26).

The chief contributions of the slave trade, from a Church growth perspective, are Islam in Malawi, British government intervention in the slave trade resulting in the whole complex of conditions rising from that and the creation of a sizeable fringe of refugees who were reorganized under the early missions of the 19th century.

### The Europeans

The fourth major disruptive and acculturating factor in the 19th century were the Europeans. Coming almost simultaneously were missionaries, commercial traders and settlers, and British government officials. The early Portuguese influence is ignored for the purposes of this paper except in the form of the Chikunda treated earlier.

It was David Livingstone's now famous appeal at Cambridge in 1857 that set in motion the process of "Christianity and Commerce" that initiated and characterized the European entry into Malawi (cf. Elston 1973: 61-84).

The European entrance was made under the rubric of freeing Africa from the slave trade and civilizing and Christianizing the Africans (Elston 1972: 345).

#### Missionaries.

From the aborted attempt by the Universities Mission in 1861 to the end of the 19th century a number of missions made permanent entry to Malawi (Elston 1972: 344). In 1875 the Free Church of Scotland established Livingstone Mission, first at Cape McClean on the south end of Lake Malawi and later moving to the northern end of the lake (McCracken 1977: 17). The established Church of Scotland began its Blantyre Mission in the southern region in 1875. The Universities Mission returned to Malawi territory and settled on Likoma Island in 1888 (Elston 1972: 344-364). In 1889 the

Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape Colony was established in the central region at Mvera (Pretorius 1972: 365-383). In 1889 the White Fathers attempted two missions that ended in disaster at the south end of Lake Malawi in Yao land. Montfort Fathers established the first permanent settlement at Nzama. The White Fathers followed and by 1903 had a dozen missionaries in the central region where the Dutch Reform Church was also active (Linden 1974: 13-61). Between 1892 and 1902 Joseph Booth began or was instrumental in introducing the Zambezi Industrial Mission, 1892, the Nyasa Industrial Mission, 1884, the Baptist Industrial Mission, 1895, the Seventh Day Baptists at Plainfield, 1899, the Seventh Day Adventists also at Plainfield, 1901, as well as John Chilembwe's Providence Industrial Mission under the National Baptist Convention (Negro) of the United States in 1900 (Shepperson 1958: 18-123). He later was the means of introducing the Watch Tower Movement in 1907 under Eliott Kamwana (Shepperson 1958: 150-156), the South African Churches of Christ under George Hollis in 1906 (Shepperson 1958: 149), and re-introduction of the Seventh Day Baptist Movement under Charles Domingo about 1910 (Shepperson 1958: 160-165). In 1900 the South Africa General Mission entered Malawi but not related to Joseph Booth (Linden 1974: 43). In 1900 the first United Missions Conference was held at Livingstonia.

These missions, especially the Scots, Dutch Reform, Anglican and Catholic missions, spawned outposts and school in a wide network in the north central and southern regions. For most Africans



in 19th century Malawi, the white man was represented most frequently by a missionary.

Traders and Planters.

In 1878 the African Lakes Corporation began as a commercial venture to assist the Livingstonia Mission and the London Missionary Society. They contracted to bring supplies to the mission as well as engage in trade. The aim was legitimate trade to make redundant the African slave trade.

With the establishment of transport routes the settlers followed. The British South Africa Company made investments and eventually took over the African Lakes Corporation. Nearly one million acres of land were placed under cultivation by various white interests on the Shire Highlands and the British South Africa Company laid claim to over two million more in northern Malawi. Coffee and cotton were primary export products of the large estates that were developed. Issues regarding land occupation and labor developed quickly in the latter part of the 19th century.

British Government Officials.

In 1891 the British government declared the British Central African Protectorate later simply Nyasaland Protectorate. The leading figure in the events that led up to this was Harry Johnston, first British Consul of Mozambique and from 1891 Consulate General for British territories north of the Zambezi. Britain's initiative was sparked first by the threat of Arab advance on the

east coast and then by Portuguese ambition to control the Shire Highlands as part of its scheme to develop a belt of control from Mozambique to Angola. The Scottish Missions played a dominant role in persuading the British to become involved. Colonial office government officials were thin on the ground and never developed to more than a handful of people attempting to administrate Malawi (cf. Wills 1973: 168-192).

#### EFFECTS OF ACCULTURATION

The acculturative effect of the Arab and Portuguese slave traders reached its peak in the Islam and the Chikunda intrusion respectively and continued to be felt only in the growth of the Islamic and Chikunda communities. Muslims were reported to be 500,000 in 1968 (Coxill 1968: 233). The Chikunda settled into the traditional way of life and were assimilated. The Muslim Yao represent a significant population group that may be open to Christianity. The conservative nature of Islam, the resistance to Christian schools among the Yao, the persistence of traditional beliefs under a veneer of Islam, the consolidation of the religious leadership in the chieftainship, the probability that Islam among the Yao represents resistance to the break-up of their traditional way of life and a way of differentiation from the national political

structures indicate a homogeneous unit of people that must be under considerable pressure in modern Malawi (cf. Shepperson 1966: 121-123). If being a Yao is being Muslim, if the conversions of the chiefs was the significant factor in the conversion of the Yao to Islam and if the initiation ritual is both a ritual reinforcement of the chieftainship and the means of spreading Islam and if the significant factor in Islam was its adaptability and concentration on orthopraxy instead of orthodoxy as Alpers suggests, then these factors suggest features of the approach Christianity would need to make to the Ayao (Alpers 1972: 173,180,181,194). Alpers quotes von Grunebaum for a statement in support of the conversion to Islam in the late 19th and early 20th centuries of the Yao people. It may also be true of the potential conversion of the Yao to Christianity.

Once internal or external experience creates intellectual, emotional, or organization needs that cannot be met by the insights or hypotheses evolved within the particular closed system, this system, its basic values as well as its doctrinal, ethical, artistic, and intellectual solutions, will command less and less unquestioning adherence. The door will be open for its transformation or even displacement. (Alpers 1972: 192; quoted from G.G. von Grunebaum, *Modern Islam: The Search for Cultural Identity*, New York 1964: 20).

While the Islamic influences have been largely limited to the Ayao, the acculturation pressures of the European intrusion increased, and even after independence, continue, although in a different manner.

### Mission Influences

#### Education

The education system built by missionaries produced an educated elite who did not accept inferiority to the European as a given. The

Livingstonia Mission in the northern region was remarkable in this respect. Christianity was linked essentially with literacy and the study of the Bible. This was a distinct difference from the oral tradition and ritual procedure that characterized African religious practice. Christianity became inseparably linked with school.\* The process of formal education is one of the chief means of transmitting culture. It was inevitable that the education process of the missions would transmit some measure of western culture in the process. However, this was, in fact, the declared aim of the early missions and captured so well in a statement by James Henderson of Livingstonia Mission in 1900.

Our peoples, if not physically moribund like the indigenous races of Australasia, are really perishing in their stagnation from progress and their utter inefficiency for the great ends of mankind. It is not possible to stem the tide of western civilization if we desire it; but there is a more excellent way. Christ is in this civilization more than we all realize, so let us give it to them, keeping none of it back. (quoted in McCracken 1977: 182)

Elson notes the identical purpose of education in the UMCA on Likoma Island (Elston 1972: 358).

It is obvious that the context of the discussion at the Missionary Conference was the problem of western culture and evangelization. Henderson correctly perceived that western civilization was already upon Malawi by the turn of historic events and the entry of the

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\* The route to baptism was a long course of study -- typically two to three years and usually involving some ability to read (McCracken 1977: 86-189; Pretorius 1972: 372).

British. He also correctly perceived that it was better to transmit that culture in a Christian context as much as that was possible. The problem he did not answer, and with which missions' educationists are still struggling, is how can any educational curriculum be designed which does give entry to the western world and its literature and yet does not transmit primarily western civilization. Has the time come for evangelical educational leaders to get together from all over the world and redefine Christian education in terms of study of what Christians have done in the context of their cultures rather than attempting to define what Christians ought to do by, perhaps unwittingly, assuming that there is a definable Christian culture (implicitly my own!) and marshalling the resources of education to its transmission?

An example of a creative approach in Malawi history is the Dutch Reformed Church Mission attempt to base an educational process on some Christian assumptions and adapt that to the cultural context.

Faced with moral decay, as they saw it, from the effect of migrant labor, the Dutch Reformed Church Mission launched a comprehensive educational program based on the assumption that the Christian family is the only true basis for an indigenous church. To promote this in the context of migrant labor policies they rapidly expanded their village schools from 1904-1914, made reading a requirement for

church membership<sup>\*</sup> and started a teacher's training school in 1904. More central to their program was the village industries and agriculture training program started at every mission station. The industry was geared to what men and women could do in their own home and the agriculture was aimed at improvement within the technical and physical capabilities of the peasant farmer. The third part of the program was a training school for girls teaching home crafts designed to make each girl a better wife and mother. An important innovation was the institution of a Christian initiation school for the girls as a substitute for the traditional ceremony (Pastorius 1972: 372-374).

In 1971 the Malawi government produced a comprehensive survey of manpower requirements in high and intermediate skilled categories. This was done to provide a basis for educational planning. Pearson, who did the survey, concludes that a Standard 8 and J.C. (two years of high school) is a basic educational requirement even for self-employed farmers if better production is to be achieved (*Manpower Survey* 1971: 22,26).

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\* This was also true of the Dutch Reformed Church Mission policy in Rhodesia, and, to my knowledge was still practiced in 1976.

An interesting parallel of the closeness of school and Christianity is the Hlengwe term *xikholwe* commonly used in the southeastern part of Rhodesia to designate the day school, the Sunday worship or Christianity itself.

Beyond this link, though, is the feeling that education is linked up with the entire achievement of western culture. Dr. Banda's thirst for education is typical (Short 1974: 12,13).

While progress is being made in providing educational facilities at university level the most difficult gap is increasing secondary school opportunities in real terms (*Economic Report* 1976: 55,56). The number of openings for secondary school has increased but so has the population.

It is important for the Church to plan leadership educational programs that remain in step with the planning for the population rather than to the education of an elite who will find only tiny minorities of the population in which their ministry will be acceptable, or to concentrate on a level of preparation too low to be acceptable to the people themselves.

#### Model of Western Material Prosperity

White Arab and Swahili presence had, before the coming of the western European, made a deep materialistic impression. House style, dress, the desire for manufactured goods, especially bright cloth, beads and guns, were not new.

In spite of missionary avoidance of ostentatious living, the contrast between their standard of living and that of the local population was enormous. It was a major cause of friction in the Livingstonia Mission which resulted in break-a-way movements. McCracken cites the case of the African head of Overtoun Institution who, at £48 per year in 1920 was receiving only a little more than a third of what his counterpart had received in 1888 -- £180 per year (McCracken 1977: 199).

Examples of this could be multiplied almost infinitely -- even from the author's experience. Unforgettable was a reply received in response to a request for housing for Bible School and Secondary School teachers. The Missionary Secretary at that time wrote that it would be unwise to provide housing that was too superior to that found in the rural villages because the change back would be too difficult (personal correspondence).

In this question there is involved not only the economics of a situation, but an entrenched feeling that those of the affluent Western culture should have more and those of the less affluent African culture should receive less regardless of their contribution to the work of the mission.

Beyond this, however, is the total impact of the implications of a better way of life materially. Christianity in Malawi, as in other parts of the world, was modeled and taught as providing a better way of life, not only morally, but materially. The Dutch Reformed Church Mission was an outstanding example of the application of this in establishing village industries and agricultural techniques -- wood and iron work, bark cloth, wool and linen weaving, basket and mat work, leather work, leather tanning, soap making, machine and hand sewing, brick making and building are some of the skills taught in the Dutch Reformed Church Mission. They set up a store and weekly markets even producing their own tin coins (because of the scarcity of money) in order to stimulate local trade (Pretorius 1972: 372,373).



Dr. Chanock has argued that missions were not a great modernizing force in Malawi in the sense of providing an ideological base for innovators. He suggests rather that the mission influence, Livingstonia notwithstanding, basically prepared people to expect material rewards within the colonial system (Chanock 1972: 436-438).

The industrializing process and its technology is seen as belonging not to the process of innovation from within Bantu society but as an alien influence from the European. Chanock sees the future of significant change not in the industrial transformation brought about by revolutionary change but in the gradual move of the peasant agriculturalist from a subsistence to a market oriented production (Chanock 1972: 440).

If one realizes that only about 5 to 6 percent of the Malawi population is involved in the wage economy (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 66-69) and that by 1968 statistics approximately one-third of Malawians were Christians or counted in the Christian community (Coxill 1968: 36), although Alexander suggests it may be much higher (Alexander 1969: 104), then the fact of the rural impact of Christianity is apparent.

To what extent has Christianity contributed to the acceptance of the small holder concept of agricultural improvement which requires hard work, discipline and thrift? How much has Christianity contributed to the acceptance of the development projects and the entry into specialized agriculture for the cash economy and for export? How much has Christianity contributed to the acceptance of the law and order which has been a necessary part of the Malawian economy since Independence?

Or in other words, when material rewards are on the increase as a result of rising productive activity brought about by diligence, hard work and thrift and these rewards are shared in anything like an approximate way among the population as a whole it would seem that this is consistent with the Christian teaching introduced into Malawi by missions. To the extent that government pursues and achieves economic policies that make continuing advance materially a visible achievement to the 95 per cent peasant population of Malawi then Christianity in that sector is not likely to produce radically politicised leadership. Malawi's continued growth in real terms of 5.1 percent per year since 1964 (*Economic Report* 1976: 10) couples with the policy of development that seeks to maintain a healthy balance between urban and rural income so as to prevent the concentration of income in the towns (*Statement of Development Policies 1971-80* 1971: 2) suggests that the emphasis on material betterment through careful management of resources and hard work that seems inherent in conservative evangelical Christianity is not out of step with the Malawi government aims. Malawi's consistent refusal to be involved even in diplomatic relationships with communist nations and the continued appeal to western development capital is well known (cf. *Foreign Economic Trends* 1978: 3,4 and *Background Notes* 1978: 4,5). Dr. Banda is quoted in *This is Malawi*, "It is fashionable to call oneself socialist these days. I am not one for fads and fashions. We are not capitalist, we are not socialist, we are not communist --

we are just Africans." (*This is Malawi*, 1977: 7(2), 11). But, Dr. Banda's pro-western preference for development of Malawi is clear.\*

The general economic climate and aspirations of Malawi indicate that Christianity providing links with the approved trading and aiding partners of Malawi should be generally acceptable as long as the present policies continue.

### Politicization

Attempts have been made to connect the Christian mission with the politics of nationalism and independence, although nationalists have argued otherwise. Mufuka, after noting the Scottish missionaries of Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions support of colonial government then goes on to examine their activity and educational policy. He notes that 8 of 10 of the Independence cabinet were educated in Scottish mission schools (Mufuka 1977: 203) and concludes in the light of their pressure for African rights and their education in a tradition of independent thinking that at least the Scottish missions must be given credit for leading the way in progressive African thinking politically (Mufuka 1977: 212,213). On the other hand McCracken examines the part played by Livingstonia Mission and concludes that the mission elite were not the primary political force in mass nationalism after the founding of the Nyasaland African Congress in

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\* This emerged early in Independence. In 1965 disagreement over Dr. Banda's refusal of an offer of aid from communist China was one of the issues that resulted in ousting several cabinet ministers. Short records full details (Short 1974: 197-230).

1944 (McCracken 1977: 291). Leadership passed to civil servants, traders and farmers in the Central Province.

Linden examines the Roman Catholic participation in Malawi and concludes they came into their own after the 1955 Chilembwe uprising as defenders of government and law and order (Linden 1974: 100-102). "With a continued emphasis", states Linden, "on authority and hierarchy in tribal, national and Church life it is unlikely that the historical role of Catholicism in modern Malawi will differ in any important respects. The character of the Malawian Church was defined for a long time to come in the formative period 1889-1939." (Linden 1974: 208)

A considerable body of writing has developed around the activity of John Chilembwe. A protégé of Joseph Booth, Chilembwe went to America with Booth in 1897 and was educated under the auspices of the National Baptist Convention who sent him back to Malawi in 1900 as an ordained minister to start Providence Industrial Mission. From 1901-1906 two American Negro assistants and Chilembwe were also supported by the National Baptist Convention. The mission was designed to evangelize and to assist Africans in education and participation in the economic life of the western world. While Booth had been a radical proponent of Africa for the Africans<sup>\*</sup> he had also been a pacifist. Chilembwe was known by government and mission

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<sup>\*</sup> He published a book by that name in the United States. Joseph Booth, *Africa for the Africans*, Baltimore 1897.

authorities as a gentle man and his school had very favorable reports. Nevertheless, in 1915, after a period of sharp protest against the conscription of blacks in World War I, Chilembwe organized a scheme of violent uprising in cooperation with other leaders of independent churches with whom he was in close contact. His venture failed and he, and several other leaders were killed (Shepperson 1958: 85-146, 218-319).

One of the important factors in the failure of Chilembwe's uprising was that there was no mass response, although he had expected it (Tangri 1971: 312). The picture that emerges is that a few educated elite were politicized in the Scottish Missions, Joseph Booth affected another small group of leaders but the masses of people were not aroused or mobilized by the Independent Christian missions in the 1915 rebellion. Afterwards, the government kept a very close watch on mission activity and long inquiry was made into the participation of various groups (Shepperson 1958: 323-396). As a result of the inquiry and subsequent deportation, exiling, imprisonment and execution of various leaders, the missions played an increasingly conservative role in the political life and by the time of the rise of a national political party in 1944 political leadership and church leadership were not identified.

During a five week period of evangelistic activity with a team of Bible School students in 1975, one overriding awareness was that some representative of the Malawi Congress Party was always alert to where we were, what we were doing and what we were saying. We were

introduced to Malawi Congress Party local committee representatives and noticed that it was even more important for them to know about our meetings than for the police.

It is my opinion that anti-government political activity would be immediately repressed. But aside from this there was no restriction on activity and growth of the Church from any official that we met.

One day on the train a missionary and a leader of the Free Methodist Church were in conversation with a leader in the Malawi Young Pioneers -- a youth branch of the Malawi Congress Party. As questions between the youth leader and the church leader approached the question of the supreme loyalty of a Christian, whether to Jesus Christ or to the head of Malawi government, the church leader walked away from the conversation and the missionary continued the conversation which immediately took a different turn. This raises the possibility that imbedded in the political philosophy of Malawi is the seed of the necessity for absolute and supreme loyalty to the head of state.

At the present time Dr. Banda participates easily in religious-political observances such as the Martyr's Day celebration and reads the Bible on such public occasions (cf. *This is Malawi*, May 1978: 8(2), 27). The joint Roman Catholic and Protestant Chichewa translation of the New Testament published in 1977 by the Bible Societies of Malawi was in response to repeated calls by Dr. Banda to have a better translation into correct Chichewa (*This is Malawi*, July 1977: 7(3), 20). In July 1977 Dr. Banda praised the efforts toward Church unity expressed in the Christian Service Committee of the Churches in Malawi, formed in 1969. Commenting on various projects undertaken

by that committee Dr. Banda said it shows the cooperation of the churches, government and the people and "shows that the best use of Church contributions is made in projects that directly help improve social life at a village level." (*This is Malawi*, July 1977: 7(3), 13).

### The Establishment of the Church

It could be easy to overlook the fact that whatever controversies may arise about the various acculturating influence of the missionaries, the fact remains that in 1861 when the ill-fated first attempt by the Universities Mission began in Malawi there were no Christians in Malawi. In 1968 the World Christian Handbook reports a total Christian community of 1,241,172 including Roman Catholics and independent churches (Coxill 1968: 76), which in a population of 4,039,583 (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 7) is approximately 30 per cent. If one uses the figures for communicant members the per centage of the Christian community drops to about 21 per cent of the population. The Christian Church is a dominant factor in Malawi life.

Alexander, however, points out that the growth of the Christian churches in Malawi since 1940 has barely kept pace with the population growth rate (Alexander 1969: 191,192). It has not always been this way. In 1895-1898 there was a widespread spiritual awakening in the northern region and again from 1903 for a few years. From 1895 to 1914 the Livingstonia Mission expanded

rapidly from a few hundred to over 9,000 communicants. But slow growth became the pattern again after that. The harvest was slowed because of the strict adherence to baptism only after several years of catechumen classes. Waiting lists for baptism built up into the thousands and the Watch Tower Movement under Elliot Kamwana moved in in 1908-1910 and baptized about 10,000 people (McCracken 1977: 184). During the period 1903 to 1914 the general awakening affected both the Dutch Reform Church Mission and the Blantyre Mission and they grew somewhat more rapidly than in previous years. The Blantyre Mission reported 11,000 adult members in 1914 (Pretorius 1972: 377) and had another period of marked growth from 1925 to 1938. The Dutch Reform Church Mission shows an increased growth from 1940 to 1953 (Alexander 1969: 180,181). Alexander does not point out the beginning of the work among Malawi migrants in Rhodesia in 1912. These figures were included in the reports for the Dutch Reform Church Mission. Increased migration after 1940 due to the rapid expansion of European farming in the northern highlands of Southern Rhodesia may have brought results to the Dutch Reform Church Mission from among non-Dutch Reform Church Mission Malawi immigrants as well since the CCAP was the only mission working among Malawian farm workers in Southern Rhodesia (verbal report of Rev. M. S. Daneel, The Evangelical Fellowship of Rhodesia Annual General Meeting, Salisbury 1966). There were about 6,000 members in this work in 1970 (Pastorius 1972: 376).



The Universities Mission did not benefit from the awakening following 1903. The most obvious explanation is that they were working primarily among the Muslim Yao who were unaffected apparently by the awakening. But that does not explain why the growth which did occur virtually stopped in later decades.

In the years following 1900 a number of independent churches were started. The Watch Tower Movement swept a large number into its membership in the northern and central region. In the southern region the Providence Industrial Mission under John Chilembwe grew. Now under Dr. Malekebu, the mission reported a membership of about 25,000 in 1968 (Coxill 1968: 228). This was greater than the Universities Mission, now Anglican Diocese, reported. Was it because Chilembwe, and from 1926 Makalebu, worked further to the south on the fringe of the Yao population and among the influx of migrants to the Shire Highlands both from the northern and central regions and from Mozambique as the Nguru or Alomwe people poured into southern Malawi?

The Roman Catholics entered the Blantyre Mission and the Dutch Reform Church Mission territory just after 1900. There was constant rivalry between the Roman Catholics and the Presbyterians. After the struggle of the first decade, the Roman Catholics grew rapidly after 1915. They were much in favor with the government because of their cooperative role during the Chilembwe uprising and considered to be supportive of government,

It is interesting however to note that the de Montfort Missions were the ones that grew so rapidly rather than those of the White Fathers. Linden presents a chart of the White Fathers' efforts and states that in the same period while White Fathers' results increased from 2,541 in 1918 to over 12,500 in 1933, the de Montfort work grew from 5,000 in 1918 to 39,000 in 1933 (Linden 1974: 113,114).

The differences in method which Linden notes is of interest. For the White Fathers conversion was primarily a rational process of assent to truth. The Montforts thought of conversion as primarily personal assent to Christ. The Montfort catechumate was both shorter and simpler (Linden 1974: 54). In addition the view of the White Fathers was slow patient evangelization of a small area. The Montforts followed a principle of expansion as rapidly as possible (Linden 1974: 70,71).

Linden seems to feel that wherever principal headmen were Ngoni the missions sided with them. The Chewa chiefs were more difficult to work with and the Nyau societies became anti-Christian, especially in the central region (Linden 1974: 114).

It is apparent that a movement to Christ took place generally in 1895-1914. Under the leadership of Donald Fraser, the awakening in the Livingstonia Mission had all the earmarks and signs of the Evangelical Revival of a previous century under the Wesleys in England (McCracken 1977: 120-123). Yet, as has been seen, at this same time a movement toward Islam was taking place among the Ayao.

Overall, the penetration of the traditional population in great numbers seems to have come to an end before 1940. The overall growth of the Church since then has scarcely kept pace with the population growth rate. This suggests that the population has been more or less "frozen" into Christian, traditional, and Muslim segments and also that Church growth since 1940 has been primarily one of reorganization of the existing disciplined population. Alexander also notes that the activities of the smaller and newer missions and independent churches tend to be an involvement with the Christianized population rather than penetration into the reservoir of traditionalists or the Muslim community (Alexander 1969: 195). He notes that missionaries are often unaware of the pagan population.

The fact that they are unaware of a pagan population as distinct from the disciplined population or the Moslem population is but a variation of the fact that they make very little distinctions of any kind among the peoples in the country in which they work.  
(Alexander 1969: 195)

It is possible for families in Malawi to be greatly divided in religious adherence without necessarily producing disruption of the social fabric. The relationship of Moses Phiri's father as a Muslim *sheke* and Phiri's mother as a member of the CCAP was a conflict, but did not break the family relationship (cf. Appendix A). However, Wishlade's study indicates this is uncommon. Most families seem to be homogeneous in religious affiliation (Wishlade 1965: 102).

Furthermore, the establishment of a Free Methodist Church in a Muslim village at Chia Lagoon is evidence that at the village level, Muslim and Christian groups can co-exist in mutually beneficial village life. Wishlade's study indicates that heterogeneous religious affiliation is quite common at the matri-lineal level. He finds that descent does not necessarily determine religious affiliation (Wishlade 1965: 105).

While it is important for the Church as a whole in Malawi, it is especially important for the Free Methodist Church in Malawi to know what kind of groups are responding. Does the Free Methodist Church represent growth of a denomination at the level of converting and vivifying nominal Christians only or does it also penetrate into the pagan population? Is the group of Christians at Chia a previously nominally Christian matri-lineage group who are not directly related to the main Islamic matri-lineages of the village, or are they former Muslims who have been converted?

Alexander has given a helpful analysis of the growth of the churches (Alexander 1969: 174-197). He makes some positive suggestions based on an analysis of traditional society as to how evangelistic approaches should be made. An interesting suggestion for matri-lineal societies is illustrated by the growth of the Faith Church of Christ which grew through conversion of the leader's matri-lineages (Alexander 1969: 60; cf. Wishlade 1965: 104,105).

However, the first question that must be answered is whether or not the pagan community is being penetrated and where is that

community. The picture at present seems to be that the Christian Church, the Muslims and the traditionalists have settled into a more or less settled relationship in which there is mutual reinforcement and cooperation. Loss of Christian men who marry Muslims or traditionalist wives may be about offset by exchange of religious affiliation in the opposite direction if Wishlade's conclusions are accurate that the husband most often takes the religious affiliation of the wife and that heterogeneous affiliation at the immediate or nuclear family level is rare (Wishlade 1965: 103).

In Malawi's developing patterns of nuclear families occupying land in a development scheme, and eventually on a freehold basis with increasing orientation toward the market economy and not only subsistence production how much of the social fabric will remain traditional?

### The Legacy of British Government

The effect of white government on Malawi is a paradox. On the one hand there is a history of growing irritation with the white man and his ways. The investigation after the Chilembwe uprising clearly brought to light the growing anti-European feeling at certain levels and many of the specific reasons. Basically Africans felt they had been freed from slavery by the British and re-enslaved economically and socially by the colonial administration and the European settlers. Low wages, forced labor, unfair

taxation, poor treatment as persons as well as the grievance of World War I veterans and their widows and families were primary complaints (Shepperson 1972: 408-416).

World War I reinforced by World War II brought increasing understanding by the Africans that Europeans were not supernatural beings. They lived, fought and died together in battle. The African began to see his own identity as equal to Europeans (cf. Linden 1974: 107). In the post-World War II period the Nyasaland African Congress, formed in 1944, limped along asking for increased participation in government for Africans.

Then the issue of Federation with Northern Rhodesia and Southern Rhodesia was revived. Africans in all three territories were opposed but in Nyasaland the African opposition was intense (Short 1974: 68,69). Dr. Banda was extremely active in London in his opposition, but to no avail. After a brief program of African civil disobedience in Malawi the Federation came into being "and the mood of the Nyasa people settled into sullen resentment." (Short 1974: 74)

Hatred of the Federation with the implications for the non-development of Malawi except as a reservoir of labor for the other two territories and South Africa eventually produced the political energy that brought British government intervention in Malawi to a close. It was through the activity of Henry B.U. Chipembere and M.W. Kanyama Chiume that the Nyasaland African Congress was revived and Dr. Banda finally persuaded to return to active politics in

Nyasaland in July 1958. Banda's leadership, the civil resistance and his imprisonment, along with nearly 1,500 others, led eventually to the constitutional council in 1960 that granted a new constitution and black majority government to Malawi. In 1962 Malawi was granted permission to withdraw from the Federation and at the end of December 1963 the Federation came to an end. Malawi was granted independence in 1964 (Short 1974: 55-172).

An interesting note to the Federation and its legacy is the first President of Togo Republic, Sylvanus Olympio's, criticism that colonialism linked states to metropolitan countries but left African countries in isolation from each other (cited in Oliver 1972: 275,276). Whatever else, the Federation established some infrastructure and communication between Malawi, Zambia, Rhodesia and South Africa and Mozambique.

In spite of all the invective directed at the system of government imposed upon them by the British, the influences of British government seem to be positive. Although some count it negative, Oliver feels that the political boundaries that have created countries much larger than pre-colonial political units are a positive contribution (Oliver 1972: 275). The centralization of government in a country that had not know centralization, the erosion of the tribal power structures, introduction to the trading community of the western world with its wage-labor based economy over against the slave based economies of the Arabs and central African societies, the regularization of English as the language of the educated

with its entry into the vast literary resources of the English language, the model of a parliamentary democracy with a British designed constitution, a developed estate agriculture which was to become a key factor in Malawi's export markets and an important kingpin of the economy, and not least, an active financial commitment to the development of the economy of Malawi which still continues to be a major factor in Malawi development (cf. *Background Notes* 1978; *Economic Report* 1976: 75).

Ndabaningi Sithole, Rhodesian nationalist, says of British colonialism:

It has been seen that colonialism gave to Africa a new vigorous industrial pattern, a new social and industrial consciousness, a new way of organizing and doing things, new skills, new insights, new dreams and visions. It created a new climate, a new environment. It annihilated many tribal, linguistic, ethnic barriers and divisions. It was largely responsible for the unification of African tribes, where previously tribal divisions had made for weakness rather than for strength. It brought Africa into international light, and this was very helpful if Africa was to keep pace with the rest of the world. Since colonialism fertilized, stimulated, invigorated, and shaped African nationalism, it is understandable when African observers say, "The twentieth-century African nationalism is indeed the child of European colonialism be it within or outside wedlock." (Sithole 1968: 101).

In terms of Church growth insights the history of Malawi in the fight for independence indicates how deeply Malawi feels about domination by invaders. Dr. Banda represents the restoration of the Chewa dominance of the early Maravi empire. All 19th century



intrusions have been assimilated to a new political reality. But there must be conflicts and tensions among various units of the population. Churches that could give opportunity to differentiation without threatening the political authority of Dr. Banda should be able to grow.

### The Legacy of Traders and Settlers

The legacy of the early settlers is difficult to evaluate because it is emotionally charged. Africans tend to see it in terms of exploitation and abuse.

However, it is difficult to argue with one fact -- the establishment of the basis of a viable agricultural export economy and the basic financial and communication networks to make that possible. Even so, without the subsequent development of small holder agriculture and massive development of infrastructure, the present situation would not have developed. Perhaps the best evaluation is to say that Dr. Banda's policy of slow localization and maximum utilization of expatriot participation both in government and in the private sector made the colonial patterns an asset in Malawi whereas in several states they were unceremoniously discarded.

Never very large, the non-African population who are nearly all involved in commerce and industry and estate agriculture was 18,805 at the 1966 census. It has probably remained relatively

static since there is no inducement to come in number and the largest group are Asians who have been adversely affected by the localization policies since 1977 and have tended to emigrate (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 7).

In terms of Church growth the economic development that has grown up must be recognized as primarily a rural development. Missionaries are congregated in towns. Church leaders are mostly of the educated elite and likewise living in towns, if possible. This, at least is my observation from both seeing and listening to comments about the movements of Church leadership in Malawi during my visit in 1975 as well as in class discussions with the Bible School students who came from the central and southern regions.

The great emphasis on urban evangelism and urban church development does not apply -- in fact it is misleading -- to Malawi which has 90 to 95 per cent of its population in rural situations, and only three significant cities.

This is not to say that those cities should be avoided, but since labor migrates to the cities, perhaps the Church should follow the converted migrants rather than seek to exploit the migrants' webs of relationship back into the rural areas for evangelistic purposes.

## DR. H. KAMUZU BANDA

"Faith moves mountains! Those who have followed Malawi's development since His Excellency the Life President, Ngwazi Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda, led the nation to independence will agree that the faith of the people in their dynamic leader has transformed agricultural imponderables into an economic boom during the past decade."(*Building the Nation* 1974: 7)

Personal History

After completing Standard Three, Banda left Nyasaland on foot while a young teenager about 1914 or 1915. He found employment in Rhodesia and then South Africa where he met the African Methodist Episcopal Church. He completed Standard Eight at a Methodist night school in Johannesburg and worked with the A.M.E. Church. In 1924 the A.M.E. Church offered to underwrite Banda's education in America. They supported him through high school at the A.M.E. Wilborforce Institute near Xenia, Ohio. In 1928, assisted by a medical doctor who befriended him, he began a pre-medical course at the University of Indiana. Transferring to the University of Chicago after two years Banda graduated in history and political science. After a post-graduate course in chemistry he entered Meharry Medical College in Nashville, Tennessee -- the same college from which Dr. Daniel Malekebu, head of Providence Industrial Mission had graduated. Banda received his Doctorate of Medicine in

1937 and went on to Scotland to study for the British licentiate which would enable him to practice in Nyasaland (Short 1974: 5-27).

In the United States Banda came into close contact with Aggrey and other famous Negro leaders. It had been his intention to return to Nyasaland to help his people. He prepared himself broadly so that he would not be a doctor who knew everything about medicine and nothing about anything else (Short 1974: 22)! Furthermore he refined his views on current recommendations for education in Africa made by the famous Phelps-Stokes Commission. Banda felt Africa needed technicians, craftsmen and artisans but, the first priority was a broadly based education in the liberal arts made widely available for without it Africans would always be subjugated (Short 1974: 22). Completing his licentiate at Edinburgh and Glasgow Banda was ordained an elder in the Church of Scotland in 1941. He was on the verge of returning to Nyasaland as a medical missionary when a group of Livingstonian nurses wrote the headquarters in Scotland that they would not serve under an African doctor (Short 1974: 39).

Banda began to take an interest in central African policies in 1938. During his practice in England, and later in Ghana he worked hard to prevent federation of the Rhodesias and Nyasaland. He attempted to influence Britain to establish a form of government that could give Nyasaland an African representative government. However, during this time Banda, at age 50, "had become a typical British general practitioner with all the accoutrements of a middle class Englishman," (Short 1974: 51). He was highly respected by his nearly

all-white 4,000 patients in North Shields (Short 1974: 51). He no longer wished to return to Nyasaland. He didn't want to dissipate his money supporting relations in the extended family system and besides he had grown accustomed to the British way of life (Short 1974: 51). However, he entertained regularly. The younger future leaders of Africa as well as leading British politicians were frequently in his home. Banda supported many African students in advanced education and sent money to the Nyasaland African Congress after it was formed.

In 1958 the young leaders of the Congress urged Dr. Banda to leave his medical practice and take on political leadership in Malawi. Supreme leadership in the Congress was promised to him (cf. *Supra* pp. 60,61). And so, as a black nationalist politician rather than a medical missionary Banda returned to Malawi. It was largely the personal intervention of Dr. Banda that broke up the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland leading to Malawi's independence in 1964.

### Directed Change

It is not so much the significance of the political event itself that is the focus of this section, although Independence is certainly one of the dynamics of the context for Church growth. It is rather the unique train of changes which Dr. Banda has set in motion in Malawi that are of interest here.

## Malawi Congress Party

Under Dr. Banda's leadership the Malawi Congress Party has become the only legal party and Malawi a one-party state. This took place in fact by mid-1965 after the crisis of dissent in Cabinet but by design and constitution in the process of establishing a Republic in 1966. The party became the sole controller of the state through its nomination of candidates for the legislative assembly or parliament and Dr. Banda became the sole controller of the party through the powers granted in the party constitution to the Life President (Short 1974: 250-272).

The effect of the transition to republican status had been to transform the Malawi Congress Party into a national tribe, to which every Malawian was expected, if not required, to belong.\* "My tribe is the whole nation, the tribe of Malawi," said Banda. (Short 1974: 266)

In 1978 the strength of the Malawi Congress Party increased by making all branch, area and district committees a three year term instead of one. In addition, all party offices are to be paid an allowance (*This is Malawi* January 1978: 8(1), 20).

Banda has been concerned deeply with the problems of developing a de-tribalized state that would retain the values and institutions of African culture and yet be blended with western culture into a composite culture and a Malawian national consciousness (Short 1974: 266,272,273). One technique he used was to impose a

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\* Through personal messages from colleagues in Malawi I understand that membership in the party is now required (1978).

common language, Chichewa. Short notes that the choice of language alienated the northern Tumbuka speaker and also other groups who felt Chewa was a tribal not a national name for the language (Short 1974: 272). If resentment exists today it would be doubly significant for Church growth among non-Chewa speaking people. On the other hand, its widespread use makes communication at the ordinary level much easier, as we found for ourselves in 1975.

### Localization

Another feature connected with Dr. Banda's determined realism in relation to Malawi's economic situation and international politics is his plan for Africanization or localization as it is called in official documents. In the *Manpower Survey: 1971* it is noted that 83.2 percent of the high and intermediate level of employment is of Malawi citizens, although it is noted that there is a marked difference between the figures in the public and private sector. Localization is significantly higher in the public than in the private sector which includes statutory or para-statal bodies.

Economist Pearson comments,

In view of the government's refusal to localise at the expense of efficiency, the high overall localization is eminently satisfactory, though further improvements in the private sector are clearly obtainable. (*Manpower Survey 1971: V*)

It would be easy because of the apparently very good relationships between black and white in Malawi epitomized, in a sense by Phiri's father

My only son, Moses, who came out of my poor blood is today a missionary. I cried, cried and cried with pleasure and joy and pride. Today, today -- today my only son, Moses, is a well-known missionary who can be visited by the whites. This is not only a pleasure but incredible as well.

to become lulled into a false understanding of the grist in Malawi's political mill. Localization is official policy. Dr. Banda's approach to it has been a bone of contention within Malawi and still is the object of attack from other black states but the Malawi Development Corporation and the National Trading Company have become forms of state capitalism by which a large degree of Africanization has been achieved.

Since March 1978, Asian traders who owned 90 percent of the small scale commerce have been restricted to the three main towns of Blantyre-Limbe, Zomba and Lilongwe in their commercial operations.\*

The point for church growth is, in spite of the surface relations, the Malawian government does not want foreign determination or control of their enterprises. A question to be determined is to what extent does white missionary cooperation with the Malawian church leaders add status and play a part in receptivity to the Free Methodist Church. It is my tentative belief that the non-permanent, collegial relationship, particularly in short term visits for various purposes adds status in the way that visiting

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\* This order made it possible, in 1977, for the Free Methodist Church to purchase a building in Salima formerly owned by Indian traders.



dignitaries do at the level of the state. On the other hand a permanent presence would produce the opposite response. A corollary conviction is that travel outside the country enhances the status of the leader. Moses Phiri's leadership status is greatly enhanced by his training outside Malawi (personal communication 1974). In this connection it may be significant to note that both the leaders of the successful African independent churches, Providence Industrial Mission, had studies in the United States. Part of Dr. Banda's status derives from his study outside the country. And perhaps the most important aspect of this is the lifting of the leader above single tribal connections.

#### Party Auxiliaries

Another factor introduced by Dr. Banda was the Youth League, the Malawi Young Pioneers and the Women's League as official arms of the Malawi Congress Party. Women play an important support role in politics and are active in community development projects. They have home craft workers teaching home economy as well as adult literacy in villages (*Building the Nation* 1974: 30).

The Malawi Young Pioneers is a highly politicized segment of Malawi's population. It was organized originally to direct the activities of the more militant members of the Youth League into constructive activity (Short 1974: 171). While some of its elite members form a personal body guard for Dr. Banda, the more common activity has been in the training schools. There are now 20 bases, a central training school and 19 Young Pioneer Settlement Schemes.

More than 13,000 have graduated from the ten month training in leadership, agricultural development, citizenship and self-help skills. Many graduates return to their villages and bring change by example. More than 100 youth clubs have been founded in strategic parts of the country by Malawi Young Pioneers graduates. These have become centers for the local farming community. Other graduates join agricultural settlements. Over 1,300 Malawi Young Pioneers settlers are now on the 19 schemes.

Each year during Youth Week to celebrate Dr. Banda's 1960 release from Gwelo Prison Malawi youth give one week of free help to self-help projects. In 1973, 344,000 youth worked on nearly 1,500 projects during Youth Week (*Building the Nation* 1974: 18).

All three of these organizations transcend ethnic and kinship ties. The Malawi Young Pioneers take on the aspect of an age-set association which provide something of the same kind of continuity that Vinyau provides in traditional society.

*This is Malawi* reported on Dr. Banda speaking at Youth Week in 1978:

"The Russians and the Chinese know everything about this country . . . To give both of them credit, they may not love us or like us, but they respect us. They know that our youth, because of the training they receive, are quite different in every respect to the youth of other African countries."

Commenting that in some countries children are allowed to do as they wished and were impudent to parents and elders,

"That is stupid," he declared. "We will not have that kind of thing here. In Malawi we want a guided, disciplined youth. The youth must be productive, not parasitic." (*This is Malawi* November 1977: 7(4), 17).

It is interesting to note that the Deputy Mayor of Blantyre at the opening of the Seventh Day Adventist Church Youth conference in 1977 praised church organizations in Malawi for their efforts to mould a disciplined, polite and obedient youth (*This is Malawi* November 1977: 7(4), 17).

### Public Morals

Dr. Banda is personally concerned about public and private morality. He criticizes the western permissive society and frequently speaks on the subject of personal morality including sex in public (Short 1974: 280). His ban of short skirts with the official regulations concerning public dress and the exceptions for tourists in certain places is well known in Malawi.\*

### Village Self-Help Program

Another direction of change sponsored by Dr. Banda is the village self-help program. These programs involve advice from government, help from political and traditional leaders, youth organizations and overseas aid bodies coupled with voluntary labor and sometimes contribution in the building projects such as gravity feed water systems, schools and clinic buildings and rural bridges. A large number of government community development workers have been trained. They are advising, encouraging and instructing people at the village level in courses, seminars and committee meetings for

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\* A copy of the regulations is posted prominently in Chileka International Airport as well as other places.

organization and coordination of the activities of voluntary agencies and action groups (*Building the Nation* 1974: 30; *This is Malawi* 1978: 8(1), 11,12).

### Foreign Relations

Finally, there is the factor in change introduced by Dr. Banda's pragmatic approach to the whole range of Malawi's problems. Committed to capitalism he has not hesitated to resort to many types of control including state capitalism as evidenced by the gigantic undertakings of the Malawi Development Corporation which had increased investments from K 1,078,000 in 1965 to K 10,311,000 in 1975 (*Statement of Development Policies* 1971: 4; *Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 154). Committed to concentration of the national development effort on small scale agriculture, he has continued to recognize the necessity of the estate agriculture which contributes substantially to the gross domestic product<sup>\*</sup> and is a major earner of foreign exchange -- but estate agriculture represents large non-African financial interests (*Economic Report* 1976: 4,5). Committed to an African, though non-racial, state yet Dr. Banda maintains an open attitude toward South Africa and Rhodesia based, in part, on the economic requirements of Malawi and in spite of serious opposition from other black leaders in Africa. Oliver notes the unpopular warning of

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\* Typical is the Dwangwa sugar project. Of the 14,000 acres to be developed in the project, 1,630 will be settled by small holders on six acre plots. The rest will be developed by estate agriculture (*This is Malawi* April 1977: 7(2), 8).

Houzehoust-Boigny of Ivory Coast in 1958 that separation in a spirit of hate of underdeveloped countries from the powers to which they were attached would create a regrouping in misery and mediocrity (Oliver 1972: 276). Banda has persisted in open relationships with South Africa and the introduction of change through exchange and understanding (Short 1974: 313,314). Noting that Malawi is still convinced that discussion and negotiation is the most practical method of solving Southern African problems, *This is Malawi* quotes Banda as telling the new South African ambassador, "Confrontation and violence leave a legacy of bitterness." (*This is Malawi* 1977: 1st Qtr, 14) Committed to non-violence on the international scene in the solution of racial problems yet in Malawi he was prepared to resort to violence. Since Independence he has used violence ruthlessly against all opposition within Malawi (Short 1974: 227-229, 255-260). Committed to the maintaining of African values and traditions he has opened up vast contacts with the western way of life in the huge development programs which involves assistance and personnel from Canada, the United States, Japan, Korea and South Africa (cf. Nelson 1975: 6; cf. *Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 96).

While there may be interest and significance in several of the above observations, it is not the individual items but the pattern that is of interest at this point. Into a society with already expanded options for their range of behavior, Dr. Banda has injected an almost unlimited range of options in the social, economic, educational and religious life. The only area in which the option for choice of behavior is limited is in the political area.

Three observations *that need testing* seem relevant. One is that the increased range of optional behavior patterns should make choosing Christianity easier and affect receptivity positively -- especially among the non-disciplined peoples of Malawi. The second observation is that this increased range of behavior choices may indicate the breaking down of the cohesion of various traditional societal patterns and may prevent or hinder the possibility that Christianity could spread widely and rapidly through conversion of kin groups, lineages or villages.

Finally, it may be possible that the increased range of choice will also mean that secular modernity is a viable option and may mean that a new category of secular pagans is being created in the process of industrializing and development.

### CHAPTER III. CONTEXTUAL FACTORS AND CHURCH GROWTH: CONTEMPORARY

#### SOCIAL STRUCTURES

The present situation in Malawi is an amalgum of the acculturating pressures of the past 150 years. This process has continued right into the present. Studies by anthropologists which have captured the situations in the past are indispensable referent points, but are not necessarily definitive in today's context. Without adequate field work it is only glimpses of what may be happening today that can be suggested here.

##### The Chieftainship

The rural areas of Malawi were territorially fixed in 1974 in the care of 194 chieftainships (Nelson 1975: 91). Historically chieftainships could be formed by enterprising headmen who hived off and established a following. This is no longer possible.

The traditional function of the chief and sub-chief as ruler and magistrate has been separated in the system of Traditional Courts introduced in 1969. The chairman of the court is a political appointment by the Malawi Congress Party although many of these are also chiefs. The chief retains a role in the allocation of land, the religious social leadership of his people whether Christian,

Muslim, traditional or some combination,\* the selection of candidates for parliamentary office from their district in concert with representation from the League of Malawi women, the League of Malawi Youth, the Malawi Congress Party and district and town councils (Nelson 1975: 155, 156), and the selection of the President of Malawi in conjunction with Malawi Congress Party officials. This latter role is, of course, eliminated for the time being in view of Dr. Banda having been declared Life President in 1970.

The chief functions as the leader of the smallest unit of local government. His primary activity now lies in administrative duties concerning taxes, licensing, registration of births, marriages and deaths and other similar duties of modern government (Nelson 1975: 91). He functions under the jurisdiction of one of the 24 district commissioners who head the largest units of local government. Only eight urban centers organized under town or city councils function outside the chief's jurisdiction (Nelson 1975: 159). Therefore at least 95 percent of the people still live within the framework of the altered traditional organization where the kinship group, the village and the chiefdom are the primary elements (Nelson 1975: 4).

Because of the Achewa custom of using only one word *mfumu* to refer to chief, headman or village head or even sometimes to honor a

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\* Traditionally the chief and headmen have had an important ritual part in puberty rituals, marriage rites, intercession and thanksgiving to tribal spirits such as before green crops could be eaten as well as in land allocation and civil disputes (Hodgson 1933: 12, 134, 135, 152, 160).



certain person (cf. Read 1956: 47) it is sometimes difficult to sort out the relative responsibility of a man designated *mfwu*. Traditionally Achewa tribal life was usually in small family communities and chiefs took on importance as leaders in times of emergency (Hodgson 1933: 143). Read says a chief was recognized by possession of a female initiation site among the Achewa (Read 1956: 47). The traditional system among the Achewa did not categorize chiefs in a horizontal plane. Their importance rose and fell with the circumstances of the importance of their lineage segment. It was British rule that injected the horizontal category and fixed status of the chief (Barnes 1954: 115). Hodgson notes that the Achewa, Anyanja, Amang'anja and Ayao were closely interwoven groups and common clan names appeared in all the tribes. Especially among the Ayao the chieftainship was more a function of leadership in military and commercial enterprise than of strict hereditary succession (1933: 143).

Among the Ngoni the chieftainship was more distinctive and the relative status of paramount chief, sub-chief and headman were kept distinct. A headman might be either a member of the royal line or of commoner origin (Read 1956: 47; Barnes 1954: 117-172; 1959: 204). After British occupancy the niceties of the various categories of chieftaincy among the tribal groups was not observed (Barnes 1959: 206).

In Dr. Banda's attempt to create a single super-tribal or Malawian loyalty with the Malawi Congress Party as its chief vehicle of organization, one wonders whether the persistence of the ancient

distinctions of chiefly and headmanly honor are not very persistent. Margaret Read noted that in her study she had been told by Europeans that the Ngoni were a scattered people and their culture was dead. She discovered it was very much alive and its honor to the chief also alive (Read 1956: 453).

A factor that needs to be determined is to what extent do historic tribal differences still persist in the fixed chieftainships or, more likely, in the headmanships of the various territorial chiefdoms? How significant are the lineage segments that must be building up in both the matrilineal and patrilineal clan organizations in terms of alternative status which is now unachievable through the new chieftancy?

While the older forms have changed is Read's comment still true? "The Ngoni sovereign state has become more and more like a rural district council in a backward area . . . But in the eyes of his people, the Paramount Chief still belongs to the Ngoni . . ." If this is still true, then churches will have to take note of this to penetrate the traditional segments of society -- and without destroying it.

Chilivumbo in an article about the response to planned change in connection with a rice scheme at Lake Chilwa notes that "the inclusion of Chief Mwambo, his son and other relatives added credibility to the scheme . . . It appears . . . that . . . working through acceptable traditional leaders heightens the chances of the successful introduction of innovation in the rural areas." (Chilivumbo 1969: 53)

Chilivumbo goes on to note some other effects. Being able to irrigate, fertilize and control crop yield changes the world view. Whereas magic was previously necessary to control nature, now the peasant farmer is in control (Chilivumbo 1969: 54). Since the chief was traditionally the vehicle of access to the spirits and the control of nature, this changes the relationship of the chiefs in terms of traditional religious authority.

Furthermore the concept of land as belonging to the people under the chief changes. In the scheme the chief nor his subordinates control the land. This becomes the function of an allocation officer (Chilivumbo 1969: 54). And so another important symbol of the traditional chief's authority as well as an important role is taken from him and his status altered.

In this case, Christianity might utilize the chief's changed position and the changed world view to enter the rice scheme and effect a movement of this chief and his people to Christ.

### The Village

In present day Malawi the village headman enters the political scene primarily through his participation in the local Malawi Congress Party and by virtue of his position he shares voice and vote in the selection of candidates for parliament as well as representing his people in the expression of grievance or suggestion for improvement at that level. Otherwise, the village headman is not an important

government person. On the other hand, the village headman as head of a social group is important socially. It is through him that links are preserved with the historic tribal lineages and royalty. Even though many headmen are not of the royal line, they had close links with the old royalty (cf. Barnes 1954: 131-132).

A village, which can be a cluster of homes varying from 20 up to several hundred, has spatial limits which are not always easily distinguishable to an outsider. Some clusters of houses that are part of one village may be nearer to another. The key to the village is its perception as a social unit. It provides a key to identity and a person is known by the village from which he comes (Mitchell 1956: 26).

Villages for matrilineal tribes have been described in the past in terms of a matrilineage group (*mbumba*) under the male lineage head (*mwini mbumba*). A typical village (except for the Ngoni and other patrilineal groups in the northern and southern regions) would consist of the descendents of a female ancestor through the female line of descent for about three to five generations and include all the unmarried male members, the spouses of the married female, the male head of the lineage (*mwini mbumba* -- he is the eldest brother of female ancestor), the wife of the *mwini mbumba* and her female descendents, their spouses and her unmarried sons. It can be seen that even this relatively simple kin grouping would give rise to a number of unrelated or loosely related groups (cf. Fleming 1971: 57; Wishlade 1965: 78-79). The village today is

probably even less homogeneous from a kin group point of view. While in the northern region the village is usually somewhat homogeneous tribally, in the southern region they tend to be very heterogeneous tribally (Wishlade 1965: 29). It should be noted that in the southern region there are strong tendencies toward interethnic marriages and that, in spite of language differences, they are nearly all matrilineal societies, marry matri-locally and have matrilineal concepts of land ownership, property inheritance and family structure (Chiluvumba 1969: 40,41).

Villages are under a headman called *mfumu*. This does not necessarily designate an officially recognized status (Barnes 1954: 131; Nelson 1975: 91). Wishlade comments on the existence of unofficial headmen called \_\_\_\_\_ in the Mlanje District who are responsible for a segment of and are resident within the area of a larger village unit recognized by government administration (Wishlade 1965: 7).

While kinship is the central feature in some way in most villages, in today's villages there are many groups unrelated to the central lineage. Groupings within the village may take place on the basis of religious affiliation, social discord or other factors as well as kinship ties (Nelson 1975: 94).

In the past it has been possible for men who would normally be eligible for head of lineages, whether in patrilineal or matrilineal groupings to move to an unoccupied area and establish a new headmanship. Increasingly this is impossible. The political opportunity is not there due to the fixed number of chieftainships. But

more central is the unavailability of unoccupied land. This is coupled with the government schemes of intensive rural development. In 1977 a 20 year project was begun called National Rural Development Program for which overseas funding has been obtained (*Background Notes* 1978: 5). This will greatly extend the efforts of a number of development schemes which have been successfully completed. The implications I think will be two-fold. Land occupation will be increasingly tightly controlled by economic planners and increasing pressure will be placed on village structures to reorganize around men who successfully cultivate small plots rather than around the lineage who have controlled land allocation in the past. This will probably give larger emphasis to the nuclear family at the expense of the matrilineage since freehold and permanent settlement have been encouraged in this type of development in the past (cf. Chilumbo 1969: 54,55).

The significance of this for church growth seems to be that with increasing pressure on traditional status groups viable options will need to be developed. If the political options of the Malawi Congress Party are tightly limited, and if the main historic churches do not open up quickly the opportunities for leadership status, then other church groups may provide that option (cf. Wishlade 1965: 76). Linden notes in connection with Roman Catholic missions two decades earlier that "in each station, Mua, Mulanje, and Nganje, the *corpus Christianum* provided an alternative society in which Africans could attain positions of authority and prestige denied to them elsewhere."

(Linden 1974: 193) This could also lead to an opening of the traditional community that has not been deeply penetrated by Christianity in any form in recent years.

It must be emphasized again that the village is a rural socio-political unit. Malawi is more than 90 percent rural and the new rural development program emphasizes the government's determination to keep it that way.

### Kin Groups

Most of Malawi, such as the Chewa, Nyanja, Yao, Lomwe Tumbuka, and Tonga, is organized on matrilineal lines. The Ngoni and the Sena in the south and some groups in the north have patrilineal forms of kin groups. In spite of the fact that there has been constant interaction and intermarriage under varying forms of political subjugation or dominance, the systems continue to flourish. Villages are structured, to a certain extent around a core lineage group, but are in no wise limited to the kin group in terms of structure. In most villages one may find people located both patri-locally and matri-locally and following either patrilineal or matrilineal forms of legal relationships.

Fleming describes three kin group systems in Malawi, the matri-potestal, the collateral patri-potestal and the primogeniture patri-potestal. Fleming uses the term potestal in preference to lineal to emphasize the legal aspect. The matri-potestal is the most widespread

and is the historic Maravi and Yao pattern. The head of the family is the oldest brother of a group of sisters all descendent from one mother with all their offspring -- in the female line for two or three generations. Headship passes from eldest brother to next and when the last surviving brother dies each sister forms a new family with her eldest son as head. Husbands belong to a different family as do the children of the sons. In the collateral patri-potestal family the eldest surviving son of a man with his sisters, paternal aunts, deceased brothers' sons and daughters and offspring in the male line comprise the core of the family. It is wives and daughters in the female line who do not belong. Succession follows from elder brother to younger and then eldest son of each wife of the deceased male progenitor becomes head of a new family. The primogeniture patri-potestal family comprises a man whose father is dead, his sons and daughters and descendents in the male line. The mother is not a member nor are the children in the female descent line. Succession to head of family is complicated among the Ngoni because of the house system of grouping wives, but is essentially a father to son pattern. Potentially each son is head of a family (Fleming 1976: 38-42).

Clarification of this confusing picture is helped by the understanding of the natural family and the legal family described by Fleming. He notes the residential situation which includes the natural family and its assorted relations, blood or otherwise, which accumulate in a village locality. The kinship of these groups will



depend on whether they are matri- or patrilineal and *mbumba* can refer to either type. Then he describes the forms of legal relationships which derive from the forms of descent which determine the kin grouping to which each person belongs determining inheritance rights and forms of marriage. The important point for this discussion is that the kin or lineage group is not specifically related to residence, but represents, in many cases, a widely scattered group with legal connections (Fleming 1976: 34-45).

This ties in with the complexities of describing the relationships in any village (cf. Wishlade 1965: 145-155). The lineage group has been cited as an important vehicle of winning people to Christ (Alexander 1969: 55,60). Wishlade notes the success of an independent church leader Severe of The Faithful Church of Christ in winning some of his own *mbumba* for Christ, but notes his failure to make inroads into the patri-laterally related *mbumba* in the same village area (Wishlade 1965: 104,105). While the well known "web of relationship" described by McGavran (McGavran 1970: 320-325) is always important, the *mbumba* with its generally scattered composition seems less likely to be important for church growth in the contemporary context than other social factors developing in rural village life.

Linden, in his study of Mua villages among the Chewa, corroborates the much more detailed study of Murphree in his study of a Budjga village in Rhodesia. Traditionalists and Christians of various persuasions can and do live in juxtaposition and turn to the

answers offered by each group for problems they cannot solve from their own group point of view. Thus Linden speaks of a girl at her first communion in her white dress later secretly undergoing *chinamwali* (female initiation) or villagers attending mass and later participating in Nyau dances (Murphree 1969: 111-115, 143-147; Linden 1974: 203).

A deeper problem seems to be described here in that Christianity has not yet offered a way of life fully satisfying to the problems men face in normal day to day living. Thus, the Christian community and the traditional community become interdependent. This suggests that, in Malawi perhaps, Christian advance into the traditional community is hindered by a set of barriers which involve the necessity of the continued existence of the traditional community. This would require extensive testing in order to formulate a conclusion of any sort.

### The Family

Many aspects of family life are undoubtedly still affected in varying degrees by the form of kin group -- matrilineal or patrilineal -- such as the payment of bride price, the place of residence immediately after marriage, the care of young children, the kinship or clan identity of children, the laws of inheritance, the procedure of marriage and divorce, the legal responsibility for damaging social activities. Yet most of the studies available on which descriptions

might be based have been done in the two decades prior to Independence. I suspect that the patterns are changing. Shewmaker cites Elizabeth Colson as suggesting that the matrilineal group among the Tonga of Zambia\* is under pressure among the more progressive Tonga who would like to change to a system of family inheritance in the interests of their own children (Shewmaker 1970: 14,17,18; Colson 1967: 23,94). Fleming also notes that his descriptions refer to the family "in its pristine state. The situation is of course very different now for every modern influence militates against the old family system." (Fleming 1976: 44) In his study of the Lake Chilwa Rice Scheme Chilivumbo says, "In these areas the traditional concepts of non-ownership and the rights of use will be replaced by the concept of right of effective use and probably private ownership . . . The principle operating in the scheme gives to the nuclear family more rights. This is at the expense of the matrilineage." (Chilivumbo 1969: 4)

It is interesting to note, however, that in Chilivumbo's 1968 study he describes the family in this southern region setting as comprising a woman with her eldest son and the extended family rising from two or three generations of descendents traced in the female line. He also notes that marriage was, at that time, essentially matri-local (uxorilocal). But he footnotes to studies done in the 1940's and 1950's by Radcliffe-Brown, Elizabeth Colson and Clyde

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\* no relation to the Lakeshore Tonga in Malawi

Mitchell (Chilivumbo 1969: 41). A more recent, and typical example is a news note in *This is Malawi* about the Chinese Bua Irrigation Scheme at Nkhota Kota in which 52 Malawi Young Pioneers and 91 farmers have settled on the first 250 acre phase of a 750 acre project (*This is Malawi* April 1977: 7(2), 20).

Based on the author's observation and discussion with seven young to middle age Malawi families, the change he perceives is a strengthening of the nuclear family consciousness. It is probably becoming less frequent for a man to marry matri-locally, and rare for the children of the nuclear family to be taken care of by the maternal grandmother. (Although one family had left their first daughter to be reared by the maternal grandparents as helper and comfort to replace the daughter lost through marriage. It was also interesting to note that when visiting this little girl, there was no sign either that she resented being separated from her parents or that she failed in any sense to recognize and love her own parents. She was about six years old at the time the author visited her.) The two factors the author sees as responsible for this change are the increased opportunities for employment, but more significant, the increased opportunities for land allocation in development schemes that do not follow the matrilineage kin group in land allocation procedure.

These changes reflect the changing status and role of men, especially those who are not lineage heads. Clearly this whole matter needs study in the light of the last decade of intensified

change under Malawi's new development policies. Whereas Moses Phiri's father could speak of the hard words spoken by his wife's brother to prevent him from influencing Moses for Islam and converting his wife (Appendix A). Today's men seem to have considerable liberty in determining their children's religious connection and considerable influence on their wives as well.

### Migrant Labor

Historically Malawi men have provided labor for Zambia, Rhodesia and South Africa. Both Rhodesian and South African recruiting organizations have been allowed to function in Malawi. There are still many thousands of Malawi men employed in Rhodesia and South Africa, some of whom never intend to return to Malawi. They have married and settled in their new land.

Official figures indicate that migrant labor is decreasing rapidly since 1974 (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 66). Recurrent speeches by Dr. Banda have encouraged men to stay home and the development schemes have been implemented partially as a measure to utilize the labor potential more effectively. Gregson notes the employment of young Ngoni men by cotton farmers in the Henga valley (Gregson 1970: 42). These young men would probably have gone into the migrant labor market if there had been no cotton enterprise.

On the other hand, in that same study Gregson notes that "nearly 42 percent of the village's adult able-bodied men were

working elsewhere in Zambia, South Africa, Tanzania and Rhodesia as well as elsewhere within Malawi." (Gregson 1970: 36) But most of these men in 1967 were working elsewhere in Malawi. The northern region has been notorious in the past for the high rate of migrant laborers. It will be interesting to see what the move of the capital to Lilongwe and the massive development that has taken place since 1972 in the central and northern region has done to affect labor migrancy. While it may never disappear, it would not seem to be a major factor except possibly for an age segment of young unmarried men who spend a relatively short term on a contract basis in South African mines. Over 50 percent of Malawians are under age 20 (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 8). With cash economy employment still providing less than 250,000 jobs in 1975, the pressure for migrant labor is liable to remain even if it is only a means of capital accumulation to get enough money to start something in Malawi later. Perhaps 60,000 to 80,000 men are involved at present (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 66-68).

If this continues, the implications for a special thrust of Christian contact in the mines setting in South Africa would be important. Traditionally the mines group laborers by ethnic origin. It would be easy to find them. The author has not been able to find out if any church is presently following up this opportunity or not.

### Voluntary Associations

Among the Ngoni, boys have been grouped in dormitories from about age seven. This establishes a close age group relation and the boys of the same age group consider themselves brothers in an association of assistance and hospitality which is lifelong (Nelson 1975: 96).

The Nyau societies are an ancient organization of the Achewa or Maravi people. They go back to the first millenium. The groups are local, not regional, they emphasize the relationship of commoners as against the ruling class and they have strong religious economic, political, historical and social overtones.

While the Nyau dances and masks are now exploited for the tourist and general public as an income source, many of the dances re-enact myths that contain the philosophy and theology of the Achewa. Many of the dances also enact modern myths.

The Nyau have no central organization and represent a lay authority that the chiefs, or government, cannot easily control -- in fact, they historically represent the tension between them.

The Nyau control the initiation or puberty rituals for Achewa boys. They thus control a major factor in the socialization process for traditionalists -- and for Christians who go in spite of church opposition -- as did Dr. Banda in his youth (Short 1974: 9).

The Nyau is also an important form of the plastic arts in terms of the making of masks and of the performing arts in terms of

drama, music and dance. Recently it has been ascertained that some of Malawi's rock paintings are of Vinyau origin.

The opposition of Christianity and Islam has modified the early obligatory nature of the initiation ceremony and Vinyau is now a voluntary association (Schoffeleers 1976: 59-68).

Among the Sena there is a voluntary grouping of young people known as *nomi* societies. These are groups of young people who work for pay. Busiest during the cultivating season, they do work at other times. They spend what they earn in a big feast at the end of the work season. The groups vary in continuity from season to season. Individuals change groups or drop out, but during the work season they stay together. They organize both male, female and mixed groups. Missions have opposed them because mixed groups sleep in common dormitories during work season. The societies used to appeal to headmen for support, now they look to the Malawi Congress Party. The societies offer great scope for young people with ambition and qualities of leadership (Nelson 1975: 97,98).

The League of Youth, the Malawi Young Pioneers, the Malawi Women's League and the Malawi Congress Party itself, all of which have been treated earlier (Chapter Two), are also examples of voluntary associations which transcend kinship and ethnic ties.

The implications of the voluntary associations for the Church seems enormous. So much of Malawi history has been written and interpreted in terms of political authority and conflict and therefore



centered on the ruling class categories that perhaps the Church itself has lost sight of the fact that organization of young people and men outside the political authority categories has a long history. The women's organization in modern times has been more obvious. A question that would be worth investigating is how is the Church perceived by the church members -- especially the evangelical churches not attached to the historic colonial past in Malawi? Are they seen as alternative authority structures or as voluntary societies which are joined for the benefits they provide for a time?

If the Nyau societies have incorporated the best of the art forms and express in these forms the religious ethos and theology of the traditionalist, why then would not the same possibility hold true for the churches? Perhaps in Nyau type performance some of the theology of the Christian faith could become not only more familiar, but more intrinsically Malawian.

## RELIGIOUS STRUCTURES

Malawi is divided and complex in its religious structure. In 1968, the latest year for which comparative statistics are readily available, the Protestant community was approximately 661,000, the Roman Catholic community was about 750,000 and the Muslim community about 500,000 (Coxill 1978: 76). The total population was approximately 4,200,000 (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 7). In very gross terms, in 1968 there must have been a population of up to 2,300,000 who still felt no specific belonging to other than the traditional community. In rough per centage terms the Protestants are 15 per cent of the population, the Roman Catholics 17 per cent and the Muslims 12 per cent. Again in rough terms, the traditionalists are about 55 per cent of the total population (cf. Figure 2).

On the assumption that the Christian community is growing at about the same rate as the population, the per centage figures will not be very different for 1978 than for 1968. The evangelistic targets are probably varied depending on point of view and to which segment the church belongs. The larger Protestant churches would have to penetrate the traditional or Muslim communities to make significant changes in the per centage of the population in their churches, since only 1.7 per cent of the population is Protestant and outside the Presbyterian and Anglican churches. The

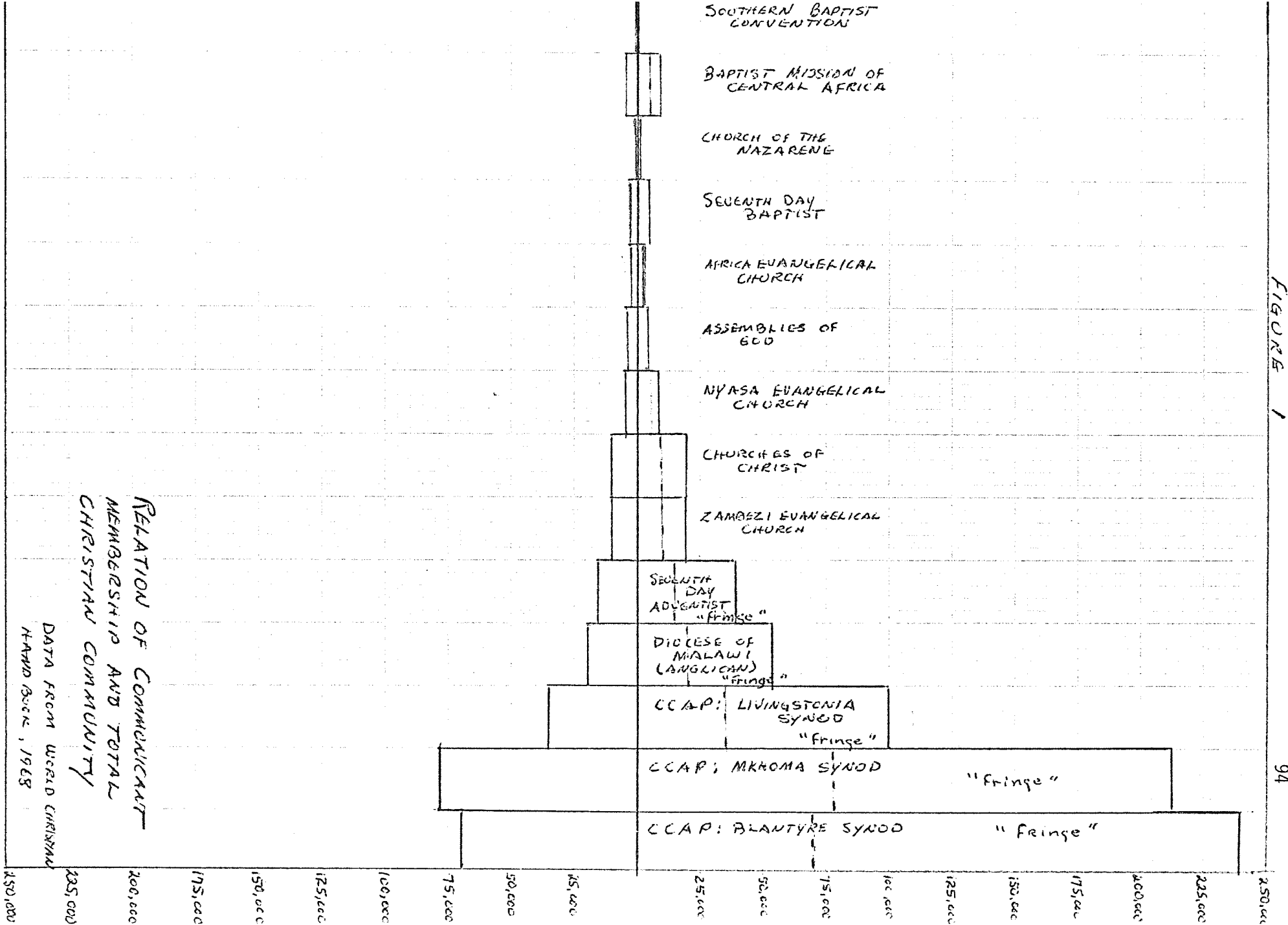
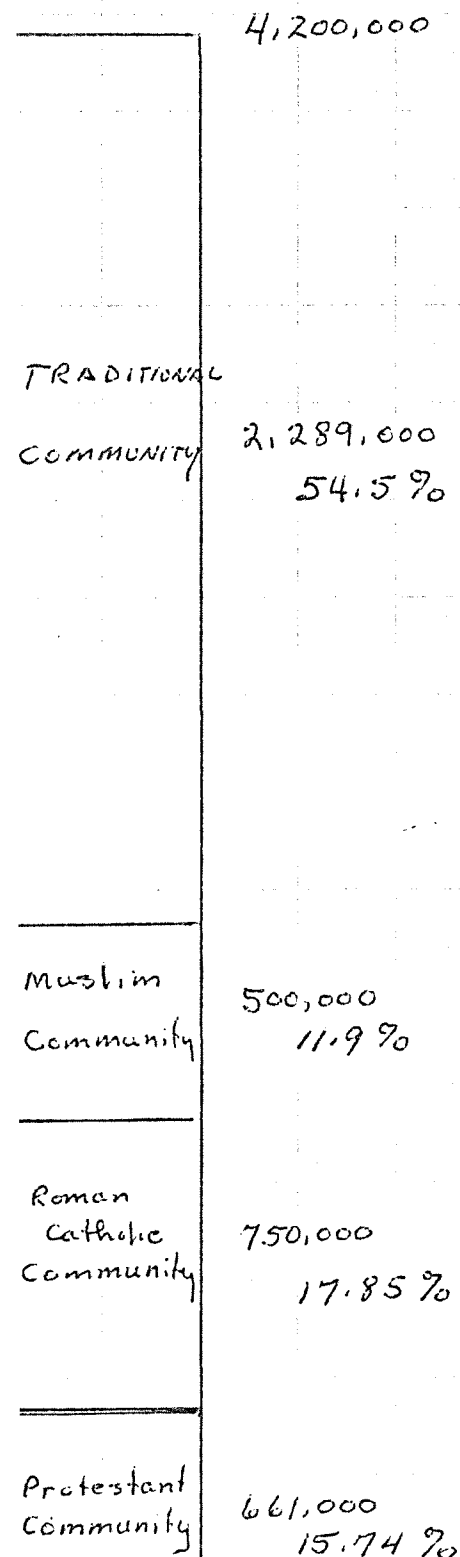


FIGURE 1



### POPULATION DISTRIBUTION IN RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

SOURCE: WORLD CHRISTIAN HANDBOOK  
1968 (Adjusted)

MALAWI STATISTICAL  
YEAR BOOK 1976  
(Adjusted)

1968

VERTICAL SCALE = POPULATION  
BY 50,000 / Square

only other alternative would be to raid the Catholic membership which is a significant 17 per cent of the population.

The small Protestant churches, including the independents, have a wider range of potential evangelistic target. In addition to the traditional and Muslim communities, 77.3 per cent of the population, they could view the Catholic and the Protestant, especially the non-communicant and unbaptized Protestant community, as evangelistic targets. The Protestant fringe of unbaptized is roughly 34 per cent of the total community or 5 per cent of the population (cf. Figure 1). This is a sizable and significant target that is particularly vulnerable in view of the long training periods required for baptism in the Presbyterian and Anglican churches over against the shorter or non-existent period of training before baptism in many of the other Protestant churches. It must be possible to conjecture that there is at least this large a fringe (though not unbaptized) among the Roman Catholic community.

So then, the picture of what is happening may be a Christian community with fairly specific boundaries that remains static in terms of total per centage of the population but is dynamic and changing with respect to the specific structuring of the community into various church organizations.

Two very specific points that need to be clarified by field data are: 1) Is the Christian community in general penetrating the traditional or Muslim community? and 2) What is the nature of the growth of the Free Methodist Church -- is it a result of

a) conversions from the non-Christian community, b) evangelization of the 5 per cent fringe community of the larger Protestant churches, c) rearrangement of loyalty within the Christian community both Protestant and Catholic or d) some combination of the above options and if so, in what ratio?

On the basis of observation and scattered interview, I would project that the answer to the question regarding the Free Methodist Church will be in terms of some combination of the options.

A major point of research would be what churches, if any, are penetrating the traditionalist barriers and how, where and among whom is it taking place? Prior to the first World War period there seems to be no question that the Protestant missions made large gains from the traditional community. It seems apparent that the Roman Catholics made large gains from the traditional community after the war period in their expansion of their school system (cf. Linden 1974: 138-160).

An even larger question which requires testing is whether there is still any coherency to a traditionalist religious way of life. Is the 56 per cent non-Christian proportion of the population committed to any central religious institution of the past such as the M'bona cult of high God worship which has persisted through six centuries and still serves as a central religious institution among the Mang'anja in the southern region although some other traditional cults have disappeared under the pressure of change (Schoffeleers 1972: 73).

In this connection the Nyau societies, an institution with important religious implications as well as connections with the male and female initiation rites in traditional Chewa society, may also have significance. One wonders what place they have in the cohesiveness of traditional or non-Christian society in spite of being secularized (Schoffeleers 1972: 271).

It is also interesting to note that Dr. Banda had a traditional prayer hut (*kabuwa*) built near Kasungu in the norther region in 1976 to show that "'our forefathers knew about God, about religion. They were not heathens. They worshipped God in their own way,'" said Dr. Banda. "He said he had ordered the Kabuwa to be built to show how people had worshipped before the missionaries had come to Malawi." (*This is Malawi* November 1976: 19).

The history of missions is dotted with references to witches (*mfiti*), spirit possession cults, medicines and charms to ward off evil and sorcery. These are not really in the category of religious institutions but belong rather to the pre-scientific rational of existence<sup>2</sup> and the areas of psychological conflict. However they do represent areas of life which pre-Christian religion dealt with only partially. Both the *mchape* (witch-finding) and *mwabvi* (poison ordeal) were devices for controlling the undesirable aspects of sorcery and conflict -- and they were not satisfactory either.

In careful questioning to a very small sample -- about 15 Malawi Bible school students -- all but one of whom had some Christian home background, the author asked about the ancestor cult and was

told it was virtually non-existent. One knew of one group of people who practiced it and felt it was growing in the southern region. However, all expressed concern about the growing incidence of witchcraft, sorcery and rise of medicines and charms (personal interviews 1975). Whether this is accurate or not I cannot tell and I have no recent studies available that indicate one way or another.

If it is true that witchcraft and associated indicators of conflict and tension is growing in Malawi, this would give an indication of a need which a church interested in growth could find ways to meet. Christianity in the past has denied and attempted to eradicate through failure to understand the mechanisms at work. The reconciling message and perhaps an institution for external symbolization of the message may be an important function for a church that grows in Malawi.

## EDUCATION

The legacy of mission education has already been noticed. But mission education was also an evangelistic device and as such tended to exclude the population that was not turning to Christ. Literacy and education came to be identified with Christianity and the colonial process. As such it was a point of great attack by



the Nyau societies who represented a special form of religious and social cohesion in traditional Chewa culture (Linden 1974: 117ff).

Since Independence education has been placed under government auspices. In the period 1964 to 1974 the primary school attendance has doubled (*Building the Nation* 1974: 34). At the beginning of the period about 36 per cent of the population over five years old had attended primary school but only 2.5 per cent of the population had finished Standard Eight (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 33). Census reports for 1966 indicate only about 17 per cent of the population had completed Standard Four or higher. Typically, the northern region per centage was 31 per cent over against the central region with 15 per cent and the southern region with 14 per cent (*Compendium of Statistics* 1970: 8). Moslems, who refused to send children to school for fear they would be converted to Christianity, have begun sending children in increasing numbers (*This is Malawi* January 1977: 7(1), 2). The ratio of boys to girls is about three to two (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 41).

In this ten year period those who have finished secondary school have increased 400 per cent yet, in terms of the total primary school population the approximately 14,500 enrolled in 1975 is excessively low and recent attention has been given to increasing opportunity with the opening of the new secondary school in Mwanza District. In addition to this, more teacher training facilities, extensions to existing girls secondary schools, and a model

primary school for each of the 23 districts as well as expansion of Bunda College of Agriculture are underway (*Economic Report* 1976: 71).

Since Independence a correspondence college with 30,000 students, development of 13 teacher training colleges, provision of apprentice training schemes at all technical institutes, establishment of Malawi Polytechnic and the University of Malawi comprises Bunda College of Agriculture; the Institute of Public Administration, the Polytechnic, Soche Hill College of Education and Chancellor College with its new \$4.5 million campus have been established (*Building the Nation* 1974: 34).

Obviously the standard of education for the total population is not yet very high and many are still functionally illiterate but the point is, western education has been intensified and accepted in Malawi. No churches in Malawi have grown significantly without an educational program in the past. With the identification of Christianity, education and western progress what will happen as education becomes increasingly secular? And what institutions can the Church use in the context of the desire for education, to promote expansion of Christianity?

What will the church that grows identify with? This poses an important question for field research. In churches that are growing rapidly in Malawi what attracts them? In particular, what is the range of reasons why people have joined the Free Methodist Church?

In the broader context of informal education a survey in 1971 indicated that 33-37 per cent of the population were listening to the radio in Blantyre, Zomba and Lilongwe and about 27 per cent in the other non-rural areas. But only 5 per cent of the rural population were listening to the radio. Since 90 per cent or more of the total population is rural that indicates a very small percentage -- perhaps 0.15 per cent -- of the total population as listening to the radio (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 136). With literacy limited and the radio not extensively used one is forced to conclude tentatively that whatever method or institution is to be used it will be primarily a word of mouth communication. Perhaps this is not unimportant in view of the fact that Jesus came in "the fulness of time" and he was the Word made flesh.

#### ECONOMIC STRUCTURES

There is a wealth of information available about the Malawi economic scene. Both the United States government and the Malawi government publish quantities of information. *Foreign Economic Review* carries information as does *Background Notes* both prepared by the U.S. Department of State. The Malawi government issues *This is Malawi*, a monthly news magazine that is full of articles

concerning economic progress in Malawi. The *Economic Report* is also published periodically with analysis and comprehensive detail. The most recent available is 1976.

Malawi is basically dependent upon agriculture for its productive resource. This has been the emphasis of government policy since Dr. Banda entered as Minister of Agriculture and Industry in 1961. There have been a number of rural development schemes -- the Chinese rice schemes, the tobacco and tea schemes, sugar cane, cotton and others -- all emphasizing gradual emergence of a small-holder (3-5 acres) cultivation plan that will meet subsistence requirements and provide specialized crops for the cash economy and export.

Along with the agriculture emphasis on the small-holder there has been an increase in emphasis on large estate agriculture. It is from this sector that the largest proportion of the exportable agriculture production has come. Major export and cash crops are tobacco, ground nuts, cotton, rice, maize, beans. Of lesser importance are tea, cotton seed, sugar cane, cassava, sunflower seed, tung oil and others.

Fisheries have received increasing attention and research. With modern methods and equipment both food and aquarium fish have become a significant factor in Malawi's gross domestic product. From 9,200 tons in 1969 production increased to 70,000 tons in 1970. Research is continuing on fish populations at deeper depths, how to farm fish, search for unexploited species and development

of ways to use the waste in cattle feed and fish farming (*This is Malawi* May 1978: 8(2), 2-5,6-9).

Forestry has received considerable attention and a pulp industry developed on the Vipya plateau. Forest areas depleted in the past have been planted with pulp producing pines and new areas planted.

Manufacturing has assumed an increasing significance in the gross domestic product. Malawi policy is to promote labor intensive rather than capital intensive production. The *Manpower Survey* of 1971 stated, "Malawi's development strategy rules out the promotion of highly capital intensive undertakings unless their function is clearly essential and there is no choice of technology." (*Manpower Survey* 1971: 37)

Import substitution has been another basic policy for setting up industry. Geared first to domestic needs to reduce import, industry is now producing surpluses for export which is essential for survival (*This is Malawi* July 1977: 7(3), 9).

Always there is emphasis on the small businessman as well as the larger business. Stories like that of Mr. Mica Thawani, who left his job as a K 17 per month laboratory attendant and now grosses K 160 per month in egg sales, abound in every issue (*This is Malawi* July 1977: 7(3), 4). To encourage consumption of eggs and meat government has not only backed poultry improvement programs but combatted old taboos on children eating eggs and meat (*This is Malawi* July 1977: 7(3), 2,3).

Manufacturing industries grew 80 per cent between 1970 and 1975. Building and construction increased more than 600 per cent between 1965 and 1975. About 200 miles of road per year have been added to the secondary road system. Electrification doubled from 1968 to 1975 and a new hydro-electric scheme is underway on the Shire River. (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 101-114). The tourist industry is growing. Two new hotel complexes are planned on the south lake shore and an extension to the hotel at Salima (*This is Malawi* January 1978: 8(1), 6-8). The number of light and heavy duty vehicles has more than doubled in 1965 to 1975. Both rail and water transport routes have had freight traffic increases of 500 to 700 per cent in the 1965-1975 decade (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 117,123).

In spite of inflation there has been a 5 per cent per year increase in the real income for Malawians (*Economic Report* 1976: 10). Not yet rich, neither are Malawians experiencing the shambles of the economy that blights Zambia, Tanzania and Mozambique. Due to the failure of the village collectives Tanzania is moving toward the private sector to increase production (*Africa Confidential* 3 November 1978: 5-7). Zambia recently re-opened its border with Rhodesia in order to import desperately needed fertilizer. Failure to invest in agricultural development has been a major cause of the present economic chaos (*Africa Confidential* 17 November 1978: 3-5). In Mozambique the dire straits of the economy supercede all other government concerns (*Africa Confidential* 6 October 1978: 1-2).

In addition to the formal sectors of the economy -- the small-holder agriculture, estate agriculture, manufacturing and commerce -- there is also a growing informal sector of industry which has been largely ignored by government economists. Involving mainly uneducated people, its records are all kept in the head. Yet it is one of the fastest growing sectors involving one or two artisans working at his home in or near the populated centers. He makes use of waste and discarded materials. It is labor intensive with low overhead, low capital and skillfully operated. It involves men who work with metal, wood and other materials meeting needs of urban people at low prices (Norwood 1975: 83-94).

The development program based on a three year rolling plan that is fixed for its first year and revised annually is still financed primarily from external loans and grants. About K 250 million of the present K 289 million projected for 1976-1979 will come from external resources. The next 20 years envision intensive development in the agricultural sector which has not developed quite as well as planned (*Economic Report* 1976: 4,5,70-72).

With a healthy growing economy Malawi seems to be justifying the policies undertaken by Dr. Banda although they have placed him in great disfavor generally among African leaders. There is a close parallel between the policies of Malawi and those followed by the Taiwanese government, particularly in the area of agricultural development (cf. Kao-teng 1970). Perhaps Malawi and Taiwan will belie the underdevelopment theories that have been popular

(cf. Ewing 1977) and demonstrate that reasonably equal distribution of income can take place in a capitalistic setting particularly if that form of capitalism is controlled and goal oriented. If so, the prophecy of Mekke Mtewa may remain unfulfilled:

I further submit for further consideration that the revolutionary pattern of the Chilembwe era, insofar as it is the progenitor of the modern mass nationalism in Malawi, is probably to serve as a revolutionary model for future politics in the New Malawi. (Mtewa 1975: 30)

The Christian Church should certainly find no great difficulties living with the controlled steady expansion of Malawi's economy. The real question that arises is whether the Church can remain sufficiently detached from the present situation to avoid equating the developing Malawi with the Kingdom of God. And a corollary is whether, in the light of the peaceful growth, Malawians will not become increasingly secular feeling less and less the need of the Church.

To what extent does Christianity reach those who are aggressive and upwardly mobile in Malawi. Is this where the Free Methodist Church is growing. A study should include economic data about the members.



## POPULATION PATTERNS

Malawi is one of Africa's most densely populated countries. The average is 111 per square mile but some areas are above 400 per square mile. The northern region has an average density of 48. The central region 108 and the southern region 169 per square mile. In common with other African countries with high population growth rates, the population is young -- 44 per cent under 15 years of age (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 8,9).

There are eight major languages, Chichewa (Nyanja), Chilomwe, Chiyao, Chitumbuka, Chisena, Chikhokholo, Chitonga, Chingoni, Chinkhonde and a whole group of other languages spoken among 50,000 people in the north, 14,000 in the central region and 18,400 in the south. Chichewa is by far the dominant language and is understood by more than 75 per cent of the people (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 10).

There are less than 8,000 Europeans (whites) in Malawi and just over 11,000 Indians. Most of these live in the three main towns and their population is relatively static (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 7).

The northern region has shown the least residential population growth, while the southern region has shown a growth that exceeds the growth of the country as a whole indicating migration. This is supported by the higher than average population of men in the 20-54 age group. The southern region was alone in having a

higher man to woman population in that age bracket (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 6,11). However these are 1966 census results and the Lilongwe development scheme of 1.15 million acres which has recently been completed should have helped shift the balance of employment opportunities somewhat (*This is Malawi* 1976: 6(11), 11, 12).

Preliminary results of the 1977 census show a total population of 5,571,567 up 38 per cent since 1966 and an annual growth rate of 2.9 per cent. The central region, where Lilongwe is situated, has had the largest increase. Blantyre is the largest city with 228,520, Lilongwe follows at 102,924, Zomba and Mzuzu are much smaller. The urban population is still considerably less than ten per cent of the total. Malawi has not yet followed the urban rush found in so many neighboring countries (*This is Malawi* January 1978: 8(1), 15).

It is quite clear that church growth emphasis should not be on the cities except to follow those who migrate. This is not to say there should not be strong churches in the cities, but to emphasize that in Malawi the leadership training and evangelistic methodology should take into account the nature of agricultural development, the age and distribution of the population and develop a distinctively rural approach that fits Malawi's development patterns.

## PUBLIC HEALTH AND HOUSING

Housing in Malawi in the urban areas, as everywhere in Africa, has been a problem. Government continues to invest in development, but the most successful provision has been the site and service type where each resident builds his own house on a small plot leased from government and serviced with water at central points. I visited one such development, Bangwe in the suburbs of Limbe. It is a massive array of homes ranging from simple one or two room huts of woven sticks and mud to impressive cement block homes with five to seven rooms. There was no indoor plumbing because no sites were serviced directly with water. But in general the homes were neatly kept and the general feeling was one of well being, although the roads were dirt and poorly graded. There was an enormous open market that operated every day where all the basic needs of the residents could be purchased. A well built and well kept school was provided at one edge of the settlement. Water could be purchased for a few cents for a 55 gallon drum although most people came with five gallon buckets and paid a proportionately lower price. Pit latrines appear to have been provided by each resident. During the week I stayed there I did not see either squalor or filth. It was a busy place and there were many self-employed artisans producing goods for local consumption -- buckets, heating stoves, tripods for pots over fires, baskets, wooden furniture, to name a few items. These conditions I found generally in Malawi.

Nowhere did I see the poverty and filth that characterizes Port au Prince, Haiti which I saw in 1978.

Health services are operated by both government and missions or churches. In 1975 missions handled 88,684 in-patients compared with 148,295 in-patient admissions in government hospitals. Government handled 10,046,020 out-patients in contrast with 2,512,333 out-patients treated by mission hospitals. About half of the patients are under-five clinics. In the past the infant mortality rate has been quite high. The rising population growth rate indicates that this is being corrected through emphasis on under-five clinics (*Malawi Statistical Yearbook* 1976: 26-32).

One very interesting sidelight is the distress in Malawi because of rapid rise in drug costs. The minister of health is quoted in *This is Malawi*:

The rises in drug costs could not be solely blamed on world inflation, but on the ability to exploit -- by multi-national drug companies -- the vulnerability of developing countries . . . (*This is Malawi* 1977: 7(4), 12)

He went on to state that Malawi was forced to buy high priced drugs because they were unwilling to risk the health of the people on inferior products, that is, uncontrolled quality in some generic drugs (*This is Malawi* 1977: 7(4), 12).

Malawi has made health services availability in all parts of the country equally a priority. This is based on the intent to prevent migration to the cities, and on the goal of improved quality

of life in the rural areas -- and also a good look at the value of health to production.

"Health was the bedrock of the Malawi economy . . . The nation had to have healthy people who would till the soil. Rural health service had to be as good as those in town," said the minister of health. (*This is Malawi* 1977: 7(4),12)

In a country with sparse health facilities in terms of treatment, hard pressed for funding to promote a preventive care program and therefore focusing on the productively active population, there seems to be room for a church to consider how it might contribute to health requirements.

Without involving medical personnel to any extent, without building hospitals or clinics -- without even dispensing much medicine -- it would appear that a well prepared teaching program of an informal nature emphasizing how to stay well before you get sick would be one way to extend contact with non-Christian people. This would have to be tested carefully before making financial and personnel commitments to such a program.

## THEOLOGICAL AND SPIRITUAL FACTORS

An important part of the context is the theological and spiritual climate of the Christian community. This is very difficult, perhaps impossible to quantify. I do not have available to me any systematic data that would give insight into this question, but I do have the testimonies of five men from Malawi, four written and one verbal that give some indications. Each of the following four accounts were written at Lundi Bible School, Rhodesia by men who are now leaders in the Free Methodist Church in Malawi.

D.M.'s father left church membership classes when he married a second wife. D.M.'s mother attended church but neither were members. After a wild period as a teenage school boy, D.M. settled down at his father's injunction and married a girl from the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian which he attended. When he met Moses Phiri he joined the Free Methodist Church. At this point his narrative changes vocabulary from church and decency to answers to prayer and following Jesus. It is apparent that while some of his relatives opposed his coming to Bible School, others supported his desire to tell people the "Good News" (handwritten document in my files).

A.M.'s parents were Christians, members of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian. As a teenager he formed gangs of boys that

bullied other boys and exploited girls sexually. His parents reproved him. He went to teacher training college, married and finally settled in to clerical work and was active in the church. He was turned down for ministerial training at Mkhoma Theological College (Central Church of Africa Presbyterian) for lack of complete secondary school qualifications. He returned to clerical work and became more active in church. Then he met Moses Phiri. He says,

Brother Phiri told me how he was saved by God, and what about me. I thought I was guilty, unsaved, although I was a teacher, checker clerk, salesman, senior clerical officer it was useless for me its better to follow Jesus. (handwritten account in my files, 4)

A.M. left his well paid job to attend Bible school in Rhodesia. He is now pastoring a church in Malawi.

N.B.'s parents were Roman Catholic but he attended a Seventh Day Adventist school. He was baptized and kept the Seventh Day Adventist Church rules until he married and started to work for Malawi Railways. He began to drink and carouse with women. He thought sometimes about the coming of Jesus Christ and his evil ways. When a friend told him about Moses Phiri he wrote to Phiri who visited him and from that time he left his former connections "without difficulty. I know God is wonderful," he wrote. "I was lost, now found. I am very happy because I chose Jesus to be my leader in my heart." (edited and corrected from manuscript in my files)

M.B.'s parents were Christians who taught him about God. As a teenager M.B. rebelled and turned to drinking and sex. After a string of failures at both higher schooling and work because of his drinking he met Moses Phiri. He writes, "When I heard his teaching I started to think of following Jesus." This was followed by a dream, further counselling and prayer with Phiri and finally conversion and baptism. He says he is "still praying to God that he must strengthen me to follow him forever . . . I am praying him to give me more love in my heart . . . and to love others also."

(handwritten manuscript in my files)

All four of these accounts have similar threads. Church background, rebellious teenage time and conversion, after marriage and after hearing Moses Phiri. Furthermore all four accounts shift from an emphasis on church and ethical conduct to following Jesus and prayer and God's power for living well.

A fifth account comes from an unrecorded interview with a young man working for the Malawi Railway. He was a member of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian but attending the Free Methodist Church. He said that the pastors of his church had stopped preaching about being converted and knowing Jesus. They did not have power in their preaching, their personal lives were bad and there was a great deal of jealousy about money and position (Unrecorded Interview at Salima, July 1975).



When one puts these five fragments together the picture that seems to emerge is of a significant church influence that colors but doesn't capture control of the lives of many young people. There is also a picture of a pervasive, encroaching, individualistic, secularism that mitigates against the moral influence of the churches. In addition, there is the hint that the professional ministry is being eroded by materialistic concerns. In short, it sounds like a page out of Church history in America or England.

On the basis of this information one must conclude that at least part of Phiri's appeal has been to people on the fringe of the churches who for one reason or another have not been won to a commitment to Jesus and the Church.

Dr. McGavran's comment is interesting in this respect:

Amazing receptivity exists among the neglected fringes of existing Christian populations. In many places the retreat of missions has meant that the fringes of the Christian community have been badly neglected or actually abandoned. These people consider themselves Christian, but never receive the communion . . .

When into such neglected Christian populations new denominations . . . arrive with a vigorous program of pastoral care . . . congregations of that new denomination multiply amazingly. Some of the growth is from existing Christians . . . Much of the growth, however, is from receptive . . . relatives of the existing Christian community, but unevangelized for many years. Vigorous evangelism brings these lost souls to Christ . . .

Such multiplication is greeted by the old line companies with screams of sheep stealing, but . . . these sheep are running wild on the range . . . looking after them . . . is doing the Lord's work. (McGavran 1979: 243,244,246)

Such, the author judges, is the case in Malawi.

## SUMMARY

Seven current contextual factors in church growth have been considered; social structures, religious structures, education, economic structures, population patterns, health and housing patterns and theological and spiritual factors. A number of questions have been raised in each section which suggest directions for data collection in order to have a better understanding of the Free Methodist Church and the context in which it is growing.

## CHAPTER IV. THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN MALAWI 1974-1978

## INTRODUCTION

I submit the following chapter as a history written from my personal point of view as a participant observer. I am writing in terms of my own categories and constructs. I am interested in the potential for predicting what could take place particularly in terms of intervention by the Free Methodist Mission in various ways. To the extent that I share common cultural factors with those who have played a part in the story my model is emic but, I do not profess to understand either the culture or the story from a truly insider's point of view. Basically I am building on an etic model.\*

In terms of analysis and interpretation my historical model derives from my Biblical perspective that faith is at least one of the focii of a cosmic struggle between a Personal Creative God and the creatures of his own creation. Man's knowledge is limited to the fact of a cosmos without much detail. What detail we have is in relation to the struggle as it related to Earth. The story of redemption in this context is the story of God creating Earth as we know it and man to participate with him in the destruction of

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\* For a good discussion of etic and emic models in anthropology see Hiebert 1976: 50-54.

evil. Man's history is Biblically interpreted in terms of response to or rejection of participation with God. It is a story interpreted in terms of conflict, not evolution and progress. It is a story in which the political state is an incidental of the necessity for social organization. A state or any other political, social, religious or economic organization may be either party to cooperation with God or party to opposition. Or any such organization may be at any given time both party to cooperation and party to opposition.

Cooperation with God is, Biblically, most broadly defined by the term Israel. Opposition to God is defined most broadly in terms of Satan. The term Christian is a subset of the term Israel and has taken on cultural content which tends to obscure its meaning. Yet Jesus Christ is not possessed by culture. And Jesus Christ is not determined by history. Jesus Christ is God. To follow Jesus as Lord is to become party to cooperation with God in history, party to the story of the destruction of evil.

I believe that when this latter proposition is turned around, that is, to say that to participate in the destruction of evil in history is to follow Jesus, then the proposition is false and in fact is opposition to God because it describes man determined criteria of action rather than God determined.

This study, or this portion of the study is not an attempt to demonstrate the validity of the above thesis, rather this thesis is the assumption on which any interpretation is based.

## GOD CALLS A MAN

I first met Moses Phiri early in 1969 when he knocked on my office door one hot summer day at Lundi Mission 68 miles south of Fort Victoria, Rhodesia. His request was to come to Bible school. There were some barriers. As a member of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian and not a member of the Free Methodist Church our policy said he should pay school fees. These he did not have. Then, he was a Malawian migrant working in the sugar industry at Chiredzi. There was no legal provision for residence of Malawi citizens as students except at the university. Again, his wife and family were in Malawi. Our strict policy was that wives were required to come with their husbands and attend instruction individualized for their level.

There were no obvious reasons why I should have encouraged Moses to come to Bible school. It was only some years later that I heard how God had spoken to him in a vision when he was working as a barman at Thyolo and told him to go on to become a minister of the Word of God. Talking to him that day as we stood outside my office I understood only that Phiri had a deep desire to enter Bible school to train to become a minister and that he could not get into any training for this in his own denomination or the sister Dutch Reform Church Mission in Rhodesia because he had only completed Malawi Standard Eight which is an eight year primary school

training. Entry to theological training in his denomination required four years of high school or its equivalent.

I had no inkling then of the depth of God's work in the preparation of Moses Phiri. Moses' father had been converted to Islam through a close friend as a young man. With gifts of leadership and intelligence he rose to the position of "senior sheke" in his district in a few years. However, he married a woman whose brother, and the head of her *mbumba*, was a staunch member of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian. In spite of intense efforts to convert his wife and her family, Phiri's father was at last forced to drop the matter and allow his wife to join the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian. When children came he wanted them to become Moslems, but again Bvalamanja, the *mwini mbumba* or head of the lineage, refused, in keeping with the matrilineal custom that children belong to the mother's family, not the father's. As a result of Bvalamanja's intervention and financial support Moses went to a Central Church of Africa Presbyterian school and became a Christian instead of a Muslim (cf. "Transcription of a Speech", Appendix A).

Without really understanding I should, I felt a tug of God's spirit to agree to Moses Phiri's application. Moses went back to Malawi and with his wife and son Peter returned to Rhodesia arriving in Salisbury without funds to come on to Lundi. He found employment teaching in a farm school for the children of Malawian migrant farm workers. A letter early in 1970 announced his intended arrival at Lundi Mission to start the third term in September.

Again only much later did I hear that God renewed the vision of ministry during this time as a school teacher.

I was on furlough in the United States when Moses Phiri and his family arrived. Others received him. I returned in August 1971. Moses and his wife Steria had completed two terms of Bible school. It had been a time of confirmation and testing. I had promised to waive school fees for him. My replacement as Bible school principal had not. Even with part time work finances had been difficult. Food patterns were different, the language was different. Bible school was in English for Moses (which he did not use fluently at that time) but the local language was Xihlengwe (Xi = shē) and Chikaranga. For Steria Bible school was taught in Xihlengwe. Moses spoke Chikaranga but Steria spoke only their home language Chichewa. School was a foreign language experience for both. The local food staple was maize meal. The Phiri's came from a rice and cassava area of Nkhotakota District in Malawi. Vegetables, plentiful in Malawi were scarce at Lundi. Fish, a regular protein source in the Phiri's lake shore Damba Village home, was rare at Lundi Mission. Even in Christian fellowship the Phiri family remained outside or on the fringe for many people. Acceptance came slowly. In that first year Moses learned a new dimension of trust in God. He had come to Bible school with considerable trust in what man was going to do for him. Disappointed, he was led to dependence upon his great God. This became a central

theme of his testimony -- the providing grace of God for those who follow Jesus.

Because Moses worked for us as a gardener part time to earn family expenses I came to know him in a special way. The three years could be expanded by personal stories illustrating the gentleness and love which captivated us and our children. One will summarize this.

In 1973 our daughter Ruth went to the United States alone to enter university. Before she left Moses and his wife prepared a special meal just for Ruth. They had Malawi rice which they had obtained some how. Then after a delicious meal which they ate together with Ruth, Moses read from Scripture and prayed for God's grace, blessing and guidance on Ruth in her new venture. And we whom God sent to minister, were ministered to from among those whom God called to be his own.

On field trips for evangelistic outreach by the Bible school Moses led the way in active witnessing to what his Jesus had done for him and how to know God. As a regular field experience he undertook to minister to a rather larger than ordinary village.\* Before he finished Bible school that whole village of several families professed Christ. Already he was finding pockets of fringe

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\* In Rhodesia a village is seldom more than one or two nuclear families in a patrilineal relationship in contrast to the rather large villages based on matrilineal clusters characteristic of most of Malawian society.



Christians and non-Christians who received no regular ministry unless they stirred themselves to walk several miles to Church.

During the years at Bible school we on the faculty spoke often of the growing sense we had that God had a special purpose for Moses and Steria. However we had no idea of what that was. We expected Moses to return to Malawi and take up some form of ministry in the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian. We made no overt effort to bring the Phiri family into membership or formal ministry in the Free Methodist Church.

Sometime in the latter half of 1973 Moses Phiri applied to the synod of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian working among Malawi migrant workers in Rhodesia. He asked for employment as an evangelist (cf. letter from M.S. Daneel undated but replied to on 22 November 1973 in my files). This application was accepted and arrangements made to remove Moses with his goods to a farm in the Salisbury area with a monthly salary of R\$ 30 plus a bicycle and travel allowance.

In November, however, Moses came to my office and related a series of three visions. In each the man who had spoken to him years before in the vision calling him to the ministry had spoken again. Now, Moses believed God was saying not to serve as an evangelist for the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian in Rhodesia, but to return to Malawi and start the Free Methodist Church. In the vision Moses saw his ministry in terms of planting hundreds of tiny papaya plants, given to him by the man. These papaya plants

grew in his vision and bore the magnificent fruit that only those who know it can fully understand. They are a graphic symbol of rapid growth and fruitful multiplication.

God gave confirmation of these visions in a vision to Rev. Luke Klemo, pastor of the local Chitanga Free Methodist Church. This confirming witness coming from the church's most educated pastor helped convince the conference board of administration to expedite his reception as a licensed minister of the Free Methodist Church and to approve his venture in Malawi as a mission outreach of the Rhodesia Conference of the Free Methodist Church. They committed themselves to prayer support but only to the possibility of financial support if it became available. Phiri's confidence in God was greater than that of the committee who endorsed his going (Capp 1973, letter to Daneel, 22 November 1973).

The weeks of November and early December 1973 were busy ones for Phiri and his family. Committee meetings convened to hear and approve his call, Bible school graduation, personal visitors saying good-bye, the organization of his goods and making travel arrangements took time.

A major factor was a financial uncertainty. Missionaries at Lundi, Bible school faculty members and church leaders joined in prayer about this. Several people felt God leading them to re-direct funds, some personal gifts, some tithe, one a substantial unspecified personal gift to a missionary from an overseas friend. When the money was given to the Phiri family a short time before

they were to leave they had enough for air travel from Salisbury to Malawi, although they chose to go by train and have the balance to help them get re-established in Malawi -- a wise choice in the event. Travel for the 260 mile trip to Salisbury worked out well as a mission car was travelling for other purposes at that time.

Thus did God call and prepare a man to do a special work in Malawi which is still young and growing. This was not the first time in the history of Christian intervention in Malawi that God called an African and led him out of the country for preparation and back to Malawi for ministry.

In 1892 to 1900 God prepared and called John Chilembwe to found the Providence Industrial Mission under the auspices of the National Baptist Convention, U.S.A. This black church sponsored Chilembwe's education and ordained him. Under Chilembwe the mission expanded rapidly in the southern region until Chilembwe was killed in a violent uprising, which he organized, in 1915 against the colonial government (Shepperson 1958: 115-142).

In 1924 Rev. Hancock Phiri, a product of Livingstonia Mission's Overtoun Institute and uncle of Dr. H. Kamuzu Banda was ordained as a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church in South Africa and sent to begin a work in Malawi. This was the culmination of seven restless years of search in Rhodesia and South Africa (Macdonald 1970: 77-79). By the mid-1930's the African Methodist Episcopal in Malawi had grown to over 3,000 members and a network of schools (Macdonald 1970: 85).

In 1926 Dr. Daniel S. Malekebu re-opened the Providence Industrial Mission. Malekebu had been a student in Chilembwe's day and spent 1905 to 1925 in the United States under the initial sponsorship of Miss Emma B. De Laney, former missionary teacher at Providence in the early years of Chilembwe's leadership. Qualified as a medical doctor Malekebu led the mission into extensive activity in Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia, and other neighboring countries (Goddard 1967: 554). In 1968 there were 25,000 reported members (Coxill 1968: 228).

In 1907 Charles Domingo, after a period of instruction under Joseph Booth in South Africa, established the Seventhday Baptist Church which still flourishes (Shepperson 1958: 160).

About the same time another trainee of Joseph Booth, Elliott Kamwana established the Watch Tower movement that baptized nearly 10,000 members from 1908 to 1910 (Shepperson 1958: 154-156).

None of these missions have approached the massive memberships of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian and Roman Catholic Churches. But each has played a role in the patterns of the history of God's call to man to cooperate in the ultimate destruction of evil and triumph of the Kingdom of God.

Since all the above churches were established in the colonial era and most had considerable political overtones in terms of opposition or resistance to the colonial government a comparison in the form of a political conflict model is likely to be unproductive in any quest for understanding the work of Moses Phiri.

## PLANTING THE CHURCH IN MALAWI

On December 19th, 1973 Moses Phiri wrote to say he had arrived safely. He had spoken to the District Commissioner of Nkhota Kota who forwarded an application to the capitol for license to start the Free Methodist Church. Meanwhile he was at work in his home at Damba Village. He says, "This time the whole village accepted Jesus and I am very busy to pray with these . . . every day people are coming for prayer meetings. Free Methodist Church will be big here in Malawi." (Phiri 1973, letter to Capp 19 December 1973)

Significantly he says that there is no Central Church of Africa Presbyterian pastor (Phiri, letter to Capp 19 December 1973). He elaborates on this in a later letter. Stating that he now has 30 members he tells of an invitation to tell the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian people about the Free Methodist Church. A number of them told him they wanted to join the Free Methodist Church after his talk. "So many people want to leave Central Church of Africa Presbyterian and join Free Methodist Church. I don't preach to them or witnessing (sic) to them. But they just want to come to hear the True Gospel which I am preaching." (Phiri 1974, letter to Capp 16 January 1974)

While Moses was busy preaching and witnessing, and the church was growing, God was working with government officials. In February a letter from Phiri reported favorable interviews with government officials in Blantyre about permission to start the church. He

requested that I, as head of the mission, come to Malawi to help establish the legal process. Reporting the destruction of the rail line to Rhodesia by Frelimo he points out by contrast that Malawi is a peaceful country which one need not fear to visit (Phiri 1974: letter 15 February 1974).

On 11th March 1974 the Reverend Naison Chauke, Chairman of the Board of Administration of the Rhodesia Annual Conference and I flew to Blantyre from Salisbury. Rev. Jack Selfridge, a Central Church of Africa Presbyterian missionary, graciously met us at the airport and helped us rent a car and locate in a hotel. The next day we engaged the law firm Lilley Wills and Co. to represent us in the incorporation of the Free Methodist Church (Muchetere 1974: letter 4 March 1974). This was a process that was finally completed in July 1977.

One highlight of the brief trip to Malawi was being able to give Moses money for a bicycle. In Phiri's first letter from Malawi he had requested the Chitanga Church to pray with him for a bicycle (Phiri 1973: letter to Capp 19 December 1973). Chauke and I had been sent with money which had been given to us without solicitation for the bicycle. He bought a Rudge. Writing on his return to Damba Village after our trip to Blantyre he says, "Thank you so much for the bicycle which you bought for the work of Jesus. Blessed are the hands which gave the money for the bicycle. This time I find it very easy to visit people in their homes." (Phiri 1974: letter to Capp 23 March 1974)

In the letter just referred to Phiri indicated he had a long testimony to give at the annual conference in April. On a tape recording I have Moses' account of the crucial event which broke down the barriers in Nkhotakota District for the beginning of the church.

Several children in Damba Village died in the space of a few weeks with a fast acting respiratory disease. One day Phiri received word where he was working that his oldest son, Peter was dead. Rushing home he found the women wailing by the inert body of his son. Moses took him into the small house and began to pray. His prayer centered around a request for God to demonstrate His great power and restore Peter to life as a sign of approval on the ministry to which he had called Moses Phiri. Within a few hours Peter was eating and is today a normal healthy child. I record this without evidence other than the personal witness of Moses Phiri, which I accept. I interpret it as a form of Power Encounter described by Alan Tippett with repeated examples of the various ways in which God has been established in the minds of a people as being more powerful than Satan or the local deities (cf. Tippett 1973: 88-91; Tippett 1967: 100-111; Tippett 1972: 141-143; Tippett 1975: 844-855).

The incident with Peter and a full account of God's constant provision for his family needs and the story of the Church now being planted was related by Moses Phiri in full at the annual conference at Lundi Mission in April 1974. Clarke and Ellen De Mille

had requested to have Moses stay with them in their guest room. DeMille was head of the secondary school and his wife one of the Bible school faculty.

For Moses the highlight of annual conference was his ordination as a minister of the Free Methodist Church, a significant and status giving achievement for a Malawi man.

Certainly Moses' ordination and his subsequent leadership and ministry is one argument that the high academic qualifications ordinarily required by churches of the west are not necessary to leadership which reflects the Holy Spirit's guidance. It argues, as well, that the refinement of detail and baggage of complexity which we associate with the highly organized church are missed not at all by people who have never been burdened by them. They will accumulate their own baggage -- but it will be culturally relevant. Finally, it argues that a man, open to the Holy Spirit, is not kept by academic ignorance of the niceties of Biblical studies from a deep understanding of the realities of the Word of God living and written.

In March 1974 correspondence with D.M. Karns, Field Superintendent of the Wesleyan Church in Natal, led to contact with Mr. Abal Manganih in Zomba District. Manganih had been associated in years past with the Church of the Nazarene (personal communication). A divorce led to his removal from leadership and Manganih went independent with his congregation. At the time of contact with Rev. Karns, Manganih had five churches and four unordained pastors under



his leadership with a total of 105 members (Morgan 1972: 2).

Manganih was interested in association with a denomination in the Wesleyan-Arminian tradition. Since the Wesleyans had declined on grounds of inadequate personnel to undertake supervision, the request was referred to the Free Methodist Mission.

Moses Phiri visited in 1974 on a number of occasions and in 1975, during a field work tour in Malawi, I had extended conferences with Manganih and his leaders. One point of issue was ordination and the relation of Mr. Manganih to Moses Phiri. I left thinking that Manganih would lead his congregation to vote to join the Free Methodist Church and that he would serve as a district leader under Phiri. In the end two of his pastors joined the Free Methodist Church with their congregations but Manganih was refused ordination by the Free Methodist bishop and he declined to place himself under the leadership of Moses Phiri. A letter from Manganih in June 1974 indicates that financial aid was one of the goals of association (Manganih 1974: letter to Capp). The group remains in fraternal fellowship.

The first extended missionary visit to the Malawi Free Methodist Church was a visit by Tillman and Gwen Houser in June 1974. Rev. Houser is a trained missiologist with the M.A. in missiology from Fuller Theological Seminary. As a result of his survey he noted several things. His visit established credibility to Moses Phiri's work in Damba village. The people joining the Free Methodist Church are a cross section of Malawi society from top to

bottom and a good per centage are poorly shepherded members of the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian. The church is stressing planting where no church exists at present. There is a great dearth of ordained pastors in the Central Church of Africa Presbyterian, Anglican and Roman Catholic churches. The mood of evangelistic initiative is in line with the government program of community self-help. Many government officials are practicing Christians and the mood is pro-Christian. There appeared to be little ancestor cult or spirit possession. The Moslem community appears to be responsive (cf. Houser 1974: 3,4).

While Rev. and Mrs. Houser were in Malawi they attended the official opening of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi on 16th June 1974 at Damba Village. More than 100 people were present and 35 received communion (Houser 1974: 2). The highlight of the day was a speech by Moses Phiri's father. It deserves a full reading and is included as Appendix A. He comments on the fact that Moses, his son, is now a missionary "who can be visited by the whites." (Phwitiko 1974)

By August 1974 a number of Malawian applicants for Lundi Bible School had been recommended by Phiri. Mikson Mbewe arrived in Rhodesia with his wife and infant daughter in time for the opening of third term in September. Several others who had travelled with him were denied entrance to Rhodesia because they did not have an official letter of acceptance from the Bible school or mission.

As applications multiplied from individuals a system was established to receive students. By policy application blanks were available only through Moses Phiri for Malawi students. His signature and the church's approval were required. It had become apparent almost immediately that it would not be possible, much less wise, to handle the training of future Malawi church leaders in a way that bypassed the church at the beginning (cf. Capp 1974, letters to Phiri 13 and 26 September 1974).

In August 1974 a group of women missionaries from Lundi Mission spent a two week holiday visiting the Church in Malawi. Their holiday turned into an evangelistic tour. Phiri arranged meetings for them almost every night. They preached in Nkhota Kota District and in the Zomba District. While they were visiting in Mr. Manganih's churches in the Zomba District, Chief Makolijah came early one morning to talk to Moses Phiri about starting a new Free Methodist Church in his village. Since then a second church has grown out of the original and the combined membership in 1978 was nearly 150 (oral communication). By September 1974 regular congregations had been established at Damba and Chia, with the enquiring group at Zomba. There was also an unorganized group meeting at Blantyre-Lembe under L.K. Domoya. Formerly a Church of the Nazarene pastor, there was some misunderstanding and Domoya came to the Free Methodist Church. Although both Phiri and I advised him to remain in Malawi in the pastoral ministry, he later attended Lundi Bible School then returned to the Church of the Nazarene in 1976 (cf. Phiri 1974: letter to Capp, 14 October; Capp 1974: letter to Domoya, 1 November).

In October 1974 Frank Andrew, a convert from Islam and a member of the Chia church, came to Bible school. Contrary to requirements he came without his wife. He was very strange. Although Phiri recommended him, late in October he wrote asking that Andrew be sent back to Malawi. Andrew did not appear to understand English well, yet he was enthusiastic about converting Muslims. He was in regular contact with Every Home Crusade in Bulawayo, Rhodesia. He returned to Malawi saying that he was going to get his wife and return in January. He did not. I saw him in 1975, but he was reportedly trying to cause division in the Chia church. It appeared to be a problem of leadership conflict (Phiri 1974: letter to Capp, 28 October; Capp 1974: letter to Phiri, 7 November, 13 November; personal communication).

Letters from Phiri late in 1974 advised of four or five new Bible school students to come, report the Church as growing bigger and bigger and indicate extensive travel between Nkhota Kota and Blantyre. There were requests for marriage documents and kool-aid -- "flour that turned into red (wine) when we put in water." (Phiri 1974: letter to Capp, 11 November) Another letter on the 14th November indicates intention to open a church in another Moslem village in Nkhota Kota District, but details of what happened are lacking.

The planting of the Church in Malawi began and has continued without mission support in terms of salaries for pastors. The rural nature of the Malawi population certainly affects the possibility

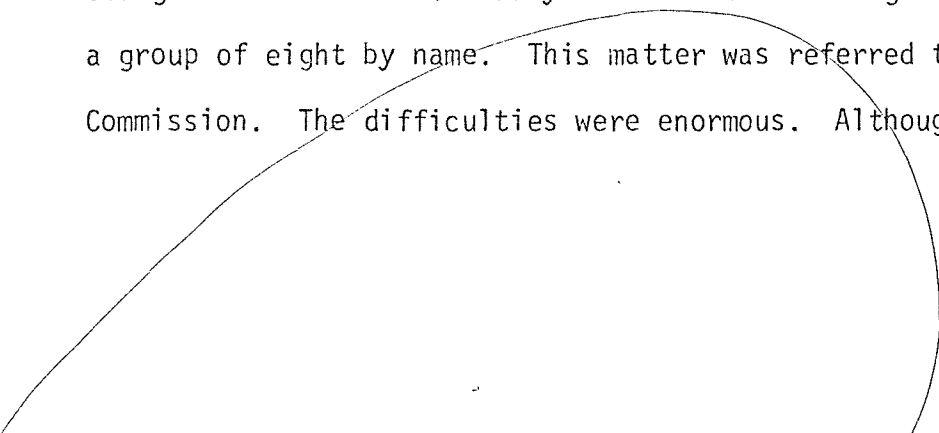
of this. The difficulty of starting a work in the city without support is illustrated in a report by Phiri of his conversation with L.K. Domoya in Blantyre.

Mr. Domoya is doing a good job in Blantyre. The Lord is really using him . . . no one has employed him but he is living in the city by Faith . . . I asked Mr. Domoya . . . do you think you can stay in the city without money? Mr. Domoya answered me this way, "God gave me (a) stomach, he knew that I need to eat, I need to wear, and I need to drink." That is the Faith of Mr. Domoya. (Phiri 1974: letter to Capp, 18 November).

In April 1974 a Missions Commission had been appointed by the Rhodesia Annual Conference to supervise and provide communication channels between Moses Phiri in Malawi and the Church in Rhodesia. But by December 1974 nothing had been done. In December Phiri wrote asking about the Commission. I spoke to the chairman from time to time but it was slow in starting. The missionary was running miles ahead of the Missions Commission of the Conference (Phiri 1974: letter to Capp, 16 December; Capp 1975: letter to Phiri, 2 February).

In December 1974 three families -- Depper Magwaza and his wife; Alifeyo Mpulula, his wife and seven children; and Finess Nyamathamanga, his wife and children -- arrived to begin studies.

Phiri had written suggesting that another team of Rhodesians -- both missionaries and Africans -- come to Malawi to help him with evangelistic outreach. Early in 1975 he wrote urgently requesting a group of eight by name. This matter was referred to the Missions Commission. The difficulties were enormous. Although Phiri was



sure the road through Mozambique was open and passable, our information was hazy (cf. Capp 1975: memo to Sayre, 1 February).

Phiri also recognized the need for the Book of Discipline to be translated into Chichewa. He requested that Mpulula be set to the task while at Bible school. In my reply to his request I said, "I think this is a good idea and we will try to do something about it." (Capp 1975: letter to Phiri, 2 February) Unfortunately, I nor anyone, ever did anything about it because by the beginning of 1976 the Rhodesian war had come full force to the Nuanetsi District where Lundi Bible School was located. Other items held priority.

#### THE GROWING CHURCH

Dear Rev. Capp -- I write this letter to tell you that the church is growing bigger and bigger, the bicycle you bought for me is now too small to compare with the work in Malawi. I employed Mr. L.K. Domoya and Mr. Alfred Chagadema to help me . . . Is there any way that you can help me with a Honda . . . I can use my bicycle from Salima to Nkhota Kota but I can't use my bicycle from Salima to Blantyre or from Nkhota Kota to Lilongwe (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 25 February).

At the end of 1974 Phiri moved to Salima to start a new church leaving Nkhota Kota and Chia in the hands of a leader he had trained. For the time being Domoya gave good leadership in Blantyre. Salima is a busy little town at the junction of the old rail line to Blantyre and the new rail extension to the new capitol city of Lilongwe.

Salima is near a tourist resort on Lake Malawi and near Chipoka, one of the main ports at the south end of the lake for water transport up the lake. Salima, headquarters for the government of Salima District, was to become the headquarters of the Free Methodist Church as well. The move was good. Communication, which was difficult to the Damba community with even the nearest postal service being 26 miles away, was vastly improved. Not only postal and telegraph service were available, but even telephone. Salima was also more central to the development pattern of the church.

Meanwhile, at Damba the Church had raised K 200 and started to burn bricks for a new building. In Blantyre L.K. Domoya decided he must come to Bible school at Lundi Mission. His father-in-law gave him K 40 for transportation and in April Domoya and his wife and two children came to Lundi. Phiri found someone else to lead in Blantyre (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 7 March).

Funds were made available by gifts in April to bring Phiri from Malawi to the 1975 Rhodesia Annual Conference which was held at Chikombedzi Mission. The days before conference and for a few days afterward it was our privilege to have Moses Phiri as guest in our personal guest house surrounded by the lovely flowers, shrubs, trees and lawn which he had so lovingly helped to plant and care for as a Bible school student.

During the April conference plans were laid to drive to Malawi with a team of missionaries and the five Malawi men attending Bible school. It was to be a combination of survey for the mission,

supervised field practical experience for the students and an evangelistic outreach for the Malawi Church. The date was to be July to August 1975. Phiri made extensive arrangements for the tour. He contacted chiefs to arrange for meetings in places where no church had been started. He organized accommodations and food for the entire team. He arranged the schedule and set up a simple format for the nightly evangelistic services -- show slides, preach an evangelistic sermon, and then "ask the people to choose Jesus". (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 26 May) Plans had been made for an African woman who was trained in tailoring to set up women's classes in Malawi for four months, from June through September. The women of the church promised to take full care of her, but she was unable to get a passport in time. By the next year it was impossible because of war (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 26 May; Capp 1975: letter to Phiri, 4 June).

The first concrete move to support Phiri's work and the beginnings of an organized mission outreach took place during the 1975 Rhodesia Annual Conference. Well over R\$ 100 were contributed in cash and a campaign for pledges to be paid later carried the total higher. In addition, the Natal-Transkei Annual Conference had become interested in the Malawi Church and the *Malihambe*, the Free Methodist Women's organization in Natal-Transkei, sent about R 100 which they had raised as a gift for the Church in Malawi. These monies were presented to Phiri at the annual conference. From time to time Phiri received other gifts from individuals who heard of his ministry, but at no time did he receive a regular allowance from any organized source.



An energetic letter writer, Phiri was corresponding with several Free Methodist people in the United States who heard about his work through occasional articles in "The Missionary Tidings", the official publication of the Women's Missionary Society of the Free Methodist Church in North America. In my movement as a missionary speaker on deputation in the United States I have heard reports of occasional gifts sent to him. General Missionary Board financial records indicate a fairly sizeable flow of unsolicited funds through their channels. On occasion the General Missionary Board made gifts of several hundred dollars, but without any regular budgetary commitment. In October 1975 Phiri gave me a list of these contribution (cf. Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 29 October).

A repeated mention is made by Phiri in his letters of his contact with various government officials, all of whom seem favorable and helpful. Typically he writes concerning the projected Bible school field trip,

I have already told the District Commissioners of Nkhota Kota, Salima, Blantyre and Zomba about your coming to Malawi. These Commissioners are ready to take care of you until you come back, we are all nice people in Malawi. We like missionaries to develop our country by God's Word (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, June n.d.)

Plans finalized, the Bible school field trip got underway on 9th July 1975. We travelled in two cars, Rev. and Mrs. Henry Church<sup>\*</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> A new missionary couple with a decade of successful pastoral ministry in the United States assigned as evangelistic missionaries to the Rhodesia mission.

and their two children, Miss Elesinah Chauke, head of the Bible school studies for women, five Malawian students, Alifeyo Mpulula, Depper Magwaza, Listard Domoya, Mikson Mbewe and Finess Nyamathamanga plus myself as Bible school principle. We made one overnight stop in Salisbury, reaching Blantyre late in the evening of 10th July as planned.

We had no border difficulties when crossing the narrow stretch of the Tete area of Mozambique that separates Rhodesia and Malawi. We were searched by Frelimo soldiers, found a Shangaan speaking friend in the immigration office who helped us get transit visas but encountered no serious problems. Fortunately we had both food and water. There was none available that we could find since all stores were closed. It was Sunday. The ravages of the recent war were evident, but so were the signs of people moving out of the militarized camps back to the land, preparing and planting fields. The people of northwestern Mozambique are historically related to the Malawians and Chichewa was easily understood by the local people. There would be potential for the Free Methodist Church in Malawi and in Mozambique to work together on expansion in this northern area.

The Bible school evangelistic team spent a week in Nkhota Kota, a week in Salima, a week in Blantyre and a week in Zomba. Nightly services were arranged, almost all in different villages. In Blantyre we met in an open field and concentrated on the Bangwe housing area of the Blantyre-Limbe complex. One obvious fact was the outstanding number of men who are involved in the Church. Estimates at the time

of the field trip indicate at least as many men as women in services. A second observation was the obvious approach through village authorities in the rural areas and town authorities in more urban areas. A distinct feature of the tour were the women's classes led by Elesinah Chauke. From her work the women's organization of Malawi has grown. The core method has been Bible study and informal preaching and counselling in a sewing group. The materials for sewing have been the unique contribution of the Women's Missionary Society of North America -- five inch squares of cloth sent by small packet mail. An interesting and effective device for ministry among women in a country like Malawi (cf. Capp 1975: Report on Lundi Bible School Field Experience in Malawi).

The primary explanation for growth noted on this tour was that Moses Phiri's message of Life in Christ is validated by his life and that years of evangelistic neglect by the historic churches has allowed a large number of villages created by population growth to develop without churches. It is these villages and village segments that seem to be responding (Capp 1975: Report on Lundi Bible School Field Experience in Malawi, p. 3).

Immediately following the field trip, Bishop Ellis, Area Bishop for the Free Methodist Church, visited the main center of the developing Malawi Church. It was a busy winter for Moses Phiri. The most exciting outcome was Phiri's report that in Chipwete Village, seventeen families, had received Jesus Christ and joined the Free Methodist Church (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 2 September). This church, seven

miles from Salima, has since grown to over 300 members and is the largest Free Methodist Church in Malawi.

In August, Kanyama Banda with his wife and infant son came to attend Bible school. He travelled to Rhodesia with the returning team. In September two additional families arrived, Nimrod Mangwanga and family and Kingstone Phiri and his family. These were the last students to come from Malawi. There were now eight families in training at Lundi Bible School for ministry in Malawi. The flow was halted first by a Rhodesian immigration problem. There was no category for Bible school students and there was no way for the students to get identity certificates which, by law, had to be carried at all times. With increasing war activity this was enforced rigidly. It took several months to get special permission, but with a graciousness typical of contacts our mission had with Rhodesian officials an exception was made and a special residence permit was granted. As hostilities intensified later and military personnel unfamiliar with the immigration permits demanded to see a regular identification certificate, the District Commissioner at the time, Peter Parsons, arranged to have these certificates issued in spite of regulations.

The second factor in the flow of students was closure of the Mozambique border with Rhodesia. The road was closed from Rhodesia to Malawi about two weeks after our return. We had been led by God to choose the only time there had been open safe road travel from Rhodesia to Malawi in several years. But later in 1975 even air travel from Rhodesia to Malawi was halted. Mozambique refused to allow

airplanes stopping in Salisbury to travel over Mozambique air space and Malawi cut off both Air Malawi service to Rhodesia and Air Rhodesia service to Malawi. The only route left was Salisbury to Johannesburg and Johannesburg to Blantyre. This made travel costs for students who had to pay their own travel to Bible school impossible.

The matter of leadership assistance for Moses Phiri was of concern. Luke Sandani, a young unmarried graduate of Lundi Bible School felt God's call to foreign missionary work. As a step in this direction Phiri was approached about his coming to Malawi. His response was positive on condition that the Rhodesian Commission on Missions underwrite his support (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 9 August).\*

In October, after consultation with Luke Sandani, a request was made that the Malawi Church receive him and provide food and shelter. Luke was prepared to trust God to supply his need for other things (Capp 1975: letter to Phiri, 22 October). Phiri then wrote that the Malawi churches agreed to this and asked Luke to come. The Commission on Missions in Rhodesia had not yet acted to give Luke official standing with the Rhodesian Church but procedure for Malawi residence was begun. Also funds were already coming for his travel (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, n.d.; Capp 1975: letter to Phiri, 18 November). At

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\* This letter is obviously misdated since it mentions Bishop Ellis who visited in the latter part of August. A more likely date would be 9 September.

first everything seemed favorable with Malawi immigration, but in February 1976 Phiri wrote that the Chief Immigration Officer had authorized a visit but refused permission for Luke Sandani to work in the Malawi Church (Phiri 1976: letter to Capp, 16 February). Meanwhile I had made attempts to get approval for Luke Sandani to serve with Operation Mobilization in Britain. Ironically, a letter of authorization arrived a day or two after Luke Sandani disappeared. Rumor says that he was offered medical training by the Patriotic Front and left Rhodesia via Botswana. Nothing has been heard from him.

In order to relieve some of the immediate stress of leadership and organization Phiri invited all his main lay leaders to Salima for a week of intensive prayer, discussion and training on how to keep the Church growing. After the meeting Phiri divided up the churches among the six leaders. Mr. Manganih was set over Kachapila, Makolija, Zomba town and Blantyre city. Mr. Malemnya was set over Mlamwa, Namsasala, Jali and Malemba Village. Mr. Nzunga was set over Kaimaima, Kandeu, Chituku and Kamoto-Ncheu. Mr. Manyoni was set over Damba, Mtete, Msamala and Chia. Mr. Chagadama was set over Kasungu, Kaniche and Nkhota Kota. Mr. Ngozo was set over Salima town, Chipwete, Ngolomi, Karonga and Simaiwa (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 29 September).

On the 2nd October 1975 another letter from Phiri stresses the need for a motorcycle again. He says,

The churches in Malawi need me at the same time. Two new villages at Lilongwe Capitol City want me to visit them. Two tobacco estates at Kasungu want me . . . Two villages at Ncheu District want me . . . One village at Mchingi District want me . . . Our village at

Mzimba District want me to visit them (Phiri 1975: letter to Capp, 2 October).

Phiri goes on to say that these requests all came as a result of his paying Malawi Broadcasting Corporation to announce the visit of Bishop Ellis.\*

Earlier in this study a survey indicating rural listenership to the radio was very low and city listenership about 30 percent. This remark by Phiri indicates that even if the pattern has not shifted, at least those who listen are active listeners. That is an important commentary on the survey and the use of media.

Since the names of places and the names of leaders listed above do not correlate well with the 1978 report (Appendix J) several explanations are possible. One is that they didn't develop. This is true with the relationship of Mr. Manganih at least. Another is that the churches mentioned are still developing and have not yet become societies with baptized members. While both explanations must be partially true, the latter is supported by Phiri's reports of baptism and his dates for beginning of churches. Dates on his 1978 report are more than a year later for a number of churches mentioned in earlier correspondence. An example of the possibility of time lag appears in a letter of 16 February 1976. Here Phiri reports baptizing 56 people at Kasungu on 18th January plus receiving 13 from other churches. On 25th January he reports

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\* Reports back to General Missionary Board headquarters resulted in one member of the Commission on Missions in America donating funds for the motorcycle. It was purchased early in 1976.

baptizing 34 people and receiving 5 men from other churches at Nasadi in Thyolo District. This latter place does not appear on the 1978 report. At Chipwete when the new church was opened 100 people gave their lives to Jesus (Phiri 1976: letter to Capp, 16 February).

Another explanation is that the statistical reporting has not been systematic, that there is need for a careful survey that would establish when each congregation came into being and what the membership was together with regular reports indicating progress of membership. Also more than one name may be used at different times for the same place. An example of this is Makolijah also called Malimba (Phiri 1976: letter to Capp, 10 August). This needs to be checked out.

Early in 1976 plans were being laid for the possibility of another Bible school field trip (Capp 1976: letter to Phiri, 6 February; Church 1976: letter to Ellis, 6 February; Capp 1976: letter to Phiri, 3 March). Moses Phiri countered with an earnest request that in 1976 pastors, black or white, Rhodesian or South African, but not Bible school students be sent to work with the Church (Phiri 1976: 16 February). The Rhodesian war prevented any further development of the Bible school field trip plans. But, funds were made available for Rev. Robert Nxumalo of the Natal-Transkei conference to spend some weeks in Malawi in teaching and evangelistic work. Nxumalo, a graduate of Edwaleni Technical School and Union Bible Institute at Sweetwater, Natal, had been



pastor and district superintendent and was now engaged in full time evangelism.

Nxumalo spent from 30 July to 7 September 1976 with the churches in Malawi. He spent the first week using the Book of Discipline to teach basic things about the Free Methodist Church to 19 men and 4 or 5 women -- all church leaders. The remaining weeks he travelled, preaching at different centers.

Some of Nxumalo's insights are interesting. He notes Moses Phiri's hard work and his need of help to teach the people. Nxumalo mentions the hope for a missionary to come and to have schools and doctors. He notes, "I am sorry to say I have killed all their hopes." (Nxumalo 1976: letter to Clyde, 3 August) In this same letter he notes that some members of the church are high government officials.

Nxumalo approved of Moses' transfer to Salima -- but for a different reason. Noting that Nkhota Kota is growing more slowly than other areas -- yet far better than his own conference -- he states, "He saw the danger of staying at home." (Nxumalo 1976: letter to Clyde, 15 August)

The matrilineal family customs were upsetting to Nxumalo. His comment is worth quotation:

The father is not so important in the family. Your brother-in-law is the one who has authority in your family. Your children are not yours, they belong to their uncle. Divorce is a very small thing here. You can leave any time. Don't worry children are not yours anyway. Just yesterday a man came here to Moses and told him that he wants to divorce his wife because

she does not follow him to be a Free Methodist. Yesterday afternoon a teacher visited us. He belongs to another church. He told us he wants to divorce one of his wives because he has two and it is expensive to keep two wives. So I am learning new things here. The Church needs so much teaching.

But Moses is so strong he faces them. He tells them that Free Methodists came here to build up homes, not to destroy them (Nxumalo 1976: letter to Clyde, 15 August).

Phiri's inexact accounting procedures and flexible idea of priority in use of money were disturbing to Nxumalo. He found Phiri had used, in other ways, money sent to him for expenses in connection with Nxumalo's visit. He also worried about more accurate membership records. He showed Phiri how to use a cash book and to make a church membership register (Nxumalo 1976: letter to Clyde, 6 September).

In a formal report Nxumalo called attention to several factors of interest.

- 1) The work was growing fast.
- 2) There was lack of leadership.
- 3) There was a problem of how to support leaders financially.
- 4) About half the church members come from other denominations.

Re-orienting them to the Free Methodist Church was a problem.

- 5) A lot of members thought Phiri was sent by a mission and with lots of money. Phiri's call from God was not clear to them.

- 6) Phiri had no proper place to stay. He was renting.

(Nxumalo 1976: 2)

The motorcycle gift increased Phiri's movement. In June he writes of new converts and new places every week. But the continued

crimp of financing remains. He writes of requesting the General Missionary Board for some travel funds. At Bangwe township in Blantyre-Limbe the leadership problem created when Domoya went to Bible school increased. The church leader pressed for a K 40 per month salary. This was out of the question. Phiri's answer was to close the church.

In keeping with all growth reports, yet confusing the statistical issue still more, Phiri reports his travel with Nxumalo in terms of preaching to 159 Christians at Chipwete on 8th August, 89 Christians at Damba in Nkhota Kota District on 15th August, 57 Christians at Lisandwa in Kasungu District on 22nd August, 209 Christians at Malemba in Zomba District on 29th August and 305 members of Nasadi Church in Thyolo District on 5th September.

It was after Nxumalo spoke to them that Manganih and his leaders in Zomba withdrew from moves toward a formal merger with the Free Methodist Church.\* An issue at stake was ordination. This reduced the Free Methodist churches in Zomba to one as of September 1976, Malemba, also called Makolijah, with 129 members (Phiri 1976: letter to Capp, 10 September).

Illustration of statistical problems is given in Phiri's letter of 18 August and 10 September. In the former he reports 182 Christians not 159 at Chipwete for the service and 65 members instead of

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\* This small group is still functioning as the Wesleyan Church though to my knowledge, without any formal connection being recognized by the Wesleyan Church itself.

89 Christians at Damba. These are discrepancies that do not invalidate the growth, but they do not clarify the picture and raise questions about other statistics.

#### WAR, RETURN AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

By April 1976 it was clearly a possibility that the military situation in Rhodesia could make it necessary to send the eight Malawi families at Lundi Bible School back to Malawi. Alternative Bible school possibilities were investigated, the most likely was Likubula Bible Institute. The Africa Evangelical Fellowship, the Nyasa Mission and the Zambezi Mission and the churches associated with them merged separate Bible schools in 1965. All three missions are essentially of British Baptist origin. The main problems were the year around residence program without facilities for families. The principal indicated in 1976 that they hoped in future to provide such facilities (Bonongwe 1976: letter to Capp, 31 May).

The sudden outbreak of war in the southeast at the beginning of February 1976 upset the Malawians. They were frightened. Their country was peaceful and up till then Lundi had been peaceful. In March the shutdown of air service from Blantyre to Salisbury was threatening. They came to me asking what the Bible school would do. I promised them that they would be returned to Malawi. In May, several said that was what they wanted to do. I asked them to discuss

it together and pray and then any family who felt they wanted to return to Malawi would be sent. A few days later, one by one the men came to me and said that God had taken away their fears. They wanted to stay. As it happened they had to go -- but before that the Holy Spirit had confirmed His call to each of these men and the threat of death -- really present -- no longer was a hindrance to their cooperation with God.

In October the General Missionary Board directed the Rhodesia Mission to send the Malawi students home. I travelled with them, arriving in Blantyre on 16 October 1976 by air via Johannesburg. No plan had been finalized but tentative plans had been made to have four one month intensive courses each year. Teachers would be flown in from Rhodesia and South Africa for each course. A place and the details of food and lodging were still unknown.

On arrival in Salima I talked with Phiri about the possibility. We went to see different buildings for rent or sale. The only likely possibility was to purchase one of the stores up for sale by Indian storekeepers being forced to move to Lilongwe, Blantyre-Limbe or Zomba under the government program to localize commerce in the rural areas. Two possible buildings were located and the owners contacted.

In October a proposal went forward to the General Missionary Board incorporating the short term scheme and the purchase of one of the Indian owned stores (Capp 1976: letter to Dr. Kirkpatrick, 27 October). On 3 December after contact with the General Missionary Board, a proposal to purchase was sent to Hussein Kalu, son of the

owner of one of the recommended stores (Capp 1976: letter to Kalu, 6 December). The offer to purchase at \$ 10,000 was accepted by Kalu. The legal details were handled by law firms in Malawi and took some months but possession of the building by 1 March 1977 was agreed to (Kalu 1977: letter to Capp, 10 January).

In faith, arrangements had been made to have Beth Beckelhymer, missionary teacher at Lundi Bible School, and Gertrude Haight, mission business manager, do the first intensive course. The dates were set for 7th March to 1st April at Salima (Capp 1976: letter to Phiri, 5 November). In spite of war, withdrawal of the missionaries from Lundi Mission, relocation of all the Bible school students and their re-integration to their home lives in Malawi, God worked out, in His own time, the possibility of continuing the leadership training of these men whom God had called. Certainly it was a step of faith for the General Missionary Secretary, Dr. Kirkpatrick, as well. Even though he gave permission to negotiate the purchase, he did not know where funds would come from. In view of the intense financial pressure that has been part of the picture for several years with the General Missionary program his approval was a bold administrative decision. Moses Phiri reported that faith in these words:

Brother Kirkpatrick wrote a beautiful letter to me. He told me that General Missionary Board at this time has no 10,000 dollars but our Lord Jesus has 10,000 dollars to buy Kalu's store in Malawi. He told me to help him in prayer to our Lord who has 10,000 dollars for Kalu's store (Phiri 1976: letter to Capp, 26 November).

In this same letter, Phiri notes that Mpulula (one of the Bible school students) had started the Free Methodist Church at his home with 70 people now attending. Another older leader, always referred to respectfully as Father Malemba, had started a new church at Malunga Village in Zomba District. "In short," said Phiri, "the Holy Spirit is really moving throughout the country of Malawi."

(Phiri 1976: letter to Capp, 26 November)

The Executive Committee of the Commission on Missions took action in their meeting of 26-28 January 1977 as follows:

On motion it was voted that the missionary secretary be authorized to take the proper steps to start a Bible school in Malawi; to provide for personnel, registration with the government and plan for future financial needs for the Bible school in the 1978 budget (Executive Committee Minutes 1977: 3).

At the same meeting the committee also agreed to pay the attorney's costs for incorporation of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi (Executive Committee Minutes 1977: 6).

Tillman Houser, veteran Rhodesian missionary and Rhodesia Mission superintendent (replacing Capp who left Rhodesia on 21 November 1976 for furlough), went to Malawi early in March 1977 to prepare the store building for use as a Bible school. He organized a bathroom, furniture, painting and a number of other such mundane but necessary items. The Indian family requested permission to use part of the facility for an interim period. They were very hospitable and helped with transport as well (Houser 1977: letter to Dr. Kirkpatrick, 7 March).

Many people extended hospitality and assistance when Beth Beckelhymer and Gertrude Haight went to hold the first intensive Bible school session in Salima. There was noise, interruption by workmen, heat, mosquitos, new diets and the need for lots of clean up and paint as well as teaching. But these were side issues.

Seven of the eight students came. Domoya had returned to the Church of the Nazarene. Each man was busy with a church started either by himself or by Moses Phiri. During the month they covered a full Bible school term of Christian education courses. On Sundays they attended the local Free Methodist Church with the students in charge. Miss Beckelhymer comments:

Moses and our students feel they have a call to lead people to a personal knowledge of the Saviour through spreading the Free Methodist Church. What they had all experienced before in this well-churched country was mostly a formal "churchianity" rather than knowing Christ in saving power. They know the difference now (Beckelhymer 1977: 2).

Describing their visit to Chipwete one Sunday Miss Beckelhymer noted that the chief was received as a full member. Spread out over the 300 miles from Nkhota Kota to Thyolo she recorded that there were eight churches and 815 members all in need of instruction and training (Beckelhymer 1977: 3).

How best to continue the Bible School was a theme that Houser discussed in his report (Houser 1977). His feeling was that the Malawi Church should provide the food. Miss Beckelhymer presents pros and cons of the present Bible school arrangement. She notes the students' desire to finish more quickly, and the fact that the



wives are unable to continue their studies. With new students wanting to enter she asks, "Is this the best way to continue?" (Beckelhymer 1977: 3)

On the positive side she points out that the men stay home. They keep their families and their fields. They are active in the local church, growing and learning at the same time. Between sessions they do self teaching extension lessons and scripture memorization (Beckelhymer 1977: 3).

It is difficult to capture the spirit of these men whom God has called to be leaders without having been with them. Finess Nyamathamanga wrote after the first Bible school session:

God is so wonderful to me . . . I made a vow with my Lord that whether in trouble or happy, no matter. whatever anyone may say I will follow my Living God. For one great thing he loved me, he died for me so that I may be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ. I am at home. The work of God begins at my home. I thank the Lord for calling me an uneducated man to do his work. To me its a great opportunity (Nhamathamanga 1977: letter to Capp, 27 April).

One of the results of Nxumalo's trip to Malawi was intense interest in Natal-Transkei Conference. Phiri was invited to be the conference speaker in April 1977 and a fund raising project was inaugurated by the mission and the conference to assist in Malawi outreach (Minutes of Natal-Transkai Mission Meeting, 8 November 1976).

At the conference excitement grew. Moses captivated the hearts of the Natal-Transkai people with his simple direct message of faith in the Lord Jesus. The conference paid for his air travel from Malawi (R 340), gave him R 200 for his work plus ten large boxes of good used clothing and raised money to buy bicycles for the Malawi pastors as well. This was the first major financial contribution to mission outreach by a Southern African Free Methodist conference to my knowledge. It was promoted by the African leadership sparked by Robert Nxumalo. Mission Superintendent Warren Johnson said, "God came upon them and showered the people with a beautiful spirit of giving and sharing. Thanks be to God!" (Johnson 1977: letter to Capp, 20 May)

In June Warren Johnson and his wife Jean went to Malawi for the second intensive course. They brought the money for bicycles from the Natal-Transkai conference and were able to buy them and present them to the Church during their stay.

The problem of financial accountability noticed earlier by Robert Nxumalo is mentioned again by Johnson. Funds had been left for the Bible school in a bank account to which Phiri was signatory. He used most of the money for general church operational expenses. He had an accurate account of it, but this time the problem was the use of designated funds (Johnson 1977: letter to Capp, 22 June).

In Johnson's report further problems with the scheme for the Bible school are discussed. While he agreed that the pastoral training program is the missionary priority he suggested that the

one-month courses are financially inefficient and that the students have too short a time to adjust to new teachers, new accents, different emphases. Calling it an inferior method Johnson recommended that until a resident Bible school is established there should be two four-week periods with a one-week break. This would double the teacher time at almost no extra expense. Johnson noted that students brought some mealie meal, chickens and sweet potatoes. Firewood was also supplied. He recommended that students or their churches try to bring all the mealie meal for the next session (Johnson 1977: Letter of Report on Malawi, 3 August).

Several other items noted by Johnson in his report included continued improvements in the facilities at Salima -- including exterior paint for the main building; permission from the District Commissioner for the Church to meet for worship in the Bible school facility; church buildings in progress at Chipwete, Damba and Zomba; huge harvest offerings and discussions with Phiri about how to use programmed textbooks which were being translated into Chichewa (Johnson 1977: Letter of Report on Malawi, 3 August).

By this time some areas of conflict were beginning to emerge. In the area of funding for the Bible school, Houser and Johnson were pressing for a measure of local contribution. Phiri responded negatively to this idea in a letter to the financial director for the General Missionary Board. He requested strongly that the General Missionary Board provide full subsidy for the Bible school and also requested provision for families to attend again, as had been the pattern in Rhodesia (Phiri 1977: letter to Clyde, 24 March).

In the area of format, the original proposal was being criticised for various reasons; that it was slower, expensive to fly in staff, strenuous for the teachers and pupils to live in the situation, inferior due to adjustments required by changing teachers, procedure, etc. Some recommendation was appearing for a residence program. Only Beckelhymer noted that the short term intensive sessions left the men in their home environment and actively using what they learned as they progressed.

The question of authority and control, especially in use of funds, had emerged. Some felt Phiri had misappropriated funds. Pressure to maintain accounting control had been applied. The supervision of the Bible school as an assisting institution had grown into a question of control of the conference and responsibility for it. The field missions had asked Johnson to coordinate the Bible school teaching schedule. The Commission on Missions had made the Malawi Church a mission conference (cf. Kirkpatrick 1977: letter to Johnson, 13 July) assuming both authority and responsibility. Yet, the Malawi Church was a product of a man's vision -- a call from God. It was authorized by the Rhodesia Annual Conference and Moses Phiri remained an elder under appointment as a missionary to Malawi from the Rhodesia Annual Conference.

Significantly Phiri writes in August:

Rev. Capp -- if General Missionary Board will need to send a missionary to work with me in Malawi please make sure that he is really called by God to work with

me. I am saying this because some of the churches are dying in Malawi because white missionaries are doing opposite to the black pastors. I have seen some of the Church members running from the church to join other churches because of disagreement between white missionaries and black pastors. You are my Mother and my Father, I am sure that you will choose a man of God to work with me in Malawi, or I can agree with your point you told me in 1975, that white missionaries can come to visit the God's work only in Malawi (Phiri 1977: letter to Capp, 12 August).

Financial concerns had begun to press on Phiri. Recommendations had been presented to the General Missionary Board for a modest budget allocation in respect of the operating cost of the new facilities and some allowance for supervisory travel for Phiri, but this would not apply until 1978 (cf. Malawi Conference Budget 1978). Upkeep and operation costs on the buildings and operating costs for the motorcycle were Phiri's major concern. Metal roofing for the new and larger burned brick churches was also a priority need (Phiri 1977: letter to Capp, 8 July and 13 July). The buildings themselves, however, were being constructed by the Church members.\*

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\* In 1978 Bishop Cryderman undertook personally to solicit funds for Malawi Church roofs as a gift from the American Church and in mid-1978 Dave and Barbara Nordquist, formerly missionaries in Rhodesia, stopped by from a term in Central Africa to put the roofs on the churches at Chipwete and Zomba. Johnson comments on this in his report on Malawi, 1978.

The third Bible school session for 1977 was conducted by Clarke and Ellen DeMille. Both formerly Rhodesian missionaries, Clarke had been secondary school headmaster and Ellen on Bible school faculty. They had known well all the Malawi students at Lundi Mission. At the end of this term, Mikson Mbewe was graduated. Also the first new student was admitted, Joseph Mwanjasi who had passed "O" level.

DeMille noted further improvements in the facilities and the urgent need for termite control treatment. Several of his recommendations are significant:

- 1) A written unified policy on Bible school operation to prevent change with each set of instructors
- 2) Support for the eight-week session with a one-week break between
- 3) Encouraged Mwanjasi to enroll in London Bible College correspondence, move to Lilongwe and make his house the meeting place for a new church in Lilongwe with close supervision by Moses Phiri
- 4) Discuss and work out details with Moses Phiri surrounding areas of responsibility between the Malawi Church and the General Missionary Board before they become major issues.

It is evident that some of the conflicts noted earlier had been recognized and DeMille made some wise proposals (DeMille 1977: Our Malawi Experience).

In November Houser went to Salima and took care of several sanitation problems as well as the termite control (Houser 1977: letter to Kirkpatrick, 28 November).

In December 1977 a letter from the law firm Willey, Wills and Co. indicated the long drawn out procedure of title transfer for the Salima property had been approved by government (Ntaba 1977: letter to Capp, 13 December).

A new refinement for the training program was initiated in 1978. Beth Beckelhymer went with Khanya Nare, a faculty member of Lundi Bible School, and Philippina Cele, graduate of Union Bible Institute in Natal with several years of experience in hospital chaplaincy and evangelistic work in the Natal-Transkai Conference.

Two sessions were arranged with two weeks devoted to a refresher course for the pastors' wives who had not been able to continue their studies and a five week session for the men. In this session Mikson Mbewe, just graduated, assisted. He showed both interest and promise as a future Bible school instructor. The faculty was heavily involved in evangelism during this session. Mikson Mbewe was ordained deacon and Moses Phiri ordained elder. Bishop Cryderman officiated. Dr. and Mrs. Hugh White and Rev. Elmore Clyde representing the General Missionary Board were also present (Beckelhymer 1978: Malawi Bible School Session, 27 March to 17 May).

Clyde reported to the Commission on Missions concerning Malawi. Characteristic of the impression of every visitor to Moses Phiri and his work in Malawi Clyde says,

It was a thrilling experience to see first hand how  
God is establishing His Church in this peaceful little

country. Words cannot explain it! The Spirit of the Lord is at work using a humble but gifted servant (Clyde 1978: Report to Commission on Missions: African Safari, 5 May).

Clyde cautioned slow movement with regard to mission intervention in Malawi and recommended an in depth study of Malawi and the Free Methodist Church as a basis for judgement in future development.

Clyde also mentioned Phiri's concern for churches in the three major cities, Lilongwe, Blantyre-Limbe and Zomba. He noted the difference in financing requirements between rural and city development. He suggested cautious assistance (Clyde 1978: Report).

At this point the rural development program of Malawi, the slow increase in employed people in the cities and the rural connections of most city people raises serious question about the wisdom of any development in cities modeled after our American urban understanding. The priority of evangelism among the 95 percent rural peoples would seem to be higher. Tentatively it would seem city churches may best grow out of rural migrants rather than concerted efforts based on assumptions of a new class of landless urbanites.

In August 1978 Warren and Jean Johnson went back for a second time to do the Bible school session. A six week session was set. Classes were conducted six days a week. Three men, Alfeyo Mpulula, Finess Nyamathamanga and Depper Magwaza were graduated. By now the Bible school and church center had been cleaned up, facilities were greatly improved, Johnsons were more accustomed to the situation. The course moved more smoothly. Johnson also noted Phiri's concern



for the cities. In addition to the main three he mentions Karonga and Kasungu as places Phiri hopes to place the Bible school graduates. Phiri's request that Bible school be five to six months in the cooler season is noted as well as indicating that there are six or seven young men with some high school background who want to start training. Johnson recommended that General Missionary Board make Phiri's request a priority (Johnson 1978: Malawi Calls Again, August).

On this trip, Johnsons were able to present four additional new bicycles to the Malawi churches as a result of the 1978 mission project in Natal-Transkai Conference (Johnson 1978: letter to Guyer, 5 July).

In June 1978 Victor Macy, veteran missionary photographer, recorded the drama of the story of Moses Phiri in a short film entitled "The Planter".

The Church is too young to have a full-fledged history with time-depth analysis. There are many unanswered questions but certain factors demand primary attention.

To start the Church in Malawi, God intervened with visions on 9th November 1973 in the life of a black man. No white Free Methodist ever had a concern for mission in Malawi and God did not call a white man. That is a fact of major and controlling importance in how any intervention should be contemplated by the mission. It should be a humbling experience. We may have much to contribute, but it should be laid at the disposal of God's men in Malawi, not overlaid to control them and reform them and the Church to our image.

If we believe that Christian history has to do with cooperation with God in the working out of his purposes, then it is important to notice how God has been doing things in Malawi. They may or may not fit the pattern developed elsewhere, but it is important to allow God to work in Malawian context. The recent past of Malawi has been convoluted by both well meant and malicious intervention of many kinds. It is questionable that further intervention no matter how well-meant would be helpful unless at the request of, and directed by, those whom God has ordained with His call.

Much about what is happening in the Church can be discovered by an adequate evaluation study. If done sympathetically and competently, a survey would give insights into a number of areas that are hazy at present. Most pressing is whether the Church is reaching the non-Christian population reservoir and, if so, how. Many impressions have been given. I have some of my own but I reserve them for a future exposition when data is more available.

Perhaps the best commentary on events in Malawi and the best summary at this point is provided by Phiri himself:

The Lord Jesus is really fulfilling all the Promises  
He told me on 9th November 1973 when I was at Lundi  
Bible School.

After carefully reading your May 5 letter, I called Mr. Nimrode Ngwangwa, Mr. Kingstone Phiri, Mr. Alfeyo Mpulula, Mr. Nyamathamanga, Rev. Mikson Mbewe and Mr. Chimpakati (church treasurer) to choose (a) spiritual man who will be coordinator. I opened the Bible and read the Book of Acts 6: 1-4. I told these men about the hearts of the early Disciples, that they had love in their hearts, that's why they wonned (sic) the whole world to Jesus.

After my sermon and prayers these men had chosen one of the church leaders at Chipwete, Mr. Fredreck Mwantisi. Mr. Fredreck Mwantisi is really a man of God, even I myself, I recommended him (Phiri 1978: letter to Miss Gertrude Haight, 24 May).

God appears far less interested than we in some of the minutia of detail and so consistently concerned with the priority of calling men with vision who believe God can do what He says.

## CHAPTER V. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF STATISTICAL DATA ON CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

There is very little accurate statistical data on which to build a statistical analysis of membership growth. This reflects the basic need for a careful evaluation study of church growth in Malawi. The following data and analysis are tentative and should be used cautiously.

### ANALYSIS OF COMPARATIVE GROWTH RATE GRAPH

Figure 3 is a composite comparative graph of the growth rate of the churches indicated based on the data in Table 1. The graph has been drawn on semi-logarithmic paper so that the slope of the line corresponds with the rate of growth. The churches for which there are enough statistics to obtain a growth rate are labeled. The vertical scale represents actual membership and the horizontal scale is years from 1938 to 1968. No statistics after 1968 are available for an extension of the comparison.

A comparative device has been used. Superimposed at intervals is a dashed line representing the rate of population growth -- 2.9 per cent per year. It becomes obvious immediately that only two churches in the last two decades before 1970 grew faster than the

population growth rate -- the Roman Catholic and the Assembly of God. All others appear to have established a basic Christian community with growth by addition of children or biological growth. The alternative possibility is that there is enough evangelism to conceal the fact that it is merely replacing children being siphoned back into the non-Christian population reservoir.

To know what is happening is important. It is unlikely that the children of Christian parents are moving back into the traditional religious framework. The general decrease of this form of worship in Malawi indicates that there is a growing reservoir of secularized non-Christians. The evangelistic method with this group would not be the same as with traditional society.

Another fact observable from Figure 3 is that the size of the denomination does not determine its growth rate. The largest and one of the smallest are the only ones growing in real terms -- that is in terms of adding to the total Christian population.

Of interest to the churches involved would be explanations of the periods of loss indicated in the Church of England, Seventh Day Adventist, Zambesi Evangelical Church and the Nyasa Evangelical Church. This is beyond the scope of this study and statistics are not available to detail the picture.

## ANALYSIS OF GROWTH RATE OF COMBINED CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

In Figure 4 the total membership of the Christian churches has been compared with the population growth rate. There is a very slight observable increase in the total Christian population after 1949. In calculated terms it is a 3.66 per cent annual growth rate as compared to a 2.9 per cent annual growth rate for population.

Allowing for the fact that the Roman Catholic statistics may actually be statistical estimates plus other errors in data for the other churches the compelling conclusion from the comparisons must be that there is almost no change in the proportion of the population that professes to be Christian. The statistical evidence supports the earlier observation that Malawi's Christian population has a border with the Muslim and other non-Christian populations. There is movement from church to church but not very much from non-Christian to Christian. Except in the narrower sense of individual conversion over against nominal Christianity.

If the picture for the decade 1968 to 1978 is in any way similar to this picture then the churches need to find out what is happening. There is evidence for the need of all the churches to find out how much they are penetrating the non-Christian frontiers. There is need to find out whether many people are reverting to non-Christian patterns and, if so, why. The background study indicates that young people may be moving out of the churches and that a good age to bring them back may be just a little while after they are married.

A more difficult question also arises from the background at this point. Young people seem to be rebelling at the point of ethical behavior if the testimony of the Malawi Bible school students at Lundi Mission is typical. Should not the theology of the Christian faith be deeper than ethical behaviour? Perhaps the churches need also to analyse their message in terms of hope, goals and objectives for life. Ethical behaviour is not the end of Christian experience but one of the means by which the end is achieved.

#### ANALYSIS OF FREE METHODIST CHURCH GROWTH RATE

Figure 6 is a graph of the Free Methodist Church based, again, on inadequate statistics. The picture is of amazing growth. However, this can be duplicated in the past of some other Malawi churches. On the basis of the historic background it would be predictable for the Free Methodist Church to expand until it reaches a comfortable figure -- this may be determined in part by the attitude of the leaders. It is also a function of the number of leaders and their ability to lead people.

If the background study is correct, that there is a pool of men seeking alternative forms of leadership opportunities, then it is very important to find them and get them into leadership positions quickly.

Training should be focused on men who have demonstrated leadership capability and desire for achieved leadership status. Since such men will be able to lead churches of perhaps 50 to 100 people, even without a lot of training, the multiplication of preaching points is the most likely pattern to produce expansion. This is the pattern seen in the history of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi.

A shift to training recruits to minister in fixed locations rather than the training of men who are already leading will halt the expansion. A shift of emphasis in evangelistic method to one of development and priority on qualitative ministry in the existing churches is certain to produce a plateau. The Free Methodist Church would then become like the other churches.

The point at which a church plateaus will be influenced considerably by the kind of priorities in leadership training and the strategy in evangelism. If the focus is on training leaders who are already leading and on the opening of new congregations the Free Methodist Church will continue its expansion.

#### ANALYSIS OF DISTRIBUTION OF FREE METHODIST CHURCHES

Figure 7 is an outline map of the location and size of the Free Methodist churches in Malawi. The first fact observable is the



wide spread of the congregations. This would indicate scattered small responsive pockets of population rather than the large homogeneous areas of responsiveness that characterized the early history of missions in Malawi.

The second fact is the clustering of congregations. Since the history of these is of extension evangelism from the first planted congregation, this indicates that there are clusters of responsive pockets. At this point it is not possible to say what is the connection between these pockets, but it is likely to be some form of kinship web relationship. In any case, it should be identified and used as a part of continued evangelistic strategy.

The third fact observable is that most of the growth has taken place in the central region. The preliminary results of the census completed in October 1977 indicates that the central region has the highest growth rate for the decade. This represents a shift from growth in the southern region indicated in the 1966 census. Of all districts, Kasungu had the highest annual rate of growth -- 6.2 per cent. At that rate the population in Kasungu will double in 12 years. The capital city of Lilongwe has grown 500 per cent in the last decade (*This is Malawi* 1978: 8(1), 15).

This indicates that new pockets of responsiveness must be forming in these areas. The Free Methodist Church should capitalize on this and seek out those responsive pockets in these and other areas where the population is growing. However, to neglect the responsive pockets that appear to be scattered in places other

than rapidly growing sections would be poor strategy. Many new congregations is probably the priority of expansion strategy. The appropriate method of evangelistic approach will be suggested by the contextual factors of these responsive pockets.

#### ANALYSIS OF LEADERSHIP RATIOS

Figure 5 is an attempt to relate the ratio of leadership to the rates of growth in the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches. The data are very sketchy but a glance at the table will indicate that the ratio of ordained leadership per thousand members appears to have little to do with the rate of growth as far as numerical quantity is concerned. Some other factors are required to explain the growth from 1949 to 1952 when the growth rate in the Protestant Churches doubled from that of the years previous to 1949. When the rate of leadership increased in the following years, the growth rate of membership was decreasing.

The Roman Catholic figures are even more sketchy. The results are inconclusive but the Roman Catholics apparently maintained a much better average growth rate with about half the ratio of ordained leadership.

At this point only assumptions can be made. However, the Roman Catholics made extensive use of unordained catechists. The

Protestant Churches made use of various kinds of unordained leadership, especially school teachers.

If the Free Methodist Church has grown partly because of a paucity of leadership it is probable that the quality of leadership rather than the quantity of leadership contains the key to some understandings. It would appear however that the dynamics of leadership are a key factor in growth.

Based on an assumption from untested observation, the leadership of the Protestant Churches has tended to cluster in the more urban areas. The tendency has been toward perfunctory administration. In contrast, at this time, the leadership of the Free Methodist Church is very active in face to face contact with the congregations.

Tentatively there is strong evidence that the dynamics of leadership -- the way in which that leadership functions, including the frequency of contact with the people of the congregations -- is a very significant factor. The ratio of leadership in quantity does not seem to be as significant. Much information is lacking about the way in which lay leadership functions in relationship to ordained leadership. This analysis is inconclusive. The evaluation study proposed should gather information on this.

TABLE 1. MEMBERSHIP DATA

	1938	1949	1952	1957	1962	1968
Roman Catholic	100,390	230,644	268,000	359,215	442,150	580,000
Central Church of Africa Presbyterian						
Livingstonia Synod	80,033	106,268	128,997	128,997		187,875
Mkhoma Synod						
Blantyre Synod						
Anglican Diocese (UMCA)	19,625	23,838	18,294		23,000	19,209
Church of Christ (Great Britain)	2,768	3,300	3,311	4,190		5,000
Nyasa Evangelical Church	2,930	2,393	2,574	2,939	2,939	4,000
Zambesi Evangelical Church	7,473	6,000	6,000	16,697	16,697	10,000
Providence Industrial Mission			25,258	25,258	25,258	25,258
Seventh Day Adventist	9,504	6,227	8,839	14,446	16,388	19,829
Africa Evangelical Church		475		609	703	682
Assembly of God		1,000	1,253	1,253		3,500
Seventh Day Baptist				1,259	1,259	2,500
Faithful Church of Christ						1,000
Baptist Mission of Central Africa						4,000
Church of the Nazarene						193

TABLE 1. MEMBERSHIP DATA (cont.)

	1938	1949	1952	1957	1962	1968
Southern Baptist Convention						700
African Methodist Episcopal Church						
Pilgrim Holiness Mission						
Church of the Watchtower						
African National Church						
African Reform Presbyterian Church						
Last Church of God and His Christ						
Black Man's Church of God						
Eklesia Lanangwa (Church of Freedom)						
Mpingo wa Afipa wa Africa						
Messenger of the Covenant Church						
African Apostolic Church of Johane Maranke						
Kagulu ka Nkhosa						
Sons of God						
Calici ca Makolo						
African Nyasa Mission						
Black Man's Presbyterian Church of Africa						
African Baptist Church						

c. 8,500

est. 35,194

TABLE 1. MEMBERSHIP DATA (cont.)

	1938	1949	1952	1957	1962	1968
TOTAL	430,701	380,145	463,001	581,415	677,703	863,746
Independent Church Estimate	8,500					35,194

## Sources:

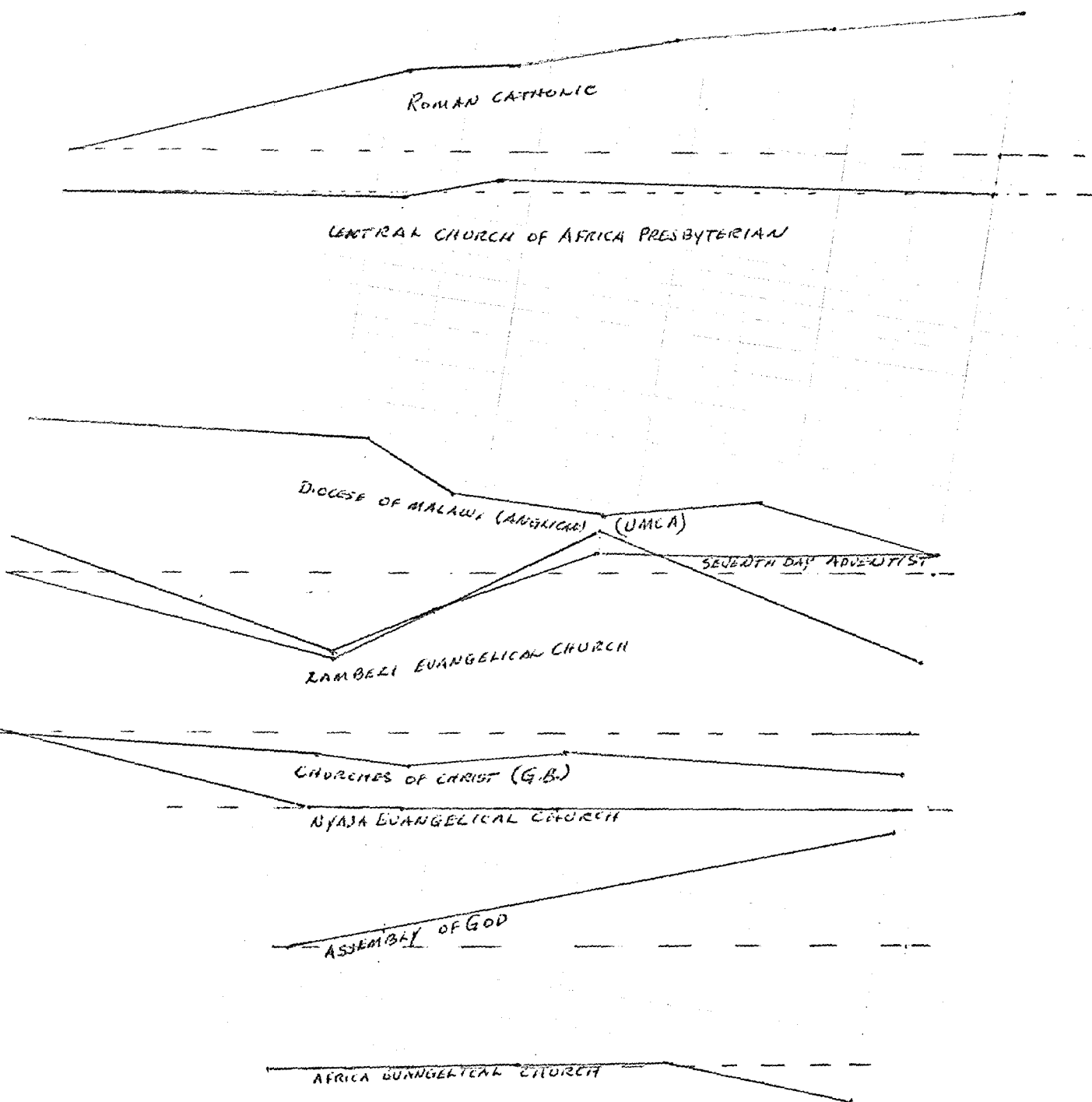
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FIGURE 3

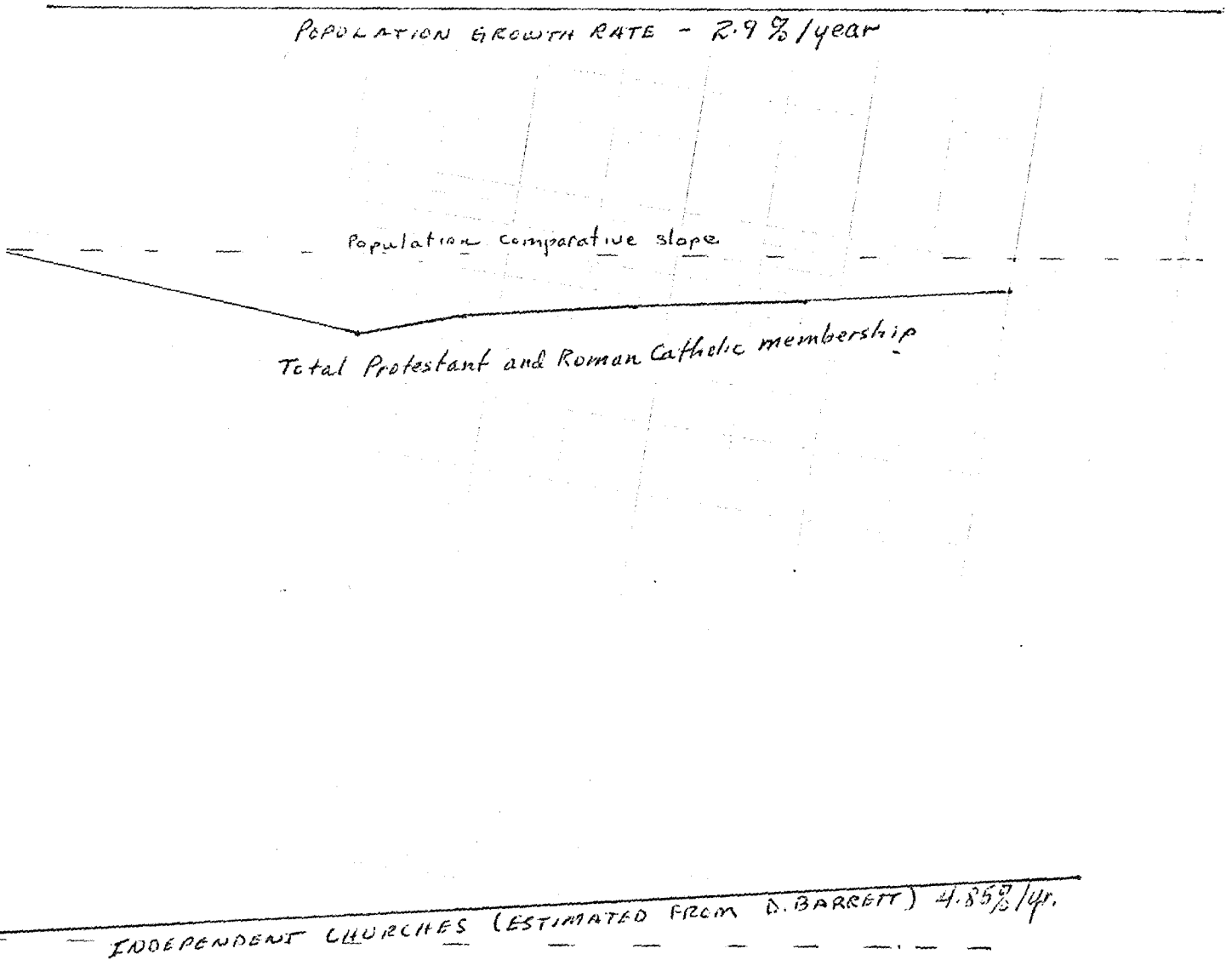


Slope of Line is proportional to growth rate  
 VERTICAL SCALE = MEMBERSHIP  
 HORIZONTAL SCALE = YEARS  
 DASHED LINE = COMPARISON WITH SLOPE OF POPULATION GROWTH AT 2.92%/year

### COMPARATIVE GROWTH RATES

Growth rate scale  
 on semi-log graph  
 DATA FROM TABLE 1

1949 1952 1957 1962 1968



POPULATION GROWTH RATE AND  
TOTAL CHRISTIAN MEMBERSHIP  
GROWTH RATES

Growth rate scale on  
semi-log graph

Slope of line is proportional to growth rate  
Vertical Scale = Number of people  
Horizontal Scale = years  
Solid line = Comparative slope of population growth rate

1949 1952 1957 1962 1968

DATA FROM  
TABLE 1



FIGURE 5

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ordained Clergy</u>	<u>Members</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Membership Decadal Growth Rate</u>
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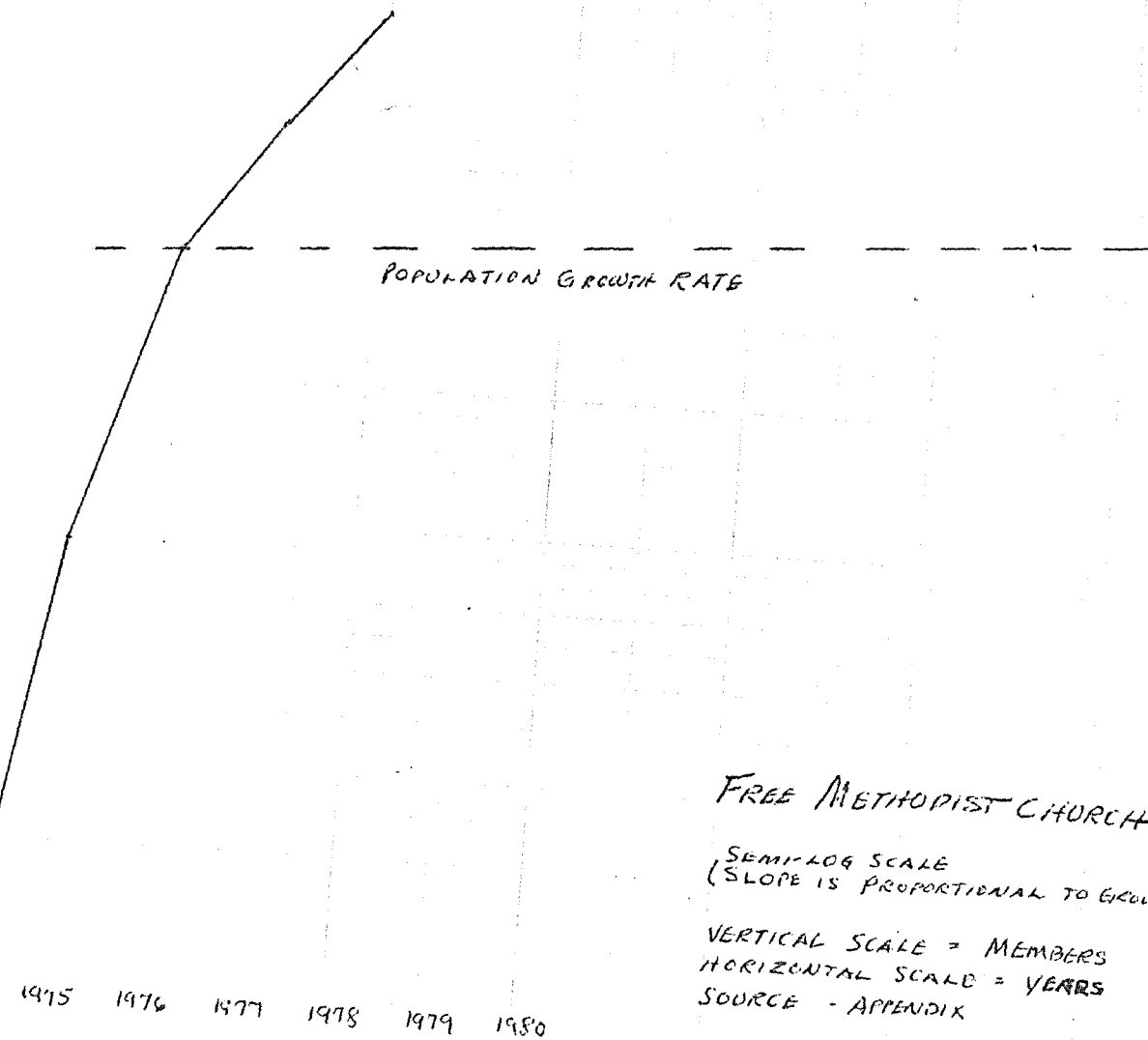
Ordained Leadership Ratios in the Protestant Churches

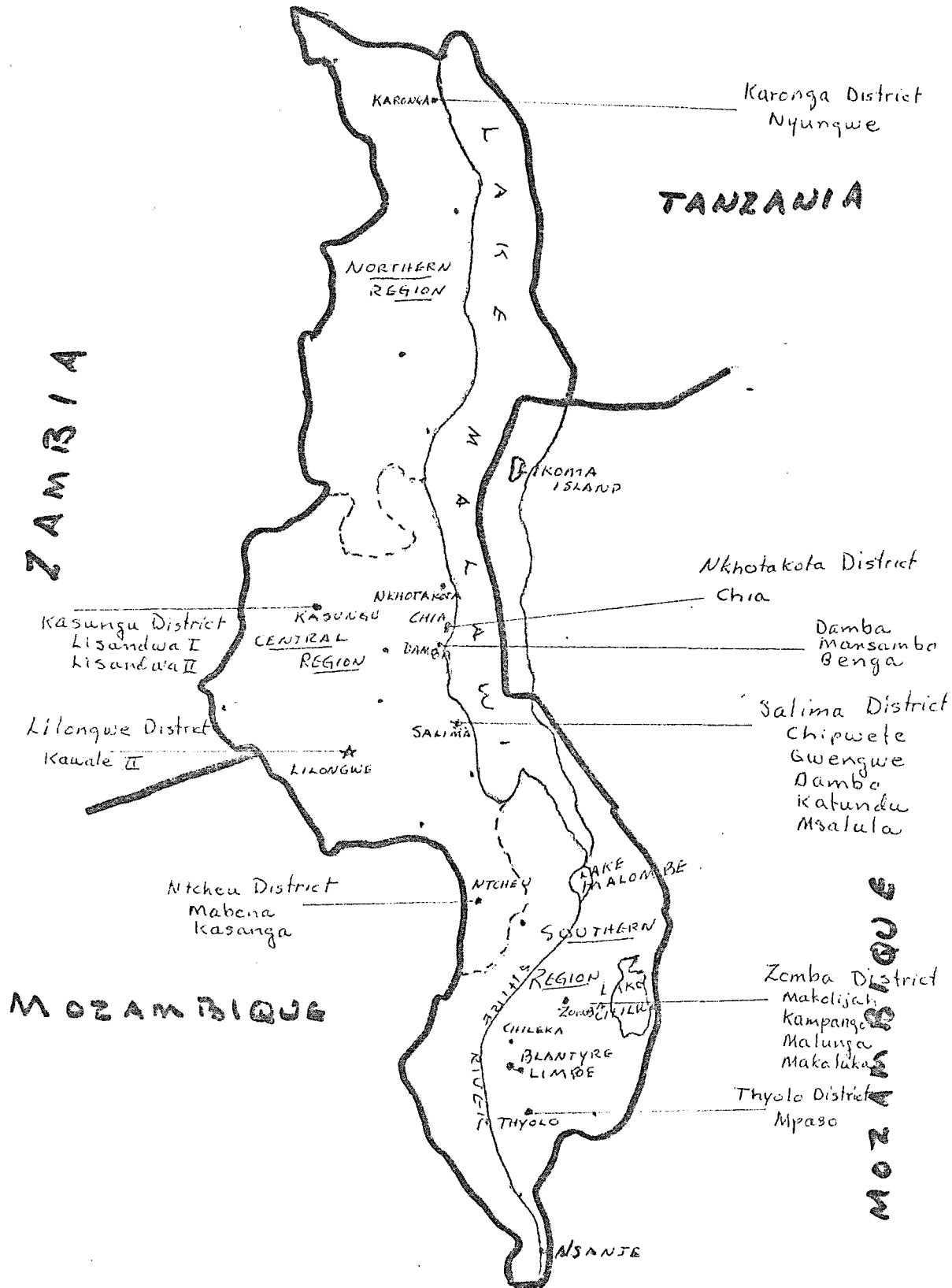
1949	129	149,501	.86/1000	120%
1952	173	194,516	.89/1000	240%
1957	255	213,942	1.19/1000	121%
1968	313	257,488	1.22/1000	120%

Ordained Leadership Ratios in the Roman Catholic Church

1952	140	268,000	.52/1000	165%
1962	289	442,150	.65/1000	165%

(Source of data is *World Christian Handbook* for years indicated.)





Geographical Distribution of Free Methodist Churches

## CHAPTER VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER STUDY

### SUMMARY

The background study of Malawi presents a picture of a country linked with all of central, eastern and southern Africa by the Bantu migrations. Linguistically and culturally it has much in common with surrounding countries. However, certain intrusions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries together with the geography of Malawi have produced changes which make Malawi border on being unique.

With virtually no known mineral resources Malawi is dependent on agriculture. Good soil, adequate rainfall and Lake Malawi make food production quite stable. Ngoni, slave trader, European intervention together with extensive migrant labor and Dr. Banda's leadership have helped shape a detribalized national consciousness superseding the tribalism common in surrounding countries.

The intensive and extensive influence of Christian missions, Islam and western European modernity have diminished or eliminated many of the traditional religious patterns and loyalties but tension and conflict help maintain traditional magic, sorcery and witchcraft patterns. The population appears to be grouped into Christian, Muslim and traditional or secular reservoirs that are not territorially defined although they may tend to exist in small pockets. The Christian population comprises a practicing core and a nominal fringe of uncertain size that appears to be undershepherded by

existing churches. While population is increasing the proportion of the three main population groupings remains almost static indicating minimal evangelistic penetration of the non-Christian population.

With a stable government, peaceful political scene, healthy and growing economy Malawi is in bold contrast with her neighbors. Emphasis for development is intensely oriented to agriculture. Estate agriculture receives attention but the bias favors smallholder development and the maintaining of rural orientation for a population which is at present more than 90% rural.

The development schemes encourage strengthening of nuclear family ties and tend to undermine traditional land allocation authority and matrilineal patterns of inheritance. The fixing of chieftainships, paucity of land for development of new villages under traditional authority and the structure of politics in a one party authoritarian state further limit alternatives to leadership. The Christian Church may offer a welcome option for Malawi men hedged in by change.

The spirit of independence is characterized by peaceful, pragmatic relations with non-blacks both on the domestic and foreign scene. The philosophy and outlook of Malawi is one of progress through hard work, discipline, obedience, peaceful change, progress with a pro-Western, anti-communist stance. However it is strongly pro-African with insistence on Malawi as a black African country. The non-racial stance is clearly a temporary expedient in terms of political and economic control and expatriots are temporary means toward Malawian goals. Political dissent is impossible in Malawi.

Educational opportunities are increasing but most of the country is still more oriented to oral communication than to written. In 1971 only a small portion of the population was listening regularly to the radio. Person to person communication has been the best means of communication. Government has promoted community development and training schemes particularly among the youth who form over half the population. Educational plans for the future are being shaped around the economic needs of the country.

Health services give priority to the health of the economically active population, but health services are still limited and inadequate. Infant mortality is high.

At present expansion of the Church seems to take place most rapidly in scattered pockets of population so that multiplication of churches rather than careful coverage of a geographical area is more productive. This is paralleled in history by the Roman Catholic expansion in the Dutch Reformed Church Mission and Blantyre Mission territory in the central and southern region. Indication is that the non-Christian population is scattered rather than territorially defined, yet tending to group socially at the village level.

There are a great many Independent Churches in Malawi about which almost nothing is known, especially in terms of size, growth, message and goals. Information about these may or may not alter the picture that there is great opportunity for growth by an aggressive denomination that offers a dynamic alternative to the static church life apparently typical of most churches.

The Free Methodist Church has appeared as a result of God's call to a man. It is thus a specifically spiritual phenomenon. The churches have sprung up in widely scattered pockets of responsive people who do not appear to be related to the founding leader except in the original area. In most places surrounding pockets have appeared and additional churches planted so the pattern is widespread clusters of churches spreading from a nuclear center.

The approach has been through the traditional authorities in rural villages. The support plan has been self-support based on faith. City work has been hampered when leaders asked for regular salaries.

Leadership development and training has been emphasized from the start and the Church appears to be the product of leaders whose lives have been charged with spiritual dynamic by the message and validating life of Moses Phiri who personally sums up the Christian expectations for many people.

The mission has assisted and caution has been exercised in the area of attempts to reform and control what is happening but indications are that traditional decision patterns by missionaries and by mission and North American Church administrations will lead to an attempt to regularize and control the form of the Malawi Free Methodist Church. This is already apparent in the trend toward increased missionary presence and impact in a longer term of Bible school. It is also seen in the increasing regular financial participation with the consequent requirements of responsibility to the mission accounting system rather than the leader perceived needs.

The picture has been of a movement of the Holy Spirit in the lives of men and women who have become receptive for a variety of cultural reasons and now find it easy to respond to the message the Holy Spirit is bringing through the Free Methodist Church. But the message is inextricably bound up with the contextual factors. Attempts to modify them with another intrusion from external sources is certain to produce a change that will inhibit growth. Malawi is unique in Southern Africa and does not appear to represent a mission field in the traditional sense where only a fragment of the population is disciplined or nominally Christian.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Tentative Conclusions

This study set out to investigate the historical and current contextual factors of Church Growth in Malawi, to present a history of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi, 1974-1978, from primary sources and in the process to provisionally test an hypothesis about the growth of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi. The study further undertook to refine or reform that hypothesis and make recommendations for further study.

The evidence is compelling that a leader, filled with the Holy Spirit, acting in response to specific visions understood as a



specific call from God to start the Free Methodist Church, has done just that. The call and promise of God to multiply the Church like papaya has been taking place.

The pattern for growth has been demonstrated in terms of scattered pockets of responsive peoples primarily within the rural, traditionally led villages. The strategy has been to work in collaboration with a chief, headman, village head or village segment head to contact his people. In this way each church represents an existing social unit whether as a whole village or as a part of a larger village.

It has been demonstrated that the Christian community has been virtually static in ratio to the total population since about 1940. It has also been demonstrated that traditional leadership posts have been fixed so that it is no longer possible to create new village heads. It has been demonstrated that traditional village leadership tends to remain only three to four generations deep at maximum. Therefore it is clear that unofficial leadership of unofficial segments has multiplied. At the same time development of leadership has not kept pace with the needs of the people evidenced by the people without pastors.

This tends to confirm the development of pockets of population that either for lack of pastors or because of restricted opportunities for leadership, or both, are open to the options that the Free Methodist Church offers. The message -- whatever it is -- of the Free Methodist Church is speaking to the spiritual need of these

scattered groups of people and the structure of the Free Methodist Church seems to be offering an acceptable alternative structure to the "frozen" leadership structures of church and politics. It would appear that the initial hypothesis is fundamentally sound and that it has been demonstrated to be so.

In the process, however, questions appear about missionary involvement, leadership training and financial assistance. There is a growing (even though a small minority still) city population. Government's intensive development programs will tend to disrupt the traditional land allocation, family structure and traditional authority and social patterns. There will be need for a growing Free Methodist Church to accomodate these changes and not be restricted in strategy or method.

A question no one can answer is the predictability of the present stability of Malawi in its present political form. Dr. Banda is Malawi at present.

With priority emphasis on quality of leadership rather than on high academic preparation, the Free Methodist Church should be able to offer avenues of expression for leadership status and upward mobility within the reach of people otherwise shut out by the present lack of educational opportunity beyond six to eight grades of primary school for most people.

Leadership training should place priority on pastoral leadership that meets the needs of people who have not had good pastoral leadership and the priority of placing many Spirit-filled men and

women in the field who are ordained cannot be understated. To limit ordination unduly is certain to produce a new spiritual vacuum. Whether for academic reasons or otherwise, policies on ordination should not be restricted to those which govern the American Church. Demonstrated leadership capability and the evidence of a life committed to the Lordship of Jesus and the anointing grace of the Holy Spirit should be far more important than academic achievement or past personal history. The approval of the Church in Malawi should be more important than the approval of the Church in America.

Missionary involvement should be on a visiting basis, should be short term -- a matter of weeks, not months, at a time. This should help avoid over-riding the initiative and innovative actions of the Malawian Church. This is in keeping with the Malawian localization policy.

It would seem to be very important to encourage cross fertilization of ideas and inspiration through exchange of leadership among the Free Methodist Conferences in Southern Africa. Mission participation in assisting both financially and logistically in making such exchanges possible would be wise.

It would seem that missionary intervention that brings the Malawian leadership into contact and stimulation with leadership from churches that are growing in similar circumstances would be important. Perhaps the Free Methodist Church in the Philippines is one of the best examples of this possibility. Conferences,

workshops, seminars for the leadership of the Church in Malawi with personnel from churches like the Philippines would be a good investment of mission funds.

The careful support of visits by Malawian leadership to other countries for participation in seminars, conferences, workshops, etc. in order to experience both the world-wide impact of the Free Methodist Church and to enhance the leadership of the Malawian Church would be a good investment of mission funds.

The encouragement and support of small teams of young people from Free Methodist churches in other countries would probably be productive. It would be important for them to reflect the Malawi values of disciplined, obedient, respectful, productive young people. A particular emphasis on singing and getting Malawian youth started in the use of some basic simple musical instruments could be an important factor for the more than 50 per cent Malawian population under 20 years of age.

A cycle of leader producing leaders producing extension congregations has been begun in Malawi. Mission intervention should encourage and feed that cycle. Prioritizing financial administration, leadership training that prioritizes qualitative and organic growth over quantitative growth,<sup>\*</sup> attempts to mould the structure

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\* These are Alan Tippett's terms which distinguish the training and perfecting of the members of the Church, the structural, organizational development of the Church and the increase in membership and increase in numbers of congregations in the Church respectively.

and emphasis of the Church to conformity with the American Church are all likely to set up conflicting cycles of activity and detract from growth.

The Church in Malawi needs to be encouraged to delegate leadership in patterns which are comfortable and within the framework of Malawi's traditional and political models. The arbitrary structures of leadership common to the Free Methodist Church in America, and the rigid equal lay and clerical representative form of legislative control for the Church is likely to be counter-productive in the rural Malawian context. Natural forms of leadership and participation by Church members should be encouraged and supported in terms of the contextual factors of Malawi. The structural forms of society, circuit, district and annual conference should be allowed to reflect Malawian tradition and practice.

Mission intervention should stress the principle of provision of inspiration and instruction which is temporary in presence and in the provision of tools and materials for Church Growth which stresses initiative, innovation and activity by Malawian people who are dependent upon their own economy for a living rather than the construction of a network of employees financially loyal to the Free Methodist Mission. But, financial aid that enhances, encourages, or produces Malawian leadership should be a priority investment.

It would seem that any regular assistance to the Church in Malawi should be on a basis of gift or grant that is administered

with accountability that satisfies the requirements of the Church in Malawi and the Malawi government rather than the requirements of the American Church. Providing funds to be used strictly for items perceived as needs by the American Church rather than for items perceived as needs by the Malawian Church is likely to produce both conflict and prioritization of outreach by American methods instead of methods more suitable to the Malawi context. Accountability that stresses how the use of funds promotes Church Growth rather than how the use of funds agrees with predesignated projects would be more productive.

The Church in Malawi would seem to be well advised to stress rural extension with city extension following migrants from contacts in rural areas.

Leadership should be developed by encouraging men and women to establish congregations and offering training to those who have demonstrated leadership potential rather than to untried young people. Leadership, not academic entry level should be the primary requisite for entry to training programs. Heavy emphasis on God's call to leaders should be dominant in the message of the Church.

The priority of extension should be maintained. Concern for the training and maturing of Christians should be balanced so that no initiative is lost in establishing new congregations. Responsibility given to new Christians to instruct other new Christians is likely to be more productive of maturity than waiting for Christian education directors.

The extent of the usability of literature and the radio should be carefully studied. The increased emphasis on education in Malawi may be producing many new readers among the young. Literature for this group would be important. The use of Trans World Radio for programs that would assist in the qualitative growth of members could be useful if listening patterns have changed or could be changed.

Somehow the horizon of what is a large and satisfactory membership must be lifted beyond the typical hundreds or few thousand we have in other conferences in Southern Africa. At this point the attitude of both the Church in Malawi and the attitude of the Mission will be crucial. Historically other Churches have been able to grow to tens of thousands in Malawi. The Free Methodist expectancy should be in those terms.

None of these concluding recommendations are final. They are based on incomplete understanding. Perhaps the major conclusion of this paper is that we do not really know very much about how and where the Free Methodist Church is growing in Malawi. For that, the evaluation study which follows is the major proposal to grow out of this paper.

### Reformed Hypothesis

Moses Phiri has found undershepherded nominal Christians and non-Christians who are responding to his message of Life in Christ verified by his own life. He is finding these people in segments

of villages where the churches have stopped reaching out but population growth has resulted in many new village segments without churches. In Malawi's tightly structured political situation and in the effective freezing of status achievement in terms of new chieftanships, headmanships, village heads and in the tightly knit leadership institutions of the historical churches, the Free Methodist Church offers another road to status achievement. To the extent the church is allied with government aims it capitalizes on the spirit of self-help, development, obedience and discipline. To the extent it allows dissent, discussion, and alternative patterns of political expression it represents a form of differentiation.

It is suggested that there is a spiritual dynamic at work in the context of specific social and political factors which make growth possible. The more exact description of those factors in particular reference to the Free Methodist Church is required for good decision making by the Malawi Church and Commission on Missions, but particularly the latter since they represent an intervening interested party. It is the resultant, not the simple addition, of the will of the Malawi Church leadership and the Commission on Missions that will determine the future of the Malawi Free Methodist Church.

Most of the data on which this paper is based are old, that is, the result of studies before independence. An accurate picture of the actual growth of Church membership is unavailable. No statistics in any depth are available for the Independent Churches. Additional information is needed.



Even so, it seems to be true that growth is not taking place in terms of penetration of the non-Christian community particularly in those Churches which are mission and missionary led. Yet the evidence is partial and little is available on which to judge if so and why.

The tendency of Churches to reach plateaus is noted but the reasons why some Churches plateau at a few hundred or a few thousand and others reach tens of thousands before the growth rates taper to meet the population growth rate is unknown.

#### Tentative Recommendations

Obviously the desirable thing is for the Free Methodist Church to continue to grow. In order to continue that growth it will be necessary to continue to reach responsive pockets of population. Therefore training, whether formal or informal, for evangelism should stress the importance of the kin-social groups in Malawi and the traditional authority structures.

It would appear very important for both leadership training and administrative leadership to stress extension evangelism, that is, the planting of many small churches. It would be fatal to get bogged down in emphasis on qualitative growth, the development of leadership with emphasis on ministry within the churches, to the neglect of ministry outside the churches.

The Bible school program should be designed to encourage and equip leadership for a rapidly expanding network of churches with

congregations of about 100 to 150 people who are primarily involved in smallholder agriculture or the small informal business enterprises associated with that population.

In view of the small minority of well educated elite in Malawi, and in view of the economic policies stressing development for the peasant classes, the Free Methodist Church should concentrate on this latter class of people, who are the majority population by 90 per cent or more.

## PROPOSAL FOR A CHURCH GROWTH EVALUATION STUDY\*

Rationale for the Study

The Free Methodist Church is growing rapidly in Malawi which is a well-churched country with 30 per cent of the population Christian and about 11 per cent Muslim. Present data indicates most other churches are not growing faster than the population growth rate.

The Free Methodist Church in Malawi has been accorded Mission Conference status. The church has requested operational finances and support for a leadership training program in terms of both money and personnel. Mission Conference and the assumed progression to Annual Conference status imply further investment of supervisory funds and personnel time.

At the present time an accurate picture of the church based on reliable data is not available. The membership statistics are conflicting. The reservoir -- active members of other denominations, unshepherded fringes of nominal Christians or non-Christians -- from whom new members are being drawn is uncertain. The reasons why the church is growing in the present context and the context

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\* The basic design for this section is adapted from Dr. Dohner's "Evaluation Report of the Pulmonary Function Workshop" in consultation with the author who is a consultant and Director of the Office of Research in Medical Education at the University of Washington. Extensive use has also been made of Ebbie Smith, *A Manual for Church Growth Surveys*.

itself are not clearly understandable from information currently available. Conflicting recommendations concerning the kind of involvement that should be made by the General Missionary Board appear in the reports of the leadership and among those missionaries who have visited for periods of participation in evangelism and leadership training. Both the Church in Malawi and the General Missionary Board need accurate information to make decisions that will stimulate growth in the Church. This study will help provide the information for those decisions.

#### The Purpose of the Evaluation Study

The purpose of this evaluation is to define, collect and analyze information that will assist with decision making. The following are questions pertinent to the decision making process.

- 1) What factors are contributing to the growth of the Free Methodist Church in Malawi?
- 2) Is the growth from the Christian or non-Christian population reservoir or both and in what proportion?
- 3) What kinds of action should be taken by the Church in Malawi and by the General Missionary Board to sustain and increase the rate of growth?

### Audiences for the Study

The results of the study should be significant to the Free Methodist Church in Malawi in terms of self-study and planning for action. The General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church should find the results significant in terms of understanding and in recommendations for future involvement. The study should contribute generally to the body of literature being built up on the growth of the Church and of interest to the academic community, professional missionaries and mission administrators in the development and understanding of church growth theory.

### The Study Team

The study will be planned and conducted by the author of this paper. Other team members will include the Malawian graduates of Lundi Bible School who are leading or pastoring churches in Malawi; a selected group of students from the Evangelical Bible Seminary of Southern Africa at Pietermaritzburg, Natal, South Africa who will have had training in both church growth theory and sociological research methodology; and Moses Phiri. It may also be possible to have the personal assistance of Dr. Gordon Cochrane, professor of sociology at Seattle Pacific University and Dr. Charles W. Dohner, Director of the Office of Research in Medical Education at the University of Washington as members of the team during the survey. Both have agreed to serve as consultants in the planning and conducting of the study.

### The Role of the Team Members

Under the leadership of Philip Capp, the team members will develop the detailed plan for conducting the survey, the procedures to be used for gathering data, the actual collection of the data and the analysis and evaluation of the data with written recommendations to the Church in Malawi and to the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church. Consultation will be held with Dr. Dohner and the resource members of his office at each stage. Philip Capp will have full responsibility for planning, executing and final results of the study.

### Preliminary Outline of the Study

#### Preparation of the Team

The preparation of the students of the Evangelical Bible Seminary is proposed in the form of a course in Research Methods in Sociology to be taught by Dr. Gordon Cochran and a course in Church Growth Theory taught by Philip Capp.

The preparation of the Malawian participants would be in the form of an intensive workshop and seminar to be held in Malawi just before the team begins the data collection process. The seminar would review church growth theory courses from their Bible school curriculum and the workshop would emphasize the procedures to be used in data collection as well as refinement or revision in consultation with them of the specific instruments and techniques to be used.

### Gathering the Data

There are six categories of data proposed for this study from which final choice of specific data used will be made. These categories and the proposed means for getting the data follow.

#### Membership figures.

Membership statistics for all churches in Malawi annually since 1960 are needed in order to describe the growth context in which the Free Methodist Church functions. Annual figures broken down into regions and Malawi administration districts, if possible, would be minimum data. Further breakdowns by language group and village would be very helpful. The churches for which statistics need to be compiled are: Central Church of Africa Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, Diocese of Malawi (Anglican), Zambesi Evangelical Church, Nyasa Evangelical Church, Africa Evangelical Church, Providence Industrial Mission, African Churches of Christ, The Seventh Day Baptist, The Seventh Day Adventist, Watchtower, Southern Baptist Convention, Baptist Mission of Central Africa, Assemblies of God, Church of the Nazarene, The Wesleyan Church, The Faithful Church of Christ, Churches of Christ (Namiwa Mission, British), Churches of Christ (Namikango Mission), Churches of Christ (Lubhaza Mission), The African Methodist Episcopal Church, The Last Church of God and His Christ, Sent of the Holy Ghost Church (Pentecostal Holiness Mission), Mikolongwe Mission, Kagula ka Nkhosa, The Ethiopian Church or Church of the Ancestors, African United Baptist, Africa Nyasa

Mission, African Church Crucified Mission, The John Maranke Vapostori and others that may be discovered as well as the Free Methodist Church. (See Table 1, Chapter V.)

For all churches except the Free Methodist Church three possible methods of getting the information in order of preference are:

- 1) Mail contact with each church headquarters requesting copies of published statistics or permission to visit the headquarters and copy out the statistics from records on file.
- 2) Personal interview with the church leader and estimated statistics obtained if inadequate records are available.
- 3) Contact with each of the 13 district commissioners and search of government records at district or *boma* level.

For the Free Methodist Church more refinement and detail of information would be required and each leader of a church would be interviewed by a team member who would fill in the data on the Membership Data Report Form.

Information about members.

Information will be gathered about the members of the Free Methodist Church concerning their former religious affiliation residence, occupation, education, age, sex, marital status, reasons for becoming Free Methodist, activity in the church and attitudes toward the church.

This information will come from two sources, the Membership Data Report Form used with leaders and by the use of structured



interviews with stratified random samples where possible, of membership in categories of geographical regions, sex and adult or child. The structured interviews will be conducted by members of the evaluation team.

Data concerning various aspects of Church development.

Information will be gathered concerning how members leave the church; why people do not join the church; how non-members view the church; how the church is supported financially; what instruction is given members -- before baptism, after baptism; how active the members are in evangelism, improving the church facilities, serving as officers, leaders, teachers, or other ministries; involvement of members in Bible reading, Bible study and Bible memorization; level of literacy; literature being used by members and leaders; how does the church function organizationally -- official committees, decision making, selection of leaders and office bearers; how are leaders trained.

This data will be collected in part by the use of the Membership Data Report Form and the structured interviews referred to above. In addition an interview schedule designed for the purpose will be used with random samples if possible of non-Free Methodists and non-Christians in the population group surrounding each church. Data collection will be by members of the team.

Kinship grouping in churches.

Information will be gathered concerning the way in which members in each church are related to each other; the number of families with split religious allegiance; the number of whole families; the number of near relatives considered reachable by members; the extent to which members have relatives who are traditionalists or Muslim; and the extent to which members have relatives whom they consider to be non-Christian and why.

This data will be collected by the use of the Membership Data Report Form and the structured interviews referred to above as used by the evaluation team.

Information about the Church and Mission organization.

Information concerning the areas of responsibility for the Church and the areas of responsibility for the Mission as perceived by the Church leaders and the same information as perceived by the Mission leadership will be gathered by the evaluation team through the use of discussion and structured interviews with Church and Mission leadership and by referral to written documents such as the Articles of Incorporation, *The Book of Discipline*, the Minutes of the Commission on Missions and any other documentary material that may be available.

Information about the Bible school.

Information will be gathered concerning the leadership needs, the levels of training needed, the kind of program desired by the

Church and why, the kind of program desired by the Mission and why, the plans for the use of trained leaders and their support, the perception of the function of the Bible school in leadership training by the Church leaders and by the Mission, the attitude toward the use of white or black teaching staff and the desirability of using expatriot or local teachers as perceived by the Church leaders and as perceived by the Mission.

This information will be gathered by the evaluation team using questionnaires, structured interviews and discussion with the church leadership.

#### Processing the Data

The data gathered will be processed and objectified in a number of ways through the use of graphs, bar charts, rating profiles, tabulation of per centages and ratios, frequency distribution curves, comparative graphs and comparison of variables in data involving opinions and attitudes.

The processing of the data will be done by the evaluation team on a preliminary basis in Malawi to make possible a joint preliminary analysis and evaluation of the results with tentative recommendations.

The final processing of the data will be done by the students of the Evangelical Bible Seminary with professional assistance from Dr. Dohner and his group and Dr. Cochrane.

### Analysis and Results

Preliminary analysis and results will be made with the whole evaluation team in Malawi. A refined analysis with results will be made by the South African portion of the team on return to South Africa and in consultation with Dr. Dohner and Dr. Cochrane.

Formulation of the results will be in terms of models for Church Growth analysis developed by the School of World Mission at Fuller Theological Seminary.

### Discussion and Recommendations

The evaluation team will spend time with Church leaders in Malawi discussing the preliminary results of the study and formulate some tentative recommendations. This will allow time for reflective input by team members and the sharpening of perceptions.

The final recommendations will be formulated in three forms. The analysis and results finalized by the team in South Africa will be forwarded to the Malawi Church leaders. They will produce a set of recommendations for the Church and the Mission based on their discussion of the results.

The students in South Africa will formulate their own recommendations for the Church and the Mission as the final project for their study. This will be done under the supervision of Philip Capp.

The analysis and results will be forwarded to the Free Methodist Mission for them to discuss and formulate their recommendations.

It would be better if the Free Methodist Mission and the Malawi Church leaders should arrange to discuss the results together.

This method will produce two or perhaps three sets of recommendations which will then be compared and submitted to the General Missionary Board of the Free Methodist Church and other institutions that may be interested.

In conclusion two things may be worth emphasizing. One is that the information collected by the study will only give a picture of what is and what people think, but not necessarily what should be. It will require creative and informed thinking by people who have clearly defined Biblical bases as well as socio-anthropological understandings to translate the results into innovative recommendations in terms of specific goals and priorities.

Finally, Alan Tippet's reminder that missionaries are *always* agents and advocates of change is pertinent. It is important to know what we are doing and what may be the effect of change. The long term effect of missionary priorities and policy in terms of what they actually do will permanently shape the Church and its ability to respond (Tippet 1973: 130-131).

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Phiri's father with introductory notes. In  
Appendix A to this paper.

## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SPEECH BY MOSES PHIRI'S FATHER

## OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN MALAWI

June the 16th 1974, Sunday, was the day when the Free Methodist Church was officially put into operation in Malawi. The ceremony was attended by very Reverend T. Houser who was accompanied by his only wife, Mrs. Houser.

The ceremony was divided into four main divisions, namely i-introducing new faces to the church, ii-baptising young children, iii-adults' baptism, iv-Holy Communion. Reverend Moses Phiri who was the master of ceremonies took charge of the house.

Among all the most important events that took place on that day there was one most highly noticeable thing. The master of ceremonies, Rev. Phiri, introduced his parents to the house. One thing which was very much peculiar and very noticeable was the speech that was made by his old aged father. I think you might be interested to read part of the old man's speech.

I remember years ago when I was a young man I had a good friend who was a Moslem, named Alaba. This friend was a true friend of mine. Alaba was a great believer in Mohammed and so he persuaded me to join his denomination. This to me was a pleasure and so immediately I became a Moslem as well. In no time I rose in church ranks and even took hold of better positions than Alaba. However, many were not surprised because they knew I was clever and I had the ability to lead. After two years I was nominated a Sheke which means a senior church elder under Mohammed.

At this time I thought of getting married and so I did. As a senior church elder I thought of getting all the people from the place where I married into my way of thinking and understanding about God; but Mr. Bvalamanja, who was the responsible man for the woman I married, turned against me and often stood on his feet ready to sack me off because of the influence I brought towards his people.

Years rolled by in this manner. Hard and tough time was always on my shoulder because I also did not want to give in, but the caretaker of the woman I married,

Mr. Bvalamanja, came on still striking from left and right so as to frighten me, but all this to me was worse than useless. I got stuck to my way. At long last I realised that I was dealing with hard people and so I gave in and left my wife with freedom to choose her own way. Immediately she joined CCAP (Church of Central Africa Presbyterian) and I remain a Moslem.

Years rolled by, then we happened to be blessed with children. Oooh -- the same trouble rose again. I wished to get my children to join me in my belief as a Moslem. When that man heard of my plans he came on again striking left and right -- I did not even like the wind of his blows. On he came as fresh as hot cakes -- ooh -- I could not stand any longer against his mighty blows and severe words. Then I set my children free and they all joined CCAP leaving their poor old father under Islam.

In my church I grew in ranks and became an area sheke; however, this did not please me at all because people could easily talk ill and rebuke me by saying "Ooh, look at that sheke -- he is an area senior sheke yet all his children are not in his denomination."<sup>ii</sup> This brought me down terribly -- however, never did I give in!!

One of my children was quiet and so good to me, named Moses. His uncle sent him to school up to standard six; thereafter he went out in towns seeking employments. He was in the first place employed by the Shell Company in Blantyre where he was selling petrol and diesel. Thereafter he went to Cholo where he worked as a bar boy. Then he left for Rhodesia. Soon after his departure he came back and said he was to take his family because he had joined a Bible school. This was totally incredible! He went back again with his wife and children. After three years he came back home and said he had completed successfully the three-year Bible course. Immediately he started preaching and said he had no time to waste.

After four months he began telling us that his top officials had written him that they were to come. We laughed at him and rebuked him. Months rolled by -- then he told us that the day was then at hand for him to meet his officials at Chileka airport. We laughed at him as he went. Two -- three days passed by. On the fourth day -- ooh, alas! God is really alive! The Almighty God is surely with us, I said to myself. My only son, Moses, who came out of my poor blood is

today a missionary. I cried, cried and cried with pleasure and joy and pride. Today, today -- today my only son, Moses, is a well-known missionary who can be visited by the whites. This is not only a pleasure but incredible as well.

Finally I am to say Moses is really my son, my son, my son, my only son, my son out of my blood he came. He is really part of my flesh!

The old man concluded. This is but a few words of what Rev. Phiri's father said on the opening of the Free Methodist Church which is situated at Damba village in Nkhotakota District. This is the first Free Methodist Church in Malawi.

Translated into English from Chichewa by  
Simon Phwitiko

(Typed from Phil Capp's type-written copy  
which was typed from Mr. Phwitiko's hand-  
written copy.)

APPENDIX B  
HOUSER REPORT 1974

\*s ] Type for Appendix B /

199 Jameson Ave. West  
Belvedere, Salisbury  
20 June, 1974

Philip Capp  
Lundi Mission P.B. 9030  
Fort Victoria, Rhodesia

Dear Phil,

This is a report on the trip Gwen and I took to Malawi from June 12-19, 1974 with travel suggestions and our observations of the Malawai Free Methodist Church.

We arrived at Chileka International airport at 11:20 on Wednesday, June 12. Moses Phiri and Simon Phwitiko met us there. Phwitiko, a Form V chap, manager of 12 transport trucks in the Press Farming Company. He is resident in Lilongwe and served as our interpreter. We rented a Vauxhall Viva car for K36.00 a week plus K1.00 per day for waiver of Exdess Liability up to K100.00. <sup>At</sup>

It is 11 miles into Blantyre. We were taken to ultra modern <sup>at</sup> SoShe Hotel to sit in the lounge to rest awhile. The point was made that anyone could sit in the lounge. The plan was to go to Zomba to the Wesleyan Methodist church there. Outside the hotel we happened to run into Jack Selfridge. His wife is chronically ill so he could not invite us to his home. We left Blantyre for Limbe which adjoins Blantyre. At the Limbe public market we bought fruit for lunch.

We drove 43.5 miles to Zomba on good tarred road and enquired for the road to Kachapira Wesleyan Methodist church. We were directed six miles back south to a very rocky and rough road. We took this road for 10 miles to reach Kachapira about 5:00PM. The pastor Rev. Abel Mangani was not expecting us but took us in anyway. Your letter was presented with the offer to join our church. The pastor said he would talk it over with his people and invited us to return the following Monday. Gwen and I slept on a mat after a good chicken dinner.

Next morning we were directed to a different road called the Jali road. This was much better than the other and the same distance. We came to the Zomba airport road which comes to the main highway two miles north of Zomba. There is a shorter road but a bridge is out. It comes out near Zomba.

The drive from Zomba to Balaka is through a mountainous area and crosses the Shire River. Along the river banks the trees and bushes are very similar to the Sengwe area along the Limpopo. We bought more fruit at the Balaka Public Market to take to Phiri's home. Here we also filled up with petrol which cost 20½ tambala per litre. (14¢ Rhodesian)

Nine miles west of Balaka we turned north on a newly layed tarred Road to Salima 90 miles away. This looks like our lowveld country with baobabs and some mopani trees. At the main Salima/Lilongwe road we turn right at the 'T' junction to go 2 miles into Salima for cold Cokes, Fanta and Sprite. We should have filled up here on petrol to give us enough to travel to Mkhota Kota, visit churches and return to Salima. Phiri has an account at the Commercial Bank in Salima. 10 miles west of Salima on the Salima/Lilongwe road we turned right to go north on what is called a 'German Road' to Chitala, a small settlement. Petrol is also available here. We turned right at Chitala on the main Lilongwe Mkhota Kota road to Zidiyana road just past Kaphiri Clinic. This turnoff to the right is 44 miles from Chitala. Phiri lives in Leonard Mvalamhanje's home 2 miles along the Zidiyana road.



We were warmly welcomed by the people and were shown our room in the Mvalamanje's brick home. He had made his bed available to us. Mosquitoes were thick during the night. Evidently he heard us trying to kill mosquitoes so he bought us a mosquito net the next day. Supper was rice, and vegetable sauce.

Friday morning we drove 25 miles to Nkhota Kota to be introduced to government officials and buy more petrol. Petrol stations are closed from Friday evening until Monday morning. Phiri introduced us to the District Commissioner, Mr. Mware a Member of Parliament, the Postmaster and Mr. Janja a member of the CID. Mr. Janja came to the Sunday services having cycled 25 miles to Phiri's home. He is interested in Bible School. We drove about a mile down the shore of Lake Malawi. Nkhota Kota is famous for a tree on which David Livingstone carved his name. We did not visit it because of lack of time. It was here that Livingstone saw the center of the Arab slave trade and vowed to do all he could to abolish it.

On returning to Phiri's home we stopped to see Mr. Frank Andrew and wife. He is a converted Moslem who is in contact with Every Home Crusade in Bulawayo. He questioned me about Lundi Bible School and would like to attend the school. Evidently he is an enterprising young man because he has a small store going at his home. Near by is another converted Moslem, Mr. Kasache.

Each night we had a Jungle Doctor film-strip and Phiri preached. Attendance was 75 or more each night.

Saturday we stayed near Phiri's home and met Chief Kwapo, Headman Damba and other people. Chief Kwapo is chief over more than 200 families. Moses brother represented Mr. Mvalamhanje who could not be present. Their request was for the mission to assist them in setting up a hospital or clinic with a doctor. I replied that I could give no answer, but would pass the request on to the proper authorities and they would make the decision. I said the mission could not build the buildings nor furnish them. They agreed to this. They also requested the privilege of sending someone from Malawi to be trained by our mission doctor and nurses. This person would then return to serve his own people. In the interim, though, they requested the mission to send someone who could start the work going.

To this, I replied that Chikombedzi cannot yet train nurses to R.N. level which should be minimum for that clinic. They could send someone to Morgenster for higher training. Also I said we need to find out what the government plans to do to provide medical facilities in this area, and what assistance they might give the mission.

After this meeting I talked with Mvalamhanje and his reaction was that the church should become firmly established before they branch out into service institutions.

Sunday services were in the new pole and dagga building about 15'x 35'. It was filled with some people having to be outside. Attendance was over 100. Phiri did infant and adult baptisms and received people into preparatory and adult membership. I preached the morning sermon and served communion to 35 people.

After a meal, Phiri and I drove to Mwanza Court where Mr. Jefta Mware is leader of a new group. He is employed in the magistrates court which is 33 miles from Phiri's home. It is 2½ miles from the Kaniche Junction on the Lilongwe/Nkhota Kota highway which is to be tar surfaced soon. On our return we stopped to see Chief Sosola who had requested a church and clinic. His home is 4 miles north of Kaniche. We saw him again on Monday morning and discussed the establishment of a church but no mention

was made of a clinic.

Monday morning we left about 8:30 to return to the Zomba Wesleyan church. We stopped at Kaphiri clinic which is 2½ miles from Phiri's home. The clinic is located on the main Lilongwe/NkhotaKota highway on a daily bus route. It is 25 miles from NkhotaKota town in which are a government hospital and an Anglican hospital. Operating outpatient, xray facilities, etc are at these hospitals. The Roman Catholic church built the buildings at Kaphiri clinic which include outpatient clinic, maternity and delivery building, nurses residence for two female nurses, and an outpatients accommodation building. Patient load is 25 per day maximum with 30 deliveries since December, 1973. The head nurse, Miss Florence Tengatenga has 8th. grade academic qualifications plus three years nurses training. The medicine stock is very meagre, which is the chief complaint of the people in the area.

The mileage from this clinic to the Jali turnoff 2 miles north of Zomba is 226 miles with another 56 miles to Chileka airport. It took all day until 5:00PM to reach Kachapira Wesleyan church. We held further discussions with the people concerning the union of the two churches. They had received a recent letter from the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries in Natal indicating their interest in the Malawi church. They had promised to send money to build a new church. If they immediately joined our church their chances of receiving this money might be jeopardized. Also there would be a registration problem. They are now registered as the Wesleyan Methodist church, it would be difficult to change their name to Free Methodist then back to Wesleyan. This was Phiri's idea to have them change their name to Free Methodist. He felt at first he would have to superintend both groups. After meeting Rev. Manganih he was doubtful about this. Rev. Manganih is a graduate of the Nazarene Bible School in Stegi, Swaziland and has had a good many years as pastor. It would be hard for Phiri to be over Mangani. So the final decision was to make no move now except to continue fraternal relations between the two groups by visits to one another looking forward to union at some future date.

Rev. Manganih had planned a complete day's services. Phiri preached in the morning. Gwen to the women in the afternoon and I in the evening. About 40 attended during the day with over 100 in the evening.

On Wednesday I stopped at Zomba to collect some books on statistics from the government. We drove on to Limbe to the home of Tom and Beth Watermire, principal of the Nazarene Bible School. They have 45 students enrolled from Rhodesia, Zambia and Malawi. The school is full now but will have room next year with the opening of a Nazarene Bible School in Salisbury.

In summary we believe the trip accomplished several things:

1) Phiri's uncles and relatives did not really believe he was connected to a genuine responsible denomination until we came. They thought the Free Methodist church was something like the Jehovah's Witnesses. Mr. Mvalamhanje's first statement to me was that, 'Now I know Phiri was telling the truth'.

2) We were able to get somewhat acquainted with some of the people joining our church. They include a magistrate, a court messenger, a storekeeper, a policeman and farmers. There are a good number from the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) who have not been properly shepherded. I would estimate 60% would be in this class.

3) We visited new church sites. Phiri stressed the fact that he was not in competition with other churches, but wished to plant churches only in areas where there is no existing church. The following are present church sites: MkhotaKota District - Dambé and Ngumbé villages. Salima District: Mwanza, Tavite and Matambe villages. Future church sites planned: Makuzi in the MkhotaKota district, Kombedza and Kanchenembwe in the Salima District. Urban areas will be Limbe, Balaka and Lilongwe the new capital of Malawi.

4) Established the fact that the Malawi church must not be dependent on the mission for funds but the mission may assist the church in ways which will contribute to church growth and planting churches. This is our major interest in the formation of a new church in Malawi.

Some observations:

1) The prevailing mood among the Christians is one of evangelistic initiative in planting and developing churches. This is in line with government programs of community self help and development.

2) There is a great dearth of ordained pastors in other denominations such as CCAP, Anglican and Roman Catholic. Phiri is filling a great need in the Christian community. It will be good to get other men from Malawi ordained as well.

3) The government is definitely Christian oriented. Many government officials are practicing Christians as well as chiefs and headmen.

4) There is little ancestral and demon worship in evidence. Our 24 year old translator has never seen ancestral worship. There is a real climate of response to Christ and the Church.

5) There is a move away from Islam evidenced by conversions to Christ. Mr. Frank Andrew feels there is a ripe harvest field among Moslems. I believe many so-called Moslems are on the fringe and are not dedicated Moslems. This may be the result of Arabs forcing Islam on Africans by pain of death.

6) We hope the mission will tread carefully in its relationships with this new church and not kill the present initiative by too much kindness and largesse. It can best help by spiritual encouragement and holding the work up in prayer.

Yours sincerely,

*Tillman & Gwen Houser*  
Tillman and Gwen Houser.

APPENDIX C  
NXUMALO REPORT

THE FREE METHODIST CHURCH IN MALAWI.  
THE CLASSES WITH THE CHURCH LEADERS.

77 Appendix D

On the 30th July, 1976 at 3:30p.m. as I arrived at Chileka Airport, there was Pastor Moses Phiri with his smiling face waiting for me. With him was Lorent M. Chanzie to escort me, since the Pastor was on his motor cycle. We took the Malawi-Air Bus to Blantyre where we spent the night with Mr Lorent Chanzie. The Pastor was on his way ahead of us to Salima.

Early the following day we went to the Bus Rank to take the Bus to Salima. The Pastor had told me that it will be a tiresome ride, because it will be 220 miles. We arrived at Salima at 5:20p.m. coming to the Pastors Residence, I found the Church Leaders eagerly waiting for my coming. After greeting me the Pastor showed me the place where I was to have a bath, then after that, he took me to the house where I was to stay. I met the owners of that house and he welcomed me and made me feel at home.

Now the Pastor Moses Phiri told me that as he had called these men, church leaders, he wanted me to teach them. Since the FREE METHODIST CHURCH is new in Malawi, the people too are new in the Free Methodist church. So he was leaving it to me to teach them what I have prepared for them.

My question to Rev. Moses Phiri was;  
Since he has had many Missionaries visiting him in Malawi, what is it that they taught so that I may not do repetition?

His answer was; most of these people present in this meeting were not in the Free Methodist Church when the Missionaries visited me, and some of our present churches were not yet planted by then. So do not count on what others have done. So we made the programme for that week. Then we had our supper and after supper we called the leaders for the first evening prayer.

CHURCH

My first Sunday at Salima, we met at Chipweto, the outstation outside the town. This is one of the fast growing church, the people are added in the church every Sunday.

Beginning on the 2-6 August we started our classes. Moses Phiri was my interpreter since I could not speak their language. I used the book of Discipline as my text book, to teach the church leaders.

PAGES I, 2, 3.

I used the following paragraphs:- Starting with pages I, 2, 3.  
INTRODUCTION: Purpose and Character.

- A. The Biblical concept of the Church.
- B. Historical heritage and Perspective.

#### CHAPTER 5

#### PAR. 500 THE MINISTRY

##### PREABLE.

- A. Personal life of the minister.
- PARA. 501 sections I, 2, 3, 4, 5.
- B. Advice to the Minister.
- PAR. 510. Section 1&2

Since these were church leaders, instead of minister I used church leaders

#### CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP.

#### PAR. 350

- 1. Characteristics of the Fellowship.

#### PAR. 351 and 352.

- 2. Reception into Preparatory Membership.

#### PAR. 355 and 356.

- 3. Admission into Junior Membership.

#### PAR. 360 and 361.

- 4. Admission into Full Membership.

#### MEMBERSHIP AND COVENANT

#### PAR. 151. The requirement of Full membership.

#### PAR. 152. The rights of Full membership.

#### PAR. 154&155. Privilege and Responsibility.

#### PAR.

May I Point out that after each session, there was a question time.

There were so many good questions easy to answer, for there were

2  
from innocent people who wanted to learn and to know the church.

#### NATAL+CAPE CONFERENCE

I gave them a report on our work in Natal-Cape Conference. This was one of the exciting periods of our classes. They had many questions after my report. Their desire was to have a Missionary just like all other conferences who have had Missionaries so that, they can see that, they are a growing church.

#### TITHING.

We also took tithing as one of our subjects. Even though they don't have much income but they cannot escape tithing because even the children of Israel and the young church as we read the Epistle in the New Testament had to pay ~~the~~ tithing and offerings. These are the teachings of the OLD and NEW TESTAMENTS.

#### HOLINESS.

The last subject we dealt with was Holiness.

May be some of the things seemed to be very hard to understand in our classes, and it may not be easy to follow some of the FREE METHODIST teachings. This is just like eating fish. There are so many bones, more especially when you eat a small fish. You may not enjoy the taste and dislike eating fish because of many bones. But if you eat the big fish, you will notice that the bones are big and there is so much meat in it, it is not easy to swallow the bones.

Now let us call Holiness the big fish; in the Free Methodist Church. This is a very big subject in the Free Methodist Church.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." Heb.12:14.

This is part of what we believe as Free Methodists. We have it, in our articles of religion in PAR. II9: also in PAR. 304. These are the teachings of God in the Old and New Testament, God is calling us to be HOLY. Holiness will help us to love our church and her teachings.

#### 9th August to the 5th September, 1976.

These were the days of visiting churches, one week to each District-where Free Methodist church has been planted.

These are the following Districts we visited:-

1. Our starting point was SALIMA-District. Two churches.
2. NKOTAKOTA - Two churches or outstations.
3. KASUNGU- Two outstations
4. ZOMBA- Four outstations. 3 of these were formally Wesleyan.
5. THYOLO- One outstation.

I was very happy to visit these places and to meet these leaders to their home churches. That gave me more privilege to emphasize my teachings at our classes held at Salima.

#### MALAWI FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

Pioneer: Rev. Moses Phiri.

A man of God with single mind, to Plant the Free Methodist Church in Malawi. A very hard worker. A man who trusts and obeys GOD.

I think we are all aware that as the work is growing fast the problems are also growing fast.

1. Problem number one is lack of leadership.
2. Problem number two is, how will he support the workers financially.
3. He needs someone with good experience, having the Free Methodist background, to help him solve many problems that are on his door steps.

A. Half of the church members are Christians who came to join the church from other denominations. So they have the background of their former churches.

B. Most of them say, we want a Missionary to come and lead us, since the church is new to us, and we are new to the church.

C. In their thinking they looked at their Pastor and thought that he is someone with a lot of money, because the Missionaries are the ones that send him to come and start the Free Methodist Church in Malawi. So he must give them money to build up churches.

It has not been clear to some of the Christians that he was called by God to start the Free Methodist church in Malawi.

4. The Pastor himself Moses Phiri, needs a proper place for him to stay, for he is renting the house where he stays.

In spite of all these things I have listed down, we are so thankful to God for those families who are at Lundi Bible School, training to be Pastors. We are looking forward to see them in the field helping Pastor Moses Phiri.

I was so much pleased to see him handling some of these problems. The Lord is helping him in a wonderful way. I really enjoyed my visit to Malawi. Malawi is a PEACEFUL country. People are very friendly.

We thank the President of Malawi to allowed the Free Methodist church in Malawi. There are many open doors for us as a church. People like the Free Methodist Church.

P.c. Rev. P. Capp..

Rev. M. Phiri.

Rev. Robert Nxumalo.  
Edwaleni Mission  
P.O. Box 8  
IZINGOLWENI 4260.

APPENDIX D  
HOUSER REPORT 1977



DE

cc: *[Handwritten signatures]*  
*[Handwritten signatures]*

MAR 14 1977

7 March, 1977  
P. O. Box 8554  
Causeway, Salisbury  
Rhodesia

Dr. Charles Kirkpatrick  
General Missionary Board  
901 College Ave.  
Winona Lake, Indiana 46590

Dear Charles,

This letter will be in the nature of a report on my recent trip to Malawi. The expenses were paid by Mary Current with South African Rands. Myrtle Guyer was very good about advancing the money on short notice and working out our securing travellers checks.

Rev. Bill Davis of the Church of Christ was most helpful in lending me a car in Blantyre with which I travelled about 600 miles from Blantyre to Salima to Lilongwe and return to Blantyre. This saved a good deal of money because I did not need to hire a rental car from a commercial firm. They also gave me two nights accomodations and met and took me to the airport.

When I arrived at Salima I was shown the quarters where I would sleep. The Indian people, the Kalu families have completely vacated the store building and Mrs. Kalu fixed me up with blankets, sheets and mosquito net for sleeping in one of the rooms. They also gave me three meals plus teas as well.

They request to remain in a few rooms at the back of the property until August or September because it is extremely difficult for them to get accomodations elsewhere at the present time. He operates a trucking business and the next few months are the best months of the year for him. He will pay the church rent for the accomodations. There will still be room for Rev. Moses Phiri and family, and the Bible School students and the missionary teachers. Mr. Kalu is a mechanic and most able and willing to assist us with transport around Salinma to haul sand, gravel, bricks and supplies for building. He also will supervise the installation of a seat toilet, shower and wash basin in the main building in which the missionaries will stay. Kitchen facilities could be installed by Mr. Kalu if he were given permission.

When I arrived I found the only toilets available are squat flush toilets which would be very difficult for older missionaries to use. So I purchased supplies in Lilongwe and Moses Phiri arranged for a builder to install a septic tank while Mr. Kalu will install the plumbing for a seat toilet. I also contracted for some furniture to be made for use in the Bible School and bought other furniture as well.

The city water is chlorinated and there is electricity installed last year throughout the buildings. By the time I had left no money had been received by Mr. Kalu, but he was not anxious about it. I'm sure Gertie will find out where the money is.

I understand that Phil Capp had urged Moses to provide food for the Bible School students through the churches. He said he had told Phil that February and March were extremely difficult months to obtain food in their homes because they have not yet reaped their crops. January was out of the question as far as the missionaries were concerned. I believe the mission will have to provide food for this first session, at least. I think Moses will expect the churches to supply food in the next sessions.

He made it very plain to me that the government welcomed white missionary teachers in the Bible School but not black male ones. They would be under suspicion of fostering political opposition to the government if they should conduct school classes. They could visit for evangelistic campaigns and preaching missions but could not participate in a structured classroom situation. On the other hand, female black teachers might be acceptable.

Moses Phiri appreciates so much the purchase of the property in Salima for use of the Bible School. I believe, though, that he would rather have it on a sixty acre tract of land about five miles west of Salima on the Lilongwe road. This land has been allocated by the District Commissioner for use of the Bible School and training center. I think Phiri feels this should be the center of the Malawi Free Methodist Church. It is near a local church at Chipwete where there are 250 people attending church regularly.

On my return to Germiston, I met with Warren and Jean Johnson, Robert Nxumalo, Gertrude Haight and Beth Beckelhymer and reported to

them on my trip. They felt that there should be some one person who is really responsible for the missionary participation in the Bible school program there. Phil Capp has been carrying the ball while he was here, and is still most interested in it. We felt, since he is the Area assistant, he should give direction as to further moves there.

In our discussions we were able to give each other information which cleared the picture for all of us in better understanding the various factors of the development of the work there. I personally feel we must be most cautious in any plans we have that they are not made without the Malawi Church being an integral part in making those plans.

Moses is aware of most of the problems he faces, and he has been making hard plans in organizing the church. He works well with the Board of Trustees of the Church and is organizing a finance committee. He has eleven churches with 301 baptized, junior and preparatory members. He has disciplined one of the Bible School students who failed spiritually to exemplify Christ. This student is now out of the Church. Funds, clothes which Moses has received have been distributed among the Church ministerial leaders.

One of the reasons for the rapid growth of the Church is his concept that three people can start a Church, those three must win three more, those six win six more. The Holy Spirit has taught him the principle of multiplication rather than addition as basic to continued Church Growth.

A real threat to this continued multiplication is emphasis on institutionalization which is what happened historically to the Free Methodist Church in the United States, Natal/Cape Conference and the Rhodesia Conference and contributed to the woefully stunted growth in those areas.

Robert Nxumalo pointed to this trend by observing that during his trip to Malawi in 1976, some of the new Christians were looking forward to the traditional kinds of Mission institutions as being part of the Church image. Some wanted to know how much salary they would automatically receive upon completion of courses of study in these institutions, particularly the Bible School.

If the institutions develop without a most active participation of the Malawi Free Methodists in the planning stages of construction of buildings, curriculum and recruitment of students, the Malawi Free Methodist Church will be most hesitant to assume responsibility for the future of the institutions.

The Church in Malawi is capable of accomplishing great things for God in the future under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our prayers are that they will continue to seek His guidance in all the many decisions they make in the future.

Yours sincerely,

*Tillman Houser*  
Tillman Houser

P.S. Would you please send copies of this report to at least the following:

Phil Capp  
Warren Johnson  
Robert Mxumalo  
Moses Phiri  
Gertrude Haight  
Beth Becelnymer.

APPENDIX E  
BECKELHYMER REPORT 1977

# MALAWI REPORT - April 1977

## Beth Beckelhymer and Gertrude Haight

### FACTS:

What? The first extension classes of Lundi Bible School at Salima, Malawi, were held...

When? 7th March to 1 April, 1977...

Whom? by Gertrude Haight and Beth Beckelhymer. They flew from Johannesburg to Blantyre and then were taken by friends the 200 miles to Salima. Five weeks later the return trip was by rail and plane.

Where? Salima is an important transport town in central Malawi, twelve miles from the lake. It has been the end of the railway and tarred road, but new roads and rails are beginning to reach north and west to the new capital, Lilongwe. Zomba was the old capital. All transport north of Salima is by truck, ship or occasional light plane. (The map shows main towns and Free Methodist centers. There are satellite congregations around some of these).

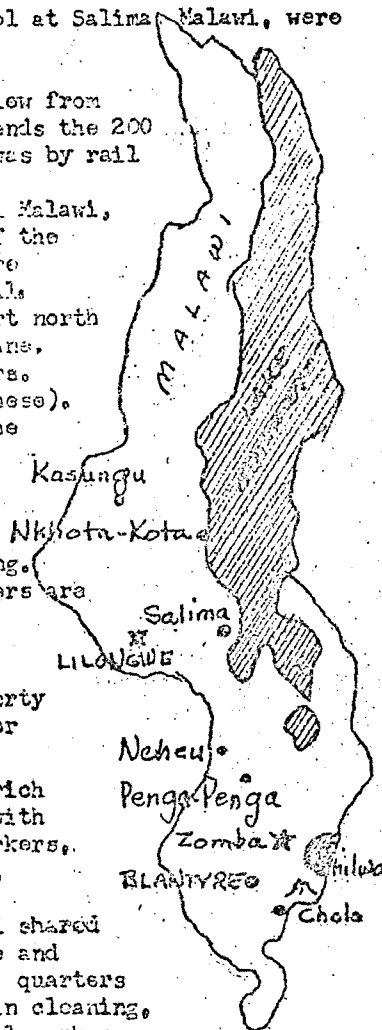
This is "Livingstone" country. At Nkhota-Kota he sat by the lake and pondered the awful slave trade he was seeing. Near here at Damba village is where the first Malawi Free Methodist Church was born just three years ago.

Salima is a town in transition - noisy, changing. Asian store owners are selling out and African buyers are moving into commerce. Africans already manage the other aspects of their country. It is a friendly little republic. Because of this transition time GMB has been able to purchase some store property as a temporary place for the Bible School and Pastor Phiri's family.

FACILITIES: During the time we stayed there we had a rich cross-cultural experience, sharing the facilities with the two Kalu families (Indians, Muslims), their workers, and our seven students. It was a very busy, noisy, interesting place. It was the scene of Mr. Kalu's trucking and motor repair business as well! We all shared the latrines for two weeks while a cistern was made and a toilet and shower were installed in the teachers' quarters behind the store. A great deal of work was needed in cleaning, painting and some building of furniture, etc. Local workers made tables and chairs for our kitchen-living room. Two basins were our kitchen sink. Two tiny paraffin (kerosene) camp stoves did our cooking. We are grateful for the electricity and chlorinated water which are part of Salima's recent development. Our life-saver was a little orange electric teakettle we bought in S. Africa. It was the only hot water we had.

When our students needed a break from books we hired them as painters. Two weeks, several buckets of paint, curtains, a tablecloth, lovely local mats for floors made these big "store rooms" more homey. Mosquito nets and burning coils helped us at night. An electric fan would have been great - a future must. But we never could manage to turn off the "wall-to-wall" noise. Main Street of Trucking Town, Malawi, just isn't the best for rest. But as our days so was our strength. We were conscious of answered prayers. But now our own beds at beautiful, quiet, cooler Lundi are great, war or no war.

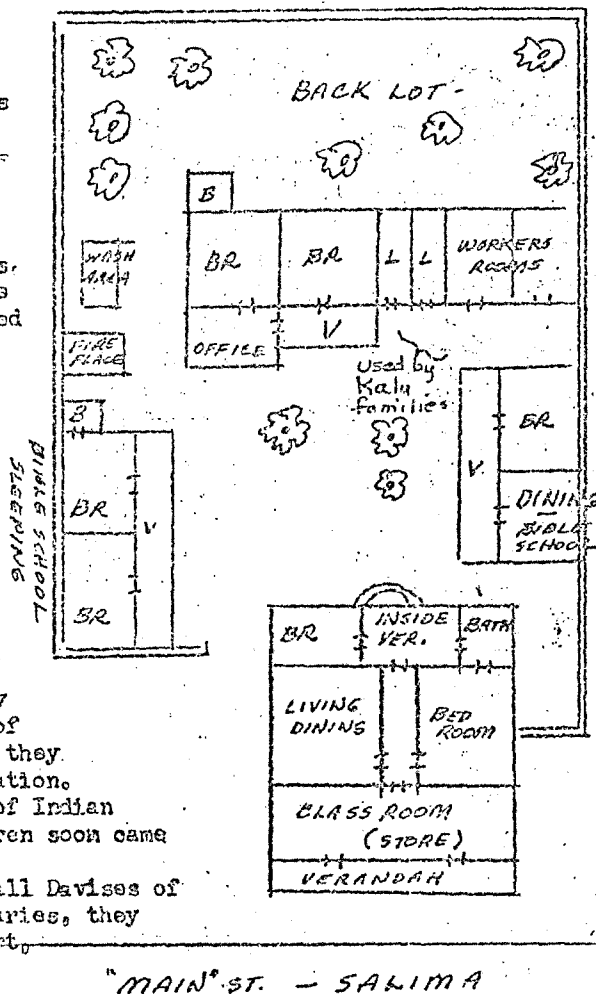
FOOD: Anyway, our courtyard life gave us lots of people contact. Live chickens given us as gifts would be carried with hot pepper one day, cooked with tomatoes in an African pot another, and American fired a third day! Fresh fish from the lake was available about once a week and made a good meal with local rice. Chambo fish is as good as trout. The lake has 250 kinds and only 200 of these are found elsewhere. Any other meat was from tins. A few vegetables from the local market and plenty of bananas filled in the rest. Our luxuries were rice bread from the bakery truck and an imported jar of Heinz dill pickles we bought in Blantyre. (I won't tell you how much it cost!) A nearby store with a freezer kept cold Cokes.



RIENDS: Facilities and food are important to school teachers, but friends even more. Friends made in a queue at the post office were a big blessing. Some Texas Baptists took us to their home on the lake over a weekend. The beauty, friendship and southern cooking was what we needed just then. Our future classroom was still dark, dirty, filled with torn-down shelves. Not only did the Workman family give us a restful weekend but they offered us the Salima Baptist Bookhouse to use temporarily for our classes! There was a classroom, tables and chairs and a blackboard just one block from our place. In the mean-time carpenters and builders were making desks and chairs, putting in a window and lighting, with plenty of noise, dust and curious heads from main street! I think Salima got to know that the Free Methodists are busy in their town.

Our friends, the Kalus, were very kind to us. Hussein directed most of the building activity for us. And they helped us a bit with local transportation. Their wives gave us delicious bits of Indian food to eat, and their little children soon came running in calling, "Auntie!"

Other helpful friends were the Bill Davises of Blantyre. Church of Christ missionaries, they helped us with hospitality, transport, and shopping between landing in Blantyre and going up country. (Fellow missionaries are family).



FELLOWSHIP: But the facilities, food and all were just a "prelude for a purpose". This purpose was fellowship in God's Word with our Malawi students who had gone home from Lundi in October due to the situation here. We'd promised them we would finish them somehow. Seven out of the eight men were Chers. One had been persuaded to return to his former denomination.

The men were thrilled to be studying again, thrilled to be on the way to their diplomas. And we were thrilled as well. Thrilled to see a new maturity in them. To sense a new depth of understanding and interest in their class work. Their questions showed they had been working and thinking about church problems. All of them were either working in a church started by Moses or had started new ones. By the end of the month they were asking for paint and brushes, turning their lap study boards into signs like, MABEWA FREE METHODIST CHURCH.

Though the men had suffered from some privation, hunger and malaria after leaving Lundi, yet all had experienced lessons in faith and answered prayer.

We taught a term's worth of classes in Christian education courses such as Sunday School Success, Understanding People, a brief New Testament Survey, and the Books of Poetry of the Old Testament. We worked them (and ourselves) hard but it was rich. Some class periods were a bit different. Like when I used Barbara Workman's autograph for singing the Psalms, or when a mad woman threw a rock at Gertie through the classroom window (She missed.)

On Sundays we attended the local F.M. church which was a packed out primary school room. (We wish they could use the big store room but it is not preferred by the District Commissioner). We were proud of the way our students conducted the services. Sometimes we helped them with music or messages. At one service a young married chap, Joseph, gave his life to Christ. Moses and our students feel they have a call to lead people to a personal knowledge of the Saviour through spreading the Free Methodist Church. What they had all experienced before in this well-churched country was mostly a formal "churchianity" rather than knowing Christ in saving power. They know the difference now.

The first Sunday we hired a rickety car (the rain poured in) to drive us to our Chipveto church, about six miles out. In services from 10:00 to 2:00 we saw infant and adult baptisms, members received and took communion. Gertie had to preach two sermons! One new full member taken in was the chief, an elderly man with a striped robe like Joseph's. Rev. Phil can't make it. All the churches often so must do all these tasks when he arrives. It was a thrill to see about 100 people packed in this mud and thatch church. They are combining their efforts to make good burnt bricks and build a bigger, better building soon. Their hope is that American Free Methodists can help them buy zinc for a roof. (Wages are low and prices high).

FUTURE: The next month's session of Lundi Bible School extension in Malawi is scheduled for June. Warren and Jean Johnson of Durban have consented to teach. Another session is planned for September. By that time Mackson Mbwewe will be able to graduate and be well on his way to ordination. Another session is needed in January 1978 and probably about April. Then three more men should finish. That still leaves three that need quite a few more sessions.

Is this the best way to continue? It is a slow method and frustrates the students who want to get done. The wives cannot come and finish either. It is very expensive to keep flying up teachers for a month's session, but it would be difficult for them to live there for much longer periods in that set-up. Not less than two can handle it as it is exhausting, and also for morale.

The local people are poor and costs very high. Buying town food is costly. The store location is considered temporary and far from ideal due to city zoning and constant noise.

Many new students want to enter, some Free Methodist and some not. It is hard to tell them we have no plan as yet for a Malawi Bible School. The Malawi Church has already chosen country property for a future Bible School site. These eight or so churches stretching over 300 miles from Nkhoskoto to Cholo with their 815 members, all new Christians or members, need regular lay and ministerial training beyond doubt. We constantly referred their questions back to them to pray about, to begin to plan and probe themselves. Helping them with training is the greatest thing the mission can do for them at the moment.

On the plus side of this present scheme is that the men stay home. They are keeping their families with their own gardens. They are active in the local churches pioneering. They are growing and learning at the same time. They are doing their self-teaching TEE lessons and Scripture memory work between sessions.

We investigated a small interdenominational Bible School in Blantyre. The fees were reasonable. It is evangelical. It teaches the major views on disputable doctrines and it is possible to add an FM missionary to the staff to teach Free Methodist polity and doctrine. At the present they cannot take families. We think it could have possibilities for a quick way for our younger men to finish or for new ones to start. We mentioned to Rev. Phil and it was a new idea to them. They need to think about it.

Prayer and planning has led to the very meaningful first session. It is surely the key to the future. The students are going to try to furnish what they can in the way of their main food, like rice or maize meal, and some of the vegetables they can carry. One volunteered to cut a tree for wood if we can find <sup>land</sup> for it.

These very young Christians, churches and pastors are beginning to learn about self support and planning. Pray very much for them and us that we will find God's way.

Beth Beckelhymer



APPENDIX F  
JOHNSON REPORT 1977

*Handwritten:*  
Please make  
copies for the  
Executive  
plus (P. Capp  
G. Hughes  
R. Nxumalo)

Beth Beckelhymer  
Tillman Houser  
Philip Capp

P.O. Box 33043  
Montclair, Durban 4061  
3 August 1977

AUG 15 1977

Dear Fellow-Workers,

As Jean and I winged our way through the night skies from Blantyre to Johannesburg on a DC 10 Air Malawi jet, we were served a delicious full-course meal. This was the parting gesture of this "midget-size" country (African standards) that had fascinated our thinking and had become our prayer concern since Rev. Robert Nxumalo's return from Malawi in September 1976 and increasingly so with Rev. Moses Phiri's visit to Natal-Transkei in April 1977. Touch-down at Jan Smuts brought a further phase of Project Malawi to completion.

Although our basic assignment was to continue the training program of the seven Bible School students, we felt we went as ambassadors of our church people and missionary staff in the Natal-Transkei Conference. You see, we were bearing their gifts of R400 with instructions to purchase at least three new bicycles and repair four old ones and a motor bike already in service, being used by the church leaders and students. The three new bicycles were presented to the Malawi F. M. church during an outdoor service attended by several hundred people near Salima.

To give you a more complete picture of the attitude of our people here, I will quote from my Annual Superintendent's report to Bob Haslam as of 21 May 1977.

The outstanding feature for 76-77 has been the development of the conference approved World Missions Board and a target missions program supported by Faith-Promise giving throughout the conference. Since Robert Nxumalo's visit to Malawi last August, interest in Rev. Moses Phiri and his call to establish the F.M. Church there has been mounting. Rev. Phiri was invited to attend Annual Conference as the special speaker. Prior to his arrival, over R300 had been raised in the conference to purchase his return air ticket. His messages at Conference stimulated great interest! Following Phiri's graduation from Lundi Bible School God had told him not to take a pastoral charge then being offered to him by the Dutch Reformed Church but rather to plant the F.M. Church in his own country of Malawi. This work he was to do completely by faith in God, without assurance of help from the Conference in Rhodesia, missionary direction and support or even without prior direction and approval from the GMB.

In about four years' time God has led Moses to raise up F.M. congregations in 11 scattered towns and cities with approximately 820 members. God has truly honored His word and stimulated Phiri's faith.

At the close of the Saturday morning conference sitting while Mrs. Shembe was making her annual WMS report and was in the act of presenting boxes of clothing to Brother Phiri with some R11 to purchase soap to wash the soiled pieces, singing began among the several hundred Zulus and Xhoses in attendance and God showered down upon them the spirit of giving. During the next twenty minutes approximately R160 was given to Brother Phiri for the Lord's work in Malawi.

Sunday morning was a repeat performance as the men of the conference prepared to also give Rev. Phiri a gift. Hundreds of people surged forward to give again. This time R58 was given to help God's servants push His work of preaching and teaching in Malawi.

#### The Bible School:

Formal classes began as scheduled 13 June, with all seven men in attendance. We count it a privilege to have been included in this most essential and worthwhile endeavour. Jean as a nurse and not a teacher, handled her subject matter commendably. The students responded with enthusiasm and diligence.

We were concerned, however, about David Banda's apparent inability to grasp much of what either of us presented, if class response and tests can be used as measurements. As others of you have evidently done previously, we, too, discussed David's matter with Brother Moses Phiri. He is a real understanding brother. He has the situation in hand!

Because personal textbooks were not being provided, each student was requested to outline the books, chapter by chapter. Halfway through (two weeks) we became aware, sad to say, that what was going through the eye-gate and into their notebooks was not really becoming a part of their knowledge. It was a non-productive exercise.

From then on we altered our approach, giving them specific questions on the material to which they would find answers in preparation for the class. I also increased my classroom time from two hours to three hours per day. I saw positive improvement in their ability to grasp as well as retain pertinent material.

Operational costs such as food supplies, wood, cook's wages etcetera were certainly kept to a minimum. Nimrod Ngwangwa handled the purse, did the purchasing and bookkeeping. All in all he spent about \$55 for the four weeks.

In response to an earlier request (see Houser's report) students brought about 50 lbs. of mealie meal, a few chickens and some sweet potatoes. The wood was also supplied.

#### The Salima Property:

Immediately the term concluded and the students returned to their homes Rev. Phiri and family took up temporary residence in the quarters vacated by the students. Earlier it was agreed that the Kalus, the previous owners, will vacate their premises by or before August 31, at which time Moses and his family will occupy their rooms, making available again the quarters for the students when they return about the 3rd or 4th of September.

Except for the installation of the wash basin in the bathroom, the work arranged to be done between Houser and Kalu has been completed. Because the exterior of the main building and fence facing main street was in dire need of paint and whitewash, about \$50 was spent on paint and lime wash, which the students applied over two Saturdays. It was particularly appropriate that this work was completed before Malawi's Independence Day celebrations July 6.

13 July became a significant day for F.Ms in Salima. About 75 women and nearly 80 children met in separate services using these facilities. The new District Commissioner in Salima altered a previous order that the church could not use these facilities to assemble together for church meetings. This, I feel, is a unique opportunity for these communicants to unite more fully and give a clearer witness for the gospel in this small town of some 2300 people.

Since leaving Salima we received word that the church's attorney needed about \$70 to register the title and complete the transfer. On 22 July I sent Mr. Mtaba the money he requested. Hopefully Brother Phiri has received the receipt and the title will come to his hand in due course.

#### Church Visitation:

The four weekends in which we had opportunity to visit the local churches we found the attendance greater than what the building could adequately accommodate. We sensed a real spirit of optimism among the people with a keen desire to reach out. A new burnt block church building at Damba has been erected. This is the place Moses first began preaching upon his return from Rhodesia. Because Phiri was not satisfied with the pitch of the grass roof, he requested the people to pull it off and make adjustments.

About 12 miles down the main highway towards Nkhotakota we found the people replacing their temporary church with blocks already burnt. Chia is the name of this place located on a beautiful site overlooking the large lagoon linked to Lake Malawi by means of a man-made "cut" in 1939. Brother Phiri informed us that these Christians, all former Muslims, are multiplying. Praise the Lord!

As we travelled together Moses would point in many directions of other new areas where the F.M. church is being planted. Of course Chipwete captures one's interests immediately. Who doesn't rejoice when the local chief becomes one of the leading laymen! They too have far out-stripped their present church accommodation. About 9000 blocks were in the process of being formed and burned in preparation for their new church building some 36 feet wide by approximately 76 feet long. Rev. Phiri says they want to build it on the 60 acres, plus or minus, granted to the church by the government. He also says they hope to have the walls completed before the rains begin, possibly in November.

On two occasions harvest offerings were being observed. Huge baskets and bags of mealies (corn), peanuts and rice were brought and presented by the people. These

products were then sold at prices set by the men of the church, with the money going into the church treasury. This augurs well for the future of God's ongoing program in Malawi.

Unfortunately we did not have time to visit the people near Zomba where Rev. Phiri was recently invited to open the fourth new preaching point. Moses says that in the Zomba area plans are moving ahead for the construction of a new church equal in size and quality to that being built at Chipwete. Here again the walls are to be finished ready for a roof before the annual rains begin.

#### The Future:

Without question the number one priority for us as missionaries in assisting this young church is to energize the pastoral training program. I frankly agree with you, Beth, these short term sessions are far from the ideal. By the time the students have adjusted to new teachers, emphases and accents, it is time to close shop. It's an inferior method when one considers the goal -- trained, equipped, spiritual leaders.

New TEE materials in Chichewa are being processed presently by the Baptists in Lilongwe. Rev. Kingsley was given Moses Phiri's address and will be keeping him posted on what becomes available in addition to Following Jesus and Talking with God. Brother Moses Phiri is thinking how this material can best be taught to the lay people. Among other things, he suggested a regular hour of teaching by a leader for all the people just prior to every Sunday morning service. Take one lesson each week and cover the 50 lessons in 12 months. This is the plan our laymen at KwaMashu here in Durben want to inaugurate soon.

#### Recommendations:

1. Make textbooks available to each student.
2. Expect the students or their churches to supply all the necessary mealie meal for each term as an incentive for No. 1 above.
3. Until a resident Bible School is established in Malawi, study the possibilities of extending the terms to cover 2 four week periods with a week's break between the two for the students to return home, the travel expenses to be included in Bible School expenses. This would double the effectiveness of the missionary personnel with little additional expense -- about \$14 for student transport.
4. Use the medium of a bank draft when transferring money to Malawi rather than traveller's cheques. These are inexpensive in South Africa and no further charges in Malawi when the draft is made in kwacha.
5. That when durable well built centrally located church buildings are erected by the people that funds be supplied from overseas for adequate roof timbers and corrugated iron.

Again we thank God for the opportunity of visiting and observing this young church at work under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and for the joy of sharing God's Word with dedicated, earnest young men.

Sincerely yours,

Warren and Jean Johnson

c.c. M. Phiri

C. DeMille

C.D. Kirkpatrick ✓

P.S. Would you please give copies to the following:

W.D. Cryderman

~~G.D. Kirkpatrick~~

P. Capp

G. Haight

R.R. Nxumalo

APPENDIX G  
DEMILLE REPORT

October, 1977

### Our Malawi Experience

We said 'goodbye' to Joy, Beth and Margi as they left for school on Thursday morning, Sept. 1, not to see them again for over a month. Fred Ryff drove us to the airport then returned to Pretoria where he and Georgia would be "Mother and Dad" to our girls during our absence. We are truly thankful to the Ryffs, for only by their kind consent to "baby sit" was it possible for both Ellen and I to have this "Malawi Experience".

As we flew over Rhodesia I spotted the "Sleeping Giant Mountain" situated across the Lundi River from Lundi Mission, a wave of nostalgia flowed over us. That area had been our home for 19+ years for me and 18 for Ellen. I breathed a prayer that God's angels would continue to surround Lundi in protective care as they have been doing since May, 1976.

Arrival at Blantyre's Chileka Airport brought us to the thrilling beginning of a new adventure. Adventure it was! New people, new values, new language and a L-O-N-G train ride. Counting the time we spent on the platform waiting for the train, the 150 mile journey from Blantyre to Salima took us from 5 A.M. till 8:30 P.M. We arrived at our destination tired (to say the least) yet happy because the trip had been made pleasant by the cheerful, well-mannered, helpful people who shared the compartment, train and platform with us. Ellen and I were both impressed by the people of Malawi. They are to be commended.

At Salima, dear Baba Moses Phiri and his friends were present to meet "my missionaries" as he puts it. This man is a priceless jewel. We were aware of this fact while he was with us in Rhodesia; however, during our stay with him and his family, we saw how matured he has become in the Lord. Such a man of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance (and we'll add our tenth quality) of good report.

#### Bible School:

1. Classes began Monday, 5th Sept. and terminated Saturday morning, 1st October.
2. Eight students were in attendance. A young man of 23 joined the courses upon recommendation. Joseph Mwanjasi has passed O'levels and vied with Mickson Mbewe for first place academically. He is a fine Christian lad who is definitely called by God to serve Him through the Church.
3. Courses taught were:
  - a. Church History
  - b. The Triune God
  - c. Biblical Beliefs
  - d. Major Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah and Lamentations)These were heavy subjects to cram into four weeks, but by God's Grace we and the students "made it".
4. Graduation service for Mickson Mbewe was held on Sunday, 25th Oct. The Salima "Church" was crowded as Baba Phiri had arranged a district meeting for that weekend; therefore three congregations were represented at the graduation. A CID official and the Salima Postmaster were among those who attended.
5. Salima Property
  - a. The whole complex is badly riddled by white ants. They are in the ceilings, most door posts and window jams (frames). The most effective way to stop their progress is to soak a solution of dieldrin around the foundations. Dieldrin can be obtained through the Shell Chemical Suppliers in Lilongwe. It is estimated that the job will cost K. 25.00
  - b. Student help was used to paint doors, shutters, windows, shelves and lecturn in the classroom/sanctuary. Two tables in the guest flat were varnished. A general clean-up of the building and grounds was undertaken, and a rake purchased for the centre in hopes that it will encourage similar activity between Bible School sessions.
  - c. A shower curtain rail was installed in the guest bathroom.
  - d. All boards and planks were removed from the south end of the classroom. A varnished wooden cross was fastened to the south wall. The versatility of the room has been increased.

The north one third of the room can be used a classroom-reading library, while the south two thirds provides a permanent sanctuary.

- e. It is to be noted that the US \$70.00 sent to Mr. Mtaba (the lawyer) by Warren Johnson is being held in the lawyers office in view of possible expenses involved in finalizing the title transfer. The property tax of K.60.00 to cover the period April 1, 1977 to March 31, 1978 was paid by Mr. Kalu, the former owner. I personally saw the correspondence concerning these two amounts. I urge G.M.B. to reimburse Mr. Kalu.

#### 6. Church Life

The Free Methodist Church in Malawi is alive and well. What a joy to see so many MEN in church! Ellen and I together worshipped at the Cipwete and Salima Churches. I also had the privilege to travel with Baba Phiri to Zomba. The new Makolija Church is a going concern. The neat little sanctuary has already a large brush arbor extension which is larger than the sanctuary itself, and still cannot accommodate the whole congregation. I saw the burnt-bricks (still in the kiln) which will shortly become the walls of a large building. The local preacher at Makolija is a fine gentleman who surrendered his claims to the local chieftanship to serve the Lord in this Church.

#### 7. Recommendations

- a. Tillman Houser should go to Salima at his earliest convenience.
- 1) There are numerous minor details (which could develop into major ones) which need to be discussed and worked out with Baba Phiri concerning the areas of responsibility between the Malawi Church and the G.M.B. regarding the property.
  - 2) Immediate treatment against white ants is imperative.
  - 3) Reed mats have been donated to be installed as a "ceiling" in the classroom/church. This will cut down the radiated heat from the bare corrugated iron roof. These should NOT be installed until treatment against white ants has been made. The cost of the installation should be reported to us (DeMilles) and arrangements will be made through us to pay for the same without cost to the G.M.B. We urge the completion of this installation before Beth and Phillipina go in January. The heat will be unbearable.
- b. A written, unified policy as to Bible School operation should be formulated touching all aspects of the Bible School: food, transport, writing equipment and materials, wood, water and lights, etc. Otherwise, policies alter with each new set of instructors.
- c. The plan of eight weeks of instruction with a one week break between, recommended in Warren Johnson's report, receives full support by Baba Phiri and ourselves. I was told that permits for that period would be granted on application to Malawi Immigration.
- d. Joseph Mwanjasi be encouraged to obtain employment in Lilongwe, enroll in London Bible College Correspondence programme, and make his dwelling quarters a meeting place for the planting of the Church in Lilongwe. He should spend as much free time as practicable with Baba Phiri to gain wisdom, instruction and practical experience in evangelism.
- e. It is important that students grasp the important facts of all course material. Therefore we suggest that revision and retesting be given students who do not pass a given test. David Banda is excepted; he is a dear man who wants to serve the Church, but just cannot make the academic "ends meet". We recommend that he be issued a special certificate indicating his attendance at Bible School and the courses to which he was "exposed". It should not be the regular diploma since this presupposes successful completion of courses.

Ellen and I have returned to South Africa richer in spirit from our "Malawi Experience". I should count it a privilege to go again!

Very sincerely in our Lord,

*Banda & Ellen DeMilles*

APPENDIX H  
BECKELHYMER 1978



# MALENTI NYAMA SCHOOL - 1940

27 March - 17 Aug, 1940

## REVENUE:

### REVENUE - 1940:

1. School	1,000.00
2. Child	
3. School	1,123.00
4. School	
(Miscellaneous)	67.00
	<u>1,771.00</u>

## EXPENSES:

General Session:	7	82.37
Transl. Session:		177.46
Teachers' Expenses:		
Monetary for three teachers		80.00
Travel & Accommodation		135.00
K. Kave (wages), visitation		40.00
K. Piki (wages) <del>transl.</del>		
for 10 days	VISAS	55.00
Telephone (calls, charges, salaries)		22.28
Food & household (for teachers and pupils)		58.57
House holder		25.90
" " " "		12.00
		<u>703.50</u>

## GENERAL MAINTENANCE:

Plumber	4.50
Extra paper (for K. Piki)	10.00
Extra electricity (" ")	20.00
	<u>34.50</u>

TOTAL \$ 738.00

## EXPENSES FOR GENERAL MAINTENANCE:

WOMEN: (7 teachers, 7 children, 2 weeks)

Food	47.25
Food	15.00
Food & Disinfectant	12.10
Toilet paper	4.17
Exercise books	3.00
Transportation to & from	12.00
Wash.	2.00
	<u>105.52</u>

NFT.

Food	70.25
Laundry and misc.	5.69
Initial costs	6.46
Books & school at Bica (17.00)	
of this for texts exp. books on	
costs for books for library)	35.79
Inc.	1.82
Travel for trip via service	10.30
Travel to & from school	6.50
Food	5.08
Beer (30.00 for 7 weeks)	30.00
	<u>177.99</u>

Expenses of travel and accommodation:

Travel to & from Bica, 2x	12.00
Grand Beach Hotel for 3 for 14 days	52.00
Transportation from Bica to B.	4.00
Hotel in Lilongwe: 2 persons, 2x	16.00
Airport tax for M.C. and B.C.	4.00
A. Fare travel, hotel and airport	
tax on return trip	13.00
Rev. Ben Messer (for trips to	
airport and to Lilongwe)	25.00
	<u>135.00</u>

Conclusion:

Of seven wives, 2 for 7 weeks, 2 for the wives, 3 for the men.

Conclusion:

There was only a refractor course as they had had no classes since leaving Bica in 1976. Six of the seven wives were there (one remained for maternity services).

Classes: Vacation Bible school and lots, Evangelism, Christian family, reading and prayer, taught by Phillipine Cole of Ndal, Abaya, M.C. of Bica, and with Rev. Ben Messer, Lilongwe, with Dickson Jones of Lilongwe as translator and assistant teacher.

Mr. Jones, who had taught the women at Bica, worked hard and well. He took full advantage of all opportunities to help, even initiating evening services.

His class was also much appreciated by the mothers. She worked hard.

The women were enthusiastic and tried to work hard. It was good to see that they had not regressed since leaving Bica. They showed growth in spiritual maturity. Their progress in understanding of their responsibilities as mothers' wives.

They had more of our teaching and fellowship sessions in the future. In the present town set-up it is so hard to keep their babies properly it isn't quite as good as when we were in Lilongwe with future sessions.

In addition to the teaching the women, P. Jones also preached, counselled and encouraged them to pray for a spiritual walk, travelling with him to work. He had been in the hands of church leaders and doctors and too busy to be able to do much more.

The three women to the 1st day rest break at the Grand Beach Hotel following the first session. There was an unpleasant rainy season there was unusual heat, and illness, and all the noise.

200

Joseph, age, 47, is located in Miami, the pool hall. He is very interested in the pool game. The Miami pool hall is a pool hall to the Miami area. It is a pool hall is a pool hall and also trying to improve his skills so that he can compete with the Miami pool hall.

High School opening was delayed a day for the collection service in which 1000 lbs. of food items and 1000 lbs. of clothing were collected. The physicians, nurses and dentists were present for this community service.

...and the

The report of the committee held up to it. The committee of youth is to be a platform for the young people, as well as a document, understanding of their thoughts and ideas. The aim is to express our club's feelings and attitudes in their own words. The committee will, therefore, be to be able to express their own opinion. The committee will be held to after the three-day meeting. The committee will be able to do their work in the proposed three-day meeting in 1977. Their pleasure.

W.T.B., Christian Vacation courses: Vacation Bible School, Emmanuel Through Christian Vacation, taught by P. Cole. His son here completed these studies for the Advanced Bible certificate. Dickson Moore joined them for this. He needed one more Bible course for his certificate as well.

The courses of John and a course on Cults were taught by both people.

Several of the students go on to further correspondence studies with a view to obtaining their diploma. This is encouraging.

1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 26

Mr. Turner did indeed need to hold the Bible School students and teachers in any way he could. His clinical talk was very good. He is sincere and involving, and very wise in his speech leadership.

The United Free Methodist Church is still developing in both size and wealth.

15. We cannot afford to have a split in leadership, but it seems no secret that as the church grows it needs your prayers more than ever. Only God can 'grow a church'.

## Best Book Interview

APPENDIX I  
JOHNSON REPORT 1978

"Will you go to Salima and help teach?" was the telephone message we received on the 10th of May 1978. That sounds like a Macedonian call, doesn't it? When Jean and I had been approached of this possibility about a month earlier, and after enquiring as to subjects to be taught with availability of materials, we readily agreed to go. Perhaps two weeks passed before a letter came saying that other arrangements had been made and we would not be needed. But God's plans and purposes are often different than we anticipate.

During the 1977-78 conference year the church in Natal-Transkei was practicing the Faith-promise method of giving to our new and growing church in Malawi, its mission project. By conference time some \$286 was available for the project in addition to having paid over \$350 for Rev. Phiri's travel expenses to our 1977 Annual Conference. Once it was decided that we were to go to Malawi, our missionary co-workers increased the amount to over \$500. So God gave us the unique privilege of being His ambassadors and like Paul of the New Testament, bearers of true brother love expressed in such a practical way.

Following the graduation service on 30 July, gifts of four gleaming, newly imported English bicycles were presented to Rev. Moses Phiri and the Church Board of Trustees. It was they who during a brief interim decided where these new machines were to be placed and who would use them. As Pastor Phiri said, "We have a great and wonderful God. We now have four new graduates and God has provided them in their work four new bicycles!" It was a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving.

Our various modes of travel to our destination, Salima, provided new insights into the demands and difficulties of the Malawian traveller. Our jet flight from Johannesburg to Blantyre was cheaper than last year (a 45-day excursion for R188) and enjoyable and brief. After an over-night stay with our Church of Christ friends Bill and Daisy Davis, we climbed aboard a two-engine prop for a one hour flight to Lilongwe. We took the airport bus to the bus rank and there caught an overloaded bus which became increasingly so for most of the 65 miles to Salima. Upon our request the driver stopped about three blocks from the Church Center at dusk. A local lorry operator recognizing us from last year picked us up and delivered us right to the gate and a warm welcome by Brother Moses Phiri, his family and, of course, the students.

Classes began the next day, Monday 26 June, terminating at noon on Wednesday, 2 August. Classes were taught six days a week. Six students were in attendance. The courses taught were: Ezekiel, Basic Principles of Church Growth, Daniel and Marriage and the Family. On July 30th Alfeyo Mpulula, Stanford Nyemathemanga and Dapoer Magwaza received their diplomas.

It was a particular joy to see the Church Center looking neat and inviting. All the old cars and scrap have been removed from the back yard which now became a volley ball court during the term. Rev. Phiri is also giving attention to painting and equipping a new classroom -- a large room that the Khalus had previously used off the office. This move should prove to be a real boon to both students and teachers, providing a quiet and relaxed atmosphere.

It was a delight to attend church services at Salima, Chipwete and Lilongwe. As Clarke DeMille exclaimed, "What a joy to see so many men in church!" Jean and I were present at the Lilongwe F. M. Church where the first four charter members -- three men and one woman -- were received into full membership by Rev. Phiri. The total attendance was 16 men, 8 women, 2 young girls and 12-15 children. There were six baptisms also.

The new church walls at Chipwete are made of burned brick awaiting the rafters and corrugated iron. Here again God has graciously answered Pastor Moses' prayer by sending Dave Nordquist to do the job. The membership at this place now stands at 303, a fantastic growth record in four years!

Brother Phiri's great burden and concern is the training of additional pastors to meet the needs of this growing church. It is his desire to place those trained and in training in new city churches at Keronga, Kasungu, Lilongwe, Zomba and Blantyre. His request is that a Bible School with five to six months of training during the drier and cooler months, March through August, be opened and staffed for the coming calendar year. He says that there are six or seven young men with Form 2 to Form 4 education that want to begin training immediately. We trust the GMB will recognize Rev. Moses Phiri's request as a priority and make money and personnel available for this most essential project.

We join Beth in saying, "It has been a privilege to have a part in training some of the Church's leaders. But it makes one aware that as the church grows it needs our prayers more than ever. Only God can 'grow a church'."

Sincerely,

*Warren & Jean Johnson*

Warren & Jean Johnson

EEARTE YOU—FIRST FOLD

NCLOSURES ARE NOT PERMITTED  
 ISLUITINGS WORD NIE TOEGELAAT NIE

SENDER'S NAME AND ADDRESS  
 AAM EN ADRES VAN AFSENDER

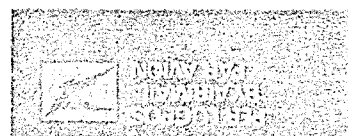
TWEEDE YOU—SECOND FOLD

Rev. W. H. Johnson  
 P.O. Box 33043,  
 84/Montclair, Durban,  
 South Africa, 4001.

Rev. Phil Capp  
 16731 - 2nd Ave. N. E.  
 Seattle, Wash. 98155  
 U. S. A.

TO  
 AAN

AEROGRAM  
 AEROGRAM



APPENDIX J

MEMBERSHIP REPORT - MOSES PHIRI

DATE	DISTRICT	CHURCH	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	LEADER	PASTOR
3.3.74	NKHOTAKOTA	DAMBA	S	15	27	35	55		BRIGHTON MANYONI	MICKSON MBEWE
1.6.74	NKHOTAKOTA	CHIYA		10	12	20	25		UMALI PHIRI	MICKSON MBEWE
10.10.76	NKHOTAKOTA	MWANSAMBO			5	20	60		DEPPER MACWAZA	MICKSON MBEWE
1.4.76	NKHOTAKOTA	BENGA					35		MKWEZALAMBA	MICKSON MBEWE
1.2.76	KASUNGU	LISANDWAI		8	31	37	45		WYSON CHIKAPA	MICKSON MBEWE
1.5.76	KASUNGU	LISANDWAI		4	13	21	25		LANGTON LIMBIKANI	MICKSON MBEWE
1.3.78	LILONGWE	KAWALE II					36		KENNEDY MDAZYOLA	MICKSON MBEWE
1.11.74	SALIMA	MSALULA		5	12	22	107		JOSEPH MACHAYA	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.8.76	SALIMA	CHIPWETE		6	150	201	305		LORENT CHANZIE	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.3.78	SALIMA	GWENGWE					70		KINGSTONE PHIRI	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.2.78	SALIMA	DAMBO					44		MWANAGAYI NABANDA	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.10.77	SALIMA	KATUNDU			5	35	42		NIMRODE NGWACWA	MOSES K. PHIRI
11.10.76	NTCHEU	MABENA			8	41	54		ALIFEOS MPHULULA	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.10.76	NTCHEU	KASANGA			25	35	65		FINES NYAMATHAMANGA	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.6.75	ZOMBA	MAKOLITA			25	85	105		JEFREY MALEMBA	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.8.75	ZOMBA	KAMPANGO		15	28	30	37		KACHASHU PHIRI	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.5.77	ZOMBA	MALUNGA				32	48		SEVEN MCHITHIHWAMPHATA	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.2.78	ZOMBA	MAKALUKA				13	22		MCHITHIWA	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.5.75	THYOLO	MPASO		13	19	32	38		GODFREY MASIKINI	MOSES K. PHIRI
1.10.76	KARONGA	NYUNCWE		13	15	31	42		LOZERUS CHIMBOZA	MOSES K. PHIRI
TOTAL	8 Districts	20 CHURCHES	5	89	375	710	1285		20 LEADERS	2 PASTORS
12.7.78									(REPORT FROM MOSES PHIRI)	