Internal and External Imperial Dynamics in Habakkuk: A Contextual Study of the Book of Habakkuk from a Malawian Socio-economic and Political Viewpoint

by

Takuze Saul G. Chitsulo

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DECLARATION

I, _____, declare that

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2. This thesis has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university.

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DEDICATION

In Loving Memory of

my mother, the Late Mrs. Lizzie Chitsulo

for moulding me to be the man I am today.

I wish she was around to see me completing my studies to this level.

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ABSTRACT

This study is an economic reading of the book of Habakkuk from Malawian socio-economic and political viewpoint. It is a good example of scholarly study of Scripture not done as „art for art‟s sake,‟‟ but undertaken because of the recognition that the Bible has something essential to say to a critical human situation. Designed as a dialogue between an ancient biblical text of Habakkuk and a modern context of Malawi, the study examines the internal and the external imperial dynamics in effort to better appreciate the shared relevance of these two chronologically disparate contexts. The two contexts share the common reality that both are socially, economically and politically shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism.

The dialogue is facilitated through a contextual biblical studies framework – using the tri-polar model or the African contextual biblical hermeneutics model – that recognizes the importance of our contexts in the interpretation of the biblical text. Since we cannot measure the people‟s well-being through the eyes of the elite but of those who suffer and struggle in life, this study deliberately chose the context of the poor and marginalized to be the subject of interpretation. To truly understand the Bible is to read it through the eyes of the oppressed, since the God who speaks in the Bible is the God of the oppressed (Fiorenza, 1981:100). The study will use liberation and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics belonging to the wider context of biblical interpretation in theology of liberation as sub-theoretical frameworks. The two frameworks are ideo-theological orientations where potential lines of connection between the biblical text with its contexts and today‟s readers and their contexts are drawn.

This study is concerned with why Malawi is still rated among the ten poorest countries in the world with over half of its populace still living below the poverty line despite having been independent for fifty-one years? Malawi continues to face many socio-economic and political problems, which are caused by economies of extraction – a particular form of capitalism that African states inherited upon gaining independence from colonial masters. It is exploitive as it involves those who do not labour gaining from those who labour. In this study, economies of extraction are a useful link between economic dimensions of Habakkuk and those of Malawi. The study therefore aims at exploring what is contained in both Habakkuk and Malawi that assists us to understand and value both contexts. Such an interpretation within

the context of a critical situation, theology of liberation offers a message that has as its aim emancipatory effects on the poor and marginalized (Fiorenza, 1981:109).

ABBREVIATIONS

ALC	African Lakes Company
ANE	Ancient Near East
BIM	Baptist Industrial Mission
BSAC	British South Africa Company
CCAP	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
DC	District Commissioner
DRC	Dutch Reformed Church
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LMS	London Missionary Society
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MYP	Malawi Young Pioneer
NCA	Nyasaland Chiefs Association
NCP	Nyasaland Congress Party
NIM	Nyasa Industrial Mission
NNNA	North Nyasa Native Association
PIM	Providence Industrial Mission
SDA	Seventh Day Adventist
SDB	Seventh Day Baptist
TMoP	Tributary Mode of Production
WARC	World Alliance of Reformed Churches
UMCA	Universities Mission to Central Africa
ZIM	Zambezi Industrial Mission

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1.1 Background and Motivation for the Study

Malawi has been independent for fifty one years now, however life for many Malawians is a struggle for survival. John Saul (2008:41) has qualified decolonization that took place in Southern Africa between 1960 and 1990 as *"false."* He observes that while there was clear attestation of decolonisation, it remains that it was without substance of liberation, especially in socio-economic terms, for those, the vast majority, at the bottom of social ladder in freshly "liberated" countries. This is true for Malawi. After seventy three years of British colonial rule, Malawi received her independence in 1964. The country's postcolonial history reveals that Malawians experienced the horror of one-party dictatorship under Banda who ruled Malawi for over thirty years. He was overthrown in 1994 when Malawi experienced political change that saw the country switching from one-party rule to multiparty system of government.

Although this is the case, Malawi is still bound in captivity. Of course, there are no chains on her feet, but she is not free. Malawi continues to be among the ten poorest countries in the world. The state of affairs shows that postcolonial Malawi deals with new face of colonialism that is capitalistically inclined. It is clear that the struggle is not yet complete; the struggle for liberation and life continues (West, 1995:14). Under such struggles, the questions raised by the prophet Habakkuk in ancient times (1:2-4) matter in our time. Habakkuk wrestled with the universal question "Why?" He posed it centuries ago, it is the very question that is asked in modern times, and no satisfactory answer has been given. And because Habakkuk speaks to some of the deepest needs of men and women who are oppressed and depressed by the ways of this world, the book becomes a resource that can help us understand the Malawian context. We note with interest that Habakkuk used poetry to address social issues of his context, which makes the book even useful to Malawian context.

We are turning to the text of Habakkuk to see if there might be relevant socio-economic ethic for Malawi today. This means that the Malawi socio-economic and political context will be examined using the framework or the lens of Habakkuk. It needs to be pointed out here that

to truly understand the Bible is to read it through the eyes of the socially, economically, politically and spiritually oppressed, since the God who speaks in the Bible is the God of the oppressed (Fiorenza, 1981:100). This explains why we have deliberately located this study to the context of the poor and marginalized in Malawi. As it has been mentioned above, Malawi shares its history with Southern African countries, whose situations are shaped by the evils of imperialism. Because imperialism involves world powers dominating over subjugated nations, Malawi"s socio-economic and political situation was and is shaped by internal and external imperial dynamics championed by those in power, both locally and internationally. It is the local political leaders who work collaboratively with powerful western nations and international financial institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund) in creating socio-economic problems that mostly affect the poor.

This study is an economic reading of Habakkuk from Malawi socio-economic and political viewpoint. It seeks to investigate internal and external imperial dynamics in both Malawi and Habakkuk. The study is designed as a dialogue between two different contexts, an ancient biblical context of Judah and a modern context of Malawi, in effort to better appreciate the shared relevance of these two chronologically disparate contexts. It must be known that the two contexts are brought into dialogue because they share the common reality that both are socially, economically and politically shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism. The aim of the dialogue is to explore what is contained in each context that assists us to understand and value both contexts. The motivational question for this study is: Why is Malawi still rated among the ten poorest countries in the world with over half of its populace still living below the poverty line despite having been independent for fifty-one years?

1.2 Research Problem

Preaching at the national service of worship of 2001 Malawi Independence Day celebrations, the Anglican Bishop James Tengatenga saw no reason to celebrate considering the difficulties Malawians were facing at that time. He mentioned among other things, the health system that lacked medicine; the collapsing economy; the lowering of education standards; and a political scene that was threatening to impose a third term bill for a president running a second term in office (Tengatenga, 2001).[1] His sentiments were not well-received among politicians who

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[1] James Tengatenga preached a sermon titled "Seek His Kingdom and His Righteousness and All Things Will Be Given to You" at Malawi National Independence Celebration Service of Worship, held in Mzuzu on July 4, 2001.

retorted with affronts. There were even plans to attack him for delivering such a disturbing sermon. In fact, the truth about the plans was known when one of the clerics riding in the Bishop‟s car was attacked by thugs upon their arrival at the reception hall. The cleric was wrongfully beaten because the thugs assigned for this task thought he was Bishop Tengatenga. Although this was the case, it remains that postcolonial Malawi suffers from many socio-economic and political problems that retard development. The main cause of these problems is economies of extraction, which are a particular form of capitalism that African states inherited upon gaining independence from colonial masters.

In this study, economies of extraction are a useful link between economic dimensions of the book of Habakkuk and those of Malawi. They denote a process of extracting something from a producer by someone or some group that has not produced it (Boer, 2007:39). This process is exploitive as it involves those who do not labour gaining from those who labour. In ancient biblical times, economies of extraction involved a local city-state extracting from peasants and an imperial power extracting from subject states through tribute, which was the main form of exploitation (Boer, 2007:41). Because of these measures, many peasants, already living on the margins, were further impoverished and driven into debt. The system was pre-capitalist because a strong state and the upper classes dominated the majority of the people through taxes, rents and debts. The situation made Israel to move from a political economy in which wealth was the product of diligent work and therefore a blessing from God, to a political economy in which wealth was the product of the oppression of the poor (West, 2011:516).

Important to note in the case of Habakkuk is the role "the wicked" play in creating manifold socio-economic and political problems in Judah. "The wicked" should be understood to have come from both within and outside Judah. This means that the elite in Judah (the king and his royal court) stood for the internal oppressor; while Assyria and Babylon represented external oppressor. There was collaboration between the two oppressors. The elite in Judah played the role of what Boer (2007:38) calls *mediations*. The elite at the city-state stood between empire and village commune to the effect that they were able to extract from their subjects (mostly poor people) in order to meet the demands made by the empire. In the process, the king and members of his royal court profited from the system since not everything extracted from the

people reached the despotic empire. In this way, the majority poor were getting poorer and poorer while the elite few were getting richer and richer.

In the context of Malawi, political elites have become internal oppressors, while international financial institutions and some western and Asian countries, through imposition of economic policies that cripple Malawi's economic development, have turned out to be external oppressors. The elites in Malawi have become *mediators* between despotic empire and poor Malawians. As internal and external imperial powers, the two have partnered in creating problems that result from extraction of Malawi's little resources that were meant to benefit the poor. Extraction of Malawi's resources did not start with the missionary-colonial enterprise; there are traceable traits of economies of extraction even in the pre-colonial era. It all began with the coming of powerful people (the Bisa, Arabs and Swahili peoples) who were looking for ivory and rhino horns in exchange for calico and beads and later they were involved in slave trade. Essentially, trade at that time was based on extraction of Malawi's natural wealth. This affirms that Malawi has had a stormy socio-economic history from pre-colonial and postcolonial period that calls for a thorough analysis of this context.

A crucial component of this analysis will deal with the role of the church in the transformation of Malawi. The socio-historical analysis of Malawi will not be complete unless the role of the church in the transformation of Malawi has been analyzed. It needs to be highlighted that one cannot fully understand the political and economic history of Malawi without getting to grips with the work of Christian missions in Malawi. There is enormous contribution of the church to the spiritual, social, political and economic development of Malawi. As Bridglal Pachai (1971:37) has correctly said, "the account of missionary enterprises and Scottish traders in Malawi is a necessary part of the country's history." Thus, it is important to take a closer look on the work of the church in the social and economic transformation of Malawi. By turning to the text of Habakkuk, we are following a long tradition where the church turns to the Bible to find a relevant socio-economic ethic when addressing political and economic issues.

The central question to this research is: What might a socio-economic reading of the poetic text of Habakkuk contribute to the churches in Malawi as they seek to make a contribution to

political and economic transformation in contemporary Malawi? The answer to this central question should satisfy the following sub-questions:

1. Why are internal and external imperial dynamics in Habakkuk crucial to the understanding of Malawi socio-economic and political context?

2. How does poetic form of Habakkuk contribute to the understanding of the prophet's message and how does it challenge the Malawian socio-economic and political context?

3. What implications does the role of the church, observed in both its voice and silence, have in the socio-economic and political life of Malawi?

4. What is contained in the ancient biblical text of Habakkuk that helps us understand about Malawi socio-economic and political context and what is contained in the Malawian context that sheds light on the text and context of Habakkuk and helps us understand and value this book?

1.3 Research Hypothesis

The hypothesis that this work seeks to substantiate is that investigations into the internal and external imperial dynamics of two different contexts, namely the modern socio-economic and political context of Malawi and an ancient biblical context of Judah, can aid in understanding and valuing both contexts. Through the dialogue, common human dynamics shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism that inform both ancient and contemporary realities are identified. On one hand, Habakkuk contributes to our understanding of certain socio-economic and political issues taking place in Malawi; on the other hand, the context of Malawi helps in understanding the biblical text and its context by pointing out that which is hidden in the biblical text. The main concern in the two contexts is economic injustice, which is the root cause of many socio-political problems in the world. From it stems all the violence and "violence" is a situation of crisis in which Habakkuk calls for help.

1.4 Research Design and Methodology

The study is designed as a dialogue between the ancient biblical text of Habakkuk and a modern context of Malawi with an aim of exploring what is contained in each context that assists us to understand and value both contexts. The dialogue will be facilitated through a contextual Bible study framework called the African contextual biblical hermeneutics model, also known as the tri-polar exegetical model. Three poles are involved, namely: the African

context; the biblical text; and the African context and the biblical text in conversation / dialogue. In this case, the socio-economic and political situation of Malawi is our context; the book of Habakkuk is the text of this study; and appropriation pole brings the biblical text and the context into dialogue. The tri-polar model provides the design of this thesis. It starts to analyze the African context, then moves to the biblical text and end with dialogue. The three poles are known by the following terms: contextualization, distantiation and appropriation, signifying the phases of exegesis in the tri-polar approach.

Contextualization phase involves spending time analyzing who we are and our location in society and history (Draper, 2002:17). It is concerned with the analysis of the context of the interpreter and his or her community (Nyirimana, 2010:41). Distantiation phase focuses on the biblical text and it functions as a tool for examining the biblical text. Appropriation brings the two contexts into a critical dialogue. This phase of exegesis always is shaped by particular theoretical frameworks such that appropriation is done through sub-theoretical frameworks, which are ideo-theological orientations where potential lines of connection between the biblical text with its contexts and today's readers and their contexts are drawn (West, 2006:412). In this study, we are using liberation and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics as sub-theoretical frameworks. They both belong to the wider context of biblical interpretation in theology of liberation. The study will employ particular methodologies when analyzing the text of Habakkuk and the context of Malawi.

1.5 Thesis Structure

This thesis consists of eight chapters. The first chapter provides a general introduction to the research. It describes the background and motivation for the study, the research problem and research design and methodology. The structure of the thesis is briefly described, as well as the limitations of this study.

In describing theoretical frameworks appropriate for this study, Chapter Two divides itself into three sections. The first section discusses the African contextual biblical hermeneutics model (*the tri-polar approach*), which is the overarching theoretical framework for the study. The discussion includes a description of the three poles that are involved in the tri-polar approach, namely: contextualization, distantiation and appropriation. The second section describes the two sub-theoretical frameworks – liberation and postcolonial biblical

hermeneutics. They are discussed under the broader context of biblical interpretation in theology of liberation. This chapter ends with a description of particular methods that are used for textual and contextual analysis.

The tri-polar model is aware of dynamic nature of the context and advocates the use of the context of the interpreter as the subject of interpretation. Chapters Three and Four are designed to establish the context of this study, which is the socio-economic and political situation of Malawi. These two chapters present the contextualization phase of the tri-polar approach. These chapters describe the political and economic history of Malawi from the pre-colonial period to present-day Malawi. Chapter Three defines the Malawi situation by analysing her politics and economics, which are the main underlying forces behind the social life of the nation. Considering the enormous contribution of the church to the socio-economic and political transformation of Malawi, Chapter Four continues contextual analysis by focusing on church"s role in spiritual, social, political and economic development of Malawi.

After analyzing the Malawian context, the study moves to distantiation phase that functions as a tool for analyzing the biblical text. In this study, distantiation takes place in chapters five and six. Chapter Five is a socio-historical analysis of Habakkuk, while Chapter Six focuses on the literary and narrative context of the biblical text. Distantiation begins with a critical study of the social, economic and political world of the book of Habakkuk in Chapter Five. In an attempt to position Habakkuk in his proper geo-political socio-economic context, the chapter explores internal and external imperial dynamics that affected the social order of Judah. Next is a literary analysis of the text of the poetic book of Habakkuk that takes place in Chapter Six. The goal of this analysis is to show how literary work on the text in this chapter relates with the behind the text kind of economic work covered in Chapter Five. In other words, the goal is to show how literary relates with the socio-economic and political world of the book of Habakkuk.

Chapter Seven forms the summit of this thesis where the appropriation phase is discussed. This is the phase where dialogue between the socio-economic and political context of Malawi and that of Habakkuk takes place. The chapter reflects on what is contained in the two contexts and in an interactive discussion tries to bring insights from each context so that the two contexts enlighten each other. To facilitate the dialogue, this chapter outlines similarities

and differences between political and economic oppression in Habakkuk and various kinds of oppression Malawians face owing to economies of extraction in order to learn from both. In this way, Chapter Seven demonstrates that: on one hand, Habakkuk contributes to the understanding of economic and political realities of the Malawian context; on the other hand, Malawian context sheds light on the text and context of Habakkuk.

Chapter Eight concludes the research. It includes a general conclusion in which objectives of the study are reviewed and indicates how far they have been reached. The chapter sums up various issues discussed in this study on the subject of internal and external imperial dynamics in Habakkuk and Malawi. It reviews the findings of the study by assessing to what extent the research has answered the questions asked at the beginning of the study. The chapter ends with recommendations that some areas not sufficiently covered by this study could be considered for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

This chapter sets forth the theoretical frameworks of this study. One of the major obstacles to contemporary culture‟s ability to take more full advantage of theological and spiritual insights of ancient biblical texts applicable to today‟s living situations involves the lack of appreciation of common human dynamics that inform both ancient and contemporary realities. As such, it is important to note that this study is designed as a dialogue between an ancient biblical text of Habakkuk and a modern context of Malawi in effort to better appreciate the shared relevance of these two chronologically disparate contexts. As will be examined in this study, the two contexts of Habakkuk and Malawi share the common reality that both are socially, economically and politically shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism. This study aims, therefore, to explore lessons from Habakkuk that can be helpful to the contemporary Malawian church in prophetically addressing this contemporary reality.

The study falls under postcolonial biblical studies, which as Moore and Segovia (2005:2) put it, is the meeting point of biblical studies and postcolonial studies. The theoretical framework relevant to the study is the African contextual biblical hermeneutics model, also known as *tri-polar approach*. The use of "African" does not imply that the model cannot be applicable to other contexts; it can be used in such contexts that share common experiences with Africa. As the term *tri-polar* suggests, three poles are involved, namely: a) African context; b) Biblical text; and c) Appropriation. In this sense, the Malawi socio-economic and political milieu is the context of this study, while the book of Habakkuk is the text and the appropriation pole brings the biblical text and the Malawian context into dialogue. The dialogue is two-way and is between the socio-historical world of the biblical text and the religious, cultural, economic and political world of the African life, in this case, Malawian (West, 2009:248). As the main theoretical framework, the African contextual biblical hermeneutics model provides the design of this thesis, which begins from the context, then to the text and end with the dialogue.

In this study, the dialogue is done through a combination of liberation and postcolonial ideo-theological theoretical resources that involve examination of Habakkuk and Malawi as responses are shaped within each context to the social, economic and political evils of imperialism. Considering this, the study will employ liberation biblical hermeneutics and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics as its sub-theoretical frameworks. The two frameworks are engaged here because they belong within the broader context of biblical interpretation in theology of liberation. Additionally, particular methodologies will be used when analyzing the text and the context. The biblical text will be analyzed using sociological, historical-critical, rhetorical and literary methods. Sociological method (a tool, which is used in social sciences to analyze economics and politics) and historical method will be used to analyze the Malawi context. Marxist theory will also be employed when analyzing political and economic aspects of the biblical text and Malawi context.

2.1 The African Contextual Biblical Hermeneutics

The African contextual biblical hermeneutics or the tri-polar exegetical model should be understood as a development of the traditional *bi-polar* model. The term *bi-polar* implies that two poles are involved – the biblical text and the context. This is what Knut Holter (2002:88) calls comparative study because the major approach is a comparative method that facilitates a parallel understanding of socio-historical dimensions of the biblical text and religio-social realities of the African life, letting the two to illuminate one another in various ways. In the bi-polar model, much emphasis is put on the text to the effect that the context has nothing to say but to accept whatever the text says. Jonathan Draper (2002:15) argues that the bi-polar model has failed to produce good results because it presupposes that human society is the same everywhere and always.

Biblical interpretation in Africa must involve diverse techniques that link the biblical text to the African context such that the main focus is on the communities that receive the text rather than on those that produced it or on the text itself (Ukpong, 2001:11). Justin Ukpong (1999:317) points out that the African contextual Bible studies strives to investigate the presence of Africa and African peoples in the Bible and the significance of such presence. The overall purpose for doing this is to articulate Africa‟s influence on the history of ancient Israel and Africa‟s contribution to the history of salvation, as well as to correct negative interpretations of some biblical texts on Africa (Ukpong, 1999:317). In this way,

interpretation of the Bible becomes relevant to African communities. The African contextual biblical hermeneutics or the tri-polar approach was therefore developed to help facilitate this task. The third pole called the appropriation pole was discovered to function as a point of connection between the text and the context (West, 2009:249).

The third pole was a hidden pole in the bi-polar model or in the comparative study of Knut Holter. It can also be called interpretation. The appropriation/interpretation pole is the space where the dialogue between the text and the context takes place. One important thing to note here is that the tri-polar exegetical model, or African contextual biblical hermeneutics, is conscious of the dynamic nature of the context and that it seeks to provide space where the biblical text and the context can interact. This means that the tri-polar model encourages African readers of the Bible to be involved in a process of biblical interpretation that critically studies the Bible in relation to their situations and for personal and societal transformation (Nyirimana, 2010:29). Nyirimana (2010:29) observes that this hermeneutical approach combines the conventional exegetical tools with the resources drawn from the people‟s culture, their history and their experience. He goes on to say that the readers who are not theologically trained are empowered to develop a critical awareness that identifies and uses critical resources in their reading of the Bible.

Advocates of this approach feel that it provides the best framework for the appropriation of the biblical message to the community of believers (Nyirimana, 2010:29). There are three major points or steps of contextual exegesis in the tri-polar exegetical model (Nyirimana, 2010:40). Draper (2002:16-8) says contextual exegesis needs to pay attention to three poles, namely: distantiation, contextualization and appropriation. In trying to describe what Draper is doing with the three poles, West says:

> Draper identifies the move from distantiation (whether via socio-historical or literary analysis) – what the text meant (traditionally referred to as „exegesis‟), to belonging (via particular contextual appropriation) – what the text means (traditionally referred to as „interpretation‟ or „understanding‟) (West, 2009:249-50).

Draper (2002:16) is of the opinion that it does not really matter where one starts, whether with the text, context, or appropriation. Thus, the design of this thesis will begin by analyzing the context of Malawi, moving to the text of Habakkuk, and finishing with the dialogue in the

appropriation pole. What follows is detailed discussion on each of the three poles: contextualization, distantiation, and appropriation.

2.1.1 Contextualization

This pole involves spending time analyzing who we are and our location in society and history (Draper, 2002:17). In other words, the contextualization "pole" is concerned with the analysis of the context of the interpreter and his or her community (Nyirimana, 2010:41). In general terms context refers to the background against which a text is to be interpreted. More specifically, it refers to an existing human community (a local church, ethnic group, country) designated as the subject of interpretation with the people's worldview, and historical, social, economic, political and religious life experiences (Ukpong, 1995:6). Nyirimana (2010:41) is of the opinion that making such a community the subject of interpretation implies that the interpreter, who is an insider in that community, draws his/her interpretive materials from the daily life issues of the community. Nyirimana further says that it is this context of the interpreter that determines the kind of questions he/she brings to the text, as well as the kind of answer he/she may expect.

Nyirimana (2010:41) holds that it is during this moment that the interpreter speaks back, to the text, challenging it with the specific questions and problems from his/her life-situation and from his/her context. This understanding confirms that any context is dynamic. Draper (1996:223) argues that contexts play a significant role in the interpretation of the Bible. He observes that sometimes our contexts make us reject or accept some biblical texts because of our experiences. Accordingly, some texts are rejected based on the fact that they support oppression or exploitation while we tend to accept texts that are liberatory. This is why West (1993:13) says it is critical to recognize our location in history because we read the Bible explicitly from and for that particular context. For this dialogue to bear the expected fruits, says Nyirimana (2010:41), the interpreter is required to have a good knowledge of his context and to be aware of specific needs that the text should address.

Draper (2002:17) argues that as Africans, we recognize our specific location at the end of a long history of colonial domination, cultural dispossession and economic exploitation. The Bible itself shows that God speaks specifically to specific people in specific situations (West, 1993:13). This proposes that the biblical text in Malawi occupies an economically exploited,

politically oppressed and culturally deprived context, whose readers‟ lives are conditioned by imperial hegemony in need of liberation. Once this is put into perspective, we are better able to recognize the role our context plays in enabling biblical scholarship to grow. We observe with Ukpong (1995:6) that there is interactive engagement between the biblical text and a particular contemporary socio-cultural issue such that the gospel message serves as a critique of the culture, and the cultural perspective enlarges and enriches the understanding of the text. This dialogue will reach the climax in the third step that has been called "appropriation."

2.1.2 Distantiation

This pole focuses on the text and it functions as a tool for examining the biblical text. History has shown that the Bible has been a forceful tool in the transformation of communities. In the case of Africa, West (2004:251) describes the Bible as one of the "goods of strange power" associated with the arrival of whites in Africa. Patrick Kalilombe (1991:397) reminds us that the Bible can be a force for liberation or a force for oppression. Based on this understanding, it is clear that the Bible occupies a central place in our contexts. It is the basic source of African Christian theology and through re-reading of this Scripture in the social context of our struggle for our humanity, God speaks to us in the midst of our difficult situations (Kalilombe, 1991:397). This is raised here because part of the overall rationale in the dialogue between the text and context is the fact that the Bible plays a crucial role in our struggles or contexts. Here, the biblical text will be subjected to critical analysis in order to retrieve its most appropriate meaning in its own context, before applying that meaning to the reader / interpreter context.

The term "distantiation" is used to signal that the reader or hearer seeks to listen rather than to talk (Draper, 2002:17). Distantiation means that the interpreter takes a distance and allows the text to speak to him/her (Nyirimana, 2010:40). Draper (2002:17) points out that there is a vital role for the exegete to gain "critical distance" from the text, to suspend what she or he previously understood the text to mean, to open her or himself up to new understandings which may contradict her or his pre-suppositions. This stage of exegesis requires that the readers or reading community allow the text to speak for itself by creating space or critical distance between themselves and the biblical text (Draper, 2001:155). Thus, the biblical text must be allowed to be other, different, over against ourselves and our concerns and questions (Draper, 2001:155). During the distantiation phase, says Nyirimana (2010:40), the reader or

interpreter strives to allow the text to speak for itself in its own context, and to address its particular problems and needs.

Nyirimana (2010:40) observes that this process requires the reader to stay far away from the text in order to hear what exactly it meant for its original audience before it can also address her or his life situation. He goes on to say that various tools are used during distantiation to allow the text be itself in its origin and social location, with the goal of reconstructing it in its original context. "Reading behind the text" and "reading the text" modes of reading the Bible will be some of the tools to be used at this stage; "in front of the text" mode of reading the Bible will be used in the appropriation pole (West, 1995:70-4). "Reading behind the text" is appropriate for this study because it is mainly concerned with the historical and sociological world that lies behind the text and from which the text comes (West, 1993:27). According to Joel Green (2010:81), "the behind the text" assists to locate meaning in the history assumed by the text, the history that gave rise to the text, and the history to which a text gives witness. He adds that the approach addresses the text as a window through which to access and examine the deposit of meaning. At the heart of this method is the understanding that views the retrieved meaning as the fruit of an interaction between the current interpreter and the elements of the text.

West (1995:70) claims that the behind the text mode of reading the Bible does not focus on the text only, it also answers questions that include: "What historical point is reflected by the discursive practice this text represents? What are the social, cultural, class, gender and racial issues at work in this text? What is the ideological-spiritual agenda of the text, that is, how does the text itself seek to be understood?" On the other hand, "reading the text" or "in the text" stresses the literary and narrative context of the Bible; it is concerned with the meaning of the text (West, 1993:27). In this way, the distantiation phase places emphasis on the necessary dialogue between the biblical text and the interpreter, whose context is analysed in the contextualization phase (Nyirimana, 2010:41). In this study, distantiation, which takes place in chapters five and six, assists us to understand the socio-historical milieu and literary form of the book of Habakkuk in order to let it challenge the Malawian socio-economic context.

2.1.3 Appropriation

Appropriation involves an interactive engagement between the two contexts and is conducted in a way that allows insights from each context to enrich the understanding of the other (Nyirimana, 2010:6). James Sanders (1987:171) describes appropriation as hermeneutics or interpretation. Draper (2002:18) avoids using "interpretation" because he sees appropriation as a process of "owning" the word, of accepting the meaning discovered in context and community and taking responsibility for it. This is where we employ "in front of the text" mode of reading the Bible that stresses the thematic and symbolic context of the Bible as a whole (West, 1993:27). West (1995:155) points out that "in front of the text" focuses on taking the biblical message to our context. He further says it answers the question, "how does a message expressed in another age, for a people of another cultural and social milieu, become effective in our time and place?"

So, the appropriative process is not just a matter of mining the text for doctrine, but includes the understanding that it results in changed behaviour, in action and through the community of faith in society (Draper, 2002:18). For Nyirimana, the concept of appropriation implies:

> that the interpreter accepts and owns the message that he/she gets from the text; that he/she accepts the implications of this meaning for his/her situation; and that the interpreter allows the text to stand against him/her, challenge, and even judge him/her by its original message so that the meaning acquired from the text challenges his/her life-style (Nyirimana, 2010:42).

The appropriation of this study seeks to bring an ancient biblical text of Habakkuk into a two way dimensional dialogue with the modern context of Malawi, both contexts being products of internal and external imperial dynamics. The two contexts are brought together in this study because of the awareness that the Bible occupies a special place in our contexts. It is part of the history of Malawi that the biblical text has been used in the public realm to engage the state.

One of the questions often asked by colleagues in non-biblical disciplines is why we bring the Bible into contact or dialogue with our context? This study demonstrates how the Bible has been used to address socio-political and economic matters. Ukpong (1995:7) says interpreting the text within the present context emphasizes the point that a text is not an archaeological specimen but a living reality capable of coming into interaction with a contemporary context to transform it and forge history. Thus, to interpret a text means putting it into dialogue with

our world and with our personal being to address and question them (Ukpong, 1995:7). There is a two way movement in the dialogue between the socio-historical world of the biblical text and the religious, cultural, economic and political world of African life (West, 2009:248). According to West (2009:250), the conversation is facilitated by the reader who enables the regular back-and-forth movement between text and context, thereby making the text and context mutually engage.

What West and Ukpong are trying to say here is that while the biblical text in its historical context has helped in shaping our understanding of our own context, perhaps our African context might help us understand something about the biblical text and its context. The argument here is that the African context contributes to both. The African context does not only help us understand the biblical text and the ancient biblical context, but it also helps us understand how the text relates to its original context. The text is central but when looked at from different contexts, each perspective will see different aspects. The tendency in traditional forms of African biblical hermeneutics is that it is the text that speaks to the context. But we also have to have the challenge – What does the context say to the text? What does the context help us to see that is hidden in biblical text?

Ukpong (1995:4) argues that Western scholars might have missed certain things because they come from a different world. Our context therefore enables us to ask questions on Habakkuk or the context of Habakkuk that Western scholars may have missed. This phase of exegesis always is shaped by particular theoretical frameworks such that appropriation in this study is done through sub-theoretical frameworks, namely: liberation and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics. A sub-theoretical hermeneutical framework is an ideo-theological orientation where potential lines of connection between the biblical text along with its contexts and today‟s readers and their contexts are drawn (West, 2006:412). Before we look at the two sub-theoretical frameworks, it needs to be pointed out that African feminism, inculturation, liberation and postcolonialism are some examples of ideo-theological orientations where potential lines of connection between the text and the context are drawn. They all belong to the wider context of biblical interpretation in theology of liberation.

2.2 Theology of Liberation / Contextual Biblical Study

Allan Boesak (1979:20) holds that the Bible testifies to the liberation of the oppressed people that began with God‟s liberative act in the Hebrew Scriptures and found fulfilment in Jesus the Christ in the New Testament. In this sense, Boesak understands the God of the Bible to be the God of liberation rather than oppression; a God of justice rather than injustice; a God of freedom and humanity rather than enslavement and subservience; a God of love, righteousness and community rather than hatred, self-interest and exploitation. Elisabeth Fiorenza (1981:100) says to truly understand the Bible is to read it through the eyes of the oppressed, since the God who speaks in the Bible is the God of the oppressed. This explains why the real concern of liberation theology is commitment to the context. It is for this reason that West (2006:400-4) calls this kind of biblical interpretation "Contextual Bible study."

Here, we have a good example of scholarly study of scripture not done as "art for art‟s sake," but it is undertaken because of the recognition that the Bible has something essential to say to a critical human situation. Fiorenza, cited by West (2001:169), maintains that this particular critical human situation is the context of the poor and marginalized. Therefore, the use of the notion „contextual‟ in West‟s „Contextual Bible Study‟ signifies commitment to a particular context, the context of the poor, the working class and the marginalized (West, 2006:401). Fiorenza (1981:100) is more outright. She says for a correct interpretation of the Bible, it is necessary to acknowledge the "hermeneutical privilege of the oppressed" and to develop a hermeneutics "from below." In this way, a commitment to the experience of the poor and marginalized becomes a crucial area for theological reflection and of course the fulcrum of liberation theology (West, 2001:170).

The thesis places much emphasis on the context of oppressed because we cannot measure the people‟s well-being through the eyes of the elite but of those who suffer and struggle in life. West (2014:3) cites Gustavo Gutierrez who says, liberation theology has chosen „nonpersons‟ as its chief interlocutors, „the poor, the exploited classes, the marginalized races, all the despised cultures.‟ Thus, the epistemological privilege of the poor is the central concept of liberation hermeneutics (West, 2014:3). Fiorenza (1981:92) strongly believes that the poor and marginalized in question are women. She says not only do women and children represent the majority of the „oppressed,‟ but poor and Third World women suffer the triple oppression of sexism, racism and classism. She then urges liberation theologians that if they make the

„option for the oppressed" the key to their theological endeavors, then they must become conscious of the fact that „the oppressed" are women. I strongly agree with her because majority of the poor and hungry in the world are women and children dependent on women.[2] Her stance helps us understand who the poor and marginalized are in Habakkuk and Malawi contexts.

A focus on the context of the poor and marginalized takes us back to the understanding that Contextual Biblical Study can also be referred to as liberation theology. It needs to be pointed out here that Contextual Biblical Study is a form of liberation hermeneutics that emerged in South Africa in 1980s. In presenting the background to this model, West (2014:2) says the South-African apartheid state, with its overt theological foundation, demonised liberation theology and relentlessly detained anyone associated with such forms of theology. Hence, the term „contextual theology" was coined to subvert the apartheid state's efforts to rid all those who were pro liberation (West, 2014:2). Contextual theology thus became „an umbrella term embracing a variety of particular or situational theologies that is able to mutate and appear in a different form in each new context it finds itself in (Speckman & Kaufmann, 2001:xi). This suggests that for the liberation theologians the pursuit of understanding of God comes in the midst of practice, which means that theology is inevitably contextual and conditioned by the environment and activity in which theologians are themselves engaged (Rowland, 1995:171).

Therefore, liberation theology, as said by Christopher Rowland (1995:170), seeks to persuade churches and communities at large of the priority of the responsibility to the poor and needy. For liberationists, the Bible is considered as a weapon in the struggle of liberation. Because liberation, a theme that permeates large portions of the Bible, constitutes one of the central semantic axes of such a reading, the reading that we do "from our location" of oppressed and forgotten peoples leads us to rediscover the socio-historical horizon that produced the text (Croatto, 1995:220). Put it in contrary terms, analysis of the socio-political conditions out of which a biblical text emerges leads us to a message that is in accord with that demanded by our own situation (Croatto, 1995:220). Such an interpretation within the context of a critical situation, theology of liberation offers a message that has as its aim emancipatory effects on the poor and marginalized (Fiorenza, 1981:109). As we shall see shortly, the two sub-

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[2] It needs to be pointed out that "Persons with Disabilities" are included in the context of the oppressed, the poor, the hungry and the marginalized.

theoretical frameworks have been employed in this study because they provide a critical perspective on liberation hermeneutics (West, 2014:3).

2.2.1 Liberation Biblical Hermeneutics

Liberation biblical hermeneutics developed based on this biblical witness that maintains that God condemns oppression, stands with the oppressed and liberates (Nyirimana, 2010:25). As a liberating God, says Nyirimana (2010:26), Yahweh delivered the Hebrews from socio-political oppression in Egypt and the Exodus narrative provides grounds for hermeneutics of political liberation. Jorge Pixley (2010:131) points out that liberation criticism begins with hermeneutical insight that biblical interpretation is always affected by the experience and social location of the reader. He further says liberation criticism is grounded in the experience of oppression, which necessarily affects the reading of the Bible suggesting that the political and social structure of any context will always influence the meaning of the text. It is important to note that a central hermeneutical principle of liberation criticism is that the biblical message, particularly the Gospel preached by Jesus Christ, is meant to be relevant to life in this world, which means that it is a call to struggle for the liberation of the oppressed (Pixley, 2010:131).

Pixley (2010:131) points out that the manner of the struggle and its strategy must be a subject of discussion in the church where social analysis is placed alongside the study of the Bible. This is where the real dialogue between the Bible and the reader‟s context takes place. Some examples of oppression that require liberation include political and economic oppression, oppression against women, and racial oppression. Ukpong (2001:23) says in contextual Bible study, the Bible is read against a specific concrete human situation, which in this study is political and economic oppression. In this way, liberation hermeneutics in general uses the Bible as a resource for struggle against oppression of any kind based on the biblical witness that God does not sanction oppression, but always stands on the side of the oppressed to liberate them (Ukpong, 2001:19).

Nyirimana (2010:26) is clear that God‟s instructions to Israel and Jesus‟ attitude and teaching in favour of the poor provide the basis for the hermeneutics of economic liberation. When life becomes intolerable because of an oppressive force, the lordship of Jesus Christ, who said that the Gospel He preached was for the poor, becomes a liberating message (Pixley,

2010:131). The task of liberation biblical hermeneutics in this study, therefore, is to situate the book of Habakkuk in its literary and socio-historical context, then allow it to dialogue with the Malawi socio-economic and political situation out of its ancient context. This task will be carried out bearing in mind that the agenda of liberation theology in this study goes beyond the condemnation of political oppression and economic exploitation to include a commitment to the transformation of the society (Nyirimana, 2010:26).

2.2.2 Postcolonial Biblical Criticism

Gale Yee (2010:205) observes that while liberation biblical criticism focuses on economic and class differentials, postcolonial biblical criticism focuses on power relations and disparities between empire and colony, between centre and periphery. She says:

> Under the pretext of bringing "civilization" to their colonies, Western imperial nations rationalized their brutal conquest and predatory extraction of their colonies" natural and human resources. It is the conflicted unequal relations between colonizer and colonized that are the focus of postcolonial studies as an academic endeavor (Yee, 2010:193).

As mentioned earlier, postcolonial biblical criticism is a meeting point of biblical studies and postcolonial studies (Moore & Segovia, 2005:2). Postcolonial studies emerge from the reality of the actual lived experiences of particular forms of colonialism or imperialism (West, 2008:152). Postcolonial biblical criticism is, therefore, a terrain that focuses on three areas: (1) issues surrounding the political, cultural and economic colonial setting that produced the text, (2) presentation of both biblical and modern empires and their impact and (3) focuses on the freedom of subjected nations (Sugirtharajah, 2012:2-3). In short, it situates the Bible in a larger global context: the geopolitical relationship between centre and periphery, the imperial and the colonial, whether in antiquity or modernity or postmodernity (Yee, 2010:208).

Postcolonial biblical criticism is devoted to analyzing an ancient biblical text in light of a social, economic, cultural and political context that has been shaped by imperialism. The primary aim of postcolonial biblical criticism is to situate empire and imperial concerns at the center of the Bible and biblical studies (Sugirtharajah, 2012:46). Sugirtharajah (2012:47-9) suggests three tasks required if postcolonial biblical criticism is to achieve its goals, which include: first, is to retrieve side-lined, silenced, written-out and often maligned biblical figures and biblical incidents and restore their dignity and authenticity; second, is to unearth the imaginative ways in which those once colonized had formulated their response to the

empire and how they resisted some of the missionary hermeneutical impositions; third, is to recover the hermeneutical works of the missionaries and European administrators who were part of the colonizing process but ambivalent about the purpose and the logic of the empire.

This process is necessary considering that postcolonial theory is ideologically committed to the retrieval of marginalized discourses or resistances, and to ensuring that political independence of the former colonies is succeeded by economic and cultural liberation (England, 2004:90). We observe that postcolonialism has been able to intervene in the area of biblical translation and repair some of the cultural and theological damage done in that process (Sugirtharajah, 2012:50). Here, we need to understand that postcolonialism is not a discourse of historical accusations, but a committed search and struggle for decolonization and liberation of the oppressed (Dube, 1997:14).[3] Robert Young (2001:4) maintains that postcolonial studies are directed toward the active transformation of the present out of the control of the past. In agreement, Jeremy Punt (2003:61) says postcolonial study concerns itself with social formation and analysis as well as cultural production by striving to rewrite history; the study imagines reflective modality which allows for a critical rethinking of historical disparities and cultural inequalities which were established by colonialism.

Sugirtharajah (2003:41) explains this in clear language, when he said: "Postcolonialism is not simply a physical expulsion of imperial power. Nor is it simply recounting the evils of the empire, and drawing a contrast with the nobility and virtues of natives and their cultures. Rather, it is an active confrontation with the dominant system of thought, its lop-sidedness and inadequacies, and underlines its unsuitability for us." In referring to liberation theology, Kalilombe (1991:408) quotes the Ecumenical Association for Third World Theologians who rejected as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action. The logic behind this line of thought is that postcolonial biblical criticism should not be satisfied with simply exposing imperial tendencies in canonical texts and deconstructing them, but should go further to construct interpretations which have decolonizing effects in the contemporary world (Sugirtharajah, 2006:67).

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[3] Before postcolonial biblical criticism appeared, Musa Dube read the Bible as a Western book and considered biblical Christian believers as referring to white Western believers while "pagans" refers to all non-Christian Africans. The Western imperial readers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries wrote themselves into the text and characterized non-Christians as their pagan counterparts in order to validate the latter's subjugation (see Dube, 1997:11-12).

Gale Yee (2010:206) observes that the stories of the Hebrew Bible narrate Israel enduring the different structures of imperial control in the course of its history, each with its particular brand of oppressive rule under imperial powers such as Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, and (for the New Testament) Rome. She goes on to point out that their socioeconomic and cultural domination of Israel makes it an excellent subject for postcolonial scrutiny. On the other hand, we notice that Western economic and political expansion heavily involved a religious and cultural colonialism, in which the Bible was a major component in the evangelization of Asia, Africa and the Americas, in many ways legitimizing the suffering and destruction of indigenous peoples (Yee, 2010:206-7). Therefore, the purpose of this study is not just about "understanding" but challenging the Malawian context. The task today is not territorial liberation but freedom from the control of the neo-colonial market (Sugirtharajah, 2012:134). Malawi realized her political independence in 1964, what is required now is to achieve a just measure of economic independence and non-exploitative global relationships.

2.3 Methods for Textual and Contextual Analysis

As mentioned in the introduction, the study will use particular methodologies when analyzing the text of Habakkuk and the context of Malawi. Before they are outlined here, it must be recognized that the study falls under the branch of social sciences, which is concerned with those patterns of social conduct that are produced by human social interaction and value orientation (Wilson, 1984:1). Because this study aims at understanding the subjective world of human experience, it is located in interpretive paradigm. Before sketching out reasons for choosing this research paradigm, it should be mentioned that there are three major research paradigms, namely: positive, interpretive and critical. Marwa Elshafie (2013:5) defines paradigms as the basic belief system or worldview that influences the researcher's choice of epistemology, ontology and methodology of the research. He says each research paradigm has its own ontological and epistemological assumptions that influence its methodology and methods used. For the purposes of this study, we shall only deal with interpretive paradigm in qualitative research.

2.3.1 Interpretive Paradigm in Qualitative Research Method

Holliday (2002:5) points out that the research in this paradigm seeks to understand the meaning that has been created within the context. Unlike positivism, the research in this

paradigm is inductive and emergent and it does not seek generalization as it is context bounded (Elshafie, 2013:7). Interpretive method seeks an understanding of phenomena from individual"s perspective, investigating interaction among individuals as well as historical and cultural contexts which people inhabit (Creswell, 2009 :8). Thus, Elshafie (2013:8) is correct to say that the aim of interpretive research is to understand these complex realities through the eyes of social actors, who are individuals with biographies, acting in particular circumstances at particular times and constructing meanings from events and interactions. Miller and Alvarado (2005a:349) are of the opinion that interpretive paradigm asks questions about social interactions that can be addressed systematically through qualitative methods.

In addition, Shah and Al-Bargi (2013:258) point out that interpretivists think that quantitative research methods are not adequate to comprehend social phenomena so they believe in qualitative techniques that are diverse. They claim that qualitative aspect of these techniques presents human beings as the primary research instrument. Qualitative research uses a naturalistic approach that seeks to understand phenomena in context-specific settings, such as real world setting where the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the phenomenon of interest (Golafshani, 2003:600). In this ways, interpretivists do not rely on statistical analysis rather they employ an investigative, holistic and inductive approach for data analysis (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013:258). Broadly defined, qualitative research means any kind of research that produces findings arrived from real-world settings where the phenomenon of interest unfold naturally (Golafshani, 2003:600). According to Holliday (2002:6), it offers insights into the quality of social life and locates the study within particular settings which provide opportunities for exploring all possible social variables.

2.3.2 Textual and Contextual Methodologies

The discourse on liberation and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics has revealed that the two sub-theoretical frameworks are entirely linked with political and economic location of the reader. This points to the fact that the Bible is not only a product and a record of class struggles, but it is also a site of similar struggles acted out by oppressors and oppressed, exploiters and exploited of our society even as they read the Bible (Mosala, 1986:196).[4] This

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[4] West (1995:73) quotes Bernadette Mosala from Mosala, B. (1986:187) "Black Theology and the Struggle of the Black Woman in Southern Africa," in Mosala, I. J. and Tlhagale B. (eds) (1986) *The Unquestionable Right To Be Free,* Skotaville, Johannesburg.

is the very reason why the two contexts of Habakkuk and Malawi are brought into dialogue. We shall now look at textual and contextual methodologies that are used in our efforts of establishing what is happening in the two contexts. A number of methods will be used to analyze the text. Textual analysis is in two parts.

2.3.2.1 Approaches for Analyzing the Socio-Historical Context of Habakkuk

The first part deals with the socio-historical background of the book of Habakkuk. Because we are interested in the community that produced the text of Habakkuk, a sociological approach and historical critical method will be used to analyze the socio-historical world of the text. Mosala (1989:54) reminds us of the fact that sociological approaches to the Bible often raise and address political issues in the Bible. With the help of social scientific tools, we will be able to discover the scenes and historical setting behind the text. Wilson observes that:

> … the social sciences can help the reader to be self-conscious about the role that social and cultural forces play in shaping literary perceptions. Each of us approaches the Old Testament with a view of reality that has been nurtured by the social and cultural situations in which we have lived (Wilson, 1984:5-6).

Therefore, sociological approach is what West (1995:64-74) calls "reading behind the text" because it aims at uncovering scenes behind the text. He considers this approach to be a new way of answering historical question that pays more attention on the social life of the text and the reader, in which social scientific criticism completes the task of historical criticism by providing more or less detailed social referential readings of the biblical text (West, 1995:63). This explains why this study employs sociological and historical critical methods to analyze the socio-historical context of Habakkuk.

2.3.2.2 Approaches for Literary Analysis of Habakkuk

The second part is the literary analysis of the book of Habakkuk. Literary criticism assists in analyzing the text itself focusing on the literature and the language of the text. This approach involves close reading of biblical texts with careful attention to their literary forms and textures (Olson, 2010:13). "In the text" mode of reading the Bible will be employed here. The questions that arise in literary approaches range widely from detailed attention to the meaning of individual words and sentences to the significance and shape of successively larger literary contexts in which the given text is situated (Olson, 2010:13). Literary criticism is aimed at understanding the language of Habakkuk in order to find the meaning of the text in its

original context. This analytical process will include genre analysis of the work of Habakkuk. Sparks (2010:55) points out that the term genre is widely used with reference to human discourse. He says:

> To inquire about the genre of verbal discourse, whether of a spoken utterance or written text, is to ask about the sort of discourse that it is. Utterances might be "commands," "questions," "poem," or "stories," just as texts might be "biographies," "histories," "letters," or "newspaper articles." When we identify verbal discourse using one of these labels, we imply that we know something about how that type of discourse works and that we have the competence to understand it to some degree (2010:55).

The book of Habakkuk is poetic in form and one of the objectives of this study is to see how poetry contributes to our context's understanding of the message of Habakkuk. The book has a variety of classic biblical genres typical of prophetic books which are used in unusual ways for surprising rhetorical purposes (Bruckner, 2012:295). The genre of the work of Habakkuk has been variously described as a liturgical composition, a prophetic imitation of a cultic liturgy, a report of a visionary experience, and a wisdom text that centres on the question of theodicy (Sweeney, 1991:63-4). Such variety in description warrants genre analysis of Habakkuk for a more precise theological appropriation and clearer understanding of its relevance to the contemporary Malawian context.

In seeking to grasp what the text is trying to do in a particular context, rhetorical criticism is utilized because it aims to present a persuasive reading and analysis of a biblical text within a given interpretive community or context. Rhetorical criticism is helpful because it links with historical-critical, sociological and literary methods thereby providing a useful link between the literary and the socio-historical context (Olson, 2010:24). It helps to analyze the language used by the biblical text, which in large part was influenced by the ways of imperial powers. Elisabeth Fiorenza (2007:5) points out that certain biblical writings use imperial language as anti-language. She adds that anti-languages are often used by those on the margins of society, who speak in code so that not everybody can understand them. It is used by outsiders for constructing a reality that is an alternative reality to that of the dominant society (Fiorenza, 2007:5). Therefore, rhetorical interpretation is conscious that it is undertaken in real-world contexts, in which the interpreter has an immediate relationship with the intended audience (Olson, 2010:24).

2.4.2.3 Approaches for Analyzing the Malawi Socioeconomic and Political Context

The Malawi socio-economic and political context will be analyzed using a sociological approach and historical method. Postcolonial theory and liberation theory will also be used as tools for analyzing political and economic aspects of both Malawi context and the biblical text. We are doing this knowing that our use of postcolonial theory will have a strong economic orientation because of the use of liberation theory. Here, it needs to be pointed out that I am going to use elements of Marxist theory particularly when I deal with the biblical material. This entails that when analyzing political and economic aspects of Habakkuk, the study will focus extensively on postcolonial economic analysis in terms of theory; however, it will draw on aspects of Marxist theory through the work of Norman Gottwald, Roland Boer and Gerald West. Likewise, the work of Per Frostin (1988) that identifies both within Ujaama theology in Tanzania and black theology in South Africa a sort of Marxist orientation will be used in that sense. Succinctly, I will be using forms of postcolonial and Marxist theory.

The 1992 pastoral letters will serve as analytical framework for analyzing the socio-economic context of Malawi. The two letters contribute theological categories to the appropriative pole in this research that help us understand what Habakkuk is doing with his poetry. Since interviews will not be conducted, the study will rely on documents for data collection. These documents will be analyzed using narrative research, which is one of qualitative techniques. It is a form of research in which the researcher analyzes the lives of individuals by asking one or more individuals to narrate their life stories (Shah & Al-Bargi, 2013:258). The present study will employ document review since there are no interviews. Bowen (2009:27) says document analysis is systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and internet-transmitted) material.

"For qualitative researchers," observes Miller and Alvarado (2005b:349), "documents are distinctive in one respect: unlike interviews and observational episodes, documents exist before the researcher seeks to use them as data." Documents contain text (words) and images that have been recorded without a researcher's intervention (Bowen, 2009:27). Atkinson and Coffey, quoted by Bowen (2009:27), refer to documents as "social facts," which are produced, shared and used in socially organized ways. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen,

2009:27). In this study, document analysis will be performed for exploration of the book of Habakkuk and its socio-historical context. It will also be carried out to investigate the Malawian socio-economic and political situation. Various documents will be used as research material in this study. Since the study focuses on economics and politics which belong in class analytical categories and concepts, a socio-historical mode of analysis will be used to analyze these documents.

CHAPTER THREE

THE SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF MALAWI

3.0 Introduction

In Chapter Two, we made mention that the theoretical framework relevant to this study is the African contextual biblical hermeneutics model or the tri-polar approach, which is concerned with three poles, namely, contextualization, distantiation and appropriation. The framework is crucial to the study because it provides the design of this thesis that begins from the context to the text and end with the dialogue. This chapter is a contextualization phase of the tri-polar model that seeks to analyze the context of the interpreter and his/her community (Nyirimana, 2010:41). As pointed out in Chapter Two, the context refers to the background against which a text is to be interpreted. It can be an existing human community such as a local church, ethnic group or country designated as the subject of interpretation with the people's worldview, and historical, social, economic, political and religious life experiences (Ukpong, 1995:6). In this study, the Malawi socio-economic and political situation is the context branded as the subject of interpretation.

Malawi has been independent for fifty one years now, but life for many Malawians is a struggle for survival. The country continues to be rated among the ten poorest countries in the world and suffers many socio-economic and political problems that retard development. The situation helps us to understand why John Saul (2008:41) has qualified decolonization that took place between 1960 and 1990 in Southern Africa as "false." He observes that while there was clear attestation of decolonization, it remains true that it was without substance of liberation, especially in socio-economic terms, for those, the vast majority, at the bottom of social ladder in freshly "liberated" countries. This suggests that when decolonization was taking place in Malawi in 1964, simultaneously, there was recolonization of the same. Here, decolonization should be understood as a process that facilitates all kinds of freedoms, including economic freedom.

The state of affairs demonstrates that postcolonial Malawi deals with new face of colonialism that is capitalistically inclined and is called economies of extraction. It is a particular form of capitalism that cripples economic growth of African countries and is the main cause of

Malawi‟s problems. Therefore, this chapter defines Malawi‟s situation by analysing her politics and economics, which are the main underlying forces behind the social life of the nation. To achieve this, the two aspects will be examined using postcolonial and liberation theories. The understanding is that since liberation theory puts more emphasis on economics, the use of postcolonial theory will have a strong economic orientation because of our use of liberationist theory. As pointed out in Chapter Two, this will be a sort of postcolonial and Marxist theory.

In view of this, our point of departure must be a look at the missionary-colonial era (1859-1961) because much of Malawi‟s political and economic foundational history springs from that period. Before dealing with postcolonial history of Malawi (1964 to present), which takes us through the political change of 1992-94, we shall discuss the transition period of 1961-64 addressing events leading to Malawi‟s independence of 1964. The task of this paper is motivated by the question: Why is Malawi, even after fifty one years of independence, still rated among ten poorest countries in the world with over half of its populace still living below poverty line? The aim of this chapter is to illustrate how internal politics and external forms of imperialism work concurrently in creating socio-economic problems of Malawi.

3.1 Political and Economic History of Malawi

The land known as Malawi did not exist up until the Christian Missionary era. This does not mean that there were no people living in this area. Andrew Ross (2009:13) says there was a large piece of land in the early eighteenth century comprising the land east of Luangwa in modern Zambia and parts of Mozambique as well as modern Malawi. The Portuguese referred to this piece of land as the Maravi or Malawi Empire. The present-day Malawi takes its name from the Maravi people, but its boundaries encompass only a part of the old Maravi Empire (McMaster, 1974:11). There seems to have been one recognized king or paramount, the Kalonga, to whom the Maravi pledged allegiance until the late sixteenth century when a dispute over succession occurred and Undi became the king (Williams, 1978:24). Although the central political authority was vested in Chief Undi, the Maravi Empire does not appear to have been a centralized state like that of the Mwene Mutapa in Zimbabwe or of Shaka‟s amaZulu; it would rather appear to have been a much looser type of political organization of people who shared a common culture and language, while honouring one chieftaincy as primary (Ross, 2009:13).

The Maravi were people of the Bantu race. Archaeological digging have shown that up to about 8000 and 10000 years ago there were people in the land we now call Malawi, but they were not Bantu in race (Phiri, 2004:13-15). The land was occupied by a race of dwarf people who were known as Batwa (Kafula) or Pygmies. Phiri (2004:14) says traditional historians remember almost vividly their encounter with a short brown people whom they alternatively called Kafula or Mwandionerapati.[5] Many wars were fought between the Bantu and the Kafula and the latter were defeated and driven out of their lands (Phiri, 2004:15). By the year 1000 A.D. people of Bantu race, such as Yao, Lomwe and Sena had settled in the lands northwest and south of Lake Malawi to the effect that when the Maravi, Tonga and Tumbuka peoples arrived they found these Bantu peoples already dwelling in the land (Phiri, 2004:15). Of course, we are not spending time discussing history of how different groups of people migrated into Malawi, but for the sake of our argument, we will mention some of the key factors that led to people‟s migration into this area.[6]

McCracken (2012:9) observes that because of favourable conditions available in this environmental zone, ever since records have been kept, population density in Malawi region has always been considerably greater than in any of her East and Central African neighbours. He adds that over the last century Malawi has had the reputation of being a peculiarly impoverished territory, well known for its export labour; yet, for much of its pre-colonial history, the region has functioned as a place of refuge for people from the surrounding areas affected by drought (McCracken, 2012:9). Access to permanent water supplies and comparatively reliable rainfall in the area are some of the factors that attracted immigrants into Malawi region (McCracken, 2012:10). The general level of soil fertility is high and is good for the successful cultivation of a wide range of crops (Williams, 1978:22).

This helps us to see that Malawi was inhabited before the first missionaries came. However, as T. David Williams (1978:21) puts it, the influence of ancient tribal inhabitancy owes less to the boundaries of contemporary Malawi since they follow natural geographical lines

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[5] The name "Mwandionerapati" arose out of the habit these people had of asking a man of normal stature; 'At what spot did you first see me?' They were very sensitive about their stature. If you answered, 'I just saw you just here' he would start attacking you because you implied that he was too short to be seen at a distance (see Phiri, 2004:14).

[6] Phiri (2004:8-100); McCracken (2000:29-45); and Williams (1978:21-36) have detailed discussion on the history of how people migrated into Malawi in the earliest times.

dividing it from neighbouring countries than following ethnic composition. McMaster (1974:11) observes that definition of the boundaries involved negotiations with the German and Portuguese governments, the British South Africa Company, and the African Lakes Company, and little attention was paid to tribal areas of settlement. The area of land that is modern Malawi was defined by decisions made during what is called in the European imperial history as „the Scramble for Africa" (Ross, 2009:13). Therefore, when we say Malawi did not exist, it simply means that there was no nation known as Malawi with the present borders.

3.1.1 Missionary-Colonial Era: British Settlement and African Response 1859-1964

Keen observers of the history of Malawi will agree that the account of Malawi"s political and economic history is indebted to the work of Scottish Missions at Livingstonia and Blantyre, who played a significant role in the establishment of Malawi nation. It would be impossible to fully understand the modern nation of Malawi without reference to them (Ross, 1996a:13). The aim of these missions was not only to preach the Christian gospel but also with the support of the African Lakes Company (ALC) of Glasgow, to help develop the economy of what is now Malawi (Ross, 1996a:14). So, they came to the shores of Lake Malawi and the Shire Highlands with an attitude that defined their missionary task as helping Africans to develop Africa for themselves (Ross, 1996a:14). David Clement Scott, one of great leaders of Blantyre Mission is quoted saying: "Africa for the Africans has been our policy from the first, and we believe that God has given this country into our hands that we may train its people how to develop its marvellous resources for themselves."[7]

Their missionary task was founded on David Livingstone"s dream of bringing Christianity alongside commerce and civilization to Africa. Livingstone believed that collaboration of the three Cs would assist in transforming people"s social, economic, political and spiritual lives. Christianity was viewed as the driving force to the missionary task since it was assumed that changed people have the capacity to transform communities. Commerce encompassed institution of legitimate trade and commercial agriculture was meant to replace slave trade with the aim of raising living standards of African people. Lastly, civilization among African communities was facilitated through introduction of education, good governments, and

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[7] Scott, D. C. 1895. Blantyre Missionaries Journal *Life and Work in the British Central Africa*, January Issue.

medical facilities. Through this dream, Livingstone had envisioned people of southern Africa entering the modern world as equal partners with Europeans (Ross, 1996a:14).

Along these lines, Livingstone understood the whole missionary task as a project meant to benefit Africans more than Europeans. This needs emphasis because, to Livingstone and first missionaries, it was the focus of the whole mission. They anticipated a day when Africans themselves would take up the heritage of civilized, Christian and industrial society with full rights of shaping and controlling the economic and political life of their country (Williams, 1978:57). This was in direct opposition to the attitude of Cecil John Rhodes as he led the expansion of white settlement northwards out of South Africa (Ross, 1996a:14). British rule in Malawi was due to the challenges the Scottish missionaries faced that forced them to ask for British protection. In essence, as Ross (1996a:15) puts it, this was not a request for British rule over Malawi, but rather a request for British Government to prevent any other colonial power from entering the area.

While this view sounds plausible, I think the question: "Whose side were the Christians really on?" raised by Jean and John Comaroff (1991:7), requires our serious consideration bearing in mind of the consequences of that decision. Although it is raised from South African context, the answer to the question helps us to understand the intentions of the missionaries in asking for British rule. As we shall see, establishment of British rule was also the beginning of many problems for poor Malawians. Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:7) point out that contribution of missionaries to the modern African predicament was judged in terms of their political role. In this sense, the missionaries were understood as facilitators of colonialism. They were labelled imperialists for they overplayed economic and political factors in their missionary expansion (Comaroff and Comaroff, 1991:7). Thus, for better or worse, this was the beginning of British interference into Malawian politics; their meddling played a significant role in distorting Livingstone"s dream for East and Central Africa.

Of course there are no precedents to show that something worked out elsewhere in keeping with what Livingstone wanted; nevertheless, I would like to argue that if imperialists and postcolonial Malawi had fully lived up to Livingstone"s dream, Malawi would not be counted among the ten poorest countries in the world today. I am saying this because, using Livingstone"s dream, the Scottish missionaries intended to bring about an economic and

social revolution in the country that would end the slave trade, eradicate poverty, and enable Africans to claim their rights and duties as co-inheritors of civilisation (Williams, 1978:45). The ALC collaborated with the missionaries in encouraging the development of legitimate commerce among Africans, in the expectation that this would reduce dependence on the slave trade. In view of this, I have marked the year 1859 to be our point of departure as we trace the political and economic history of Malawi. It was the year of Livingstone‟s first visit to Malawi region, which also marks the initial informal involvement of Britain in the area (McCracken, 2012:2).

3.1.1.1 Dr David Livingstone: Contribution to the Making of Malawi

In 1856, after working with the London Missionary Society for fifteen years, Livingstone returned to Britain where he began sensitizing people about Africa and encouraging them to be involved in the fight against slave trade. It was during this furlough in Britain, while addressing a series of meetings, notably his Cambridge lectures of 4th - 5th December 1857, that Livingstone made a famous appeal to a very large audience consisting of graduates, undergraduates and visitors from the town and neighbourhood (Nkomazana, 1998:44). He said:

> I beg to direct your attention to Africa: I know that in a few years I shall be cut off in that country, which is now open; do not let it be shut again! I go back to Africa to make an open path for commerce and Christianity; do you carry out the work which I have begun. I LEAVE IT WITH YOU! (Livingstone, 1858:24).

It appears that his advocacy work on behalf of the African continent yielded returns because immediately after his speech the British government decided to send an expedition with a mandate to open up links with the interior of Central Africa and establish firm contact with African chiefs and kings (Phiri, 2004:112). Livingstone was appointed leader of the Zambezi Expedition as well as Britain‟s Consul at Quelimane. The expedition was considered by many a failure, although it became a blessing in disguise for the Malawi region.

One of the obstacles leading to the failure was Cabora Bassa rapids on Zambezi River that made navigation difficult; the party could not proceed by boat and had to take a land route to reach Shire River, which proved to be more navigable than the Zambezi (Phiri, 2004:113). Williams (1978:38) described Livingstone‟s first visit to Malawi in 1859 as a more potent instrument of change because it was the beginning of social, political, economic and spiritual

transformation of Malawi. In April 1859, he and John Kirk, a young Scottish doctor and botanist travelled to Lake Chilwa in Zomba and the Shire Highlands which they both regarded as a suitable site for a Christian mission and cotton-growing colony (McCracken, 2012:39).[8] On 17 September 1859 he reached the south-end of Lake Malawi.

Perhaps another episode that was pressing and might have contributed to the failure of the expedition was the death of Livingstone˝s wife, Mary, who died at Shupanga in Mozambique in 1862 and was buried there (McCracken, 2012:40, 43). Similarly, the threat posed by the Portuguese, which grew increasingly hostile, contributed to the failure of the expedition. McCracken says:

> The threat that the Portuguese might levy prohibitive tariffs at the Zambezi mouth was a drawback sufficiently severe to lead Livingstone into two explorations of the Ruvuma, a river, as he noted, "exterior to Portuguese claims." But by the end of 1862 it was clear that for those who believed that the best means of linking the interior with the coast was by steamer, the Shire-Lake Malawi route was the only one to aim for (McCracken, 2008:49).

The Portuguese saw Britain˝s involvement in Central Africa as a European rival˝s intervention in their sphere of influence (McCracken, 2012:40). Furthermore, sour relations and disagreements existed between Livingstone and his fellow whites, which could have contributed to the failure of the expedition (Phiri, 2004:112). Phiri (2004:112) observes that Livingstone as a leader was much better when he was surrounded by Africans; with his fellow whites he proved incompetent suggesting that he often disagreed with them.

James Stewart is on record that he expressed his disillusionment with Livingstone when he first visited the Shire Highlands in 1861 (McCracken, 2012:41). Unfortunately, Stewart had arrived at the very time that the famine was beginning to take its toll (McCracken, 2012:41). This meant that he was not able to see much of what Livingstone had promised during his lectures in Cambridge and London. Almost no cotton could be found and primitive methods of spinning were in use so that it was clear that no commercial benefit could be gained from them (McCracken, 2000:53-54). Expressing his disappointment with Livingstone he said:

> His accursed lies have caused much toil, trouble, anxiety and loss of life, as well as money and reputation and I have been led a dance over half the world to accomplish nothing (Wallis, 1952:125).

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[8] Phiri (2004:113) emphasizes that Livingstone's eyes and heart had been drawn to the beauty and climate of the Shire Highlands, which very much reminded him of Scotland's highlands.

After this Stewart returned to Britain. While there, in November 1863, he presented to his committee a report that catalogued the obstacles overlooked in Livingstone's earlier dispatches, such as those mentioned above and the one that touched on the climate of the river valley, which he thought was unfavourable to the health of white men (McCracken, 2000:54).

The portrayal of Livingstone disagreeing with fellow whites confirms that his concept of the missionary enterprise differed from that of most of his colleagues among the missionaries of the London Missionary Society (Nkomazana, 1998:44). While his colleagues understood the missionary task as strictly for evangelization purposes, Livingstone saw Christian missions as autonomous centres that provided for all the people's social, economic, political and spiritual needs (Nkomazana, 1998:44). Livingstone and his party were recalled to Britain in 1863 after the British government saw that the expedition did not achieve its original goals. Although he was bitterly disappointed, yet he was not broken down completely. Livingstone himself remained committed to the idea of establishing a small colony of British immigrants in the Shire Highland (McCracken, 2012:41-42).

Although the second expedition was considered a failure, for Livingstone and his colleagues it was a success in that they were able to locate land suitable for missionary activities. After failing to pass through Cabora Bassa cataracts, Livingstone was directed to Shire Highlands using the Shire River. When Livingstone entered the Shire River on New Year's Day 1859, he was looking for land that could be colonized by British or, more especially, Scottish missionaries, artisans and farmers and would be commercially attractive to British merchants (Williams, 1978:38). Although it may be disputed that Livingstone was not the first white man to set eyes on what is now Lake Malawi, Williams (1978:39) argues that he was the first to arrive in the country with the firm intention of bringing it to the notice of the most powerful nations in the world. Livingstone was convinced that he had found a country rich in natural wealth; food was abundant, he wrote, and cotton was already produced on a large scale (William, 1978:39).

More importantly, the expedition led him to Malawi where he was exposed to the evils of slave trade. Williams writes: "He had long since acquired a horror of the slave trade and was greatly distressed that so much of the cotton and sugar imported into Britain was produced by

slave labor in the southern states of America" (William, 1978:39). Livingstone believed that if land could be found where these products could be cultivated efficiently by free men, it would not only bring commercial benefit to his countrymen but would strike a blow at the very heart of slavery in the Western world (William, 1978:39). It is clear that Livingstone was saddened by the gravity of slave trade in this part of Africa. He described the scourge of slave trade as "the open sore of Africa." It appears that his vision of Christianity, commerce, and civilization was formulated mainly to counteract the evils of slave trade, which he termed as the greatest enemy of Africa (Nkomazana, 1998:44). Livingstone saw the problems of slave trade and illiteracy to be among the greatest blocks to Christian progress and economic progress in Africa (Nkomazana, 1998:44).

Because his heart was in Africa and that he remained committed to the idea of establishing a small British colony in the Shire Highlands, in 1866 Livingstone set out on a third expedition to Africa (McCracken, 2012:41-42). His difficulties this time were greater than before: he was alone, without any other white man to accompany him; both British Government and London Missionary Society had withdrawn financial support so that Livingstone had to rely on the money earned from the sale of his books and financial donations from friends (Phiri, 2004:113). There was no communication between Livingstone and his countrymen and rumours started spreading in Britain that he had died. They were turned down when Morton Stanley found Livingstone at Ujiji in October 1871.[9] He supplied Livingstone with medicine and goods he had run short of and when he was asked to go back with Stanley, he refused because his heart was in Africa (Phiri, 2004:114).

On the morning of 1st May 1873, his faithful friends Susi and Chuma found him kneeling beside his bed, but he was dead (Phiri, 2004:113). "Found dead on his knees" was a symbol of his obedience to God's call. His heart was buried at Chitambo in Zambia, while his body was taken to Britain by his faithful friends and was buried in Westminster Abbey with one of the rarest honours given to the truly great in Great Britain. Williams (1978:43) observes that Livingstone's achievements of his last years were almost completely irrelevant to the purposes with which he was most closely identified, but his life, work and example led to the establishment of missionary enterprises in Malawi. Certainly, exploits of his last expedition –

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[9] Phiri (2004:114) says in America, a newspaper called *New York Herald,* hired Henry Morton Stanley to go to Africa and find out what had actually happened to the explorer.

the false report of his murder, the meeting of Stanley and, finally, the picturesque death at Chitambo village in Zambia – all contributed to a massive resurgence of interest in his work.

3.1.1.1.1 Critics of Livingstone and His Interpretation of Missionary Task

Critics of Livingstone have often misinterpreted him as an imperialist, who was a conscious promoter of European colonization of Africa. Nkomazana (1998:45) quotes Cecil Northcott, one of the critics who said:

> Livingstone was a colonialist and was not ashamed of it. He was in Africa to offer the benefits of the white man's civilization, and no latter day beliefs in the black man's freedom, liberation and independence may be read into his actions (Nkomazana, 1998:45).

Livingstone's passion to get British administration more involved in spreading Christianity, commerce and civilisation in Africa and the fusion of the three in the development of Africa, became for some a pretext for imperial exploitation (Conradie, 2013:121). Also, the whole effort of partition of Africa (1885-1895), was viewed by imperialists as Europe's response to Livingstone's famous appeal to the outside world to intervene to end the east African slave trade (Conradie, 2013:121). Through this, they were able to distort Livingstone's dream.

So, Livingstone's vision, which was meant to build and develop Africa by eradicating human suffering, poverty and illiteracy, become a tool for enriching and building the British Empire. Conradie (2013:121-122) helps us to understand how colonialists used Livingstone's dream for their own gain. He says imperial powers used Christianity to open up areas for expansion and to pacify communities; thus, Christianity came to be seen in many cases as a religion of the white-man and of the oppressor. Civilization was used to impose the will of the imperial powers and to adjust communities to patterns of „Civilized Europe" in order to produce goods for the „Mother country." In this way, the people were burdened by the perceived western way of life and civilization became synonymous with colonialism and oppression. Commerce was used to advance economic interest and self-enrichment of colonizers and individuals such as Cecil John Rhodes. The imperialists used natural resources and cheap labour of local communities, which resulted into people being burdened with the psychological and social impact of labour abuse (Conradie, 2013:122). Thus, commerce became synonymous with multi-national capitalism that enriches a few and impoverishes the masses.

While it may be arguable that Livingstone"s determination to open up Africa for Christianity, commerce and civilization, ultimately contributed to European imperialism, it would be a wrong assumption to say that Livingstone consciously promoted it (Nkomazana, 1998:45). On the contrary, he believed that the key to Africa"s future was the stimulation of indigenous development and good government. Thus, Livingstone was against any form of domination of Africans, and never tried to acquire personal riches or power at their expense. He refused to be associated with individuals whose sole aim in Africa was to colonize and create permanent settlements for selfish reasons (Nkomazana, 1998:45). His intention was aimed neither at undermining institutions of people, nor simply introducing western economics and forms of colonization, but that Livingstone genuinely believed that combining Christianity, commerce and civilization would not only benefit Africans, but was also based on very sound humane and practical grounds (Nkomazana, 1998:45).

Livingstone understood the plight of Africans and the motives of some whites for coming to Africa, which helped him to see that the key to Africa"s future was stimulation of indigenous development and good government. He was conscious of the fact that European commerce without Christianity and civilization scandalously exploited Africa (Nkomazana, 1998:45). So, Livingstone carefully crafted his vision to demonstrate that Christianity, commerce and civilization had interests in common and that they could unashamedly support one another (Nkomazana, 1998:44). Christianity provided principles for moral guidance to facilitate honesty in wealth-producing business; legitimate commerce encouraged Africans to produce their own goods from their fertile soil to trade with Europeans and the proceeds would help further Christianity (see Porter, 1985:597; Nkomazana, 1998:44).

Consequently, as Christianity and commerce become established in Africa, civilization will take place. Their united effect would improve the life and prosperity of Africans, stem the loss of population caused by slave trade, and transform the more violent institutions of African society (Nkomazana, 1998:45). In a region such as central Africa, which was dominated by the inhumane activities of his fellow Europeans and Arab-Swahili in the form of slave trade, Livingstone believed that human suffering could only be alleviated by introducing genuine and legitimate commerce, and good government guided by Christian principles (Nkomazana, 1998:44). By this, he understood that genuine socioeconomic and spiritual transformation of communities could only be achieved by opening Africa to genuine

commerce and education, and making it a peaceful environment for the spreading of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

3.1.1.2 Scottish Missionaries and Colonial Government

Before dealing with the work of missionaries and subsequent colonial rule in Malawi, it is important to mention that Livingstone was not the first foreigner to visit Malawi. The Arabs were the first, but they never intended to settle or to form a nation. The only recorded Arab settler was Jumbe, who in 1840 had opened a trading post at Nkhotakota (Phiri, 2004:198). He was in charge of the principle crossing point on the west bank of Lake Malawi and had acquired the power that was being lost by traditional rulers whose people were devastated by slave trade (Williams, 1978:32). This is brought into perspective to help us appreciate the role Livingstone played in the transformation of Malawi. The Scottish missionaries, who had followed his vision, founded the Malawi nation on Christian values that nurtured government policies and encouraged legitimate and fair trade to all peoples. Reading Livingstone"s vision, one could appreciate that his sole aim was to create another Great Britain in Africa. He was aware of the social, economic and political problems of Great Britain of his day; however, he modelled African countries after Britain as yardstick for measuring the kind of civilization he had imagined for Africa.

Livingstone"s life, work and example led to the establishment of missionary enterprises that came and settled in Malawi. The Universities" Mission to Central Africa of Church of England had its initial attempt to establish a mission in the Shire Highlands at Magomero in 1861 during Livingstone"s second expedition. Unfortunately they encountered difficulties and had to withdraw the whole mission to Zanzibar.[10] Livingstonia Mission of Free Church of Scotland and Blantyre Mission of Church of Scotland were inspired and responded to Livingstone"s call for Christianity, commerce and civilization to be brought to Central Africa.

In 1875, the Livingstonia Mission came and settled first at Cape Maclear on the southern tip of Lake Malawi. The mission was later in 1881 moved to Bandawe in the northern part of Malawi. A year later, in 1876, the Blantyre Mission arrived and opened a mission station in the Shire Highlands of southern Malawi. Thus, the two missions opened up the country to

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[10] For more information about UMCA's early activities in Malawi see McCracken (2012:39-40; 45, 56); Phiri (2004:115-118); and Williams (1978:40-42).

other missions. In 1881 the UMCA returned to Malawi and began evangelizing on the east coast of Lake Malawi and in 1885, a diocesan centre on Likoma Island was opened (McCracken, 2012:105). In 1889, the Cape Colony branch of the Dutch Reformed Church founded the first DRC station at Mvera. The Catholics came in 1901 followed by Evangelical Churches. Collectively, these missions contributed significantly to religious transformation of Malawi. Through integration of Christian faith and African life, an indigenous Christianity became a vibrant force shaping Malawian life and culture (Ross, 1996a:13-14).

The missionaries replaced slave trade with legitimate trade and commercial agriculture where crops such as tea, coffee, cotton and many others were introduced as cash crops. Livingstone had appealed for opening of Central Africa not just to Christianity but to commerce trusting that the two were necessary to heal the „open sore of Africa" – slave trade (Phiri, 2004:121). After nearly two years of operation, the Scottish missionaries realised the need for another organization that would concern itself mainly with commercial matters (Phiri, 2004:121). Thus, Glasgow businessmen who financed the Free Church mission also set up a trading company, African Lakes Company (ALC), with a capital of about £30,000 (Williams 1978:46; see also Phiri, 2004:121). The company's main objective was to supply missionaries and missions of any denomination with commercial goods they might require. In addition, the company was supposed to trade with Africans and try to turn them away from slave trade.

As part of the civilization package, the Scottish Missions opened up mission schools such as Henry Henderson Institute at Blantyre Mission and Robert Laws at Livingstonia Mission where most of the country's political and religious leaders, diplomats and civic leaders owe their education. As mission schools began to produce more literate people, some of them began to question the prevailing unequal status between whites and indigenous people.[11] This was critical to the history of Malawi as it provided an alternative channel for African involvement in political development and government of their country (Ross, 2009:21-2). Therefore, mission schools proved to be seedbeds of a nationalistic movement which finally succeeded in achieving independence for Malawi in 1964 (Ross, 1996a:13). It was Christian values they upheld that led them to fight for Malawi's independence. Also, as part of the

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[11]McMaster (1974:12) mentions that the most comprehensive and advanced educational system was in the Northern Region; it had a lasting effect on the political development of the territory.

civilization package, hospitals were introduced in mission centres that offered health services to surrounding indigenous people.

3.1.1.2.1 The Beginning of Colonial Rule in Malawi

From Livingstone"s second expedition, which was the beginning of British interest in Central Africa, the Portuguese had been a problem posing constant threat to any operation in the interior (Ross, 1996a:85). Williams (1978:46) observes that Scottish missionaries and the ALC were worried about the possibility of Portuguese expansion into Nyasaland. He adds that the ALC was particularly concerned because goods bound for the company from Britain were obliged to pass through Portuguese territory. The missionaries could not resolve the problem as it required diplomatic activity on a level that was beyond reach of the missionaries or the ALC (Ross, 1996a:85). So, by the end of 1880s, the Scottish Missions were calling for the British colonization of the area (Thompson, 2005:576). Thompson (2005:576) says their fears were that if the British failed to act, it would inevitably lead to Portuguese (Catholic) control of the area and possible expulsion of Protestant missionaries (as indeed happened later in Mozambique).

This was not the first time the missionaries request British intervention. In the early years of their missionary work (1870s), Scottish missionaries had frequently requested the appointment of a British consul in the area as a means of reinforcing the anti-slavery campaign, but to no avail (McCracken, 2012:50). The failure of the Zambezi expedition contributed to British reluctance to interfere in Malawi"s affairs. The British government saw no financial or strategic value in intervening directly, particularly as access to the Zambezi and Shire continued to be controlled by the Portuguese (McCracken, 2012:50). In fact, at the partition of Africa the British government was willing to leave the whole territory to the Portuguese, but the Scottish missionaries would not have it and so Malawi"s boarders were negotiated to keep it a British area (Ross, 1996b:84).

Likewise, Scottish missionaries opposed Cecil John Rhodes" proposal of absorbing the African Lakes Company into his British South Africa Company in order to take over the government of Nyasaland Districts so that he could offer protection to mission stations (McCracken, 2012:57). His proposal meant relegation of all interests, missionary, trader, settler and especially native interests, to the sole judgment of a large monopolizing

commercial concern (McCracken, 2012:57). This was firmly opposed by Scott and Hetherwick of the Blantyre Mission, arguing that they had been advocating the love that is enshrined in the Bible and feared that if Rhodes came in with his smash-and-grab and men, Africans would view missionaries as traitors who had spoken a sweet language to prepare them for enslavement of another type (Phiri, 2004:212). The missionaries were aware that an official British presence in the area would ensure their capacity to carry out their work (Williams, 1978:49). It is not clear, though, to what extent the missionaries understood the repercussions of their request at this particular time. This is why the question: "Whose side were the Christians really on?" needs to be considered.

In trying to answer this question, Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:8) observe that missionaries" involvement in the establishment of British rule is of great concern here. It is undisputable; missionaries paved the way for colonialism. Their role in reorganizing relations of production in rural communities, in abetting the penetration of capital and fostering the rise of peasant agriculture, and in encouraging the emergence of classes, the rise of black elites, and the availability of tractable industrial labor, makes people think they were on the side of colonial masters. But because there was continual hostility, as we shall see, between missionaries and British colonial government throughout the seventy three years of British rule in Malawi, we can argue that it was not a request for British rule over Malawi but rather a request for British government to prevent any other colonial power from entering the area, as indicated above (see Pike, 1968:93 cf. Ross, 1996a:15). All in all, Malawi was eventually declared a British-claimed territory on 14th May 1891 and Harry Johnston, who had been British consul in Mozambique since 1889, was appointed commissioner and consul general (see Phiri, 2004:213-214 and Williams, 1978:52).

Missionaries might have realized what they desired; although it was the beginning of more difficulties for the people of Malawi. Notwithstanding the fact that Christianity has allegedly been among the more effective agents of change in Africa, Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:7) are of the view that it was one of the technologies of European domination. In line with this, Sugirtharajah (2012:9-10) observes that European politicians, historians, and theologians talk about the benefits that came with colonialism, such as the railways, the rule of law and education; but they conveniently forget the tyranny, torture, poverty, desolation of lands, and destruction of cultures that accompanied the empire. At the helm of colonization process was

a missionary who has been condemned as an agent of imperialism. Comaroff and Comaroff say:

> The condemnation was extended also to scholarly apologies that portrayed European churchmen as well-intentioned philanthropists or benign imperialists; such accounts being seen by their critics as modern expressions of the same missionizing culture (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991:7).

Looking at the role the missionaries played in reorganizing relations of production in rural communities; abetting the penetration of capital and fostering the rise of peasant agriculture; and encouraging the emergence of classes, the rise of black elites, and the availability of tractable industrial labor, one can say their missionary task was driven by imperial concerns (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991:7). In a way, they facilitated long-term processes of colonial conquest, capitalist expansion, state formation and proletarianization (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991:7).

3.1.1.3 Economic History of Malawi in the Missionary-Colonial Era

Not only did the British establish territorial hegemony through force, they also brought about a fundamental reshaping of the country‟s economy along lines that are still familiar today (McCracken, 2012:74). For us to understand economic implications attached to the establishment of British rule, we need first to get to grips with the economy of Malawi in pre-colonial period. For a clear understanding of Malawi‟s pre-colonial economic life, we are deeply indebted to the work of McCracken (2012:11-19) and Phiri (2004:245-246). The two have presented an economic history that helps us understand how the people earned their living at that particular period.

3.1.1.3.1 Economy of Malawi in Pre-Colonial Era

Phiri (2004:245) points out that before the whites came to settle, farm and rule, Malawians like most other Africans lived a largely self-sufficient life. Everyone cultivated his own crops, built his own hut and did almost everything else to make life comfortable according to the standards of the day. Mostly, household mode of production was in use with a number of economic activities taking place throughout the country, which included: agriculture, animal husbandry, cotton production (cotton cloth making), smelting of iron, salt production, fishing and hunting. McCracken (2012:13-18) provides a detailed account showing parts of the country where each of these economic activities was prominent. But all over Malawi, the

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people were agrarians because they all depended on agriculture for daily living. It is reported that when Livingstone and other missionaries made their first visit to Malawi, they found people growing such crops as tobacco, sugarcane, groundnuts and rice, but not tea and coffee.[12]

Phiri (2004:245) observes that because everyone was trying to do everything for himself, about everyone had something of his own, and did not need to exchange his products for those of others. He says:

> Seldom were things produced in great abundance for people to engage in much trade…The use of money as we know it today was unknown. Trade was largely by means of barter. This means goods were exchanged for goods. If you had a cow but needed a bag of maize you had to find someone who had maize and was looking for a cow. It was not easy to find such a person. Still trade did take place between people in the same village or different villages (Phiri, 2004:245).

McCracken (2012:18) points out that it was trade that brought Malawians into contact with a wider international economy. People started engaging in more trade when foreigners came in search of ivory, but the earliest known traders were Bisa people from northeast Zambia, who had come looking for elephant tusks and rhino horns in exchange for calico and beads (Phiri, 2004:245). The Bisa, who acted as agents of Arabs and Swahilis at Kilwa and Zanzibar, were in contact with Yao traders from east of Lake Malawi who entered the elephant-rich Nkhamanga area in 1770s and 1780s and began hunting and trading for ivory and skins (McCracken, 2012:19). Later, Arabs and Swahilis started arriving in the country themselves instead of depending on agents. Besides ivory, they now wanted slaves to carry the ivory (Phiri, 2004:246).

Phiri (2004:246) observes that although the first missionaries and the traders of the African Lakes Company vigorously campaigned against slave trade, and definitely saved the lives of thousands of people from dreadful conditions and deaths due to hardships, agents of the ALC took a prominent part in the purchase of ivory. He says:

> Indirectly they thus took part in the destruction of the elephant population. Frederick Moir travelled with a large caravan to Ujiji, Tanzania, to buy ivory from the Arabs there. Alfred Sharpe who later became the first British administrator to wear the title of governor came primarily to hunt elephants for their ivory. After retiring from service he returned to Malawi to continue his hunting (Phiri, 2004:246).

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[12] This is why we have Malawian names for tobacco (fodya), cotton (thonje), sugarcane (mzimbe) and rice (mpunga). For coffee and tea people just speak *khofi* and *tii*, words modified from English (Phiri, 2004:247).

The trade that took place before Malawi became British protectorate should be understood as one based on extraction of natural wealth from the forest since nothing was done to replenish that which was being taken out (Phiri, 2004:246). Here, we notice that as an important centre for international trade, Malawi became part of the wider international economy. In this way, the country was exposed to the evils shaped by economies of extraction that were taking root even before the British rule.

3.1.1.3.2 The Pursuit of Economic Viability under British Rule

After Malawi became a British protectorate in 1891, two circumstances, one geographical, her landlocked position, and one geological, the scarcity of mineral resources, shaped economic infrastructure that developed in Malawi in the colonial era (McMaster, 1974:31). Unlike Zimbabwe and Zambia where minerals dominated their economies, Malawi relies on agriculture for its economy. Also, its landlocked position makes transportation of goods to and fro Malawi difficult. Had Livingstone's legacy, the Zambezi-Shire highway, functioned as the explorer had hoped, as a smoothly functioning artery for international trade, the problem of Nyasaland's geographical isolation might have been overcome (McCracken, 2012:75). McMaster (1974:32) observes that if Malawi had possessed large and easily accessible deposits of valuable minerals, such as copper or gold, her pattern both of transportation development and European settlement would have been very different.

This does not mean that Malawi does not have minerals. There are some minerals of economic potential in Malawi. The only problem is that mining was negligible during colonial days due to insufficient information about the extent of deposits.[13] Thus, the moment British rule was established in Malawi, it was clear that agriculture was going to be the source of Malawi's economy. By this time, long distance trade in gathered items such as ivory declined and was gradually replaced by trade in agricultural staples: principally coffee, cotton and tobacco (McCracken, 2012:74). It must be highlighted, here, before we continue, that colonies were acquired for the benefit of the parent state, and unless they were needed for strategic reasons they were expected to pay for themselves (Williams, 1978:58). In the

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[13] The most valuable resource is a deposit of nearly 60 million tons of good quality bauxite on Mulanje Plateau, but its extraction would depend upon the availability of cheap coal and electricity (see McMaster, 1974:32).

case of Malawi, Johnston was given authority by the Foreign Office to administer the Protectorate but without adequate financial support to hire civil servants (Phiri, 2004:214).

Before taking a look at how Johnston sustained his administration, we need to consider the attitude of the Foreign Office in the whole saga of establishment of British rule in Malawi. It is a matter of curiosity. Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:276) say the mission correspondence of the period is filled with reports of the seizure of land by the whites, their plunder of cattle, and their indiscriminate reduction of the local communities to "abject vassalage." This raises a question as to what extent the Foreign Office was involved. To deny that the Foreign Office was not part of these atrocities is a fallacy. We need to be reminded that imperialism involves taking possession of colonized lands, minds, economies, political institutions and culture and rearrange them according to the interests and values of the imperializing powers (Dube, 1996:26-30). Based on what has been established so far, it is clear that the devices that Johnston used at the establishment of British rule in Malawi were part of a well-known strategy that was cooked in the Foreign Office.

To sustain his administration, Johnston had to raise extra money accrued from taxes levied on Africans. Williams (1978:58) states that this was severely constrained by the meagre income-earning possibilities open to Africans, which were largely determined in the short run by the demand of European-run estates and trading companies for wage labor. It follows, then, that Africans, who previously had no experience of wage employment, were forced to work in European-run estates in order to pay their taxes. In this way, Williams (1978:58) says it was expected that estate agriculture under British government direction, reinforced by British commercial and industrial activities, would provide the means for transforming the economic life of Malawi. Three basic requirements, namely, adequate communications (especially transport), a sufficient and reliable supply of cheap labor, and abundant cheap land, had to be met if European farmers were to establish viable economic institution in Malawi (Williams, 1978:59).

The attempt to meet these requirements was to dominate the political and economic agenda of the colonial administration throughout most of its effective existence (Williams, 1978:60). These efforts of establishing a viable economic program were accompanied by exploitation of African peoples. McCracken (2012:57) observes that the years 1891-1895 were dominated by

the bruising military campaign dedicated to transforming the paper partition into the reality of formal rule. Johnston went about provoking fights with chiefs so that he could subdue them to accept his authority and compel them to pay taxes or else do *thangata* work for the white farmers (Phiri, 2004:214). He had combined these campaigns with the imposition of hut tax where conquered chiefs were instructed to bring in taxes at the rate of six shillings a hut, paid initially either in foodstuffs or else in labour for the government (McCracken, 2012:61). If they resisted, their villages and grain stores were burnt.

McCracken (2012:66) describes the impact of colonial conquest as severe for Malawians in general. He added there was widespread burning of villages, looting of cattle and destruction of grain bins. While commenting on the destruction of Mitoche village in 1893, Alexander Hetherwick writing to Dr A. Scott lamented, "I saw the ruins and the half-burned maize lying scattered over the ground – and a sore sight it was, when one thought of the famine of last season."[14] After each campaign, the chief's land was declared crown land and made available for lease to white planters (Ross, 2009:18). By the 1890s, over 800,000 acres of fertile land, crucial for agricultural economy, had been alienated to a handful of settlers (McCracken, 2012:128). Phiri says:

> When the farmer's purchase was recognized, Johnston issued the purchaser a deed called Certificate of Claim. This document contained a „non-disturbance‟ clause whereby farmers were required not to evict Africans out of the land they were already occupying or evict them out of their gardens. Johnston thought he was being fair to both the previous owners of the land and the new ones (Phiri, 2004:234).

Johnston did not take into account population growth that took place naturally and the land, which was not to be disturbed, soon turned out to be insufficient (Phiri, 2004:234). In 1895, Johnston appointed surveyors who demarcated colonial boundaries as well as those of the huge areas of land acquired by settlers under Certificates of Claim (McCracken, 2012:66). It should be noted, as Ross (2009:18) puts it, that land policy was the source of people's anger and social tension from the time of Johnston on through the whole colonial period of Malawi history and, indeed even later.

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[14] This is taken from correspondence between Hetherwick and Dr A. Scott, 13 June 1893, *National Library of Scotland* (Hetherwick, 1893:7534).

Since agricultural economy at this time required labour, the settlers introduced a form of labour rent well-known as *thangata system*. Succinctly, it is forced labour. This was the practice by which African tenants, living on land allocated to white farmers, were compelled to work for up to two months a year as payment for the land they occupied and as part payment of their hut tax (Thompson, 2005:576). McCracken (2012:129) says in practice, on virtually all estates, *thangata* could be paid only in labour. Some farmers forced their workers to work longer than the days stipulated by government; a labour month usually reckoned as twenty-six working days excluding Sundays, but the farmer would make his men work thirty days (Phiri, 2004:238). In many cases the land in question was the traditional tribal land of the people concerned, and since such labour could be demanded precisely at planting time when local people were trying to plant their own crops, the practice proved very unpopular (Thompson, 2005:576). Phiri (2004:238) observes that this arrangement and its abuse caused a great deal of resentment and was one of the reasons the Chilembwe rising took place.

The introduction of hut and poll taxes in 1891 and their maintenance was not only intended to raise revenue for the running of the colonial administration; it also served as a mechanism of forcing Africans to work on European-run farms (Williams, 1978:73). Williams (1978:73) is of the opinion that tax regulations were aimed at increasing the supply of labour to European employers. To ensure that there was sufficient labour supply on settlers" farms, Johnston doubled the rate of tax on Africans, but those who worked for a European for at least one month during the year were granted exemption from half the tax (Williams, 1978:73). The pressure on Africans to work for European farmers intensified when it became accepted practice for a landowner to pay the taxes of his tenants and then demand that they provide labour services at a time suitable to him to make up for the value of the tax payment (Williams, 1978:73-74). Thus, by paying in cash the taxes of a whole village, a European could claim a month"s work from the owners of huts and if they refused to turn out he could call on the strong arm of the administration (Williams, 1978:74).

Because it was the only system that made European economic pursuit work, *thangata* was there to stay. In consequence, the system continued to aggravate injustices until the 1950s (McCracken, 2012:146). This confirmed that the European settlers had come to Malawi not to pursue Livingstone"s vision, which was to help Africans develop Africa for themselves; but they had come to pursue their own economic interests. In reality, they had come to extract

from African resources in order to build their own empire. Their agenda was clear in the words of Chief Secretary Hector Livingston Duff, who said, "Our first and most natural care was to protect the interest of the British settlers there" (Jones, 1964:68).[15] In addition, Williams says:

> From its inception, one of the most pressing objectives of the colonial administration was to the establishment of conditions that would enable the handful of British settlers in the colony to achieve commercial success, a success sufficient to allow them to maintain a satisfactory standard of life and, in turn, provide the foundations of a viable monetized economy to which the local exchequer could look for a substantial part of its revenue (Williams, 1978:57).

In pursuing these interests, Malawi was ravaged by capitalistically inclined policies that were socially, economically and politically exploitive. They had knowledge of modern agricultural practices, understanding of the foreign markets in which they expected to sell their products and perhaps some useful connections among potential buyers, together with some organizing ability and enough capital to enable them to live for a few years until the farm or estate began to provide them with an adequate income (Williams, 1978:59). Even when they started producing, it was a handful of Europeans and Britain, the parent state, that benefited more than Malawians. The best agricultural products were shipped to Britain where they were sold at higher prices while the African who produced it benefited nothing from the proceeds. In this way, Malawi was understood to be object of extraction where much of its resources were taken out leaving the country undeveloped.

3.1.1.4 Opposition to British Rule: Political Organizations in Malawi

Under these conditions, the only thing missionaries could do was to take the role of the voice of the voiceless. Of course the history of Malawi reveals a long tradition of missionary and local Christian opposition to policies which they regarded as unjust (Thompson, 2005:575). The Church"s contribution to the socio-economic and political transformation of Malawi will be discussed in full in Chapter Four. Because their contribution is enormous, it is unthinkable to justify the history of Malawi without making reference to the work of missionaries and local Christians in the social, economic and political sphere of Malawi. We will notice that throughout the seventy three years of British rule in Malawi, missionaries encouraged and worked side by side with nationalist"s movement in fight for independence of Malawi. The main focus in this section is on indigenous opposition to colonial rule.

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[15] The source of this quotation is a book by Duff (1903), the Chief Secretary himself.

It is interesting to note that opposition to British rule came following economic measures that were set as mechanisms for running the colonial government. As we shall see in Chapter Four, Scottish missionaries, such as David Clement Scott and Alexander Hetherwick of Blantyre Mission and Robert Laws and Donald Fraser of Livingstonia Mission, were critical of Johnston's unjust policies that centred on the relationship between indigenous people and the small but growing number of European settlers (Thompson, 2005:576). Some of the policies they opposed included issues of land, taxes, and *thangata* (forced labour). The most noxious opposition to the whole colonial enterprise, according to Thompson (2005:577), did not come from the Scottish missionaries, but Joseph Booth – one of the few genuinely anti-colonial British missionaries of the period, constantly campaigning for African rights through letters, books and newspaper articles.

Johnston and Alfred Sharpe were later to discover that Booth was a more nuisance than Scott and Hetherwick (Phiri, 2004:152). We shall hear more about him in Chapter Four; but, here, we need to point out that through his example of non-racial behavior and his strong anti-colonial teachings, Booth is known for influencing and mentoring African religious leaders, such as John Chilembwe, Charles Domingo and Elliot Kamwana (McCracken, 2012:107). Here, we particularly mention John Chilembwe for leading an uprising against British rule in 1915. We shall come back to Chilembwe in Chapter Four for an in-depth understanding of his contribution to the making of Malawi. Before we go on, we need to know that there was growing indigenous opposition to British rule even before Chilembwe's rebellion.

The arrival of white people first as missionaries, then traders and lastly as rulers, created a new situation where Africans started to see themselves as black while others white or brown (Phiri, 2010:43). Phiri (2010:43) observes that before foreigners came, Africans were known by their tribal names; now they heard Europeans calling them natives or Africans when they meant to be polite or else names such as Nigger, savages, which Chilembwe had condemned. Yes, Africans admired many good things that Europeans brought, but with these good things colonizers had also brought forms of harassment unknown before such as taxation of men and women even widows (Phiri, 2010:43). All these common experiences made people of diverse tribes feel that they were one people, a subject people and must speak to their rulers with one voice (Phiri, 2010:43).

Thus, Africans themselves, mainly converts who were products of Scottish missions" education system, began to make their voices heard in the social and political arena (Thompson, 2005:579). Simon Mhango was the first man to propose formation of a voluntary association or pressure group later to be known as North Nyasa Native Association (NNNA) (Phiri, 2010:306). Its formation, at Karonga in 1912, had the encouragement of Robert Laws who had hosted the association"s first meeting in the reading room of Livingstonia mission (see Ross, 2009:22; Thompson, 2005:579). It was the beginning of nationalists movements that were spreading across the country, which in 1944 joined together to form Nyasaland African Congress. Phiri (2010:43-53) provides a list of Native Associations that were formed in different parts of Malawi following the formation of NNNA.

Robert Laws believed that it was important that the voice of the emerging class of literate Africans be heard by the colonial government for the good of the development of the country, if, as Laws hoped, the country was to develop in the direction of modernity (Ross, 2009:22). To show how serious Laws was in this matter, which also places him closer to David Scott of Blantyre than is recognized, Ross wrote:

> What is notable is that Laws, despite all the sound and fury over the Chilembwe Rising, wrote to the Chief Secretary in Zomba in 1920 attempting to persuade him that it was important to continue listening to the Associations despite the feeling in the administration that they were simply a marginal pressure group. Laws even dared to say that these associations, if treated properly could be guided so as to prepare the way for Africans to elect first Europeans, but later Africans to represent them in the Legislature (Ross, 2009:22-23).

Regrettably, for most of the first half of the 20th century, the local African population had no direct representation in government; the nearest they could get was the appointment of missionaries to represent their interests in the Legislative Council. Both Hetherwick and Laws, leaders of Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions, respectively, served in this capacity as did Bishop Frank Thorne (see Tengatenga, 2006:66) of Anglican Church over the years. Although this was the case, the dawn of Native Associations did at least provide a platform for political debate and training ground for future political leaders (Thompson, 2005:579).

It was only in 1949 that Ellerton Mposa and Alexander Muwamba were appointed to represent fellow Africans in the Legislative Council. They were later in 1953 joined by Herbert Gondwe. However, the balance of power in the Legislative Council remained

unchanged – administrators, six unofficials (all of them Europeans), one Asian and three Africans (McCracken, 2012:234, 271). In 1958 the Constitutional Amendment Act and the Federal Electoral Act increased the overall size of the Federal Legislative Council from 36 to 60, but held African representation steady at a total of four members for all three countries of the Federation (Thompson, 2005:580). Thompson (2005:580) observes that this was a deliberate move to further dilute the African voice in parliament. He adds that there was a clear feeling that the few Africans allowed in the legislature were in any case the puppets of the Federal government, rather than the genuine representatives of the people.

3.1.1.4.1 Hostility against Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland: The State of Emergency

The antagonism between the British government and the Scottish missionaries alongside the locals, mostly their parishioners, continued in varying degrees throughout the seventy three years of British rule in Malawi (Pike, 1968:93). In 1950s, these were joined by chiefs (who had formed their own political association called Nyasaland Chiefs Association [NCA]) in the campaign against imposition of the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. From inception in 1953, the federation was bitterly resented by practically the whole African population of Nyasaland (Ross, 1996b:195). When the Legislative Council met on 20th April 1953 to formally vote for the federal scheme, Malawian members Muwamba and Mposa walked out and left the whites continue with their mock vote (Phiri, 2010:126).

Resistance activities increased in Malawi because it was discovered that white people of Southern Rhodesia had been invited to take part in a referendum to decide if they wanted the federation or not; no such referendum was conducted in Malawi and Zambia, which was perceived as injustice to the people of the two countries (Phiri, 2010:126). In addition, Pike (1968:113) says "the whole tenor of opposition to federation was that under colonialism the people could look forward to independence under African rule, but under a federation the people feared that colonial authority would be diminished and finally removed, thus depriving them of the chance of independence." There were also fears that under the federation, Africans would lose their lands to white settlers. So, because in 1958 the Federal Legislature introduced measures to reduce the very limited political representation which it accorded to the African population, the hostility moved steadily from cautious criticism in 1953 to full-scale opposition in 1958 (see McCracken, 2012:357; Ross, 1996b:195).

There was growing political unrest in Malawi whereby the people were calling for dissolution of the federation. Thompson (2005:580-581) identifies the following as the causes of the political unrest in Malawi: growing racism of both government and white immigrants; restrictions on civil liberties for Africans, including prohibition on holding public meetings without a police permit; expanding activities of Special Branch of police; and growing use of informers against law-abiding people. Because of nationwide protests against British rule and the growing disorder in the country, on 2nd March 1959, Malawi was declared a state of emergency. On the same day, the Nyasaland African Congress, the Women"s League and the Youth League were banned as unlawful organisations in Malawi (McCracken, 2012:353). The next day, 3rd March 1959, Operation Sunrise was launched just before sunrise, which involved the arrest of 208 of those people the Governor Armitage had categorized as hard-core leaders or activists of the Congress (McCracken, 2012:353; Phiri, 2010:201).

Because Armitage regarded Banda, Masauko Chipembere, Dunduzu and Yatuta Chisiza as the main organizers, they were sent to the Gweru prison and housed in the European section to separate them from others. The other Nyasaland African Congress leaders taken to Southern Rhodesia were housed in either the Khami Prison, near Bulawayo or at Marandellas (Ross, 2009:177). The majority of ordinary detainees were kept in Nyasaland in the emergency detention centre at Kanjedza, a subdivision of Limbe. During the operation, over 50 unarmed Africans were killed by the colonial security forces and not a single white person was killed in these events (McCracken, 2012:354). This was against lies that British national newspapers were spreading saying nationalist movement in Malawi was violently racist and had hatched a plot to murder all the whites in the country (Thompson, 2005:582). The papers might have picked the words of Lennox-Boyd, who in trying to justify the actions of the Governor, lied to the House of Commons that plans had been made by Congress to carry out widespread violence and murder of Europeans, Asians and moderate Africans; that in fact, a massacre was being planned (McCracken, 2012:353).

The Nyasaland Emergency raised many questions in Britain and on 6 April 1959 the British government constituted the Devlin Commission to probe the nature and cause of Nyasaland disturbances (Phiri, 2010:200). The Commission described Nyasaland as a police state where the people are restrained from expressing their political views (Phiri, 2010:200). It went on to

criticise the colonial and Federal governments for not letting Africans hold senior posts in the civil service. The commission''s report revealed that the Federal government had been giving Nyasaland grants of three million pounds annually but most of this money was not being spent on the social and economic advancement of Africans (Phiri, 2010:202).[16] While the commissioners were in Bulawayo the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland met and debated the Nyasaland Emergency. It recognized that the time had come for a radical revision of the territorial constitution of Nyasaland and earnestly recommended to Her Majesty''s government that effective power be given to the African community in this land (Thompson, 2005:582). It further pushed for the release of all detainees and if need be, they be brought to trial. These sentiments were heard in Her Majesty''s government and were part of contributing factors to the independence of Malawi which was gained on 6th July 1964.

3.1.2 Postcolonial History of Malawi: Banda and the Malawi Congress Party

The first thirty years of postcolonial political course of Malawi were dominated by Banda and his Malawi Congress Party. It is important, at this stage, to mention that Banda was a product of Livingstonia Mission schools. He began his studies at Mtunthama and later at Chilanga in Kasungu (Lwanda, 2009:14).[17] While learning at Mtunthama, Banda was baptized into the Livingstonia Mission of the Church of Scotland, but his acceptance of Christianity did not mean that he abandoned his Chewa cultural heritage of *vinyau* (Lwanda, 2009:15). Following his failure to obtain entrance for a teacher training course at Livingstonia Mission, Banda migrated to South Africa in search for greener pastures from where he proceeded to America to further his education. While finishing his medical studies in Edinburgh, Banda had been ordained as an elder of Church of Scotland (Thompson, 2005:583). Although he rarely attended church in Malawi after his return in 1958 (apart from formal state occasions) and never exercised his eldership within the local CCAP, Banda used his earlier ecclesiastical position to great political effect (Thompson, 2005:583).

When Banda was released on 1st April 1960, his colleagues, Chipembere and Chisiza brothers were moved from Gweru Prison to Kanjedza detention centre where they had to endure six more weary months of detention (Ross, 2009:206). Ross (2009:207) observes that Banda did

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[16] Also see Ross (2009:179-193) and McCracken (2012:350-362, 388-9) for a detailed discussion on the Devlin Commission.
[17] For more information on the background of Banda's life see Lwanda (2009:8-39).

nothing at all about gaining early release for the three; they had to wait for their freedom to the very end when Kanjedza detention centre was closed at the termination of state of emergency. This raised questions as to what kind of a leader Banda was to become. Thus, his supporters including Chiume, Chipembere, Chirwa and countless others were later to find Banda an intimidating bully who detained thousands, apparently without mercy (Lwanda, 2009:1-2). Before Banda was release, Orton Chirwa, who was released in August 1959, became leader of newly formed Malawi Congress Party (Ross, 2009:206). On 30th September 1959, about 300 people gathered at Orton's house in Limbe where he announced the formation of MCP (Phiri, 2010:212).

Short (1974:126) points out that the new party made it plain that it regarded itself as a caretaker organization whose principal tasks were to agitate for the lifting of the State of Emergency and the release of the old Congress leadership from detention. Its aims, among others, were: to work relentlessly to achieve self-government and ultimate independence for the people of Malawi; to serve as the vigorous conscious political vanguard for removing all forms of oppression, racial, economic, social and otherwise; and for the establishment of a democratic national government in Nyasaland.[18] Phiri (2010:216) says the government had allowed formation of MCP at this time for two reasons: first, they feared that if they ban MCP, it would confirm the Devlin Commission's allegations that Nyasaland was a police state; secondly, the government hoped Chirwa would set himself up as a rival leader to Banda and that on basis of what it knew about him he would agree to keeping Nyasaland within the federation.

To their surprise, on 5th April 1960, four days after Banda's release, Chirwa handed the presidency of MCP to Banda (Ross, 2009:207). During his brief tenure, with the aid of Aleke Banda, Chirwa had laid firm foundations for the party by increasing membership and opening branches throughout the country. Short (1974:126) says party membership soared from 8,100 at the end of October 1959 to nearly 250,000 in March 1960. It was an answer to authorities in Colonial and Federal governments who alleged that opposition to Federation was not popularly held. In November 1959, Chirwa went to Britain to see Secretary of State for Colonies, Ian Macleod where he pleaded for the release of detainees, particularly three women: Mrs Chibambo, Mrs Mdeza and Mrs Nthenda (Phiri, 2010:215). On the day he

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[18] For more aims of Malawi Congress Party see Phiri (2010:212-213).

formally handed over presidency to Banda, the MCP, in sharp contrast to the old Nyasaland African Congress, had a large staff, a Land Rover, and a bank balance of over £2,000 (Short, 1974:131).

3.1.2.1 Tensions within Malawi Congress Party: Potential Thorns in Banda's Side

By the time Chipembere and the Chisiza brothers came out of Kanjedza in August 1960, the MCP was no longer the old Congress brought back to life by Orton a few months ago (Ross, 2009:208). There were many changes taking place in the new party that threatened its progress and unity. The MCP had grown up round the message, brilliantly purveyed by the Publicity Secretary, Kanyama Chiume, that Banda was one and only leader, who would destroy the federation and set people free (Ross, 2009:208). Banda was being hailed as the „saviour of the nation" and power was moving towards a new generation of older men like Qabaniso Chibambo, Lali Lubani, Lawrence Makata and Richard Chidzanja (Lwanda, 2009:123). The grassroots base of the party was also diffusing deeper into rural areas where Banda"s concept of respect for elders was more likely to have resonance than educated nationalists" ideologies (Lwanda, 2009:123).

These developments lead our discussion to a transition period, the three years between the 1961 election and independence in 1964, which was critical to the future of Malawi. The 1961 election marked the high point of MCP unity. The unity was demonstrated by the overwhelming African support that helped MCP to win all twenty lower roll seats, five of them unopposed, and two upper roll seats (Short, 1974:153). With this triumph, the new government was ready to start work with fervour.

> Dr Banda became leader of the MCP in the Legislative Council and sat on the Executive Council as the Minister of Natural Resources. The other MCP members of the Executive Council were Kanyama Chiume, Minister of Education; Augustine Bwanausi, Minister of Labour and Social Development; and W. Mkandawire, Minister without Portfolio, while in the Legislative Assembly Orton Chirwa and Dunduzu Chisiza became Parliamentary Secretaries to the Ministries of Justice and Finance respectively (McMaster, 1974:26-27).

McMaster (1974:30-31) observes that while there was this eagerness, contrariwise there was some conflict between Banda and his lieutenants over the direction of Malawi"s economic development, her political and economic relations with neighbouring states, and the degree of freedom allowed to the individual ministers. Here, we need to know, as Short (1974:155) puts it, that Banda"s economic policies at this time were founded in the belief that Nyasaland was, and would remain for many years, in essence an agricultural country, sought to combine

elements of both socialism and capitalism. Dunduzu Chisiza who had proposed that Nyasaland should develop a „mixed" economy with socialism as a dominant element, shaped to meet its particular requirements. Unfortunately after Chisiza"s death, the capitalist tendency became more pronounced (Short, 1974:155). This takes us to a discussion on the two young leaders who were among the few Congress leaders Banda feared and referred here as potential thorns in Banda"s side.

Before discussing the two potential thorns in Banda"s side, we need to understand that Banda was quite aware of the combined intellectual and charismatic power of Dunduzu Chisiza and Masauko Chipembere, having corresponded with them and having shared prison with them (Lwanda, 2009:125). In short, we can say the two had contributed a lot to the success of Banda. Chipembere and Chisiza were instrumental in backing the return of Banda to take leadership of NAC in 1958. On his release, Chipembere delivered a series of fiery speeches in many parts of the country, which were aimed at transferring the spotlight from Banda to himself (Ross, 2009:209). On 28th November 1961, Chipembere gave a speech in which he called for "real bloodshed, real killing of our enemies, real action if we do not leave Federation" (Williams, 1978:25). British regime regarded the speeches as extremely dangerous, threatening public order; thus, in January 1961, Chipembere was arrested, charged and found guilty of sedition and was imprisoned (Ross, 2009:209).

By this action, a potential thorn in Banda"s side was removed without Banda having to respond in any way at all to Chipembere"s speeches (Ross, 2009:209). Williams (1978:25) says it was surely something of a relief to Banda when Chipembere was sentenced to three years in prison for advocating violence. Although Chipembere was prosecuted „because of the violence of speech," it is more likely that Banda, as did Armitage and other colonial officials, wanted to shut and tame him (Lwanda, 2009:137). Ross (2009:209) reports that Sir Glyn Jones had made it clear that he was willing to discuss early release of Chipembere, Banda did nothing about gaining remission of sentence so as to allow Chipembere regain his freedom and re-enter service of the party. On 29th November 1961, Dunduzu Chisiza, another potential thorn in Banda"s side, condemned Banda for delaying Chipembere"s release (Ross, 2009:208). Chipembere was released from prison in January 1963 (Ross, 2009:211).

Despite being an advocate of the concept of Banda as life president immediately after his release in 1960, later Chisiza became critical of Banda"s leadership (Lwanda, 2009:123). Lwanda (2009:129) describes Chisiza as the only one who had enough clout to raise issues Banda would rather not have discussed. Relations between the two were not entirely cordial. However, Chisiza was the one man in the party whose public goodwill was a major asset to Banda (Williams, 1978:207). In July 1962, Malawi had hosted an International Economic Symposium organized by Chisiza. It was a massive gathering of distinguished economists and development specialists from all over the world never to be seen in Malawi again during the next forty years of the country"s independence (see Ross, 2009:213; Phiri, 2004:255). Dunduzu was praised highly by delegates but Banda"s coolness towards the symposium was there for all to see (Lwanda, 2009:123).

In September, a few weeks after this triumph, Chisiza died in car accident on main Blantyre to Zomba road with stories circulating that Banda engineered the killing of Chisiza (Ross, 2009:214-215). Chisiza"s death, at thirty-two, was a tragedy for Nyasaland. The MCP lost its foremost intellectual and the country an economic intelligence which it has not been able adequately to replace (Short, 1974:156). Ross mentions two confrontational meetings Chisiza had with Banda prior to his death, he says:

> Dunduzu Chisiza, Mikeka Mkandawire and Colin Cameron demanded a private interview with Dr Banda who agreed that the meeting should take place in the presence of Sir Glyn Jones, … The three made a formal request that Banda should restrain Chiume, who, in various speeches … was „putting down" the other leaders of the Party … However, the discussion rapidly became a direct clash between Banda and Dunduzu Chisiza ... about two weeks later, Banda and Chisiza met again, this time alone. At this meeting Dunduzu expressed himself without reservation or antipathy to Dr Banda"s whole style of leadership. He went so far to say that if things did not change for the better, he would wait until Malawi had gained her full independence and then resign from the Party and go into active opposition (Ross, 2009:213).

Dunduzu Chisiza served notice that he would stay outwardly loyal to Banda"s leadership for the sake of the nation and independence, but with independence achieved he would then act, unless there had been real change in the interim (Ross, 2009:213). It seems Banda did not enjoy being challenged by young promising leaders like Chisiza and Chipembere, and since they posed a threat to his leadership, Banda decided to remove Chisiza as a way of securing his position. Williams (1978:208) believes that had Chisiza lived, Banda might have had some hesitancy about pursuing policies to which he would have been deeply antipathetic. He concludes that the effective restrictions on serious debate before the death of Chisiza and its

almost complete absence after his death made it virtually impossible to resolve the tensions within the party.

3.1.2.2 The Cabinet Crisis and Banda's Reign of Terror

Thus, traits of Banda‟s dictatorship were slowly creeping into the system. As demonstrated above, we trace his autocratic rule immediately after the release from prison in 1960 before even taking over leadership from colonial masters (McCracken, 2012:430). Additionally, tensions that were mounting within MCP found their fullest expression in cabinet crisis of 16th August to 8th September 1964; an event that led Banda to lay off four cabinet ministers from office and four more resigned from their portfolios in solidarity with their colleagues.[19] Colin Cameron resigned on 4th August 1964 over reintroduction of preventive detention without trial by the new Malawi government of the British colonial led by Banda. On 8th September 1964, Banda dismissed Augustine Bwanausi, Orton Chirwa, Kanyama Chiume and Rose Chibambo, which was followed by resignations of Yatuta Chisiza, Willie Chokani, John Msonthi and Chipembere, but later Msonthi withdrew the resignation.

Lwanda (2009:164) claims that after independence there was such a degree of euphoria that Malawians did not want to „spoil their independence.‟ He further says the young ministers themselves had realized that disunity would spoil the run up to independence. We observed that Dunduzu Chisiza delayed his actions by pretending to be loyal to Banda for the sake of the nation and independence. Williams says:

> Chipembere and his colleagues were aware that, after being the principal organizers of the mass party in the late 1950s, they were rapidly being displaced from key positions in the party; even worse from their point of view was the fact that Dr Banda had built up a personal network of support and control that was independent of the party organization; his vast powers as head of state and leader of the party were being supplemented by the development of a private, informal structure of control with channels of information and command outside the formal party hierarchy (Williams, 1978:212-213).

The ministers had made no preparations at all to overthrow Banda. So they were exposed politically when he decided to strike (Ross, 2009:222). Ross (2009:222) points out that to greater extent Chiume‟s behaviour had the upper hand in the events of the cabinet crisis. Between 4th and 16th August 1964, Chiume had changed sides bringing a new violently anti-Banda – „Banda must go‟ – note to the conflict that was rising. Again, the people of the

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[19] For more information on the Cabinet Crisis see McCracken (2012:429-460); Phiri (2010:273-289) and Ross (2009:218-223).

North, who were sympathetic to the ministers" position, chose to do nothing at all in the crisis because there was widespread and deep dislike of any activity that was being led by Chiume. By leaving rebellion until after independence, the ministers had further handicapped themselves (Lwanda, 2009:164).

The cabinet crisis had long lasting repercussions on the manner Banda conducted the affairs of Malawi (Phiri 2010:305). It was a turning point in the history of Malawi. It defined Malawi"s political course for the next thirty years of Banda"s rule. These years were characterized by fear, social injustice and economic exploitation. Using MCP machinery, Malawi Young Pioneers headed by Albert Muwalo, Banda persecuted all ex-ministers, their relatives and all who seemed to support them. A reign of terror was created throughout the country in which many people lost their lives, some were beaten, some were imprisoned and many others fled into exile (Ross, 2009:222). Phiri (2010:291-303) provides a detailed record of how some of the ex-ministers left the country along with their relatives. Chipembere had led a guerrilla group that was aimed at overthrowing Banda"s government before going to America where he died of diabetes on 24th September 1975 at the age of forty five. Similarly, Yatuta Chisiza led a failed coup d"état. He was shot dead on 11 October 1967 in a fierce battle against the Kings African Rifles.

Banda"s tyrannical mechanism paved the way for the country to have a single party rule led by Banda. He became powerful to the effect that in 1971, by act of parliament, Banda was declared life president of Malawi and MCP was made the only lawful party in Malawi. This meant that only in exile did opposition parties exist (Phiri, 2010:307). The meaning of life presidency was that so long as Banda was alive no one could by constitutional means become or aspire to become president of Malawi. Banda created fear among the people to the effect that nobody dared to question his authority. This was clear even in his speeches:

> This kind of thing, where a leader says this, but somebody else says that; now who is a leader? That is not the Malawi system. The Malawi system, the Malawi style is that Kamuzu says it"s just *that*, and then it"s finished. Whether anyone likes it or not, that is how it is going to be here. No nonsense, no nonsense. You can"t have everybody deciding what to do (Short, 1974:202-203).

In this, Banda was appealing directly to the rural masses using the traditional tools of respect for authority, continuity, law and order, or as he called it *bata ndi mtendere* (calm and peace and age) (Lwanda, 2009:164). In a shrewd move, Banda"s personal struggle for survival in

power had on 8th September 1964 become „his people"s struggle" (Lwanda, 2009:165). As in the old Chewa schemes of things, he made the people believe that a battle against the chief or king was likely to lead to subjugation of the entire kingdom by aliens.

In this way, Banda won people"s support and was able to generate an atmosphere where anyone who challenged his leadership was beaten, imprisoned, exiled or killed. In describing the era, Ross (1996d:41) cites a report by a delegation of British lawyers who visited Malawi in 1992, which read: "The emotion we encountered, among citizens at every level, from villages to government officials was fear." It is no exaggeration to say that Malawi was a police state; wherever the people gathered, in church, tavern, wedding et cetera, there were police agents in plain clothes (Phiri, 2010:305). Lwanda (2009:303) claims that Banda cultivated the air of a benign dictator; a pattern that was not expected in the immediate post-independence era. The same allegations that the British colonial government was accused of, the nationalists fought for, and that the Devlin Commission stressed in their report, continued unchecked during Banda"s rule. Thus, Malawi of Banda"s time in power was known to be a land where silence ruled (Ross, 1996d:41).

Additionally, Phiri (2010:305) refers to incidences of political instability and the assassination of political leaders in countries such as Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Nigeria, Ghana and Togo as events that exercised Banda"s mind and forced him to tighten security measures. He adds that throughout the thirty years of Banda"s regime, such principles of democracy as freedom of association, freedom of the press and freedom of speech were reduced to the bare-minimum. There was no respect for human rights during Banda"s rule. In a chronicle of poet"s imprisonment under life president Banda of Malawi, Jack Mapanje (2011) describes how political prisoners were treated at Mikuyu prison; a prison which was constructed for the sole purpose of punishing those considered to be Banda"s enemies. Banda possessed most considerable power to influence the outcome of the judicial process, which meant that he was able to use judicial system to punish his enemies (Williams, 1978:247).

Banda used capitalistically inclined principles that allowed a few Malawians, mostly those close to him in the Malawi Congress Party elite, to enrich themselves leaving the majority of Malawians in dire poverty. Lwanda (2009:395) observes that the system supported a few

people to own businesses that survived because government gave them contracts. Certain government assets were sold cheaply to those in the patronage system. There was abuse of public funds at the expense of poor Malawians.[20] Banda, a Chewa himself, encouraged tribalism that elevated his tribesmen above other tribes – a practice that threatened the social, economic and political life of Malawi (Lwanda, 2009:351). McCracken (2012:432) mentions that during the cabinet crisis, ministers accused Banda of favouritism and nepotism citing the Tembo family and other ministers like Aleke Banda as the most favoured.

3.1.2.3 The 1992-94 Political Change: Economic Mechanism in the Multiparty Era

The church, under such circumstances, could not raise its voice against injustices perpetrated by the Banda regime because of fear. The development of one-party state and the growing personal authoritarianism of Banda meant that open criticism, of any type, of Banda or his government became increasingly difficult in 1970s and 1980s (Thompson, 2005:582). In the early 1970s, Banda persecuted and exiled Jehovah''s Witnesses in Malawi for refusing to buy MCP membership cards. They were not allowed to function as a religious institution in Malawi. Perhaps this could be the reason why churches remained silent at that time. Church leaders genuinely feared for the future of their institutions should the church speak out collectively (Thompson, 2005:583). As we shall see in Chapter Four, it was the collective nature of Episcopal Conference of Malawi which allowed Catholic Bishops finally to break the long silence that ruled Malawi (Thompson, 2005:584).

On 8th March 1992, Catholic Bishops, selflessly and courageously, issued a pastoral letter "Living Our Faith," which was read in all Catholic churches in Malawi. This letter was the first public challenge to Banda''s regime in thirty years. In June 1992, CCAP Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre with support from their international partners presented an open letter to Banda entitled "The Nation of Malawi in Crisis: the Church''s Concern," which was written in support to Catholic Bishops'' pastoral letter. The two letters were church''s reaction against social ills Malawians faced under Banda''s rule and served as initial stride towards political change that finally took place in 1994 when Malawi embraced multiparty system of government. Since then, Malawi has witnessed four leaders ascending to power: Bakili

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[20] Lwanda (2009:399) refers to a trip Banda and his entourage made to Britain that costed over a million dollars at the time the Malawian government was begging for aid. During the trip Banda stayed at Claridges Hotel and his large entourage stayed at nearby luxury hotels; Malawians were seen to indulge in 'an orgy of shopping for luxury goods' which was video recorded and later was shown to an astonished Baroness Chalker.

Muluzi (1994-2004); Bingu wa Mutharika (2004-2012); Joyce Banda (2012-2014); and the incumbent president, Peter Mutharika.

Although this is the case, nothing in terms of governance has changed. Patronage system that has played a crucial role in economies of extraction has persisted from Banda"s era to present-day Malawi. Despite being independent for fifty one years, Malawi continues to face numerous socio-economic and political problems that mostly affect the poor. The situation confirms that decolonization of 1964 did not go deep enough to demolish the foundations of colonialism. It is crystal clear that postcolonial Malawi deals with a new face of colonialism, which in this paper is termed as economies of extraction. It is a form of capitalism inherited within Africa that is driven by both internal politics and external imperial forces. The two have direct control over the economy. Internal political decisions alongside imposition of foreign economic policies have major repercussions on the lives of the poor. In liberation theology, Frostin (1988:9) observes that the distinctive characteristic of the poor is not economic statistics; rather, the term denotes the underprivileged in the different power structures and must be clarified by means of social analysis.

It is clear from our analysis that both internal and external political forces have played a significant role in shaping the socio-economic life of Malawi. The phrase "economies of extraction" denotes the idea of imperialism where imperial powers come into a context for purposes of extracting its resources. They come in the name of aid, that is, they build roads, hospitals, schools etcetera. In exchange poor countries are forced to supply these powerful nations with some of their resources at a giveaway price. When the aid that comes in is compared to resources that flow out poor countries, you will find that it is imperial powers that benefit more from such trades. On the local scene, it has been observed that many join politics not to help the people, but to enrich themselves. So, they join politics for the sole reason of extracting the country"s little resources that are meant to assist the majority poor. In economies of extraction, the external imperial power always has a lot of influence on the internal political will to the extent that they work collaboratively with local political leaders in creating most of Africa"s socio-economic problems. Therefore, economies of extraction are the neo-colonialism that cripples economic growth of Malawi.

At the helm of economies of extraction is the patronage system, which is the main cause of Malawi"s problems. We observe that the patronage and repression based rule of Banda was replaced by patronage and money based rule of Muluzi (Lwanda, 2008:7). Bingu Mutharika adopted a stance that tried to mix elements of the two; mixing elements of recycled politicians from Muluzi and Banda era despite an initial promise to break with the past (Lwanda, 2008:7). The use of recycled politicians that encourages the patronage system was also evident in Joyce Banda"s regime and continues in the present administration of Peter Mutharika. Politics of granting favours or making appointments to office in return for political support have persisted from Banda"s reign to present-day Malawi. These trends have increased poverty, corruption, personality based parties and a failing economy in Malawi.

3.2 Conclusion

The socio-historical analysis of Malawi has revealed that the main cause of the country"s problems is economies of extraction. From pre-colonial period to present-day Malawi powerful people, nations and commercial and financial institutions have come to Malawi with the sole purpose of extracting from her already staggering economy. This suggests that if Malawi suffers manifold socio-political problems, it all hinges on the powerful pursuing economic viabilities. We observe that many revolts in Malawi happened because of economic injustices. Of course, Malawi got her independence in 1964 and experienced another political change in 1994, but she is still bound in captivity. There are no chains on her feet but she is not free. What is required is to achieve a just measure of economic independence and non-exploitative global relationships. The task today is no longer to fight for political liberation but to fight for freedom from the control of economies (Sugirtharajah, 2012:134).

Before we turn to the text of Habakkuk in Chapter Five to see if there might be relevant socio-economic ethic for Malawi today, we will have to analyse the role of the church in the transformation of Malawi in Chapter Four. We understand that from missionary-colonial era to present-day Malawi, the churches have always turned to the Bible to find a relevant socio-economic ethic when addressing political problems of their time. The socio-historical analysis of Malawi in Chapter Three has demonstrated the enormous contribution of the Church to the spiritual, social, political and economic development of Malawi. Therefore, it is important to take a closer look on the work of the church in the social and economic transformation of Malawi.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL LIFE OF MALAWI

4.0 Introduction

The socio-historical analysis of Malawi in Chapter Three has revealed that Malawi is what it is today because of Christians. The analysis helped us to see how the missionaries founded their missionary task on David Livingstone"s vision of bringing to Africa Christianity, commerce and civilization. The vision was well-defined when missionaries started to establish mission schools, hospitals and to introduce commercial agriculture to replace slave trade. Civilization was facilitated as Christianity and commerce began to take root in Malawi. These missions were not only preaching the Christian gospel, they also contributed to the development of economic and political life of Malawi.

On the other hand, their contribution to the economic and political life of Malawi was blamed because they were viewed as agents of imperialism and colonialism. Hence, one cannot fully understand the political and economic history of Malawi without getting to grips with the work of Christian missions in Malawi. Bridglal Pachai (1971:37) has correctly said, "the account of missionary enterprises and Scottish traders in Malawi is a necessary part of the country"s history." Thus, Chapter Four is designed to continue the contextual analysis of Malawi with special emphasis on the church"s role in socio-economic and political transformation of Malawi starting from missionary-colonial era to present-day Malawi.

4.1 The Church and Social Transformation in Colonial Era

In order to have a clear understanding of the church"s role in the socio-economic and political life of Malawi, we need to grasp theological savvy that guided missionary and local Christian thought. In Chapter Three, we observed that Livingstone"s ideas of Christianity, commerce and civilization played a crucial role in their missionary task. Conradie (2013:125) states that through the dream, Livingstone was able to understand the relationship between biblical faith, social transformation and enterprise development. Briefly, we can therefore say Livingstone engaged Christianity, commerce and civilization for social and economic transformation of Africa. We understand that the vision was formulated as an antidote to the horror of slavery,

which was the main cause of Africa's misery. Livingstone believed that Christianity could not be preached without developing the autonomy of all individuals – or without political, social and economic freedom and civil rights for all (Nkomazana, 1998:47). This is what the missionaries and local Christians in Malawi believed.

James Tengatenga (2006:9) claims that the missions' stories demonstrate that from the very beginning of the different missions there was a political consciousness in their work and that politicians of the new Malawi were products of the missions. As observed in Chapter Three, which resonates in Tengatenga's (2006:190) work too, the colonial government did not come to Malawi of its own free will; it was invited by the church for the church's protection. Before tables were turned, Malawi was imagined as a church, that is, a settlement formed by Christians (Tengatenga, 2006:190). Once Malawi became a British protectorate, there were drastic political changes that were inspired by economic pursuits. The Church too had to change its roles; it became more political to accommodate the waves that blew over Malawi throughout the seventy three years of British rule and beyond. The manner in which missionaries and local Christians in Malawi conducted themselves in social, political and economic matters demonstrates that they were inspired by Livingstone's legacy. But what was it that shaped David Livingstone's thinking?

4.1.1 Thought of David Livingstone: A Template for Social Transformation

Nkomazana (1998:46-50) has defined some of the influences contributing to Livingstone's thinking. He says Livingstone shared the Evangelical world view in Scotland and England which closely linked the growth of Christianity to prevailing educational, economic and political factors. He grew up in an environment where English evangelicals and Scots reformers strongly believed that comprehensive improvement in education was necessary to uplift people's social and religious lives (Nkomazana, 1998:46). Nkomazana (1998:46) observes that from the 16th century onwards, social transformation in Scotland was achieved through: opening up schools that helped to transform each successive generation (by 1732 schools were opened in 109 parishes); the Church coerced parents into sending their children to school; and the Bible was the main textbook of the schools, and became the main reading at home.

Livingstone's family contributed a lot to his thinking, especially reading habits of his father, Neil Livingstone, who loved to read Scottish theology and could not allow novels or scientific works into his house as he viewed them unfriendly to Christianity (Nkomazana, 1998:46). Nkomazana (1998:47) mentions that Livingstone's idea of combining Christianity, commerce and civilization for humane causes can be traced in the activities of two English evangelicals William Wilberforce, a campaigner for the abolition of slave trade, and Thomas Buxton who suggested that the best means of eliminating slavery in Africa was the introduction of legitimate commerce. Conradie (2013:119) points out that Wilberforce's own vision for a better world lay in the transformative potential of faith and business and it was in pursuit of this vision that he initiated radical social transformation on a global scale. Wilberforce believed that since both Christianity and legitimate commerce had human liberty at their core, they were destined to work together for social reform (Conradie, 2013:119-20).

As Wilberforce's successor, Buxton believed that once Africa was introduced to legitimate trade, African chiefs would stop to barbarically sell their people for beads, cloth, guns and jewels they coveted; thereby weakening slave trade at its source (Conradie, 2013:120). Nkomazana (1998:49) observe that Buxton was not only calling for complete eradication of slave trade, but he went further to suggest other necessary measures that would facilitate the elimination of slave trade, which included: stimulation of missionary enterprises; introduction of more sophisticated methods of agriculture; study of African languages; elimination of tropical diseases; exploration of the geography of the continent; and institution of legitimate commerce and of engineering projects.

The time David Livingstone spent with Dr John Philip at the Cape when he first arrived in Africa in March 1841 before proceeding to his final destination helped him to position himself with those who fought to protect the rights of Africans (Nkomazana, 1998:49). It helped him understand that Philip's struggle for civil rights in South Africa created enmity between the London Missionary Society and the Boers, who were intolerant of Philip's ideas (Nkomazana, 1998:48). In a letter written before his own aversion to the Boers had reached its highest pique, Livingstone is quoted as saying:

> They have in general a great aversion to missionaries. The cause of their dislike seems to be an idea that we wish to furnish the natives with fire-arms, and whether right or wrong always take [their] sides (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1991:274).

At the same time, Livingstone noticed divisions among the LMS missionaries over the question of Church-State relations; some sympathized with colonists while others with the African people (Nkomazana, 1998:49). Philip had blamed the corrupt colonial system of law in the Cape for the unjust treatment of Africans; he wanted dignity restored to those Africans forced to work for Boers for no pay, by giving them legal contracts and conditions of service (Nkomazana, 1998:47-8). Having witnessed the role of Christianity in the Scottish civilization, Philip believed that development of Christianity, education, better civil rights, industry and commerce would do the same in Africa (Nkomazana, 1998:48; Conradie, 2013:120). He believed Christianity always brings civilization.

These factors and ideas had a major impact on Livingstone. He was able to articulate them as he laboured to bring the three Cs to Africa. Conradie (2013:121) stresses that one of the aims throughout Livingstone"s travels was to find suitable bases from which the three Cs could play their role in transforming Africa without the violence, injustice and slavery which he believed had characterized the meeting of European and African heretofore. Livingstone emphasized the importance of education because he understood it to be the key to the progress of Christianity and commerce. The logic behind Livingstone"s ideas of combining Christianity, commerce and education, was that Africans should produce raw materials which they could trade with Europe for manufactured goods. In essence, Livingstone was looking for spiritual freedom, cultural freedom and economic freedom of African peoples (Conradie, 2013:119-121).

4.1.1.1 Livingstone's Idea of Three Freedoms: Spiritual, Cultural and Economic Freedoms

With respect to spiritual freedom, Livingstone believed that people had to be set free from sins and practices (such as superstition) that prevented them from living lives that honour God (Conradie, 2013:119). Part of his theological understanding was that the Holy Spirit empowers people to live holy lives and move away from sin; thus, social change is facilitated when more and more people followed that example (Conradie, 2013:119). He clearly believed in the essential relationship of saving souls and social transformation towards becoming more like Christ and living out the principles of the Bible (Conradie, 2013:119). Since people had to be set free from cultural practices, like slavery, that prevent social and intellectual development, cultural freedom was essential. Livingstone encouraged a cultural

value system that was meant to facilitate education, health and law and order – a package he understood to be civilization (Conradie, 2013:119).

In terms of economic freedom, people had to be set free from poverty that encouraged them to sell others into slavery (Conradie, 2013:119). Because economic development in Africa required commercial activities, commerce became one of the powerful tools for social transformation of communities. Livingstone believed that the arrival of honest traders and missionaries would provide the opportunity to exchange the natural resources of Africa for European trade goods (Conradie, 2013:120-121). This move, he thought, would undercut and end slave trade, paving way to the growth of Christianity and development of a more prosperous African society. Christianity was the driving force in the missionary task. As a theologian, observes Conradie (2013:125), he believed that essential to the missionary task was the connexion between biblical faith, social transformation and enterprise development. Because Christianity and commerce were closely linked, it was easy for missionaries to fall prey to the imperialist"s agenda.

4.1.2 The Place of the Bible in Social Transformation

Comaroff and Comaroff (1991:215) quoted Rev Hughes who in a personal letter to Robert Moffatt wrote: "… the simple reading and study of the Bible alone will convert the world. The missionary"s work is to gain for it admission and attention, and then let it speak for itself." History has shown that the Bible"s encounter with local cultural customs and practices has led to their transformation (Mijoga, 2001:374). Through this understanding, the Bible became the norm for life and conduct as it facilitated spiritual transformation that brought people into a personal relationship with God to experience spiritual freedom (Conradie, 2013:125). Thus, the whole idea of evangelism in the missionary task was perceived as a call to transformation and changing behaviour and culture (Conradie, 2013:125). In explaining how biblical faith, enterprise development and social transformation are linked together, Conradie says:

> Biblical faith empowers people to understand that God loves them, that they can love themselves and that they have to love their neighbours. This message therefore transforms their lives so that they get the courage to start businesses through which they can earn a living for themselves and their families and through that glorify God. These believers then transform the community around them through encouraging a life-style based on the biblical message that results in improved community care (Conradie, 2013:125-126).

For Livingstone, biblical principles were vital for social transformation. He believed that genuine social transformation takes place when transformed people live out the biblical principles. He understood mission undertaken in the spirit of Jesus as a mission that transforms all who are involved. In fact, the mission has as its very purpose transformation of all things and persons, to bring them into closer conformity with Christ (Conradie, 2013:126). Once biblical principles are lived out, enterprise development where local communities take control of their own economic development takes place suggesting that economic and physical freedom is experienced and economic transformation is facilitated (Conradie, 2013:126).

This suggests that the Bible played a crucial role when Livingstone was laying down foundational principles of the missionary task. He believed that the Bible is placed in its rightful central location when the church is involved in social, economic and political transformation of our communities. Clearly, the history of Malawi from missionary-colonial era reveals that the biblical text has been used in public realm in different roles; the use of the Bible was from the start a central feature in the struggle for social, economic and political transformation of Malawi (Mijoga, 2001:375-376). As we shall see in this chapter that throughout the seventy three years of British rule, missionaries and local Christians in Malawi constantly drew from the Bible when presenting their arguments against their oppressors – colonial masters. It was Christian values they upheld, rooted in the Bible that led them to fight for independence of Malawi. The same was the case with the political change of 1992-94. This illustrates how the church in Malawi has been impacted by Livingstone‟s thought.

4.1.3 Missionary Involvement in the Social Transformation of Malawi

Stephen Neill, quoted by Ross (1996a:23), described Scottish Missions of Livingstonia and Blantyre as the best organized mission projects in the world. They came to Malawi with an array of enterprises ranging from evangelistic, educational, industrial and agricultural. From the beginning, Scottish missionaries had hoped to produce Christians who were at the same time literate and skilled artisans, capable of assisting in the transformation of their situation (Williams, 1978:78-9). To achieve this, missionaries, inspired by Livingstone‟s legacy, worked industriously in establishing their work in Malawi. In this way, they were able to participate in the socioeconomic and political transformation of Malawi. This is why in this

chapter we are taking time to look at how the Church, through the attitudes of missionaries and local Christians, conducted itself in light of political events shaping the socioeconomic course of Malawi.

McCracken (2002:179) has pointed out that church involvement in political sphere was frequently justified by an idealized account of the circumstances in which Malawi found herself in. The establishment of British rule in 1891 was a defining moment in the history of Malawi; political and economic devices laid down at that time had enduring effects on the social life of Malawi. With the coming of Harry Johnston"s administration, many African communities became vulnerable to injustices perpetrated by colonial government. These changes led the Church to take up a new role of being the voice of the voiceless, which had strong political and prophetic inferences. The Church, mainly Scots missionaries, felt that it was their responsibility to speak for the ordinary people in villages against unjust policies carried by British government. Because of this, Scottish missionaries and their local parishioners were always at loggerheads with British administration for the entire 73 years of British rule.

4.1.3.1 The Era of David Clement Scott and His Scottish Colleagues

When dealing with this era, we will particularly focus on individuals who were part of certain social systems. These individuals are part of colonial framework yet they are very powerful and some of their thought gets picked up in a kind of neo-colonial way. The most vocal Scottish critic of government in the first decade of British rule was David Clement Scott, leader of Blantyre mission, who shared Livingstone"s vision of spreading Christianity and commerce and the emergence of a genuinely African Church (Thompson, 2005:576; Ross, 1996:83). In addition, McCracken (2002:179) points out that the key factor influencing the behaviour of Scott and his like-minded allies at Blantyre was Calvinist commitment to social reform. He says during his years at Blantyre (1881-1898) Scott demonstrated a concern for human justice in the face of state oppression which brought him into conflict both with colonial authorities and with the church authorities in Scotland. He had the ability to understand and sympathize with powerless and illiterate Africans (Williams, 1978:53).

Phiri (2004:138) claims that Scott was a man of independent views and mind. If he believed that something was worth doing he went ahead to do it despite opposition from colleagues

and superiors. Scott"s independent views and mind were evident in how he had managed to build the St Michael and All Angels Church (Phiri, 2004:139). He was attracted to the Catholic tradition of the Church extending back beyond the Reformation to the age of the Apostles when narrow sectarianism was still unknown (McCracken, 2002:179). McCracken says:

> The image of the Church which he sought to build in Africa was given tangible form by the dedication in 1891 of St Michael and All Angels at Blantyre, a church designed and built by Scott in a blend of Latin, Byzantine and Romanesque styles symbolizing the missionaries" hopes for a uniform African Christianity, free from the petty divisions of Europe (McCracken, 2002:179).

In this way, Scott was seeking to restore the liturgy of the Church as it was before the schism of East and West, of Syrian North and South, certainly even of Jew and Gentile (McCracken, 2002:179). His aim was to make the church truly local and African in conception but that European and African church members should form one body (Phiri, 2004:139). This was objected by many Europeans who believed in separateness that encouraged social and racial segregation (Phiri, 2004:139). Scott wanted African and European church members to participate in the sacraments together because he believed that racial unity at the communion table was essential (Ross, 1996a:179). But in their objection, Europeans accused Scott of making important decisions unilaterally (Phiri, 2004:139).

Although this was the case, Scott went on to ordain four Africans, Joseph Bismarck, Henry Kambwiri Matecheta, Mungo Murray Chisuse and John Gray Kufa, as deacons with whom he formed a council to discuss church affairs (Phiri, 2004:139). In September 1893, Scott sent two European women to Ntcheu to work at Nthumbi Mission Station under an African overseer Henry Matecheta; a thing that some Europeans opposed saying an African cannot supervise white persons (Phiri, 2004:139). Here, we note that Scott was being pragmatic; as a missionary, he understood his role to be that of preparing Africans for eventual control of the church. Equally, his influence helped Africans to recognize their role in political affairs. Phiri (2004:139) mentions that within the organization of the church Africans learned that their opinions did matter; thus, they wanted similar recognition in the political arena.

Another area where Scott and his allies infuriated Europeans was the tendency of sending Africans abroad for higher education. Of course, the first missionary to think of sending Africans abroad for higher education was Duff MacDonald, a leader of Blantyre Mission who

preceded Scott (Phiri, 2004:137). Before MacDonald was dismissed and recalled back to Scotland, he had sent to Lovedale College men like Rondau Kaferenjira, Joseph Bismarck, Chenkolimbo, Evangel Sawelayera and Kagaso Sazuze. Dr Rankin, who came to Blantyre to investigate reported scandals surrounding MacDonald‟s dismissal, took Donald Malota and Henry Cowan Kapita to Scotland at his own expense (Phiri, 2004:138). They returned well trained to serve their country in 1884. Scott too helped Africans attain higher education in Scotland. On the first leave he went, Scott took with him Nacho Ntimawanzako for two purposes: to help Ntimawanzako acquire better education and to assist Scott in preparing the chiNyanja dictionary (Phiri, 2004:138). They both returned to Malawi in 1887.

Phiri (2004:138) mentions that Scott had also sent Mungo Murray Chisuse to Edinburgh for attachment to the House of Nelson where for two years he was trained as a printer. Upon his return, Chisuse worked for the mission as a printer and judging by the type of evidence he gave before the Chilembwe Rising Commission, his learning proved that he went beyond acquiring the art of printing (Phiri, 2004:138). Phiri (2004:138) reports that these experiments in educating Africans abroad, however, were abruptly stopped because the Foreign Mission Committee could not afford to continue with the scheme. He observes that at least this is what it said, but it must also be remembered that very early in the colonial history of Malawi, Europeans especially estate owners were denouncing mission educated Africans as cheeky.

Scott was regarded with particular animosity by many of the settlers, and was eventually forced to resign, partly because he considered the church authorities in Scotland were taking the side of his white settler critics in Malawi (Thompson, 2005:576). He and his colleagues were repeatedly at loggerheads with Johnston‟s administration because his policies were against their noble objective of bringing about a social and economic (as well as spiritual) transformation that would bring the African to his rightful place as "co-inheritor" of a common civilization (Williams, 1978:54). This meant that: if on every important issue the interests of Africans were to be subordinated to those of Europeans; if for administrative convenience the traditional structure of African society was to be destroyed; and if for the foreseeable future it was to be assumed that Africans would be unable to achieve positions of leadership in the new society being formed on their land, then the whole missionary task would be defeated (Williams, 1978:54).

Scott and his associates conducted a vigorous campaign against transfer of the Protectorate to Rhodes" BSAC (McCracken, 2002:180). They were acutely aware of the danger of company rule and settler rule, and they were suspicious that Johnston was more concerned about the extension of imperial power than with the future welfare of African subjects in the country (Williams, 1978:54). These suspicions increased when Johnston was offered a job as Rhodes" BSAC administrator to administer its affairs north of Zambezi (Phiri, 2004:212). This implied that as imperial officer, Johnston"s salary and that of his deputy, Alfred Sharpe were to be paid by the Foreign Office; the rest of the expenses, such as military expenses, were to be met from the BSAC subsidy (Phiri, 2004:212). Scott and his colleagues perceived Johnston"s untenable dual role as something that could lead Rhodes to take control of the territory. They were right to be suspicious for the letter that Johnston wrote Rhodes in June 1893 revealed that Johnston had hoped that Malawi would become part of the Chartered Company territory in 1894 (Ross, 2009:17).[21]

Much of the policies that Scott opposed within the Protectorate were what he considered the injustices of Johnston"s rule (Thompson, 2005:576). As part of proceedings leading to the establishment of British rule, Scottish missionaries persuaded many chiefs in Malawi to sign treaties as a way of convincing the British government that the people of Malawi needed its protection from the Portuguese and any other external power (Ross, 2009:17). Scott and his allies had worked tirelessly in creating strong ties with these chiefs. Regrettably, once Johnston was installed as Commissioner, he immediately embarked on a series of military campaigns against some of those very chiefs Scott had persuaded to sign the treaties, deeming them „inveterate slavers" (Ross, 2009:17). Scott angrily criticized Johnston"s attitude to chiefs considering the good relationships he had gradually developed over the previous eleven years; the Scottish Mission of Blantyre had lived peaceably with these chiefs for a decade (Ross, 2009:18).

In Chapter Three, we observed that these operations led to Johnston taking the land of defeated chiefs as crown land, which was then held to be leasable by him to planters and others (Ross, 1996a:122). Ross (1996a:122) points out that it was both the campaign against

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[21] Ross (2009:17) says that this letter was not copied to the Foreign Office despite the rule that all Johnston's correspondence with Rhodes should be so copied.

the chiefs and the resulting land decisions that provoked Scott"s protest. Reacting to Johnston"s land policy in February 1892, Scott wrote:

> We have always held that the land belongs to the people, and have ever questioned the legal and moral right of the chief to sell any part of his territory over the heads of those dwelling on it without safe-guarding on them the right to have room to plant and build. A very large part of the Shire Highlands is claimed by European purchasers … Where is the native community soon to find room to hoe and plant its food crop? (Scott, 1892).

In December 1894, Scott reiterated his position:

> Our contention is if the Europeans take the land they practically enslave the native population…and we upheld this that no civilized power can come into a country, more especially under Christian promises, and turn the natives into slave on their own holdings…we cannot treat the land as a conquered country, and we must in every case of confiscation or annexation have the very best proof to show that no other way than fighting the natives was possible (Ross, 2009:18).

Johnston"s land policy was the source of people"s anger and social tension throughout colonial history, even later (Ross, 2009:18). Scott and Hetherwick strongly opposed Johnston"s imposition of hut tax at six shillings per year and succeeded in forcing him to reduce it to three shillings (Thompson, 2005:576).

In Livingstonia Mission, Donald Fraser was vocal in criticizing the system of labour certificates, whereby an African who had worked for a European for one month paid only half normal rate of hut tax (Thompson, 2005:576). He suggested that African employers of labour, such as mission teachers or clerks, should also be able to sign labour certificates (Thompson, 2005:578). In Chapter Three, we saw how Dr Robert Laws was instrumental in the formation of the first native association and how he fought for direct representation of local African population in government. In response to criticism that Africans didn"t bother to raise their hats when passing a European in the street, Hetherwick replied "Even the smallest drummer boy in the British army, when he salutes Lord Kitchener, expects a salute in return" (Thompson, 2005:579). But the Scottish missionaries were less successful in their attempts to eliminate or limit the growing practice of thangata; it continued largely unchanged, and indeed was one of contributing factors to Chilembwe Rising of 1915 (Thompson, 2005:578).

4.1.3.2 The Second Wave of Missionary Expansion

McCracken (2000:216) maintains that the establishment of the colonial administration was accompanied by the proliferation of Christian missions in Nyasaland. This second wave of missionary expansion resulted in the undermining of the Scots" Christian monopoly of the country (McCracken, 2012:105). By 1890 two additional missions had entered the region: first, the UMCA through W. P. Johnson began evangelizing on the east coast of Lake Malawi in 1881 and in 1885 opened a station at Likoma. Secondly, the Dutch Reformed Church of the Cape Synod opened its mission at Mvera in 1889. This was followed by the founding of a further five smaller missions within the space of the next eight years, all but one associated with Joseph Booth at some period, and by the introduction of two Roman Catholic missions, the Montfort Marist Fathers and the White Fathers in 1901 and 1902 respectively (McCracken, 2000:217).

The missionary expansion had affected Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions differently. For Livingstonia, direct consequences of missionary expansion were comparatively slight; largely because smaller missions that came into Nyasaland in the 1890s, anxious to become self-supporting as quickly as possible through cultivation of plantations, were driven to the south, most of them within a thirty mile radius of Blantyre Mission (McCracken, 2000:217). McCracken (2012:106) observes that relations between the UMCA and Livingstonia were predominantly those of cooperation, which was also true of the DRC and Livingstonia. In fact, in the case of DRC, for over a year the first DRC missionary, Andrew Murray based himself at Livingstonia"s stations before the mission opened its stations at Mvera (1889), Kongwe (1892) and Nkhoma (1896) (McCracken, 2012:106). The establishment of DRC Mission in the central region signalled the first systematic attempt to evangelize among the Chewa people (McCracken, 2012:106).

Blantyre Mission had experienced most difficulties with Booth"s Zambezi Industrial Mission, but there had also been awkwardness at times with the Nyasa Mission. There were squabbles that took place over encroaching on one another"s areas or bribing away teachers by offering higher wages (Ross, 1996a:180). Their differences were resolved when the Federated Board of Mission was set up in 1910 at the Mvera Missionary Conference, which was attended by representatives of Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions, DRC Mission, Zambezi Industrial Mission (ZIM), Nyasa Industrial Mission (NIM), Baptist Industrial Mission (BIM) and South

African General Mission (Ross, 1996a:179). The Board"s mandate was to consult over things such as education, Bible translation and other matters of common interest (Ross, 1996a:179). We note with interest that the UMCA did not take part in this Board; they refused to attend any of the three missionary conferences of 1900, 1904 or 1910 (Ross, 1996a:180).

Here, we need to mention that relations between Blantyre Mission and the UMCA had been the most cordial of the inter-mission relationships until the mid-1890s (Ross, 1996a:180). It was during these years that Alexander Hetherwick had often asked Anglican Bishops to preach and conduct Holy Communion at Blantyre (Phiri, 2004:117). But after 1900, as reported by Ross (1996a:181), the formal comity agreement that the two missions entered was ignored entirely and most tensions in the years leading up to the First World War were between Blantyre and the UMCA, and not with the other missions, whose initial relations with Blantyre had not been good. Perhaps these tensions grew as UMCA continued to poach teachers from the Blantyre Mission since we understand that the UMCA had separated itself from the Federated Board of Mission. We could also explain these tensions as growing from their differences in approach to matters relating to church and state. The UMCA being aligned to the Church of England could not oppose Johnston"s policies.

Here, we need to mention that although John Chilembwe was not part of Mvera Conference relations between his Providence Industrial Mission and the Blantyre Mission were cordial (Ross, 1996a:181). He had a father and son relationship with Alexander Hetherwick. Ross (1996a:181) cites the most interesting contact in the Blantyre records where Chilembwe wrote Hetherwick asking for wisdom on how he could deal with partners in a polygamous marriage desiring baptism. Hetherwick wrote a careful and cordial reply, explaining the position adopted by the Blantyre Presbytery on that matter. Chilembwe used to go to the Scottish mission doctors whenever he was not well, especially with his eye problem; at least once he stayed for a few days at Domasi Mission for treatment (Ross, 1996a:181). We are told that when Chilembwe was killed in the Rising of 1915, Hetherwick took his sons, John Jr. and Donald, to the Blantyre Mission to be brought up and educated (Phiri, 2004:173).

4.1.3.2.1 Scottish Missions and Other Missions

Multiplication of missions revealed some qualities that distinguished Scottish Missions from other Christian bodies in Central Africa, which is vital to understanding the role missions

played in the transformation of Malawi (McCracken, 2000:217). McCracken (2000:217) says all missions in the 1890s recognized that the prime task of religious conversion could not be accomplished without the introduction of at least a measure of Western education; all that were Protestant shared Henry Venn‟s ideal of a self-governing, self-supporting native church. They understood that evangelization of the African formed the major and sacred goal of missionary programs, and literacy stood as a fundamental necessity for the reading of the Bible (Lamba, 1984:377). Where they differed most markedly was on the type of society they wished into effect (McCracken, 2000:217).

McCracken (2000:218) raises this point taking into consideration that Scottish missionaries approached their missionary task with a determination to revolutionize the society in which they worked, which contrasted evidently with attitudes demonstrated by members of UMCA, DRC and Catholic missions. Of the UMCA, McCracken (2000:219) says that the mission came to Africa, not to transform societies, but to insert Christianity into them. Tengatenga (2006:190) agrees. He says the UMCA set out not to found a nation or a colony but to be a church in the land along the River Shire and Lake Nyasa. As in other missions, the policy of the UMCA was to use the school as auxiliary to the church, which is why their teachers were evangelists first and teachers after (Banda, 1982:3). They aimed at Christianizing societies in their own civil and political setting and to help them develop a Christian civilization suited to their own climate and their own circumstances (McCracken, 2000:219).

So, the UMCA missionaries understood themselves as a religious body, not educationalists; they even did not want to advance education beyond a certain point (McCracken, 2000:219). In his book, *A Brief History of Education in Malawi*, Banda writes:

> There was a great tendency towards religious bias in the mission‟s curriculum…In their curriculum, the UMCA were not keen to include industrial training. It was out of necessity that they provided a form of industrial training as they needed carpenters, builders, gardeners etc. in their mission stations (Banda, 1982:3-4).

Explaining this, Banda (1982:4) says most of UMCA members came from Universities upper class in England who were concerned not so much with industrial work but intellectual growth; which was unlike the Scottish missionaries who were drawn from a cross section of the Scottish community and had worked their way up as Livingstone did. By focusing on

evangelism, the UMCA had disregarded to the value of education, which was fundamental to genuine social transformation.

Similarly, paying minimal attention to education prevented the DRC mission from playing an active role in matters of social transformation. McCracken (2000:219) says staff recruitment in the DRC mission was one of the contributing factors to the mission‟s policy on education. He points out that its missionary agents in the first place were predominantly of rural stock; all without exception had grown up on farms as boys in South Africa before they entered mission work. Compared with the emphasis placed by Livingstone and the Scottish missionaries, with their largely urban background, on Commerce and Christianity, their slogan was that of "the Bible and the Plough" (McCracken, 2000:219). Again, McCracken (2000:219) says the doctrine to which they ascribed of "the natural diversity of races," while it implied much genuine concern with improving the conditions of the existing society and raising the moral and physical standards of African villages, ensured that no attempt would be made to transform that society itself.

With this in mind, as Lamba (1984:377) argues, the DRC mission education for Africans never aimed at discovering the profound mysteries of the European world, so long as it helped in the formation of character and a Christian peasantry. Banda (1982:8) observes that the DRC‟s principles of curriculum were based on the fact that they wanted to instill a thorough knowledge of the Word of God into the minds of scholars and also to prepare them for agriculture and simple village life. Lamba (1984:377) adds that the Dutch upheld the nineteenth century missionary view that considered the African as a child whose basic need was low level literacy, particularly in the vernacular and they were stuck to that ideology. He further says that they generally saw Africans as second class citizens with no special organization conducive to a civilized mode of life. The DRC mission policy was consistent and never agreed fully with the quest for total transformation of the African (Lamba, 1984:377).

In this way, the DRC parted ways with the Scottish missions who believed in a reasonably liberal and progressive education. One practical example of their differences was the DRC‟s most extreme Afrikaner conception of the African which forbade any close contact between

the races, and the more liberal social and political aims of the Scots (Lamba, 1984:377). Jean and John Comaroff (1991:1) helps us understand DRC's position in this statement:

> You must know what it means to accept this church. The Dutch Reformed Church has a motto, a commandment: "There Shall Be No Equality Between Black And White in Church Or In State!" If we allot a site to this church, we know it is as good as [accepting] the Bantu Authorities Act. It does not want educated Africans…. It does not want black people to wear shoes. The DRC refuses passports to our children when sympathizers overseas offer them scholarships to further their education. We are afraid of the DRC. Its members are bribed people, people of no intelligence.[22]

Of interest to note is the fact that Scottish Missions had put much emphasis on the education of Africans. Phiri (2004:132) says Dr Robert Laws in his mission work was guided among other things by a German proverb which states "What you would put into the nation put into its schools." This was realized when the two missions became notable educational institutions in central and southern Africa (Phiri, 2004:133 cf. Banda, 1982:11). The northern region of Malawi, Livingstonia Mission's area of influence, became the most educationally advanced in the whole Central Africa (Phiri, 2004:133).

The central region being the DRC mission area of influence was particularly affected because its educational policy excluded the teaching of English in the village schools, a factor disliked by many Africans who saw English as the gateway to social and economic success (Lamba, 1984:378). Lamba (1984:378) says this in part was responsible for the rise of independent African educational initiatives, such as the African Methodist Episcopal school programme in Kasungu; it was opened because the Dutch had stopped teaching English when Livingstonia handed Kasungu over to the DRC mission. Banda (1982:37) says the transfer of Chilanga mission in Kasungu to the DRC mission infuriated Banda, then in South Africa, because in his opinion, the Dutch were not teaching English in their schools, which meant that the people of Kasungu were going to be deprived of a very important subject in formal education.

To illustrate how the political life of Malawi was affected by this policy, Ross (2009:32) says the central region was not conducive to the growth of the native association movement. He observes while citing Roger Tangri (1970:126-7) who clearly explained that in the central region, education was provided by the DRC, UMCA and Roman Catholic missions none of whom, at that time, concentrated on education in English. The first association in the central

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[22] This is quoted from Barolong boo Ratshidi, Mafikeng, Minutes of Council Meetings, 22 February 1960, "Minutes on the Discussions by Tribal Headmen on the Application for a Site by the Dutch Reformed Church."

region was formed in Lilongwe, but to confirm the nature of the problem majority of its members were people from northern and southern region working in the town, considered to be innovators and almost all products of Livingstonia and Blantyre Mission school systems (Ross, 2009:32). It all hinges on the fact that the DRC mission, the Catholic missions, the UMCA – however much they differed in details of policy – all emphasized indigenous language education and played down (when they had any at all) English medium education (Ross, 2009:32).

4.1.3.2.2 Joseph Booth and His Contribution

The challenge to the Scottish missions" hegemony began in earnest in 1892 when Joseph Booth founded the ZIM at Blantyre (McCracken, 2000:216). He bothered the three groups of Europeans already resident in Malawi: missionaries, government officials and farmers (Phiri, 2004:150). Scott and Hetherwick openly condemned Booth"s tactics for enticing their converts and trainees to his mission (Phiri, 2004:152). Despite their earlier support, Johnston and his successor Alfred Sharpe learned that Booth was a more nuisance than Scott and Hetherwick (Phiri, 2004:152). In August 1899, Booth drafted a petition he had proposed to send to Queen Victoria on behalf of Africans of British Central Africa as Malawi was called until 1907 (Phiri, 2004:155). In the petition, he had called for complete withdrawal of British rule in Malawi and for handing of the territory back to local administration (Thompson, 2005:577).

In addition to this, Booth pleaded for good quality education as that which students used to get in Britain to be given to five percent of the natives of the Nyasaland Protectorate to prepare them for government, professional, mechanical or mercantile appointments (Langworthy, 2002:214). He further suggested that the revenue collected from the hut tax be extended on the education of Africans to the point of equality with the average British education (Langworthy, 2002:214). The petition also pleaded for exemption of Nyasaland Africans from all obligations to bear arms against their fellow Africans in other parts of Africa (Langworthy, 2002:214). The Protectorate Administration in Zomba was alarmed because they feared that due to Booth"s teachings, there was likely to be trouble from the native (Langworthy, 2002:214). When the Commissioner Alfred Sharpe sent soldiers to arrest him, Booth fled and sought refuge among the Ngoni of Mozambique. After a five-month

exile, Langworthy (2002:215) says he was willing to compromise and in January 1900 Booth returned to Nyasaland.

McCracken (2012:107) claims that Booth's ideas and enthusiasm played a formative part in the shaping of the first wave of Malawian anticolonial protest. Several churches in Malawi were established under Booth's influence, these included: Zambezi Industrial Mission (1892); Nyasa Industrial Mission (1893); Baptist Industrial Mission (1895); Plainfield Industrial Mission (1900) financed by Seventh Day Baptist Church (SDB) in Plainfield, New Jersey. It was later bought by American-based Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) who renamed it Malamulo (1902). Under his influence, Church of Christ Mission was opened 1907 (Phiri, 2004:159). Booth left Malawi for good in February 1903 and established himself at Clifton in Cape Town where he opened a Bible School.[23] In spite of the rolling stone nature of his missionary activities, Booth did have some influence on the early history of modern Malawi, including influencing and mentoring John Chilembwe.

4.1.3.2.3 John Chilembwe: The 1915 Uprising

John Chilembwe was Booth's first convert in Malawi (Banda, 1982:13). They first met in February 1893, a few months after Booth's arrival in the country and Chilembwe was hired to be his cook. Before their encounter, Phiri (2004:168) says Chilembwe had received education at a Church of Scotland school in Chilomoni, Blantyre where he studied up to Standard Three which meant he was in school for about seven years.[24] In 1897, Booth took Chilembwe to America where he was enrolled at Virginia Theological Seminary in Lynchburg with the financial and moral support of National Baptist Convention – a leading Negro Baptist Church in America. Chilembwe was ordained as a Baptist minister in 1899 upon finishing his studies. Here, we need to mention that Chilembwe was the first of his people to become an ordained minister. We understand that Blantyre and Livingstonia Missions only ordained their first Malawian ministers in 1911 and 1914, respectively.

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[23] McCracken (2012:107) points out that Booth left Malawi following the breakdown of relations over disputes on ideological questions between Booth and Thomas Branch (leader of SDA). At Clifton, he trained a number of Malawians, such as Alexander Makwinja, Gilbert Chihayi, Hanson Tandu and Elliot Kamwana, whom he later sent back to Malawi to propagate Watch Tower teachings (Phiri, 2004:159).

[24] Phiri (2004:168) points out that in those days pupils spent four years called classes 1 to 4 learning entirely in the mother tongue. The fifth year known as Standard One they started learning English. When Chilembwe left school about the year 1892 he had been learning English for three years.

4.1.3.2.3.1 Establishment of Providence Industrial Mission

In 1900, Chilembwe returned to Malawi as one sent by black Baptists, his sponsors, who had hoped that he would be "a John the Baptist making in the wilderness of Central Africa a path for American Negro "Missionaries" (Williams, 1978:109). On arrival, Chilembwe established himself at Mbombwe in Chiradzulu where his Providence Industrial Mission is located. Phiri (2004:170) points out that though his American sponsors had promised him help with money and advisory staff, the help did not come all at once. Chilembwe engaged in a good deal of hunting for wild game, particularly elephants, for their meat and ivory which he sold and used the earnings to lay down the foundations of his mission. Like Booth, Chilembwe began his mission by looking for men who had obtained some education in missions that were already established (Phiri, 2004:170).

Matecheta (1996:149) claims that not many people from already established churches joined Chilembwe; largely he was joined by Lomwe immigrants working on Bruce Estates. He says:

> Because they know that John will not give them work to do. Second, because many are loyal to their church, and look to it as the mother. Third, because its teaching is good and it has done much for uplifting of the natives in its industrial and spiritual work. To forsake and to be disloyal to it is a great crime. All what we have today is from the Church of Scotland (Matecheta, 1996:149).

Regardless of this, by 1910, Chilembwe had made some progress on his mission work. In the years 1901 and 1902, the progress was remarkably enhanced when he was joined by the Rev. L. N. Cheek and Miss Emma B. Delany respectively. The work progressed to the effect that PIM soon became the new social centre in Chiradzulu and the mission"s influence soon extended to other parts of the southern Malawi and the nearby territories of Mozambique and the Rhodesias (Banda, 1982:18). After helping to build a strong foundation of PIM, the two American Negro "Missionaries" left in June 1906.

Chilembwe had to direct and manage the work alone and the years 1906-1914 were noted for the mission"s development (Banda, 1982:18). By 1910, he had seven assistants helping him ministering to 800 members and work had begun on an impressively large brick church, rivalling that of the Blantyre Mission in size if not in intricacy of decoration (McCracken, 2012:133). By 1912, more than 900 pupils were in attendance at the PIM"s seven schools (McCracken, 2012:133). It was during these years that the mission earned scorn from white

settlers in and around Chiradzulu (Banda, 1982:19). One of the things that aroused scorn was his desire to establish a respectable and dignified African community based on a European model (Banda, 1982:21). For this, Chilembwe was held by many local Europeans as simply an ambitious and a dangerous man who was aspiring to be a European (Banda, 1982:21). Banda (1982:21) says Chilembwe‟s appeal for education of Africans came at the time when many settlers saw no reason why Africans were to be given education at all. The idea behind this was to keep Africans as labourers on white owned farms.

4.1.3.2.3.2 Grievances Leading to the 1915 Uprising

While his principal concern in the early years of his work was to build a firm base among his flocks, Chilembwe did not ignore broader issues affecting his countrymen (Williams, 1978:109). By 1910, he began to add to his assertion of the social and economic equality of all races vigorous denunciations of British colonialism (McCracken, 2012:135). Chilembwe‟s appeal derived from three separate and contradictory elements: a concern for African advancement; a dislike of British colonialism; and a belief in the imminence of the Second Coming when the poor and exploited could expect to come into their own (McCracken, 2012:133). Through his petition, Chilembwe took the alternative view from that of Scottish missionaries and their African staff, which held that colonial impact was essentially beneficial in that it had ended the slave trade and created new economic and educational opportunities (McCracken, 2012:135). His views, however, were those expressed most clearly by his former mentor, Booth, that „Africa was for the Africans; Europeans have come only to take away your land‟ (McCracken, 2012:135).

Recounting some of the factors leading to Chilembwe Rising of 1915, Matecheta (1996:151) points out that Chilembwe was greatly grieved by *thangata system* because it was considered another form of slave trade. He says *thangata* means help, but the one introduced by British government and European farmers was not *thangata* at all; it was compulsory labour that natives allowed out of fear. Whereas *thangata* affected only people who lived on private estates in some districts of the southern region, taxation vexed people countrywide (Phiri, 2004:263).[25] Chilembwe was particularly annoyed with the conduct of tax collectors who

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[25] Government introduced the poll or hut tax partly to raise revenue and partly to compel Africans to work for European estate owners. Phiri (2004:263) says the use of money was unknown among Africans. When tax collectors went about the village demanding three or five shillings people could say, "you compel us to pay in

went out terrorizing villagers by demanding free chickens and flour from them (Phiri, 2004:264). Phiri (2004:264) says wives of tax defaulters who had fled into hiding were held as hostages until the tax defaulter turned up with the tax money. During such occasions, decent women were raped and penniless widows were harassed – a thing that riled Chilembwe more.

The coming of white settlers and British rule ushered into African tribal life problems, which had not existed before (Phiri, 2004:262). In Chapter Three, we saw how a lot of tribal land was alienated and offered for sale to white settlers. Once land on which people had been dwelling was sold they woke up one day to find they were forbidden to: cut poles used in building huts and maize granaries; hunt for animals or honey in the bush they had gone hunting before; and they could not shift to virgin lands when the one on which they were dwelling had lost its fertility (Phiri, 2004:263). Chilembwe bemoaned the country"s situation, he remarked:

> Now the land has been taken away from us. All the fertile places have been taken away, and the poor Africans are staying in barren places. Even when a white man has got a case with a black man, the Resident helps his own countryman. Often the native is punished. When white men pass each other they do not call each other *"Chotsa chipewa!"* ("Remove your hat") – only to black people. Even when he takes it off, if he tries to put it on again, he often gets scolded with angry and bad language: *"Ufuna chikoti"* ("You deserve to be whipped!") or "I'll take stick to you," with such words as *"Nyani, Niger etc.,"* ("Baboon, Nigger etc.") which only means slaves! (Matecheta, 1996:150).

Chilembwe was critical of the use of Nyasaland African troops in campaigns against fellow Africans. In 1914, at the outbreak of the First World War, he was not happy to see Africans, who benefitted nothing, being forced to go and fight in the war he believed only served European interests. McCracken (2012:136) says when Chilembwe was appalled by the loss of African life, he reverted to a more orthodox political stance and complained:

> A number of people have already shed their blood, while some are crippled for life…If this were a war…for honour, Government gain of riches, etc., we would have been boldly told: Let the rich men, bankers, titled men, storekeepers, farmers and landlords go to war and get shot. Instead the poor Africans who have nothing to own in this present world, who in death leave only a long line of widows and orphans in utter want and dire distress are invited to die for a cause which is not theirs (McCracken, 2012:136).

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cash but do we have machines for minting coins." Such people were directed to go and work on the estates mostly in Blantyre, Chiradzulu, Thyolo and Mulanje districts for at least three months.

He was also displeased with the way Africans living on land occupied by European settlers were treated. Ross (2009:25) traces the course of the development leading to the Rising from the uncomfortable neighbourliness that existed between Pastor John Chilembwe and the estates of A. L. Bruce at Magomero. Bruce Estates formed the single European community that was not only unimpressed with Chilembwe"s educational activities but was literally hostile to Africans (Banda, 1982:21). Ross writes:

> Despite Alexander Livingstone Bruce being the son of David Livingstone"s daughter Agnes, and the estate manager, William Jarvis Livingstone being a distant relation of the explorer and missionary, the record of labour relations on the estate was a bad one and, even more remarkably, neither schools nor churches were allowed on the thousands of acres of the estate (Ross, 2009:25).

Magomero was the headquarters of large Bruce Estates where W. J. Livingstone was the manager. According to McCracken (2012:131), he is said to be the cruellest man on the Estates. He describes him as a man given to alternating acts of brutality and kindness. It was at these estates that most of Chilembwe"s followers worked for or lived as tenants.

Because W. J. Livingstone had been extremely harsh with African employees, historians have portrayed him as a man responsible for all brutalities done to Africans on Bruce estates. But it is worth stressing, argues McCracken (2012:131), that it was Livingstone Bruce, grandson of David Livingstone and a member of the Legislative Council, who set the tone of management on the estate. McCracken writes:

> Wounded in the South African War and capable of walking only with sticks, Bruce was a somewhat distant figure to the tenants, whereas Livingstone was ever present, settling disputes and distributing food in times of famine but also urging workers with kicks and blows and extending the tasks that capitaos had allotted to them (McCracken, 2012:131).

McCracken (2012:131) says it was Bruce who was responsible for banning all schools from the Magomero estate and Bruce again who personally refused to allow Chilembwe followers to build a church on his land. As Bruce explained to the Commission of Inquiry, it was clear that he had absolute control over the making of policy on the estate to the effect that if Livingstone was rough instrument in carrying these policies out, he could not have acted without Bruce"s approval (McCracken, 2012:131). McCracken (2012:132) says Bruce and Livingstone became powerful because government had transferred responsibility for tax collection almost entirely to them. They even tried all their cases at the estate.

Under such circumstances, desertion, the classic strategy employed by abused workers on plantations all over the world, was an unattractive option for refugees who had fled from the even greater abuses inflicted on workers in Mozambique (McCracken, 2012:132). By 1910, evidence of workers „grumbling,‟ „sulking‟and otherwise expressing their dissatisfaction was beginning to accumulate; yet without leadership or inspiration there was little they could do (McCracken, 2012:132). McCracken (2012:132) says it was at this point that some tenants turned to John Chilembwe. Chilembwe had seen how blacks were ill-treated in America and could not bear it to see his countrymen being mistreated in their own homeland. So, he staged a rising in 1915 to try and remove foreign domination in his country and give his people freedom (Phiri, 2004:262). Several historiographers focusing on the history of Malawi have written extensively on events surrounding Chilembwe‟s 1915 Uprising[26] and because of this, we will not spend much time discussing it here except to highlight its significance to the making of Malawi.

4.1.3.2.3.3 Significance of Chilembwe's Uprising

First and foremost, it is important to mention here that the 1915 Chilembwe Rising has been claimed the only significant rebellion in the whole of Africa to be inspired by Christianity prior to the First World War (McCracken, 2012:127).[27] Although its history can be localized at Mbombwe in Chiradzulu, Chilembwe‟s Uprising had embraced national interests. His followers in the Rising had come from a variety of tribes (Phiri, 2004:274). At the start of the Rising on Saturday 23rd January, Chilembwe wrote Stephen Kadewere of Zomba and Philip Chinyama of Ntcheu, his close associates, instructing them to lead their followers to attack the neighboring government offices (McCracken, 2012:136). The Rising was therefore not tribal, but what today we would refer to as a national movement (Phiri, 2004:274). It was the first Central African resistance to European control which looked to the future, not to the past and was aimed at founding a nation rather than restoring the fortunes of the tribes (McCracken 2012:127).

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[26] For more information on Chilembwe's Rising see the following: McCracken (2012:127-146); Ross (2009:21-30); Phiri (2004:261-275) and Williams (1978:93-128).
[27] McCracken (2012:127) has taken these claims from John Iliffe, 1995. *Africans: The History of a Continent,* Cambridge.

In 1912, Chilembwe was ordered by the District Commissioner (DC) at Chiradzulu to stop opening more schools in the district. Phiri (2004:265) says the DC made this order to pacify the white-run missions.[28] He goes on to say that Chilembwe pleaded that if he did so, his sponsors in America would stop giving him further financial assistance. However, the DC refused to withdraw his order. Chilembwe was convinced that the government, missionaries and estate owners had combined to frustrate his efforts to educate his people. He then began talking to his friends about revolting and setting up an independent African state (Phiri, 2004:265). Chilembwe‟s object in the Rising was to expel or exterminate Europeans and establish a native state or theocracy of which he was to be the head (Phiri, 2004:274). These thoughts had emanated from his contacts with Joseph Booth and African-Americans from whom he had come to cherish the Ethiopian ideal of Africa for Africans (Phiri, 2004:274).

Others have argued that Chilembwe‟s Rising was a political failure that had no impact on the social life of Malawi. They claim that short-lived armed insurrection achieved nothing except the killing of William Jarvis Livingstone and two other European planters (Ross, 2009:27). Hetherwick, who was in charge of Blantyre Mission at the time of the Rising, is quoted by Ross (2009:30) as saying, "Nothing came of the commission [which was appointed to enquire into the Rising] and the whole matter was speedily forgotten." Although Hetherwick uttered these remarks, it should be noted that Blantyre ministers and elders, both missionaries and Africans, were unanimous that though they believed Chilembwe‟s taking up of arms was wrong, his complaints were justified (Ross, 2009:29). Ross (2009:29) observes that while each of those who came to testify to the Commission of Enquiry had something complimentary to say about the results of the arrival of Europeans, they all complained – in some cases quite bitterly – about the same issues of unjust treatment of the indigenous population that had angered Chilembwe.

Several factors contributed to its failure. Williams (1978:117) says there is little reliable evidence that Chilembwe had been able to enlist the support of many Africans apart from those who were members of his own church in Chiradzulu or of Chinyama‟s African Baptist Church in Ntcheu. He says:

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[28] It should be pointed out, as stated by Phiri (2004:274), that the system of teaching by small churches mostly of American and European origin was openly condemned for entrusting Bible teaching in the hands of Africans who were apt to misuse it. Thus, the system of teaching by the Church of Scotland missionaries was indirectly attacked, while approaches by the Roman Catholics and the Anglicans were admired.

There may well have been some who adopted a wait-and-see policy, but few of them were openly sympathetic; the movement was shunned by the majority of educated Africans, who belonged to the established churches; it received no support from any major chief and it was subsequently condemned by the native associations, which were the principal political voice of educated Africans during the 1920s and 1930s (Williams, 1978:117).

The North Nyasa Native Association (formed in 1912), of which Levi Mumba was one of the founding members, was very critical of Chilembwe"s and others" actions. It is regrettable because the association believed there were other options of resolving Africans grievances, including the High Court that existed to receive such appeals (Williams, 1978:117). But given the unfair treatment during Chilembwe"s time, how could one trust the judicial system that defended the white minority and condemned and oppressed Africans? Ross (1996a:186) makes it clear that there was general unhappiness about the status of the African in his own country, exemplified by the refusal of the Protectorate authorities to accept African evidence in court as being on a par with that given by a European.

Although there was no support from native associations, it remains that Chilembwe"s Rising was a reveille to both the natives and the whites of the Protectorate (Williams, 1978:117). It signified that the natives were capable of doing anything to transform their situation. This suggests that the Rising had national interests at heart. Williams (1978:115) says this interpretation is consistent with the assertion of Governor Sir George Smith, who said the Rising "opened a new phase in the existence of Nyasaland." The Rising had helpful effects on the social relations as Europeans became more aware of the offense given to Africans by the behaviour of men like Bruce (Williams, 1978:115). And among Africans in the Shire Highlands, Chilembwe was not forgotten (Ross, 2009:30). McCracken (2012:142) is right, he says, "Even if the Chilembwe Rising was, in the short run, a political failure, it continued to resonate in the minds of Malawians and remained of concern to colonial officials."

The significance that has been widely accorded to the Rising, argues Williams (1978:114), had perhaps owed less to what happened at the time than to the effect of the events on the subsequent history of the country. Pachai (1973:224) is of the opinion that Chilembwe died as a martyr but not in vain. He says after 1915 the shadow of Chilembwe was cast on the private estates, in the missions, in the Legislative Council chambers, in the relations between white and black. Though independence was yet a long way off, argues Pachai (1973:224), the year 1915 marked the end of the old era; what happened in 1953 and 1959 was a lengthening

of this shadow and a reinforcement of all it stood for. Although the grievances continued to worsen from 1915 into the 1950s, it remains that Chilembwe‟s Revolution was not a mere symbolic blow; it was, as Pachai (1973:224) puts it, a real instrument of change, even if it was fifty years ahead of its time. This is why John Chilembwe will always remain an integral or essential component of the history, not only of Malawi, but of Africa as a whole.

4.1.3.3 Responses to Chilembwe's Rising

Government‟s reactions to the Rising included vigorous campaigns against everyone who could in any way be connected with Chilembwe‟s Uprising (Ross, 2009:27). In trying to put down the revolt, David Kaduya was captured and then publicly executed in front of workers on one of Magomero‟s cotton plantations (McCracken, 2012:142). When Kaduya was killed, effective military resistance was brought to an end. He was considered a militant millenarian and former KAR askari, and the only rebel of proven military quality on Chilembwe‟s side (McCracken, 2012:141-2). Chilembwe himself was tracked down and was finally shot dead on 3rd February 1915 (McCracken, 2012:142). Many were hanged, including John Gray Kufa, and many more flogged and imprisoned (Ross, 2009:27). Banda (1982:23) says among those killed were African teachers. He further says European teachers that had been sympathetic were deported and all European staff of Zambezi Industrial Mission were told to leave the country.

As part of government‟s retaliation package, Chilembwe‟s New Jerusalem church at the PIM headquarters, which had been standing for two years, was demolished and all schools owned by PIM were closed and burnt down (Banda, 1982:23). Consequently, the mission completely ceased to operate until 1926 when it was restarted by Dr. Daniel Malikebu (Banda, 1982:19). He was an ex-pupil of the mission when it had opened in 1901. In 1906, Malikebu went to America at the invitation of Miss Delany and returned to Malawi as the first modern medical doctor (Banda, 1982:23). The government, persistent with its reprisals, went on to close all independent schools run by Africans like Charles Domingo although they had not been connected with Chilembwe‟s Revolt (Banda, 1982:23). Similarly, schools belonging to small churches of American and European origin, such as Zambezi Industrial Mission, Nyasa Industrial Mission, Churches of Christ, and the Watchtower Society, were also closed. Their system of teaching was openly condemned for entrusting Bible teaching in the hands of Africans who were apt to misuse it (Phiri, 2004:274 cf. Ross, 1996a:188).

4.1.3.4 Education Policy as a Consequence of the Rising

Before long the blame was shifted to focus on educated Africans and so onto the Scottish Missions and the churches these missions had produced (Ross, 2009:27). We have already pointed out that the nature of the education the Scottish Missions provided was at that time radically different from that given by other missions. Moreover, Blantyre and Livingstonia missions had produced the vast majority of schools in the Protectorate (Ross, 2009:28). The situation ignited a duel between the Anglican and the Catholic Missions, supported by the government, on the one hand, and the Scottish Missions on the other (Banda, 1982:23). In their evidence before the Commission of Enquiry into the Rising, says Ross (2009:28), spokesmen of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and Dutch Reformed Missions all insisted on the limited aims of the education they provided, which existed primarily to produce church members literate in the indigenous language. They also emphasized the careful supervision by Europeans of all African catechists and teachers, which was in sharp contrast with what the Scottish Missions were doing (Ross, 2009:28).

We observe with Ross (2009:28) that while their education system stressed on English and the gaining of skills useful in the modern world, Scottish Missions went further to trust and to grant independence to the missions‟ African ministers, teachers and evangelists. Both Blantyre and Livingstonia missions had allowed a measure of autonomy to their African evangelists and teachers, and more importantly, had already ordained Africans as full „ministers of word and sacrament‟ (Ross, 2009:28).[29] Robert Laws learnt that failure to grant Africans authority had particularly affected Livingstonia mission in a bad way in that it had led to the creation of independent churches (McCracken, 2008:290).[30] Therefore, his reaction to the Chilembwe Rising was to seek to increase African responsibilities still further. He had become convinced that religious breakaway more commonly resulted from denial of African authority (McCracken, 2008:290-1).

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[29] Robert Laws had sent evangelist David Kaunda – the father of Zambia's first President, Kenneth D. Kaunda – as mission pioneer to Lubwa in Northern Rhodesia, whereas Rev. Harry Kambwiri Matecheta played the independent role among Gomani's Ngoni in Ntcheu (Ross, 2009:28).

[30] McCracken (2008:291) cites the Sanga congregation's call to Yesaya Zelenje Mwasi in October 1916 as an example symbolizing the growth of African power; the Central Fund Committee was convinced that the congregation had resources enough to pay Mwasi's salary and he became their individual minister with the same constitutional rights as possessed by Europeans.

At first, the government, angered by the events of Chilembwe Rising, sided with the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and DRC missions in attacking Scottish Missions as well as smaller Protestant sects for allowing their scholars unsupervised access to the Bible (McCracken, 2012:143). In this way, the Roman Catholic, Anglican and DRC missions" approaches were admired by the government. In the Legislative Council, Livingstone Bruce moved a motion demanding that all schools in charge of native teachers in the Protectorate be closed at once (McCracken, 2012:144). This created fears among Scottish missionaries because the motion represented European thinking both on the part of officials and settlers (Ross, 1996a:189). It was also a threat to their educational work. They feared that the Nyasaland government might insist that no African minister, evangelist or teacher should work except under close and direct supervision by a European, something that would have closed down major part of the work of Scottish Missions (Ross, 2009:28). It would also have made nonsense of the plans to set up by these missions a legally autonomous African church that was later to be known the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (Ross, 2009:28).

It should be mentioned here that by 1914 Blantyre and Livingstonia had agreed to form this autonomous church, but the outbreak of the First World War meant that the formal launch of the church did not take place until September 1924. In this sense, Bruce"s motion was going to affect Scottish Missions" work badly. McCracken (2012:144) says Bruce had gone too far this time. So, Hetherwick and Laws mobilized the support of Church interests in Scotland and with their help were successful in repelling this threat to their educational work. Good sense prevailed eventually in government circles and things were left as they were (Ross, 2009:28). However, similar protection was not available for smaller, predominantly American-based missions, for instance Churches of Christ and the Watchtower Society. In a series of panicky measures, the government exiled Eliot Kamwana and other leading members of the Watchtower Society to Mauritius and thence to the Seychelles, where they were to languish until 1937 (McCracken, 2012:144).[31] McCracken (2012:144) says African-organized churches were told to suspend their operations and Residents were not allowed to gather in large numbers for any religious or social and political discussion associated with native preaching.

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[31] Also, the government imposed a ban on the importation into Nyasaland of all Watchtower literature as well as a variety of other publications (McCracken, 2012:144).

Although the history of education in Malawi was darkened by government"s reaction to the Rising, reciprocally, argues Williams (1978:116), Chilembwe"s Revolt had significant and beneficial effect on educational policy in Malawi. He observes that after the war, mainly in 1920s, government became more actively involved in the promotion of education. It is said that during the meetings of the Commission of Enquiry set to inquire into the Rising, Hetherwick, in a four hour presentation, took the initiative and attacked the government for its lack of a positive policy of aid to education (Ross, 1996a:188). In the attack, Hetherwick is quoted by Ross (1996a:188) pointing out that despite the African population paying quite heavy taxes, they got only 2d per child per annum back in education grants, compared with 15/9d in the Cape, or 13/5d in the more fairly comparable example of Basutoland.[32] Hetherwick believed that it was the moral duty of the government to help positively the economic development of its dependencies (Ross, 1996a:193).

In this regard, the role of the government in education was understood as a major element in the sort of positive social concern which Hetherwick held was its duty and a just return for taxation (Ross, 1996a:193). It was what Hetherwick had long wanted and what the mission had always stood for (Ross, 1996a:193). The government finally increased its financial support to mission schools and even more went on to establish a Department of Education to oversee educational affairs in the country (Williams, 1978:116). Of course, Williams (1978:116) makes mention of some quarters that have ascribed government"s active involvement in promoting education to a trend that was sweeping across British colonies in Africa after the war. While it may be true that the trend was strongly reinforced by the visit of Phelps-Stokes Commission to many African territories that provided a powerful stimulus to educational development throughout Africa, it remains that the effects of Chilembwe"s Revolt cannot be devalued. Granting the fears it had created among the whites and the impact it had on Africans, the insurrection had influenced the creation of education policy in Malawi.

4.1.4 The Church and the Struggle for Independence 1915-1964
Williams (1978:118) is right to suggest that the Rising and the manner in which its supporters had been punished may have discouraged political activity by Africans in the Shire Highlands for we notice that none had stood up to condemn government"s atrocities done to Chilembwe supporters. The only open criticism to Nyasaland government came from Blantyre and

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[32] Ross (1996a:188) states that verbatim extracts of this speech are to be found in Livingstone (1931:156-7).

Livingstonia missionaries, especially Hetherwick and Laws. Perhaps this may also explain why formation of native associations in the southern region took place only in 1920s. Williams (1978:118) states that the Shire Highlands was the only part of the country where education facilities were anything as good as those in the north. Equally, Robert Laws, in laying down guiding principles of the first native association formed at Karonga in 1912, stipulated that the members themselves be of a good education and character and loyal to the government (Mufuka, 1977:130). Certainly, the Shire Highlands had all these potentials. However, events following Chilembwe Revolt might have contributed to late formation of native associations in the area.

Ross (1996a:186) points out that before the Rising occurred, missionaries through the Blantyre Mission magazine, from 1891 up till almost the eve of the attack on Bruce Estates, had constantly warned of the dangers of the continuance of a system akin to serfdom in the European owned estates in the southern region of the country. Their opposition to government few days after the Rising took another form from that of warning to that of bringing the government to book for the atrocities committed on the Rising supporters. Ross (2009:27) says the enthusiasm of the general European population for the punishment of all suspected of collaboration with Chilembwe‟s plans brought this rebuke from Hetherwick:

> I hear there were six further executions at Zomba on Monday and Zomba camera fiends were on the spot. I wonder what our countrymen are coming to these days. This whole affair is to them a „Roman Holiday‟ at Zomba (Ross, 2009:27).

Hetherwick‟s immediate reaction was to press that the Enquiry into the affair which all seemed to agree was necessary, should specially enquire into African grievances (Ross, 1996a:187). His curiosity had been to know whether there were any grievances or other causes of discontent among the natives of the Protectorate which can be adduced as a factor in the question (Ross, 1996a:187). Ross (1996a:188) observes that it was a natural step to make this demand because there were a lot of pressing issues affecting Africans at the time.

Some of the pressing issues that Hetherwick addressed included the hardships of load carriers in the First World War (Amatengatenga) (Ross, 1996a:188). He also complained about the virtual serfdom of many people on the European estates. In the spirit of his old friend, D. C. Scott, Hetherwick defended the African from the charge that he was becoming "cheeky" and no longer lifting his hat to Europeans by asking the government to use its influence to get

Europeans to acknowledge the salute: "Then it will be known that instead of there being only one gentleman, two gentlemen have met" (Ross, 1996a:188-9). Of Scott and Hetherwick, Alfred Sharpe successor of Harry Johnston had concluded:

> There would be no permanent and satisfactory state of things with regard to this Mission until two missionaries, the Rev D. C. Scott and Rev Alexander Hetherwick, were removed from the country (Ross, 1998:77).

Time and again Scott and Hetherwick had been critical of the government on issues to do with land, labour, taxation, military actions against local chiefs and on those which they judged to be harmful to the interests of the African population (Ross, 1998:77). In other words, these missionaries took the course that made them appear as the opposition party to the colonial administration (Ross, 1998:77-8).

4.1.4.1 The Church and the Formation of Nyasaland African Congress

In Chapter Three, we saw the significant role Robert Laws played in the formation of the first native association in Malawi in 1912. The success of Levi Mumba as Secretary of this association led to the formation of other native associations across the country (Mufuka, 1977:131). Later, in 1944, these associations formed a united Congress called the Nyasaland African Congress, which was to act as dominant opposition party to the colonial rule. Mufuka (1977:131) reminds us that the purpose, which was to protest lack of adequate representation in the Legislative Council, was never lost sight of. He goes on to say that when Laws himself was nominated to the Legislative Council in 1913, he used the North Nyasa Native Association as a platform on which to both air his own views and to receive the opinions of the Africans. The causes taken up by the associations included issues to do with: load carriers in the First World War; imposed licences for dog; and the penal code of 1929, which penalized sexual relations between white women and black men (Mufuka, 1977:131).

While Livingstonia missionaries were instrumental in the establishment of the first native association, Blantyre missionaries" contribution was on the formation of an umbrella native association - Nyasaland African Congress. Phiri (2004:55) alludes to a missionary of the Church of Scotland, who in 1943 convened a meeting of leading Africans, including members of the Blantyre Native Association and told them that Coloureds had approached the government with a request that they should be given separate schools, from those given to

Africa.[33] Mufuka (1977:132) identifies this missionary as J. A. Rodgers, a quiet man who was an expert on federation and constitutional affairs. The founding members of the Congress, Levi Mumba, Frederick Sangala and Kenneth Matupa were also elders of the Church of Scotland at Blantyre and they used to frequent visit the house of Rodgers. Rodgers was a man who helped in the drafting of the first Congress Constitution (Mufuka, 1977:132).

We need to mention here that although the relationship between Congress and the Church of Scotland was close and the bulk of the leadership came from the graduates of Livingstonia and Blantyre mission schools, it is important to separate the two (Mufuka, 1977:132). In its official capacity, says Mufuka (1977:132-3), the Church of Scotland had made it clear that it supported the aspirations and ambitions expressed by Congress, and not the party itself. This is crucial for our understanding of church and state relationship for it draws boundaries as to how far the church should involve itself in politics. The Church's aim was to leave no room for any accusation that it is taking sides. Its official policy therefore was merely to express opinions on matters affecting the majority of its members (Mufuka, 1977:133). This suggests that if the church was to take sides, it was always to side with the oppressed. We observe that during the federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland the church was obligated to take sides with the aggrieved African population and against the plans of the white settlers (Ross, 1998:85). Ross (1996c:16) says Malawians bitterly resented being incorporated into what they regarded as a racist political union which would lead to the underdevelopment of their country.

4.1.4.2 The Church and Congress versus Federation

In Chapter Three, we learned that resistance activities increased in Malawi when the Legislative Council voted for a federal scheme in April 1953 and a series of political unrests followed with people calling for dissolution of the federation. Hostility heightened in 1958 when Federal Legislature introduced measures to reduce the very limited political representation which it accorded to the African population (Ross, 1996b:195). Most Scottish missionaries and most of their Malawian colleagues and parishioners moved steadily from cautious criticism in 1953 to full-scale opposition in 1958, placing themselves alongside Congress in opposition to government (McCracken, 2012:357). Mufuka (1977:163) points out that the relationship between Congress and the Church of Scotland missions at the time of

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[33] Phiri (2004:57) says Coloureds did not want to attend African schools which they said were inferior and that African fellow students were dirty; they did not want to eat African food.

federation was a symbiotic one: both saw federation as an impediment to their aims; as Congress was driven to desperation, some of the thinking and activities of that body were reflected in the Church as well. Both Congress and the missions therefore, being suspicious of the good intentions of the federal government, were committed from the beginning to its failure.

The Blantyre Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian watched these events with growing impatience (Mufuka, 1977:175).[34] In its statement of May 1958 that outlined the perceived causes of the growing political unrest in Malawi, the Synod called publicly for dissolution of the federation (McCracken, 2012:357).[35] In the statement, the Church asserted that it was its duty to express its views on the affairs of society and in all humility to pronounce what it believes to be a Christian judgment on matters affecting life of Malawians. Since doubts were cast on representative character of educated and politically active Africans, the Synod underlined that it was its responsibility to speak for ordinary people in villages (Ross, 1996b:195). Some of the excerpts from the statement read:

> Synod … feels it urgently necessary to say that it is unanimously opposed to Federation as it has been seen in practice over the years … This Synod appeals to Christians of all races in this land, and to its own members in particular, to strive by every means in their power, to help understanding between races, and to build a peaceful, righteous society … This Synod appeals to the people of Scotland through the Church of Scotland to remember their ancient links with the people of this land, and consider their political responsibilities towards us as exercised by the United Kingdom Government (Ross, 1998:85-6).

It is important to mention that the distinctiveness of the church, at the time the statement was produced, was that the affairs of the Synod had been mainly in African hands for many years and were practically completely independent in control of their own affairs (Ross, 1998:86). For instance, the statement was signed by the Rev Allan Thipa who was then the Moderator of Blantyre Synod. The statement had a powerful political impact. Ross (1996b:195) says it was adopted by the Church of Scotland – a leading advocate in Britain of the need to dismantle the federation and to grant self-rule to Malawi. It also became one of leading

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[34] In 1924, Blantyre Synod (formerly known as Church of Scotland Blantyre Mission) alongside Livingstonia Synod (formerly Free Church of Scotland Livingstonia Mission) had joined together to form Church of Central Africa Presbyterian. The two missions were later in 1926 joined by the Nkhoma Synod (formerly the Dutch Reformed Church).

[35] In Chapter Three, we pointed out that the following were the causes of political unrest: growing racism of both government and white immigrants; restrictions on civil liberties for Africans, including prohibition on holding public meetings without a police permit; firming activities of special branch of police; and growing use of informers against law-abiding people (see Thompson, 2005:580-1).

factors that contributed to Britain's abandonment of its commitment to federation and to finally grant Malawi independence in 1964.

4.2 Postcolonial Era: Establishment of Banda's Rule

Indeed the battle to achieve greater independence intensified and the support offered by some of the churches, especially the Church of Scotland, lent legitimacy to the struggle (Ross, 1996c:16). In the process, Banda, who had been out of the country for over forty years, was called back and he led Malawi to independence in 1964. Chapter Three provides detailed discussion on proceedings leading to independence and beyond. It also describes how Banda ruled the country as a single-party dictatorship of Malawi Congress Party for over thirty years. This is crucial for our discussion because for us to understand the role of Church in postcolonial Malawi, we need to get to grips with the man Banda, the first Malawian president. When the young Congress leaders decided to invite the 60-year old Banda to return home and become leader of the struggle for independence, they had hoped that "the old man" would act as a figurehead while they retained the real political power. They were not prepared for the way in which he quickly reorganized the Congress party machinery so that it revolved around his personal authority (Ross, 1996c:17).

So, they were dismayed by his increasingly autocratic style of leadership (1996c:17). It was mentioned in Chapter Three that the young Congress leaders did nothing. They laid aside their reservations until the great goal of independence had been attained. From the moment of his arrival the Congress propaganda, as a political tactic, portrayed him in messianic terms as the great leader who would break the hated federation (Ross, 1996c:17). Later, this developed into an ideology that recognized Banda as the Father and Founder of the nation, a messiah or saviour that God provided to save and lead Malawi for life (Chirambo, 2004:148). Chirambo (2004:148) states that Banda was understood as the fount of all wisdom, and always knew what was best for the nation. He goes on to argue that based on this philosophy, Banda was able to build his hegemony in Malawi. The ideology that Banda was divinely appointed to lead the country for life, claims Chirambo (2004:148) was instilled in the people and it created an environment where the people in Malawi wanted Banda only to lead them.

It followed then that anyone opposing or criticizing Banda was waging a war against the people of Malawi and implicitly, s/he was challenging what God had ordained (Chirambo,

2004:148). He succeeded in establishing his rule with an iron hand and became powerful by creating fear among the people. To nurture the culture of fear, Banda used the Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), an infamous paramilitary wing of MCP, which worked closely with members of MCP Youth League, to terrorize and hassle the public. Chirambo (2004:151) observes that the MYP duplicated and usurped some of the functions of the Army and Police. They bore arms, conducted spying and intelligence operations, and Banda trusted them more than the Army and Police. As early as April 1964, by act of parliament, MYP was legislated into existence and was established as an integral and equal part of the security forces (Chirambo, 2004:151). Later in the year, in an amending act, the police were expressly forbidden from arresting any Young Pioneer without his commander's agreement – a measure that to all intents placed them above the law (McCracken, 2012:443).

This enactment of parliament enabled the MYP and the Youth League to operate without professionalism and legal mandate that bound the Police and Army, at this time still under the command of British colonial officers (Chirambo, 2004:152). The fact that they served as watchdogs and vanguards as well as architects of Banda's repressive machinery only served to make them feared and hated by both the security agents and the general public (Chirambo, 2004:152). Chirambo (2004:152) observes that as the MYP increasingly became armed and overlapped in their work with the Police and Army, the tension, particularly between Malawi Army and MYP increased. It found its fullest expression in the Operation Bwezani of 1993 when the Malawi Army conducted a disarmament exercise in all MYP bases in Malawi. He adds that their role in the politics of Malawi evolved with the changing political terrain of post-independence Malawi especially after the 1964 Cabinet Crisis when Banda saw the need to not only suppress political dissent but also prevent it.

In Chapter Three, we saw how Banda used the MYP to persecute ex-ministers and their relations for opposing him during the 1964 cabinet crisis. With them he was able to crush and suffocate the opposition and critics. Chirambo (2004:152) argues that to show that he did not trust the Army and the Police, Banda told them that he was prepared to use the MYP if security forces did not crush his enemies. He goes on to say that in 1965 Banda did use the MYP to burn down the entire village from where Chipembere hailed detaining thousands of people from the area. He was able to terrorize his enemies both in Malawi and abroad with the MYP (Chirambo, 2004:152). Banda's reprisals against the "rebel" ministers entailed that

from that time on, membership of the party was to be understood in terms of personal loyalty to him (Ross, 1996c:17). After the cabinet crisis, Banda declared concerning his opponents that:

> These people are wild animals now. They must be destroyed. No beating about the bush. Arrest them. But if they resist arrest, anything you do is alright so far as I am concerned. So remember that (Ross, 1996c:17-8).

In this way, Banda sanctioned the ill treatment of dissidents (Lwanda, 2009:305). Such was the unaccountability of Banda‟s power that thousands upon thousands of innocent people were detained, tortured and killed on this basis without any question being raised (Ross, 1996c:18). During his rule, which was characterized by political oppression, economic injustice and gross human rights abuse, Banda was able to: banish and imprison numerous opponents; hunt and murder exiled „rebels‟; and appropriate and dissolve the boundaries between private and public spheres, individual and collective lives, so that no one was sure of anyone, not of friends or colleagues, or relatives, not even of partners and spouses, and even one‟s careless dreams could be dangerous (Ross, 1996c:18-9). Malawi became a land of inescapable fear with Banda‟s dictatorial power as the machine controlling the system. Ross (1996c:18) has rightly put it that everyone in the country fell captive to this systemic terror.

4.2.1 The Church under Banda's Rule

In Chapter Three, we mentioned that development of one-party state and the growing personal authoritarianism of Banda meant that open criticism, of any type, of Banda or his government became increasingly difficult in 1970s and 1980s (Thompson, 2005:582). Even the role of churches was seen to be in the arena of private morality and little by little their room to manoeuvre was narrowed down (Thompson, 2005:583). From independence in 1964, church leaders felt their role in socio-political issues was to offer all possible support to the regime in the task of nation-building (Ross, 1996c:19). Ross (1996c:19) illustrates this task by quoting a Joint Message from the Catholic and Presbyterian Churches issued on the 10th Anniversary of Independence, which read:

> What has been achieved during this period in all fields is so unbelievable that it confounds even the most optimistic expectations of most of us and there is no doubt that all this achievement is due to the untiring efforts, dedicated, selfless, and responsible leadership of His Excellency the Life President Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda. If this country has grown from the ranks of the poor nations into a nation with a viable booming economy, with a healthy educated people, it is

due to His Excellency's own dynamic leadership and the stable and peaceful conditions that leadership has created.[36]

The church appeared to be compliant supporter of the life president and his repressive one-party regime. Every Sunday in all churches in Malawi leaders prayed for long life and prosperity of the dictator who was ruthlessly exploiting and brutally oppressing people (Ross, 1996e:38). The presence of church leaders at every national occasion implied religious legitimacy for the political status quo. It followed that the church lost its prophetic voice and allowed Banda and his government execute unjust policies unrestrained. Thus, as Ross (1998:87) correctly puts it, for many years the Church appeared to be ideologically captive to the Banda regime.

Ross (1996c:19) argues that the Christian churches had, to some extent, contributed to the creation of what critics have called the "Frankenstein monster" of the Banda dictatorship. He observes that being deeply involved in the struggle of the people for self-government, they were too close to the Congress movement to be able to develop the critical distance necessary to offer a prophetic critique. Ross (1998:133) says the churches, particularly the CCAP had fallen into this trap partly because most of the Congress leadership, including Banda, were products of the Presbyterian missions and that many remained active members of the church.[37] He goes on to say that the church and state shared a sense of solidarity in the struggle to throw off the shackles of colonialism and to build the nation. In addition, churches were caught off guard when decisive changes in the MCP during the early 1960s paved the way for the dictatorship and repression of the one-party system which prevailed from independence in 1964 until the rise of the democratic movement in 1992-93 (Ross, 1998:87).

Furthermore, after many of its lay leaders became victims of the purge which followed the cabinet crisis of 1964, the CCAP was wrapped up by the climate of fear which dominated the country for the next thirty years (Ross, 1998:133). It was therefore difficult for the CCAP to develop an independent position. While open criticism was very difficult and any criticism made attracted dire consequences; still there were a few brave voices speaking out against the

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[36] This Joint Message was issued in 1974 and was signed by Most Rev James Chiona, Catholic Archbishop of Blantyre, and Very Rev J. D. Sangaya, General Secretary, CCAP Synod of Blantyre.
[37] Ross (1998:87) points out that the Congress movement was so much the child of the Blantyre and Livingstonia Synods, with e.g., eight out of the ten members of the first Malawi Cabinet being products of the Presbyterian missions.

regime in the 1970s and 80s, even at the height of Banda"s power (Thompson, 2005:583). In a detailed discussion, Ross (1998:134-146) stressed the role played by individual ministers of the CCAP Blantyre Synod in speaking out against the MCP and its leadership.[38] Thompson (2005:583) mentions that similar voices were also heard in their sister Synod, Livingstonia and most of these voices came from General Secretaries of the two Synods. Their criticism should not be underrated for some who spoke publicly against Banda were detained without trial, others disappeared and some almost certainly murdered. Even though there were these voices, it remains that the churches in Malawi failed to challenge Banda"s autocratic rule in 1970s and 80s.

Perhaps the reason why the CCAP remained silent at that time can be explained by looking at how the Jehovah"s Witnesses in Malawi were handled for refusing to buy MCP membership cards. In early 1970s, Banda persecuted and exiled Jehovah"s Witnesses in Malawi and were not allowed to function as a religious institution in Malawi. Klaus Fiedler (1996:154) says in 1967, at the MCP Convention held in Mzuzu, a resolution was passed, which said:

> Recommend strongly that the Jehovah"s Witnesses denomination be declared illegal in this country as the attitude of its adherents is not only inimical to the progress of this country, but also negative in every way that it endangers the stability and peace and calm which is essential for the smooth running of our state (Fiedler, 1996:154-5).

Banda emphatically supported the resolution saying the Jehovah"s Witnesses were causing trouble everywhere (Fiedler, 1996:155). In his closing remarks, Banda mentioned that government "may pass a law in such way that every area district can decide itself whether it wants Jehovah"s Witnesses or not. If people in any area said „No" then there would be no Jehovah"s Witnesses there" (Fiedler, 1996:155).

Fiedler (1996:155) states that such a law was indeed made by government, but it banned the Jehovah"s Witnesses outright, leaving the people of given areas no choice, and threatened to punish anyone trying to keep the movement going with 14 years in jail. He further says long before these legal particulars had been completed, the MCP had taken the law in its own hands and launched a ferocious onslaught on the Jehovah"s Witnesses. It involved burning of houses, destruction of crops, physical torture of both men and women and general beating,

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[38] Ross (1998:134-146) provides detailed discussion on individuals like Jonathan Sangaya, Saindi Chiphangwi, Peter Kaleso and Silas Ncozana who in their own way reacted to the injustices of the Banda regime.

sometimes resulting in deaths. Maybe it's because of this that church leaders genuinely feared for the future of their institutions should the church speak out collectively (Thompson, 2005:583). It also explains why heroic voices were coming from individual members of the Synods. Unfortunately, Banda's iron hand muted the church to the effect that it could not manoeuvre as a potential force for political reform and renewal.

4.2.2 The 1992 Catholic and Presbyterian Letters

The turning point in Malawi's history came on 8th March 1992 when the Catholic Bishops issued their famous pastoral letter *Living Our Faith* (Ross, 1998:87). The letter was issued in light of the wind of change that was sweeping across Africa and western countries in 1990s. Phiri (2010:339) observes that the following changes had some effect on Malawi: the fall of communism in the USSR in 1989; the release of Nelson Mandela in 1990 which led to peaceful transition from apartheid to democratic South Africa; and reforms in other African countries like Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria and Mozambique. He writes:

> Multiparty political system had been introduced in Kenya and Zambia by the year 1992. In Ghana and Nigeria civilian governments with multiparty systems had been restored. In Mozambique civil war had ended, the then rebel movement called Renamo had been recognized as an opposition party to the ruling party Frelimo (Phiri, 2010:339).

These changes were the result of pressure from dissident groups and church organizations. It was only in Malawi that the ruling MCP was stubbornly refusing to introduce reforms and restore multiparty democracy (Phiri, 2010:339). Although this was the case, Ross (1996e:38) believes that the increasingly apparent political bankruptcy of the Banda regime raised hopes for positive change in Malawi in the early 1990s.

Thus, the Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter was the first public criticism of Banda's regime in thirty years. Thompson (2005:584) notices that it was the collective nature of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi which allowed the Bishops to finally break the long silence that was ruling Malawi, which is in sharp contrast with individual heroic voices that came from the Synods of Blantyre and Livingstonia in 1970s and 80s. It should be mentioned here, as Thompson (2005:576) puts it, that this happened unexpectedly because open criticism of Banda's regime in 1970s and 1980s was very rare. Secondly, he points out that over longer period since British colonization of Malawi, Catholic Church had not been known for speaking out against injustice and oppression. As observed above, most criticism of

government, mainly in colonial period, had come from missionaries of Livingstonia and Blantyre Missions (Thompson, 2005:576). In the 90 years of operation in Malawi, the Catholic Church had not been known to take a frontline position on public affairs (Phiri, 2010:340).

Although it was couched in measured and respectful language this document was a strong denunciation of political situation in Malawi, and set off a train of events which eventually led to the downfall of Banda (Thompson, 2005:575). The letter addressed issues such as wage structure, education and health services, human rights and democratic accountability of government (Mijoga, 2001:375). Felix Chingota (1996:43) emphasizes that the pastoral letter was very critical of the socio-economic and the political situation in Malawi. In a detailed summary, he says:

> On the social level … They were particularly critical of the government‟s policy of requiring that all teachers remain in their regions of origin. The implementation of this policy meant that a number of teachers from the northern region who were working in the southern and central regions had to be repatriated back home, creating thereby a shortage of teachers in many schools. They also expressed their displeasure at the criteria used in selection of pupils for secondary school and third-level institutions ... The health services were also found lacking in many ways: overcrowding and lack of personnel, and particularly inequality in medical treatment. Regarding the economic situation the bishops pointed out the inequality in the distribution of resources resulting in a growing gap between the rich and the poor. The wages of workers were noted to be very inadequate and there was injustice in the prices paid to producers. On the political level the bishops noted that there was little participation of people in the decision making process in the country. There was no freedom of expression and association. Furthermore, the judicial system left a lot to be desired. Cases were not justly tried resulting in imprisonment of many Malawians without proper trial (Chingota, 1996:43).

On 2nd June 1992, the CCAP Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre with the support from the World Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) issued an open letter to Banda entitled "The Nation of Malawi in Crisis: the Church‟s Concerns." Ross (1996c:27) points out that there was discontent in the international Presbyterian and Reformed circles with the neutral attitude which the CCAP had adopted in the tense situation in Malawi. Meeting in Lusaka from 29th April to 5th May 1992, leaders of Southern African Alliance of Reformed Churches (SAARC) issued a strong letter supporting the Catholic bishops and calling the CCAP to be prophetic. They also called on WARC in Geneva to send a delegation to Malawi in order to inform itself about the situation there and to express its solidarity with the churches and the people of

Malawi (Schoffeleers, 1999:206).[39] Thus, the delegation from WARC met with the CCAP leadership and issued an open letter to the president asking him to act on matters raised in the two letters.

It needs to be mentioned here that the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, because of its closer ties with the MCP and that it covers part of the country which is Banda"s home area, did not sign the letter. It had distanced itself from any protest against government plans to deal with the Bishops (Schoffeleers, 1999:183). Of course, by lucky coincidence the Nkhoma leadership was in Athens attending the Reformed Ecumenical Synod at the time the letter was produced (Schoffeleers, 1999:206). Nonetheless, this does not dismiss that within the CCAP there was a difference of opinion between Nkhoma and its two sister synods on the position of CCAP on the Bishops" letter. Apparently, in the Nkhoma Synod, there was some strong opposition against the Bishops" letter (Schoffeleers, 1999:190). Schoffeleers (1999:190) adds that it was even alleged that officers of the synod had shown the police a letter inviting them to the General Synod in order to determine the CCAP"s position on the pastoral letter. He observes that this difference of opinion between the synods made a formal official CCAP position on the bishops" letter impossible.

Although this was the case, Schoffeleers (1999:179) mentions that there is a document from the General Assembly office, signed by representatives of Livingstonia and Blantyre Synods, addressed to the Head of State, officially acknowledging the existence of and the impact made nationally and internationally by the pastoral letter. We observe that throughout 1992-94 political transition, the Nkhoma Synod maintained its stance and continued to boycott all efforts taken by churches in bringing national grievances to government. Ross (1996c:29) mentions that the Nkhoma Synod had to withdraw its signature when in August 1992 the Christian Council of Malawi called upon the government to hold a referendum on the system of government.[40] While the Nkhoma Synod refused to support the call for good governance, Lwanda (2009:305) reminds us that opposition to Banda was not total even in the Catholic Church. One priest refused to read the Lenten letter in his parish.

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[39] SAARC is the Southern African regional division of World Alliance of Reformed Churches.
[40] Their letter was signed by representatives of the Anglican Church, all three Synods of the CCAP, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the Seventh Day Baptist Church, the Churches of Christ, the Zambezi Evangelical Church, providence Industrial Mission, the Baptist Church and a number of para-church organizations, but later the Nkhoma Synod withdrew its signature.

4.2.3 The Bible and 1992-94 Political Change

In Chapter Three, we pointed out that the two letters were the church‟s reaction against social ills Malawians faced under Banda‟s rule and served as initial stride towards political change that finally took place in 1994 when Malawi switched to multiparty system of government. The language of the letters was rooted in the teaching of the Bible, especially of Jesus Christ, and Church‟s traditions (Mitchell, 2002:7). Both Catholic and Presbyterian leaderships employed liberation theology that legitimized itself through the New Testament, with Christ the revolutionary as central pillar of support. The gist of liberation theology is well-defined in the seventh chapter under "the Bible and the context of the poor and marginalized." Relying on New Testament images of Christians as inherently free, authors of these letters ultimately contributed to the development of representative democracy (Mitchell, 2002:5). Mijoga (2001:377) says by issuing the pastoral letters, the church was measuring government policies and actions against the biblical message of the Kingdom of God.

The historical analysis of the role of the church in social transformation of Malawi has revealed that the biblical text has been used in the public realm to engage the state. In a historical and hermeneutical analysis of first encounters between Christian missionaries and the Tlhaping people of southern Africa, Gerald West (2004:251) points out that the Bible was among the "goods of strange power" associated with the arrival of whites in the Tlhaping land.[41] He further says the Bible is a separable object of power in the protracted transactions between the Tlhaping people and explorers and missionaries who first brought Bibles among them. Although it tends to be subsumed and assumed under terms like "Christianity," "the Word," "the message," it remains that in these first encounters, the Bible is palpably present (West, 2004:252). Clearly, the Bible was part of the missionary-colonial package in that it was integral to most if not all forms of Christianity and colonial activity (West, 2004:252).

Although West is dealing with the South African context, his sentiments sheds more light in providing facts pertaining to what transpired during the first encounter between missionaries and indigenous people of Malawi. I presume Malawi‟s experience is not far from Tlhaping people‟s first encounter with Christian missionaries. Thus, West‟s work becomes the basis for

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[41] West (2004:251) says the Bible was there at the beginning, along with guns, beads, ox wagons, ploughs, watches, mirrors, telescopes, letters, tobacco and other items brought by missionaries. Guns and the Bible were the most powerful things that the white man brought to these people.

understanding the role the Bible plays in social, economic and political transformation of Malawi. Whereas West is clear that the Bible was one of the powerful objects that the missionaries brought to Africa; here, we argue that the Bible has been a forceful tool in transforming Malawi. We have already seen that from missionary-colonial era, particularly for Livingstone and missionaries who came after him, biblical principles were vital for social transformation. Even keen observers of the advent of multiparty politics in Malawi could not fail to notice that appeal to the Bible was central to the argument of proponents of change (Chingota, 1996:41). The Bible came to be a central text in public discourse concerning the transformation of Malawi.

Mijoga (2001:375-6) observes that engagement with the biblical text was from the beginning a central feature in the struggle for social and political change in Malawi. This entails that the Bible was used as a basis for the Church‟s challenge to the Banda regime. For instance, in the pastoral letter, Catholic Bishops used Genesis 1:26 as the key passage by which the church based its advocacy work and involvement in the socio-economic and political life of society (Chingota, 1996:60-1). Arguing for the dignity and unity of humankind, the first paragraph of the bishops‟ letter said:

> Man and woman, created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1.26), carry in themselves the breath of divine life…The unity and dignity of the human race have been definitively sealed in Christ the Son of God who died for all, to unite everyone in one Body. Rejoicing in this truth, we proclaim the dignity of every person, the right of each one to freedom and respect. This oneness of the human race also implies equality and the same basic rights for all (Chiona, Chimole, Assolari, Chamgwera, Chisendera, Roche & Gamba, 1996:203).[42]

In his recently published work, West (2015:84) observes that dignity is the refusal to accept humiliation and dehumanization. This is what was implied when the bishops argued for the dignity of every person. West cites John Holloway, who said:

> Dignity is an assault on the separation of morality and politics, and of the private and the public. Dignity cuts across those boundaries, asserts the unity of what has been sundered. The assertion of dignity is neither a moral nor a political claim: it is rather an attack on the separation of politics and morality that allows formally democratic regimes all over the world to co-exist with growing levels of poverty and social marginalization (West, 2015:85-6).

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[42] CHIONA, J. M. F., CHIMOLE, M. A., ASSOLARI, A., CHAMGWERA A., CHISENDERA, G. M., ROCHE, J., AND GAMBA, FR. 1996. Living Our Faith: Pastoral Letter of The Catholic Bishops of Malawi. *In:* ROSS, K. R. (ed.) *Christianity in Malawi: A Source Book.* Gweru: Mambo Press.

Dignity must never be thought along the lines of economic status because this has led many to think that those with money are better off and so with dignity; and those without money as people whose life and voice does not count and are therefore people with no dignity.[43] In this sense, the bishops posed a revolutionary request that demanded for the creation of a society where all people, particularly the poor and marginalized, are treated as human beings.

On "Participation of all in Public life," the Catholic Bishops" drew from Ephesians 4:7-16 (cf. 1 Peter 4:10-11) to present their argument against totalitarian leadership that claimed monopoly of truth and wisdom. Instead the bishops proposed recognition of gifts of all and in allowing these gifts to flourish and be used for the building of the community. Under "the truth will set you free," the bishops understood that the first step in the restoration of the climate of confidence may be taken by recognizing the true state of the nation. When the letter was republished by Catholic Institution for International Relations in London, it was entitled "The Truth Will Set you Free" which was a clear reference to John 8:32 (Mijoga, 2001:376). Here, the pastoral letter is using this text in a particular way, quite different from the normal „evangelical" interpretation. The use of the text arises from the context of a suffering people who are in need of deliverance from a very oppressive regime. It connects well with the message of Luke 4:18-19, which was also quoted in the bishops" letter.

By quoting Luke 4:18-19, a passage described as the manifesto of Jesus" mission, Chingota (1996:61) says the bishops underlined the importance of social life, particularly in the context of the poor and marginalized. This is one area of concern in the liberation theology. Frostin (1988:12) says some critics of liberation theology question its strong commitment to humanist concerns such as social welfare or economic justice and fear that the spiritual and theological aspects are diluted, if not completely eradicated. While there might be some truth in their argument, it is a fact that the voice of the poor and needy sounds throughout the Bible more persistently than in any other classical literature (Gottwald, 1991:27). In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus clearly stated that the main concern or priorities of His mission were setting the people free, healing and justice, emphasizing emancipation of the poor and oppressed from all infirmities. Thus, to understand John 8:32, we need to get to grips with the core purpose of Jesus" mission outlined in Luke 4:18-19. This discussion is picked up in Chapter Seven when we look at the Bible and the context of the poor and marginalized.

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[43] This is taken from West (2015:86) who quotes Lindela Figlan, a leader of Abahlali Basemjondolo.

The Bishops conclude their letter with an appeal from Micah 6:8 („love tenderly, act justly, walk humbly with your God"), which takes religious life and daily life as two inseparable sides of the same coin. Turning to the Presbyterian letter, Chingota (1996:61) claims that the CCAP used wisdom tradition of power to convey their message to the president. By citing Proverbs 14:34 „Righteousness exalts a nation but sin is a reproach to any people," the CCAP was pointing out to government that it had freedom of choice to respond positively to the demands made in June 1992 at the Paris (donors) meeting and those made within the country by the two churches. The fact that the CCAP worked from the wisdom perspective of power is further indicated by their disclaimer that they neither represent nor desire any political power; they simply were trying to „seek first the kingdom of God and His justice," which was drawn from Matthew 6:33 (Chingota, 1996:61-2). With this, Chingota (1996:61) recognized two types of kingdom – the kingdom of God and the earthly kingdom – of which the power of the latter is limited by the power of the former.

Armed with such an interpretation of the biblical passages, the Church went on to look critically at the economic and political life of Malawian society, pointing out what they thought was against the Word of God (Chingota, 1996:41). The two churches turned to the Bible to find a relevant socio-economic ethic that helped to bring the government to book. In this way, the Bible became a resource to church"s argument against Banda. This was liberation theology at work. Rowland and Corner (1990:43) observe that at the heart of the theology of liberation is the twofold belief that in experience of oppression, poverty, hunger and death, God speaks to all people today and that God"s presence among the millions unknown and unloved by humanity but blessed in the eyes of God is confirmed by the witness of Christian tradition, particularly the Scriptures themselves. It is this dual conviction, nurtured by the thousands of Basic Christian Communities, which is the dynamic behind liberation theology (Rowland & Corner, 1990:43).

The uniqueness of the 1992 pastoral letters is that they document history, a history of the Bible being invoked or being used as a way of engaging with the state. In these letters, we have a history of the church engaging with the state using biblical and theological resources; a history of the church engaging with the state in a way that confronts secular issues of economy and politics. The two letters are now part of our heritage because they were not

written for the sake of theological and biblical argument. They contributed to the 1992-94 political change that saw Malawi switching from one party rule to a multiparty system of government. Granting the impact of these letters, we can irrefutably say that the Bible has persuasive and transforming force, of which the authors were aware of. That is why they relied on its message as they confronted Banda"s regime.

4.3 Conclusion

Chapter Three has clearly stated that although Malawi switched from one-party to multiparty politics in 1994, nothing in terms of governance has changed; patronage system which plays a crucial role in economies of extraction has persisted from Banda"s reign to present-day Malawi. Malawi continues to face numerous socio-economic and political problems that mostly affect the poor. Chapter Four has helped us to understand the contribution of the church to the socio-economic and political development of Malawi. It shows in some detail the various ways in which missionaries and African faithful were involved in the socio-economic and political history of Malawi. This involvement varied from, on the one hand, violent revolution citing the Chilembwe Uprising of 1915 to support for the colonial administration as did some churches like the Anglican Church, DRC and the Roman Catholic before Malawi got independence.

The final section of the chapter reflects on the Church"s biblical response to Banda"s tyranny when it had been going on for too long. Here, the church played a significant role in the political change of 1992 to 1994 that saw Malawi switching to multiparty system of government. Given the current situation of Malawi, this study proposes that the Bible can still play similar kind of role in the present day Malawi. Of course, Patrick Kalilombe (1991:397) reminds us that the Bible can be a force for liberation or a force for oppression. Against Livingstone"s dream, colonizers used Christianity to open up areas for expansion and to pacify communities. In April 1896, Johnston thanked Scottish missionaries for the Good News of Jesus Christ because it assisted government to impose hut tax on poor Malawians. He said, "But let us not forget that all has come about through preaching of the Gospel of Christ" (Elmslie, 1899:294-6). The Bible thus became the force for oppression.

Conversely, the Bible is the basic source of African theology and through re-reading of this Scripture in the social context of our struggle for our humanity, God speaks both to church

and state in the midst of our difficult situations (Kalilombe, 1991:397). Dunduzu Chisiza (1962:51-2) turned the negativity of Johnston‟s words into positivity when he asserted that a nation cannot survive without the church. He said, "It should be the duty of churches to expose the injustices, if not to censure without malice, those responsible." Therefore, the church must always be part of the socioeconomic and political transformation of society because through its involvement, the Bible is placed in its rightful central location of our communities. Historical and hermeneutical analysis of the role of the Church in social transformation of Malawi illustrates that missionaries and local Christians have always turned to the Bible when addressing pressing issues of their time. In this study we are turning to the book of Habakkuk to find a socio-economic ethic that might help the Church in addressing present problems of Malawi.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIO-HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK

5.0 Introduction

The socio-historical analysis of Habakkuk involves critical investigation into the social, economic and political world of the book. Our main objective is to unearth the historical and sociological world that lies behind the text and from which the text of Habakkuk comes (West, 1993:27). We are doing this bearing in mind that there is a special correlation between socio-economic life and political life in that the former is always shaped by the latter. Hence, our main task is to yield an economic reading of Habakkuk's situation, which was essentially conditioned by religion and politics of ancient Israel. Norman Gottwald (2001:3) observes that religion and politics in ancient Israel were inseparable. When we evaluate the politics of ancient Israel, we are inevitably evaluating its religious component as reported by the Hebrew Bible (Gottwald, 2001:3). This entails that religion and politics together had a lot of impact on Israel's socio-economic life.

William Steeger (1983:16) observes that Israel and Judah did not live in a vacuum; their prophets often spoke from the context of national and international awareness and insight. He claims that Habakkuk carried foreign oracles, and for us to understand them, we must have the knowledge of both national and international geo-political historical setting of Judah, because such is the composition of the prophecy. The compositional context shows that Habakkuk lived in a situation in which the wicked surrounded the righteous; a nation where foreign power had a lot of influence on internal operations, which in turn affected Judah's social, economic, political and religious life. His message reveals that Judah's situation was shaped by the collaboration of internal and external forces that Habakkuk terms as the wicked (1:4). To him, the wicked were the causative agents of socioeconomic and political problems of Judah of his time.

This chapter is structured in such a way that it addresses two areas critical for understanding the socio-economic and political background of Habakkuk's situation. It begins by giving a description of the geo-political context of the Ancient Near East, focusing on its economic and political history. The second section of this chapter strives to locate Habakkuk in this

wider geo-political context. The section divides itself into two parts. The first part is a comprehensive analysis of the socio-economic background of Habakkuk, which will focus on dominant modes of production and the role of the temple in ancient Israel. The second part situates Habakkuk in the wider geo-political context by mapping out internal and external imperial dynamics that contributed to the anguish of Judah of Habakkuk″s time.

5.1 Geo-political Landscape of the Ancient Near East

Efforts to situate Habakkuk in his geo-political socio-economic context require one to have knowledge of the wider framework of the land of the Bible. Geographically and historically, the land of Israel or Palestine was merely a small part of a vast area known today as the Middle East and, in its early history, generally characterized as the Ancient Near East (ANE) (Gottwald, 2009:21). The region known as ANE consisted of the grouping of sub-units of Lower Mesopotamia, Upper Mesopotamia, the Levant (areas bordering the eastern Mediterranean), southwestern Iran and Anatolia (modern Turkey), each having specific features (Liverani, 2007:4). Since Israel is part of the Levant, we need to particularly mention that the Levant is a geographical term for the territory of the modern states of Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria west of the Euphrates River.

The land mass of the ANE is penetrated and constricted by five large bodies of water – the Red, Mediterranean, Black and Caspian seas, and the Persian Gulf – and it is differentiated internally by mountains, plateaus, deserts and river valleys (Gottwald, 2009:22). The area extends from Turkey and Egypt in the west through the Levant to Afghanistan in the east. From north to south, it runs from the Caucasus Mountains between the Black and Caspian seas to the tip of the Arabian Peninsula. Succinctly, the ANE is an area occupied by modern day states of Iran, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. This is the terrain that best describes Israel″s larger framework, which is in harmony with the Hebrew Bible.

The ANE is characterized by the following features: notable diversity in natural environments (hills and steppe-lands, river valleys and Mediterranean countryside); different peoples and languages (Semites and Indo-Europeans and others); various ways of life (urban to nomadic) and modes of production (from agriculture and pastoralism to specialized crafts and complex financial dealings); different complicated writing systems; and social diversity in access to

resources, communication, and decision-making (Liverani, 2007:3). Although these variances make unitary treatment of the region difficult, the history of the ANE shows that there were major features that unified the region (Liverani, 2007:4). It was in this region, says Marc Van De Mieroop (2007:3), that the culture and influence of Africa, Asia and Europe met.

Yohanan Aharoni (1979:3) argues that the history of any land and people is influenced to a considerable degree by their geographical environment, which includes not only the natural features such as climate (temperature, rainfall and seasons), soil and topography, but also the geo-political relationships with neighbouring areas. The environment has a major influence on the kind of culture that evolves in a particular region (Kuhrt, 1995:6-7). This affirms that the geographical environment contributed a lot to the socio-economic and political life of the ANE. Therefore, in order for us to better understand the sociological world behind the book of Habakkuk, it is imperative in this discussion to provide a brief outline of the geographical environment of the biblical world. This will assist in establishing the economic and political bases of the ANE.

5.1.1 The Fertile Crescent: The Economic Base of the Ancient Near East

While the northern and western parts of the ANE had enough rainfall and good climate that encouraged agriculture and settled life, southern Mesopotamia and Egypt had very low rainfalls, which made agriculture totally depend on irrigation using the great rivers of the Nile, Tigris and Euphrates (Kuhrt, 1995:6). Although environment of this area was perceived as a limiting factor, it facilitated a range of agricultural possibilities that contributed to early civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt (Gottwald, 2009:22). David Hopkins (1985:32-33) points out that the ancients believed that many environments required treatment if they were to be productive. Thus, they noticed that the great rivers were springing from the well-watered mountains and flowed across vast desert spaces, depositing rich alluvium along their course (Gottwald, 2009:22). The rich soils along the great rivers were inviting despite the great summer heat of these river valleys (Gottwald, 2009:22).

This agriculturally viable land formed an arc – the Fertile Crescent that extended northwards from the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea, eastward across northern Syria, and then into southern Mesopotamia (Gottwald, 2009:22). The Fertile Crescent, which in this thesis is taken to be the larger context of Habakkuk‟s message, is the geographical term for Egypt, the

Levant and Mesopotamia. The term was invented to describe the region"s early agricultural settlements that became the economic base of the ANE. To cultivate these alluvial soils of Fertile Crescent dependably, however, it was necessary to capture and control the seasonal runoffs of the rivers through canal and dike systems (Gottwald, 2009:22). Fed by spring rains, the great rivers were subject to periodic violent flooding, threatening life and harvest (Miller and Hayes, 1986:30).

Before the construction of the great Aswan dam, the Nile flooded the valley from mid-July to September, that is, after the harvest, and receded again just at sowing time; while in south Mesopotamia the Tigris and Euphrates flood in the springtime at the very moment when the crops were ready to be harvested (Kuhrt, 1995:6). This meant that a lot of energy was spent constructing canals and dikes to manage the floodwaters. Gottwald (2009:22) asserts that this project coordinated the efforts of many people over great distance and spans of time and by about 3000 BCE irrigation schemes promoted intensive farming and greater density of population. This development, according to Snell (1997:14), stresses the fact that land in Mesopotamia has no value at all without water. He observes that large amounts of land that might be irrigated were always available. The Iraqi plain along the Euphrates River was one of the areas that never had enough rainfall to grow things.

On the other hand, the people living in the foothills of the Near East experienced enough water for rainfall agriculture, a thing that made the area to be densely inhabited. Snell (1997:13) states that because of populous conditions people began to venture out of the parts of the foothills onto the Iraqi plain to experiment with irrigation, which turned out to be easy as the Euphrates is slow-moving, meandering stream that is easy to tap and divert to riverside fields. It was discovered, then, that irrigation improved the amount of the grain, so that even more food was produced from the same area of land. In view of this, the people started deserting their isolated villages to inhabit the fertile lands along the great rivers. This was the beginning of living in large communities that later developed into chieftaincies, cities, states and empires.

5.1.1.1 State Formation in the Ancient Near East
Augusta McMahon (2007:26) has argued that the period between 8000 and 5500 BCE marked the beginning of chieftaincies, which many scholars believe preceded states.

Chieftaincy or the village commune is a term used by Roland Boer (2007:36) to refer to an extended family of perhaps twenty to twenty five couples who comprise the basis of a tribe. Chieftaincies were ruled by headmen who were chosen because they had more goods than others. Ambitious headmen may have tried to get control of decision making in neighboring villages, too, forming bigger chieftaincies (Snell, 1997:13). Structurally, asserts McMahon (2007:26), chieftaincies were kinship-based with a degree of social complexity and inequality and a single leader, in contrast to the corporate entity implied by a state. He adds that chieftaincies were reactions to states or unrelated organizational forms. It needs to be pointed out here that between state and the village commune stood what Boer (2007:35) calls temple-city complex. Later in the chapter, we shall see that "reactions to states" cited above were actually tensions between the village commune and the temple-city complex.

Here, it is important to note that the temple-city complex should not be understood the same as the state. According to Van De Mieroop (2007:27), a state, as we shall see later, although small, had developed by the late fourth millennium where the city held structural controls. It should be pointed out that village communes were known throughout the Neolithic world, but cities originally appeared in southern Mesopotamia where there is no evidence of earlier human habitation (Warburton, 2009:70). The temple-city complex indissolubly connected a number of village communes, much like a wheel: village communes comprise multiple points at the end of the spokes, all of which have some connection to the axle (Boer, 2007:36). So, the city was a center in its geographical setting, the focal point both for its own inhabitants and for the people living in the countryside (Van De Mieroop, 2007:27). Because cities were dominated by „major public buildings" that included temples, cities were distinguished from villages communes (Warburton, 2009:70). Thus, term "temple-city complex" signifies that the temple was the centre of authority.

Gottwald (2009:23) claims that this development was „the dawn of history" because it was the beginning of written record of human events and achievements. He goes on to say that it was the emergence of a more elaborate social organization that introduced authoritative leadership and administration to oversee the taming of the rivers and the cultivation of the fields, and the enforcement of certain allocations of the increased wealth that the new techniques and organization made possible. This form of social organization was the state, and with its development politics in the full sense of the word came into being (Gottwald, 2009:23). The

state, in this sense, came as the authoritative power whose duty was to enforce policies and to make the system work. The status of the state was realized following a progression from family to tribe to chiefdom to state presenting the growth toward civilization (McMahon, 2007:26). Later, we shall see that some despotic states became empires, such as the Sumerian, Babylonian, and Persian.

Boer (2007:36) locates this progression within the sacred economy of the ANE. The sacred economy is a system that is understood and operates in terms of the sacred rather than the political (Boer, 2007:34). It is called "sacred" because at the base there is religion. This economy is depended on members of the village commune who were the main producers of essentials items. Boer writes:

> With further concentration of wealth and power we get chieftains and towns and then, at some vague point when the extraction of essential items becomes sufficiently complex and requires some form of defence for such wealth, we get the city and the state and its ruler, whether a king, despot or tyrant (Boer, 2007:36-7).

In this way, the progression of the village commune, the temple-city complex, the formation of despotic state, labour and class, mediations between empire and village commune and what he calls theo-economic or regimes of allocation, are believed to be the key nodes of the sacred economy (Boer, 2007:35). This progression helps us to see how the state worked collaboratively with the temple-city complex to extract from these producers in some fashion, whether by coercion or persuasion or some mix of the two – the technical term for this is exploitation (Boer, 2007:36). It was the source of tensions between the village commune and temple-city state.

Earlier in this section, we mentioned that states in ANE arose in tension between the village commune and temple-city complex (Boer, 2007:35). Mostly these tensions occurred when the temple-city complex wanted to extract surpluses from the village commune members who were the main producers of essential commodities. In this case, we should understand the tension as a crush between a centralized economy and rural village based economy. Boer (2007:39) speaks of this in terms of a tension between allocative economics and extractive economics. He points out that it is in the rural village based economy where we find strong aspects of allocation. In this way, tensions between temple-city complex and the village commune developed because in the rural economy (as it was in ANE, which is also the case

of most African countries), we have a sense that land belongs to people, comes from God and ancestors (Boer, 2007:40). Most societies hold that the deity is not only responsible for fertility of the soil but also animals and human beings (Boer, 2007:40). Generally, this is the allocative dimension of economy.

5.1.1.2 Development of Politics in the Ancient Near East

As villages grew into cities and states, the individual or individual family was not self-sufficient, but relied on others for certain goods and services (Van De Mieroop, 2007:24). Social life was now becoming complex, which necessitated specialized skills that could make the system work. Van De Mieroop (2007:26) observes that specialization of productive labor that characterized the establishment of urban life in southern Mesopotamia caused a fundamental restructuring of society. He says it culminated in the existence of a stratified society in which professional occupation primarily determined one"s rank in the hierarchy. It also led to the need for an authority to organize the exchange of goods (Van De Mieroop, 2007:24).

The authority required an ideological foundation shared by all participants in the system to make it acceptable for them to contribute part of their production in return for something else in the future (Van De Mieroop, 2007:24). That ideology in Mesopotamia was provided by religion because there was a belief that goods were received by the god of the city and redistributed to the people (Van De Mieroop, 2007:24). The people had the impression that the gifts collected went directly to the gods rather than men. In this way, religion in ANE aided as an ideology to legitimate the existing social and political order (Gottwald, 2009:38). The temple, believed to be the house of the god, became the central institution that made the system work.

Although later in the chapter we have full discussion on the role of the Temple in the ancient Israel, here, we need to mention that the temple in the ANE functioned both as a centralized place of worship and as a centre for the collection and distribution of agricultural goods (Van De Mieroop, 2007:16). Snell (1997:14) cites of a building found in the far southern site of Eridu that appeared to have been a temple perhaps dedicated to the god of fresh water because excavators have found a great many fish bones in it. Van De Mieroop (2007:16) holds that these masses of fish bones were remains of offerings made to the deity of the

temple. Based on these archaeological findings, Snell (1997:14) proposes that probably there were priests and political leaders of some sort, and they may not have had to work, or at least to work full-time, as farmers. Instead, they counted on the rest of the population to support them with their agricultural surpluses. These leaders became powerful and formed a class of a few influential people in their communities, which was also the beginning of hierarchy and centralized powers and functions.

This was the rise of a different class of exploiters whose power base was outside the temples (Snell, 1997:17). Snell (1997:18) observes that temples in Mesopotamia were always economic plums that rulers wanted. Usually kings managed to dominate them, even if they did not emerge from the temple hierarchy themselves. This class of exploiters became kings and eventually expropriated the lands and people of the temple. Van De Mieroop (2007:26) says the power of these newly developed elites resulted from control over agricultural resources. He points out that on family or community level, one member with distinct status would emerge to supervise the storage of harvests in a central location. At the city or state level, priests and political leaders created a new class of specialists – administrators – to oversee the collection and redistribution of goods at the temple. As a result, the city began to operate as a mediator between people, both those living inside its limits and those living in temporary or seasonal settlements in the surroundings (Van De Mieroop, 2007:21). The city grew into a point of collection and redistribution of goods and provided a number of central services.

In this way, the elites managed to impose some form of political authority over the weaker local families, majority of whom were farmers, fishermen, herders, and so on, to the fact that these communities were probably in a tributary relationship with the city (Van De Mieroop, 2007:26-27). Tributary relationship demands communities or peasants living in small villages to provide part of their agricultural products to the city, while it was expected of the city to arrange for certain services to these communities (Van De Mieroop, 2007:27). The peasants here were in a way paying taxes to nearby city-rulers and in return, the city-rulers or the state provided a number of services to the communities that supported the political system (Snell, 1997:28). This system created a class structure in the society wherein oppressors (the elite) were on top and the oppressed (the peasants) underneath.

One of the services was security. Snell (1997:28) says that the city or state protected the peasants and their fields from other cities or states. In addition, the state form of political organization facilitated: irrigation agriculture to ensure high production of agricultural products; and trade with other states (Gottwald, 2009:35). States were involved in long-distance trade (barter) that was largely controlled by the elites (Van De Mieroop, 2007:16). Snell (1997:24) reports that long-distance trade allowed the elites to acquire more rare and exotic foreign goods than they could have if they relied only on kinship groups to which they belonged. Because of this, says Van De Mieroop (2007:29), the economy became so complex that accounting mechanisms were necessary to record goods coming into and going out of the central organization. The system included a record of quantities, an identification of the person or office involved in the transaction as a participant or supervisor, and the use of stamp seals impressed on jars or on lumps of clay providing an identification of the authority that guaranteed the contents (Van De Mieroop, 2007:29).

Here, we notice that state formation was closely related to the emergence of cities and international trade networks (Warburton, 2009:70). McMahon (2007:27) argues that it was the long-distance trade that promoted the growth of city and state structures. He does notice that scholars have focused on positive aspects of the Mesopotamian river plains – agricultural surplus potential, predictability of rainfall and floods, efficient water transport – but in addition, he specially emphasizes that long-distance trade had an upper hand in the formation of the state. In agreement, Van De Mieroop (2007:23) says the need for exchange was the most crucial single element in the establishment of the city or state. Thus, trade and its management, which involved acquiring and dispersing key items and resources, are the most enduring popular explanations for Mesopotamian state origins (McMahon, 2007:27).

We will return to political and economic aspects later in this chapter as we try to locate Habakkuk in this geo-political world. Having discussed "states" and development of national and international trade connections in the region, it will be logical to then go on and look at the role of empires in the geo-politics of the ANE. This is crucial in this study because it establishes how external imperial dynamics work in the book of Habakkuk. The discussion will focus on the relationship the land of Palestine had with its neighbours in the ANE. As we wrestle with this task, we shall try to establish why Egypt, an African country, is considered part of the Fertile Crescent.

5.1.1.3 The Role of Empires in the Geo-politics of Ancient Near East

Investigations into why Egypt is part of the Fertile Crescent demand our knowledge of Egypt"s dealings with the ANE states. There is a long history of Egypt being involved in the political and economic affairs of the Fertile Crescent – the region believed to be the cradle of two earliest civilizations – Mesopotamian and Egyptian. We note that Egypt"s involvement in the region began long before the rise of Israel and remained an important influence until the New Testament times. Miller and Hayes (1986:30) observes that the early history of Israel and Judah unfolds in the wider context of the Fertile Crescent and neighboring regions, particularly Egypt. They maintain that although actually a part of Africa and separated from the Fertile Crescent by the Sinai Desert, Egypt is considered as an extension of the Fertile Crescent because of its proximity and the equally important role it played in ancient history. Therefore, our response to the question why Egypt is part of the Fertile Crescent necessitates investigative analysis of the role Palestine played in linking Egypt with the Fertile Crescent.

5.1.2 The Land of Palestine: The Geo-political Landscape

In this study, Palestine – also known as Canaan or the land of Israel – is considered as the immediate context of the book of Habakkuk. Most of the events of the Bible took place in this small area, which embraces the south-western arm of the Fertile Crescent. The land of Palestine is located along the arc between Mesopotamia and Egypt at a point where the sea on the west and the desert on the east constricted the inhabited area into a corridor ranging in width from about 35 miles in the north of the land to about 90 miles in the south (Gottwald, 2009:23-24). It was the southern section of Syro-Palestinian strip of land that extended between the Euphrates River and Egypt.

Palestinian relief structure is generally described as a series of four longitudinal zones, which proceed in order from the sea on the west to the desert on the east (Gottwald, 2009:24). Moving eastward from the Mediterranean Sea, you come ashore on the Coastal Plain. Going farther East the ground begins to rise into a mountainous region called the western mountains or the Central Highlands or the Central Hill Country (Cisjordan in Palestine). Still farther East the land drops sharply into a deep valley called the Rift Valley at the bottom of which runs the Jordan River. The Sea of Galilee is near the northern end of this valley, and the Dead Sea is at the southern end. Continuing eastward, the land rises on the eastern side of the Jordan into a region called the Transjordan, which simply means "across the Jordan River."

The region is sometimes known as the eastern mountains or plateau.[44] The regions of Edom, Moab, Ammon, Gilead and Bashan are all located in the Transjordan Highlands (Aharoni, 1979:36-40).

Because of these extreme variations of altitude over small distances, combined with the fluctuations of climate between desert and sea, the main characteristic of Palestine is its mountainous and chopped up appearance (Aharoni, 1979:21). Palestine is divided into many tiny regions, each possessing its own peculiar geographical features, despite being quite a small country. Likewise, the soils in Palestine varied greatly in their suitability for cultivation (Gottwald, 2009:24). The result of this combination of relief, rainfall, and soil factors was that the reliable farming areas of Palestine amounted to less than one-half of the total land area (Gottwald, 2009:24). The land outside the core reliable agricultural areas was used for grazing where possible, and here and there spring-fed oases interrupted otherwise arid regions (Gottwald, 2009:24). Aharoni (1979:5) observes that Palestine has no great natural resources and has no deep harbors to make its shipping power, which makes the land to be relatively poor.

5.1.2.1 The Geo-political Importance of the Land of Palestine

Although Palestine is a small and relatively poor country, its main geopolitical importance lies in its role as passageway between Egypt and the lands of the Fertile Crescent (Aharoni, 1979:5). Because of its unique centralized location, Palestine constitutes the only land bridge between the two continents of Asia and Africa. It became a middle ground between Mesopotamia and Egypt from both the economic and the political point of view (Aharoni, 1979:6). In fact, Palestine has always been more of the crossroads for contact or conflict between the various political powers in the region. Miller and Hayes (1986:33) claim that the very location of Palestine and its function as a land bridge between Asia and Africa inevitably involved Israel and Judah in the power struggles between Mesopotamia and Egypt.

Aharoni (1979:6) says the mighty kingdoms on both sides of the Fertile Crescent considered this strip of land a thoroughfare to the effect that they labored to impose their authority over

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[44] Gottwald (2009:24-31) and Aharoni (1979:21-40) provide a thorough discussion on the four longitudinal zones of Palestine.

it, mainly so as to control the trade routes passing through it and to use it as a bridgehead for defense or offence. The International highways in the ANE were of prime importance because of their value as arteries providing important and vital links to trade, commerce and culture (Aharoni, 1979:43). These highways were also crucial in military expeditions. Nearly all the main international highways that linked parts of ANE and other nations pass through the land of Palestine (Aharoni (1979:45-57). These included: the Coastal Road called the Way of the Sea connecting Egypt with countries to the north and east. Further to the east was the King"s Highway, another north-south road that ran along the plateau to the east of the Dead Sea connecting Red Sea ports with the north. Further to the east was another north-south road, known in the Bible as the Desert Road.

Aharoni (1979:43) argues that because of the difficult topography, there were fewer important east-west highways. He cites the road that connected the port city of Gaza with trading destinations towards the Persian Gulf as one of the east-west main roads (Aharoni, 1979:52). Another route of great importance for east-west movement began in lower Mesopotamia and followed the valley at the Euphrates River as it descended from west and north. Aharoni (1979:55) says that because of the harsh desert conditions and the direct east-west line between Mesopotamia and Canaan, this road followed the river and then turned south into Canaan. He says this was the route followed by Abraham as he travelled from Ur in Mesopotamia north to Haran and south again to Damascus and on into the land in which God called him.

Later in this chapter, we shall see that Solomon"s great wealth was based on his control of these important trade routes (1 Kings 4:21-34; 9:15-18). The network of these international roads encouraged political and economic unification, often under the authority of a foreign power (Aharoni, 1979:43). Thus, because of these trade routes, the people of Palestine felt the imprint of many different cultures and religions. Their history, therefore, was significantly shaped by this diversity. Miller and Hayes (1986:33) say Palestine was politically and culturally influenced by two ANE giants, Mesopotamia and Egypt, who often fought for control over the region; although in terms of basic cultural patterns – language, literature, mythological and theological perspectives – there seems to have been a closer association with Mesopotamia than with Egypt.

It was in Egypt and Mesopotamia that we see the rise of the first mighty kingdoms which succeeded in imposing an organized and unified government over their respective populations, and in various periods even spread their authority to areas beyond their natural borders (Aharoni, 1979:5). Aharoni (1979:5) says that toward the end of the fourth and the beginning of the third millennia BCE the foundations of human civilization were laid in the two lands of the great rivers, Mesopotamia and Egypt. He says:

> The birth of these two civilizations was aided by similar economic and geographical factors in their respective regions; each contained broad expanses, the fertility of which depended upon the great rivers passing through them. The river is the main force for integration and unification in these lands; it is a convenient and inexpensive artery for transportation and irrigation, which stimulated the local populations to take advantage of its blessings (Aharoni, 1979:5).

The Mesopotamian and Egyptian conditions were completely different from those of the land of Palestine. Like the greater part of the ANE outside Egypt and Mesopotamia, Palestine lacked any great river that could be harnessed for irrigation (Gottwald, 2009:24). It follows that its people and the agricultural basis of life were inevitably dependent on rainfall. Briefly, this geopolitical account of the ANE should provide some of the reasons for including Egypt as part of the Fertile Crescent.

5.1.3 The Age of Empires 3100-300 BCE

Equally important to note is the fact that the history of Palestine is marred by myriad bloody conflicts of empires fighting over control of trade routes and this strategically located little stretch of land (Van De Mieroop, 2007:163). The ANE superpowers instigated wars as one way of gaining control over strategically important areas such as Palestine. History has shown that from about 3100 down to 300 BCE, powerful states began to spread their supremacy far beyond their homeland, dominating larger and larger sections of the ANE.[45] Because it involved effective control of a subordinated society by an imperial society, the era was called the age of empires (Chavalas, 2007:34). An empire can be defined as organized collaboration between political entities, where one with effective sovereignty dominates and exerts political control over the internal and external policy of the subordinated allied (Chavalas, 2007:34).

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[45] Gottwald (2009:23-39); Beaulieu (2007:48-61); Chavalas (2007:34-46); and Snell (1997:30-118) provide detailed discussion on the rise and fall of empires in the Ancient Near East.

Whereas Chavalas (2007:34) considers the period of empires to have extended from 3100-900 BCE, Beaulieu (2007:48) locates it between 900-300 BCE arguing that during this era the ANE was ruled by a succession of states which fully deserve the label of "empire." Their arguments are not conflicting, instead they point to the fact that the age of empires developed in two successional phases. Empires often began because of the need for protection against external threats, economic goals of security or acquisition of valued resources, ideological factors, or as a result of natural consequences of power differences between political entities (Chavalas, 2007:35). The first phase of the age of empires runs from 3100 to 900 BCE. By this date, Chavalas tracks down the age of empires in Mesopotamia from Jemdet Nasr period (3100-2900 BCE) through the Early Dynastic (2900-2300 BCE) and Old Akkadian (2300-2000 BCE) periods down to Old Babylonian (2000-900 BCE) period.

Chavalas (2007:40) observes that in the Jemdet Nasr and Early Dynastic periods, city-states were linked to each other in a league that had a religious aspect and not political aspect. Each state had divinely sanctioned borders that separated the different political entities. Because of this, expanding by means of subjugating other states or even unifying them was tough, which led some scholars to take the two periods as not belonging to the age of empires. Although this was the case, we can still argue that the Jemdet Nasr and Early Dynastic periods laid foundations that signalled the beginning of imperial ventures. Based on these accounts, Snell (1997:32) says the period between 2300 to 2000 BCE – that saw the rise of Sargon and his Akkadian kingdom – marked the beginning of political consolidations on the Iraqi plain and the start of imperialistic adventures. Akkadian prominence was attained through military might (Van De Mieroop, 2007:64).[46] Snell (1997:46) says the rise of imperial states formalized social and economic relations and forced some people to explain their acts to a central government.

The Akkadians and those who succeeded them – especially the Old Babylonians (2000-900 BCE) – had considerable success in imperial ventures (Gottwald, 2009:38).[47] They developed a new system of government where the formerly independent city-states needed to be

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[46] Because of this military power, Chavalas (2007:43) considers the Akkadian Kingdom to be the first world empire. Concurring with Chavalas, Van De Mieroop (2007:64) says, "It was written of Sargon that "daily 5400 men ate at his presence," which may refer to the existence of a standing army. Military activity is the sole subject of his own inscriptions."

[47] It should be noted that between the Akkadian and Old Babylonian rule, the region was ruled by first, the Gutians (2197-2112 BCE) and second by the third dynasty of Ur (2112-2004 BCE).

incorporated within a larger structure in every respect, ideologically, economically and politically (Van De Mieroop, 2007:64). The Akkadians succeeded in imposing an imperial order on their vassals so that politically, the original city-rulers began to act as governors for the king of Akkad (Van De Mieroop, 2007:64). A new system of taxation was introduced, in which part of the income of each region was siphoned off and sent to the capital or used to support the local Akkadian administration (Van De Mieroop, 2007:64-65). This confirms that empires had an international aspect and were achieved by force, by political collaboration, or by economic, social, or cultural dependence (Chavalas, 2007:34).

The second phase of the age of empires started from around 900-300 BCE. The period focuses on imperial activities of Assyrians, Neo-Babylonians, Persians and Macedonians. It was characterized by a new phase of world hegemony which differed substantially from what had preceded (Beaulieu, 2007:48). In this period there was a departure from the previous imperial models in the level of structural transformation which the first millennium empires imposed on both the imperial core and the conquered periphery in the course of their expansion (Beaulieu, 2007:49). Therefore, in order to secure military and economic assets on the side of the conqueror, it was customary to subordinate conquered states as vassal headed by local princes (Gottwald, 2009:38).

Also, while the previous empires had been rather brief, Assyria in the first millennium eventually grew into something not seen before, not only in scale, but also in a distinctively new imperial structure, its ideological expression, and especially its lasting success (Beaulieu, 2007:49). For instance, to secure greater control and efficiency, the Assyrians began to turn many of their conquered territories into provinces headed by Assyrian officials (Gottwald, 2009:38). Assyrians, like some earlier Mesopotamian imperialists, practiced deportation and used to relocate disobedient communities to other places (Snell, 1997: 79).[48] These practices were continued by the Neo-Babylonians.

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[48] Snell (1997:79) reports that perhaps 4.5 million people were deported and reallocated over three centuries, most in the period from 745 to 627 BCE. He adds that this kind of exile was intended to destroy the person's independence and rebelliousness.

To summarize, I have used Gottwald's descriptive summary of the Fertile Crescent to facilitate our understanding of the kind of wider framework to which the land of Israel belongs. He says:

> The land demarcated by this arc includes the largest concentrations of population, the most fertile agricultural areas, the most frequently travelled routes, the territories most fought over by armies and the great majority of powerful states in the region. This so-called Fertile Crescent designates the crucial zone of economic and political development in the Ancient Near East (Gottwald, 2009:23).

From this summary, it is evident that politics in ANE started to revolve around when the ruling class or the elite began controlling the fertile plains. It was a power struggle over the Fertile Crescent that led to the growth of empires, which involved societies that had grown into city-states expanding their powers to broader horizons. Because the second phase of the age of empires sets the book of prophet Habakkuk in its proper context, our discussion now narrows down to an in depth analysis of the socio-historical location of Habakkuk. As a continuation of the discussion on socio-economic background to Habakkuk, before looking at the text itself focusing on internal and external imperial dynamics, we shall try to construct economic dimensions that might have been prevalent at the time the prophet sounded his prophecy.

5.2 The Socio-Historical Location of Habakkuk

The prophet Habakkuk belongs to the second phase of the age of empires and his message is predominantly shaped by imperial actions of Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians. Gottwald (2009:38) observes that after the brief flowering of Israel as a united kingdom under David and Solomon, its weakened divided branches were drawn increasingly into imperial diplomacy and warfare. As a result, the northern kingdom, Israel, was destroyed by the Assyrians, while the southern kingdom, Judah, was overthrown by the Neo-Babylonians. Thus, Gowan (1998b:9) is right to say that the books – Isaiah through Malachi – respond to the three key moments in Israel's history: the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and Cyrus' decree in 538 BCE. This suggests that prophetic books were written largely in response to the rise and fall of the Assyrian and Babylonian empires.

Aberbach (1993:1) claims that Hebrew prophecy came about in wartime, and war is the subject of, or background to, most prophetic books. He goes on to say that their message is

inseparable from the empires which determined the history of the ANE and the fate of Israel and Judah from the eighth century to the end of the sixth century BCE.[49] It remains, therefore, that Habakkuk's context was not spared from imperialistic hegemony championed by the superpowers of his time. Assyria and Babylon extended or imposed their power, authority or influence on Judah. Musa Dube describes implications involved in imperial acts in the following words:

> Imperialism is an ideology of expansion that takes diverse forms and methods at different times, seeking to impose its language, its trade, its religion, its democracy, its images, its economic systems, and its political rule on foreign nations and lands. The victims of imperialism become the colonized, that is, those whose lands, minds, culture, economies and political institutions have been taken possession of and rearranged according to the interests and values of the imperializing powers. Imperialism is, therefore, about controlling foreign geographical spaces and their inhabitants. By its practice and its goals, imperialism is a relationship of subordination and domination between different nations and lands, which actively suppresses diversity and promotes a few universal standards for the benefit of those in power (Dube, 1996:26-30).

According to William Steeger (1983:16), Israel and Judah did not live in a vacuum, their prophets often spoke from the context of national and international awareness and insight. Composition of Habakkuk's prophecy shows that he lived in a situation in which the wicked surrounded the righteous; a nation where foreign power had a lot of influence on internal operations, which in turn affected Judah's social, economic, political and religious life.

Assyrians and Babylonians consecutively extended power and domination over Israel and Judah and gained indirect control of its political and economic life. Habakkuk's message is set in a context where Babylonians were becoming the dominant world power taking over from Assyrians, and Judah was about to feel Babylon's destructive force. During Habakkuk's ministry, Judah was under stress, facing rigid social change and economic reversal (Steeger, 1983:66). "Injustice overwhelmed Judah during this time," says Carol Dempsey (2000:77), "The law proved ineffective (1:4), and Habakkuk thought that God was unconcerned and not sensitive to the wickedness that prevailed – greed, theft, extortion, embezzlement, idolatry and debauchery." It was a critical period in Israel's history believed to be a time of social, political and religious unrest.

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[49] Aberbach (1993:6) understands that prophetic message represents the triumph of the spiritual empire over the mortal empire, of the invisible God, King of the universe, over the human king of the civilized world, of losers over victors, of moral ideas over military force.

In order to get to grips with this situation, we will now engage with a fuller discussion of the economic dimensions of the context of Habakkuk. Boer (2007:34) argues that one way of making sense of the ANE history is to study economics of the region, which he calls *sacred economy*. By sacred economy he means a system in which the economy operates and is understood in terms of the sacred rather than the political. West (2011) calls this *temple-state economy* because at the base there is religion. Here, we note that in the ANE, politics are shaped by religion. Thus, economic reading of the book of Habakkuk requires a thorough analysis of Israelite religion and politics because the two played a significant role in Ancient Israelite economies. The discussion will focus on economies of allocation and extraction by drawing on Marxist analysis via the works of Norman Gottwald, Roland Boer, and Gerald West. This chapter investigates economies of extraction in Habakkuk for purposes of understanding the Malawian context.

5.2.1 Economic Systems Used in Habakkuk's Time

Economic systems of Habakkuk's time necessitates that we become more knowledgeable about economic mechanisms involved at that particular time. Wagner-Tsukamoto (2013:395) refers to these economic mechanisms as means that a state uses for its running. Succinctly, this is called political economy. Gottwald (1991:12) describes political economy as the means by which people produce and reproduce their lives. He says it has to do with how we keep ourselves going on daily bases, develop our social relations, assert and accept authority, and generate ways of thinking about what we are doing. These thought patterns concern the way the system works, from provision for the most elementary needs, such as getting food and shelter, to the notions entertained about the ultimate meaning of life (Gottwald, 1991:12).

When analyzing ANE economic systems, special attention is paid to the modes of production that supported the systems. West (2011:513) identifies "household" and "tributary" modes of production as economic systems that undergirded biblical societies.[50] He says that the two, together with the slave-based mode of production provide a most effective large scale historical framework for the Bible. Here, the focus is on the two modes of production,

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[50] The term "household" mode of production is used for pre-monarchic Israel (also known as "communitarian" or "primitive commune"); while the term "tributary" is Norman Gottwald's notion of "Asiatic" mode of production (following Marx).

"household" and tributary, because they are crucial to understanding the socio-economic and political milieu of Habakkuk.

In his article, Wagner-Tsukamoto (2013) traces various economic principles that arose from political governance of the Israelite society during the reigns of Joshua, Saul, David and Solomon. He argues that the formation of Israelite state was legitimized on economic grounds (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2013:399). Although Wagner-Tsukamoto agrees with others like West, Gottwald and Boer on this point, it is important to note that his economic analysis is not explicitly Marxist. We observe that during the reign of Joshua, the people of Israel were not united; they appeared in Canaan as individual tribes of Israel (Gottwald, 1979:32). Thus, Wagner-Tsukamoto (2013:402) claims that the people of Israel were only united for economic reasons. He says the fertile land in the Jordan Valley was considered as a scarce commodity among both the Israelite tribes and other nations who made claims to the Promised Land, or neighbours to the Promised Land.[51] So, the tribes of Israel overlooked their differences and in one spirit acquired the land, and distributed it amongst themselves.

While this achievement – land acquisition – is attributed to Israel"s God, Gottwald (1991:14) argues that one way of understanding this is that the Canaanite city-states were weakening and in virtual collapse. Yet the books of Joshua and Judges indicate that the Israelites, who at that time were considered assertive peasants, took advantage of weaknesses in the political system and joined together in the common cause of becoming free agrarians. This is where Gottwald differs with Wagner-Tsukamoto. Here, Gottwald suggests that the „land" was not conquered by „Israel," but that there was a social revolution between those who benefitted from the city-state system and those who were exploited by it. All in all, the tribes of Israel settled in the hill country of western Palestine. It was in these early settlements that we notice the development of modes of production. The "household" or "communitarian" mode of production was dominant in the initial Israelite settlements in Canaan, while the tributary mode of production was introduced when Israel turned to monarchy.

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[51] See a discussion on the land of Palestine above where Gottwald (2009:24) is quoted as claiming that the reliable farming area of Palestine amounted to less than one-half of the total land area.

5.2.1.1 The "Household" or "Communitarian" Mode of Production

Gottwald (1991:14) says the first Israelites in Canaan were residents of small villages, banded together in large families and tribes to protect themselves from Canaanite city-states and ultimately from the Egyptian empire. Although the village commune was founded on kinship, Boer (2007:35) says it was considered to be an economic unit because it relied on its own means of production: family-owned lands and flocks of sheep and goats. About 98 percent of the population lived in these villages and when they first arrived in Canaan, they were held as the underclass Canaanites who were mostly cultivators of the soil, but included pastoral nomads, artisans, and priests (Gottwald, 1991:15). The people of Israel emerged bit by bit as a new people whose ethnic identity was formed in the midst of their struggle to establish themselves firmly in the hill country of western Palestine (Gottwald, 1991:15).

Gottwald (1991:14) observes that there was something unusual about the first Israelite communities in that they did not give or take tribute. He goes on to say that they refused allegiance to the states that taxed and conscripted their subjects, and they themselves strove not to extract tribute from one another. It is worth noting that they even developed their own distinctive measures of self-help, cooperative labor, and mutual aid, extending assistance from one family or clan to another, making grants-in-aid that passed among the people without interest charges (Gottwald, 1991:14). Because they belonged to Yahweh, Gottwald (1991:14) says the Israelites were not willing to pay taxes, to be constricted into the city-state armies, or to be debt-obligated. They asserted the full and free use of their own labor products.

5.2.1.2 The Tributary Mode of Production (TMoP)

The communitarian mode of production did not prevail once Israel itself became a monarchic state with its own kings (Gottwald, 1991:16). The rise of Israelite monarchy meant that tribes of Israel were now moving towards a system – the tributary mode of production (TMoP) – they had opposed when they first arrived in Canaan. This development is usually explained by the need to unite Israelite military forces against the Philistines (1 Samuel 8:19-22), who were a more formidable enemy than the divided Canaanite city-states (Gottwald, 1991:16). Through the work of Walter Houston who cites Melotti, Carlos Castillo (2015:164) identifies three main elements that characterized the TMoP, namely: the rulers would have had a claim on the entire territory and there would be no distinction between tax and rent; the village

communities would have been obligated to "hand over surpluses to state representatives in the form of tax-rents in kind or cash or in labour on state projects"; and lastly, there would have been a centralization of power to facilitate the exploiting class belonging to a state bureaucracy, to "live off the labour of the peasants."

Furthermore, in this model, as we shall see in the following section, religion played an crucial part in sanctioning the right of the rulers to possess fields, impose forced labour and take the produce of the peasantry (Castillo, 2015:164). The TMoP was the most oppressive machinery because it burdened the people through taxes, temples tithes and imperial rulers" tribute, which the king extracted from the poor to maintain the city or state fundamental economic structure (Horsley, 2009:3). What is worth noting is that it was this turn to monarchy that set the stage for Israel"s prophets to appear (Gottwald, 1991:16). In agreement, Thomas (1991:6-7) says prophets in ancient Israel arose mainly in opposition to economic systems that were forced on the people and were exploitive. He claims that the role of the prophets was to apply the "communitarian" ethic of the underclass to a prosperous kingship which had returned to conscription and exploitation. In effect, prophets arose in opposition to the TMoP.

This form of production included relationships of domination, wherein a powerful state (such as Egypt, Assyria, or Babylon) or a smaller city-state (such as Canaan or Syria) dominated a considerable stretch of land made up largely of villages engaged in agriculture and animal breeding (Gottwald, 1991:16). West (2011:512) agrees by asserting that the tributary mode of production was characteristic of imperial political economies of the ANE. Although his focus is on the biblical history between two texts, 1 Samuel 8 and Mark 12, West (2011:512) claims that this economic system has endured from ancient times to present. To these claims, Gottwald (1983:26) cited Marx who indicated that when British capitalism penetrated China and India, it found intact a traditional form of political economy that had persisted from antiquity. This has led many to describe tributary mode of production as pre-capitalist.

West (2011:514-5) regards 1 Samuel 8 as "birth" narrative of the TMoP because it deals at the narrative level with the mechanisms by which the emerging political economy would operate. The text outlines the socio-economic cost of a city-state (vv. 11-18); for there can be no city-state without mechanisms of economic extraction (West, 2011:515). Boer (2007:39) observes that economic extraction denotes a process of extracting something from a producer

by someone or some group that has not produced it. He says it is exploitive as it involves those who do not labor gaining from those who labour. In the TMoP, economies of extraction involved a local state extracting from the peasants and an imperial power extracting from subject states and tribute was the main form of exploitation (Boer, 2007:41). Peasants had "use ownership" of the land, but the state claimed entitlement to tax the villages first in the form of payment in kind and second in the form of conscription of labour for public works or army service, suggesting that the state regularly intruded into the village communities and took a good part of their labor products (Gottwald, 1991:13).

Thus, many peasants, already living on the margin, were further impoverished and driven into debt by these measures (Gottwald, 1991:13). In this sense, Gottwald (1991:13) affirms that the tributary social system was pre-capitalist because it involved a strong state and the upper classes dominating the majority of the people through taxes, rents and debts. According to West (2011:516), the situation made Israel to move from a political economy in which wealth was the product of diligent work and therefore a blessing from God, to a political economy in which wealth was the product of the oppression of the poor. Therefore, he is correct to say that "the rich" were wealthy because "the poor" were poor; for he observes that the primary systemic mechanism that linked the rich and the poor was tribute induced debt.

Saul''s reign did not add to the development of TMoP. Wagner-Tsukamoto (2013:407) points out that when Saul got into power, he had to deal with institutional problems of how to unite the individual tribes and how to acquire a „monopoly on violence" for the state. He says Saul had to draw on metaphysical support to make the Israelites cooperate and transfer tribal defense responsibilities to him. Unfortunately, Saul did not succeed in bringing these into reality. Similarly, West (2011:516) says the Davidic state did not develop a fully-fledged tributary system, largely because it was able to rely extensively on "the booty of war" and "tribute extracted from conquered peoples (2 Samuel 8:1-14; 10:19; 12:26-31). The issue of establishing sustainable relationships with neighbouring tribes and nations, both at an economic and military level, was never resolved under David (Wagner-Tsukamoto, 2013:411). We note in 2 Samuel 10:1-11:1 that his approach to handling other nations still employed the aggressive approaches of Joshua and Saul.

Although this was the case, Davidic dynasty had some indications of an emerging tributary system. We observe that "David had an administrator of forced labour (2 Samuel 20:24) and the census taken by David (2 Samuel 24:1-9; 1 Chronicles 21:1-6) … must certainly have had the objective of extracting tribute from the population under his rule" (West, 2011:516). Most significantly, West (2011:516) believes that "David played a direct role in establishing a city-based elite (2 Samuel 8:15-17), distributing the fertile alluvial plains of Canaan, secured after he defeated the Philistines, to his military retainers, leading to the establishment of a new class of Israelite aristocrats and bureaucrats." Wagner-Tsukamoto (2013:410) claims that the proposal to build God a house in effect implied a more authoritarian bureaucratic control of spiritual, religious leadership functions, including tax collection through the priests, too.

West (2011:516) says the TMoP came to maturity during Solomon"s reign when large scale public works, particularly the building of the temple (1 Kings 6-9); extravagance of "normal" court life (1 Kings 4:22-28); and maintenance of the security of the state, increased the need for tribute and forced labour. Israel"s importation of building materials, luxury goods, skilled labour and military technology (1 Kings 5) accelerated pressure on the surplus of peasant farmers during Solomon"s rule (West, 2011:517). In this way, Solomon"s city-state became a part of the larger political economy of the region, including other city-states and empires (West, 2011:517). Wagner-Tsukamoto (2013:413) says the king had accumulated substantial economic gains that included a large court with many wives. In addition, West (2011:517) says it was such excessive consumption and accumulation that led to state debt. It is reported that internal revenues were not enough to service the debt, instead Solomon had to sell twenty northern cities to Hiram of Tyre to pay off state debt (1 Kings 9:11).

Though the details of the Judean economy in the time of Habakkuk remain unclear, the general economic context conformed to the TMoP, which was the dominant economic system in Judah of his time. The tributary social system continued until the New Testament times. West (2011:512) traces its existence by looking at the biblical history between two texts (1 Samuel 8 and Mark 12) in which he claims that TMoP endured throughout this history. Strangely, this exploitive economic system was legitimated by Israelite religion and the temple became the economic hub of Israelite nation as shown in the subsequent discussion.

5.2.2 The Role of the Temple in Ancient Israel

The present discussion helps us to understand how the city or state in the Israel is unthinkable without the structuring role of the temple and indeed the palace which is an add-on to the temple. Before I continue, I need to be clear that this study is an economic reading of the book of Habakkuk. I am mindful of the fact that the temple conducted healing services, carried charitable work and included teaching and scribal activities. The Bible itself is a product of the temple scribes. These roles are taken into consideration in this study, but because I am doing an economic analysis – which is my emphasis – the study might seem to be rather one-sided as a mere economic exploitation. As pointed out earlier, the study focuses on how politics and economics affect the social life of our communities. With this framework in mind, this section discusses the role of the temple in ancient Israel by showing how politics and economics collaborated together in creating socio-economic and political problems in Israel.

As pointed out earlier, temples in ANE (including Israel) were used as a centre for collecting tribute from conquered states and villages within the boundaries of the state in power. The primary role of tribute was the maintenance of the temple-city complex and the large imperial state (Boer, 2007:41). The temple-city complex should be understood as the nucleus of the state, which was formed out of exploitation (Ahlstrom, 1982:5). The term is self-descriptive, for it designates the way the city or state is inconceivable without the temple. The temple became the central institution that made the system work. Therefore, temples in ANE, particularly in ancient Israel, should not only be understood to be worshipping centres; they also played a crucial role in sustainable economic growth of their nations.

In Egypt, during the empire period (1540-1100 BCE), temples became very wealthy through booty, tribute and donation of large estates so that they were repositories for the revenue of the empire (West, 2011:521). West (2011:521) says in providing education temples produced and sustained the professional class, including astronomers, doctors, scribes, and singers, most of whom were priest. He goes on to mention that Egyptian temples were involved in trade, which included the selling of meat, wine and cakes, thereby providing a site and sustenance for sectors of the merchant class. With reference to Mesopotamian temples, West (2011:522) observes that the Mesopotamian temples of Uruk, Sumer and Girsu were very rich and prosperous having abundant resources in livestock and agricultural products. In the

case of Babylonian temples, he says they constituted the richest agricultural, industrial and commercial unit within the society. The temple in Babylon was perceived as a site of export production where its workshops produced not only for the needs of the deity and the priests but manufactured also export goods in order to buy precious metals, stones and timber that were not available in Babylon.

For this reason, temples in the ANE were dominated by kings even if they did not emerge from the temple hierarchy themselves (Snell, 1997:18). The Jerusalem Temple economic system was designed based on ANE economic patterns. West (2011:524) points out that the temple in ancient Israel was considered an essential part of state formation rather than as a by-product of state formation. This understanding assisted those who contributed labour and resources to the temple project to be convinced that their service was divinely ordained. We have already alluded to tensions that existed between peasants of the village commune and the elite of the temple complex. Usually, these tensions manifested themselves in the tribute extracted by the elite from the peasant farmers (Boer, 2007:41). Tribute was a problem within the sacred economy and in the case of Israel, the problem deepened in that tribute shows up in a manner that it was justified and sanctioned by the deity, most notably in the notion of the temple tax or tithe, a reallocation of produce for the sake of the priests and the material structure of religion (Boer, 2007:41).

West (2011:520) wrestles with the problem by asking, "So how was the state extraction of surplus religiously rationalized by the ruling class in monarchic Israel and Judah?" He reacts to this question by quoting Gottwald who says:

> The state legitimated the tax-rent as payment due to Yahweh''s servants who protected the patrimonies of the free agrarians, and the latifundaries explained their taking of possession of indebted lands as the work of custodian or keeper of the patrimonial shares of those who fell hopelessly into debt (West, 2011:520).

The state here refers to the ruling class in the monarchic Israel. West (2011:524) observes that the temple in Jerusalem stood side by side with the palace and the king controlled the priesthood of the temple, which affirms the inseparability of religion and politics in ancient Israel. There was only a theoretical distinction between the national and religious treasuries, with the king exercising total control of temple treasury (West, 2011:524).

The ideology that tribute was justified and sanctioned by Yahweh played a significant role in the creation of the tributary system in ancient Israel. West (2011:520) observes that the state extraction of surplus was religiously rationalized by the ruling class in monarchic Israel and Judah. He maintains that formal education offered at the temple ensured ideological legitimation of economic dimensions among the ruling elite, which also legitimated the role of temple in economic extraction (West, 2011:522). Continuity in economic extraction of the powerful was guaranteed through education offered at the temple that targeted the elite only. Therefore, all activities at the temple were organized to serve as machinery for economic extraction. It is the basis for understanding socio-economic locale of Habakkuk. This leads us to the next discourse that tries to locate Habakkuk in this wider geo-political context focusing on how internal and external imperial dynamics helped in creating the anguish of poor Judeans.

Ancient Near East Empires and Canaanite city-states had a socio-economic organization and ideo-theological structure very similar to the one that the united monarchy introduced in Israel. Many scholars call this the "tributary mode of production" (See Gottwald 1985; Chaney 1986; Houston 2006). Houston, citing Melotti, states that this system was characterized by three main elements. First, the rulers would have had a claim on the entire territory and there would be no distinction between tax and rent (Houston 2006: 34). Second, the village communities would have been obligated to "hand over surpluses to state representatives in the form of tax-rents in kind or cash or in labour on state projects" (Houston 2006: 34). Third, there would have been a centralization of power to facilitate the exploiting class belonging to a state bureaucracy, to "live off the labour of the peasants" (Houston 2006: 34). Furthermore, in this model, religion would have played an important part, sanctioning the right of the rulers to possess fields, impose corvée and take the produce of the peasantry, in a dynamic Boer (2007: 29, 39) has called "sacred economy", described in the next section.

5.2.3 Internal and External Imperial Dynamics in Habakkuk: The Occasion of Prophecy

The task of mapping out internal and external imperial dynamics in Habakkuk requires us to establish the occasion of the prophecy first. To situate Habakkuk's prophecy, usually scholars apply it against empires that dominated the world history at a particular time. Investigations

into the occasion of Habakkuk's prophecy have produced a wide range of possibilities from Sennacherib's invasion of Judah in 701 BCE to Alexander's conquest of the Near East in 332-324 BCE (Sweeney, 2000:454). Some scholars have assigned the prophecy to the Persians or Macedonians period in the fourth century BCE claiming that Habakkuk addresses campaigns of Alexander the Great (see Hartman, 1963:920 and Szeles, 1987:4). Others even went further to locate Habakkuk in the second century BCE identifying his real situation as the struggle of the Jews under Judas Maccabeus against the Seleucid kings of Syria (Andersen, 2001:26).[52] The main reason for the differing views is absence of personal details.

Habakkuk does not mention like other prophets the time he lived, his parents' names, where he came from, and not even kings under whom he exercised his ministry. This makes the task of situating the prophecy in its historical setting more difficult. Although this is the case, Boadt (1982:159) argues that the book of Habakkuk provides the reader with a glance into a period between the late seventh and early sixth centuries BCE. Others have described the occasion of the prophecy by identifying "the wicked" in Habakkuk. Habakkuk's complaint is straight, "the wicked surround the righteous" (1:4b), suggesting that the wicked were causative agents of Judah's problems. According to Habakkuk, the wicked were responsible for the suffering of the righteous. But who are the wicked in Habakkuk? Before tackling this question, we need to briefly answer the question: Who are the righteous in Habakkuk?

5.2.3.1 The Righteous in Habakkuk

Steeger (1983:180) identifies the righteous as God's people in Judah under the leadership of the rightful ruler – Jehoahaz (2 Kings 23:28-37; 2 Chronicles 35:20-36:10). Others consider them to be the worshipping community, which was also Habakkuk's audience. Wendland (1999:596) maintains that they were individuals who remained forever "faithful" to their covenant vows with Yahweh (2:4b). Andersen (2001:24) says the righteous man is the prophet himself, who is suffering persecution. It is clear from these views, and of course from the text itself that Habakkuk is not referring to the whole nation of Israel when he mentions the righteous; rather, he is speaking of a group of Judeans who were faithful to God's will.

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[52] See also Boadt (1982: 163) and Smith (1984: 94).

While these views represent popular reading of „the righteous" in Habakkuk, Aaron Pinker (2007:102) provides another reading by suggesting that the Hebrew word צַדִּיק „righteous" in 2:4, originally read as צִדְקִיָּה (Zedekiah).

His main argument is that Habakkuk's advice in 2:4 was originally a political observation, rather than a moral or ethical paradigm as it is mostly claimed. After a thorough analysis of Hebrew word צַדִּיק „righteous" in 2:4, Pinker (2007:102) claims that Habakkuk's original text read צִדְקִי, an alternate or abbreviated form of צִדְקִיָּה (Zedekiah), instead of צַדִּיק (righteous). To substantiate his argument, Pinker says:

> It is very easy to see why a scribe, well removed from Zedekiah's situation, would be baffled by the uncommon צִדְקִי in the text and would correct it to the „seemingly" more logical צדיק. Indeed, it is even possible to argue that Zedekiah's rebellion against Babylon was an embarrassment for the exiled (Ezek. 17:12-22; Jer. 38:19) and was intentionally removed by a simple transposition of two letters. Finally, it is generally recognized that the current text is in most parts the result of various redactional activities, which aimed at projecting prophetic claims onto new generations. It is very likely that redactors felt free to expand and rewrite sections of a prophet's writings, believing that they articulated what the prophet would have said were he confronted with the problems of their own time (Pinker, 2007:103-4).

In this way, Pinker read the prophecy to mean that Habakkuk was advising Zedekiah the king of Judah that his personal survival depended on being steadfast in his loyalty to Babylon (Pinker, 2007:102). He considers this kind of reading to be in line with Jeremiah's promise to Zedekiah that he will survive by being subservient to Babylon (Jer. 27:12, 17). The phrase "live by their faith" in 2:4 is similar to Jeremiah's advocacy in chapter 38:17 and 20 that Zedekiah will live if he only surrenders to the Babylonians (Pinker, 2007:104). Although this proposition is plausible, it remains that the identity of „the righteous" is not known.

5.2.3.2 Who are "the Wicked" in Habakkuk?

Before answering this question, it is worth noting that the book of Habakkuk divides neatly into three sections: the dialogue between God and Habakkuk (1:2-2:4); the meaning of the woe-oracles in Habakkuk (2:5-20); and the psalm of Habakkuk (3:1-19). It is clear from the text that Habakkuk 1 and 2 have definite clues to the date and circumstances of the prophecy. Thus, the task of tracking down the wicked necessitates special focus on the first two sections of the book (1:2-2:4 and 2:5-20). They describe Habakkuk's encounter with Yahweh. Because of this, others divide the book into two main sections with 1:2-2:20 forming the first

part and 3:1-19 being the second part. Moreover, the distinctive character of the series of *woe oracles*, in contrast with features of the dialogue contained in 1:2-2:6a, has suggested to many scholars that 2:6b-20 is a complete separate prophetic composition (Andersen, 2001:24). That is why as we strive to identify the wicked in 1:2-2:4, we shall also endeavour to discern the target of woe oracles in 2:5-20. This discussion therefore will split into two: one will focus on 1:2-2:4; the other will attempt to identify the wicked in the woe-oracles of Habakkuk 2:5-20.

5.2.3.2.1 "The wicked" in Habakkuk 1:2-2:4

Three views emerge concerning the identity of the wicked in Habakkuk: some say they were a foreign power; others consider them to be within Judah among the Israelites themselves. The third interpretation holds that they represented both internal cruelty and foreign power (cf. 1:4; 1:13). Those claiming the oppressor was foreign power have produced three differing propositions. While most exegetes maintain the reading *Chaldean* (1:6) as the wicked claiming that the oppressor is the same throughout Habakkuk, others hold that the oppressor is neither the Chaldeans nor a class in Jewish society but Assyrians. Andersen (2001:24) cites Von Karl Budde, one of the proponents of this views, who holds that Habakkuk 1:6 was a future reality, claiming that the Chaldeans cannot be regarded as in any sense the subject or occasion of the prophecy; but they are simply instrument in Jehovah''s hands for the achievement of His purpose, the bringing down of the oppressor, the release of His righteous ones, and ultimately the rescue of all the nations whom the oppressor had enslaved.

Andersen (2001:24) argues that if we follow this theory, then 1:2-4 could have been produced in the middle of the seventh century BCE, and 1:5-11, if a prediction, must have been produced before 612 BCE. He goes on to say that there is nothing in the book of Habakkuk itself to identify Assyria as the wicked. Thus, based on this fact, this view was rejected. Other scholars led by Smith (1929) identified Egypt as the wicked. His argument was based on Pharaoh Neco''s killing of King Josiah at Megiddo in 609 BCE (2 Chronicles 35:20-25; 2 Kings 23:29), which made Judah a vassal of Egypt. As an Egyptian puppet and a vassal king, Jehoiakim was obliged to pay tribute to Egypt. Jehoiakim is on record that he taxed the land and extracted silver and gold from his own people to meet Pharaoh''s demands (2 Kings 23: 31-37). Smith''s views were also rejected on the bases that Egypt is not mentioned in the book of Habakkuk.

Those who claim that the oppressor is in Judah base their argument on the mention of "the law becomes slack" in 1:4. Their understanding is that the situation is in Judah because there was no nation in the biblical times that was given the law apart from Israel. Thus, they read the complaint of 1:2-4 as referring to internal injustice inflicted by the powerful and wicked Judean leaders on their fellow citizens (Mason, 1994:66). Although certain exegetes have placed Habakkuk during the reign of Josiah (640-609) or the closing days of the reign of Manasseh (686-642), their views were rejected by some scholars as the moral conditions of 1:2-4 are differing with the period of Josiah's reforms and the reforms Manasseh instituted in the latter part of his reign (2 Chronicles 33:15-16) (Gowan, 1998b:92). Freeman (1968:253-4) argues that the phrase "in your days" (1:5) would seem to disagree with prophetess Huldah's prophecy, in which she predicted that the calamity (described in Habakkuk) would not fall upon Judah in the lifetime of Josiah (2 Kings 22:18 ff.). Thus, Habakkuk's message is taken to be a reaction against abuses perpetrated in Judah during the reign of Jehoiakim (2 Kings 23:34-24:6).

The third view holds that the wicked in Habakkuk represented both internal oppression and foreign domination. Majority of scholars agree that Jehoiakim and officials at the king's court were internal oppressors, whereas Assyrians and Babylonians are largely accepted as external power. Here, we will not rule out Pinker's proposal that thrusts Habakkuk's prophecy to the reign of Zedekiah. His interpretation shades more light to setting Habakkuk's message in its rightful place. However, for the sake of our argument we will go along with the majority by locating Habakkuk during the reign of Jehoiakim. Identification of the wicked suggests that Habakkuk's prophecy was influenced by the political atmosphere taking shape in the ANE region around late seventh or early sixth century BCE. The period saw the collapse of the Assyrian empire and the subsequent power-struggle between the raising Babylon and Egypt over inheriting the territories spreading from the Euphrates to Sinai, which were abandoned by Assyria (Pinker, 2015).

5.2.3.2.2 The Role of the wicked in Habakkuk

Judah had been a captive nation of Assyrian hegemony from the reigns of Manasseh (696-641 BCE) to Josiah (639-609 BCE) (Bruce, 1993:833). It also needs to be pointed out that before Babylon became the dominant superpower, Assyria – a ruthless world giant – had

done enough damage on Judah. A translation by A. Leo Oppenheim of Babylonian and Assyrian historical texts which is part of an edition edited by James Pritchard provides detailed evidence regarding the actual merciless deeds of Assyrian invading armies.

> I covered the wide plain with the corpses of their fighting men, I dyed the mountains with their blood like red wool. I took away from him many chariots and horses broken to the yoke. I erected pillars of skulls in front of his town, destroyed his other towns, tore down their walls and burnt them down (Pritchard, 1955:277).

Through these ruthless acts, Assyrians dominated a number of states that remained nominally independent but whose rulers were vassals considered to be "under the yoke of Assur" (Van De Mieroop, 2007:243). Their duties included the delivery of annual tribute in the form of valuable items. As vassals, the tributary rulers had to adhere to treaties and any breach was considered a grave transgression that gave the Assyrians the right to impose a military punishment (Van De Mieroop, 2007:243-4).

An Old Testament example of what the invading armies actually did is portrayed in 1 Kings 20:5-6 where King Ben-hadad of Aram sent word to King Ahab of Israel demanding that Ahab deliver to Ben-hadad his silver and gold, his wives and children. Ben-hadad ordered his servants to go and search Ahab"s house and the houses of his servants and lay hands on whatever pleases them and take it away. As a vassal state, Judah used to pay heavy tribute to Assyria, her colonial masters and tribute caused a lot of suffering among the poor Judeans. The gravity of such suffering that resulted from the effects of tribute and crop failure is well illustrated in the story of Ben-hadad"s siege of Samaria (2 Ki 6:25-29). The people there were reduced to eating unclean food, such as donkey"s head and dove"s dung, and for these they paid exorbitant prices – eight shekels of silver for donkey"s head and five shekels of silver for dove"s droppings. But even worse, people were eating their own children (cf. Lev 26:29; Deut 28:53-57). Rulers treated their subjects unjustly (1 Ki 21:6-14).

These illustrations help us to understand that Assyrian ruthless actions are behind conditions outlined in Hab 3:17. Drought is not behind these conditions for Habakkuk does not provide any portentous clues that there was famine in Judah at this particular time. Judah"s economy depended on three main fruit crops – figs, grapes and olives – that they ate; fields that yielded barley and wheat; and the common domestic animals – sheep, goats and cattle (Gowan, 1998a:34). Barker and Bailey (1998:375) note that the six clauses in 3:17 appear to be in

ascending order of severity, loss of figs ranking least and loss of the herd in the stalls causing the greatest economic damage. Together, the losses spelled economic disaster and devastation and loss of hope. This situation should be understood in the context that it was cruel actions of their external oppressors in partnership with Judean king and his officials that created these problems. Their collaboration is well articulated in Greg Woolf"s words, who writes:

> Empires are political systems based on the actual or threatened use of force to extract surpluses from their subjects. Imperial elites spend these revenues on the infrastructure necessary to maintain power, and retain a profit that is distributed to groups that are privileged by virtue of their place within the imperial hierarchy (Woolf, 1992:283).

Here, Woolf touches a crucial area of this study that deals with economies of extraction. He helps us understand how the elite in Judah, who acted as agents between their subjects and the empire, benefited from the system. This is what Boer (2007:38) calls *mediations* for the elite at the city-state or city complex who stood between despotic empire and village commune. Thus, in trying to meet the demands made by despotic empire (in this case Assyria), Judean leaders were forced to extract surpluses from the village commune thereby exploiting the poor and enriching themselves.

Assyrian domination receded in Judah and elsewhere towards the end of the reign of King Assurbanipal around 627 BCE, about the same time, the Chaldeans were gaining momentum to the effect that they established their independent empire called Neo-Babylonian Empire (Bruce, 1993:833; see also Freeman, 1968:256). Fall of Kalakh and Nineveh in 612 BCE were the ultimate signs that the Assyrian Empire ceased to exist (Pinker, 2015). Pinker (2015) says the new political situation in Babylon led to an alliance of Egypt and Assyria aimed at countering their new rival – the Neo-Babylonian State of the Chaldeans. In fact, the rivalry between Babylon and Egypt was centred on control over Syria and the Land of Israel.

Josiah, king of Judah, took advantage of the collapse of Assyrian power for territorial expansion and religious rejuvenation (Pinker, 2015). Gowan (1976:16) says Judah had a few moments to breathe, a few years without tribute. It was time to nourish new hopes of becoming an independent nation again under their able king, Josiah. He describes Josiah"s reforms as "a vain hope, for soon Egypt moved into the power vacuum left by Assyria"s demise and briefly took control of Judah until the great Nebuchadnezzar came to power in Babylonia and was able to devote his attentions on the west." When Josiah was killed at

Megiddo in 609 BCE, the people appointed Jehoahaz to replace his father. However, since Judah was made a vassal of Egypt, Neco exiled Jehoahaz to Egypt and installed a puppet Eliakim (whose name was changed to Jehoiakim) as king of Judah (2 Chronicles 35:20-25; 2 Kings 23:29, 31-37).

Egypt was defeated by Babylon in 605 BCE and according to 2 Kings 24:1, Judah became a vassal state of Babylon when Jehoiakim surrendered and paid tribute to his new lord. Barker and Bailey (1998:297) mention that of all Judah"s evil kings, only of Jehoiakim is reported to have killed a prophet (Jeremiah 26:20-23). Jeremiah, Habakkuk"s contemporary, knew Jehoiakim as a ruthless and merciless ruler, who had cut up the scroll Jeremiah prepared and threatened the lives of Jeremiah and his scribe, Baruch (Jer. 36:20-26). Jehoiakim died during the Babylonian siege of Jerusalem in 597 BCE (Pinker, 2015). Jehoiachin his son succeeded him and ruled Judah three months and ten days. Zedekiah, Jehoiachin"s uncle, was appointed king over Judah by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chronicles 36:9-10).

In 587 BCE, when Jerusalem was completely destroyed and many Jews along with temple treasure, were forced into Babylonian exile, Zedekiah was brought before Nebuchadnezzar at Riblah, where his children were slain before him and his eyes blinded (Pinker, 2015). Briefly, this will be considered the political framework behind Habakkuk"s message. Freeman (1968:253) says Habakkuk depicts a time after Nineveh had fallen (612 BCE), but before the first Babylonian invasion of Judah in 605 BCE (2 Kings 24). His prophecy came at the time when Nebuchadnezzar was threatening the freedom of Judah, i.e., late in the seventh or early in the sixth century. The background of Jehoiakim"s reign and appearance in Palestine / Syria of the Babylonian army under Nebuchadnezzar supports the anguish of Habakkuk (608-598 BCE; 2 Kings 23:34-24:6).

In this sense, the role played by external oppressors need not be underrated because it was imposition of their economic and political demands that made king Jehoiakim and officials at the king"s court to oppress their own people. Oppression was probably already an internal dynamic, but the impact of empire was to exacerbate the internal oppression, extracting even more from Judah"s own people. The Judean leaders received pressure from their foreign oppressors, which in turn affected the day to day running of the nation (cf. 2 Kings 23:35). With such influence, unhealthy collaboration existed between the elite in Judah and their

oppressors; their systemic relationship rested on the fact that the despotic empire had all the mechanisms of controlling politics and economy to the extent that Judah had to follow whatever was laid before her. In consideration of this, Jehoiakim and his officials alongside their overlords worked concurrently as dimensions of socio-economic exploitation on the poor Judeans.

The anguish of Habakkuk should be understood as having been occasioned by wicked actions of the elite in Judah in collaboration with their foreign oppressors. In his description of what is involved in such kind of partnerships, Paul Gifford (1998:6) says the local leaders became brokers between their own community and central government, passing benefits in both directions, and probably taking their share in the process. With this understanding, we can then conclude that the book of Habakkuk belongs within the economic systems discussed above. We will be correct to say that the tributary mode of production continued to be the dominant economic system in Judah of Habakkuk‛s time and will not be wrong to say that the wicked in Habakkuk can be located as operating within the tributary mode of production. Thus, Jehoiakim and his officials extracted surpluses from the poor Judeans through taxes, rents and debts that were imposed in order to meet the demands made by their foreign oppressors.

5.2.3.2.3 "The Wicked" in the Woe-Oracles of Habakkuk

Whereas Jehoiakim and his officials and Assyria and Babylon are identified as the internal and external oppressors in the first section of Habakkuk (1:2-2:4), the second section (2:5-20) does not explicitly mark the oppressor. Habakkuk 2:5-20 is a poem introduced as a taunt against some unnamed oppressor by the peoples and nations which he had enslaved. It is the anonymity of the wicked that makes this section crucial for this study. The section requires special treatment because of its position in Habakkuk. It is considered a kind of interlude between the really meaningful materials in chapter one and three, which has led them to say that the book is a product of many authors (Gowan, 1976:51). In reaction to this, Szeles (1987:7) says: "What is conspicuous, however, is not the unity of its form but of its contents, for that fuses together all the separate parts." This means that the woe-oracles are part of the story Habakkuk is narrating in his book.

A series of five distinct oracles of woe begin in 2:6a with a call for everyone to taunt the oppressor. Sweeney (2000:473) observes that the form of the rhetorical question of course actually constitutes an assertion that everyone should indeed engage in such ridicule against the oppressor. Each oracle starts with the word *"woe"* (הוֹי – *hoy*), except for the last oracle in 2:18-19, which begins abruptly and has its *"woe"* in the middle rather than at the beginning. If verses 18 and 19 were interchanged it would look exactly like others (Gowan, 1976:52). The word הוֹי – *hoy* describes the actual funeral lament and is often translated as *"alas."* It is also translated as *"ho"* or *"ha"* or *"ah!"* meaning a cry for attention. Generally in prophets the word הוֹי – *hoy* is interpreted as *"woe to you,"* which in Hebrew was thought to have the same force as in a curse (Gowan, 1976:53).

Each oracle has a specific focus that describes the crimes perpetrated by "the wicked" and the different responses to them. The first *woe oracle* is directed towards those who obtain goods dishonestly (2:6b-8). It accuses the oppressor of greed and plundering that which is not her own. The second deals with building fortunes and power structures on unjust gain (2:9-11). Baker (1988:64) says that the oracle condemns not only exploitation for personal gain, but also for national or dynastic overdoing because the oppressor established his dynasty firmly by means of force and cunning. The third oracle is the doom of evil and violence (2:12-14). It accuses the oppressor of bloodshed. Baker (1988:65) states that the very foundations of the centres of society were founded on bloodshed (cf. v.8; Nahum 3:1, especially referring to Nineveh; Micah 3:10, to Jerusalem) and wickedness (cf. Isaiah 59:3; Micah 3:10).

The fourth oracle is a woe against debauchery. It indicts the oppressor for terrible treatment of the subjugated nations (2:15-17). The world conqueror is now condemned for leading others, her neighbours, into wickedness by causing them to drink intoxicants. The fifth woe is the doom of idolatry (2:18-20). This oracle points to the oppressor's idolatry and failure to recognize Yahweh (cf. 1:11, 16; 2:13a) as the root cause for the atrocities outlined in this taunt song (Sweeney, 2000:477). The oppressor seeks her own security not only through violence and plunder, but also through resorting to powerless idols. This series of woes is designed to show that ultimately sin, evil, crime, oppression, debauchery, greed and idolatry are doomed to destruction (Smith, 1984:111).

5.2.3.3 The Use of Woe Oracles in Habakkuk

Gowan (1998b:96) observes that most of the uses of the word *"woe"* (הוֹי –*hoy*) in the prophets convey connotations of a curse, and it is true that there is no indication of grief in some of them, but frequently enough they appear in contexts of death and lamentation (e.g., Jer. 22:18; 30:7; 34:5). In addition, Barker and Bailey (1998:330) assert that the word *hoy* shows that the action under prophetic condemnation has seeds of death within it. Because of this, some scholars take Habakkuk 2:6-20 to be a funeral song sung not for the oppressed but for the oppressor. The woe oracles are a taunt funeral song meant to ridicule the oppressor.[53] Gowan (1998b:96) argues that in Habakkuk, the emotion is clearly joy because a tyrant is dead (2:10). Judah is not mourning the impending fall of her overlord, but uses the literary form of a funeral song to mock her.

Baker (1988:62) says that although the oppressor looked unbeatable when Habakkuk uttered this prophecy, the woe oracles revealed that God‟s power would bring her low by 539 BCE. Gowan (1998b:96) asserts that one of the major themes of funeral songs – the reversal of fortune – power turned to weakness – runs through the first four stanzas (cf. 2 Sam. 1:19, 25; Isaiah 14:4, 11, 16). He says that Habakkuk may be seen as using the language and themes of a funeral song, but for a brutally new purpose. Here, God is sanctioning a suffering people to sing a mock funeral song in advance over the tyrant who has oppressed them (Gowan, 1998b:96). All subjugated nations, whom the oppressor has persecuted, shall mock their conqueror. As Leggett (1990:105) puts it, the prophet celebrates in advance the doom of evil and final triumph of God in the world. Thus, the woe oracles are advance pronouncements of the death of the tyrant and condemnation of his sinful acts committed for the enhancement of his rule and kingdom.

5.2.3.4 To Whom Does the Mock Funeral Song Apply?

When one starts reading Habakkuk 2:6-20, questions arise concerning against who are the woes marked for and who is the scoffer? Tradition says Babylon is the world conqueror being mocked in the woe oracles and evidently Habakkuk is the speaker on behalf of subjugated peoples and nations. Barker and Bailey (1998:329) say that the mock funeral song is placed creatively and unexpectedly in the mouths of the nations who had suffered under Babylon‟s unrestrained behaviour. The text mentions the nations but nowhere do we hear them speak

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[53] See Gowan (1998b:96) and Szeles (1987:35-6).

openly. Smith (1984:111) quoted Eiselen who rightly said, "These woes are placed in the mouths of the nations; in reality the prophet is the speaker." This affirms that the book of Habakkuk is the artifact of an individual, who produced it on behalf his community.

In the woe oracles, the prophet speaks of those who wrongfully enriched themselves, who plundered many nations, who lived in luxury and security at the expense of the poor, who made use of liquor to shame their neighbours, and of worshippers of idols (Gowan, 1976:57). While tradition takes Babylon as the oppressor, Gowan and Leggett have differing views based on the fact that the text does not explicitly mention the oppressor. Gowan (1976:57) argues that although in the context an application to Babylonian as oppressors is logical, the problem we have is lack of definite historical references in the woe oracles. He identifies the oppressor by going back to verse 5: "It has spoken of one whose greed is as wide as Sheol, who gathers for himself all nations, i.e. it is an apparent reference to a world-conqueror and his captive peoples" (Gowan, 1976:52). The significance of verse 5, therefore, is that it works as a transition between Habakkuk 1:2-2:4 and the woe oracles, which are left without any identification of subject or singer without this verse.

In this sense, verse 5 forms the prelude to a series of five woes pronounced on the oppressor by those whom he has brought under his yoke. The absence of specific historical references confirms that Habakkuk was condemning the sinful principles of life common to oppressors in every generation (Leggett 1990:105). In agreement to this, Gowan (1976:57) says what is described in *woe oracles* has occurred over and over again, and not only in antiquity. He goes on to say that no effort has been made in this song to refer to any specific situation in history; rather that it has purposely been expressed in general terms which could apply again and again to tyranny in many forms. Habakkuk did this deliberately because his concerns went far beyond the problems of Judah early in the sixth century, catastrophic though they were (Gowan, 1976:57-58). Thus, Habakkuk produced a prophecy that could be used to apply to more than one situation. Indeed, this thesis will take up the question of the relevance of Habakkuk's prophecy to the contemporary context in Malawi.

5.3 Conclusion

Through the socio-historical analysis of Habakkuk, the circumstances which led Habakkuk to write this book have been described. This analysis has helped us to understand how

imperialism works. The analysis has introduced us to economies of extraction, which are the key aspect and the focus of this thesis. The phrase "economies of extraction" bears the idea of imperialism because always superpowers, or oppressors as in Habakkuk"s context, will come into an African context to extract. Gifford (1998:6) writing about the African context, says imperial powers will provide services such as security, building roads, mines etc. with an intention of extracting from the very same people they are serving. Therefore, whosoever the prophet Habakkuk is engaging with is shaped by economies of extraction, which are a useful link between economic and political dimensions of Habakkuk and those of Malawi.

CHAPTER SIX

LITERARY ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF HABAKKUK WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE POETRY OF HABAKKUK

6.0 Introduction

This chapter is designed to examine the text of Habakkuk, which involves analyzing various genres contained in the book. By „genre‟ we mean any recognizable and distinguishable type of writing or speech which operates within certain agreements (Barton, 1984:10-16). Chapter Six therefore is a literary look at styles of expressing oneself; it attempts to ascertain why Habakkuk is using such literary techniques to address his situation. The task involves closer reading of a biblical text with careful attention to its literary contours and textures (Olson, 2010:13). Describing the nature of this task, Olson (2010:13) says:

> The questions that arise in literary approaches range widely from detailed attention to the meaning of individual words and sentences to the significance and shape of successively larger literary contexts in which the given text is situated….How does one interpret biblical poetry with its play of language, line, metaphor, emotion, and extravagance of expression as distinct from biblical narrative? ... These are a sample of the kinds of questions that literary and rhetorical criticism asks (Olson, 2010:13-14).

According to Barton (1984:11), this kind of analysis assists in understanding the language of the text, in this case it is the text of the prophet Habakkuk. The critical question to be considered in this chapter is: What is it about poetry that is significant in bringing about change and transformation in theological terms?

Because we are reading Habakkuk with special reference to the Malawi socio-economic and political framework, Chapter Six will investigate how the prophet Habakkuk‟s use of poetry to prompt believers of his era toward faithful and courageous engagement of their socio-economic and political realities in ancient Judah has relevance for the Malawian church in the 21ˢᵗ century. In this study, we are using the 1992 Catholic Bishop‟s pastoral letter and the Presbyterian leadership open letter to the president as an analytical framework for examining the socio-political context of Malawi. The main goal is to show how the literary dimensions of the biblical text relate with the socio-economic and political world. This involves trying to understand not only what prophet Habakkuk is saying in economic and political terms, but also the way in which he conveys his message. The chapter will seek to understand what

Habakkuk was doing with his poetry because it was not only what he said, but how he said it which was part of the persuasion and transformation of his situation.

6.1 Why Habakkuk?

In reply to this question, I begin by telling a story that tries to present what I intend to do in this chapter. The story is an extract of what the late Catholic Bishop Patrick Kalilombe said to Zomba Theological College graduating class of 2008. He was speaking on the topic "Church and State Relationship." In his presentation, the bishop highlighted some of the techniques the Church in Malawi employed in challenging the leadership of President Banda. One of these techniques was the use of language of which the Bishop said:

> You could not approach Dr Kamuzu Banda anyhow; in order for him to accept you, you were supposed to speak a language that was inviting to him. The language could outline some of his achievements and was full of praises. He always felt elated and motivated by such kind of applauses. The language was created in such a way that at the end of the church's engagement with him, Kamuzu could realize that he was being stabbed and that the church was in fact challenging his policies.[54]

The language had rhetorical dimensions, articulated for purposes of disarming the listener. Paying attention to rhetorical dimensions of language was a significant feature of how the church in Malawi approached political leaders. The 1992 Catholic Bishops' pastoral letter and Presbyterian leadership open letter to the president are classic examples of how the church used language in a deliberate manner to address social, economic and political issues. The letters were rhetorically written with an aim to engage and persuade Banda to act in light of social ills Malawians were facing during his rule.

Here, it is important to point out that the church's use of rhetorically deliberate language in addressing ills Malawians faced during Banda's rule reveals the significance of prophet Habakkuk's approach to Malawi's contemporary socio-political and economic situation. We notice that Habakkuk used special language (poetry) to address problems of his people, which imply that there is a link between poetry and socio-political and economic life. This calls for an exploration of how poetry bends and breaks the rules of prose language, thereby enabling the poet or prophet to say what cannot be said in „nomal‟ language. It is this „subversive‟ dimension of poetry that makes it so powerful. Poetry subverts the normal rules of language.

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[54] This is the author's paraphrase of actual words of late Bishop Patrick Kalilombe when he spoke to the third year students of Zomba Theological College, Zomba, Malawi in 2008.

This understanding can be compared to what structuralism does in the work of Terence Hawkes. In his book *Structuralism and Semiotics,* Hawkes writes:

> Structuralism, as the leading edge of „theory‟, challenged all that, to the degree that it helped puncture the balloons of „discrimination‟ and „taste‟ by a pinpricking examination of the social and linguistic interests served by such fantasies, then, from a British standpoint at any rate, it looked suspiciously like evidence of a mutiny within the ranks (Hawkes, 2003:140).

In this sense, structuralism is understood as a language that appeals to those in power, which is the reason why Habakkuk is using poetic language to address his situation. With this in mind, the 1992 pastoral letters are treated side by side with the poetry of Habakkuk as a framework that helps us to see what Habakkuk is doing with his poetry. This enterprise will help link the behind the text kind of economic work that has been dealt with in Chapter Five with the literary work on the text that will be covered in this chapter. The two are treated in this manner because they complement each other.

6.2 Literary Context of the Book of Habakkuk

Habakkuk belongs to a canonical tradition in the Hebrew Bible called "the Prophets" נְבִאִים (N*e*biim). It is one of the three distinct elements that form the Hebrew text; the others being "the Law" תּוֹרָה (the Torah) and "the Writings" כְּתוּבִים (K*e*thubim). The three together constitute Jewish Scriptures. In canonical terms, argues Brueggemann (2003:101-2), "the Prophets" are understood as second to and derivative from "the Torah." This suggests that the Torah is the expression in narrative or in commandment of the norms of faith and obedience proportionate with the rule of Yahweh while the prophetic canon is a literature that articulates Israel‟s faith and practice in the rough and tumble of historical reality (Brueggemann, 2003:101-2). The collaboration between the Torah and the Prophets portrayed in the Hebrew Bible helps us to see the role of the prophets in society.

Two groups, the Former Prophets and the Latter Prophets constitute "the Prophets" in the Hebrew Bible. The Former Prophets include the following books: Joshua, Judges, Samuel and Kings. These books are reckoned to be part of prophetic literature partly because the authors of these books were evidently not historians but religious writers, and partly because prophets like Deborah, Samuel, Nathan, Elijah, Jonah, Isaiah, and many other men and women of God, named and unnamed, play so prominent a part in the narrative (Sawyer, 1987:2). Nyirimana (2010:165) observes that this corpus of historical books contains a long narrative, the deuteronomistic history, describing the situation of the people of Israel in the Promised Land. He says since the six books were found to be connected in style and themes,

some scholars have argued that a single exilic author used older traditions to compose a theological "history" that runs through these books.

The second group, the Latter Prophets, also known as canonical or writing prophets, consists of four books of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel (also known as the Major Prophets) and the Book of the Twelve (the Minor Prophets). It is important to note that the twelve small prophetic books were one scroll and thus form a fourth prophetic scroll (Brueggemann, 2003:105). They are traditionally termed "minor" not because they are unimportant or less important, but that the books are relatively brief when compared to the Major Prophets (Brueggemann, 2003:209). Habakkuk as one of the Minor Prophets belongs to the umbrella group of the Latter Prophets that form a unique corpus in the Hebrew Bible. Their uniqueness is witnessed in the message that is not ascribed to prophets elsewhere (Gowan, 1998b:6-7). The Latter Prophets marked the beginning and end of their exclusive message that focused on the end and restoration of Israel (Gowan, 1998b:6-7).

The unifying theme of their message is "The Death and Resurrection of Israel" derived from the three key moments in Israelite history, which are: the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, the fall of Jerusalem in 587 BCE and Cyrus" decree in 538 BCE (Gowan, 1998b:9). Here we note that the Latter Prophets have been more or less mechanically shaped and edited into a twofold assertion of God"s judgment that brings Israel to exile and death, and God"s promise that brings Israel to a future that it cannot envision or sense for itself (Brueggemann, 2003:107). In this sense, the experience of the exile by both the people in Israel and Judah should be understood as death; whereas Cyrus" decree in 538 BCE that issued emancipation of God"s people should be seen as resurrection from the dead of God"s people. Furthermore, we can say the books – Isaiah through Malachi – respond to the rise and fall of Assyrian and Babylonian empires, which clearly distinguishes the work of the Latter Prophets from their predecessors. Heaton (1977:12) points out that the books – Daniel and Lamentations – may be isolated from the Latter Prophets because in the Hebrew Bible both belong in the Writings. The Latter Prophets are clustered into three groups based on the time they prophesied. The clustering corresponds to the major emphasis of the message of each of the prophets, and to a key date in history (Gowan, 1998b:8).

The first group of Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah 1-39 is situated from the middle to the end of the eighth century BCE. The defining contextual matter for this literature is the imposing reality of Assyrian imperial hegemony that threatened, in turn, the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah (Brueggemann, 2003:210). Their message focused on the fall of Samaria, the capital of the Northern Kingdom, which was conquered by Assyrians in 722 BCE. The second group consists of Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who prophesied between the late seventh and early sixth centuries. Their defining contextual matter was the waning reality of Assyrian hegemony, the soon-to-arrive Babylonian empire, and the general disarray in Jerusalem attributable to poor royal leadership and a general disregard of the requirements of Judah as YHWH‟s covenantal people (Brueggemann, 2003:210). They were mainly concerned with the fall of Jerusalem that took place in 587 BCE when Babylonians were in control.

The last group comprises of prophets Isaiah 40-55, Isaiah 56-66, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. According to Brueggemann (2003:210), the central contextual reality for this literature is the new, kinder imperial policies of Persia that, unlike the policies of Babylon, permitted some reassertion of local religious and political traditions, of course under the more general support of the empire. The message of these prophets focused on the restoration of Judah after Cyrus‟ decree in 538 BCE, which was the beginning of the Persian hegemony of the late sixth century BCE.

Prophets Obadiah, Joel and Jonah are difficult to date. The dating of Obadiah ranges from preexilic period to postexilic period (see Niehaus, 1993:496-7). Because Obadiah depicts a time of acute tension for Judah with the Edomites, many have located the book in the latter half of the ninth century BCE (Brueggemann, 2003:211).[55] Scholars such as Jeffrey Niehaus (1993:502) and Hobart Freeman (1968:135) have located Obadiah‟s prophecy during the reign of Jehoram around 845 BCE. In the case of Joel, the book has been dated from early preexilic times (in the ninth century BCE) to the late postexilic date of 350 BCE because the book is undated in the superscription (Freeman, 1968:147). While this is the case, there are strong indications that the book originated in the postexilic period (Gowan, 1998b:181). This is in line with the thoughts of Raymond Dillard (1993:242-3), who says although establishing

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[55] Carl E. Armerding (2008:425) says the prophecy is clearly a response to a time when Jerusalem was overrun by foreign armies, a sacking in which the Edomites were understood to have in some way collaborated.

the date of Joel is inconclusive, it is fair to say that it tilts towards a date in the postexilic period.

For Jonah, Joyce Baldwin (1993:544) says there is no indication in the book as to who may have written the story of Jonah; anything we claim to know about the author and when he lived has to be deduced from his work. Gowan (1998b:137) agrees, he says several themes have been proposed as keys to understanding the purpose of the book, and there is no agreement among scholars as to which, if any, should be taken as central, but it is for thematic reasons that discussion of the book has been located at the end of Neo-Babylonian period. Because Jonah is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 as the "son of Amittai, the prophet, who was from Gath-hepher," many claim that Jonah ministered God"s word to Jeroboam II of Israel (782-753 BCE) (Baldwin, 1993:544). Armerding (2008:454) and Freeman (1968:166) support this view and locate Jonah in the eighth century BCE at the time Jeroboam II of Israel and King Uzziah of Judah.

This simple matter of dating suggests that these three turning points in Israel"s history account for the existence of just this collection of prophetic books (Gowan, 1998b:9).[56] The clustering helps in locating the book of Habakkuk in its rightful literary context. Thus, because prophetic books address events leading to the death and restoration of Israel in the period between eighth to mid-sixth centuries, the Latter Prophets are treated as the larger literary context of Habakkuk. The immediate literary context of Habakkuk is the period between eighth and early sixth centuries that describes the death of Israel and Judah. The message of Habakkuk was wrought by the Assyrian and Neo-Babylonian threats. Although Assyrians were mainly the cause of Israel"s death in the Northern Kingdom, their impact was also felt in Judah, the Southern Kingdom.

Habakkuk appeared on stage to explain what God was doing in the life of Judah when Neo-Babylonians were about to destroy Judah. As Judah and Jerusalem had sunk deeper into disobedience towards God and his requirements, so the fabric of national life had begun to come apart at the seams (Prior, 1998:203). It was the most difficult time for the people of Judah: destruction and violence were evident; strife and contention were everywhere; and the

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[56] Here, I need to mention that I am not making a detailed claim about the dating of any particular book, but that I am using a broad scholarly framework to locate Habakkuk.

law became useless to the fact that there was no justice in the courts (1:3-4). The period was characterized by exploitation of the poor since the system only favoured those in power – the king and his officials at the royal court.

6.3 The Message and Intent of Habakkuk

The book of Habakkuk is an intensely personal testament that arose from the agony of one man"s struggle to live with God in this world (Andersen, 2001:11). Habakkuk was disturbed and heartbroken by what he saw in his society – a dying world characterized by injustice, wickedness and socio-political and religious unrest. The prophet wrestled with the question why? Habakkuk wanted to know: Why God often seems indifferent in the face of evil? Why evil people seem to go unpunished? He could not understand how a holy God could allow the wicked to triumph over the righteous. Habakkuk, a contemporary of Jeremiah, directs his passion and despair at God Himself, rather than at the king, which makes him an unusual, if not unique, prophet of the First Testament (Prior, 1998:203-4). While other prophetic books brought God"s word to people, this book brought people"s questions to God.

Patterson (1991:18) is right to say that the book itself rehearses Habakkuk"s spiritual journey and records his deep spiritual concerns over the godlessness of his society. In this spiritual journey, we are given profound insight into the prayer life of the prophet and in the process, his whole relationship with God becomes public (Prior, 1998:204). Prior (1998:204) says, "Habakkuk was capable of anything. With Habakkuk, larger questions quickly engulfed the local concerns." Because the prophet is dealing with a context specific question, but one that has implications for other contexts, readers have always associated their circumstances with those of Habakkuk, which in essence, is the reason for the continuing relevance of Habakkuk"s message (Prior, 1998:204).

The book commences with a rendering of a man who has been persistently bringing to God"s attention a complaint concerning the state of affairs in his society (1:2-4). Habakkuk is not calmed by God"s answer (1:5-11), instead he further queries God pertaining to His raising of the wicked Chaldeans as a solution to the problems of Judah (1:12-2:1). God"s second answer (2:3-20) comes and assures the prophet that those who are faithful to God will survive the calamity, but the wicked are destined for ruin. The book concludes with a psalm of Habakkuk

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(3:1-19) that declares the prophet's resolve to trust in God despite the impending destruction of Judah by the Babylonians.

Prior (1998:207) observes that the message of Habakkuk had burdensome dimensions from the start to the end. The actual burdensome message was about the imminent and inevitable arrival of Babylonians who as God's instrument of justice were tasked to destroy Jerusalem and take the people of Judah to exile. For Habakkuk, as it was also with his contemporary, Jeremiah, it was costly and traumatic to declare such a message of the Lord to their countrymen. Of course, the two prophets experienced the personal anguish for being God's spokesmen in days of deep social and spiritual dysfunction in Judah; but for Habakkuk, God's message was a burden, supremely because it contained at its very heart an uncompromising and chilling declaration of judgment on his own country (Prior, 1998:208). It was a heavy oracle of judgment and difficult to bear because Habakkuk was assigned to announce God's wrath upon his compatriots.

The intent and setting centred around an attempt to explain the rise of the oppressive Neo-Babylonians empire in the late seventh century BCE as an act of Yahweh which does not contradict divine righteousness and fidelity to Judah (Sweeney, 1991:81). When Habakkuk looked at life from his earthly standpoint, it seemed that God was indifferent to the evil permeating society, but God gave him a divine perspective and showed him that life is more than what it seems. Through his dialogue with God, Habakkuk had learned that the imminent judgment of God through Babylonians was inescapable. Thus, the prophet's role was to persuade his hearers to abide by what God had set for Judah, which was to submit to Babylon. Such a message attracted treason charges for anyone delivering it and we can deduce from these facts that Habakkuk could have faced treason charges for delivering this message.

Therefore, the book of Habakkuk was written with a purpose to show that God is still in control of the world despite the apparent triumph of evil. Reading through it we understand that the deeds of men and women cannot prevent the purposes of God; God's plan will surely take place and be on schedule (2:3). The book shows that those who do not show any regard for God may seem to prosper at the moment, but God will ultimately right all wrong. God acts sovereignly in all that comes to pass so that everything works toward His good purpose.

Habakkuk learned that he cannot sort out the whole picture from where he was in life, only God can. Thus, Habakkuk called the people not to despair, but to live by faith (2:4b) and share his joy in Lord (3:18) (Bruckner, 2012:294). In this spiritual journey, Habakkuk learned that from God‟s perspective, all things are working together for the believers‟ good and for His honour.

6.4 The Structure and Literary Genre of the Book of Habakkuk

At least two distinct sections can be recognized in Habakkuk (1:1-2:20 and 3:1-19). First, we observe that after the superscription (1:1) that introduces the book as the מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ (the oracle or burden) comes a long section constructed as a dialogue between the prophet and God (1:2-2:20). The section, which divides itself into four units, describes Habakkuk‟s perplexities (1:2-4 and 1:12-2:1) and God‟s responses to the prophet‟s complaints (1:5-11 and 2:2-20). Of course this division is not universally accepted as there are other scholars who hold that God‟s second response comprises only 2:2-5 followed by "woe oracles" in 2:6-20. We shall explain the reasons for this division as the discussion unfolds. The concluding section (3:1-19) is a psalm that opens with a petition (3:1-2), which is followed by a hymn of praise that exalts God for his mighty acts (3:3-15), and concludes the whole book with Habakkuk‟s response to the theophany, which is a statement of faith in the face of calamity and scarcity (3:16-19).

From this structure, we notice with Bruckner (2012:295) that Habakkuk contains a variety of classic biblical genres typical of prophetic books, but here they are used in unusual ways for surprising rhetorical purposes. Although the book does not contain the prophetic „Thus says the Lord,‟ it is built up from liturgical material, laments and hymns, which may seem more closely related to priestly material (Davidson, 1983:18-19). While this may sound positive, the build-up of the book has led to diverse ways of describing the genre of the work of Habakkuk, which has created persistent problems in understanding the text. Scholars have variously described the genre of the work of Habakkuk as a liturgical composition, a prophetic imitation of a cultic liturgy, a report of a visionary experience, and a wisdom text that centres on the question of theodicy (Sweeney, 1991:63-4). Such variety in description alone warrants genre analysis of Habakkuk for a more precise theological appropriation and clearer understanding of its relevance to the contemporary Malawian context.

In order to discover clues about what is going on or what kind of communication is being attempted in a particular text, genre analysis is necessary (Floyd, 2002:407). According to Floyd (2002:407), genre analysis involves the following: description of the rhetorical pattern that informs the structure of a text; comparison with other texts whose structures are similarly informed by the same rhetorical pattern; and consideration of this family of texts in relation to a particular complex of ideas in a recurrent social setting. In his attempt to explain how this analysis works, Floyd says:

> A genre is suggested by a particular rhetorical pattern, but there can be variations in the configuration of elements that make up the pattern, variations in the way the pattern informs differently structured texts, and variations in the way different members of this family of texts express similar ideas and relate to their common setting. Moreover, this whole complex of factors can undergo changes over time without a genre losing its identity. Genre analysis is therefore necessary whether or not the genre of a text is explicitly named in its title, because the naming is not an end in itself (Floyd, 2002:406-7).

Here, we note that the task of analyzing genre does not only focus on the text that is being investigated; it also pays attention to other related texts and informs the context from which the text comes. Therefore, genre analysis is particularly important in the present study because it links the literary work of the text with the social setting of the text.

Floyd (2002:406) defines genre as a literary convention that is initially evident in recurrent rhetorical patterns suggesting "family resemblances" among various texts. He holds that the overall structure of a text is informed by a rhetorical pattern that indicates the conceptual stance assumed by the author toward those with whom he or she is trying to communicate. On the other hand, the role of the genre is to disclose the social situation that the sender of the message assumes or aims to establish with the receivers of the message (Floyd, 2002:406). This understanding is particularly important in our present case because it signals that biblical genres plays significant role in establishing the social location of the biblical text. Therefore, genres in this sense provide clues as to how the literary dimensions of biblical texts relate to the socio-political world.

The following genres are identified in Habakkuk: a dialogic exchange of lament and divine response (1:2-2:5); the woe oracles given as taunt (2:6-20); and the prayer of Habakkuk (3:2-19). These genres are based on the prophetic pronouncement מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ (chapters 1-2) and a petitionary prayer תְּפִלָּה tĕpillâ (chapter 3) that constitute prophetic affirmation of divine

sovereignty and justice, the purpose of which is to convince its audience that Yahweh is maintaining fidelity in a crisis situation (Sweeney, 1991:80). Among the two, the מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ is of paramount significance here because it is the title of the entire book. The book is presented as "the maśśāʾ „burden" that Habakkuk saw" (1:1), which suggests that its meaning is critical to understanding Habakkuk's message.

Hence, it is imperative to start this genre analysis by looking at the significance of the term מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ in Habakkuk. This involves understanding the term maśśāʾ or „burden" as a genre in prophetic literature. Following this will be a literary look at the dialogic exchange of lament and divine response (1:2-2:4), which breaks into four units: an individual lament (1:2-4); response from God (1:5-11); an individual lament (1:12-2:1); and a complaint response from God (2:2-4). The next genre to be considered is a series of woe oracles that is given as a taunt to the oppressor (2:5-20); these woes are a continuation or form part of God's answer in 2:2-4. Lastly, we shall analyse the prayer of Habakkuk (3:1-19), which is a combination of a theophanic psalm (3:1-15) and a psalm of trust (3:19).

6.4.1 The Meaning of the term מַשָּׂא Maśśāʾ in Habakkuk (1:1)

Habakkuk opens with the title "The oracle that the prophet Habakkuk saw" (1:1), which is a typical prophetic form wherein the prophet tries to explain Yahweh's actions in the world. The function of this title is to provide the reader with essential information that identifies or characterizes the material that follows (Sweeney, 1991:65). Barker and Bailey (1998:292) maintain that this title approves all that follows as powerful divine words even if their form and content would lead us to emphasize the human element of lament, complaint and question. In other words, Hab. 1:1 describes the content of the book by identifying the material contained in Habakkuk as "the burden." The Habakkuk story is told in a vivid and dramatic way to the extent that we today can almost see what the prophet is describing (Prior, 1998:208). The story is about the oracle or burden that Habakkuk saw.

The Hebrew word for „oracle" is מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ and most interpreters have translated it as a „burden" or „load" with the literal meaning of something that has been lifted up and is being carried. The word is a noun derived from the root verb נָשָׂא nāśāʾ, which basically means

"carry" or "lift up" (Floyd, 2002:401). It signifies the idea of lifting up in order to carry, which commonly describes the transport of a load of merchandise by a pack animal (Andersen, 2001:87). Figuratively, in Habakkuk the oracle represents a judgment which lies heavy on the people of Judah, which proposes that the book itself is the burden that Habakkuk saw. If we were to follow Coote"s (1981) and Mosala"s (1989) analyses, part of the „burden" is being the mediator of the voices of the marginalized as the prophet speaks to power. The prophet is trapped between his own words and what needs to be said in the voices from below, who are the marginalized and the oppressed.

Other translators have resorted to the neutral terms such as „the message," „pronouncement," or „proclamation," to convey the meaning of the מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ (Floyd, 2002:401). This line of thought, according to Floyd (2002:401), links the prophetic use of the מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ to the idiomatic phrase נָשָׂא קוֹל nāśāʾ qôl „to lift (one"s) voice," which supplies the translation with the meaning „pronouncement" or „proclamation." He argues that if this particular way of thinking characterizes the term maśśāʾ, then it should be applicable to utterances of many kinds, not just prophetic one (Floyd, 2002:402). But Coogan (2001:1336) maintains that the maśśāʾ (burden) relates to prophetic discourse only because it describes a kind of prophetic speech that responds to the questions of the community. In prophetic writings, says Andersen (2001:87), the maśśāʾ becomes a technical expression for the message brought by the prophet (Isa. 14:28).

6.4.2 Rhetorical Pattern of the מַשָּׂא Maśśāʾ in Habakkuk

Floyd (2002:409) describes the מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ and its implications in prophetic activity by turning to Richard Weis"s (1986:28-29) claims that affirm strongly that the maśśāʾ texts have a rhetorical pattern with three basic characteristics: first, an assertion is made, directly or indirectly, about Yahweh's involvement in a particular historical situation or course of events; second, this assertion serves to clarify the implications of a previous revelation from Yahweh that is alluded to, referred to, or quoted from; third, this assertion also provides the basis for directives concerning appropriate reactions or responses to Yahweh's initiative, or for insights

into how Yahweh's initiative affects the future.[57] Floyd (2002:413) maintains that all three definitive elements of the maśśāʾ are evident in Habakkuk.

First, we notice that the text itself bears witness to Yahweh''s involvement in human history. Floyd (2002:413) points out that the oracle in 1:5-11 indicates that Yahweh is responsible for the rise of the Neo-Babylonian Empire that is rapidly subjugating all the peoples of the ANE. He further argues that if Babylonian hegemony is Yahweh''s doing, then it raises the question of whether Yahweh is treating His people justly. This becomes a problem for Habakkuk since he finds it difficult to reconcile what he had learned and believed about God''s justice with Yahweh''s apparent nurturing of the wicked Neo-Babylonians. God''s involvement in human affairs is again confirmed in the oracular inquiry reported in chapter 2:2-20 that claims that Yahweh is about to bring down the Babylonians (Floyd, 2002:414).

The next point goes in line with Weis''s definitive element of the maśśāʾ that serves to clarify the implications of a previous revelation from Yahweh. It has already been pointed out that Habakkuk''s problem is that Yahweh appears to be implicated in the Babylonians' unjust exploitation of Judah (1:6). But in chapter 2, the problem is resolved when it is claimed that Yahweh is now destroying the power of the Babylonians because they abused the imperial role Yahweh formerly assigned to them (Floyd, 2002:414-15). Having heard God speak plainly about instability and impermanence of such a conceited and crooked people, Habakkuk receives inspiration to foresee the day of reckoning for the Chaldeans and to record the charges which will then be brought against them (Prior, 1998:243). It is the turn of tables; the oppressor is now mocked (2:6-20). In this way, God''s answer to Habakkuk''s complaints comes with a directive to the prophet that also contains within it directive for the people (2:2-5) (Floyd, 2002:414). This takes us to Weis''s third definitive element of the מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ.

The assertion that Yahweh is putting to an end the Babylonian hegemony provides the basis for directives to the prophet and the people regarding appropriate reactions or responses to what Yahweh is doing (Floyd, 2002:15). In the present case, Habakkuk is asked to write a vision given to him by Yahweh and to wait expectantly for the revelation to be realized (2:2-

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[57] In trying to describe the term Maśśāʾ and its implications in prophetic books, Michael H. Floyd used the work of Weis (1986), who describes the term Maśśāʾ by providing its three definitive elements.

3); the revelation itself in 2:4-5 promises life to advocates of justice who keep faith in Yahweh and then conversely announces the imminent death of the greedy Babylonian imperialists (Floyd, 2002:14). In 2:6a, there is a directive to all the people to taunt the oppressor, which is followed by the great uproar of the nations (2:6b-20), giving the support of world opinion to the claim that Babylon is destined by Yahweh to soon fall (Floyd, 2002:14). The impression here, as Gowan (1998b:96) in Chapter Five pointed out, is that God is sanctioning a suffering people to sing a mock funeral song in advance over the tyrant who has oppressed them.

The directive is addressed to Habakkuk as representative of the people, who then gives the people a model of compliance with this directive in the prophetic complaint in chapter three (Floyd, 2002:15). Because the woe oracles (2:6b-20) precede the Lord‟s command in 2:2, Andersen (2001:88) proposes that the eventual proclamation is precisely the woe oracles. He looks at this series of woes as the actual burden received and the message to be pronounced. While maintaining the maśśāʾ as the name of the entire book, Andersen‟s (2001:88) main argument is that the title maśśāʾ is more appropriate for the woe oracles (2:6b-20). He takes the woe oracles to be the main matter of the prophecy and the remaining parts of the book as supplying the context and circumstances from which this ‚burden‟ emerges.

In the prophetic corpus, Nahum, Habakkuk and Malachi are the only cases of a book being identified in its superscription as a maśśāʾ; while Zechariah has two appended sections (9:1-11:17 and 12:1-14:21) branded as a maśśāʾ.[58] For Habakkuk, the oracle is of God and is only given to the prophet in a vision of dialogue with God (Hab. 2:1; cf. Jer. 28:10-15). By using the word מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ, Habakkuk emphasizes that this is not a message that he has dreamed up himself; in a very real sense he neither looked for it nor likes it – he would rather be rid of it, but it weighs heavily on him and he cannot escape the responsibility of declaring it (Prior, 1998:207). The message is not called the prophet‟s ‚burden,‟ it is qualified only as the burden ‚that Habakkuk the prophet saw‟ (cf. Isa. 13:1) (Andersen, 2001:87).

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[58] The New Oxford Annotated Bible Third Edition highlights that the remainder of Zechariah (chapters 9-14), and the whole of the subsequent book of Malachi, can be divided into three units of comparable length, each introduced by the title, "An oracle," which literary means "Burden" (Zech. 9:1; 12:1: Mal. 1:1). The first major section of the book contains three parts, each introduced by a date formula (1:1; 1:7; 7:1). For more on this subject see Coogan (2001:1358 and 1364).

Andersen (2001:88) reminds us that prophetic vision was an experience in which the prophet typically saw the Lord in the divine assembly (cf. 1 Kgs 22:19; Isa 6; Jer 1:11; Eze 1) and so was able to hear what the Lord said. In this way, the title stresses Habakkuk‟s prophetic role by highlighting the mediation function of prophecy where prophets speak not only for themselves but also for God (O‟Brien, 2004:67). It is the report of the Lord‟s proclamation which is now the burden (maśśāʾ) to be carried by the prophet to the people from his meeting with Yahweh. Thus, Habakkuk articulates the account of the oracle as if he had seen it with his bodily eyes being fulfilled, which helps us to understand why it is vital to comment on the word „saw‟ in the title.

6.4.3 Understanding the word חָזָה "saw" in the Title

The title describes the maśśāʾ as something seen in a vision, rather than heard – "the burden that the prophet Habakkuk saw" (Andersen, 2001:88). The Hebrew word that has been used for „saw‟ is חָזָה ḥāzâ, which means "to see mentally" (especially a vision). Prior (1998:208) claims that the word חָזָה ḥāzâ is a loan word from the Aramaic, where the verb and its derivatives are the usual words used to denote the act of seeing. According to Andersen (2001:91) the word has definite connotations of a visionary perception, such as would come to a prophet in a state of ecstasy. He says such an experience often took the form of participation in the divine assembly. Thus, the word חָזָה ḥāzâ is mostly applied to prophecy or revelation.

This suggests that the word חָזָה ḥāzâ is different from the verb רָאָה rāʿâ "to see." Of course the verb and its derivatives appear in the First Testament alongside the verb רָאָה rāʿâ for all kinds of sight and vision, but are specially associated with the visions of the prophets (Prior, 1998:208). Here, we note that although חָזָה ḥāzâ refers to both the natural vision of eyes and to supernatural visions of various kinds, it remains that the word is not often used for normal physical seeing. In the context of Habakkuk, the oracle was divinely presented to his mental vision; thus, the verb ḥāzâ, along with מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ "burden," highlights the visionary aspects of Habakkuk‟s prophetic experience (Andersen, 2001: 91). The use of the two words in the title intends to describe the weight of Habakkuk‟s prophecy in terms of carrying and

conveying it to his people. With this understanding of the meaning of the מַשָּׂא maśśāʾ, we are now in a better position to analyse the genre of the work of Habakkuk.

6.4.4 Lament Used in a Dialogical Complaint (1:2-2:4)

Habakkuk opens his book with a dialogic exchange in lament-oracle-lament-oracle pattern (1:2-4; 1:5-11; 1:12-2:1; 2:2-4) between the prophet and God (Boadt, 1982:171). Each of these sections is demarcated by its syntactical features and the perspective of its verbs and pronouns which indicate the speaker of the section, the party being addressed, and in some cases the subject of discussion in the passage (Sweeney, 1991:66). Patterson (1991:19) points out that the complaints raised by Habakkuk (1:2-4; 1:12-2:1) make use of lament genre with its characteristic elements of invocation (1:2, 12), statement of the problem (1:3-4, 13-17) and implied petition. He further adds that the second complaint has a closing affirmation of confidence in God (2:1). Likewise, each of God‟s answers displays careful literary attention not only in giving the solution to the plaintiff‟s query (1:5-6; 2:4, 5-20) but a detailed description of the Chaldean, the agent of Judah‟s destruction (1:7-11) and a catalogue of the woes associated with the chastiser (2:6-20) for his failure to meet God‟s righteous standard (2:4-5) (Patterson, 1991:19).

Patterson (1991:19) maintains that each major unit of chapters one and two is composed so that the two perplexities of the prophet begin with a question (1:2, 12) and each of God‟s answers starts with an imperative (1:5; 2:2). He observes that the two chapters are threaded together with stitch-words such as: מִשְׁפָּט (judgment), צַדִּיק righteous, בּוֹגְדִים/בּוֹגֵד traitor or the wicked, אָסַף gather and verbs of seeing. We notice that the book is introduced as the burden that the prophet "saw" (1:1). Then, God is accused of making Habakkuk see wrongdoing and to look at trouble (1:3). In reaction to Habakkuk‟s honest prayer, God orders him to look at the nations and see the work God is doing (1:5). Another verb come when Habakkuk says he will keep watch to see what God will say to him. Hab 2:2 carries connotations of seeing when Habakkuk is asked to write the vision clearly so that a runner may read it. In the theophanic psalm, Habakkuk says he saw the tents of Cushan under affliction and the tent-curtains of the land of Midian trembled (3:7).

Bruckner (2012:296) points out that there are two sets of prophetic questions posed to God in this section: first, in a voice of pain seeking help from God, Habakkuk asks, "Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?" (1:2-4). God''s response (1:5-11) is indirect and creates a more severe problem for Habakkuk as it is not an oracle of deliverance (Gowan, 1998b:93). In view of the new information given in God''s answer to the initial complaint, and of-course in the light of divine holiness, the second set of questions reasserts by rephrasing while intensifying and expanding the original question, "Why then do you tolerate the treacherous?" (1:12-17). God''s answer to this complaint comes in 2:1-4 where Habakkuk gives a report of the vision he received from God. This dialogic exchange of laments and divine responses, elaborates Brueggemann (2003:241), is a characteristic liturgical interaction familiar from the book of Psalms (cf. "How long?" in Ps. 6:3; 13:1-2; 79:5; 89:46; and "Why do you…?" in Ps. 10:1; 44:23-24; 74:11).

Bruckner (2012:295) says the inclusion of God''s responses in Habakkuk has similarities to the book of Job: Habakkuk''s and Job''s questioning is presented as faithful protest (cf. Job 42:7-8); each of them conversed directly with God (cf. 30:2-23, 31:6, 35); and the Lord led both of them out of older theological constructs into new understanding of God''s way in the world (Hab. 1:5, 12-13; 2:2-6; 3:16-19; cf. Job 42:1-9). This understanding helps us to see why Andersen (2001:21) prefers to term Habakkuk''s prayers as „complaints" rather than „laments." To him, laments are more suited to a prayer of misery appealing to God''s pity, whereas a complaint can take the form of a protest and an appeal to God''s justice from a person who has been victimized. For Bowling and Longacre (2013:13) this type of discourse is called "riyb," which may either mean indictment or complaint.[59]

In their unpublished work, Bowling and Longacre (2013:13) points out that there are two varieties of "riyb": God''s calling His people to account and God''s people complaining against Him and attempting to bring God into the docket. The situation in Habakkuk is that of the second riyb where people complain against God''s ways of handling human affairs. So, in a way, Habakkuk has taken God to court to answer some charges; he is accusing God for letting the wicked to triumph over the righteous. He expected God to act with urgency in

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[59] Bowling and Longacre (2013:13) have used a Hebrew label "riyb" because there is no one English word which is broad enough in scope to label this discourse type. This discourse type evokes a courtroom-like atmosphere with indictment, cross-examination and defense.

addressing problems the righteous were facing in Judah; unfortunately, the text pictures God as someone who does not listen, is inactive to save, and tolerates evil. The text in question avows that Habakkuk is bitter with God for not taking action against the wicked in Judah.

Gowan (1976:22) says that in the psalms of lament, which are either individual or communal, the singer comes to God to complain about his or her troubles and the troubles of his or her community. In Habakkuk, the complaints are individual laments presented on behalf of his community. Brown and Miller (2005:16) define lament as the voice of pain, which at the same time is the voice of prayer; it is the possibility of language when suffering is so great that it is hard to speak. They hold that because it is the cry for help, lament is utterly human and profoundly theological. Generally, laments arise from challenging circumstances that effect discomfort on lives of the people. Because they rise from the reality of human existence, laments shall always remain the peoples‟ prayer (Brown & Miller, 2005:17). In the case of Habakkuk, it was the repressive ways of internal and external oppressors that caused Habakkuk to raise complaints to God.

6.4.4.1 An Individual Lament: Habakkuk's First Complaint (1:2-4)

Unlike other prophets, Habakkuk opens his book with a voice of pain, depicting a person living in the midst of terrible anarchy where everything is falling apart. The initial complaint is a prayer of a person who for a long time has been petitioning God to rescue him from his gloomy state. As Habakkuk turns to God once again in 1:2-4, he employs two interrogatives – "How long…?" (1:2) and "Why…?" (1:3) – which are typical of the complaint element in psalms that are often categorized as lament (cf. "How long?" in Ps. 13:1-2; 6:3; 80:4; 89:46; Jer. 12:4; Zech. 1:12 and "Why?" in Ps. 10:1; 44:23-24; 74:1, 11; 80:12; 88:14) (Armerding, 2008:611). Andersen (2001:110) observes that Habakkuk‟s language lacks the courtesy of address to a superior that customarily contains a title defining the role in which the deity is being supplicated ("my God" or "my Lord").

Armerding (2008:611) claims that the questions raised in Habakkuk‟s initial complaint imply a situation of crisis from which the speaker seeks deliverance, as is suggested in his "cry for help." He goes on to say that "violence" is the crisis in which Habakkuk calls for help and the response expected from Yahweh, assuming that He "hears," is that He should "save" (1:2). Prior (1998:209) agrees, he says Habakkuk‟s fundamental lament and complaint before God

is expressed in one word, "violence." The word appears six times in Habakkuk (1:2, 3, 9; 2:8, 17[x2]), fourteen times in Psalms and seven times in Proverbs, which suggests that it is a key word to understanding circumstances surrounding this prophecy. The word "violence," as Armerding (2008:611) puts it, denotes flagrant violation of moral law by which a person injures primarily a fellow human (cf. Gen. 6:11). The situation is a confirmation that the Torah is numb or paralysed, justice never goes out, and justice is "bent" or perverted or crooked. The underlying meaning is one of ethical wrong, of which physical brutality is only one possible expression (cf. Jdg. 9:24).

Prior (1998:210) is right that the blend of horror words piled up by the prophet – wrongdoing and trouble, destruction and violence, strife and contention, imply that violence had escalated in Judah and Jerusalem of Habakkuk"s time. In the Old Testament, injustice and wrongdoing are linked together and used mainly in contexts of perverted justice and social oppression; destruction and violence are likewise correlated with the unjust oppression of the weaker members within a community (Prior, 1998:210).[60] Although this section does not explicitly name the righteous and the wicked, the use of these horror words suggest the kind of life Judeans were leading at the time when Habakkuk sounded his prophecy. The words here suggest that the weaker members of the community were in terrible state. The state of affairs in Judah was that the righteous were powerless before the heavy presence of the wicked – those who were in power and controlled everything.

Thus, Brueggemann (2003:241) notices that the initial complaint, with echoes of Jeremiah 12:1-4, raises the acute question of theodicy, that is, "Why do the wicked prosper at the expense of the righteous?" The essential evil of the situation, as Prior (1998:210) puts it, is summed up in the phrase, „The wicked surround the righteous" (1:4), which inevitably points to the oppression of the righteous people by those in power. It is, therefore, this oppression of the righteous by the wicked which is the basic cause of the breakdown of order and the chief reason for the prophet"s complaint (Sweeney, 1991:66). In trying to express his displeasure and frustration, Habakkuk used a language that is typical of complaint terminology that appears in contexts of legal disputation (cf. Job 19:1-7) and cultic lamentations (Psalm 18:7, 42) (Sweeney, 1991:66). In the contexts alleged to be unjust, the prophet complains to God demanding justice.

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[60] Cf. Job 5:16; Prov. 13:23; Isa. 10:1-2; 61:8 and Jer. 22:13.

6.4.4.2 A Judgment Oracle: Response from God (1:5-11)

This section is distinguished from 1:2-4 by a transition to God as the speaker (Armerding, 2008:612). Of course, there is no introduction to this unit to identify it as a speech of God using a standard formula, such as "Thus says the Lord," but its content clearly marks it as a divine proclamation (Andersen, 2001:139). Andersen (2001:139) observes that these verses are demarcated by imperative verbs and matching pronouns which are plural.[61] Because the verbs are plural, the message is not a private one for Habakkuk's personal benefit; it is an oracle for public proclamation (Andersen, 2001:139). In support to this view, Sweeney (1991:67) says the second plural address form indicate the addressee is not only the prophet himself, but those whom he represents, presumably the "righteous" mentioned in 1:2-4.

Hab 1:5-11 is an oracle, a word from God; and because verses 5b and 6 describe things only God could claim to do, we consider this unit to be God's answer to the prophet's complaint (Gowan, 1976:24). Here, we notice with Prior (1998:212) that God has been listening to Habakkuk's prayer very carefully, taking in the actual words the prophet has used to pour out his heart to God. He replies in detail to Habakkuk's prayer by taking up his own vocabulary: his lament about the paralysis of the law and the perversion of justice (1:4, 7), and his central theme of violence (1:2, 3, 9) (Prior, 1998:213). These seven verses echo focal concepts from 1:2-4 that are signalled in verse 5 where the verbs "look at" and "watch" correspond to "look at" and "tolerate" in verse 3 (Armerding, 2008:613). Therefore, Prior (1998:213) is correct to say that there is nothing vague or generalized about this answer to prayer; God listened and addressed Habakkuk's burning concern in specific detail.

In his initial complaint, Habakkuk had been forced to watch violence gradually taking over his own city and nation (1:3); and in effect, he saw only distressing lawlessness in his society (Andersen, 2001:139). As chaos escalated, Habakkuk became more and more depressed and desperate about the situation to the effect that he reached a point when he no longer wanted to know (Prior, 1998:212). Now in this oracle, God announces institution of the Chaldeans – the Neo-Babylonian Empire under Nabopolassar. Nothing is said as to the purpose for which the Chaldeans are established, although 1:9 indicates that they come for violence (Sweeney,

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[61] Sweeney (1991:67) agrees, he says, "Hab. 1:5-11 is demarcated by its second person singular plural address form, as indicated by the plural imperative verbs, second person plural imperfect verbs, and the second person plural pronouns suffix in verse 5; its first person singular participial formation in verse 6 which identifies the speaker as YHWH; and its third person description of the Chaldeans in verses 6-11."

1991:67). This suggests, as Sweeney (1991:67) puts it, that they are not to be viewed as the means for correcting the injustice announced in the previous complaint; rather they may be viewed as its cause. In a way, the coming of the Chaldeans worsens the situation. The oracle in verses 6-11 describes how mighty, fearsome and successful the Chaldeans were in perpetrating violence.

Habakkuk expected God"s answer to embrace comforting words of deliverance. Instead, it is surprising that God is compelling Habakkuk to look at violence and to feel its impact in his sensitive soul (Prior, 1998:212). God invites Habakkuk to look at it so as to see justice in that violence, not in spite of it (Andersen, 2001:139). There is a shift in the course of this dialogue from national to international concerns. Andersen (2001:140) notices that the focus of Habakkuk"s prayer had been local; he gave no indication that he was concerned about world events. Habakkuk is thus instructed – he and his people – to turn his eyes away from his own little world and watch God at work on a wider canvas setting his vision on the world stage (Prior, 1998:212).

We will be right to agree with Andersen (2001:168) that in this oracle, the Lord was raising the Chaldeans not to deal with Assyria; it is obvious that it was uttered after the destruction of Assyria and before the invasion of Judah. Thus, Assyria could not be the "wicked" of verse 4 (Andersen, 2001:168). It could not be Egypt either because the Chaldeans had defeated her at Carchemish in 605 BCE. This means Judah was now exposed helplessly to the Babylonian threat, which helps us to date the oracle in 1:5-11 at a time when the Chaldeans had already emerged on the world scene and had accomplished much (Andersen, 2001:168). In summary, therefore, we can concur with Armerding (2008:613) that God"s first response to Habakkuk"s complaint enables us to understand that evil and calamity do not exist independently of the sovereign rule and redemptive purposes of God (cf. Am. 3:6); but this truth is apprehended only by faith in God as He reveals Himself (see 2:4; 3:1-19; cf. Pss. 37 and 73; Eccl. 8:11-13; Is. 51:12-16).

6.4.4.3 An Individual Lament: Habakkuk's Second Complaint (1:12-2:1)

The new speaker, addressee and subject of discussion distinguish this unit from the previous section.[62] The content and placement of this section indicate that it is a second complaint by Habakkuk to God concerning the oppressive nature of the Chaldeans (Sweeney, 1991:68). Armerding (2008:616) points out that this complaint, which is also classified as an individual lament, has many points of contact with 1:2-4. He cites the following as points of connection: the invocation of the Lord"s name (1:2, 12); the urgent questions addressed to God (1:13, 17); the description of the wicked oppressing of the righteous (1:13-17); and the issue of unrequited injustice that this complaint raises, expressed in vocabulary echoing that of 1:2-4 (e.g., „righteous," „wicked," „tolerate," „look," and „wrong" in 1:13). The dominance of interrogatives in this complaint is like Habakkuk"s first lament, suggesting that the prophet is still asking questions or, more likely, complaining to God that His policies and practices are incomprehensible and unacceptable (Andersen, 2001:170).

The critical pain reflected in Habakkuk"s second prayer stems from God"s use of Neo-Babylonians in solving Judah"s problems. This is well-articulated in Prior"s (1998:218) statement, which says, "The "cure" of Babylonian invasion is worse than the "illness" of Judean sin." The statement suggests that God"s answer in 1:5-11 does not promise that God would rid Judean problems. Habakkuk could not believe what he was hearing from God; the answer to his complaint had opened up a far more frightening scenario than the one he had brought to God in agony of heart (Prior, 1998:218). So, in a heart-to-heart talk with God, Habakkuk – dissatisfied with the proposed solution of Babylon"s ruthless and imperial interventions to his problems – again raises a protest. Habakkuk is frustrated because God is unconcerned with the problems of His own people.

Habakkuk begins this unit with a rhetorical question addressed to God (1:12a), which is also a statement of faith in the Lord"s covenantal justice (Armerding, 2008:617). The question establishes Yahweh"s antiquity and immortality; and the ground for the following material, that Yahweh, as creator and master of the world, is capable of intervening either to establish

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[62] Sweeney (1991:68) points out that the second person singular verbs and the pronoun hT'a *ʾattâ* "You" in 1:12-14a identifying Yahweh as its addressee, the first person singular pronoun suffixes in verse 12a, which identify Habakkuk as the speaker, and the third person singular that represents the Chaldeans, distinguish this section from the judgment oracle in 1:5-11.

the Chaldeans or to remove them (cf. 1:12b, 13; 2:6-20).[63] By accepting God‟s sovereign use of the Chaldeans (1:12b), Habakkuk affirms that his life and identity are inextricably intertwined with the life and identity of the Lord (Prior, 1998:220). This is followed by an extended question on the existence of injustice (1:13-17) and verse 13 is the heart of Habakkuk‟s problem (Armerding, 2008:617). He does not understand how a Holy God could tolerate evil.

Prior (1998:223) observes that having accepted the rightness, the justice, in God‟s sovereign choice of the Chaldeans to bring correction and chastisement to Judah, Habakkuk cannot but point out the inherent contradiction to which this testifies – the Chaldeans are faithless men (1:13). According to him, Habakkuk believes there is absolutely no justice, no rightness, in God allowing, let alone commissioning, such people who are the embodiment of the wicked to swallow up those more righteous than they (1:13). The human drama viewed in verses 15-17, which grows out of creation simile in verse 14, represents the Chaldeans as a fisherman, with the nations as fish (Andersen, 2001:190). Barker and Bailey (1998:315) say that in a figurative language, Habakkuk stated the problem (1:14), described the setting by showing how Babylon treated the conquered nations (1:15-16), and raised the serious question about the future (1:17).

Andersen (2001:190) argues that by comparing humankind to fishes, the poet brings out both their huge population and also their helplessness, making the image even more pathetic and appealing by adding they "have no ruler" (1:14b). The picture here suggests that the people became no better than animals or even insects to Babylonians, which made them to delight in their total power over the helpless creatures snared in their control (Boadt, 1982:177). The nations, as Leggett (1990:98) points out, are as helpless before the tyrant as fish are in the net of the fisherman. He adds that the net is a symbol and instrument of Babylonian power; thus, they worshipped and sacrificed to it (1:15). Boadt (1982:178) observes that the use of a net here is a mockery of divine power because the traditional imagery portrays God Himself as

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[63] Sweeney (1991:68) indicates that this is made clear in the two statements that follow: 1:12b states that Yahweh has appointed the Chaldeans for justice and arbitration, i.e., they have been established to rule. He goes on to say that verse 13 states that Yahweh is incapable of looking upon, i.e., tolerating, injustice.

the fisherman (Ezek 29:1-7; 32:1-3; Jer 16:16).[64] Also the reference to "have no ruler" (1:14b) is a reproach to God pointing to His insensitivity to Habakkuk's problems.

Habakkuk's second prayer concludes with a statement of faith (2:1), in expectation of the Lord's answer to the dilemma (Armerding, 2008:617). It is a soliloquy that serves as a transition from the prayers of chapter 1 to God's response of chapter 2 (Andersen, 2001:194). Habakkuk is talking to himself preparing himself for God's answer. Cathcart (2010:347) holds that „legal" or „forensic" language has been used here because for him this dialogic exchange is a conflict between Habakkuk and God. This understanding helps us to see 1:12-2:1 as Habakkuk's protest against what God intends to do to His people. Thus, Habakkuk expects an answer from Yahweh concerning his complaint (2:1). Because he is a prophet, because he has been praying, and because he has heard from God before, Habakkuk readies himself for God's next move (Andersen, 2001:197). The prophet is convinced that God would indeed answer his complaint.

In his second complaint, Habakkuk is dealing with the very question of theodicy. The continuing problem of evil in the world and God's involvement in it raised theological concerns for Habakkuk. How long can a holy, pure, immortal God remain silent? Can God use the Babylonians as instruments of His wrath? How long can Babylon continue to empty his net? (1:17). Barker and Bailey (1998:318) observe that Habakkuk's views of God were right (cf. Psalm 82; Isaiah 57:15), but his perspective was too limited. He argues that Habakkuk had looked for the punishment of the wicked so that the prosperity of his people could be assured, but God, who knew the end from the beginning, looked for the punishment of Habakkuk's people so that they could be restored to fellowship.

6.4.4.4 A Complaint-Response Oracle (2:2-4)
This unit substantiates that Habakkuk's intense concentration, his wholehearted expectation, expressed in 2:1, have not been in vain. At last God provides a solution to Habakkuk's complaints. The answer itself comprises an introduction that provide directions for the

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[64] Boadt (1982:178) holds that there is a challenge to the divine authority that comes out in reference to fish and creeping things, created by God on the fifth day (Gen. 1:20-22), but now claimed by the fisherman.

prophet (2:2-3) and the core element of the message from the Lord (2:4).[65] Gowan (1976:41) says these verses are a response to the "how long?" question that Habakkuk raised in chapter 1. The content and the basic statement of the vision appear in verse 4. The answer is short but comprehensive and is given by means of a strong contrast.[66] O'Brien (2004:79) argues that the traditional translation of this verse sets it as the answer of God to the problem of injustice: in response to the prophet's observation of the injustice of the world, God declares that (despite outward appearances) the wicked are doomed to failure and the righteous live by their trust in God. It is a complete denunciation and condemnation of the wicked, particularly all unjust oppressors (Wendland, 1999:4).

The fact that the righteous will live by their faithfulness entails that God will not leave the guilty, whether in Judah or in Babylon, unpunished; it is certain that those in rebellion against God would die. Chisholm (2002:436) observes that the Lord considered this message so important that He ordered Habakkuk to write it down on tablets (2:2-3). The verb "answered" (2:2), argues Andersen (2001:202), is used to introduce the favourable response, in word (salvation oracle) or deed (rescue act) by the Deity to an appeal from a devotee in distress (cf. 1:2 with Jonah 2:3). He adds that the precision with which the prophet specifies "he answered me" shows that this is exactly an answer to his prayer, and not just another case of "the word of the Lord came to me."

The answer was a new promise to the righteous. In the Habakkukan context, the righteous are the innocent people who are oppressed by those in power (cf. 1:4, 13 with Amo 2:6; 5:12; Isa 5:23; 3:10; 29:21) (Gowan, 1998b:95). Here, the term is used of innocent victims of oppression in Judah (1:4) and those who would be swallowed up by the Babylonians (Chisholm, 2002:437). Their only hope is offered in the statement "the righteous will live by their faithfulness." Gowan (1998b:95) observes that Ezekiel, who could have been a contemporary with Habakkuk, associated "life" with the "righteous" in a very emphatic way (Ezek. 3:21; 18:5-9, 24; 33:12-13), which helps us to understand Habakkuk's association of righteousness with life. He says:

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[65]This section is treated thus bearing in mind that some scholars such as Armerding (2008:623) and Chisholm (2002:436-40) take Habakkuk 2:2-20 to be the content of the revelation mentioned in verse 2 – a conclusion supported by the clear break at 3:1 and by the length of this unified passage, which makes it suitable for preservation on a number of "tablets."

[66] Barker and Bailey (1998:324) points out that the first half of verse 4 actually refers to the wicked described in 1:7, 11 and 13 without using the term, while the second statement explicitly describes the righteous person.

He was a priest, and it has been shown that the way he uses these words depends on his cultic background. "Live" is a declaration that God has accepted the worshiper and intends to bless him or her with all that "life" implied in Hebrew usage. Merely existing did not count as living in Hebrew thought. When sick, weak, in danger, or one"s reputation was hurt, one was in the grip of death and not fully alive. To be alive was to have vigour, honour, and security (Gowan, 1998b:95).

The verb "live" is used here in its most basic sense of "live physically," which refers to being preserved or sustained through the coming invasion, which would strip the land of its food sources (see 3:17) (Chisholm, 2002:437). So this verse does not merely tell us how we can barely hang on to some feeble thread of existence in times such as Habakkuk describes; no, it speaks of being richly and fully alive as expressed in 3:17-18 (Gowan, 1976:42-3). Although there is no evidence of blessing for the righteous now, and that the temptation to doubt God"s power (cf. Zeph. 1:12) is very strong, as chapter 1 indicates, Habakkuk is precisely speaking of those whom God declares to be innocent and thus intends to bless (Gowan, 1998b:95).

Thus, the answer to Habakkuk"s complaints calls for the righteous to remain faithful during the present time where there is no visible support for faithfulness, but it offers them life, if they persevered (Gowan, 1998b:96). Gowan (1998b:96) points out that because the answer calls for one to go on believing while God has still apparently done nothing, this to others may not be an answer. Thus, the text proposes that "the righteous" are: those courageous enough to accept God"s word of promise in a world dominated by the horrors of Babylonian power described in the preceding verses; those whose lives correspond to God"s leadership; and those who live according to the demands of their relationship with God (Barker and Bailey, 1998:325). In conclusion, the answer to the theodicy problem of Habakkuk is that the righteous must remain true to God because He will eventually call the godless to account (Prinsloo, 1987:279).

6.4.5 The Woe Oracles Given as Taunts (2:5-20)

The answer to Habakkuk"s complaints is followed by the woe oracles which are given as taunts to the oppressor (2:6-20). Patterson (1991:70) takes this series of woe oracles to be an explanation to the meaning of God"s second response (2:2-4) suggesting that it is part of God"s answer to Habakkuk"s complaints. It can also be considered a kind of interlude between the really meaningful materials in chapter one and three, which has led them to say that the book is a product of many authors. In this poem, the enslaved peoples and nations are

called to taunt the oppressor (2:6a). Sweeney (2000:473) observes that the form of the rhetorical question (2:6) actually constitutes an assertion that everyone should indeed engage in such ridicule against the oppressor. Their respective fortunes are reversed (cf. Isa. 14:1-21); the nations get the last taunting word, conveyed in the style of funeral laments (see "Alas" in 2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19; cf. 1 Kgs 13:30; Jer 22:18).

Each oracle starts with the word הוֹי – *hoy* which means *"woe."*[67] The word describes the actual funeral lament and is often translated as *"alas."* it is also translated as *"ho"* or *"ha"* or *"ah!"* meaning a cry for attention. Generally in prophets the word הוֹי – *hoy* is interpreted as *"woe to you,"* which in Hebrew was thought to have the same force as in a curse. In the present case, each oracle has a specific focus that describes the crimes perpetrated by "the wicked" and the different responses to them. And as Patterson (1991:19) puts it, each of the woes in this unit is formed in accordance with the traditional elements of invective (2:6, 9, 12, 15, 19a), threat (2:7, 11, 13, 16, 20), and criticism (2:8, 10, 14, 17, 18, 19b). This series of woes, says Brueggemann (2003:242), is a condemnation of community-destroying antineighbourly acts, which in the long run are unsustainable in the Torah community.

The first *woe oracle* is directed towards those who obtain goods dishonestly (2:6b-8). It accuses the oppressor of greed and plundering that which belongs to other people. The second deals with building fortunes and power structures on unjust gain (2:9-11). Baker (1988:64) says that the oracle condemns not only exploitation for personal gain, but also for national or dynastic overdoing because the oppressor established his dynasty firmly by means of force and cunning. The third oracle is the doom of evil and violence (2:12-14). It accuses the oppressor of bloodshed. Baker (1988:65) states that the very foundations of the centres of society were founded on bloodshed (cf. v.8; Nahum 3:1, especially referring to Nineveh; Micah 3:10, to Jerusalem) and wickedness (cf. Isaiah 59:3; Micah 3:10).

The fourth oracle is a woe against debauchery; it indicts the oppressor for terrible treatment of the subjugated nations (2:15-17). The world conqueror is now condemned for leading others, the neighbours, into wickedness by causing them to drink intoxicants. The fifth woe is

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[67] Gowan (1976:52) observes that each oracle begins with the word "woe" except for the last oracle in 2:18-19, which begins abruptly and has its *"woe"* in the middle rather than at the beginning. He suggests that if verses 18 and 19 were interchanged it would look exactly like others.

the doom of idolatry (2:18-20). This oracle points to the oppressor's idolatry and failure to recognize Yahweh (cf. 1:11, 16; 2:13a) as the root cause for the atrocities outlined in this taunt song (Sweeney, 2000:477). The oppressor seeks own security not only through violence and plunder, but also through resorting to powerless idols. This series of woes is designed to show that ultimately sin, evil, crime, oppression, debauchery, greed and idolatry are doomed to destruction (Smith, 1984:111).

6.4.5.1 The Use of Woe Oracles in Habakkuk

Gowan (1998b:96) observes that most of the uses of the word *"woe"* (הוֹי –*hoy*) in the prophets convey connotations of a curse, and it is true that there is no indication of grief in some of them, but frequently enough they appear in contexts of death and lamentation (e.g., Jer. 22:18; 30:7; 34:5). In addition, Barker and Bailey (1998:330) assert that the word *hoy* shows that the action under prophetic condemnation has seeds of death within it. Because of this, some scholars take Hab 2:6-20 to be a funeral song sung not for the oppressed but for the oppressor; the woe oracles are a taunt funeral song meant to ridicule the oppressor (see Gowan, 1998b:96 and Szeles, 1987:35-6). Gowan (1998b:96) argues that in Habakkuk, the emotion is clearly joy because a tyrant is dead (2:10). Judah is not mourning the impending fall of her overlord, but uses the literary form of a funeral song to mock her.

Although the oppressor looked unbeatable when Habakkuk uttered this prophecy, the woe oracles revealed that God's power would bring her low by 539 BCE when the Persian army under Cyrus defeated Babylon (Baker, 1988:62). Gowan (1998b:96) asserts that one of the major themes of funeral songs – the reversal of fortune – power turned to weakness – runs through the first four stanzas (cf. 2 Sam. 1:19, 25; Isa 14:4, 11, 16). He says that Habakkuk may be seen as using the language and themes of a funeral song, but for a brutally new purpose. Here, God is sanctioning a suffering people to sing a mock funeral song in advance over the tyrant who has oppressed them (Gowan, 1998b:96). Borrowing the words of Leggett (1990:105), the prophet celebrates ahead of the doom of evil and final triumph of God in the world. Thus, the poem ends with a liturgical formula in 2:20 (cf. Zeph. 1:7 and Zech. 2:17) and God is portrayed as residing by His almighty power in His holy temple where the powerlessness of idols is contrasted with His power.

Barker and Bailey (1998:349) suggest that this is a fitting conclusion to the woe oracles because it depicts God as a deity who is ready to respond to the needs of His people. Habakkuk has been making demands of God, asking questions of God, and retreating to his watchtower to wait for God‟s answers, impatient at God‟s silence; but now he hushes himself and the entire world, willing to let God act in God‟s time and willing to wait for God to open His mouth when God chooses (Barker and Bailey, 1998:349). Leggett (1990:106) says the call for silence is a call for reverent submission to His mysterious purposes: "Be still and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations" (Psa 46:10; cf. Zech 2:13). This implies that all the forces that oppose God will ultimately be silenced, even though now the forces of evil still rage (Smith, 1984:112).Here, we note that the certainty of judgment is based on the fact that the world belongs to God and that it is always under His control.

6.4.6 The Psalm of Habakkuk (3:1-19)

Hab 2:20 is an ideal bridge between the woe oracles and the prayer of Habakkuk in chapter 3 for it turns to positive looking at God, after the negative attention to Babylon‟s sin (Baker, 1988:68). The book of Habakkuk now moves from doubt to trust in God; from impatience to patient expectation of faith (Prinsloo, 1987:280). This section is demarcated initially by the superscription (3:1) that identifies the contents as "the prayer of the prophet Habakkuk according to Shigionoth." The prayer itself follows in verses 2-19a and the chapter closes in verse 19b with instructions to the choirmaster. The language and form of this chapter is closely linked to the psalms.[68] In the psalms, says Armerding (2008:637), the term "prayer" occurs most commonly in laments where intercession is made for divine intervention and vindication against oppression or injustice (Psa 4:1; 6:9; 17:1; 35:13: 54:2: 55:1; 69:13; 86:6; 88:2, 13; 102:1, 17; 109:4, 7; cf. 1 Kgs 8:28-54); it is a typical title for psalms of lament which petition God for deliverance.

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[68] While Habakkuk 3 is considered to be a psalm, Patterson (1991:20) says one may also make a satisfactory case for considering whole chapter as a prayer. He observes that there are many of the features common to this type of poetry (cf. Psa 17, 86, 90, 102, 142): opening cry/statement of praise, and attestation of reverence /trust (v. 2a), petition or problem (v. 2b), praise and exaltation of God (w. 3-15), statement of trust and confidence in God (vv. 16-18), and concluding note of praise (v. 19). He further says that all of this is developed in such a fashion as to settle fully both the prophet's concerns and to assure his readers that God truly is in control of earth's history, guiding the destinies of nations and all men in accordance with His most holy and wise purposes.

6.4.6.1 Habakkuk's Prayer (3:1-2)

The precise meaning of liturgical direction "according to Shigionoth" is unknown. Bruckner (2012:299) says it may be related to an Akkadian verb meaning "to howl, lament," which he thinks reinforces its associations with the psalms.[69] Armerding (2008:637) points out that the characteristics of its corresponding "shiggaion" in Psalm 7 suggest that as a musical genre it constitutes a vehement cry for justice against sin. Smith (1984:115), on the other hand, is of the opinion that the term "Shigionoth" (3:1 and also *"Niginoth"* in 3:19b) indicates that the psalm was set to music, whose tune and mood for its performance was meant to suit lament genre. Then again, Sweeney (1991:78) says these terms correspond to the general situation of distress presupposed throughout the psalm. Armerding (2008:637) observes that the liturgical direction "according to Shigionoth" serves as perfect link between the heading that separates chapter 3 and the preceding chapters where a similar cry for justice is expressed in the same genre of a lament.

As we can see, references to opinions about Shigionoth may lead some readers to think Hab 3 is a lament psalm, but it is not; in fact it is a theophany. Barker and Bailey (1998:352) claim that the psalm of Habakkuk celebrates satisfactory answers the Lord has offered to his moans. In this psalm, Habakkuk has reached the pinnacle of his spiritual experience; his distressing questions are resolved because he sees and hears God coming to administer justice (Wiersbe, 1983:95). The psalm offers hope of Yahweh's decisive response to the prophet's challenging of God's justice. The song divides into two parts: the first part deals with the transcendent God (3:2-15); the second part talks about the meaning of faith (3:16-19). We notice that the poet's own invocation of God (3:2) and his meditation on the significance of the vision that is granted him in his recapitulation of the ancient creed (3:16-19b) encases the primeval account of the destructive-redemptive-creative activity of Yahweh (3:3-15) that celebrates the majesty and the greatness of God, who comes to rescue His people (Andersen, 2001:261).

Of the entire chapter, only verse 2 will be considered the prophet's prayer since it takes on the form of a petition for God to do something. Bruckner (2012:299) argues that although the

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[69] Bruckner (2012:299) suggests that the phrase "according to Shigionoth" might have derived from šāgâ, meaning "to stumble" or "to go astray," perhaps a reference to Habakkuk's need for God's guidance. Armerding (2008:637) says the corresponding "*shiggaion*" appears as the title of another lament (Psa 7); the preposition "on," or "according to" (ʿal), is used in musical directions at the head of numerous psalms (e.g., Psa 6, 8, 12, 22, 45-46; cf. Hab 3:19).

psalm is an expression of Habakkuk"s faith in God"s past deeds, it is a subtle form of protestation; not until the concluding bridge (3:16-19) does the prophet relinquish the plea for immediate intervention and accept the revelation of Babylon"s rise given in the second chapter. So, verse 2 acts as an introduction to the hymn (3:3-15) that prepares the way for a narration of the ancient deeds of God. It is a petition for God to renew His work of salvation history; a prayer that reminds God to remember His mercies of the past in order to act today (Boadt, 1982:189).

The prophet"s plea for mercy in the midst of wrath entails alleviating and mitigating the cruelty of the Chaldeans toward Judah and speeding up their downfall and destruction (Leggett, 1990:110). This petition is grounded upon the nature of God and His covenantal commitment to His people (Exo 34:6; Psa 51:1; 86:15; 145:8). As he reflected upon the suffering of his people and their sore need for Yahweh"s help, Habakkuk recalls the story of God"s victory over their enemies in the distance past and prays that He will again exercise the same power (Stephens, 1924:290). Davidson (1983:118) is right to say that at this particular time, Habakkuk is appealing to the past as the ground for present hope (cf. Psa 44).

6.4.6.2 A Theophanic Psalm (3:3-15): A Hymn of Praise and Exaltation
In what seems to be a response to that plea, verses 3-15 take up a very old hymn that examines the massive coming of Yahweh in lordly theophany from Mount Sinai in military splendour in order to crush opposition and establish governance (Brueggemann, 2003:242). Johnson (2002:26) says as one of the major types of psalms, the hymn was composed for the sole purpose of extolling the glory and wonders of God. He says:

> Hymns might focus on the majesty of God as seen in nature (Pss. 8, 24), in history (Pss.113-118, esp.114), in the temple at Jerusalem (Pss.84, 122), or of YHWH as enthroned as king in Zion (Pss.24, 47). Psalm 29, possibly derived from a Canaanite poem, is a good example of a hymn. Between a symmetrical prologue (vv. 1-2) and epilogue (vv10-11) are four strophes (stanzas) that describe a powerful thunderstorm, with lightning, thunder, and hail, moving from the Mediterranean (v. 3) south to the wilderness of Kadesh (v. 8) where it dies. The writer"s focus, however, is on the response of the worshipers in the temple, who sensing the power of God in the storm, cry, "Glory" (Hebrew: *kabod*).[70]

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[70] On top of hymns, Johnson (2002:26-30) identifies national lament, individual lament, royal psalms and thanksgiving psalms as some of the major types of psalms. He believes that most these psalms were composed as liturgies for public worship in the temple at Jerusalem or for individual prayer.

This describes well of what is happening in the hymn of Habakkuk (3:3-19). According to Prior (1998:265), the hymn is a two-part victory song (3:3-7 and 3:8-15), composed in epic style, that sings on the activity of God in the exodus story – a consistently celebrated theme in Israelite worship. It tells of the might deliverance of Habakkuk's people by the God before whom he was to stand in silent awe (2:20) (Patterson, 1991:20). Conversely, in proportion to James Scott's (1990:181) rituals of reversal, the language of the psalm should be understood as representing the voices of the marginalized. He refers to how the marginalized „imagine" reversal. The images are often very violent, yet the violence is endemic to the violence with which they are oppressed, and so they (re)use the language of the dominant system to express themselves.

In this hymn, says Patterson (1991:20), Habakkuk has utilized the epic psalter material to illustrate and validate his thesis that God is in control of earth's unfolding history and, as in the past, may be expected to deal justly with His covenant nation which He has instructed to live by its faithfulness (2:4) and "be silent before him" (2:20), resting its case with Israel's true hero and victor – God Himself! The first part of the hymn (3:3-7) describes the glory and power of God where Yahweh's coming in judgment to the earth and ensuing effects on nature are sketched in a colourful manner (Prinsloo, 1987:280). The glory of God that Habakkuk is describing here, argues Robertson (1990:223), is not that which is naturally reflected in creation (cf. Ps. 19:2); Habakkuk speaks of the particular glory radiating from the theophany of God as He comes to deliver His people.[71] This glory is particularly manifested at those crucial points in history when God intervenes to save His own people.

The second part (3:8-15) answers the question „Why is God coming?" It expresses the central idea of this hymn and marks the decisive turning point of the theophany (Szeles, 1987:50). The first four verses in this unit (3:8-11) present God as a chariot-riding Divine Warrior who has come to defeat His enemy. Andersen (2001:262) points out that there is change in mode of address to the second person, which makes these verses to be more like a continuation of the opening invocation of verse 2. Yahweh has arrived as Commander-in-Chief equipped for war, and He engages in battle victoriously. Chisholm (2002:441) says that the rhetorical

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[71] The lightning flashes from the clouds described in verse 4 are symbols of God's power, but His real essence or power is covered or hidden. The effect of God's power is seen in the crumbling mountains and sinking hills (verse 6). The tents (homes) of Cushan and Midian will tremble at Yahweh's coming (verse 7).

questions in verse 8 forces one to reflect on the object of God"s anger; he asks, "The Lord has climbed into His chariot to do battle, but against whom? Is He angry at the rivers and the sea? At first the question may seem strange, but verse 15 does indeed depict the hooves of the Lord"s chariot horses stomping on the surging water of the sea."

It becomes apparent as the vision unfolds that the sea is the object of the Lord"s anger (see 3:10b).[72] God"s hostility focuses on water, but the mountains are also assaulted, and the battle spreads from the underworld to the heavenly lights. Rhetorical questions in verse 8 describe God"s anger against the rivers and the sea, which are the traditional forces of chaos in ANE myths. The imagery recalls the exodus, when the Lord dried up the sea (Chisholm, 2002:441). In verse 9, God is depicted as acting with the full force of His destructive powers and verses 10-11 portray the reaction of the natural world to God"s attack. Hab 3:8-11 begun with the picture of God"s conflict with „rivers" and „sea," argues Davidson (1983:119), and culminates in the declaration of God"s sovereignty over all the forces which shape life and history (3:12); a sovereignty revealed in Israel"s history as God"s saving concern for His people.

This leads our discussion to the last four verses (3:12-15) where we notice that God is involved in history: the setting is the world (3:12); the purpose is deliverance (3:13); the enemy (unnamed) is almost represented as an individual (3:14); and a final reference to the waters makes the Exodus the most likely referent, although this is far from proved (Andersen, 2001:262). The picture of God assaulting nations that threaten Israel is found in verses 12-14. The theophany report closes in verse 15, which returns to the initial mythological theme from verse 8 of God"s trampling the sea with horses (Sweeney, 2000:486). Smith (1929:152) says, "Though the theophany is with floods of rain and lightning, and foaming of waters, it is not with hills, rivers or sea that God is angry, but with the nations, the oppressors of His people, in order that He may deliver the latter."

Smith (1929:152) argues that all this, taken with the fact that no mention is made of Egypt, proves that, while the singer draws chiefly upon the marvellous events of the Exodus and

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[72] Scholars such as Chisholm (2002:441), Andersen (2001:262) and Leggett (1990:112) agree that the enemy is the watery chaos, represented by rivers and sea, which is given considerable emphasis in the whole section and refers to the nations (3:12).

Sinai for his description, he celebrates not these alone but all the ancient triumphs of God over the oppressors of Israel. We understand, therefore, as Chisholm (2002:441) puts it, that the watery chaos (represented by the rivers and the sea) is a poetic metaphor for violent systems, whether external or internal. This collocates well with the position of this project that looks at Habakkuk as prophecy intended to address any form of oppression that may arise in any generation. So, here, the prophet is not celebrating triumphs of God over Israel"s oppressors only; the hymn applies to all oppressors, even of our time. Gowan (1976:58) is right to say that Habakkuk had already begun to develop a universal outlook and so he used language that could apply to tyranny whenever and wherever it arises. The message of this hymn fits anyone in any generation who tyrannizes others.

Sweeney (2000:482) defines this theophany report as a genre of biblical literature, generally poetic in form that depicts an appearance or manifestation of Yahweh in the temporal world; often is associated with military situations in which Yahweh defeats the enemies that threaten Israel and the general order of creation. Yahweh is portrayed as a cosmic Divine Warrior, who is stronger than the oppressor; thus, the theme of this hymn is salvation of God"s own people (see 3:13). Robertson (1990:219) argues that this theme comes as a surprise bearing in mind that judgment had been central to Habakkuk"s dialogue with God (cf. God"s judgment on Judah in 1:5-11 and on Babylon in 2:6-20). However, he resolves this by claiming that the whole point of the book of Habakkuk had been salvation for God"s own people in the context of judgment. It is not surprising that in this hymn the prophet is no longer complaining; Habakkuk is comforted by God"s coming and saving actions.

6.4.6.3 A Psalm of Trust (3:16-19)
Habakkuk has heard the Lord"s answer to his complaints (2:2-20), has seen the Lord coming in battle against the wicked and the salvation of the righteous (3:3-15), and now in 3:16-19b he provides us with his reaction to this awesome experience (3:16-19b). These verses are a description of Habakkuk"s response to God who is present in worship. The poet closes by describing the effect which the contemplation of Yahweh"s approaching manifestation produced in his own heart: suspense and fear on the one side, but on the other a calm and joyous confidence in the God who, he is definite, will ensure His people"s salvation (Driver, 1965:339), We notice that the prophet has changed profoundly in these verses; the Habakkuk who speaks in these four verses is a very different person from the Habakkuk to whom we

were introduced at the beginning of the book (Prior, 1998:270). These closing verses open to our eyes the inmost soul of the prophet who in the midst of deepest suffering, boldly resolves to rejoice (Davidson, 1983:119).

The psalm of trust holds one of the most powerful statements of faith recorded in Scripture. While the answer satisfied Habakkuk, the thought of a Chaldean invasion of his people has left him physically shattered and disturbed (cf. Jer. 4:19). The power of the vision shocked Habakkuk, yet it reassured him that God was watching over His own. This entails that the situation in Judah would get worse before final vindication arrived (Chisholm, 2002:443). Although this is the case, Habakkuk, in this psalm of trust, makes two firm resolutions: "I will quietly wait" (3:16) and "I will rejoice" (3:18) in which he shows that, as a result of his profound experience of God in prayer, he has made God"s word to him (2:4) his own (Prior, 1998:271). The prophet has heard and encountered the living God, the God of glory, power, wrath and salvation; such an encounter, argues Gowan (1998a:34) has always had some effects (3:16).

Verse 16 describes the kind of trembling fear that enters the body of a person who has received tragic news or experienced God in a very extraordinary way. The tragic news in Habakkuk is that God is using Babylonians to destroy Judah. Bruckner (2012:299) says Habakkuk finally acknowledges he has "heard" the Lord"s word about Babylon"s coming triumph (3:16). Although terror stricken, he accepts that the Lord will work in a different and unsettling way to accomplish His purpose (2:14) through exile and return; he declares his unconditional allegiance no matter what the consequences (Bruckner, 2012:299). We notice therefore that in verse 16, the Habakkuk of "How long?" (1:2) has experienced God to the effect that he is transformed from an impatient prophet into a calm and expectant servant of God. He resolves to "wait quietly for the day of calamity" because he knew the Lord would judge righteously; thus, he could face the future trusting that God would sustain His faithful followers.

The link between verse 16 and verses 17-19a is found in the understanding that quiet patience is the proper atmosphere for true joy (Prior, 1998:275). One has to live in an agrarian world to begin to understand the awful situation described in verse 17. Gowan (1998a:34) says that to appreciate the deep meaning of this psalm, we must have knowledge of the economy of

Israel that depended on figs, grapes, and olives – the three main fruit crops that they ate; fields that yielded barley and wheat; and the common domestic animals – sheep, goats and cattle. These crops and animals express the natural bounty that God provides to the people in the land of Israel (cf. Deut. 14:22-29; 18:3-8; 26:1-15); failure of all these resources had serious economic and spiritual ramifications. The account here entails that things may well become even worse than they were when Habakkuk led to complain as he did in chapter 1 (Gowan, 1976:83).

In Chapter Five, we pointed out that the six clauses of verse 17 seem to be in ascending order of severity, with the loss of figs ranking least and loss of the herd in the stalls causing the greatest economic damage. Together, as Barker and Bailey (1998:375) put it, the losses spelled economic disaster and devastation loss of hope – loss of their daily provisions, loss of their economic strength, loss of the Lord‟s blessing due to their sin (Lev 26; Deut 28; Amos 4:6-9; Hag 1:6-11). The devastation is similar to that described by Joel in the wake of invasion by a vast plague of locusts that destroyed everything (Prior, 1998:275). In the midst of this entire calamity, the prophet confesses his trust in Yahweh (3:18), which is in sharp contrast with his earlier doubts when he complained to God (cf. 1:2-4; 1:12-17). The prophet now expresses a strong trust and faith in Yahweh.

Here, it is important to note, here, that even though everything that is normal and predictable collapses, Habakkuk will still rejoice in the God who delivers His people from such crises (Chisholm, 2002:443). It is important to point out that the joy referred to here, stands in contrast to the usual rejoicing over God‟s good gifts and protection (Psa 5:11-12; 13:5-6; 16:5-11; 47:1-4) since Habakkuk rejoices even without them; it also stands in contrast to that of the Babylonians, who rejoice because they live in luxury and enjoy the choicest food (Hab. 1:15-16) (Bruckner, 2012:300). Here, we notice with Prior (1998:276) that Habakkuk rejoices in the Lord in ways appropriate and natural for an Israelite released from bondage to fear, and from the need to understand and explain the workings of God.

The prophet‟s trusting words in this psalm reflect his acceptance of the oracle of Hab 2:4-5; for one cannot really understand "The just shall live by faith" in 2:4, until he begins to comprehend the words of Hab 3:17-18 (Gowan, 1976:84). Gowan (1976:84) write: "For what is faith? The former verse does not say. But these verses make it clear what it means to live

by faith and to be faithful in our living." Faithfulness means to go on doing the right, no matter what happens.[73] The story that best illustrate this kind of faith is of Daniel"s friends – Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who were thrown into the furnace of blazing fire for refusing to worship the Babylonian gods and golden statue Nebuchadnezzar had set up (Dan 3:13-30). They told the king that they were prepared to faithfully serve God even if He does not deliver them from the furnace of blazing fire and from the hand of king Nebuchadnezzar (Dan 3:16-18). Even if all of nature and all the signs of divine blessing and bounty fail completely, says Boadt (1982:197), still Habakkuk will sing the praise of Yahweh as giver of blessing.

Habakkuk now proceeds naturally to the conclusion in verse 19, where he shares the secret of his position: "God, the Lord, is my strength" (Prior, 1998:277). Prior (1998:277) observes that the prophet is ready to let anyone know the reason for his hopefulness in a depressing situation. The reference to "He makes my feet like the feet of a deer…tread upon the heights" suggests that somehow the Lord would enable Habakkuk to negotiate the dangerous obstacles ahead, just as an agile deer is able to run on rugged terrain (3:19) (Chisholm, 2002:443). In this way, Habakkuk 3 creates and maintains hope in the face of calamitous future, providing a lasting resource for survival (Bruckner, 2012:300). We agree with Bruckner (2012:300) that the chapter demonstrates the geography of hope in two ways: looking back by reciting the Lord"s victories on Israel"s behalf (cf. Deut. 26:1-11; Psalm 78) and looking up at creation"s wonders as a sign of Creator"s presence and power (cf. Psalm 19:1-4; Isaiah 40:12-31; 42:5-25).

6.5. A Summary of the Literary Analysis of the work of Habakkuk

A literary look at the genres of the work of Habakkuk has confirmed that despite their varied textures, the sections of the book build on each other. Literary and rhetorical criticisms that involve "in the text" mode of reading the Bible have helped us to see that Habakkuk is not discussing abstract questions about the existence of evil in the world; he is speaking out of a concrete and intensely personal situation (Andersen, 2001:170). The tone of the book reveals that his complaints arose from a very critical period held to be a time of social, political,

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[73] In addition, Gowan (1976:84) says: "Whether anybody ever rewards you or not – do the right thing, because that is what God wants. Faith means that you don't do it as a sour duty, gritting your teeth like a stoic. Faith means that you know the God who puts these demands upon you, and to know God makes you rejoice, no matter what."

religious and economic unrest in the history of Judah. Judah of Habakkuk‛s time was known by its laxity of the law, injustice and wickedness that triumphed in the land. We agree with Prior (1998:210) that the essential evil of the situation is summed up in the phrase, „The wicked surround the righteous‟ (1:4). Thus, it is the oppression of the righteous by the wicked, which is the basic cause of the collapse of order and the chief reason for Habakkuk‛s complaint (Sweeney, 1991:66).

Based on this literary analysis, I would like to argue that Habakkuk, in the actual sense, is speaking to authorities in Judah who are the causers of this chaotic situation. We understand that Habakkuk‛s prophetic activities took place at the Jerusalem Temple. And as observed in Chapter Five, a temple in the ANE was understood as an economic and political centre known to be the power base for exploiters. Although Habakkuk‛s prophetic activities took place in the temple, it does not mean that he was part of this exploitive system; in fact, he was more of a critic than a promoter of cultic community (cf. 1:4). Victor Matthews (2012:625) argues that prophets, in their capacity as spokespersons for Yahweh, operated independently despite being associated with cult centres and centres of power. They may have come from priestly background (e.g., Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Haggai, Malachi) or associated with kings (e.g., Samuel and Nathan), but generally when it came to their message they upheld their independence.

It was this independence that gave the prophets the singular opportunity to rise above power structures (cf. Amos 7:14) and to serve as social critics when necessity arose (Matthews, 2012:625). They could not even rely on groups or social structures in order for them to deliver the message from God. The prophet‛s fierce denunciation of every aspect of social and religious life, king and temple, sacrifice and prayer, worship and values, indicate that these prophets were social critics operating with a high level of theory (Carroll, 1983:26). In this way, Habakkuk might have been active serving in the temple as one of liturgists, but as a prophet, he remained faithful to his call as God‛s spokesperson. The message of the book is clear that as an intermediary between the people and Yahweh, Habakkuk defended tradition against the political and economic forces that threatened righteousness and justice; he served the purpose of voicing social criticism in the face of judicial (1:4) and economic abuse of the poor and the powerless (3:17) (Matthews, 2012:633).

Evidently, Habakkuk's message was determined by the social and political character of Judah of his time. As previously pointed out, Habakkuk used special language to convey such a message. Brueggemann (1989:4) prefers to term the language as poetic or prophetic asserting that biblical prophets were poets. This is worth noting because in African context, the poet and the prophet are the same; they both possess qualities of prophecy, foresight and insight (Na'Allah, 2003:135). Carroll (1983:26) says the open and quite often extreme hostility shown towards social institutions in ancient Israel is a common feature of poetic collections in the prophets. In this way, prophets (also known as poets) are understood as the voice that shatters settled reality and evokes new possibility in the listening assembly (Brueggemann, 1989:4). This helps us to see that there is interrelatedness between the message of Habakkuk that comes in poetic form and the socio-political life of Judah. As we begin to look at Habakkuk's poetry, we need to bear in mind that it is this interrelatedness which is key to understanding how poetry relates with the socio-economic and political world.

6.6 The Use of Poetry in Habakkuk

Prophetic poetry is devised as a form of direct address to a historically real audience (Alter, 1985:140). Through poetry, prophets may even have been social reformers putting forward radical critiques of society and arguing for serious changes in the lives of the people (Carroll, 1983:26). It was stated in Chapter Five that poetry of biblical prophets is inseparable from the empires which determined the ANE history; in actual fact, Hebrew prophecy came about in wartime, and war is the subject of, or background to, most prophetic poetry (Aberbach, 1993:1, 6). Thus, prophetic poetry was written largely in response to the rise and fall of Assyrian and Babylonian empires (Gowan, 1998a:9). This suggests that Habakkuk's context and poetry were not spared from imperialistic hegemony under the two global forces. This setting should assist us to see poetry or prophecy as a social phenomenon that is dynamic and interactional (Overholt, 1989:17). Hugh Page Jr. (2013:x-xi) takes Hebrew poetry to be a genre born out of human struggles.

This is the painting we have in Habakkuk. Habakkuk thought that God was unconcerned and insensitive to the wickedness that triumphed in a context alleged to be unjust; therefore, the prophet complained to God demanding justice. As he expressed his anger and frustration over the actions of the wicked, Habakkuk used a language typical of complaint terminology that appears in contexts of legal disputation (cf. Job 19:1-7) and cultic lamentations (Psalm 18:7,

42) (Sweeney, 1991:66). Because they take the form of a protest and an appeal to God"s justice from a person who has been victimized, argues Andersen (2001:21), Habakkuk"s prayers are more of complaints than laments because the latter are more suited to prayer of misery appealing to God"s pity. Although this is the case, we can still hold that both elements are present in Habakkuk. These elements make the language of Habakkuk, which is poetic in style and nearer the psalms in structure, cult language used in liturgical sense.

The text affirms that Habakkuk was one of the Temple prophets also known as "cultic prophets" whose prophetic activities took place during worship at the Temple (see 2:1, 20). Szeles (1987:5) upholds that the prophet had received his calling through the instrumentality of the liturgy in public worship, which he had grasped as it applied to himself, as it was visually and audibly mediated to him. His love for psalms, as portrayed in the book, indicates that his duty was to compose psalms for public performance in the Jerusalem Temple (cf. 3:19). Gowan (1976:15) asserts that the prophet was strongly influenced by the language and ideas of those around him – singers, teachers and worshippers who were his audience – that his book is more like their work than it is of one person.

Brueggemann (2003:240) points out that in ancient Israel, events of great depth and large scope evoked poetic-prophet-imaginative generativity. From the beginnings of prophecy in Israel at least until the end of exile, poetry was the central medium of prophecy (Freedman, 1977:22). In Chapter Five, we noted that prophecy in Israel arose together with the monarchy. Prophets appeared on stage mainly in opposition to exploitive economic systems that were put in place when Israel turned to monarchy. Perhaps, this explains why poetry and prophecy go together in that they function as the vehicle of revelation. In the biblical tradition, says Freedman (1977:21), the two share so many of the same features and overlap to such an extent that one cannot be understood except in terms of the other; they are different aspects or categories of the same basic phenomenon, namely, the personal contact between God and man, and the verbal expression of it through the action of the Holy Spirit.

Kugel (1990:16) is of the opinion that all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed by God"s power. By this, he means to say that "God takes away the minds of the poets, and uses them as His ministers in order that we who hear them may know them to be speaking not of themselves

who utter these priceless words in a state of unconsciousness, but that God Himself is the speaker, and that through them He is conversing with us" (Kugel, 1990:16). It makes sense, therefore, argues Alter (1985:141), that divine speech should be represented as poetry since poetry is our best human model of intricately rich communication, not only solemn, weighty and forceful but also densely woven with complex internal connections, meanings and implications.[74] With this in mind, although it does not fit Hab 1:2-4 and 12-17, we can conclusively say that on numerous occasions, it is not the prophet who is speaking but God who is speaking through the prophet.

It is believed that from time immemorial the language of heaven and of heroes has been poetic in form (Freedman, 1977:15). This proposes that poetry in ancient Israel was the language spoken in royal courts, and thus meant for kings. Although there is no evidence provided for this assertion, I will argue that this is a unique contribution from Habakkuk. This helps us to understand why ancient Israelite prophets employed poetry in the process of conveying God‟s message; they used poetry as a language fitting for addressing kings and powers. Considering that prophecy arose when Israel turned to monarchy, poetry would be the most appropriate language that appeals to the kings and powers. Poetry allows different audiences to hear different things. Scott‟s (1990:183-4) analysis on the language of „infrapolitics‟ helps us to understand why poetry appeals to kings and powers. He observes that every subordinate group creates, out of its ordeal, a "hidden transcript" that represents a critique of power spoken behind the back of the dominant (Scott, 1990:xii). The powerful, for their part, also develop a hidden transcript representing the practices and claims of their rule that cannot be openly avowed (Scott, 1990:xii). Thus, the hidden transcript is occasionally openly declared in the face of power.

Scott (1990:19) points out that analysis of infrapolitics offers a way of addressing the issue of hegemonic incorporation. He goes on to say that infrapolitics involves cultural struggle and political expression of subordinate groups who have ample reason to fear venturing their unguarded opinion. The infrapolitics of subordinate groups designate a wide variety of low-profile forms of resistance that dare not speak in their own name (Scott, 1990:19). Based on this understanding, poetry will be an expression of hidden transcript in the public realm.

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[74] It needs to be pointed out here that Kugel does not see biblical poetry as "poetry" (a literary composition) precisely because it is inspired Scripture. Alter, by contrast, sees biblical poetry as a literary composition.

Here, we imagine the power of poetry. We note with interest that it is not an accident that most prophecy is poetry. Brueggemann (1989:4) argues that what a prophet has to say, can never be said in prose. Habakkuk is a prophet who when he wants to communicate certain things about politics and economy, he uses poetry. So, what is it about poetry that is significant in bringing about change and transformation in Habakkuk?

6.6.1 Rhetorical Dimensions of Poetry

Based on W. H. Auden"s and William Butler Yeats" arguments, Tod Linafelt (2008:497) claims that poetry makes nothing happen; it is rhetoric that makes something happen. His claims are grounded on the understanding that we argue with others through rhetoric, but of with ourselves through poetry. In this sense, poetry is oriented inward suggesting an argument with ourselves, while rhetoric is oriented outward suggesting a noisy argument with others (Linafelt, 2008:497). Gray (2006:4) defines rhetoric as the means by which a text establishes and manages its relationship to its audience in order to achieve a particular effect. And because rhetoric is oriented outward, it imagines an audience where the feeling is that of pouring oneself out to other minds, courting their sympathy, or endeavouring to influence their belief or move them to passion or action (Linafelt, 2008:498).

Huckin, Andrus, and Clary-Lemon (2012:109) point out that rhetoric has always been concerned with the power of spoken and written discourse, in particular the ways in which language can be used to persuade audiences about important public issues. That is why rhetoric is verbalized in such a way that it is meant to convince, persuade and inspire action in listeners (Linafelt, 2008:497). This line of thought may seem to disapprove the main argument in this chapter that classifies poetry as a persuasive and transformative language; but as a matter of fact, it reinforces this stance by stressing the existing relationship between poetry and rhetoric. The collaboration should be understood in such a way that rhetoric becomes the persuasive and transformative force behind poetry. The power of poetry, therefore, rests on the poet"s use of rhetorical dimensions of language, which in this case I consider to be the crucial element of poetry that persuades and transforms societies.

6.7 Conclusion

The genre analysis of the work of Habakkuk has shown that the prophet really wrestled with socio-political problems that were caused by oppressive systems. There is strong agreement

between this literary work on the text and the behind the text kind of economic work covered in Chapter Five in that both works testify that at the helm of Habakkuk"s complaints is the tributary mode of production. The use of poetry with rhetorical dimensions signifies that Habakkuk was really addressing authorities who were the causers of the chaotic situation in Judah. The significance of Habakkuk lies not just in his religious and social message, but also in his condemnation of the greed and cruelty of imperialism and his creation of a spiritual alternative (Aberbach, 1993:14). Habakkuk spoke against all, in every generation, who conquer by unholy ambition, greed and covetousness, who build their kingdom by violence, cruelty and bloodshed, taking advantage of the weak (Habakkuk 2:6-20).

Here, we have the relevance of Habakkuk for Malawi today. The literary study of the book has revealed that there are resources in Habakkuk that the church of present day Malawi can utilize if it was going to engage the state on current economic issues. In my view, the change of 1992-94 meant that political issues were dealt with; what remains are economic issues. Malawi finds herself in another crisis moment where economies of extraction pose as the most crucial challenge to the country. This study has helped us to see how literary dimensions of the biblical text are connected to the socio-political and economic world. The study offers techniques, not only on what to say in socio-economic and political terms, but also on how the church can convey such a message. The whole purpose for using such techniques is to disarm the listener by persuading him or her to accept the Bible"s world view.

CHAPTER SEVEN

**THE TEXT OF HABAKKUK IN CONVERSATION WITH MALAWIAN SOCIO-
ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONTEXT**

7.0 Introduction

This chapter is the acme of this thesis. It is the appropriation phase in the tri-polar model that
brings together all analytical work done in chapters three to six. It needs to be mentioned here
that part of what the tri-polar model does is to set up a dialogue. Therefore, in doing Chapter
Seven, we are overtly coming back to tri-polar theory where a two way dimensional dialogue
between the socio-historical world of Habakkuk and that of Malawi is established. The
chapter will also bring the dialogue to an end. As pointed out in Chapter Two, the dialogue
will be enabled through a combination of liberation and postcolonial ideo-theological
theoretical resources that belong to the broader context of biblical interpretation in theology
of liberation. Because all forms of liberation hermeneutics are dialogical (West, 2014:2),
Chapter Seven will outline three key areas necessary to facilitate this dialogue.

The first key area to be considered will include drawing similarities and differences between
political and economic oppression in Habakkuk and various kinds of oppression Malawians
have faced and continue to face owing to economies of extraction. The biblical world and our
world are not the same. However, just as there are similarities, there are differences. The
second area involves reflecting on what is contained in the book of Habakkuk that contributes
to a better understanding of Malawi situation. The third area will focus on how the Malawian
context sheds light on the text and context of Habakkuk. We begin the dialogue by mapping
out rhetorical continuities between Habakkuk and Malawi. It is a good place to begin because
it picks up from where we left in Chapter Six and therefore serves as a perfect introduction to
the whole dialogue.

7.1 Rhetorical Continuities between Habakkuk and Malawi

Peter M. Phillips, who is quoted by Ernst Wendland (2012:140), understands rhetoric as
strategic communication that attempts to mould another person‟s view of the world in which
he or she lives; it invites its audience to reconsider their existing world view in the light of the
world view promoted through strategic communication of one kind or another.‟ In this way,

he sees biblical rhetoric as, first and foremost, the art of persuading individuals and communities to accept the Bible's world view (Wendland, 2012:140). This line of thought assists us to see what Habakkuk is doing with his poetry. Here, we are not concerned about what he said – using poetry as a language. Rather, we are concerned with how he said it – using rhetorical dimension, which is of acute importance. It also helps us to understand why we are treating poetry of Habakkuk alongside the Malawian 1992 pastoral letters; the two letters serve as frameworks that help us see what Habakkuk is doing with his poetry.

The two letters were issued following a long period of dictatorship under Banda, whose rule was characterized by fear, economic exploitation and social injustice. Nobody dared to oppose Banda; anyone who challenged his power was beaten, imprisoned, exiled or killed. Malawi of his time saw a few people, particularly those of Malawi Congress Party elite, enriching themselves while the majority of Malawians were living in dire poverty. Kenneth Ross (1996d:38) is right to describe Malawi of Banda's time (1964-1992) as a land where silence ruled. This long silence was wrecked in 1992 when the Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter "Living Our Faith" which was read on 8th March 1992 in all Roman Catholic churches in Malawi. The CCAP leadership alongside their international partners, in solidarity with the bishops, presented an open letter to Banda entitled "The Nation of Malawi in Crisis: the Church's Concerns" (Thompson, 2005:585; see also Ross, 1996:41).

In Chapter Four, we pointed out that although the two letters were couched in measured and respectful language, these documents were a strong condemnation of the political situation in Malawi, and set off a train of events that eventually led to the downfall of Banda who had ruled the country as a one-party state for most of his thirty years in power (Thompson, 2005:575).[75] Their language was rooted in the teaching of the Bible, especially of Jesus Christ, and the Catholic and Protestant Churches' traditions. Relying on the New Testament images of Christians as inherently free, the authors of these letters ultimately contributed to the development of representative democracy (Mitchell, 2002:5). Both Catholic and Presbyterian leadership employed liberation theology that legitimized itself through the New Testament, with Christ the revolutionary as a central pillar of support (Mitchell, 2002:7). Thus, the Bible was used as a basis for their challenge to the Banda regime.

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[75] These included events such as the 1993 referendum where Malawians voted for multiparty democracy against one-party rule; and the first democratic elections of 1994 where Banda was defeated.

One of the major areas of resonance in this project is that Malawi has a history – documented in the pastoral letters – of the Bible being invoked or being used as a way of engaging with the state. The letters may not be poetry, but they have rhetorical dimensions. Wendland (2012:140) defines rhetoric as "the art of argumentation or persuasion" or "the art of persuasive communication." In these letters, we have a history of the church engaging with the state using biblical and theological resources; a history of the church engaging with the state in a way that confronts secular issues of economy and politics. The two letters are used here as part of Malawian church heritage because they were not written for the sake of theological and biblical argument; they contributed to the 1992-94 political change that saw Malawi switching from one party rule to a multiparty system of government.

Looking at the impact of these letters, we can irrefutably say that the authors of these letters used a language that can be termed as having persuasive and transformative force. We can as well say that rhetorical dimensions reinforced the language of these letters so that they were able to effect the Malawi‟s 1992-94 political change. Here, we note that the letter genre has its own „intrinsic‟ rhetoric. That the Catholic bishops and the CCAP leadership chose to write letters rather than to issue a statement or issue a press conference is a deliberate choice of genre and its associated rhetoric. Similarly, Habakkuk does not integrate rhetoric into his poetry; rather he chooses poetry because of the rhetoric possible within the poetic form. Thus, his persuasive argument was strengthened by rhetoric associated with his poetry. That poetic genre „carries‟ particular rhetorical potential is a key point in this analysis. We notice that in both Malawi and Habakkuk, which is also one of the key resonances in this study, prophetic voices choose particular genres for their potential rhetorical effects.

In both Malawi and Habakkuk forms of discourse appropriate to speaking (in)directly to power were chosen, namely the letter genre and the poetic genre. The church and Habakkuk understood that in speaking to power, if you stand and speak normally, you are probably not going to be heard or you are going to be killed. Whereas when you speak through the letter or poetry you create a different kind of space and possibility rhetorically. It is precisely because speaking truth to power is difficult that the church chose the letter form and Habakkuk chose poetry. In practice, rhetoric entails the use of a definite and clearly definable artistic strategy that aims through conventional but skilfully employed means of argumentation to modify

(that is, to reinforce, or change) the cognitive, emotive, and/or volitional stance of intended audience (Wendland, 2012:141). In this way, rhetoric is able to persuade and transform societies so that they conform to the intended purpose. In this study, the two letters should be understood as contributing theological categories to the dialogue between Habakkuk and Malawi.

7.2 Reading Habakkuk from Malawi Socioeconomic and Political Viewpoint

Occasionally, someone "discovers" Habakkuk. The book was composed in such a way that it addresses issues that are common to humanity. When one takes a serious study of this book, s/he is struck by the reality of the fact that it is easy to make a logical connection between one‟s own circumstances with those of Habakkuk. Actually, the message of Habakkuk speaks of real life struggles and problems, which helps us to see its relevance to Malawi situation. Severino Croatto (1995:219) says the reading of the Bible, like the reading of any text, is always carried out from a particular location. He points out that the social practices of the exegete condition his or her reading of the biblical text. Thus, a good or sound hermeneutic reading of the Bible consists of an exegesis that is done from within the situation of the interpreter (Croatto, 1995:219).

In the present study, Habakkuk is read from the context of the poor and oppressed of Malawi. Investigations into the socioeconomic and political locations of Malawi and Habakkuk in chapters three to six of this thesis helped us to understand some of the social problems the poor and marginalized face. It is clear from these analyses that this study deals with two contexts that are socially, politically and economically shaped by the evils of imperialism. Through socio-historical and literary analysis of Habakkuk in chapters five and six, we came to grips with circumstances that led Habakkuk to raise his complaints to God. The analysis of Habakkuk contributed to our understanding of how imperialism works. It also introduced us to economies of extraction, which are the key aspect and the main focus of this thesis. The anguish of Habakkuk was caused by internal and external imperial dynamics that were determined by wicked actions of the elite in Judah (King Jehoiakim and his court officials) in collaboration with their foreign oppressors (Assyria and Babylon).

Similarly, analysis on the social, economic and political life of Malawi in chapters three and four revealed that the main cause of Malawi‟s social problems is economies of extraction.

The meaning of economies of extraction is best elaborated in what Gifford (1998:6) calls "the politics of the belly." Economies of extraction found their way into Malawian society through wicked actions of powerful people from both local and foreign. The local political leaders are the internal oppressor while powerful western countries and financial institutions such as World Bank and International Monetary Fund are the external oppressor. Through imposition of economic and political policies on Malawi, the external oppressor has managed to cripple Malawi"s economic growth. Equally, the two oppressors work simultaneously as dimensions of socio-economic exploitation of the poor in Malawi.

In view of this, economies of extraction are a useful link between economic and political dimensions of Habakkuk and Malawi. The feeling of being caught in the imperial net of economies of extraction opens perspectives for interaction with the text from the Judean and Malawian contexts. We noted in both contexts that through economies of extraction, the powerful, in pursuit of their economic viabilities, became causative agents of many socio-political problems that mostly affected the poor. Both internal and external oppressors have inclinations of coming into a context not to serve the people but to extract resources meant for the poor. It is clear from these analyses that the poor in Habakkuk and Malawi are victims of internal and external imperial dynamics that have caused a lot of suffering among the poor majority.

7.3 The Bible and the Context of the Poor and Marginalized

Taking into account of what has been established so far, the task of reading Habakkuk from Malawi socioeconomic and political viewpoint requires commitment to a particular context that this study has coined as the context of the poor and marginalized. The mission of the church, which is also the heart of liberation theology, should be understood as one that identifies itself with the poor, one that joins them in their struggle for peace and freedom, justice and dignity. Worth of note is Dorothee Soelle"s definition of liberation theology done in Third World countries that describes it as living faith. She writes:

> This faith is not predominantly perceived as comfort in common and often miserable lives, but as a way to live, to hope, and to act. It entails a revolution in the hearts of women and men, something like Jesus" saying to the one who has been lame for many years: "Rise, take up your bed, and walk!" (Mark 2:9). Christ is not just a comforter but a changer of our life. As it happened with Jesus" first disciples, who were poor and little-educated people – most of them women – so also today communities of faith grow at the grass roots level. There a new way of

> living together is arising, a new way of sharing, of organizing, of celebrating, and of struggling together (Soelle, 1991:92)

This kind of faith requires that the church immerse itself in the world and become the voice that speaks for the poor. It calls for the church to be incarnated in those who fight for freedom and defend them and share in their persecution. In line with the biblical witness, focus on the poor and oppressed is not optional pursuits we simply choose to engage in or not. It is an absolute must because the poor and oppressed are the main concern of the gospel and of the kingdom of God. Reading through Scriptures it becomes clear that God has always had a particular concern for the poor, the forgotten and the vulnerable (Deut 10:18; 15:11).

Gottwald (1991:27) claims that the voice of the poor and needy sounds throughout the Bible more persistently than in any other classical literature. In His inaugural speech at the start of His ministry, Jesus in Luke 4:18-21 stated that the main concern or priorities of His mission were setting the people free, healing and justice, emphasizing emancipation of the poor and oppressed from all infirmities. Jesus cited Isaiah 61:1-2 where Isaiah pictures the deliverance of Israel from exile in Babylon as the "Year of Jubilee" when all debts are cancelled, all slaves are freed and all property is returned to original owners. The Year of Jubilee (the Fiftieth Year) is well described in Leviticus 25. It is one of the three interconnected forms of resting that talk about God"s economy (Soelle, 1991:88). The Seventh Day (the Sabbath) and the Seventh Year (the Sabbath of the land) are the other forms of resting. Soelle (1991:88) says rather than stressing on „production," „profit," or in modern times „capital," God"s economy emphasizes on labor, on those who work.

As stated by Abraham Heschel (1955:417), the Sabbath is a reminder of every human being"s royalty; an abolition of the distinction of master and slave, rich and poor, success and failure. Therefore, for him, to celebrate the Sabbath is to experience one"s ultimate independence of civilization and society, of achievement and anxiety. In this sense, the Sabbath is an embodiment of the belief that all human beings are equal and that equality of men means dignity of men (Heschel, 1955:417). In this way, the main purpose of the "Year of Jubilee" was the balancing of economic system that expressed God"s special preference for the poor. Jesus applied this beautiful and difficult truth to His own mission. This truth is so often misunderstood by those in power. Because the message of liberation is rooted in faith in Jesus

Christ, it has always remained the disturbing truth, particularly to the powerful. For this reason, political leaders have never embraced such a message.

Of course, the text says Jesus" listeners could not believe in Him because they saw Him as the son of Mary and Joseph, the Boy they watched grow up in their own city. But reading behind the text, one could see that political elites were behind this rejection. Certainly, those political leaders chose not to listen because they wanted to keep the poor in poverty as the machine for making themselves rich. This affirms that the poor"s condition is not their own fault as many are made to believe (Soelle, 1991:94). The poor are poor because the rich are wealthy (West, 2011:516). Through political and economic strategies, those deemed to be powerful make the world so hard for the poor to facilitate their aim of keeping them in poverty. Soelle (1991:95) says that economic order of the covenant that God had made with Israel and that takes its real social shape in the Sabbath has its foundation in the equality of the use and distribution of goods.

Soelle says the Sabbath"s clearest expression was found in the story of manna with which God feeds the Israelites in the wilderness. Citing Exodus 16:17-18, Soelle writes:

> God takes care of the people with food, the bread from heaven. "And the people of Israel did so; they gathered, some more, some less. But when they measured it with an omer, [the one] that gathered much had nothing over, and [the one] that gathered little had no lack; each gathered according to what [they] could eat" (Soelle, 1991:95).

She goes on to say that in God"s community, the people have equal access to food according to their needs. Soelle (1991:95) points out that real misery in such a need-oriented economy could only arise when this equal and just distribution of the common goods collapsed due to natural catastrophes, or in individual accidents such as illness or death. In any case, however, responsibility for the care of the poor was with the privileged and not with the propertyless themselves (Soelle, 1991:95). Thus, the poor, the ones in need, the widows and the orphans, had a right to be cared for by the community. It is not surprising that when Jesus spoke His Sermon on the Mount, He first blesses the poor (Matt 5:3), suggesting that if our societies are to be about God"s business, the poor must be the focus of our mission.

7.4 Similarities and Differences between Habakkukan and Malawian Contexts

7.4.1 The Complex Interplay of Internal and External Imperial Dynamics

A discussion in Chapter Five on economic systems used in Habakkuk‟s time, especially on the household or communitarian mode of production, helps us to understand the kind of life God planned for His people. I will argue that the community life the Israelites practiced when they first settled in Canaan was the kind of life God intended for His people. The household mode of production was in use at that particular time. The whole enchilada was running efficiently in these settlements up until Israel turned to monarchy and the tributary mode of production was introduced. Gottwald (1991:16) says the communitarian spirit and practice of the people did not disappear overnight, but now it was dominated and threatened by Israelite state power. He says:

> What this means is that within about two centuries the Israelite tribes had gone full circle. Arising in opposition to a foreign tributary mode of production – or one that became "foreign" to them as they withdrew from it – they now returned to a native tributary mode of production (Gottwald, 1991:16).

In view of this, as Gottwald (1991:16) puts it, one could say that the Israelite tribes were now able to be ruled and oppressed by Israelite kings, merchants and landlords instead of by non-Israelites. Undoubtedly, many Israelites found no consolation in the fact that they were now oppressed by fellow Israelites instead of outsiders; many considered it to be an affront to and violation of their history and constitution as a communitarian people (Gottwald, 1991:16). It followed, then, that people began to face many socioeconomic and political problems when the monarchy introduced exploitive economic mechanisms that were forced on the people.

7.4.1.1 Economic Pursuit: The Backbone of All Violence

7.4.1.1.1 Economic and Political Developments behind Habakkuk's Circumstances

Description of geo-political context of the ANE and socio-historical location of Habakkuk in Chapter Five facilitated our understanding of the problems in question. It defined economic and political developments of the ANE, which provide insights into the wider and immediate context of Habakkuk. The account describes the situation behind Habakkuk‟s circumstances. In that analysis, it was mentioned that the Fertile Crescent, which is the economic base for the ANE, is the larger context of Habakkuk. The economic viability of the ANE that depended on agriculture in the fertile lands along the great rivers of Euphrates, Tigris and Nile, induced the people to abandon their isolated villages and inhabit these fertile lands. This was the

beginning of living in large communities that later developed into chiefdoms, cities, states and empires. Conversely, politics in the full sense of the word began to revolve around when the ruling class started controlling these fertile plains. Such political inferences contributed to the growth of empires, culminating in the power struggles over the fertile lands. In this way, the Fertile Crescent became the crucial zone for economic and political developments in the ANE (Gottwald, 2009:23).

The Land of Palestine is considered the immediate context of Habakkuk because most of the events of the Bible took place in this small area. In Chapter Five, we made mention that even though Palestine is a small and relatively poor country, its main geopolitical influence lies in its role as passageway between Egypt and the lands of the Fertile Crescent (Aharoni, 1979:5). Its centrality provides a unique link between the two continents of Asia and Africa in both economic and political terms. That said, the history of Palestine is marred by myriad bloody conflicts of empires fighting over control of trade routes and this strategically located little stretch of land (Van De Mieroop, 2007:163). This, therefore, proposes that Israel and Judah were inevitably involved in the power struggles between superpowers of the region (Miller & Hayes, 1986:33). Imperial actions of these giants caused a lot of problems among subjugated nations.

In Chapter Five, there is a section describing how empires managed to dominate the region. It also locates Habakkuk in his proper context by identifying the prophecy with a particular age of empires. The situation and message of Habakkuk are in tune with imperial actions under Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians in the second phase of the age of empires (900-300 BCE) that differed substantially from the first (3100-900 BCE).[76] Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians introduced imperial models in the level of structural transformation, ideological expression and their long-lasting imperial success (Beaulieu, 2007:49). In order to secure greater control militarily and efficiency in economic terms, they used to turn many of their conquered lands into provinces headed by their officials (Gottwald, 2009:38). On top of maintaining peace in their provinces, these officials were also responsible for collecting tribute. Assyrians and Neo-Babylonians practiced deportation and used to relocate disobedient communities to other

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[76] For more information on the first and second phases of age of empires (3100-300 BCE) see under the sub topic "The Role of Empires in the Geo-politics of ANE" in Chapter Five.

places (Snell, 1997:79). These mechanisms persisted up to the time of Habakkuk and were circumstances that forced him to raise complaints to God.

7.4.1.1.2 Economic and Political Developments Leading to Malawi Situation

Similar developments were observed in Malawi. Economic history discussed in Chapter Three describes life in pre-colonial Malawi as one based on communitarian mode of production. We observed that before the Arabs and Swahilis came in search of ivory and later slave trade, and before whites came to settle, farm and rule, Malawians like most other African people lived a largely self-sufficient life (Phiri, 2004:245). The peace and tranquillity that carried the day permitted the people to do almost everything that made life comfortable in keeping with the standards of the day. A number of economic activities were taking place throughout Malawi, including: agriculture, animal husbandry, cotton production (cotton cloth making), smelting of iron, salt production, fishing and hunting. In general, Malawians were agrarians since the whole country relied on agriculture for daily living.

7.4.1.1.2.1 Extraction of Malawi's Natural Wealth

Because everyone was trying to do everything for himself, about everyone had something of his own, and did not need to exchange his products for those of others (Phiri, 2004:245). It was trade based on extraction of Malawi"s natural wealth that changed the existing social order. Through this trade, Malawians were exposed to the wider international economy, which on the other hand was the beginning of many socioeconomic problems for Malawi (McCracken, 2012:18 cf. Phiri, 2004:246). The Bisa people of Zambia, who acted as agents of the Arabs and Swahilis at Kilwa and Zanzibar, came to Malawi searching for ivory and rhino horns in exchange for calico and beads. We observed that later the Arabs and Swahilis started coming themselves to directly trade with Malawians. They were not only interested in ivory and rhino horns, but they also wanted slaves to carry the ivory (Phiri, 2004:246). Since chiefs were attracted to calicos, beads and guns, it was easy for them to exchange these items for human beings. Such economic pursuits were a threat to the existing social order.

Slavery itself was a different kind of extraction. It was literary taking something out of the economy completely and creating a gap. Suddenly, instead of the village having ten workers, they have five, which affected production in the community. The problem of slavery in pre-colonial context is a perfect example of how internal and external imperial dynamics works.

In all forms of extraction, two parties are involved. The Arabs and Swahilis are not the only ones to blame for the evils of slavery. The indigenous people participated in the slave trade. They even enabled it to some extent. We have just mentioned above that local chiefs found it easy to exchange human beings for calicos, beads and guns. This implies that there were men within the community that were helping chiefs capture their own people and selling them into slavery. The local people might also have played a part by canoeing slave caravans when they wanted to cross great rivers. So, they were caught in the system of extraction and benefitted from it.

7.4.1.1.2.2 Missionary Contribution before Colonial Rule

The coming of Scottish missionaries and the African Lakes Company in 1870s facilitated the erasure of slave trade in Malawi. They were inspired by David Livingstone‟s vision of taking Christianity, Commerce and Civilization to Africa. Through this vision, these missionaries managed to replace slave trade with legitimate trade and commercial agriculture where crops such as tea, coffee, cotton and many others were introduced as cash crops. Mission schools and hospitals were opened in their mission stations as part of the civilization package. Most importantly, Christianity remained the driving force for shaping Malawian life and culture (Ross, 1996a:13-14). Describing the influence of Christianity in the period before colonial rule was established in 1891, Tengatenga (2006:190) says Malawi was imagined as a church, that is, a settlement formed by Christians. Things went out of hand when the British colonial rule was established. There is a section in Chapter Three outlining circumstances surrounding the beginning of British rule in Malawi.

7.4.1.1.2.3 Exploitive Economic Measures: From Johnston to Independent Malawi

However, it needs pointed out here that establishment of British government in 1891 was the beginning of seventy three difficult years for Malawians. Attached to this development were economic implications. We learned in Chapter Three that Harry Johnston was given authority by the Foreign Office to administer the Protectorate but without adequate financial support (Phiri, 2004:214). To sustain his government, he had to raise extra money through exploitive economic measures that were another form of enslavement on Africans. Johnston went about provoking fights with chiefs so that he could subdue them to accept his authority and compel them to pay taxes or to work for government and white farmers (Phiri, 2004:214). In addition, he levied hut tax at six shilling a hut on conquered chiefs and instructed them to pay either in

foodstuffs or else in labour for the government (McCracken, 2012:61). Any resistance to this arrangement attracted severe punishments that included burning of their villages and grain stores.

Malawians continued to face socioeconomic and political problems throughout the seventy three years of British rule. Chapters three and four have help us to understand some of these problems. It is worth noting that most of Malawi"s problems stem from exploitive economic pursuits of the powerful. In Chapter Three, we observed that Malawi continued to face many social, economic and political problems even after gaining independence in 1964. The socio-historical analysis of Malawi has revealed that the country has remained a target of economic exploitation since its pre-colonial history. We have already pointed out that before foreigners started coming, pre-colonial Malawi was a series of village economies.[77] It was trade with the Bisa, Arab and Swahili peoples based on extraction of Malawi"s natural wealth that changed the whole scenario. Then again, what emerges in Malawi with the coming of colonialism, which is perpetuated through neo-colonialism, is that extraction then becomes a focus of economy in a way that was not in pre-colonial times.

This proposes that economies of extraction were present in pre-colonial time, but it was never the focus of economy. Extraction now becomes systemic. For instance, debt becomes a mechanism of the state. So, debt is not an accident of lending money, the state creates debt deliberately in order to control its people. That is the logic behind debt and the whole world operates like that today. This, as Sugirtharajah (2012:17) puts it, confirms that the nature of colonialism has changed; the old territorial colonialism has given way to new forms under the heading of neo-colonialism. Part of what neo-capitalism does is to create dependence control where powerful nations like USA and Britain, alongside financial institutions such as World Bank and IMF, control poor countries in Africa because we owe them money. Comaroff and Comaroff (1997:16) agree, they say colonialism, in its modern guise, has to do, above all, with the extension of political, economic, social and other forms of control by metropolitan European powers over so-called "Third World" peoples.

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[77] Discussion on the village commune versus the city-state in by Boer's (2007) article, sheds more light on these economies.

We observe that through structural adjustment programs they have managed to let African countries dance to their tune to the effect that some of the programs they finance do not really address African problems. Instead, they are the ones who benefit more from such programs than African countries. In this way, these modern empires build their worlds through the violence of extraction, exploitation of the indigenous peoples, brute force, and imposition of sovereign authority (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997:16). The other problem is that even though African countries gained their independence, African leaders did not transform economies of extraction. And so, West (2011:514) is right to claim that some become rich because others become poor. Succinctly put, economic injustice is the root cause of many socio-political problems in Malawi. From it stems all the violence. This was also the case in Habakkuk"s context and of course in the world.

7.4.2 The Rise of Prophetic Voices

It is interesting to note that in both Habakkuk and Malawi, prophetic voices arose particularly in opposition to exploitive economic systems. Before exploitive economic mechanisms were introduced, we noticed that both contexts enjoyed the communitarian mode of life. Problems only started when new mechanisms were introduced. These new economic mechanisms crept into Israelite society when the people opted to have their own kings. In the case of Malawi, it was the establishment of British rule that brought with it exploitive economic mechanisms. In both contexts, these mechanisms attracted opposition from Israelite prophets and the church, respectively.

7.4.2.1 Prophetic Voices in Israel

In Chapter Five, we pointed out that it was the turn to monarchy that sets the stage for Israel"s prophets to appear, suggesting that prophecy in Israel arose together with the monarchy (Gottwald, 1991:16). This denotes that prophecy was not only a form of discourse addressed to the outside empire, but also to the internal political powers. Thomas (1991:6-7) bluntly asserts that prophets in ancient Israel arose mainly in opposition to the TMoP, which was the dominant economic system during the monarchy. As already pointed out, before the monarchy, Israelites were inhabitants of small villages where communitarian life was effective. Introduction of TMoP made Israel to move from a political economy in which wealth was the product of diligent work and therefore a blessing from God, to a political economy in which wealth is the product of the oppression of the poor (West, 2011:532).

Undoubtedly, Habakkuk as one of these prophets wrestled with the same socio-political problems that resulted from oppressive systems. It is clear from the text that at the helm of Habakkuk‟s complaints is the TMoP.

7.4.2.2 Prophetic Voices in Malawi

The rising of prophecy in Israel resonates perfectly well with the beginning of prophetic role of the church in Malawi. We pointed out in Chapter Four that establishment of British rule in 1891 was a defining moment in the history of Malawi. At that time, the British, through Harry Johnston‟s cruel administration, laid down political and economic strategies that had enduring effects on the social life of Malawi. These expedients included subduing chiefs and forcing them to pay taxes or to work for government or in farms owned by whites. In Chapter Three, we saw how Johnston‟s cruelty terrorized African communities. It was a sudden turn of tables because by this time Africans were beginning to enjoy the peace that the missionaries had built with the chiefs. The coming of Johnston destroyed that peace and Africans became vulnerable to injustices perpetrated by colonial government. Under such circumstances poor Africans could not say or do anything because they were silenced by Johnston‟s army.

These drastic changes forced the church, particularly Scottish missionaries, to take up a new role of being the voice of the voiceless that had strong political and prophetic inferences. The missionaries felt that it was the responsibility of the church to speak for the ordinary people in villages against unjust policies carried by British government. They had been critical of the government on issues to do with land, labour, taxation, military actions against local chiefs and on those which they judged to be harmful to the interests of the African population (Ross, 1998:77). Here, we particularly mention Johnston‟s land policy, which was the source of people‟s anger and social tension throughout colonial history, even later (Ross, 2009:18). We have already seen that Johnston‟s campaigns against chiefs led him to take their land and held it to be leasable by him to planters and others (Ross, 1996a:122). Thus, most of the traditional fertile lands that first belonged to the native people were taken by Johnston‟s government.

Attached to Johnston‟s land policy was imposition of hut tax to defeated chiefs at six shilling per hut. Those who were unable to pay were forced to work for government or in white owned farms. *Thangata* system, which simply means forced labour, was introduced as a form

of tax payment. Similar mechanisms were evident in the ANE that involved peasants having "use ownership" of land while the state claimed entitlement to tax the villages first in the form of payment in kind or in the form of conscription of labour for public works or army service (Gottwald, 1991:13). The missionaries, particularly D. C. Scott who demonstrated a concern for human justice in the face of state oppression, protested against these policies (McCracken, 2002:179). The church had opted to be the voice that spoke for the poor by identifying with them and joining them in their struggles. In essence, the missionaries had taken the course that made them appear as the opposition party to the colonial government (Ross, 1998:77-8).

We observe that because of this, throughout seventy three years of colonial rule, the church was always at loggerheads with British administration. This new role placed the church at par with Old Testament prophets like Habakkuk. We need to be reminded that Yahweh is always in the business of sending His spokespersons to address specific situations in the life of His people. Although the Latter Prophets share the unifying theme "Death and Resurrection of Israel," as Gowan (1998b:9) has put it, it is clear from their individual messages that each one of them addresses a particular event in Israel. As pointed out by McCracken (2002:179), the church in Malawi shares the same understanding. The church‟s involvement in political scope was frequently justified by an idealized account of the circumstances in which Malawi found herself in. Thus, the message of the church was conditioned by unfolding events within the context of Malawi.

7.4.2.3 "Violence" to the Poor: The Chief Reason for the Rise of Prophetic Voices
It needs to be highlighted that prophetic voices in both Israel and Malawi arose mainly in opposition to exploitive economic pursuits that are carried by the powerful. As has already been pointed out, economic injustice is the root cause of many problems in the world; from it stems all the violence. Interestingly, the literary analysis of Habakkuk‟s first lament (1:2-4) in Chapter Six revealed that his fundamental cry and complaint before God is expressed in the one word, "violence" (Prior, 1998:209). Succinctly put, "violence" is a situation of crisis in which Habakkuk calls for help (Armerding, 2008:611). Armerding (2008:611) says the word denotes flagrant violation of moral law by which a person injures primarily a fellow human (cf. Gen 6:11); its underlying meaning is one of ethical wrong, of which physical brutality is only one possible expression (cf. Jdg 9:24). The blending of horror words piled up in this

lament indicate that violence to and unjust oppression of the weaker members of the community had escalated in Judah of Habakkuk‟s time (Prior, 1998:210).

The state of affairs was that the righteous were powerless before the heavy presence of the wicked, who were in power and controlled everything. The essential evil of the situation is summed up in the phrase, "The wicked surround the righteous" (1:4), which inevitably points to the oppression of the righteous people by those in power (Prior, 1998:210). This helps us to understand the situation of poor Malawians at the time Britain was establishing its rule in Malawi. It should be noted that it was this oppression of the poor or the weaker members of the community by the wicked or the powerful which is the basic cause of the breakdown of order and the chief reason for the rise of prophetic voices in both Habakkuk and Malawi. In both contexts, the church and the prophets were antagonists to economic systems that were the root cause of oppression of the poor. Writing from South African perspective which sheds more light on what it means to be prophetic, Wesley Mabuza (2001:107) says when prophetic contextual theology came into being its intention was to challenge the oppressive powers of the day with the view to bringing about a democratic government not for its sake, but for the sake of freedom and justice for the oppressed.

7.4.3 Evidence of Tensions between Peasants and Elites
One of the parallels between socio-historical context of Habakkuk and Malawi is that both contexts contain forms of resistance against imperial economic systems. The discussion in Chapter Five on state formation in the ANE alluded to tensions that existed between temple-city complex and village commune. Gottwald (1991:17) states that the state and the agrarian populace coexisted in uneasy tension that sometimes broke into open conflict. Mostly these tensions occurred when the temple-city complex, representing the despotic state, wanted to extract surpluses from village commune members, who were the main producers of essential commodities. The tensions were strongly linked to economies of extraction and allocation, which are part of every society. In the rural economy or African traditional society, as it was in the ANE, there is strong emphasis on allocation because it is believed that crops, children and all good things are provided by God and ancestors (Boer, 2007:40). In such an economy, land belongs to people, comes from God and ancestors; on the other hand, the deity is not only responsible for fertility of the soil but also of the animals and human beings (Boer, 2007:40).

It should be pointed out that forms of extraction were also found in village commune where villagers would offer tribute to their king. The only thing was that, in the village commune, allocation and extraction were kind of balanced. The king knew that if he extracts too much, the people will starve and they will not work and then the whole system comes out of balance. What happens though in the TMoP is that the balances of allocation and extraction become distorted. The emergence of city-state or what West (2011) calls as temple economy, takes away what is bearable form of extraction and replaces it with exploitive one. Once you merge into city-state or the temple-state, you have a class of people who do not care (Boer, 2007:36). Extraction becomes the emphasis because the city lifestyle relies on that extraction. In this way, allocative economies are powerful to the effect that any system that works against its beliefs creates tensions. In essence, these tensions were a clash between centralized economy and rural village based economy.

7.4.3.1 Resistance against Oppressive Economic Systems

According to Wittenberg (2007:x), tensions between the two economies are called "resistance or prophetic theology" because it is a theology not from above but from below; theology that is in opposition to all oppressive systems. Resistance theology is from below because it is initiated and carried by the people themselves upon realizing that they are being oppressed. In the Third World countries, this kind of theology is what is called "People"s Theology." The basic idea is that theology in the Third World must be determined by its relevance to the social problems of "the people," and must therefore arise out of the direct social involvement of Christians doing theology (Beyerhaus, 1988:7). In this section, we are going to look at two instances of tensions: one from the Old Testament – rebellion of the northern tribes of Israel (1 Kgs 12); the other from Malawi – the 1915 Chilembwe Rising. The two examples are an embodiment of peasants" resistance against the powers behind oppressive economic systems and they help us understand the meaning of resistance theology.

7.4.3.1.1 Resistance in the Old Testament: 1 Kings 12

Wittenberg (2007:x) says the most obvious part of Old Testament literature where one would expect to find resistance theology is prophetic literature. This does not mean that there are no forms of resistance in other sections of the Old Testament. In a master"s thesis, Carlos D. Castillo (2015:134) argues that Gen 47:13-26 belongs to the Old Testament tradition that

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rejected the centralized power and its oppressive economic mechanisms. He says the text was inserted in Gen 37-50 as a voice of resistance concerning economic exploitation and ideo-theological domination, resistance that finds an echo in other Old Testament stories. It is of interest to note that in his analysis, Castillo (2015:134) uses 1 Sam 8:11-18 and 1 Kgs 12:1-20 as examples that have close connections with Gen 47:13-26 in this project of resistance. He claims that 1 Sam 8:11-18 assists in demonstrating how Gen 47:13-26 belongs to a tradition that denounces the abuses of the monarchy and its tributary system; 1 Kgs 12:1-20 shows how such oppression encountered different movements of resistance.

In Chapter Five, we made mention that 1 Sam 8 is the birth narrative of the TMoP because it grapples at the narrative level with mechanisms by which the emerging political economy would operate (West, 2011:514). In this text, says West (2011:514), Samuel clearly states that "the king will take," outlining the socio-economic cost of a city-state that relies heavily on mechanisms of economic extraction. He says:

> There can be no city-state without mechanisms of economic extraction, Samuel says. So, the king will take some of the sons and daughters of the peasant farmers (vv. 11-13), he will take some of their land (v. 14), he will take some of their produce (v. 15), he will take some of their slaves and livestock (v. 16); in sum, says Samuel, "you shall be his slaves" (v. 17b) (West, 2011:515).

Hence, if 1 Sam 8 narrates the origin of the TMoP, 1 Kgs 12 confirms and exposes economic exploitation that Samuel delineated in the eighth chapter of his first book. Revolt of northern tribes after the death of Solomon is a perfect example of Old Testament stories that helps us understand the people's resistance against powers behind exploitive economic mechanisms. Before we go on, we need to know that this rebellion was not the first in the early Israelite monarchy under David and Solomon. Wittenberg (2007:101) states that there were two others before the revolt of northern tribes: the first under Absalom shook the reign of David (2 Sam 15); the second, rebellion of Sheba Ben Bichri challenged the very legitimacy of David's rule over the ten tribes of Israel (2 Sam 20).

Among the three, it is the rebellion of northern tribes of Israel led by Jeroboam that is directly linked to economics. Even the structure of 1 Kgs 12 demonstrates the dynamics of imposition of and resistance against economic exploitation (Castillo, 2015:155). The story begins in 12:1 by mentioning that Rehoboam was made king at Shechem, about 35 miles north of Jerusalem.

This raises suspicions because it would have been normal to anoint the new king in Jerusalem the capital city. Based on immediate developments surrounding this event, one might say Rehoboam saw trouble brewing with Jeroboam, whom we understand had fled to Egypt because Solomon wanted to kill him (see 11:40). The reasons why Solomon tried to kill him are not clear, but it may be possible that the king learnt about prophet Ahijah"s prophecy and was disturbed about it (see 1 Kings 11:26-40). It seems therefore that Rehoboam went north as a way of trying to maintain good relations with the northern tribes. This suggests that he chose Shechem for political reasons although, on the other hand, he might have chosen the place because it was an ancient location for making covenants (Jos 24:1).

The return of Jeroboam and the trust the leaders of Israel had in him (see 12:3) confirms that he was a threat to Rehoboam"s reign. Wittenberg (2007:102) says the assembly at Shechem of Jeroboam and the elders of Israel reflects the deep discontent with the rule of the house of David. It needs to be stressed that the assembled elders of the northern tribes were willing to remain loyal to Rehoboam on condition that he loosens the yoke of forced labour and heavy taxes that became oppressive during the reign of Solomon. Now, what is fascinating is that Rehoboam first goes to the elders and says what should we do? As keepers of the traditional institutions, the elders said listen to the people. He goes to younger men and they say make it even harsher. The elders understand the logic of the village; they know if they make it too hard, the whole system will crumble. In contrast, the younger men know that their life style in the city is dependent on extraction. This is why, to maintain the city life style, extraction is institutionalized and becomes an engine itself.

Wittenberg (2007:102) observes that when Rehoboam rejected their demands the spokesmen for the traditional institutions proclaimed their independence from the Davidic monarchy. In other words, he says the authority of popular democratic institutions clashed with autocracy of the monarchy. Here, Wittenberg is trying to help us see the power of traditional institutions that rests in the people. The elders of the northern tribes backed Jeroboam because they were tired of Davidic Empire that was slowly eroding ancient privileges of communitarian mode of life.[78] It is clear from the text that the success of the rebellion relied heavily on the support of

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[78] Although it was short-lived, Absalom's rebellion was successful because of such kind of support. The popular institutions abandoned David and backed Absalom because he promised them restoration of ancient privileges (see Wittenberg, 2007:107).

the popular institutions that had abandoned the monarchy. Therefore, forced labour and heavy taxes became main reasons behind the breakup of the Davidic Empire.[79] Interesting to note is the fact that in 1 Kgs 12, forced labour and heavy taxes are married together and presented as the yoke that Solomon imposed on his people.

7.4.3.1.2 Resistance against Oppressive Systems in Malawi: The 1915 Chilembwe Rising
Equally important to note is the marriage of forced labour and heavy taxes that form part of the grievances contributing to the rise of resistance voices against colonial rule in Malawi. It has already been mentioned that prophetic voices began to be heard immediately after the British established their colonial rule in Malawi. We also noticed that in 1912 the first native association was formed with the aim of making sure that voices of the indigenous people are heard. The 1915 Chilembwe Uprising is a good example that best illustrates tensions between the village commune economy and state economy in Malawi. The grievances leading to the Rising were closely linked to exploitive economic mechanisms that were laid down by the British government. In Chapter Four, we observed that Chilembwe was greatly grieved by the *thangata system*, which to him was another form of slavery. Linked to *thangata system* were taxes that were imposed on the people. The flowing together of forced labour and taxes were the main factors that contributed to the 1915 rising.

Chilembwe was also saddened to see most of the fertile land that traditionally belonged to the people being taken away. Such tribal land was alienated and offered for sale to white settlers. In Chapter Four, we saw that this affected Africans badly because once the land was taken, they were not allowed to do certain activities they used do. They were forbidden to: cut poles used in building huts and maize granaries; hunt for animals or honey in the bush they had gone hunting before; and they could not shift to virgin lands when the one on which they were dwelling had lost its fertility (Phiri, 2004:263). Forcing Africans to go and fight in the First World War was another factor that Chilembwe saw as injustice to poor Malawians. So, he staged a rising as a way of removing foreign domination in the country and giving his people freedom. We observe that colonial and imperial powers reacted to people's resistance by devising different counter-insurgency programs (Comaroff & Comaroff, 1997:28). These programs included the killing, imprisonment and deportation of all supporters of Chilembwe.

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[79] It needs to be mentioned here that Israel encountered forced labour at the beginning of its history in Egypt and then again in the early monarchy (Wittenberg, 2007:84).

Similar programs were evident in the ANE where the state stepped in when tensions arose between the village commune and the temple-city complex. That said, the grievances that Chilembwe raised and the subsequent uprising assists us to understand why the northern tribes of Israel rebelled against Rehoboam.

7.5 Habakkuk's Contribution to Understanding Malawian Context
7.5.1 Habakkuk Helping Understand the Role of the Wicked in Malawi

An exploration of the wicked in Habakkuk in Chapter Five contributed to our understanding of the role local politicians and external oppressors play in creating socio-economic and political problems in Malawi. Although we are dealing with two different contexts, an ancient biblical context of Judah and a modern context of Malawi, investigations into the role of the wicked in Habakkuk serve as a model for understanding the Malawi situation. To get to grips with the actions of the wicked in Habakkuk, we first had to have knowledge of economic systems that were in use during Habakkuk"s time. Boer (2007:34) has made it clear that one way of making sense a history of any nation is to study economics of that particular country. Hence, in the case of Habakkuk, we looked at "communitarian" and "tributary" modes of production, which are believed to be economic systems undergirding biblical societies (West, 2011:513). We made mention that communitarian mode of production was in use when the Israelites first arrived in Canaan; while TMoP was adopted when Israel tuned to monarchy.

We have already seen that although household mode of production did not prevail once Israel became a monarchic state, the communitarian spirit and practice did not disappear overnight (Gottwald, 1991:16). Gottwald (1991:25) maintains that the original impulse of Israel was to create a communitarian society that empowered the poor and denied to anyone the right to lord it over others. He claims this impulse was sharply challenged and frustrated by Israel"s own resort to monarchy and also by her experience of exile and dispersion among the tributary world empires. West (2011:515) observes that with the turn to monarchy and the use of TMoP, within ancient Israel there was an emerging recognition of two types of wealth: non-systemic wealth, where a farmer steadily increased his possessions through diligence and hard work; and what Proverbs 20:21 refers to as "hastily gotten" gains, through systemic means, such as money-lending and dubious mercantile transactions. During this long retreat from communitarian social practice, the prophets of Israel and Jesus Himself upheld the neglected and violated communitarian norms and practices (Gottwald, 1991:25).

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West (2011:512) has argued that the TMoP has endured from ancient times to modern times. To this end, Gottwald (1983:26) referred to Marx who indicated that when British capitalism penetrated China and India, it found intact a traditional form of political economy that had persisted from antiquity, which has led many to describe the TMoP as pre-capitalist. Since the TMoP included relationships of domination and exploitation, Gottwald (1991:16) says the communitarian life was dominated and threatened by Israelite state power under David and Solomon. We should understand that such tendencies of domination in the ANE involved powerful states (such as, Assyria, Babylon or Egypt) or smaller city-states (such as Canaan or Syria) extending power to a considerable stretch of land made up largely of villages engaged in agriculture and animal breeding. Bruce (1993:833) mentioned that from 696 to 609 BCE Judah was a captive nation of Assyrian hegemony before Neo-Babylonians became the dominant force in the ANE. This proposes that Judah was paying heavy tribute to Assyria and later to Babylon, her colonial masters.

Gottwald (1991:17) observes that tribute paid to Assyria and later to Babylon was a threat both to the Israelite state and to its peasant subjects. In general terms, tribute was the main cause of suffering among the poor (Hab 3:17 cf. 1 Kgs 21:6-14; 2 Kgs 6:25-29). Foreign conquerors began to exact tribute and indemnities from Israel, and these payments had to come out of the same Israelite villages that paid taxes to Jerusalem or Samaria (Gottwald, 1991:17). Thus, the role played by Assyrians and Babylonians in causing enormous suffering of the poor Judeans should not be underrated. Oppression was already an internal dynamic, but the influence of external oppressor exacerbated the internal oppression, extracting even more from Judah''s own people (see 2 Kgs 23:35). Gottwald (1991:19) says to maintain the city, building and military programs, and also to maintain good relations with their external oppressor through tribute, the internal oppressor levied taxes, imposed forced labour and extracted surpluses, policies that were humanly very costly to their subjects. He observes that these same leaders also felt themselves entitled to privilege and luxury.

In this way, the elite in Judah alongside their overlords worked concurrently as dimensions of socio-economic exploitation of the poor Judeans. Their systemic collaboration rested on the fact that external oppressor always has mechanisms of controlling politics and economy to the extent that the internal oppressor is forced to follow whatever is laid before her. From one

point of view, the political leadership is almost totally captive to the ruling economic interests (Gottwald, 1991:26). What is involved in such systemic collaboration is best articulated by Paul Gifford, who says:

> The local leaders became brokers between their own community and central government, passing benefits in both directions, and probably taking their share in the process (Gifford, 1998:6).

This is typical of Malawian situation. There is always pressure from the external oppressor, which in turn affects the day to day running of the country. Like in Habakkuk, the problems of Malawi should be understood as ones wrought by wicked actions of local political leaders in collaboration with powerful nations and international financial institutions. It is imposition of economic policies and structural adjustment programs that compels the local leadership to execute certain policies that are exploitive to its subjects.

In this sense, Habakkuk offers insights into how local political leaders function as mediations [to use Boer's (2007:38) terminology of agents] between the poor Malawians and the external oppressor. In trying to meet the demands made by the external oppressor, the local leadership together with the foreign oppressor become exploiters of the poor by enriching themselves. Gottwald puts it differently, he says,

> The most powerful capitalist nation in the world gains the advantage of wealth that it has by "bleeding" and dominating smaller nations, the majority of whose citizens live in deepening poverty, and at the same time it allows a very large part of its own population to suffer in poverty (Gottwald, 1991:26).

An illustration of how powerful capitalist nations exploit smaller nations is tobacco industry in Malawi where the producer, mostly poor peasant farmers, is forced to sell his/her tobacco at a very low price. In this industry, prices are fixed by the buyer with no consideration of how much the poor farmer has spent to produce that tobacco. Majority of these buyers come from western countries and ultimately are the ones who make more profits than the producer because they go and resell the same tobacco in international markets at a very high price.

This illustration assists as to see that an economic interaction is necessary where Malawi can contribute and benefit justly from its contribution to the world economy. The real issue here is that Malawi does not have access to international markets, which are mostly controlled by the same powerful nations. The experience of tobacco farmers makes it clear that those with

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more political power have more control over the earth‟s resources and those who do not are excluded and marginalized (Filibus, 2010:45). In addition, their experience helps us to see that capitalism, operating at both local and international levels, is the chief engine of empire that has become a global exchange in which the privileged elite profit and excluded majority continue to suffer (Mshana, 2009:17). Musa P. Filibus (2010:45) argues that human greed, which is desire for more with risk that the neighbour is seen as the object of exploitation (2 Peter 2:3, 14), is a key force behind the current global economic and financial system.

Based on this understanding, capitalism should be considered as a mode of production being used today as a means of extraction. It has ensured the historical continuity between the economically impoverished colonial Malawi and donor-dependent postcolonial Malawi, where colonial grants have been replaced by postcolonial loans and grants, creating a debt-burdened donor dependent state (Lwanda, 2009:527). On national level, it is the elite few, mostly politicians, who bleed and dominate over the poor Malawians, the majority of the population. Today, politics of the powerful shape the socio-economic life of Malawi. This implies that economic decisions made by local politicians under the influence of external forces have major repercussions on the lives of the poor. Gottwald (1991:13) observes that political economies of many Third World countries today exhibit features very much like the tributary pattern in the ANE. He says this is why Bible readers in Third World countries are often quicker to grasp the stark realities of biblical economics than those in more protected economic environments where inequities and hardships are less blatant.

It also helps to explain why Third World peasants and workers can grasp the fundamentals of a liberation theology that baffles First World intellectuals (Gottwald, 1991:14). In connection to the liberation of such groups, Sugirtharajah (2012:134) suggests that the task today is not territorial liberation but freedom from the control of the market. We understand that Malawi realized her political independence in 1964, what is required now is to achieve a just measure of economic independence and non-exploitative global relationships. If we are to achieve a just economic interaction both on global and national levels, inclusion of the rural peasantry is crucial. To achieve this, we shall rely on the knowledge that postcolonial biblical criticism offers. In Chapter Two, we pointed out that the primary aim of postcolonial biblical criticism is to situate empire and imperial concerns at the centre of the Bible and biblical studies (Sugirtharajah, 2012:46). Adding to this, Dube (1997:14) says postcolonialism is not a

discourse of historical accusations, but a committed search and struggle for decolonization and liberation of the oppressed.

This suggests that postcolonialism is not simply a physical expulsion of imperial power, nor is it simply recounting the evils of the empire, and drawing a contrast with the nobility and virtues of natives and their cultures; rather, it is an active confrontation with the dominant system of thought, its lop-sidedness and inadequacies, and underlines its unsuitability for us (Sugirtharajah, 2003:41). At the heart of liberation theology is the action implied here. Any academic type of theology that is divorced from action is rejected as irrelevant (Kalilombe, 1991:408). Sugirtharajah says:

> Postcolonial biblical criticism should not be satisfied with simply exposing imperial tendencies in canonical texts and deconstructing them, but should go further to construct interpretations which have decolonizing effects in the contemporary world (Sugirtharajah, 2006:67).

In this way, the model that Habakkuk offers works in such a way that we are able to see the actions of the wicked in Malawi. To borrow the words of Gottwald (1991:26), we can say the wicked in Malawi have created a situation where the public goes begging, while a small part of the populace lives in abundance and surfeit of goods. This confirms that most of our political leaders enter politics not to serve the people but to extract from the already few resources that Malawi has.

7.5.2 Pinker's Proposition Affirming Church's involvement in Politics

The discussion on the identity of "the righteous" and "the wicked" in Chapter Five dealt with different views that help in locating the prophecy of Habakkuk. In that discussion, I pointed out that we are not ruling out Aron Pinker"s proposal that thrusts Habakkuk"s prophecy to the reign of Zedekiah. In his article, Pinker (2007:102) argues that Habakkuk"s advice in 2:4 was originally a political observation, rather than a moral or ethical paradigm as it is mostly claimed. His argument is based on claims that Habakkuk"s original reading of Hebrew word צַדִּיק „righteous" in 2:4 was צִדְקִי, an alternate or abbreviated form of צִדְקִיָּה (Zedekiah). In this way, he understands the prophecy to mean that Habakkuk was advising Zedekiah the king of Judah that his personal survival depended on being steadfast in his loyalty to Babylon. This kind of reading is in line with Jeremiah"s promise to Zedekiah that he will survive by being subservient to Babylon (Jer 27:12, 17). Pinker (2007:104) says the phrase

"live by their faith" in 2:4 is similar to Jeremiah"s advocacy in chapter 38:17 and 20 that Zedekiah will live if he only surrenders to the Babylonians.

Because it presents an alternative political interpretation that is based on the political realities of the period, Pinker"s proposition serves as framework that the church in Malawi can use as it engages with the state. His claims confirm that there are political implications to the Gospel and that the church can in no way evade such implications. As observed in Chapter Six, God"s message in Habakkuk had burdensome dimensions because it contained at its very heart an uncompromising and chilling declaration of judgment on his own country (Prior, 1998:208). Whether we follow Pinker"s political proposition or the mostly claimed moral paradigm, the message of Habakkuk is clear that for Judah to live, she should comply with God"s judgment, which was being executed by the ruthless Babylonians. Speaking to kings is difficult, more especially when the message is about destruction of your country. This is why, as mentioned before, most political leaders will never embrace criticism or advice from the church. But Habakkuk"s advice to Zedekiah reminds us that the church must maintain its prophetic voice at all times.

I have brought Pinker"s proposition here seeing that the church in Malawi has at particular times failed to maintain its prophetic voice. It was observed in Chapter Three that after Malawi got independence in 1964, the church was silent in political matters except for endorsement of government policy and offering prayers at political gatherings (Tengatenga, 2006:9). Today, the silence of the church manifests itself when the church chooses to align itself with governments that are corrupt and oppressive. Sometimes the church is silenced when its leaders receive bribes from political leaders and become party members themselves. It should be known that the silence of the church means the poor and marginalized have no voice in society. To be prophetic, the church in Malawi is supposed to support the aspirations and ambitions expressed by political parties and not the parties themselves (Mufuka, 1977:132-3). The church must leave no room for any accusation that it is taking sides. Its official policy must always express opinions on matters affecting the majority of its members (Mufuka, 1997:133). This implies that if the church was to take sides, it must always side with the poor and oppressed people.

7.6. Malawian Context Shedding Light on Habakkuk

In Chapter Two, we mentioned that while the biblical text in its historical context contributes to our understanding of our own context, on the other hand, the Malawian context assists in understanding biblical text and its context. Already we have seen how the pastoral letters of 1992 assist us to see what Habakkuk is doing with his poetry in addressing socio-economic problems of his context. Likewise, the grievances that Chilembwe raised in the 1915 uprising shed more light to the understanding of economic dimensions surrounding revolt of northern tribes of Israel against oppressive mechanisms used when Israel turned to monarchy. These examples are not only helping us to understand the meaning of the text, but they also contribute to the development of biblical studies. Referred to here are two more instances that help us see how our context contributes to the understanding of the biblical text.

7.6.1 Unity of Hopeful People

The first has to do with unity of hopeful people. In Chapter Three, we noted that the victory of MCP in the 1961 election marked the high point of unity for the party and Malawian people. The unity was demonstrated by overwhelming African support that helped MCP to win all twenty lower roll seats, five of them unopposed, and two upper roll seats (Short, 1974:153). Malawians have never been united except for that moment; it was an expression of the power of hopeful people. It needs to be pointed out here that by this time, Malawi had been under British rule for 70 years. Throughout these years, Malawians had been hoping that one day they will be free from colonial rule. The victory of MCP in the 1961 election meant that power was now going to Africans. When Malawi became independent in 1964, people were expecting that things will change for the better. Regrettably, the situation worsened during Banda‟s reign. The 1992-94 political change and current economic hardships reveal that not much has changed, Malawians are still hoping for better life.

The power of unity demonstrated in 1961 contributes to our understanding of what was going on behind the text of Habakkuk. In Chapter Six, we noted that since the prophet was strongly influenced by the language and ideas of those around him – singers, teachers and worshippers who were his audience, the book of Habakkuk is more like their work than it is of one person (Gowan, 1976:15). The text affirms that Habakkuk was a cultic prophet whose prophetic activities took place during worship at the Jerusalem Temple (see 2:1, 20). The complaints he

raised were not personal, Habakkuk presented them to Yahweh on behalf of his community. Szeles agrees, she says:

> The prophet is he who feels for his people at the time of their trial, takes them in his arms, so to speak, and undertakes to share their fate (Szeles, 1987:5).

This suggests that Habakkuk was not a lone ranger. He shared the concerns of his community to the effect that he was part of whatever the people were going through. "Reading behind the text" we can see the power of unity working between Habakkuk and his audience. It seems that the worshipping community at the Jerusalem Temple cherished Habakkuk's ministry as he performed his duties of receiving revelation from God and passing it on to them (Chitsulo, 2006:26). No doubt, they were a source of encouragement and a sturdy support to Habakkuk. Considering the conditions they were in, Habakkuk and his audience were united in hope for better life.

Gowan (1998b:95) observes that "live" is a declaration that God has accepted the worshiper and intends to bless him or her with all that "life" implied in Hebrew usage. Merely existing did not count as living in Hebrew thought. When sick, weak, in danger, or one's reputation was hurt, one was in the grip of death and not fully alive. To be alive was to have vigour, honour, and security. Therefore, when we say the people in Malawi and Judah were hopeful people, we mean to say they were in search for a better life. This kind of hope will always stem from a dire situation seeking for the liberation of oppressed people. It is when the people are liberated from all kinds of oppression that they are fully alive and ready to enjoy the life meant for them. In this way, the Malawian context enlightens us on what was happening in Habakkuk.

7.6.2 Continuous Opposition to Oppressive Systems

The second example is the church's continuous opposing to government oppressive policies, which helps us to see how Habakkuk addressed socio-economic and political issues of his situation. We have repeatedly stressed that the church in Malawi has always been critical of government policies that it considers to be unjust. Such opposition to government points to a better understanding of Habakkuk's ministry. Unlike other prophets, Habakkuk opens his book with a voice of pain, depicting a person living in the midst of terrible anarchy where everything is falling apart. In Chapter Six, we observed that Habakkuk's first complaint is a

prayer of a person who for a long time has been petitioning God to rescue him from his gloomy state. It is clear from the text that this was not the first time Habakkuk presented his case before Yahweh (1:2). The prophet is angry with God to the effect that his language lacks courtesy of address to superior that customarily contains a title ("my God" or "my Lord") defining the role in which the deity is being supplicated (Andersen, 2001:110).

What is fascinating about Habakkuk, as Sweeney (1991:66) points out, is that as he expressed his anger and frustration over the actions of the wicked, Habakkuk used a language typical of complaint terminology that appears in contexts of legal disputation (cf. Job 19:1-7) and cultic lamentations (Psa 18:7, 42). Because they take the form of a protest and an appeal to God"s justice from a person who has been victimized, Habakkuk"s prayers are more of complaints than laments because the latter are more suited to prayer of misery appealing to God"s pity (Andersen, 2001:21). Based on a literary analysis of the genre of the work of Habakkuk in Chapter Six, I argued that although Habakkuk directed his queries to God, in true sense he was speaking to authorities in Judah who were the causers of this chaotic situation. Such a claim was made because of his use of poetry in conveying his message, which points to the power of poetry. It is not an accident that most prophecy is poetry since what a prophet has to say, can never be said in prose (Brueggemann, 1989:4).

We observed that Habakkuk is a prophet who when he wants to communicate certain things about politics and economy, he uses poetry. From time immemorial the language of heaven and of heroes has been poetic in form, which proposes that poetry in ancient Israel was the language spoken in royal courts, and thus fitting for addressing kings and powers (Freedman, 1977:15). Considering that prophecy arose when Israel turned to monarchy, poetry would be the most appropriate language that appeals to kings and powers. Even Habakkuk"s prophetic activities are tactically positioned at the Jerusalem Temple to serve that purpose. The temple in the ANE was understood as an economic and political centre known to be the power base for exploiters. Therefore, through poetry, as Carroll (1983:26) rightly puts it, prophets may have been social reformers putting forward radical critiques of society and arguing for serious changes in the lives of the people. Their fierce denunciation of every aspect of social and religious life, king and temple, sacrifice and prayer, worship and values, indicate that these prophets were social critics operating with a high level of theory (Carroll, 1983:26).

Habakkuk might have been active serving in the temple as one of liturgists, but as a prophet, he remained faithful to his call as God's spokesperson. The message of the book is clear that as an intermediary between the people and Yahweh, Habakkuk defended tradition against the political and economic forces that threatened righteousness and justice; he served the purpose of voicing social criticism in the face of judicial (1:4) and economic abuse of the poor and the powerless (3:17) (Matthews, 2012:633). The cry "How long?" uttered at the beginning of his complaint in 1:2 shows that for quite a long time Habakkuk had been crying for justice. The meaning of Habakkuk's cry for justice can be found when the text is read from Malawi where the church continuously cried for justice throughout 73 years of colonial rule. In this way, our context does not only help us understand the biblical text and its context, it also sheds more light on how the text relates to its original context. The context is given a voice that points us to things that are hidden in the biblical text. By allowing the context to help us see that which is hidden in the biblical text, the dialogue between the text and the context is enabled.

7.7 Conclusion

The dialogue between the socio-historical context of an ancient biblical text of Habakkuk and the modern context of Malawi has confirmed that the two contexts share the common reality that both are socially, economically and politically shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism. As observed, through appropriation that involved an interactive engagement between the two contexts, the dialogue has enabled insights from each context to enrich the understanding of the other (Nyirimana, 2010:6). In this way, the dialogue has established the relevance of the book of Habakkuk to the Malawian context. It has proven that Habakkuk is a resource to the Malawi socio-economic and political situation. Habakkuk's socio-economic and political context adds to an understanding of certain social issues taking place in Malawi. On the other hand, the dialogue has shown that listening to what our context is saying offers a better understanding of the biblical text. Our context sheds more light to what the biblical text is saying and it also helps us to see that which is hidden in the biblical text.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSION

8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings to an end the whole discussion on internal and external imperial dynamics observed in Habakkuk and Malawi. It summarizes the findings emanating from analysis of various socio-economic and political aspects covered in this study. The study is designed as a dialogue between an ancient biblical text of Habakkuk and a modern context of Malawi in effort to better appreciate the shared relevance of these two chronologically disparate contexts. The dialogue helped us to notice common human dynamics that inform both ancient and contemporary realities. On one hand, Habakkuk added to our understanding of certain socio-economic and political issues taking shape in Malawi; on the other hand, the context of Malawi helps in understanding the biblical text and its context by pointing out that which is hidden in the biblical text. Differently put, the dialogue helped to answer some of the critical questions raised in this study. Following summary of findings, the chapter concludes by mapping out some areas that have not been sufficiently covered by this study and therefore require further research.

8.2 Summary

This study investigated internal and external imperial dynamics of two different contexts, an ancient biblical context of Judah and a modern context of Malawi. The two contexts share the common reality that both are socially, economically and politically shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism. Because of this, contexts of Habakkuk and Malawi were brought into a critical dialogue with an aim of exploring what is contained in each context that assists us to understand and value both contexts. The dialogue was facilitated through a contextual Bible study framework that recognizes the importance of our contexts in the interpretation of the biblical text.

As Africans, we recognize our specific location at the end of a long history of colonial domination, economic exploitation and cultural dispossession. It was critical to recognize our location in history because we read the Bible explicitly from and for that particular context (West, 1993:13). Contextualization assisted us to see that the Bible in Malawi occupies an

economically exploited, politically oppressed and culturally deprived context, whose readers"
lives are conditioned by imperial hegemony in need of liberation. Part of the overall rationale
in the dialogue between the text and context was the fact that the Bible plays a crucial role in
our struggles or contexts. This is why we subjected the biblical text to critical analysis in the
distantiation pole. We did this to retrieve its most appropriate meaning in its own context,
before applying that meaning to the context of Malawi. Thus, the distantiation pole was used
as a tool for examining the biblical text. Distantiation emphasized the necessary dialogue
between the biblical text and interpreter, whose context was analyzed in the contextualization
pole.

After analysis of our context and the biblical text in contextualization and distantiation poles,
respectively, we were ready for appropriation. It involved an interactive engagement between
the two contexts and was conducted in such a way that it allowed insights from each context
to enrich the understanding of the other (Nyirimana, 2010:6). This phase of exegesis is
always shaped by particular theoretical frameworks, which are ideo-theological orientations
where potential lines of connection between the text and the context are drawn.

The dialogue was done through liberation and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics, which are
examples of ideo-theological orientations that draw potential lines of connection between the
biblical text along with its context and today"s readers and their contexts. The study engaged
liberation and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics as sub-theoretical frameworks because they
belong within the broader context of biblical interpretation in theology of liberation.

Contextual Bible study was therefore undertaken because of the recognition that the Bible has
something essential to say to a critical human situation, which in this study has been taken to
be the context of the poor and marginalized. Fiorenza (1981:100) says to truly understand the
Bible is to read it through the eyes of the oppressed, since the God who speaks in the Bible is
the God of the oppressed. Equally, we cannot measure the people"s well-being through the
eyes of the elite but of those who suffer and struggle in life. Thus, a focus on the context of
the poor and marginalized helped us to understand why theology of liberation can also be
called contextual Bible study. Such an interpretation within the context of a critical situation,
theology of liberation offers a message that has as its aim emancipatory effects on the poor
and marginalized (Fiorenza, 1981:109). Liberation and postcolonial biblical hermeneutics

were engaged in this study because they provide a critical perspective on liberation hermeneutics (West, 2014:3).

Liberation biblical criticism is grounded in the experience of oppression. We have political and economic oppression, oppression against women and racial oppression as examples of oppressions that always affect the reading of the Bible, suggesting that social and political structure of any context will always influence the meaning of the text. Thus, the task of liberation biblical hermeneutics was to situate the book of Habakkuk in its literary and socio-historical context, then to let it dialogue with the Malawi socio-economic and political situation out of its ancient context. This was done considering that the agenda of liberation theology goes beyond condemnation of political oppression and economic exploitation to include a commitment to transformation of the society (Nyirimana, 2010:26).

While liberation biblical criticism focused on economic and class differentials, postcolonial biblical criticism focuses on power relations and disparities between empire and colony, between centre and periphery (Yee, 2010:205). As a meeting point of biblical studies and postcolonial studies, postcolonial biblical criticism focuses on: issues surrounding political, cultural and economic colonial setting that produced the text; presentation of both biblical and modern empires and their impact; and freedom of subjected nations (Sugirtharajah, 2012:2-3). This suggests that postcolonialism is not simply a physical expulsion of imperial power, nor is it simply recounting the evils of the empire; rather it is an active confrontation with the dominant system of thought, its lop-sidedness and inadequacies, and underlines its unsuitability for us (Sugirtharajah, 2003:41). Thus, postcolonial theory, as England (2004:90) puts it, ensures that political independence of former colonies is succeeded by economic and cultural liberation.

A combination of liberation and postcolonial ideo-theological theoretical resources helped in analyzing the socio-economic and political contexts of Malawi and Habakkuk. It needs to be pointed out that the present study was concerned with how politics affect socio-economic life of the nation and its ordinary people. In this, we understand that politics and economics are the main underlying forces behind the social life of every nation. Therefore, to define Malawi and Habakkuk situations, it required examination of their politics and economics; a task that has been achieved through employment of postcolonial and liberation theories. It has already

been noted, liberation theory puts more emphasis on economics, which implied that the use of postcolonial theory had strong economic orientation because of we used liberationist theory. Following the design of this thesis, the study began with contextualization that examined the Malawian context in chapters three and four. We started with this phase because the Malawi context was the background against which the biblical text was to be interpreted.

Chapter Three focused on the political and economic history of Malawi. The chapter analyzed political and economic developments that shaped Malawi starting from pre-colonial era right through missionary-colonial era to present times. The analysis included the role that Christian missionaries played in the transformation of Malawi. We noted that the account of Malawi's political and economic development is indebted to the work of Scottish Missions of Blantyre and Livingstonia, whose missionary task was founded on Livingstone's vision of bringing Christianity alongside commerce and civilization to Africa. Their aim was not only to preach the Christian gospel but also to help develop the economy of Malawi. It was the missionaries' belief that collaboration of the three Cs would assist in transforming people's social, political, economic and spiritual lives.

Furthermore, Chapter Three described events leading to establishment of British colonial rule in Malawi. We observed that by the end of 1880s, the missionaries and the ALC were calling for the British colonization of the area (Thompson, 2005:576). They were worried about the possibility of Portuguese expansion into Nyasaland; a problem they could not resolve as it required diplomatic activity on a level that was beyond reach of the missionaries or the ALC (Ross, 1996a:85). The missionaries' fear was that if the British failed to act, it would mean the Portuguese (Catholic) taking control of the area and possible expulsion of all Protestants (as indeed happened later in Mozambique). On the other hand, the missionaries opposed Cecil Rhodes' proposal of absorbing the ALC into his BSAC in order to take over government of Nyasaland District so that he can offer protection to mission stations (McCracken, 2012:57). Eventually Malawi was declared a British-claimed territory in 1891 with Harry Johnston as the first commissioner and consul general.

While the missionaries realized what they desired; nevertheless establishment of British rule in Malawi was the beginning of more difficulties for the people of Malawi. The third chapter described how British government through their pursuit of economic viabilities created havoc

that lasted for 73 years. The missionaries were quite aware that an official British presence in the area would ensure their capacity to carry out their work (Williams, 1978:49). While our findings exhibit missionaries" hostility against injustices perpetrated throughout 73 years of British colonial rule, it is not clear to what extend the missionaries understood repercussions attached to the establishment of British rule in Malawi? The study wrestled with this question by focusing on how missionaries" adoption of the three Cs, particularly their emphasis on commerce, began to open up economies of extraction. The missionaries might not have seen it, but the Comaroffs (1991:7) are very clear that by emphasizing commerce, the missionaries were imagining Africans to become a part of the global economy.

Introduction of the wage labour system was part of initiating Africans into becoming part of this world economy. We observed that Africans men were not interested in earning a salary because their livelihood was linked to the communitarian mode of production. Even though the missionaries may have thought this was a good thing, it was beginning to insert Africans into a system, which when empire arrives shortly behind the missionaries becomes extractive. We noticed that the coming of British government imposed hut tax on Africans forcing them to pay in money. So, they were forced to either sell their cattle or get a job. The missionaries never intended to do that. However, in process of preparing Africans to be part of that global system, they created a platform for what became economies of extraction. We may as well conclude that while many missionaries were concerned about local Africans, all of them were part of the very systems of extraction that have been identified in this study. Part of what postcolonial criticism does is to recognize the ambivalence or ambiguity of these things. The study has shown that the missionaries bring positive things but they also create a platform for other things to happen. This emphasizes that inequalities that are part of pre-colonial system are new kinds of inequalities in the missionary period, which are picked up by the colonial and postcolonial forces.

The chapter described the formation of political organizations, which were instrumental in the fight for independence of Malawi in 1964. Additionally, this chapter narrates postcolonial history of Malawi, which clearly stated that although Malawi received her independence in 1964 and also switched from one-party to multiparty politics in 1994, nothing in terms of governance has changed. We observed that economies of extraction are the main cause of Malawi"s problems. Patronage system which plays a crucial role in economies of extraction

has persisted from Banda"s reign to present-day Malawi. The country has remained a target of economic exploitation from pre-colonial times to present-day Malawi.

The analysis of Malawi contributed to the understanding of how internal politics and external forms of imperialism work concurrently in creating socio-economic problems of Malawi. From pre-colonial era to present, the country has witnessed powerful people, nations together with commercial and financial institutions, coming to Malawi not to help but to extract from the already staggering economy; which entails that if Malawi suffers manifold socio-political problems, it all hinges on the powerful people pursuing economic viabilities. In the process of analyzing political and economic history of Malawi, Chapter Three demonstrated that Malawi is what it is today because of Christians. There is enormous evidence of church"s contribution to social, political, economic and spiritual transformation of Malawi to the effect that one cannot fully understand political and economic history of Malawi without getting to grips with the work of Christian missions in Malawi. It is clear that the account of their work is a necessary part of Malawi"s history (Pachai, 1971:37). While it is important to recognise the transformative work of mission, it is naïve to ignore their complicity in empire. It was the very presence of missions that enabled economic activities to be so easily integrated into empire.

Therefore, Chapter Four was a continuation of contextualization with special focus on the role the church played in the socio-economic and political transformation of Malawi starting from missionary-colonial era to present-day Malawi. It looked at how the church, through the attitudes of missionaries and local Christians, conducted itself in light of political events shaping the socioeconomic course of Malawi. The chapter discussed the church"s influence in commerce and civilization. The church played a crucial role in the introduction of legitimate trade and commercial agriculture. It also contributed to the civilization by opening up mission schools, hospitals and as we have seen, the church played a bigger part in the establishment of British colonial rule in Malawi.

We noticed that political and economic devices laid at the establishment of British rule brought changes that forced the church had to take up a new role of being the voice of the voiceless. Highlighted in this chapter were grievances that missionaries and local Christians raised against British rule, which were also part of the factors leading to the 1915 Chilembwe

Rising. Another area highlighted in Chapter Four was the church"s involvement in the struggle for independence, which was more evident when the church played a crucial role in the formation of National African Congress and also when the church joined with the Congress in the fight against federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and finally gaining independence in 1964.

It was observed that in postcolonial Malawi, development of one-party state and the growing personal authoritarianism of Banda meant that open criticism, of any type, of Banda or his government became increasingly difficult in 1970s and 1980s (Thompson, 2005:582). The church under Banda"s administration appeared to be compliant supporter of life president and his repressive one-party rule. Being deeply involved in the struggle of the people for self-government, the church was too close to the Congress movement to be able to develop the critical distance necessary to offer a prophetic critique. So, the church lost its prophetic voice and allowed Banda and his government to execute unjust policies unrestrained. The turning point in the history of Malawi came on 8th March 1992 when the Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter *Living Our Faith* that sets off a train of events which eventually led to downfall of Banda.

We concluded Chapter Four with a discussion describing how the Bible has been used in the public realm to engage the state. The historical analysis of the role of the church has revealed that the biblical text has been a forceful tool in transforming Malawi. We have already seen that from missionary-colonial era, particularly for Livingstone and missionaries who came after him, biblical principles were vital for social transformation. Even keen observers of the advent of multiparty politics in Malawi could not fail to notice that appeal to the Bible was central to the argument of proponents of change (Chingota, 1996:41). This entails that the Bible was used as a basis for the Church"s challenge to the Banda regime. The Bible came to be a central text in public discourse concerning the social and political transformation of Malawi.

From contextualization we moved to distantiation that involved socio-historical and literary analysis of the book of Habakkuk in chapters five and six, respectively. This analysis helped in understanding circumstances that led Habakkuk to raise his complaints to God and why he used certain literary techniques to address his situation. At this stage, we employed "reading

behind the text" mode of reading the Bible to help analyze socio-historical background of the book of Habakkuk; whereas "reading the text" mode of reading the Bible was used to assist in analyzing the literary content of Habakkuk. Distantiation began in Chapter Five with critical investigation into the social, economic and political world of Habakkuk. The main objective was to unearth historical and sociological world that lies behind the text and from which the text of Habakkuk comes (West, 1993:27). To achieve this, Chapter Five addressed two areas critical for understanding the socioeconomic and political background of Habakkuk.

The first section described the geo-political landscape of the ANE with special emphasis on its economic and political history. In this geo-political landscape, the Fertile Crescent, which is the economic base of the ANE, was identified as the larger context of the book of Habakkuk. We also observed that politics in the full sense of the word began to revolve around when the ruling elites began to control the fertile plains. The Land of Palestine is considered as the immediate context of Habakkuk since most of the events of the Bible took place in this small area that embraces the south-western arm of the Fertile Crescent. The second section strived to locate Habakkuk in this wider geo-political context. The section was divided into two parts. The first part was a comprehensive analysis of socio-economic context of Habakkuk that focused on dominant modes of production and the role of the temple in ancient Israel. The second part located Habakkuk in this geo-political context by mapping out internal and external imperial dynamics that contributed to the anguish of Judah at the time Habakkuk sounded his prophecy.

Succinctly put, the socio-historical analysis of the book of Habakkuk showed that the general economic context conformed to TMoP, which was the dominant economic system in Judah of Habakkuk‟s time. It was effected through imperial actions of "the wicked" coming from both within (local Judean elites) and without (Assyria and Babylon) Judah. This exploitive system involved local leaders becoming brokers between their own community and imperial power, passing benefits in both directions, and probably taking their share in the process (Gifford, 1998:6). Strangely, this exploitive economic system was legitimated by Israelite religion. Our findings illustrate that Jehoiakim and his officials extracted surpluses from the poor Judeans through taxes, rents and debts that were imposed on the people in order to meet the demands

made by their foreign oppressors. This signifies that the anguish of "the righteous," who were largely poor Judeans was caused by those in authority.

Chapter Six was a literary look at the book of Habakkuk with special reference to the poetry of Habakkuk. It analyzed styles of expressing oneself in order to ascertain why Habakkuk used such literary techniques to address his situation. This analysis revealed that the prophet really wrestled with socio-political problems that were caused by oppressive systems. It was observed that there is strong agreement between the literary work on the text and the behind the text kind of economic work covered in Chapter Five in that both works testify to effects of TMoP, which was at the helm of Habakkuk''s complaints. The use of poetry substantiated that Habakkuk was really addressing authorities who were the causers of the chaotic situation in Judah, choosing a form of address that could speak truth to power. The analysis of Habakkuk contributed to our understanding of how imperialism works. It also introduced us to economies of extraction, which are the main aspect and the focus of this thesis. It is clear from this analysis that the anguish of Habakkuk was caused by internal and external imperial dynamics determined by the elite in Judah (King Jehoiakim and his court officials) in collaboration with their foreign oppressors (Assyria and Babylon).

Because we are reading Habakkuk from Malawi socio-economic and political viewpoint, we overtly returned to the tri-polar theory where a two way dimensional dialogue between socio-historical world of Habakkuk and that of Malawi was established (West, 2009:248). Analysis of the two contexts continued in Chapter Seven, which was the appropriation phase of tri-polar model that brings all analytical work done in chapters three to six together. For the dialogue to take place, three key areas necessary to facilitate the dialogue were delineated. The first drew similarities and differences between political and economic oppression in Habakkuk and various kinds of oppression Malawians experienced and continue to experience due to economies of extraction. We observed that both contexts enjoyed communitarian mode of life before powerful people began introducing exploitive economic mechanisms. Habakkuk''s and Malawi''s socio-economic and political problems stem from exploitive economic pursuits of the powerful. Such economic pursuits have always threatened the existing social order.

We noted with interest that prophetic voices in both contexts arose particularly in opposition to these exploitive economic systems. The dialogue in Chapter Seven clearly pointed out that Habakkukan and Malawian contexts started to face various socio-economic problems when powerful people introduced new economic mechanisms that replaced communitarian mode of life. These new economic mechanisms crept into Israelite society when the people opted to have their own king. In the case of Malawi, the coming of foreigners to trade and later to rule introduced Malawians to exploitive economic mechanisms. Introduction of these mechanisms attracted opposition from Israelite prophets and the church in Malawi. As Thomas (1991:6-7) has rightly put it, prophets in ancient Israel arose mainly in opposition to the TMoP, which was the dominant economic system during the monarchy. We also notice that drastic changes brought at the establishment of British rule in Malawi forced the church to be the voice of the voiceless – a new role that had strong political and prophetic inferences.

One of the similarities between socio-historical context of Habakkuk and Malawi is that both contexts contain forms of resistance against imperial economic systems. An exploration of state formation in the ANE alluded to tensions that existed between temple-city complex and village commune. Usually these tensions occurred when temple-city complex, representing the despotic state, wanted to extract surpluses from village commune members, who were the main producers of essential commodities. These tensions were strongly linked to economies of extraction and allocation, which are part of every society. In essence, the tensions were a clash between centralized economy and rural village based economy. We cited a rebellion of northern tribes of Israel (1 Kgs 12) and the 1915 Chilembwe Rising as some of examples embodying peasants" resistance against the powers behind oppressive economic systems. One common feature between the two examples is the marriage of forced labour and heavy taxes that form part of the grievances in both contexts contributing to the rise of resistance voices against those in power.

The second area necessary to facilitate the dialogue involves reflecting on what is contained in Habakkuk that contributes to a better understanding of Malawi situation. It was noted that an exploration of the wicked in Habakkuk contributed to our understanding of the role local politicians and external oppressors play in creating socio-economic and political problems in Malawi. Although we are dealing with two different contexts, investigations into the role of the wicked in Habakkuk serve as a model for understanding the Malawi situation. The same

applies to Aron Pinker's proposal that thrusts Habakkuk's prophecy to the reign of Zedekiah. Because it presents an alternative political interpretation that is based on the political realities of the period, Pinker's proposition serves as framework that the church in Malawi can use as it engages with the state. It affirms that there are political implications to the Gospel and that the church can in no way evade such implications. No doubt, speaking to kings and political leaders is difficult, more especially when the message is about the liberation of the oppressed. They have never embraced such messages; but Habakkuk's advice to Zedekiah reminds us that the church must maintain its prophetic voice at all times.

We observed that in both Malawi and Habakkuk forms of discourse appropriate to speaking (in)directly to power were chosen, namely the letter genre and the poetic genre. The church and Habakkuk understood that in speaking to power, if you stand and speak normally, you are probably not going to be heard or you are going to be killed. Whereas when you speak through the letter or poetry you create a different kind of space and possibility rhetorically. It is precisely because speaking truth to power is difficult that the church chose the letter form and that Habakkuk chose poetry.

The third key area focused on how the Malawi context sheds light on the text and context of Habakkuk. It was clear from this dialogue that not only does the context help us understand the meaning of the text; it also contributes to the development of biblical studies. The 1992 pastoral letters helped us to see what prophet Habakkuk is doing with his poetry in addressing socio-economic problems of his context. Likewise, the grievances that Chilembwe raised in the 1915 uprising shed more light to the understanding of economic dimensions surrounding revolt of northern tribes of Israel against oppressive mechanisms used when Israel turned to monarchy. The power of unity Malawians demonstrated in the 1961 elections contributes to our understanding of what was going on behind the text of Habakkuk, suggesting that he was not a lone ranger but that the his audience was the source of support and encouragement. The church's continuous opposing to government oppressive policies helps us to see how Habakkuk addressed socio-economic and political issues of his situation. The meaning of Habakkuk's cry for justice ("How long") can be found when the text is read from Malawian context where the church persistently cried for justice throughout 73 years of colonial rule.

Based on this dialogue, we concluded that our context does not only help us understand the biblical text and its context, but it also sheds more light on how the text relates to its original context. The context is given a voice that points us to things that are hidden in the biblical text. By allowing the context to help us see that which is hidden in the biblical text, dialogue between the text and the context is enabled and allows insights from each context to enrich the understanding of the other. In this way, the dialogue has established the relevance of the book of Habakkuk to the Malawian context by proving that Habakkuk is a resource to the Malawi socio-economic and political situation. On the other hand, the dialogue has shown that listening to what our context is saying offers a better understanding of the biblical text. So, it is a two way benefit: while the biblical text adds to an understanding of certain social issues taking place in our context, our context sheds more light to what the biblical text is saying.

8.3 Conclusion

Malawi has been independent for fifty one years now, but life for the majority of its people is a struggle for survival. The country continues to be rated among the ten poorest countries in the world and suffers many socio-economic and political problems that retard development. Its history has revealed that the main cause of these problems is economies of extraction that found their way into Malawian society through economic pursuits of powerful people coming from within and outside the country. The local political leadership and the powerful western countries alongside the World Bank and International Monetary Fund are the main causers of Malawi‟s problems.[80] They work concurrently as dimensions of socio-economic exploitation of the poor in Malawi. Through imposition of economic and political policies that profit them more than Malawi, the external powers have managed to cripple Malawi‟s economic growth. The situation indicates that at the time decolonization was taking place in Malawi in 1964; simultaneously there was recolonization of the same, which affirms that postcolonial Malawi deals with new face of colonialism that is capitalistically inclined - economies of extraction.

Coming to grips with circumstances that led Habakkuk to raise complaints to God helped us to see that his anguish was caused by internal and external imperial dynamics wrought by *the*

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[80] The local political leadership should include traditional chiefs especially in pre-colonial era and government official. Foreign powerful people should include the Bisa, Arabs and Swahili who were active in pre-colonial era.

wicked – the elite in Judah (King Jehoiakim and his court officials), who worked jointly with their foreign oppressors (Assyria and Babylon). The behind the text kind of economic work and the literary work on the text of Habakkuk covered in chapters five and six testify that at the helm of his complaints were economies of extraction, which are part of the TMoP. In the TMoP, economies of extraction involved a local state extracting from the peasants and an imperial power extracting from subject states and tribute was the main form of exploitation (Boer, 2007:41). The analysis helped us to understand how imperialism works and to see that the significance of Habakkuk lies not just in his religious and social message, but also in his condemnation of greed and cruelty of imperialism and his creation of a spiritual alternative (Aberbach, 1993:14). His use of poetry signifies that Habakkuk was addressing authorities who were the causers of the chaotic situation in Judah.

The socio-historical analysis of Malawi and Habakkuk revealed that this study dealt with two contexts that are socially, politically and economically shaped by the evils of imperialism. The study was an economic reading of the book of Habakkuk from Malawi socio-economic and political viewpoint. We observed that economies of extraction are a useful link between economic dimensions of Habakkuk and those of Malawi. Habakkuk was read from the context of the poor and the oppressed of Malawi. Investigations into the socio-economic and political backgrounds of Habakkuk and Malawi helped us to understand some of the social problems the poor and marginalized face. In other words, analytical work that has been undertaken in this project has helped to answer critical questions we raised at the beginning, as follows:

8.3.1   Why are internal and external imperial dynamics in Habakkuk crucial to the understanding of Malawi socio-economic and political context?

It is clear that this study dealt with two different contexts, an ancient biblical context of Judah and a modern context of Malawi, sharing common reality that both are socially, economically and politically shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism. The study investigated internal and external imperial dynamics in Habakkuk with an aim of understanding Malawi‴s situation. We observed that because Hebrew prophecy came about in wartime, and that war is the subject of, or background to most prophetic books, Habakkuk‴s message was inseparable from the empires which determined the history of the ANE. His context was not spared from

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imperialistic hegemony crusaded by Assyrians and Babylonians, who extended their power on Judah. Judah was forced to pay heavy tribute to her colonial masters. Internal and external imperial dynamics in Habakkuk were observed through the wicked actions of Judean elites and their foreign oppressors, who worked collaboratively in creating social problems among poor Judeans.

Here, is the reason why internal and external imperial dynamics in Habakkuk are crucial for understanding Malawi socio-economic and political situation. Habakkuk"s context assists in understanding how internal and external imperial dynamics work in Malawi. He sheds more light to the situation in Malawi by offering insights into what is happening in terms of the collaboration that exists between local political leadership (internal oppressor) and powerful western nations together with the World Bank and IMF (external oppressor). The systemic relationship between external and internal oppressors rests on the fact that Malawi"s internal dimensions are always controlled by the imposing power. We observed that most imperial powers and international financial institutions have all mechanism of monitoring Malawi"s economy to the extent that internal politics follow whatever is laid before her. These foreign institutions have the ability to twist poor countries into any direction because they have direct control over the economy. This has serious repercussions on the lives of the poor; economy plays a crucial role in their lives because it is the driving force behind how people produce and reproduce their lives.

8.3.2 *How does poetic form of Habakkuk contribute to the understanding of the prophet's message and how does it challenge the Malawian socio-economic and political context?*

It has been argued that although Habakkuk directed his queries to God, the truth of the matter is that he was speaking to authorities in Judah who were the causers of this chaotic situation. We made such a claim based on his use of poetry in conveying his message, which points to the power of poetry. We noticed that it is not an accident that most prophecy is poetry. What a prophet has to say, can never be said in prose (Brueggemann, 1989:4). Habakkuk is a kind of prophet who when he wants to communicate certain things about politics and economy, he uses poetry. To understand what he was doing with his poetry, we treated Habakkuk"s poetry alongside the Malawian 1992 pastoral letters. The two letters were not written for the sake of

theological and biblical argument. They contributed to the 1992-94 political change that saw Malawi switching from one party rule to a multiparty system of government. Granting their impact, one can irrefutably say that the letters had persuasive and transforming force.

We observed that the language of the pastoral letters had rhetorical dimensions articulated for purposes of disarming the listener. This assisted us to see what Habakkuk is doing with his poetry. He integrated rhetoric in his poetry to strengthen his persuasive argument. What is of acute importance here is that we are not concerned about what Habakkuk said – using poetry as a language, but how he said it – using rhetorical dimension. Here, we notice that there is collaboration between poetry and rhetoric. The collaboration should be understood in such a way that rhetoric becomes the persuasive and transformative force behind poetry. The power of poetry therefore rests on the poet"s use of rhetorical dimensions of language, which in this case I consider to be the crucial element of poetry that persuades and transforms societies. In this way, Habakkuk becomes a resource that the church can use when engaging the state in socio-economic and political matters. Based on this discussion, we can also conclude that our context too becomes a resource as sheds more light to understanding biblical texts.

8.3.3   *What implications does the role of the Church, observed in both its voice and silence, have in the socio-economic and political life of Malawi?*

In a book titled *Africa - What Lies Ahead,* Dunduzu Chisiza, before he died in 1962, asserted that a nation cannot survive without the church. He said, "It should be the duty of churches to expose the injustices, if not to censure without malice, those responsible" (Chisiza, 1962:51-2). Of course, the history of Malawi reveals a long tradition of missionary and local Christian opposition to policies which they regarded as unjust. We noticed that throughout 73 years of British rule in Malawi, missionaries encouraged and worked side by side with nationalist"s movement in fight for independence of Malawi. Regrettably, after Malawi got independence in 1964, the church was silent in political matters except for endorsement of government policy and offering prayers at political gatherings. Development of one-party state and the growing personal authoritarianism of Banda meant that open criticism, of any type, of Banda or his government became increasingly difficult. Banda"s iron hand muted the church to the effect that it could not manoeuvre as a potential force for political reform and renewal. It

followed that the church lost its prophetic voice and allowed Banda and his government execute unjust policies unrestrained.

It should be known that the silence of the church means the poor and marginalized have no voice in society. As a consequence of the church‟s silence, many people were persecuted and exiled, some were murdered while others detained without trial. For instance, Banda persecuted and exiled the Jehovah‟s Witnesses in Malawi in early 1970s and were not allowed to function as a religious institution in Malawi. The silence of the church manifests itself when the church chooses to align itself with corrupt and oppressive governments. Sometimes it is when church leadership receives bribes from political leaders and other church leaders opting to become party members themselves. To be prophetic is to support the aspirations and ambitions expressed by political parties and not the parties themselves (Mufuka, 1977:132-3). The church‟s official policy must always express opinions on matters affecting the majority of its members, as Mufuka (1997:133) says, and these are the poor. It implies therefore that the church must always take sides with the poor and oppressed people.

8.3.4 *What is contained in the ancient biblical text of Habakkuk that helps us understand about Malawi socio-economic and political context and what is contained in the Malawian context that sheds light on the text and context of Habakkuk and helps us understand and value this book?*

The socio-historical analysis of an ancient biblical text of Habakkuk and the modern context of Malawi confirmed that the two contexts share the common reality that both are politically, economically and socially shaped by the challenges of devastating imperialism. The two contexts were brought into a critical dialogue with an aim of exploring what is contained in each context that assists us understand and value both contexts. The dialogue enabled insights from each context to enrich the understanding of the other. Habakkuk‟s socio-economic and political context helped us to understand of certain socio-economic and political issues taking place in Malawi thereby establishing the relevance of Habakkuk to the Malawian context. On the other hand, the Malawian context has contributed to the understanding of Habakkuk by shedding more light to what the biblical text is saying. It helped us to see certain things that are hidden in the biblical text. In this way, the Malawi context was given a voice that enabled it to dialogue with the biblical text and its context.

8.4 Further Research

An economic reading of Habakkuk from Malawi socio-economic and political viewpoint has revealed that internal and external imperial dynamics are/were real in Malawi and Habakkuk. These dynamics manifest themselves through economies of extraction, which in this study are taken to be the main cause of socio-economic and political problems in both contexts. Of course, this study has outlined some of these dynamics; however, there are particular aspects that require further research to complement this study. These aspects were not sufficiently covered because not much work has been done from Malawian perspective and also because of the limited scope of this study.

In dealing with postcolonial history of Malawi that begins from 1964 to present, the study has focused much on Banda era and not much has been said concerning the multiparty era. This study has a lengthy discussion on the first thirty years of postcolonial Malawi that deals with one-party system of government under Banda. Further research is required to analyze the multiparty era in postcolonial Malawi. It will be interesting to take a closer look at economic aspects attached to the reigns of Bakili Muluzi, Bingu Mutharika, Joyce Banda and Peter Mutharika. This will also help us to see how economies of extraction have persisted in the multiparty era.

Based on the nature of this study, further research is required in the area of economics. In this study, political and economic aspects of both Malawi and Habakkuk were analyzed using two theories: postcolonial theory and liberation theory. Our use of postcolonial theory had strong economic orientation because we used liberation theory. Because an economic reading of Habakkuk from Malawi socio-economic and political viewpoint focused on economies of allocation and extraction, the study had to draw on Marxist theory via the works of Norman Gottwald, Roland Boer and Gerald West. I believe what is required now a Marxist analysis of Malawi for an in-depth understanding of the Malawi socio-economic and political situation.

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