



**INVESTIGATING THE IMPLICATIONS OF AN EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF
REVELATION 1:4-6 FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ROLE OF THE
CLERGY IN MALAWI'S POST-ONE PARTY SOCIO-POLITICAL CONTEXT**

MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES) THESIS

STEWART DAISON KAPINDA

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

SEPTEMBER, 2021.



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Department in partial**

**fulfillment of requirements for the degree of Master of Arts (Theology and Religious
Studies).**

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

SEPTEMBER, 2021.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis is my own original work which has not been submitted to any other institution for higher learning. Where other people's work has been used acknowledgements have been made.

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

This study exegetes Revelation 1:4-6 and argues for its implication to the members of the clergy in Malawi's socio-political context. The problem the thesis addresses has to do with the situation in Malawi where the clergy undertake their roles in the Church while being actively aligned to some political parties. The work is a desk type of research and has used secondary information. The study has used inductive and deductive methods. The inductive method was used to discover textual and the historical data while the deductive exegesis was used to draw some preconception for the Malawian context. In terms of data analysis, the thesis used content analysis to get to the appropriate findings. The exegetical findings highlight that the Church has been made a Kingdom and priests not only highlighting its sacral duty but also as its mission as agents of the Kingdom of God in the socio-political sphere. However, within the Malawian context it is observed that the clergy get into too much politics, become allies with political regimes and sideline public role of the work of Kingdom for material interest. In contrast to this, the study demonstrates from the exegetical findings that the concept of Kingdom and Priest can be used to help the clergy to engage socio-political affairs for the benefit of the Kingdom of God. The original contribution of the study is in its demonstration that the clergy are obligated to represent the Kingdom of God in their individual and institutional engagement in Malawi's socio-political context.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.D	Anno Domino
C.C.A. P	Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
CCM	Christian Council of Malawi
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
DPP	Democratic Progressive Party
ECM	Episcopal Conference of Malawi
KJV	King James Version
MCP	Malawi Congress Party
MAM	Muslim Association of Malawi
MLS	Malawi Law Society
MCCT	Malawi Chambers of Commerce and Trade
PAC	Public Affairs Committee
UDF	United Democratic Front

DEFINITIONS OF KEY TERMS

In this research a number of terms are frequently used. These include:

- Clergy:** The etymology framework of the term highlights Greek, Latin and French words. The Greek *klerikos*, the Latin *Clericatus* (One ordained for service) and the French *Clergie* (learned men). In contemporary times it is used to refer to a body of persons such as ministers, sheiks, priests and rabbis who are ordained and trained for religious service.¹ In this study, this term is employed in Christian setting.
- Kingdom:** *The Bible Dictionary* defines a Kingdom in two ways. First, as a realm in which kingly authority or works are experienced. Second, as referring to a people on whom a King reigns.²
- Kingdom of God:** The basic meaning is God's rule, kingly power (Lk 19:12), and not as a geographic area. It is a dynamic notion; God's rule is his rule in action Ps. 145:13, Dn.2:44.³
- Priest:** In simplest terms a priest is a minister of a religion.⁴ However, within Christian tradition there is distinction in application. The Episcopalian tradition, the term priest refers

¹ Douglas, Harper. <http://en.m.wiktionary.org/wiki/clergy> (accessed on 13/03/2019).

² James, D Douglas and Tenney, Miller, C (ed). *Bible Dictionary*. (Michigan: Macmillan.1987), 587.

³ Bruce, Milne. *Know The Truth: A hand Book of Christian Belief (2ndeds)*. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 309.

⁴ Mircea, Elliade(ed). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. (Michigan: McMillan, 1987), 230.

particularly to the clergy, while in Congregational tradition this allotment is obscure, because of the teaching of the priesthood of all believers.

Political neutrality: The absence of any form of partisanship or commitment, - the absence of political sympathies and ideological leaning.⁵

Political regime: Political regime is a set of political structures that make up the state, may also be referred to as form of Government or state system, and also refer to a specific ruler or set of rulers within a political system.⁶

Government: Government is an agent or machinery through which the state operates. Also refers to a unit of political organization.⁷

Social-political sphere: In general, the social-political sphere refers to a sphere in which socio- political issues emerge.

⁵ Nandini, Patel and Lars Svasand. *Government and Politics in Malawi* (Zomba: Kachere, 2007), 57.

⁶ Jura [Http://www.italk.com](http://www.italk.com)>questions (accessed on 13/10/2019).

⁷ Democracy Consolidating Program. *Building an Informed Nation: Handbook for Civic Education on Governance and Human Rights* (Lilongwe: Democracy Consolidating Program: 2004), 5.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

This Chapter introduces the study by discussing the background information, the problem statement, significance of study, research aim, research objectives, research questions, research hypothesis, theological/theoretical, limitation and delimitations and the research outline. This chapter is very important as it stipulates the nature of the study.

1.2 Background Information

The Book of Revelation is one of the Books in the New Testament which has an explicit content on the relationship between Church and the State. The historical setting of this book shows that the message of the book indicates a confrontation of the Church with the repressive socio-economic and political system of Rome.⁸ It is important to note that within this context, Revelation 1:4-6 highlights the identity of the Church as a Kingdom and Priests. In other words, the Church is given this identity in order to represent the Kingdom of God in the world and its socio-political affairs. Therefore, considering the fact that the Christian clergy in Malawi are part of the Church and play a crucial role in the socio-political affairs since the advent of multiparty

⁸ Richard, Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 162.

democracy in 1992, the research uses Revelation 1:4-6 to analyze the extent to which the clergy in the Christian setting, represent the interests of the Kingdom of God in the social political context of Malawi.

The principles of Kingdom and Priest have been thought to be powerful symbols both in the secular and religious sphere.⁹ Within the context of Revelation 1:4-6, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza highlights that the titles *βασιλείαν* (Kingdom) and *ἱερεῖς* (Priest) in ancient antiquity represented bearers of political and sacral authority.¹⁰ Her understanding in view of this, is that the socio-political context of first century AD, the terms were applied to the Church to highlight its new dignity and mission. According to Richard Bauckham, Revelation was situated in a context in which the Church suffered and was oppressed by the Roman authorities.¹¹ Furthermore, the suffering of the Church in this period was necessitated by state controlled political and sacral authority.¹² This political authority which was exercised through tyrannical political administration and economic exploitation presented a threat to the Christian community. In view of this, according to Charles Henry, the Church's role in this socio-political context was to represent the work of the reign of God through its mission and also through this to inevitably resist the forces of evil perpetuated by the Roman Government.¹³

⁹ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Richard, Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 162.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Charles, Henry. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of Revelation of John*. (Edinburgh: T & T CLARK, 1920), 22.

It is therefore important to note that for the Malawian context members of the clergy in 1992 resisted some policies and abuses of the government by using the institutional and prophetic roles.¹⁴ This is evidenced with the Catholic Bishop's Pastoral letter titled "Living Our Faith" popularly known as the Lenten letter of 1992. In this letter the Catholic Bishops critiqued both the socio-economic and political situation of the country during Kamuzu's era. The Bishops argued against the repatriation of civil servants to work in their home regions.¹⁵ They also critiqued the autocratic political regime and human rights abuse under late Ngwazi Dr Hasting Kamuzu Banda.¹⁶ The letter also addressed the issue of freedom of expression in Malawi.¹⁷ In the Lenten letter this fundamental principle was discussed as follows:

Human persons are honored- and this honor is due to whenever they are allowed to search freely the truth, to voice their opinion and to be heard, to engage in creative service of the community in all liberty within association of their own choice. Nobody should ever have to suffer reprisal for honestly expressing and living up their conviction: intellectual, religious or political.¹⁸

The statement above firmly affirms the prophetic voice of clergy in the Roman Catholic Church on the fundamental principles of human society. The Catholic Bishops used the Prophetic voice to outline these principles.

¹⁴ Martin, Ott. "The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)", in Martin Ott et al, *Malawi's Second Democratic Election Process, Problems and Prospects* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000), 122.

¹⁵ Kenneth, Ross. "The Transformation of Power in Malawi 1992-94: The Role of the Christian Churches"; in Kenneth Ross (ed), *God People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective*. (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 57.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Furthermore, the institutional role is evident with the clergy's use of institutions in the civil society. One of the critical institutions in this category is the Public Affairs Committee (PAC). This institution was originally composed of Church Council of Malawi (CCM), Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM), Law Society of Malawi (LSM), Malawi Chambers of Commerce and Trade (MCCT). It is important to note that, these institutions during the advent of multiparty Democracy spear headed political regime change and political transition in Malawi. Presently, the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) is engaged in advocacy, mediation, civic education and transformation.¹⁹

While it can be seen that the role of the clergy is evident through these examples, problems emerge when the clergy become allies with political regimes or get into too much politics and sideline the values of the Kingdom of God. One of the critical examples highlighting this problem is found in the conference held on 22-23 January 1993. The clergy of Blantyre Synod said:

If we look at our own history as C.C.A.P during the time of the struggle we will see that Blantyre was very much in support of the Nyasaland African Congress because of the verbal stance the C.C.A.P was aligned closely with government and become so assimilated that the synod gradually lost its ability to admonish or speak pastorally to the government. We do not want to make the same mistake at this time in order to ensure the Church retains its prophetic voice throughout the coming years of our country.²⁰

The excerpts of this statement show how the C.C.A.P clergy were discontent with its previous position it adopted on Church and State relations. It is evident that the Synods

¹⁹ Kenneth, Ross. "The Transformation of Power in Malawi 1992-94: The Role of the Christian Churches"; in Kenneth Ross (ed), *God People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective*. (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 57.

²⁰ Felix, Chingota. "The Use of the Bible in Social Transformation", in Ross, Kenneth (ed) *God, People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective* (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 57.

clergy in this communiqué were calling for a re-orientation of the pastoral ministry in socio-political affairs.

Martin Ott in his article on *The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)* adds up by observation and gives a number of members of the clergy who in the post one party era became active in the political sphere.²¹ In this article he lists some members of the clergy, who under the influence of the government and out of self-interest were incorporated in government functions. These members of the clergy were appointed and sent by the government to serve as ambassadors in other nations, as high commissioners, board of directors and chairmen of government parastatals. However, their active role in disregarding the mission of the Church, among other things contributed to complacency of the clergy in giving effective prophetic critique in Malawi's socio-political sphere.²²

1.3 Statement of the Problem

This research exegetes Revelation 1:4-6 and demonstrates its relevance and Implications on the role of the clergy in the post- one party socio-political context of Malawi. The study's exegetical analysis and its rich socio-political historical background will be central for this thesis.

The envisaged problem is the fact that despite the prominence of the institutional and prophetic roles of the Church in 1992, the clergy have faced a number of problems.

²¹ Martin, Ott. "The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)", in Martin Ott et al, *Malawi's Second Democratic Election Process, Problems and Prospects* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000),127.

²² Ibid..

These include: the lack of pro-active leadership to spearhead the mission of the church in the socio-political context of Malawi and the clergy being aligned to political parties. This is also against the backdrop where members of the clergy in post-multiparty democracy undermined values of Kingdom God because they engage themselves in partisan politics. The consequence of this is that the clergy get into political sphere out of self-interested agenda and hence the Church's socio-political witness and prophetic role suffer. This is the problem that this study seeks to address.

Therefore, in the light of this, the exegetical work will be employed to deduce findings that will demonstrate the practical values of employing the "Kingdom and Priest" analogy as exemplified in Revelation 1:4-6, in relating the clergy's role in Malawi's socio-political context.

1.4 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is threefold. Firstly, the study generates information for academic purposes. This study basically provides new information which analyzes data relating to Church and politics in Malawi. Furthermore, this study advances a scholarly understanding of the Church's mission and socio-political issues useful to both New Testament ethics and contemporary Malawian Church history.

Secondly, the study is significant to ordinary readers. This study enables the readers to understand that the Church is not only concerned with the spiritual issues but also socio-political day to day affairs. Therefore, research's use of Revelation 4:1-6 is imperative for the readers to understand this aspect.

Thirdly, this study is significant to members of the clergy in that it will enable them to be informed on how they can properly engage the contemporary socio-political issues in Malawi. Hence, this study will be useful for the clergy to consistently engage and support organizations that speak as religious bodies on socio-political matters.

1.5 Aim of Study

This paper aims to analyze the role of the clergy in the socio-political context of Malawi in the light of Revelation 1:4-6.

1.6 Research Questions

1.6.1 Main Research Question

In the light of the implication of an exegetical analysis of Revelation 1:4-6 what role should the clergy play in the socio-political affairs of Malawi?

1.6.2 Sub Research Questions

In order to meet the aim above, the study will be underpinned by the following sub research questions:

- What theological and political issues are exemplified in the exegetical analysis of Revelation 1:4-6?
- What is Malawi's post one party socio-political context?
- What challenges undermine the clergy in engaging critical socio-political issues in Malawi as agents of the Kingdom and priests?

- What are the implications of an exegetical analysis of Revelation 1:4-6, that can help the clergy in the socio-political context?

1.6.3 Research Objectives

1. To establish theological and political issues which are exemplified in the exegetical analysis of Revelation 1:4-6.
2. To find out Malawi's post one party socio-political context.
3. To highlight challenges that undermines the clergy in engaging critical socio-political issues in Malawi as agents of the Kingdom and priests
4. To examine the implications of an exegetical analysis of Revelation 1:4-6, that can help the clergy in the socio-political context.

1.6.4 Research Hypothesis

If the engagement of the clergy in the socio-political affairs of Malawi is guided with reference to the mission as a kingdom of priests, they will be enabled to constantly have great impact in Malawi's socio-political affairs. Certainly, this hypothesis advocates for a socio-political engagement of the clergy, based on Kingdom philosophy or commitment to values of the Kingdom of God.

1.6.5 Assumptions

The following are the enumerated assumptions stemming from the research's hypothesis:

1. That the work of the clergy in the socio-political sphere be guarded with a Kingdom mindset.
2. That the clergy's engagement in socio-political affairs is not truly appreciated because they have interests not linked with those of the Kingdom of God.
3. That the clergy need to embrace the Kingdom values with a Priestly framework in order to have an effective public ministry.
4. That unless the clergy continue to intervene in the socio-political affairs as agents of the Kingdom and as Priestly servants of the Church their contribution in socio-political affairs will not be effective.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

1.7.1 Inductive and Deductive Exegesis

Feridoon Morhkof identifies two methods which undergird exegetical practice. These methods include the inductive and deductive methods.²³ These are theories that can also be understood as approaches in Bible study. Therefore, this research has employed both inductive and deductive approaches in exegesis. With the inductive method the study attempted to draw out specific individual terms, facts, observation on terms under scrutiny which include *βασιλείαν* (Kingdom) and *ιερείς* (priests). The study followed the three basic

²³ Feridoon, Morhkof. *Advanced Hermeneutics*<http://religiondocbox.com/judaism/77613623-Advanced-hermeneutics-outline.html>(accessed on 06/07/2019)

steps of inductive method: Observation, Deliberation and Application.²⁴ The study through Observation revealed what the author was conveying to the first recipients. Then through the process of Deliberation the research focused on, the context, history and language, key phrases and parallel passages.²⁵ An attention was made to grammatical Greek exegesis in order to understand the logical sequence of the text and the key phrase under scrutiny. Thirdly, the step of Application was centered on relating relevant truth from the text and historical situation to the contemporary Malawian context.

Concomitant to the inductive, the research employed the deductive method or approach. Deductive exegesis was done to let some of the preconception drawn from the Malawian context to interact with the biblical text. As such, an investigative reading was done to search themes that can interact with the Malawi context. Moving to the next step in deductive approach, an analytical reading was done by relating the historical and theological contexts. Thirdly, a comparative reading was established with reference to parallel passages and the Malawian context understudy.

1.7.2 Political Theology Hermeneutics

Political theology as a theory was founded upon the ideas of John Baptist Mezt. However, foundational trends are observed in early church history writings. For, instance in the writing of Eusebius '*Court Theology*', and Augustine's Doctrine of two Kingdoms (*The City of God and the City of Man*) and Martin Luther's Doctrine of two Kingdoms.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Feridoon, Morhkof. Advanced Hermeneutics <http://religiondocbox.com/judaism/77613623-Advanced-hermeneutics-outline.html> (accessed on 06/07/2019)

²⁶ Sinclair, B. Ferguson. *New Dictionary of Theology*. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 521.

The primary thought and ideas in these writings advance the ideas which attempts to relate religion to the political character of its society.

Political theology hermeneutics as a theory in biblical studies commits to the Christian truth in a political context.²⁷ Political Theology is not about the politicization of the Church, it points towards awareness of the political dimension of theology or theological overtones of politics. This posture is supported by Kee who argues that:

the attempt to separate politics and theology is invariably done out of self – interest: political theology does not arise from opportunism or attempt to win strategic advantage, but a particular understanding of the way we can be true to the fundamental character of Christian faith.²⁸

Accordingly, political theology derives its frameworks from biblical socio-political categories. In the light of this, the study pays particular attention to the phrase *βασιλείαν* (Kingdom) and *ἱερεῖς* (priest) which is employed in Exodus 19:5, 1 Peter 2: 9 and Revelation 1:4-6 and relate these socio-political categories to Malawi's context. Buttressed with this theory is liberation theology hermeneutics. This theology emerged from Latin America among both Roman Catholic and protestant theologians. Gustavo Gutierrez defines liberation theology as:

A theology reflection based on the Gospel and the experience of men and women committed to the process of liberation in this oppressed and exploited sub-continent of Latin America. It is a theological reflection born of shared experience in the effort to abolish the present unjust situation and to build a different society, freer and more human.²⁹

²⁷Sinclair, B. Ferguson. *New Dictionary of Theology*. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 521

²⁸ Alister, Kee. *Scope of Political Theology*. (London: SCM Press, 1978), 3.

²⁹ Gustavo, Gutierrez. *Teologia De La Liberacion, Perspectivas* (Salamanca: Edicionessigueme, 1972), 15.

Again, Marrian Hillar argues liberation theology as “an interpretation of Christian faith out of the suffering, struggle and hope of the poor. A critique of society and the ideologies sustaining it. A critique of the activity of the church and of Christians from the angle of the poor”.³⁰ These definitions give some of the critical dimensions of liberation theology. Consequently, Liberation hermeneutics sees the scriptures as being committed to virtues such as justice, peace and righteousness.³¹ This background therefore is imperative for this study. The rationale is based on the fact that this study questions the role of the clergy in Malawi’s socio-political arena.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations

1.8.1 Limitations

The study is an exegetical analysis which seeks to relate the contemporary context with the biblical text. The biblical text in question is Revelation 1:4-6 where the study pays a close attention to the phrase βασιλείαν (Kingdom) and ἱερεῖς (priest) in these verses. Therefore, although the subject matter of the study is seemingly restricted to the application of the phrase in the New Testament, the Old Testament witness shall be employed in the discussion. With regard to the Old Testament this will be restricted to Exodus 19:5 and shall not extend to deal with how the phrase was further appropriated of by various authors of Old Testament writings in their context.

³⁰ Marrian, Hillar. ‘Liberation Theology: Religious Response to Social Problems’ ‘Marrian, Hillar and H.R Leuchtag (ed) *Humanism and Social Issues. Anthology of Essays*. (Huuston: American Humanist Association, 1993), 36.

³¹ Ibid.

Furthermore, the study situates its discussion in dealing with issues that involve the clergy in the socio-political sphere. It highlights issues that emerged in the post multiparty era from 1992 to present. The study does not seek to give a comprehensive overview of what actually happened in this era as far as Church-state relationship is concerned. However, it limits itself to extracting issues within this period which relate to the problem understudy. For foundational purpose, the study has used some materials pointing to the era before multiparty democracy. However, these materials are scanty and only used for background purpose. Thus, the study is limited to address those issues in the post-one party era. These will be used to interact with the biblical text and the historical context which shall be elaborated in the findings.

1.8.2 Delimitations

As much as the study is limited in order to focus itself on the aim of the study, there are areas in which the study is delimited. For study uses the context in Exodus 19:5 and 1 Peter 2:9-10 to the appropriation of Revelation 1:4-6. This is done so that the contextual understanding of the phrase “Kingdom” and “Priest” is fully established. In as much as exegesis deals with bringing the meaning of the text in its current context, the study will not be limited to this. The study employed several texts in other section of the Book of Revelation to relate them with the actual text understudy. Of interest are issues which include those dealing Christian leaders in the book of Revelation and the internal and external pressures which pertain to the churches of Asia Minor. These are limited to interact with the historical context of the book and in turn with contemporary context of the clergy in Malawi.

Within issues dealing with the clergy in the socio-political sphere the study in the limitation section highlighted that the discussion is interested with issues in the post-multiparty era from 1992. However, the study delimits itself to highlight State and Church relations before 1992. Obviously this is done to demonstrate the historical heritage of some problems which the clergy continue to experience.

1.9 Thesis outline

This study has five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the study by discussing the background information, the problem statement, significance of study, research aim, research questions, research hypothesis, theological/theoretical, limitation and delimitations and the research outline. This chapter is very important as it stipulates the nature of the study.

Chapter 2 reviews literature related to the study. A number of books and scholarly works were reviewed to ascertain the extent to which the issue at stake has been dealt with by other scholars. A substantial number of books were initially reviewed in this chapter as constituting preliminary sources. Works in the book of Revelation and specifically Revelation 1:4-6 were reviewed. Second, literature on relating to role of the clergy and the Church in socio-political affairs of Malawi were reviewed. Finally, literatures on the theoretical framework namely political theology were also reviewed. These scholarly works provide frameworks through which this study relies on to accomplish its aim.

Chapter 3 is methodology through which the study accomplishes and satisfies its aim. The chapter is very crucial as it provides a methodology and methods on how the study is designed. Being an exegetical analysis, exegetical methods are discussed and how

they have been used. The design shows that the study is a desk research, which critically reflects on the New Testament scripture, namely Revelation 1:4-6 with some allusion to some parallel passages like Exodus 19:5. The study shows the tri-polar approach in appropriating the exegetical findings to the problems identified in the study.

In chapter 4 the study discusses the Findings of the research. These including findings that relate to the research question of the study. The chapter further discusses the socio-historical and Textual context of Revelation 1:4-6, the Kingdom and Priestly Language in the Book of Revelation, Reading of Exodus 19: 6, 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Revelation 1:4-6 in their Historical context and a contemporary appropriation of Revelation 1:4-6. The chapter has depicted findings which show challenges that the clergy encounter in socio-political affairs. It also shows the use of the phrase Kingdom, Priest to help the clergy to represent the Kingdom of God in the Socio-Political affairs of Malawi.

Chapter 5 is the conclusion of the study and it presents the study's practical implication. This is the chapter in which all that has been discussed from chapters find their concluding remarks. The chapter has recommended an area for further study.

1.10 Chapter Summary

This chapter has heightened the background information, the problem statement, significance of study, research aim, research questions, research hypothesis, theological/theoretical, limitation and delimitations and the research outline. This chapter is very important as it stipulated the nature of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with the introductory part of the study, the research problem, research questions, research hypothesis, and significance of research, limitation and delimitation. This chapter moves further to understand the subject matter of this study within the broad spectrum of related literature and contribution of scholars. First, the chapter focuses on reviewing literature available on the book Revelation and specifically Revelation 1:4-6. Second, the chapter deals with literature on the role of the clergy and the Church in the socio-political affairs in the context of Malawi. Finally, the chapter highlights literature on the theoretical framework, namely the political theology and concludes with evaluation of literature.

2.2 Literature on the Book of Revelation

In the book *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, Richard Bauckham argues that the author of Revelation wrote his book on an Island called Patmos. According to him the author was probably a Christian who had been exiled on the island of Patmos as a martyr for his Christian faith.³² Furthermore for him, the writer is identified as a Jewish Christian Prophet who evidently was one of the circular Prophets in the Churches of the Province of

³² Richard, Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.1993), 4.

Asia.³³ Regarding the purpose of the Book, Richard Bauckham highlights that the writer wrote his book to comfort and to encourage Christians in the seven Churches and many others in Asia Minor who lived under the Roman Empire and experienced suffering and oppression by the system of the Roman Imperial cult.³⁴ He further identifies the book contains two kinds of literally genre. First a circular letter which stems from chapter one to four, and second, Prophecy from chapter four to twenty-two. Consequential to this present study, Revelation 1:5-6 is part of the circular letter according to Richard Bauckham.³⁵

Kenneth Gently in his book *Four Views of the Book of Revelation*, uncovers its socio-political context. For him, Revelation portrays the Roman Empire as a system of violent oppression, founded on conquest, maintained by violence and oppression.³⁶ In this socio-political context of the first century AD Rome, the Roman Emperor promoted a propaganda which made Christians to be exploited by the Roman Imperial cult.³⁷ The imperial cult imposed itself on the subjects of the Roman Empire and countered Christian Religion because it emphasized on the Lordship of Jesus and not Caesar.³⁸ This analysis is relevant for this study because in the Malawian context the state sometimes uses its agenda on the Church, this is observed in the findings section.

In his book, *The Revelation to John* Richard alludes to this by pointing to the two sides of the imperial cult. First, he notes the imperial cult as a cult of the false prophets and

³³ Richard, Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.1993), 4.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Kenneth, Gently, L et al. *Four Views of the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 45.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

also the cult of imperial priesthood.³⁹ He further sees the imperial cult venerating the Roman Emperor through the apparent divine names and claims of divinity given to him (Rev 13:1, 5).⁴⁰ In other words, Roman government legitimized itself by claiming religious loyalty. Furthermore, within this context he sees some Christian leaders who were instrumental in denying the worship based on Roman imperial cult. Some of these Christian leaders were martyred by the Roman authorities for clinging to the values and principles of the Kingdom of God.⁴¹ In his analysis Richard sees several prophecies in the book of Revelation as giving a description of the near future in which the Roman authority will not only persecute on the religious plane but also the persecution will move to the socio-political realms.⁴² This is presented through the imagery of Revelation 13:16-17, where the Roman authority is depicted restricting all economic transactions to those who are certified as worshippers of the beast.⁴³

Robert H. Gundry in his book *New Testament Survey*, also outline approaches for interpreting the book of Revelation.⁴⁴ These models include the Preterist View, Historicist, idealist, and Futurist view.⁴⁵

In his survey he argues that the Preterist view sees the book of Revelation as describing events which are now past and also the visions as of events arising out of the conditions of the Roman Empire in the 1st century A.D. Therefore, this means that Preterism understands the apocalypse from the standpoint of its first-century historical

³⁹ Richard, Popkin. *The Revelation to John*. (Illinois: Inter Varsity Press, 2005), 67.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Robert, H. Gundry. *The New Testament Survey*. (third edition) (Michigan: Zondervan, 1994), 461.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

setting. Similarly, For Stan Gundry and Marvin Pate this model is an interpretive model of the book of Revelation that seeks to understand its message within the framework of past events.⁴⁶ It is important to note that scholars who hold this view have their basis from the language in Revelation 1:1, “*the things that must soon take place,*” which establishes timing for events of the book. Kenneth Gentry is also one of such adherents to this view and he writes, “The prophecies were in the future when John wrote and when his original audience read them, they are now in the past”.⁴⁷ Therefore, with reference to this, the past entails the first twenty chapters of Revelation which are arguably to have been fulfilled at the time of the destruction of the temple in 70 A.D. This model comes under fire because it robs the book its eschatological and prophetic stance.⁴⁸ Furthermore, the said past prophetic fulfillment robs relevance of prophecy in the contemporary world.

Another view held by scholars in interpreting the book of Revelation is the historicist view.⁴⁹ This view assigns a chronological application of eschatological prophecy to concentrate events in history. According to Gundry and Pate, the model historicizes the message of Revelation from the first century audience and schematizes things to actual contemporary history.⁵⁰ For instance, some of those who hold this view argue that the papacy of the Roman Catholic Church is the beast presented in Revelation 13 and that the mark of the beast refers to the cryptic number from the name of papal position in Latin. However, according to Preterist the mark of the beast commonly ascribed as 666 was a cryptic number of Emperor Nero whose alphabetical letters of his name adds up to 666 or

⁴⁶ Stan, Gundry and Marvin Pate. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 37.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 37.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

660.⁵¹ The historicist view was actually developed during the period of reformation, a time in which the abuses of the holy seat of Rome were criticized.⁵² This study views that the appropriation of every symbol in Revelation to the contemporary history makes this approach to run into danger of wrong interpretations.

Futurism is another interpretive approach.⁵³ This view sees the book solely as prophecies where the events are seen to represent the future time. This view recognizes that the only historical content of the book is present rightly in Revelation chapters 1-3 and apply to the Church presently, but chapters 4-22 are about future events with no present day application to the Church. According to Robert Thomas “Revelation chapters 1-3 presents or constitutes historical character and conditions of the Church through the ages which are typified by seven Churches in Asia”.⁵⁴

The idealist approach is a view which advocates the theodicy philosophy.⁵⁵ This view sees in the book depictions of struggle between the forces of good and evil, between God and Satan.⁵⁶ The Idealist view favorably recognizes the symbolism of the battle between good and evil and its application as timeless truth in all ages of the history of the church.⁵⁷ It avoids historicizing the message of Revelation to the first century audience and also the contemporary history. This view asserts that there are multiple historical applications of the symbols found throughout the book.

⁵¹ Stan, Gundry and Marvin Pate. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 37

⁵² Gundry and Pate, 186.

⁵³ Stan, Gundry and Marvin Pate. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 37.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Robert, H. Gundry. *The New Testament Survey*. (third edition) (Michigan: Zondervan, 1994), 460.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

For this study the eclectic interpretive approach will be employed.⁵⁸ This view is moderation of all the foregoing models of interpretations, for it blends all the strengths of these positions. This approach according to Gundry and Pate deals with multiple historical applications of the symbols found throughout the book.⁵⁹ In simplest terms the multiple interpretation entails that the book deals with issues both contemporary with John and issues in the future as well, both relevant to contemporary church. For instance, the interpretation of Revelation 13 on the beast is understood clearly that in John's day the beast was the violent Roman Imperial system which launched intense persecution of the Church.⁶⁰ Another example of this interpretation is in dealing with the issues in the seven churches mentioned in Revelation 2 and 3. These historical Churches set the perspective of the Churches' strengths and problems.

Consequently, pivotal to the study's findings is the eclectic interpretive approach mentioned above. This interpretive approach serves as an important backdrop to this study, although it is not the primary purpose of this work to describe how every chapter is interpreted using this approach. The exegetical work using this approach particularly demonstrates that the concepts of "Kingdom and Priests" have a social political bearing on the Church, and that the socio-political categories in the mission of the Church are relevant to the contemporary Malawian setting.

⁵⁸ Stan, Gundry and Marvin Pate. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*, 37.

⁵⁹ Dean, E. Klein. *Revelation and Suffering Church, The Tribulation, Kingdom*. (North Carolina: Moody Bible Institute, 2017), 51.

⁶⁰ Gundry and Pate, 187.

In view of these scholarly works, the study in the exegetical section has made use of these works to build the historical understanding of the book of Revelation and especially Revelation 1:4-6.

2.3 Review of Literature on Revelation 1:4-6

In his work titled *Revelation and Suffering Church, the Tribulation, Kingdom*, Dean E. Klein begins with a coloration between Exodus 19:6 and Revelation 1:4-6. For him, John used the term βασιλείαν (Kingdom) and ἱερεῖς (priest) based on the Old Testament phrase found in Exodus 19:6. The key phrase, “*He made us a Kingdom, Priests to His God*” (*Rev 1v. 6a*) is equivalent to Exodus 19:6, “*You shall be to me a Kingdom of Priests and a holy nation*”. For Klein, this was written in the future tense, but was never fulfilled by Israel. However, Klein notes that in Revelation, John asserts that it is fulfilled in the Church.⁶¹ Klein further goes on to argue that “in the Church does not merely live within a Kingdom but exercise Kingly power albeit under the rule of God, as Priests, the Church exercises its role in its witness to and willingness to suffer in a hostile world”.⁶² His analysis on the allusions of Exodus 19:6 will be vital for this present study.

George, Bradford Card in his commentary titled *Commentary On Revelation of St John the Divine*, provides an exegesis on Revelation 1:4-6. For him, the concepts of (Kingdom) and ἱερεῖς (Priest) used in Revelation 1:4-6 employed both God-ward and man-ward function.⁶³ He agrees with Klein’s assertion that John applies the description of Old

⁶¹ Dean, E. Klein. *Revelation and Suffering Church, The Tribulation, Kingdom*, (North Carolina: Moody Bible Institute, 2017), 51.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ George, Bradford Card. *Commentary on The Revelation of St John the Divine*. (London: Charles Black.1966),17.

Testament Israel to the Church.⁶⁴To him, the Old Testament Israel was as a Kingdom because they belong to God through covenant and as Priest because they were set apart as preservatives of Gods holiness.⁶⁵

Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza in her book, *The Book Revelation: Judgments and Justice* sees Revelation 1:5-6 as being situated in a context in which the redemptive role of Christ in the Church was unfolding in the suffering and oppression of believers in the first century AD.⁶⁶ First, for her, the writer writes to assure his readers to live up their holy calling in a socio-political system which makes the nature of their redemption obscure.⁶⁷ Second, to assure them that redemption gives them a new dignity in society.⁶⁸ To her, this new dignity is demonstrated in the titles *βασιλείαν* (Kingdom) and *ιερεῖς* (Priest) which in ancient antiquity represented bearers of political and sacral authority.⁶⁹ However, questions have been raised on how such titles can be applicable in the hostile situation of first century AD in which the Christian lived.⁷⁰

Leonard Goppert in his *Theology of the New Testament* pays a special treatment of Revelation. He deals with the problem of authorship, the content, the problem of interpretation, God and history, political anti-Christianity and the true disciple and consummation of the community of faith.⁷¹ In analyzing the concepts of (Kingdom) and

⁶⁴ See: Dean E. Klein. *Revelation and Suffering Church, The Tribulation, Kingdom*, (North Carolina: Moody Bible Institute, 2017), 51.

⁶⁵ George, Bradford Card. *Commentary on The Revelation of St John the Divine*. (London: Charles Black.1966),17.

⁶⁶ Elisabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation; Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Leonard, Goppert. *Theology of the New Testament*. (Michigan: W.B Eerdmans Publishing 1981), 187.

ἱερεὺς (Priest) he sees a relationship between Revelations 1:4-6 with Revelation 5:10 which says “you have made them to be a Kingdom and priests....”(NIV). For him, the redemption is central to the composition of the Kingdom. However, he still shares the idea that the full expression of this reign shall be witnessed through the *parousia*.⁷²

Based on the foregoing literature, the choice of this text to analyze the role of the clergy in Malawi’s socio-political sphere is twofold. First, it outlines the nature of the Church through the terms Kingdom and Priest. Second, the text lays in the rich historical setting in which the church confronted with Roman Government. These have been used to analyze the extent to which the clergy in the Christian setting in the context of Malawi represent the Kingdom of God in regard to the social political affairs.

2.4 Literature on the Kingdom and Priestly Ministry of the Church

Johan Heyns, one of prominent scholars on the Church and Kingdom discusses one of the critical topics on *The Church and the Kingdom of God*. In his analysis of the Kingdom of God he covers the following; God’s Kingdom as a dynamic reality, the Kingdom of God as a universal reality, God’s Kingdom as both a present and future reality, Gods Kingdom as a reality characterized by a counter reality.⁷³ In his point on *God’s Kingdom as a present and future reality*, he emphasizes that the Kingdom is experienced in present reality whenever the Church finds submission to God.⁷⁴ Furthermore, in his work on the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the Church he holds the view that the

⁷² Leonard, Goppert. *Theology of the New Testament*. (Michigan: W.B Eerdmans Publishing 1981), 187.

⁷³ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 7.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

two are not identical. The basis of his argument lays in the understanding that the Kingdom of God covers many facets of reality.⁷⁵

Another work highlighting similar conclusions is the work *Church, State and Society: The Anglican Case* by James Tengatenga. His work demonstrates to the reader how the Church is related to the Kingdom. The primary questions which drive his inquiry is on whether the Church is related to the Kingdom of God, or whether the Church or the state is the Kingdom of God.⁷⁶ In an attempt to answer these questions, Tengatenga presents ideas of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and Karl Barth. Tengatenga highlights that Barth sees the relationship as in three concentric circles, the Church in the inner circle, the government in the outer and the two in the circle of the Kingdom.⁷⁷ For him, members of the Church belong to both circles and that the Church has the mandate not only to work in the inner circle but also to work actively in civil community on the behalf on the Kingdom.⁷⁸ This analysis is pivotal for the present work because it gives us a missionary outlook of the Church in participating in the Kingdom of God within the spectrum of civil issues.

George Eldon Ladd's book *on A Theology of the New Testament* gives critical insights to this study. Ladd discusses the ethics of the Kingdom of God, ethics of the reign of God, ethics of the inner life. One of the areas of concern is how he handles the point on the relationship between the Kingdom of God and the Church. In response to this question he highlights that the Church is not the Kingdom. However, for him several conclusions suffice. These include that, the Church is a witness to the Kingdom, the Kingdom creates

⁷⁵ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 7.

⁷⁶ James, Tengatenga. *Church, State and Society: The Anglican Case*. (Zomba: Kachere, 2006), 196.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

the Church, the Church is the custodian of the Kingdom.⁷⁹ These points are some of the issues which are debated in every discussion on the Church and the Kingdom. This research will appeal to these but will endeavor to show a relationship between this to Revelation 1:4-6.

Jürgen Moltmann's in his seminal work on *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology* sees through the Bible the New and Old Testament a Trinitarian conception of the Kingdom. In highlighting this Trinitarian schema, he argues that "it is because of the Kingdom of God that God creates the world. In order to bring that into creation, God reveals God self". Furthermore, for Moltmann, the process of the establishment of the Kingdom of God as attested in the scripture can only be done through the salvific work of Christ. Further Moltmann opines that "in the present age the spirit is in the process of renewal and actualizing the work of the Kingdom".⁸⁰ So within the Church, God continues to interact with creation for the consummation of the Kingdom to take place.

The Encyclopedia of Religion edited by Mircea Eliade asserts that the Kingdom of God is one of central concepts of religion. This work recognizes and affirms that in most religions the Kingdom of God is conceived within history as a just and transcendent reality which enters and transforms history.⁸¹ According to New Testament scholarship the message of the gospel has this central theme. On one hand, within the gospel writings John the Baptist called for repentance and reform in society in preparation of the Kingdom of God. On the other hand, Jesus message was centered on both the present and future

⁷⁹ James, Tengesha. *Church, State and Society: The Anglican Case*. (Zomba: Kachere, 2006), 196.

⁸⁰ Jürgen, Moltmann. *The Coming of God: Christian Eschatology*. Translated by Kohl. (London: SCM Press, 1996), 50.

⁸¹ Mircea, Eliade(ed). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. (Michigan: McMillan 1987), 308.

manifestation of the Kingdom. In analyzing the message of the Kingdom of God in the teachings of Jesus, Elliade in this work sees four strands. First, the entering of the Kingdom, the Kingdom's victory over darkness, the Kingdom as object of search or struggle as proofs that the Kingdom has broken into history (Mk 11:20).⁸² Second, the teachings deal with the conditions of entering into the Kingdom, these are both negative and positive (Mk 10:25), coming of the Kingdom as the coming reward for the poor (Mk 6:20).⁸³ The Third set deals with, the Kingdom of God as the object of desire (Mt 23:13). Finally, the fourth phrases deals with the future presence of the Kingdom (Mt 14:25, Lk 22:29-30).⁸⁴ It is important to note that within contemporary application of the gospel the Kingdom of God has been used to legitimize the diaconal ministry of the Church towards the vulnerable in society.⁸⁵ However, few studies go further to legitimize its ministry in the socio-political affairs with the state.

2.5 Priestly Ministry

James Douglas, explains in simplest terms that a Priest is a minister of a religion.⁸⁶ However, he differentiates how various congregations understand the function of this term. First, he points out that “in the Episcopalian tradition the term priest refers particularly to the clergy, while in Congregational churches this allotment is obscure on the basis of the teaching of the priesthood of all believers”.⁸⁷ Second, he argues that the biblical concept

⁸² Mircea, Elliade(ed). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. (Michigan: McMillan 1987), 308

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid, 307.

⁸⁶ James, D Douglas and Tenney, Miller, (eds). *Bible Dictionary*. (Michigan: Macmillan.1987), 230.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

of priests carries the following meanings: as one who performs sacral functions, teaches and proclaim the will of God.⁸⁸ This analysis is central for this study in highlighting the functional aspects of priests.

In the book *Levities and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition* edited by Mark Leuchter and Jeremy Hutton, discusses the views of several scholars who argue for the functions of priests and Levites in relation to the cult, kinship, literacy, sexual politics and gendered space, warfare, mythology, administration, and other components of Israelite life.⁸⁹ In this book, they account for the views of scholar who agree that “Aaronide and Levites had a long-standing sacral and political function”.⁹⁰ For them, “the Aaronide were serving as the dominant priestly house governing temple affairs while the Levites were functioning as scribal and administrative mediators between the public and the ruling class”.⁹¹ This analysis helps to establish the view that the priestly ministry was much in touch with socio-political sphere of Israel and helped to shape its day to day affairs.

Paul Hoskins in his work on *Priesthood in the Book of Revelation*, concentrates his attention on the priestly elements of Revelation and the temple theme.⁹² His major focus on the priestly theme has to do with elements of the people of God as his priests or priestly servants. In his analysis of the priestly content he categorizes John’s presentation of the priesthood of the people of God in the future and the present. For him, the term “priests” occurs three times in Revelation as reference to Christians as the people of God (Rev 1:6;

⁸⁸ James, D Douglas and Tenney, Miller, (eds). Bible Dictionary. (Michigan: Macmillan.1987), 230.

⁸⁹ Mark, A. Leuchter and Jeremy M. Hutton. *Levities and Priests in Biblical History and Tradition*. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature,2011), 17.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Paul, M. Hoskins. *Priesthood in the Book of Revelation* <http://equip.sbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SBJT-22.2-Priesthood-in-Revelation-Hoskins> (accessed on 19/05/2019).

5:10; 20:6).⁹³ Hoskins argues that “in all these three cases, the mention of “priests” is part of an allusion to Exodus 19:6”. For his work these allusion to the priesthood of Israel has a bearing on the Christian community.⁹⁴ Consequently, Hoskins shows that it is not just about the sacral function of the Priest that is mentioned, but also their role as a people of God in the socio-political sphere. This work gives special insight to the present work on how the clergy can apply the socio-political functions of priests in their role in socio-political context of Malawi.

Hermann Mvula in his PhD doctoral thesis titled *The Use of Old Testament Ethical Principles in Entrenching Constitutionalism in Malawi*, presents a comprehensive overview of the Priestly Levitical Code of holiness. In his work he pays particular interest on the essentials of the law of holiness which covers issues like “holiness in social ethics, holiness at work, holiness in obtaining the truth and using the truth, holiness in motive and heart holiness in governance and political process”.⁹⁵ Interesting to this work is how these topics are related to the socio-political context of Malawi.⁹⁶

Therefore, in view of the current research, it can be viewed that the Clergy have a critical role in relating these to the socio-political sphere of Malawi. This research sees this gap in this research. This study appeals to the view of priestly ministry in general, paying specific focus on the socio-political function of the priests and relating these to Revelation 1:4-6.

⁹³ Paul, M. Hoskins. Priesthood in the Book of Revelation <http://equip.sbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SBJT-22.2-Priesthood-in-Revelation-Hoskins> (accessed on 19/05/2019).

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Hermann, Mvula. *The Use of Old Testament Ethical Principles in Entrenching Constitutionalism in Malawi. (PhD Thesis)* (Zomba: Chancellor College, 2018), 225.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 244.

2.6 Literature on the Phenomenon of the Kingdom in Contemporary History

In his book, *The Gospel Ferment Theological Essays*, Kenneth Ross covers some theological reflection on social transformation. His approach is to look at the Kingdom of God in contemporary politics. In The essay *on The Kingdom and Contemporary Politics*, Ross covers topics like divine salvation and political struggle, the ultimate and penultimate in relation to the Kingdom of God.⁹⁷ He first argues that “‘in the one party area the Kingdom of God was often presented as realm quite different from the contemporary society’”.⁹⁸ On account of this reason, the Church in Malawi restricted its public witness.⁹⁹ However, his concern was on whether the Christian community in Malawi still regards God’s liberative action in view of the Kingdom of God as having a relationship with political transformation.¹⁰⁰ This concern is albeit similar to the objective of this study. However, Ross’ study focused on the Christian communities while in the present work members of the clergy are central to the study.

Heyns in another section of his book which is entitled *The Church and the People, Church and Politics* discusses several issues. He gives an analogy of the chemical compound of water as an example. The atoms of hydrogen and oxygen combine to form water (H₂O) but the atoms do not cease to exist as such.¹⁰¹ A new compound is formed with new characteristics but the elements are the same.¹⁰² Similarly for him, the Church

⁹⁷ Kenneth, Ross. *The Gospel Ferment in Malawi Theological Essays* (Gweru: Mambo Press.1995), 51.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 213.

¹⁰² Ibid.

remains in the sphere of a people in the state and the church is intermeshed in this relationship. Second, Critical to his work is his views on church and politics. For him “politics is a system of norms and actions for conducting state affairs”.¹⁰³ Furthermore, he argues that the church and state are both modes of the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁴ The state in his view is a servant of the Kingdom of God vested with authority to bring order in the world (Rom 13). However, he is against the view which sidelines the church and leaves the political sphere only to the state. The reason behind this is that sometimes the state can degenerate work against this calling and become an enemy of God and become an ally of the Kingdom of evil.¹⁰⁵

John De Gruchy shares similar statements with Heyns on Church and politics. In his article *Prayer, Politics and False Piety*¹⁰⁶ he addresses the question on Church and state relations. This work argues pertinent issues as advanced by Heyns in the foregoing paragraph stating that the Church is not just the priestly and prophetic servant of the state, it is the servant of the people and an agent of justice.¹⁰⁷ And also, that the Church in its priestly service to the nation, it is a witness of the Kingdom of God.¹⁰⁸

In her work, *The Relevance of Understanding The Kingdom of God*, Mwakapenda presents the imperatives of the kingdom of God to society.¹⁰⁹ First, for her “the Kingdom of God gives moral imperatives that men and women can rise above their egoism to serve

¹⁰³ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 213.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, 220.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 215.

¹⁰⁸ John, De Gruchy. “Prayer, Politics and False Piety”, in Allan Boesk and Charles, *Villa –Vicencio a Call for an End to Unjust Rule* (Glasgow: Bell, and Bain Ltd 1968), 108.

¹⁰⁹ John, De Gruchy. “Prayer, Politics and False Piety”, in Allan Boesk and Charles, *Villa –Vicencio a Call for an End to Unjust Rule* (Glasgow: Bell, and Bain Ltd 1968), 108

the greater good’’.¹¹⁰ Second, she argues that “the political ethics of the Kingdom are beneficial to society’’.¹¹¹ For her, the Kingdom of God preaches social righteousness which is concerned with seeking liberation from oppression and promotion of justice, integrity and honor.¹¹² These critical imperatives are important for contextualizing the relevance of the Kingdom in society, hence vital in contextualizing Revelation 1:4:-6 to Malawian socio-political affairs.

2.7 . Literature on the Clergy in Socio-political Affairs

There are number of books and articles by scholars outlining a variety of perspectives on the role of the clergy in the social political context of Malawi. First, the article by Martin Ott in the book, *Malawi’s Second Democratic Elections*¹¹³ provides an indispensable guide to those seeking to understand the prophetic and institutional approaches of the clergy’s role in the socio-political. Ott highlights the prophetic and institutional role. On one hand he argues that “the prophetic role reflects the bold proclamation of the word of God in situations of injustice and oppression’’.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, the institutional role presents contributions towards social and public order.¹¹⁵ In his approach, Ott sees two major problems. First, the effectiveness of the prophetic depends

¹¹⁰ Mwakapenda, M, S. *The Relevance of Understanding the Kingdom of God (BA Diss, Zomba: Chancellor College,2014)*, 5.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Martin, Ott. “The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)”, in Martin Ott et al, *Malawi’s Second Democratic Election Process, Problems and Prospects* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000), 122

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

on the collective voice of the clergy.¹¹⁶ Another gap he observes is that in the institutional role there is a problem of delegation and representation.¹¹⁷ This is present in scenarios where the clergy sideline their Prophetic role by delegating these to civil society institutions like Public Affairs Committee.¹¹⁸ These two critical gaps are essential to orientation of this present work. This book is very important as it authenticates how the Church embraced both the institutional and the prophetic in the advent of multiparty democracy and in the post democratic era.¹¹⁹

Another profound analysis is by Peter von Doep. His analysis uses distinctive terms from the preceding views. In contrast to the institutional and prophetic role, Peter von Doep describes the role of the clergy using these distinctive terms mainly the internal and hidden face.¹²⁰ For him “the internal face includes the things of which the clergy routinely engage within the church institutions which include routine activities such as clerical messages and pastoral priorities. The external face includes active role in politics, making pledges to support and advisory role”.¹²¹ For Von Doep, the external face is done through institutions like Public Affairs Committee (PAC) and Church and society or many other Church institutions which undertake Civic education, educating people in the process of

¹¹⁶ Martin, Ott. ‘*The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)*’, in Martin Ott et al, *Malawi’s Second Democratic Election Process, Problems and Prospects* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000), 122.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Peter, Von Doep. ‘The Kingdom Beyond Zasitha: Churches and Political Life in Malawi’s Post Authoritarian Era’, in King Phiri, et, al, *Democratization in Malawi: A Stock Taking* (Blantyre: CLAIM, 1998), 110.

¹²¹ Ibid.

democratization.¹²² However, Peter von Doep observes the problem in the internal face in the following statement:

Though the church embraces some level of social activism, this does not translate into change in how the clergy think, because politics is addressed outside pastoral engagement.¹²³

This observation is pivotal to this study because it will help us articulate the disparities which exist in the pastoral strategies of the clergy in Malawi and their respective ecclesiastical setting as it applies and contextualizes Revelation 1:4-6.

Binala Joseph in his work on *The Church and Participatory Democracy in Malawi: An assessment of Political Witness of C.C.A.P.*, ably discusses the effects Church government on participatory democracy in Malawi. He observes that in the Episcopalian setting the church government is ruled by bishops.¹²⁴ This type of government is exemplified in Catholic and Anglican Churches. In this government the Bishops are higher than the least of the clergy and the laity. Joseph observes that the Bishops are the chief teachers of or spokespersons of the Church.¹²⁵ The implication here is that the bishops have more authority to speak on the social-political issues than the rest of the clergy and laity.

Another strand of Church government discussed in his work is the Congregation model. For him this model allows collective participation within the local congregation.

¹²² Peter, Von Doep. 'The Kingdom Beyond Zasitha: Churches and Political Life in Malawi's Post Authoritarian Era'', in King Phiri, et, al, *Democratization in Malawi: A Stock Taking* (Blantyre: CLAIM ,1998),110.

¹²³ Peter, Von Doep. 'The Kingdom Beyond Zasitha: Churches and Political Life in Malawi's Post Authoritarian Era'', in King Phiri, et, al, *Democratization in Malawi: A Stock Taking* (Blantyre: CLAIM ,1998),110.

¹²⁴ Binala, Joseph, *The Church and Participatory Democracy in Malawi; An assessment of Political Witness of C.C.A.P.*, (Zomba, Kachere.2005), 6.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

This model is typical with Baptist and Pentecostal. Joseph also discusses the Presbyterian model of church government. According to him, Presbyterian is middle to the Episcopalian and congregation. The Presbyterian government rests upon equality of the clergy on the basis that regardless of the leadership they are all both teaching and ruling elders of the Church. This model allows variety of in views the way the clergy orient themselves toward politics.¹²⁶

Austin Chiyeka in his dissertation, *The Church, State and Politics in the Post-Colonial the Case of Zambia*,¹²⁷ argues that Church and State relations is indispensable in the context of Zambia. Interesting to his work is how he uses Calhoun Brown hypothesis,¹²⁸ which stipulates that being a member of a Church where political theology is articulated can be an important impetus to political participation.¹²⁹ To him, the hypothesis puts the clergy to task as far as the socio-political affairs are concerned. His critical conclusions are that Christians can engage in political issues at community if church leaders encourage them to do so by guiding them in ways of engaging with secular powers.¹³⁰ To him, the clergy, priests, Pastors, Evangelists and Prophets have a duty to ensure that the laity had a conscience to make democracy work. Consequently, his work deals with how members of the clergy ensure Christians participate in the socio-political arena. However, a gap exists on the participation of the members of the clergy themselves in the social political arena. This aspect is addressed in this study.

¹²⁶ Binala, Joseph. *The Church and Participatory Democracy in Malawi; An assessment of Political Witness of C.C A. P*, (Zomba, Kachere.2005), 6

¹²⁷ Austin, Chiyeka. *The Church, State and Politics in the Post-Colonial the Case of Zambia* (PhD. Thesis) (Zomba: Chancellor College, 2003), 179.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

In a yet another article relating to these issues, Tarisai Mutangi in the article titled *Religion, law and Human Rights in Zimbabwe*¹³¹ argues that the involvement of religious leaders into politics should be regarded as an individual exercising his freedom. However, he insists that this should not ignore the indisputable role played by churches in civil society in the quest to social transformation.¹³² However, his analysis critically exposes the gap which exist among the clergy in terms of understanding whether their laws and freedoms in Zimbabwe empowers them to act in the socio-political sphere through the institutional and political role.¹³³ Therefore, Tarisai Mutangi asks critical questions on crucial issues which expose the clergy and the Churches mission in socio-political context which are relevant for this study.

Gerald Chigona in his PhD Doctoral thesis titled, *A Critique Concerning The Living of The Catholic Social Teaching 1964-2004*¹³⁴ ably discusses Church and politics in Malawi. He observes that although the Church has instruments that empower her to act in the socio-political context.¹³⁵ For the Catholic Church these instruments include the Catholic social teaching. Chigona observes that the Catholic Church in Malawi began to make use of such teachings in early 1960, however for him the impact of these teachings

¹³¹ Tarisai Mutangi *Religion, law and Human Rights in Zimbabwe* 'Rights in zimbabwe.afri.hum.rights law j., Pretoria, v.8,n.2,p526545,2008<https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=script_arttext&pid=s1996-20962008000200014&ing=en&nrm=iso>.accessed on 8 oct.2021.

¹³² Tarisai Mutangi. *Religion, law and Human Rights in Zimbabwe* 'Rights in zimbabwe.afri.hum.rights law j., Pretoria, v.8,n.2,p526-545, 2008<https://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=script_arttext&pid=s1996-20962008000200014&ing=en&nrm=iso>.accessed on 8 oct.2021.

¹³³ Billy, Gama *Secularization in Malawi and Britain, A Comparative Inquiry*, (Zomba: Kachere,2016), 98..

¹³⁴ Chigona, Gerald, L, M. *Church and Politics in Malawi, A Critique Concerning the Living of the Catholic Social Teaching 1964-2004(Ph.D. Thesis)* (Zomba: Chancellor College,2006), 229.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

were blurred until 1992.¹³⁶ He observes that with coming of the pastoral letter *Living Our Faith* the clergy rediscovered their prophetic voice. In relating these in the post-one party era, Chigona argues that the Clergy can make more impact if they adopt a theological shift i.e. shift in pastoral objectives from the primary objectives.¹³⁷

According to Billy Gama in his book *Secularization in Malawi and Britain*, the Church has been affected by religious pluralism and national political change.¹³⁸ He observes that socialization in society affects the clerical role and authority in society.¹³⁹ Gama observes that secularization affects institution of the clergy like the Malawi Council of Churches.¹⁴⁰ Gama also observes that pastoral letters are no longer respected as they used to. In view of this he relates a respondent who argued in his findings that: “*when the Church issues a pastoral letter the government connives with another Church who normally criticizes the other church*”¹⁴¹. This observation relates to the first research sub-question which aims to find out what issues undermines the clergy from engaging the socio-political arena.

In the book *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, A Study in Promise and Legacy* John Lwanda gives critical insights of the role of the clergy in the post one party era. His study is critical on the complacency of the clergy. For him, he sees the pastoral letters and the support they received as short lived.¹⁴² He acknowledges that these instruments could have promulgated

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Chigona, Gerald, L. M. *Church and Politics in Malawi, A Critique Concerning the Living of the Catholic Social Teaching 1964-2004*(Ph.D. Thesis) (Zomba: Chancellor College,2006), 229.

¹³⁸ Gama, Billy. *Secularization in Malawi and Britain, A Comparative Inquiry*, (Zomba: Kachere,2016), 98.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 99.

¹⁴² John, Lwanda. *Kamuzu Banda of Malawi, a Study in Promise and Legacy (Malawi Under DR Banda 1961-1994)*. (Zomba: Kachere,2009),511.

a culture in which the individual members of the clergy speak. However, in today's context the clergy fear of speaking on social injustice despite the successes of PAC. His input is very important to this research as it aligns us to the problem of political alignment identified in this research. However, a gap that exists is to identify the reason why some members of the clergy who were not critical in socio-political affair become suddenly critical.

In yet another work by Hermann Yokoniah Mvula on *The Use of Old Testament Ethical Principles in Entrenching Constitutionalism in Malawi*,¹⁴³ Mvula shoes how both in the one party and multi-party era various political regimes abused their power on the Church. He observes that the controlled and penetrated the bishops, pastors, priests to be silence.¹⁴⁴ This research finding highlights how the institutional approach becomes paralyzed when the clergy are antagonized in state affairs most especially in repressive regimes like that of Dr Banda and DPP regimes of both Bingu wa Muthalika and Peter Muthalika. This finding is crucial to the study, but, however a gap exists in explaining why the Government or political regimes decide to antagonize or incorporate the clergy in their system.

Bessie Massa in a thesis titled *Assessing the Impact of Blantyre Synod Health And Development Commission: A Liberation Perspective*¹⁴⁵ discusses this commission as one of the institution of the C.C.A.P which is used by church to interact with the socio-political context. According to her, she observes that such institutions have problems because they

¹⁴³ Hermann, Y, Mvula. *The Use of Old Testament Ethical Principles in Entrenching Constitutionalism In Malawi*. (PhD thesis) (Zomba: Chancellor College, 2018), 152.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Massa, Bessie. *Assessing The Impact of Blantyre Synod Health and Development Commission; A Liberation Perspective (BA Dissertation)*. (Zomba: Chancellor College, 2017), 6.

do not align with the biblical concept of liberation and also modern liberation theology.¹⁴⁶ She observes that liberation resonates with teaching of the synod, which is in terms of social, economic and political oppression. Hence, for her the problem exists in bringing the liberation perspective into reality.

James Tengetenga in yet another section of his book *Church and Society an Anglican Case*,¹⁴⁷ Tengetenga deals with the Church in democratic society. For him, a democratic society is the one in which there is an active civil society.¹⁴⁸ Within this democratic society, the civil society is that sphere in which different institutions work towards maintaining and advancing of democratic ethos.¹⁴⁹

Therefore, Tengatenga demonstrates that the Church gave a voice to the governed and gives birth to the formation of civil society by the formation of the Public Affairs Committee, this together the rest of the civil society and give it a voice. Tengatenga advances the view that the Church has to relate to the *polis* which is composed of lawyers, businesspersons, politicians of divergent views as it did in the advent of democracy.¹⁵⁰

2.8 Literature on Political Theology

This study has employed Political theology as a theory that will guide it. This study makes use of the writing of Francis Schüssler Fiorenza *Political Theology as Foundational Theology*. Alister Kee. *Scope of Political Theology*, Jürgen Moltmann, *The Politics of*

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ James, Tengetenga. *Church, State and Society: The Anglican Case* (Zomba: Kachere, 2006), 204.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

Discipleship and Discipleship of Politics and John Baptist Metz, *The Two-fold Political Theology*, to form the basis of this study's theoretical framework. For instance Kee, sees the Bible as having an explicit socio-political content that guide the Christian witness in the society.¹⁵¹ These contents are both in the Old and New testaments. In his famous quote he states that:

that the attempt to separate politics and theology is invariably done out of self-interest: political theology does not arise from opportunism or attempt to win strategic advantage, but a particular understanding of the way we can be true to the fundamental character of Christian faith.¹⁵²

This certainly is critical to Christianity because fundamentally the Bible has an explicit content which show an encounter of faith and politics. Kee's understanding is imperative because it shows the scope in which theologians can engage the socio-political context. It is very clear from his study therefore that the attempt of political theology is not to maliciously politicize the Church, its faith and its theology.¹⁵³ His book therefore guides this study in that it uses the political content of the book of Revelation and the socio-political terms which are relevant for the clergy in their role in socio-political affairs which should be suitable for the Malawian context.

In his Book, *The Politics of Discipleship and Discipleship of Politics*, Moltmann argues that political theology is also a Hermeneutical Theology.¹⁵⁴ In his own view, he submits "it is not good to recognize the socio-political content of the Bible or theology but

¹⁵¹ Alister, Kee. *Scope of Political Theology*. (London: SCM Press, 1978), 3.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

these must be followed with a Christian response to complex challenges in society’’.¹⁵⁵ Therefore, the key challenge in this regard is to let political theology be ‘speaking up’, which Moltmann articulates as the prophetic task of political theology.¹⁵⁶ This understanding is imperative for this study because it shows us that formulating theologies that address socio-issues is only a first step in a series of actions, as these become useful when they are practically implemented through the prophetic task of speaking up.¹⁵⁷

In the same vein Francis Schüssler Fiorenza advocates this public awareness. He calls this ‘public awareness’ as a hermeneutics of suspicion.¹⁵⁸ He argues for “‘a public religious discourse in which political theology will make the public sphere aware of its values and concerns’”.¹⁵⁹ The challenge to him is to let Christian political theology to articulate an understanding of human nature and human sin in order to uncover the power within humanity which leads to oppression and exclusion.¹⁶⁰ This agrees with Qeko Jere’s writing on the public role of the Church, where he argues for a *kenosis* framework as a solution that goes beyond the gist of secular approaches in addressing issues like corruption.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁵ Jürgen, Moltmann, *The Politics of Discipleship and Discipleship of Politics*, (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 36.

¹⁵⁶ Jürgen, Moltmann, *The Politics of Discipleship and Discipleship of Politics*, (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 36.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Francis, Schüssler Fiorenza, “Prospects for Political Theology in the Face of Contemporary Challenges”: in Francis Schüssler Fiorenza et al *Political Theology Contemporary Challenges and Future Directions* (Louisville: John Knox Press 2013), 60.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Qeko, Jere. Pastoral Letters and The Church in the Public Square: An Assessment of the Role of Pastoral Letters in Influencing Democratic Process in Malawi <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1844> (accessed on 24/08/2019).

Sinclair Ferguson outlines the ideas of John Baptist Metz, on political theology. He argues that the task of political theology is to de-privatize theology.¹⁶² For him, the promises of the Kingdom such as freedom, justice, and reconciliation are not as private affairs, but are seen in regard to the political society.¹⁶³ He further views that “just as much as the scripture witness Jesus in moral conflict with the religious and political leaders of his society, and the church is called to bear an eschatological message and should expect similar encounters with the world”.¹⁶⁴ This study agrees with this notion because some of the members of the clergy are silenced to concentrate on preaching the gospel as private enterprise which is detached from socio-issues in the society.

2.9 Chapter Summary

From the foregoing literature reviewed, it can be observed that most of the individual scholars generally have something to say on the socio-political context of the Church in first century AD. From these studies, the Church was impacted negatively from the policies that the Roman Government established which posed as a stumbling block for Christians in Asia Minor. The literature also purports a general call to Church leaders and the Christian communities of Asia Minor not to compromise to the demand to the Roman Government and the societies. This feature is pivotal to the thesis because it is used to analyze the situation of the clergy in Malawi. Another essential feature is how the phrase “Kingdom”, “Priest” has been understood by the various scholars. The Kingdom of God

¹⁶² Sinclair B. Ferguson. *New Dictionary of Theology*. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 521.

¹⁶³ Sinclair B. Ferguson. *New Dictionary of Theology*. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 521.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

has been seen as the public witness of the gospel while the priestly role has been interpreted as the sacral and social mission of the men of God. However, only a few scholars have adopted this interpretation. This thesis addresses this gap by applying the concepts in the socio-mission or secular mission of the Clergy in Malawi's socio-political context.

Within the Malawian setting, it is observed from the literature that the clergy since 1992 have used the prophetic and institutional approach to play role in socio-political sphere. However it is observed that the clergy still struggle to use these approaches because the use of the gospel to impact the socio-political is still in the development stage. It is observed that there is need for the clergy to implement biblical frameworks in order to impact the political landscape. Consequently, a gap exists in the area where the clergy use biblical frameworks to play various roles in socio-political affairs.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was the literature review for the study which discussed; literature on the book of Revelation, literature on Kingdom, and priestly ministry, literature on the clergy in the socio-political sphere of Malawi. Finally, the theoretical framework guiding this study was also discussed. This chapter focuses on the methodology that the study employs to obtain accomplish its purpose.

3.2 Research Methodology

This study is a qualitative research. It seeks to analyze what is currently known about the topic using the Book of Revelation, specifically Revelation 1:4-6. The work is strictly a desk type of research. As a desk research it uses secondary information by employing data from published books, commentaries, articles, newspapers, journals and official church documents containing statements of the clergy on the socio-political affairs of Malawi.

Since the study employs Revelation 1:4-6, the study uses a number of exegetical principles in order to establish the meaning of the text. Primarily, the research looks at the Historical critical methods. However, methods are not used so strictly, in order to give room for interpretation, application and analysis of the topic under study. The rationale behind this is to give room of reading and reflecting on the past and future phenomenon in interpreting the book of Revelation.

3.3 Tri-polar Approach

While inductive and deductive methods were paramount in exegesis and slightly in application, the main method/approach used in application was the tri-polar approach. This approach is emphasized in African contextual biblical studies.¹⁶⁵ The approach involves three poles: a) the African context; b) the biblical text; and c) appropriation.¹⁶⁶ As explained by Gerald West there is a two-way movement between text and context, enabling each to interrogate the other critically, and construct connection.¹⁶⁷ Hence, the study deals with the historical context of Revelation and the Malawi context, both of which are substantially shaped by social, economic and political conditions.

3.4 Data Collection

There are different techniques and tools of data collection which are very important in research. The research relied on secondary sources to come up with the research findings. These secondary sources used to obtain data include books, Bible, commentaries, articles, Newspapers, Journals and internet sources.

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

After collection of data from the material the next stage was processing. This involved a series of steps. The data was collected, grouped into themes, checked for

¹⁶⁵ Takuze, Saul Chitsulo. “Exploring the Role of the Wicked in Habakkuk from Malawi’s Socio-Economic and Political Viewpoint”. OTE 28/2 (2015): 301.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Gerald.O. West. *The Stolen Bible: From the Tool of Imperialism to African Icon*, (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2016), 422.

completeness, accuracy and uniformity with the sources. Upon completion of this stage, the researcher scrutinized data along the aim and each research question to make sure that all the required information is obtained. A record was prepared to document all relevant data available in the period of the research.

3.6 Ethical Consideration

In the process of academic research, it is important to explain the steps the researcher had taken to treat the research sources both primary and secondary with precaution. In field of humanities, Biblical and religious studies desk study research like this one which uses already existing written information, all ethical principles go with the manner in which data was collected and used using prescribed standards.

In terms of references and acknowledging other authors' work the study has employed a referencing style which is known as the Kate Turabian *Manual for writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations* in citation and reference list system. This approach is traditionally renowned in disciplines of humanities (arts, history, music, religion, theology). It requires the use of bibliographic footnotes or endnotes in conjunction with a bibliography to cite sources used in the research papers and dissertations. This is applied in most of the universities of repute world-wide.¹⁶⁸

3.7 Validity and Reliability

¹⁶⁸ Kate, Turabian. *Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations*. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995).

Validity and reliability in research is paramount to any academic paper. These aspects deal with the correctness or credibility of the description, explanations and conclusions of the matter at hand¹⁶⁹. It also deals with bringing credible findings. So in respect to this the research, the validity or reliability of this research is based on the facts that; the phenomenon is widely known and debated and that it uses secondary sources which are credible in the academia.

The findings are reliable based on the fact that the study followed research methodology and methods which are appropriate in Biblical studies. These methods enabled the researcher not to be biased in his approach.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter has presented the methodology and the design of this study. It has outlined a qualitative methodology which employs a desk research as the study's design. Being an exegetical hermeneutical methods employed in the study have been discussed. The next chapter presents the actual exegetical analysis and its implication to the clergy in Malawi's socio-political context.

¹⁶⁹ Maxwell, Joseph. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, 2nd edition. (London: Sage Publications, 2005), 106.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF REVELATION 1:4-6

4.1 Introduction

This chapter exegetes Revelation 1:4-6 and discusses the implications of the exegetical trajectories to the members of the clergy in regard Malawi's socio-political affairs. This analysis is not limited to the verses in the text but employs other relevant parallel texts to Revelation 1:4-6, namely Exodus 19:5 and 1 Peter 2:9-10. In so doing, the study analyzes the role of the clergy in socio-political sphere by extrapolating the relevance of the exegetical analysis to the clergy in Malawi.

4.2 Historical Setting of the Book of Revelation

It is agreeable among scholars that the purpose of the book was to encourage Christians living in Asia Minor and beyond to endure the impending persecution in Roman provinces.¹⁷⁰ Richard Bauckam, rightly states that:

The writer wrote his book to comfort and to encourage Christians in the seven Churches and many others in Asia Minor who lived under the Roman

¹⁷⁰ See: Richard, Bauckam, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*, 7, Rowley, H. H. *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*. (New York: Association Press, 1963), Charles H, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of Revelation of John*. (Edinburgh: T & T CLARK, 1920), 22.

Emperor and experienced suffering and oppression by the system of the Roman Imperial cult.¹⁷¹

Alluding to this assertion, Charles Henry in his exegetical *Commentary on Revelation of John* argues that “the object of the apocalypse was also to encourage the faithful to resist, the blasphemous claims of the state, to proclaim the coming victory to the body of Christ, to the nations and the church to carry out God’s work without haste”.¹⁷² Torleif Elgvin provides two aspects of the book of Revelation which highlights its purpose. First, he states “the considerable unique nature of the Apocalypse which has a profiled anti-Roman attitude in contrast to the New Testament books of Romans, 1 Peter, and the New Testament Pastoral letters”.¹⁷³ For him, these writings advocate a respectful relation to the Roman authorities.¹⁷⁴ Second, what is crucial for him is the profound vigilant and concrete eschatology where the believers are promised that they will rule over the earth.¹⁷⁵ It cannot therefore be exaggerated to infer that most of the issues highlighted by these scholars on the purpose of this book pre-empt the background to the socio-political setting of the first century AD Roman Empire of which the book of Revelation was situated.

4.2.1 Religious and Political context

Moving further, the socio-political context of the book in first century AD is of prime importance to the exegetical background of this study. Primarily in this regard, critical data from the book inexorably reveals the activities of Roman imperial system in

¹⁷¹ Richard, Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 7.

¹⁷² Charles, Henry. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Revelation of John*. (Edinburgh: T & T CLARK, 1920), 22.

¹⁷³ Torleif, Elgvin. *Priests on Earth as in Heaven: Jewish Light on The Book of Revelation* <https://brill.com>book>edcoll>B> (accessed 09/08/2019).

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid.

the socio-political and religious setting of Asia Minor.¹⁷⁶ Evidence from Revelation 5, 13:1 demonstrates challenges the imperial cult posed to Christianity.¹⁷⁷ According to Collins, “the conflict between the demands of a totalitarian secular power and allegiance to the Christian faith was at the center of the confrontation of the Church and the Roman system”.¹⁷⁸ The Roman political system used the imperial cult to advance its agenda of supremacy. This was apparent in its demands of religious loyalty when Roman regime used apparent divine names and claims of divinity (Rev 13:1, 5).¹⁷⁹ Discussing the sequential development of the deification of the state among the provinces in Rome, Robert Mounce opines that the “deification provided the rationale for emperors to strengthen their authority by making certain claims to divine status”.¹⁸⁰ Robert Mounce states that “historical data in this regard reveals that Julius Caesar accepted being worshiped as a god during his lifetime, Augustus Caesar sanctioned temples to himself in Roman provinces, Caligula demanded that his subjects everywhere do homage to his statue and was not content with voluntary worship and by the time of Nero the imperial cult had been firmly established as a religious institution”.¹⁸¹

Consequently, Christian leaders of Churches in Asia Minor denied these claims and were unwelcomed in Roman provinces.¹⁸² Revelation chapter 3 demonstrates this point by

¹⁷⁶ Stan, Gundry and Marvin Pate. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 37.

¹⁷⁷ Alebra, Yabro Collins. “*The Revelation of John: An Apocalyptic Response to A Social Crisis*.” *CurTM*, 8 (1981), 12.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ Robert Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 2.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸² Robert Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 2

giving us evidence on how some of Christian leaders in Asia Minor were instrumental in denying the religious reverence of the Roman imperial cult.¹⁸³ Therefore, the denial of these obligations and claims attracted persecution and martyrdom for Christians. Richard's exegetical study reveals several of the prophecies in the book of Revelation which shows "how in the near future the Roman authorities were to persecute believers not only on the religious plane but also on socio-political and economic grounds".¹⁸⁴ Such prophecies are seen through the imagery presented in Revelation 13:16-17, which depicts Roman authorities restricting all economic transactions to those who are certified as worshippers of the beast.¹⁸⁵

4.2.2 Literary Context

The book of Revelation is one of the most fascinating and widely misunderstood book in the New Testament. One of the basic reasons lays in its distinctiveness literally type and its theological scope. According to Richard Bauckham the literally types in the book of Revelation include a circular letter to seven churches which stems from chapters 1 to 4 and the apocalyptic prophecies from chapter 4 to 22.¹⁸⁶ Revelation 1:4-6 is thus located within the circular letter which serves as prologue to the apocalyptic message and theology of the book. For adequate understanding of the book of Revelation it must be borne in mind that it belongs to a class of literature referred to as apocalyptic literature.¹⁸⁷

¹⁸³ Ibid, 35.

¹⁸⁴ Richard, Popkin. *The Revelation to John* (Illinois: Inter varsity Press, 2005), 67.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ Richard, Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.1993), 2.

¹⁸⁷ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation; Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

Surprisingly, many in the Christian world do not understand this and hold to the view that the book is one of prophetic books of the New Testament.¹⁸⁸ However, critical scholars and theologians make a fundamental distinction of prophecy in the book of Revelation. For them, prophecy within apocalyptic literature was seen from different spectrum from the general prophecy like those of the Old Testament writings. Rowley puts this distinction in this way: “Speaking generally, the prophets foretold the future that should arise out of the present, while the apocalyptists foretold the future that should break into the present”.¹⁸⁹ Therefore, in the apocalyptic writings prophecy had more relevance to the present circumstance because it looked at the present period as a time when God will break into the world of time and space to bring the entire political systems to reckoning.¹⁹⁰

Several theological philosophical perspectives underpin all apocalyptic writings including the book of Revelation. Firstly, the writings within this class are always eschatological. The eschatological perspective looks at the intrusion of the Kingdom of God into the political sphere of harsh political regimes.¹⁹¹

Secondly, apocalypses were dualistic and pessimistic.¹⁹² This dualism should not necessarily be understood in metaphysical terms but purely historical and temporal. According to Rowley, dualism was presented through the existences of two opposing supernatural powers, that of God and Satan.¹⁹³ “The theological themes entrenched through

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Howard, Henry Rowley. *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*. (New York: Association Press, 1963), 123.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Robert. Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 1.

¹⁹² See; Howard, Henry Rowley. *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*, 123, Robert. Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation*, 2.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

this dualism defended that Satan and the tyrannical political systems were not over and above God or his Kingdom. Rather, God was perceived as being in control and sovereign over the affairs of the world and not Satan''.¹⁹⁴ Therefore, the explanation of this dualism served as an encouragement for all believers who believed God and anticipated the Kingdom. Buttressed with this concrete dualism is the pessimistic view. This view in apocalyptic writings advanced the view that contemporary world events will continue to go from good to worse until the final intrusion of the Kingdom.¹⁹⁵ It is not surprising to note therefore that pessimism pervaded much of the teaching in the Bible which anticipated the coming of the Kingdom and the final judgment of the ungodly world.

Thirdly, apocalyptic writings in both the Bible and extra-biblical writing were highly symbolic and contained cryptic messages which only the initiated understood. For the modern reader the symbolism in the book of Revelation is obscure and brings about bizarre and misleading interpretations.¹⁹⁶ The primary reason for such misleading interpretations is because majority of Christian readers follow after interpretive approaches which range from futurism to historicism which try to contemporize symbols in the book of Revelation. However, critical scholarship has revealed that the symbolism retrieved from the text has relevance for the early recipients. For example, internal evidence outlines that stars referred in the book of Revelation represent angels, the lamp stands represent the Churches and Babylon or the beast as Rome.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Howard, Henry Rowley. *The Relevance of Apocalyptic*. (New York: Association Press, 1963), 123.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation; Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

¹⁹⁷ Stan, Gundry and Marvin Pate. *Four Views on the Book of Revelation*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 37.

4.3 Author and Date of Authorship

Prior to the exegetical analysis several issues need some attention. These include: the question of authorship, the recipients and their situation and the purpose of the passage. According to Richard Bauckham's analysis of the internal evidence about the authorship, the author of the book of Revelation was probably a Christian prophet who identified himself in this writing as John.¹⁹⁸ It is important to note that within scholarly corpus, this identity is rigorously debated and is a contentious issue. Critical historical data from early writers like, Irenaeus, Pliny, Papias, and Eusebius have been crucial to the scholarly debates establishing the identity of this John.¹⁹⁹ For instance, Eusebius in his *History of the Church* makes a critical distinction between John the Apostle and John the Presbyter in reference to the identity of John.²⁰⁰ However, some scholars argue that Irenaeus in his works saw no distinction between John the Apostle and John the Presbyter.²⁰¹ Nonetheless the focus is not to present conclusive scholarly arguments on the identity of this John. However, the question of authorship comes basically because Revelation 1: 4-6 falls in the chapter where the author identifies himself by name and presents his situation. In simplest arguments, within scholarly consensus it is meticulously agreed that the author was probably exiled on the island of Patmos as a martyr for his Christian faith and was one of the circular prophets who had unquestionable authority over the seven Churches.

¹⁹⁸ Richard, Bauckham. *The Theology of the Book of Revelation*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.1993), 2.

¹⁹⁹ Dave, Hagelberg. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ to the Seven Churches and to Us*. (Kashmere: ISPCK, 2013), 15.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ David, A. DE Silva. "The Social Setting of the Revelation to John: Conflicts Within, Fears Without" *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (1992) 273.

4.4 Critical and Detailed Exegesis of Revelation 1:4-6.

The passages read:

John to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace [be] unto you, and peace, from Him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before his throne; And from Jesus Christ, [who is] the faithful witness, [and] the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us a kingdom and priests unto God and his Father; to him [be] glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.

4.5 Revelation 1.5 “to the seven churches in Asia Minor”

Verse .4 This verse rightly outlines the recipients of the circular letter and the contents of the book of Revelation. Inferred from the identification of John in this verse, it is probable to view that the writer had some form of apostolic oversight of the seven churches of Asia Minor.²⁰² According to Philip Edgcumbe Hughes, “these seven Churches were geographically located in Roman provinces of Asia and which are now part of the territory of Turkey”.²⁰³ The seven Churches are those at Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. It is important to note that, the epistolary concerns to these seven churches are highlighted in chapters 2 and 3 of the book of Revelation.

Prior to the introduction of each of John’s letter to the seven Churches in chapters 2 and 3, he introduces his address by the phrase “Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῇ ἐν...ἐκκλησίᾳς

²⁰² David, A. DE Silva. “*The Social Setting of the Revelation to John: Conflicts Within, Fears Without*” *Westminster Theological Journal* 54 (1992) 273

²⁰³ Philip, Edgcumbe Hughes. *The Book of the Revelation a Commentary*. (Michigan: W.M. Eerdmans,1990),56.

γράφον” which literally means “*and to the messenger of the church in...write*” or in some other translation reads “*and to the angel of the church in ...write*. Bible commentators like Mike Berry have argued that the “phrase ἄγγελος (angel) does not refer to some celestial beings, but rather to fellow ministers who were overseers of the churches in these particular locations”.²⁰⁴ It is proper to insinuate that the leadership of these seven Churches was instrumental for the dissemination of the message of the book of Revelation.

Therefore, it is important to note that in each of the message to the seven Churches there was a message addressing both internal and external pressures that existed in these Churches. One of the critical messages was for the Christian leaders not to compromise the church in its relations to the world and the contemporary society.

Some of the issues addressed in these letters relating to external pressure is the influence of Roman pagan influence on the Churches. This is depicted in Thyatira church where the Church demonstrated inability to surmount and dominate external circumstances. Berry states “The leaders and the Church at Thyatira’s inability to overcome these pressure led to its voluntary acquiescence to Nicolaitan and their doctrines”.²⁰⁵ Another issue was with the Laodicean leaders and the Church. For the Laodiceans, “the main problem relates to inability to dominate external circumstances. Here the author uses the word, “neither hot nor cold and lukewarm”.²⁰⁶ These phrases point towards a state of their zeal in the work of ministry.²⁰⁷

²⁰⁴ Mike, Berry. *The Seven Churches of Asia Minor* 5 Oceandrivechurch.org, (accessed on 6/07/2019)

²⁰⁵ Mike, Berry. *The Seven Churches of Asia Minor* 5 Oceandrivechurch.org, (accessed on 6/07/2019)

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

According to Robert Mounce, “Laodicea was a prosperous center of banking, a place of manufacturing. Further, Laodiceans saw progress in material things and subjected the Church to outward influences”.²⁰⁸ Mounce goes on to argue that “allusions of Christ castigating the Laodicean Christians were in reference to their spiritual poverty and nakedness in the midst of affluence”.²⁰⁹ Therefore, it is apparent that Laodiceans were comfortable, satisfied with their position because of the material prosperity of the city.²¹⁰

Another critical concern expressed in these letters was that of the Church at Pergamum. The leaders of this Church were threatened by the activities of this city. Most important is the description in Revelation Chapter 2 which says that “the city was the seat of Satan (Rev 2:13)” According to Ramsay, “the reason behind this description lays in the fact that the city was one of the centers of the imperial cult activities. The Church at Pergamum and its leaders were subjected to its influence and were unable to surmount and dominate its external circumstances”.²¹¹

The letter to Thyatira is also mainly occupied with the inability of the Church to rise above the habits of its contemporary society. This is in the light of the external pressures as a result of the influence of the Nicolaitan, the imperial cult. The letter calls for the leaders and the Church to surmount these circumstances. Crucial to this call was for the Church leaders not to compromise the proclamation because of the riches they enjoy in the

²⁰⁸ Robert. Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 35.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ Ibid.

²¹¹ William, M. Ramsay, *The Letters to the Seven Churches of Asia and Their Place in the Plan of the Apocalypse*. (Aberdeen: Independent Press, 2017), 5.

Roman provinces. These aspects are critical for the Malawian Church and the clergy's approaches to socio-political affairs.

4.5.1 “Grace and peace to you.”

Verse. 4b The term “grace and peace” was one the epistolary blessings which apostolic letters proclaimed to the Churches. This terminology was attested by Paul and other pastoral writings of the New Testament in their prologue and epilogue.²¹² Some Bible commentators argue that the phrase “grace and peace” was not merely a formal greeting of the apostles to the Churches. However, the notion of grace and peace went beyond formal greeting.²¹³ For Mounce “The apostolic presentation of “grace and peace” presented a call and blessing to the Churches to live in the sphere of grace and peace where missionary work was involved and in fellowship with each other for the growth and edification of the Church”. Robert Mounce opines that “the idea of peace, the opposite of chaos, was very much tied to the biblical concept of peace (in Hebrew, shalom).²¹⁴ Mounce states that “in many other nuances of meaning, shalom is partly that attitude which is expressed by people who live in a harmonious and joyous relationship with each other”.²¹⁵

Grace is the divine favor showed to the human race, and peace is that state of spiritual well-being that follows as a result.²¹⁶ It can therefore be alluded that Churches need grace and peace to reign in their mission so that they live in what they proclaim.

²¹² Robert Mounce. The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 35.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Robert Mounce. The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 35.

²¹⁵ Ibid,36.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

Particularly in the Malawian context the proclamation of the epistolary blessing of grace and peace can be advantageous for the clergy in Malawi in the light their socio-political duties. Metzger calls attention to the fact that “grace and peace always stand in that order and observes that “it is because of God’s grace that his people can enjoy peace”.²¹⁷

4.5.2 “The faithful witness... And the ruler of the kings on earth”

Verse 5 Critical to the missionary task of the writer of the book of Revelation were allusions to the phrase the “faithful witness”. Metzger states that “this element is assigned as Christological title which designates the obedience of Christ to the gospel. This designation applies in the first place to his role in mediating the revelation he received from God (Rev 1:1; the “testimony for the churches” referred to in Rev 22:16)”.²¹⁸ But it also refers to the larger purpose of his life as the one who bore witness to the truth from God (John 3:17). It is also important to note that the Greek word for witness (*μάρτυς*) has come over into English as “martyr,” as one who suffers death for allegiance to a cause and throughout Revelation the word is associated with the penalty of death that results from a firm and constant witness (cf. Rev 2:13; 11:3; 17:6).²¹⁹

It is important to note that within the Malawian context in the pre-multiparty era the Catholic Bishops stood firmly to the message which brought hope and political transformation. They were faithful witnesses to this cause to the extent that the Bishops

²¹⁷ Metzger, Bruce M. *Breaking The Code*. (Nashville: Abingdon, 1993.), 23.

²¹⁸ Robert. Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 36

²¹⁹ Ibid.

were willing to lay down their lives in defense of the gospel and transforming truth. Therefore, the Christological title of the faithful witness presents the model of how to stand firm and never compromise the truth of God (cf. 1 Tim 6:13).

Striking in this verse (Rev1:4) is also the Christological titles “*the ruler of the Kings of the earth*”. A noticeable theological contribution in this verse is the notion that the notion of the sovereignty and freedom of God over the earthly affairs.²²⁰ This phrase on the face value clearly informs the readers that politics in Christ has not been left for the secular powers. In the light of Martin Luther’s book on the “Two Kingdoms”, he argues that God has both hands on the world, with one hand he governs the world and the other hand he governs the Church. Luther captures his argument by stating that “By God’s right hand God Rules by word, gospel, grace and promise, faith and by God’s left hand God rules by the sword, reward, reason, work and law ”.²²¹ Jürgen Moltmann in his book titled; *the Church in the Power of the Spirit* gives a new dimension to the reign of God. He argues that “ In his Kingdom, God’s rule is undisputed no shadow fall upon it, in his history Gods rule is demonstrated through the word of promise, the spirit of freedom”.²²² He further states that “in history God rules in a hidden way and undisputed –the coming of the Kingdom forbids us to banish the lordship of the Kingdom to a future world totally unrelated to the earthly historical life”.²²³

Therefore, in speaking about Christ as the ruler of the Kings in the world, this does not mean that Christ is not taking over the worldly government and administration but that

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Erling T. Teigen. Two Kingdoms: Simulium et peccator: *Depoliticizing the Two Kingdoms Doctrine* www.blts.edu/2014/08/e (Accessed on 08/10/2019).

²²² Jürgen, Moltmann. *The Church in the Power of the Spirit*. (London: SCM Press),140.

²²³ Ibid.

the duty of earthly rulers and the rule of God is to entrench the ethics of the Kingdom into earthly governments so that the Governments reflect what God ordained them for to administer justice, order and peace to the citizens.²²⁴

4.5.3 “*Has made us a Kingdom and Priest to him be glory and dominion*”

Verse 6b This verse is central to the study. It purports that Church collectively constitute a Kingdom and a priesthood. It is very important to note that the writer of Revelation in this doxology was making allusion to the Old Testament narratives of Exodus 19:5-9. However, a parallel application of the same appears in 1 Peter 2:9. According to Bruce Milne “the phrase Kingdom basically means God’s rule, kingly power (Lk 19:12), and not a geographic area, but as a dynamic notion of God’s rule in action (Ps. 145:13, Dn.2:44).”²²⁵ This verse in its proper context reveals that corporately the Church is made a “Kingdom”. This does not mean that the Church is the eschatological Kingdom but that the Church has a royal standing in connection to the exaltation of Christ as ruler of all earthly kings.²²⁶ The main contention is whether the verse should read “*he has made us a kingdom and priest to God*” versus the rendering “*he has made us a priestly kingdom to God and his father to him be glory and dominion*”.²²⁷ The analysis above will help us to understand why these variant interpretations are possible.

²²⁴ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 220.

²²⁵ Bruce, Milne. *Know The Truth: A Hand Book of Christian Belief (2ndeds)*. (Leicester: Intervarsity Press, 1998), 309

²²⁶ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation; Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

²²⁷ This based on a comparison of Bible translations of King James Version (KJV) and New International Version (NIV).

It is interesting to note that various versions are divided on these lines. It is important to note that those translations which follow the translation of “Priestly Kingdom or Kingdom of priest ” follows the Hebrew rendering of the verse, and most importantly it follows the Hebrew term “Kingdom” in Exodus 19:6. Within the Hebrew rendering the terms Kingdom and priest are basically present in the construct state.²²⁸ When you look at this grammatical construction therefore the Kingdom of priest is the plausible translation. Contrary to the Hebrew rendering in the Greek text of Revelation 1:4-6 as observed in the foregoing Greek text, the word “Kingdom and Priest” are separated with a comma and are not in the construct state.²²⁹ Looking at the text above which shows Greek words *βασιλείαν, ἱερεῖς* in the verse, both words Kingdom, Priest are in the accusative case and not in the dative showing possession.²³⁰ Hence, some translators maintain the rendering “*Kingdom, Priests*’”.²³¹ Scott in his work on “A Kingdom of Priests”, decodes five possible meanings which can be drawn from Exodus 19:6 which in view of this research can also apply to Revelation 1:4-6.²³² These meanings are as follows:

1. Kingdom composed of priests;
2. Kingdom possessing a legitimate priesthood;
3. Kingdom with a collective priestly responsibility on behalf of all peoples;
4. Kingdom ruled by priests;

²²⁸ Based on grammatical exegesis and parsing of the Hebrew root word.

²²⁹ See Greek rendering of the verse.

²³⁰ Based on grammatical exegesis and parsing of the Greek root word.

²³¹ Robert, B. Young Scott. “*A Kingdom of Priests, Exodus. 19: 6.*”OTS 8 (1950): 216.

²³² Ibid.

5. Kingdom set apart and possessing collectively, alone among all peoples, the right to approach the altar of Yahweh²³³

Based on these proposition by Scott, the study will employ some insights from point number 1 which asserts the phrase “*Kingdom, Priests*” to mean Kingdom composed of priest, and also revolve around point number 3 which interprets the phrase “*Kingdom, Priests*” to mean Kingdom with a collective priestly responsibility on behalf of all peoples. These interpretations will be used with reference to missionary context of the Kingdom and the priestly ministry of the Church in the implication section of the study.

4.6 Analysis of Revelation 1:4-6 with Exodus 19: 6, 1 Peter 2:9-10 in their Historical context

Any serious exegetical work on Revelation 1:4-6 cannot go without a reference to Exodus 19:6 or 1 Peter 2:9. For this present study the work makes considerable attention to critically analyze the historical and life situation of these texts in relation to each other. In one sense John is concerned to juxtapose redemption narrative following the exodus narrative of redemption of Egypt and second the priestly overtones to the services of God links to the public role of the church.²³⁴

For this study the historical context of Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9-10 and the book of Revelation are very imperative in understanding the first research question which deals

²³³ Ibid.

²³⁴ Anthony, Gelston. *The Royal Priesthood*, <http://www.semanticscholar.org> (accessed on 23/7/2019)

with whether the term, “Priestly Kingdom” or “Kingdom, Priests” in relation to the verse are terms used strictly to the sacral sphere or religious sphere. Here, the research compacts Exodus 19:6, 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Revelation 1:4-6 in order to come up with a concrete answer. The passages of 1 Peter 2:9-10 and Exodus 19:6 are replete to a contextual understanding of Revelation 1:4-6.

The narrative in Exodus 19:6 directs us to a time of the covenant at Sinai. Here, the writer of the book of Exodus points to the Exodus about the redemption of Israel from oppression in Egypt. God called Moses to assemble in the wilderness to re-articulate this redemption and the covenant blessing. The purpose for this address was to remind Israel of the redemption in Egypt and to point further the privileges the covenant has for Israel. A point worth noting in this narrative is one of the essential privileges of being a people of God, a “Kingdom of Priest” which was essentially linked to their obedience and covenant royalty. The passage reads:

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth [is] mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These [are] the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel” (Exodus 19:5-6a).(KJV)

To this effect, the remarks identifying Israel as a (Kingdom of Priests), shows two things. First, that Israel has a special relationship with God and second it has a unique task before GOD, the people and the nations.²³⁵ It is important to note that following this stunning event, God gave Moses the Decalogue and the holiness code.²³⁶ These laws not only prescribed the sacral activities of Israel but also the laws that touched every aspect of life.

²³⁵ Robert, Young Scott. “*A Kingdom of Priests, Exodus. 19: 6.*” *OTS* 8 (1950): 216.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

Mvula on this aspect observed that “these laws were so comprehensive and they covered socio-political issues”.²³⁷ For him, “these laws covered issues of holiness in social ethics, holiness at work, holiness in obtaining the truth and using the truth, holiness in motive and heart holiness in governance and political process”.²³⁸

In the light of these, the reality of practicing these laws within socio-political sphere essentially was what guaranteed the privilege of being a Kingdom of Priest and Holy nation. Brueggemann adds his voice to the conditional aspect of this text, by alluding that, “the failure on the part of Israel to fulfill both the sacral function and socio-political demand was reciprocal to a severe consequences in her future of becoming a ‘Priestly Kingdom and a Holy nation’”.²³⁹ Byron Wheaton vehemently alludes by demonstrating how during the period of the Kings, the implication of neglecting the responsibility to attend to the task of guarding God’s holiness and teaching God’s commandments affected the nationhood of Israel²⁴⁰. For him, Israel’s disobedience led to the exile in 721 B.C by the Assyrians and Judah by the Babylonian regime from the beginning of 603 B.C²⁴¹. This highlights how crucial the comprehensive nature of the laws of GOD was to Israel i.e. both sacral and social laws.

²³⁷ Hermann, Mvula. *The Use of Old Testament Ethical Principles in Entrenching Constitutionalism in Malawi. (PhD Thesis)* (Zomba: Chancellor College, 2018).

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Brueggemann, Walter. “The Book of Exodus: Introduction, and Commentary and Reflections”, *NIB* Vol. 1. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994).

²⁴⁰ Byron, Wheaton. *The Church as Heir of Israel’s Vocation as Royal Priesthood* <https://equip.sbts.edu>. Publication (accessed on 08/06/2019).

²⁴¹ Ibid.

Consequently, several things can be outlined from these aspects. First, “the idea of “priests” in the ancient world was linked to mediation between people and the deity”.²⁴² Second, in ancient Israel and also in other Ancient Near Eastern society, priests were charged with the responsibility of teaching the law of God”.²⁴³ On this part “it largely involved the teaching of the laws of GOD and reminding the kings of the necessity of the covenant loyalty for the survival of Israel”.²⁴⁴ Third, “this task also reflects of their role in the midst of the nations”.²⁴⁵ In relation to other nations the idea of priest was simultaneously the role of bringing the knowledge of God to the nations and the awareness that God is behind the course of history.

It is important to note that “the writer of 1 Peter intentionally used the Old Testament parallel text in order to address the situation of the recipients. Christian communities in Asia Minor whom the letter was addressed were suffering and were being persecuted by the political authority of the day”. Consequently, “this persecution brought an identity crisis among Christian communities such that the earthly responsibility was obscure”.²⁴⁶ Elliot argues that:

The incomprehensible language, strange habits, and the worship of foreign deities put the civic loyalty of such aliens into grave question. Thus, restrictions were placed on their legal and social rights, and they bore the brunt of covert as well as overt social discrimination.²⁴⁷

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Byron, Wheaton. *The Church as Heir of Israel's Vocation as Royal Priesthood* <https://equip.sbts.edu>> Publication. (accessed on 08/06/2019).

²⁴⁴ Ibid .

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ John, Elliot. “Salutation and Exhortation to Christian Behavior on the Basis of God’s Blessings (1:1-2:10),” *Review and Expositor* 79, no.3 (1982): 425.

²⁴⁷ Ibid

In addition to this, “the severe hardship which the Christian community faced, probably was making them unwilling to take part in activities of their society because they were living in fear. It is plausible that they needed to be encouraged and their identity in the socio-political sphere be re-affirmed”. In view of this, it can be observed that the Old Testament phrase of Priestly “Kingdom” and “Holy Nation” seemed appropriate for the writer to address this problem. It is noteworthy that the usage of the term “royal priesthood” and “holy nation” from Exod. 19:6 was not in reference to the cultic and sacral role of Israel or his recipient, but the awareness that the people had a privilege position before God and the society.²⁴⁸ Therefore as Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza, states “it is obvious that the author presumably wanted to inform the readers about the identity of the communities of Christians who were scattered in Asia Minor”.²⁴⁹

Finally, parallel to 1 Peter 2:9-10 and in Revelation 1:6 the use of the terms context re-emerges within the context of suffering and persecution. However, the writer adds up another essential feature to this phrase by making the text parallel to the Exodus narrative of redemption. Some scholars seem to agree that the redemptive work of Christ stated in Revelation 1:4-6 was used as parallel to Old Testament narrative of Exodus 19:6.

Interestingly, Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza argues that, the writer of the book wanted to assure his readers that they have the privilege of exercising their priestly and royal dignity with the exalted Christ in the provinces of Asia Minor.²⁵⁰ Fiorenza sees these titles βασιλείαν (Kingdom) and ἱερεῖς (Priest) as giving new dignity to the Christians within

²⁴⁸ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

the setting of redemption and liberation. Again Fiorenza says, “the terms, in this redemptive context are not strictly related to the liberation of souls, but also conceived in socio-political terms. This understanding of liberation is also perceived within the spectrum of liberation from the Roman violent system of oppression and the imperial cult”.²⁵¹ Therefore, in this regard the realization of Christians as being kingdom and priest was an anti-thesis of the Roman Empire and Imperial cult which aggressively exploited Christians.²⁵² László Gallusz, convincingly argues that “political and religious aspects are merged in the imperial cults as forming together a controlling system concerning loyalty to the emperor”.²⁵³ Michael Horton eloquently captures this in the following words:

The Apocalypse is a social challenge to the seven churches to maintain their liminal status against the mounting external pressures. The Apocalypse is a call not to give into the powers that be grounded on the counter-proposal that these powers that are shall not be forever, and that therefore one may respond to the eternal Power, the Lord.²⁵⁴

Therefore, in view of such understanding by László Gallusz and Michael Horton the concept of “Kingdom, Priests” is counter-proposal to the forces of evil, political systems and sacral authority. Therefore, it was pertinent for Church’s public and spiritual role to be reinstated their within the context of this violent and aggressive Roman regime.²⁵⁵

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² László, Gallusz. *The Throne Motif in the Book of Revelation*. (A PhD Dissertation). (Budapest: KároliGáspár University, 2011), 301.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Horton, Michael. *The Christian Faith: A Systematic Theology for Pilgrims on The Way*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2011), 209.

²⁵⁵ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

4.7 The Theology of Revelation 1:4-6

4.7.1 *The Church and the Kingdom of God*

Crucial to understanding of Revelation 1:4-6 is the critical understanding of Kingdom and priestly language in the book of Revelation. New Testament scholarship generally agrees that the message of Kingdom is a central theme in Jesus ministry.²⁵⁶ Biblical analysis shows the Kingdom message was a continuation of the Old Testament calls about the intrusion of the Kingdom of God in history. Within the New Testament gospel writings John the Baptist called for repentance and reform in society in preparation of the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14, Mathew 3:1, Luke 3:3-16). Furthermore, the message of Jesus also centered on the present manifestation of the Kingdom. In analyzing the message of the Kingdom of God four strands can be observed.²⁵⁷ The entering of the Kingdom, the Kingdom's victory over darkness, the Kingdom as object of search or struggle as proofs that the Kingdom has broken into history (Mk 11:20).²⁵⁸ As continuation of the theme of the Kingdom the message in Revelation also carries some overtones similar to those of the gospel.²⁵⁹

The extrapolation from Revelation 1:6 leads to the discussion on the relationship between the Church and the Kingdom of God. This is also one of the most profound theological significance of the book of Revelation to the contemporary world. George Eldon Ladd defines the Kingdom of God as “the reign of God, not merely in the human

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Mircea, Eliade(ed). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. (Michigan: McMillan, 1987), 308.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Mircea, Eliade(ed). *The Encyclopedia of Religion*. (Michigan: McMillan, 1987), 308.

heart but dynamically active in the person of Jesus and in human history”.²⁶⁰ The theme is expressed in verse 6 where the phrase “Kingdom, Priest” appears for the first time in the book of Revelation.²⁶¹ This verse serves as a primary basis for further development of the theme of the Kingdom of God in the book of Revelation where in the later chapters it is presented as in the future eschatological horizon.²⁶² However, the present verse attests to the fact that in the present age the Church constitutes a Kingdom and not the eschatological Kingdom.²⁶³ Within the writings from the history of the church, theologians from Augustine to reformers have shared the prevalent view that the Kingdom was in some sense or other to be identified with Church.²⁶⁴ This view is seldom defended now. However, there are limitations set to this. Contemporary scholars also share the view, for instance Albert Schweitzer in the 1800s claimed that eschatology was central to the New Testament message.²⁶⁵ For Schweitzer, “Jesus’ message was wholly eschatological, and his coming was in order to force the coming of the eschatological Kingdom”.²⁶⁶ Adolf Harnack in *What is Christianity* understood the Kingdom of God as “the pure prophetic religion taught by Jesus”. C. H. Dodd in his *Realized Eschatology*, ‘the Kingdom of God is in reality the transcendent order beyond time and space that has broken into history’.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁰ George, Eldon Ladd. *A Theology of the New Testament*. (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 118.

²⁶¹ See Revelation chapter 1.

²⁶² John, Beekman. *Exegetical Helps on Revelation*: (SIL International, 2003), 191.

²⁶³ George, Eldon Ladd. *A Theology of the New Testament*. (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 118.

²⁶⁴ Paul, John Davies. *Faith Seeking Effectiveness: The Missionary Theology of José Míguez Bonino*. (Dorrington: Universiteit Utrecht :2006), 80.

²⁶⁵ Joachim, Jeremias. *New Testament Theology*. (London: SCM Press 1971), 82.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

The language in Revelation seems also to be preoccupied with the presence of the eschatological Kingdom in the contemporary first century AD.²⁶⁸ According to Mounce all this shows that the gist of this language points towards the following:

1. The role of the church in preserving an eschatological people who will overcome hostile socio-political situations with the gospel.²⁶⁹
2. The eschatological Kingdom which usher in justice and judgments to repressive regimes.²⁷⁰
3. The absolute victory of the Kingdom over darkness and judgment of enemies of the Kingdom.²⁷¹

What is striking from the points above is the realized role that the Kingdom has for socio-political setting in the book of Revelation. Consequently, this language is interested in unveiling the fact that the eschatological judgment is not something that is reserved for the future but that in the present scenario judgment is administered when the Kingdom is manifested in part.²⁷² Therefore, from these points it can be viewed that through this realized aspect of the Kingdom of God, the Church has hope to preach without haste and that in the present age the Kingdom is victorious over the forces of evil and darkness.²⁷³

²⁶⁸ Robert, Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 8.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ Ibid.

²⁷¹ Robert, Mounce. *The New International Commentary on the New Testament the Book of Revelation*. (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans: 1997), 35.

²⁷² Paul, M. Hoskins. *Priesthood in the Book of Revelation* <http://equip.sbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SBJT-22.2-Priesthood-in-Revelation-Hoskins> (accessed on 19/05/2019).

²⁷³ Ibid.

In view of these insights, critical scholarship has helped to balance these assertions and to prevent the confusion where the Church is said to be the Kingdom of God. For example Heyns discusses the Kingdom of God and the Church.²⁷⁴ For him, “the two are not identical to each other because the Kingdom of God covers many facets of reality which are not present in the description of the church as a Kingdom”.²⁷⁵ He argues by demonstrating that “the church’s scope does not constitute the administrative task which political government and regimes are entrusted which includes establishing order or administering justice as a political entity”.²⁷⁶ However, whilst this may be true, there are critical aspect of this administration of justice and order where the Church is called to proclaim and defend its missionary work. The reason for this is because these virtues are similar to those in the Kingdom of God. In an attempt to balance and avoid such confusion, George Eldon Ladd makes the following profound conclusions about the Church and the Kingdom; the church is not the Kingdom of God the Church witnesses to the Kingdom, the Kingdom creates the Church, and the Church is the custodian or agent of the Kingdom and the Church is an instrument of the Kingdom.²⁷⁷ Most important to this study are the conclusions that the Church witnesses the Kingdom and also the point that the church is the custodian or agent of the Kingdom. These insights are imperative for the apocalyptic nature of the book of Revelation because the book shows that the kingdom of God is an intrusion of divine justice in socio-political world. However, within the context of the Church, the church is an agent of the Kingdom because she is here to proclaim the justice

²⁷⁴ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 7.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ George, Eldon Ladd. *A Theology of the New Testament*. (Michigan: William b Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 118.

of God in the world. Míguez Bonino argues that “the Kingdom is not a riddle to be solved but a mission to be fulfilled”.²⁷⁸ Therefore, it is pertinent to this study to argue that in the Church the clergy ought to submit to this missionary task. This aspect is comprehensively dealt with in the ensuing sections of the study.

4.7.2 The Sovereignty of God

On the most profound theological significance of the book of Revelation to the contemporary world is the retaliation that God is sovereign over the socio-political affairs of kings and rulers of this world. This theme is expressed in verse 4 where the phrase “*ruler of the Kings of this world*” appears for the first time in the book of Revelation. Like any other apocalyptic writings this presents a situation of dualism where divine activity or authority is concerned with the earthly affairs. This verse serves as a primary basis for further development of the theme that “God rules over the kings of the world” and has not rescinded to the religious sphere or left the scope of political affairs to the Kings and rulers of this world.²⁷⁹ As with reference to Isaiah, God’s interest is that the rulers of this world administer justice, righteous, order, peace, to the citizens in all aspect of political life (Isaiah 9:7, 45:8, 32:17). Intrinsic to Isaiah’s message are virtues such as integrity, justice and moral uprightness which represent the will of God for the nations.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁸ Míguez, Bonino. *Revolutionary Theology Comes of Age*. (London: SPCK. English Edition of 1975), 143.

²⁷⁹ Paul, M. Hoskins. *Priesthood in the Book of Revelation* <http://equip.sbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SBJT-22.2-Priesthood-in-Revelation-Hoskins> (accessed on 19/05/2019).

²⁸⁰ William, Sanford Lasor. *Old Testament Survey: The Message, Form and Background of the Old Testament* (Michigan: William B Eerdmans Publishing, 1974), 308.

If Malawian rulers realized that God is sovereign over the political realm and that they as political authorities are mere stewards, some of the heinous practices they tolerate in their political context would not be tolerated. If political regimes in Malawi would strive to bring about ethics of a just political rule as exemplified in the reign of God which promotes the administration of justice, righteous, order, peace and a regard of the welfare for the poor, Malawians will be closer to the will of God for governance of the state.

4.7.3 Priestly Service

Another important aspect relates to the priestly data in the book of Revelation. The priestly language in this Book is seen to be closely connected to the concept of the Kingdom. This is not surprising because in ancient antiquity kingly rule was seen side by side with the cultic authority. This is also the case in the Roman context as observed in the previous section where it highlights that the Roman Empire had the imperial cult of priests who worked side by side with the imperial authority. It can be viewed therefore that the theology of the book of Revelation can be said to be an opposition to this contemporary setting. In contrast to the Roman imperial priesthood, the Church is a priesthood of the Kingdom which serves God Almighty and not the emperor. Considerable scholarly interest has been shown on the nature of priestly notions in the book of Revelation. Most importantly, scripture data present two sides of the priestly language which include the temporal and transcendental aspects.²⁸¹ Fundamental to transcendental aspect are the visions describing the priestly services of believers in heaven and the heavenly sanctuary.

²⁸¹ Paul, M. Hoskins. *Priesthood in the Book of Revelation* <http://equip.sbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SBJT-22.2-Priesthood-in-Revelation-Hoskins> (accessed on 19/05/2019).

This notion is portrayed in the latter part mainly of Revelation 7, 14 and 20 where after believers overcome persecution on the earth through the obedience to the gospel they serve God and given a new priestly service as God's people in the New Jerusalem. Revelation 7:15 speaks about their priestly service to God as follows, "On account of this, they are before the throne of God and are serving him day and night in his temple, and the one who sits on the throne will place his tabernacle over them" (7:15).

Related to this exegetical analysis is the temporal language dealing with the priesthood in Revelation. It can be observed that these temporal and earthly motifs of the priesthood in the book of Revelation are seen as both typological and the fulfillment of the Old Testament types.²⁸² This is why it is not surprising to note that in the book of Revelation, the priesthood of God's people has multiple connections to the Exodus from Egypt and the covenant at Mount Sinai.²⁸³ The context of Revelation 1:4-6 shares this commonality among verses and chapters which allude to the temporal aspect of the priesthood. Within the temporal setting, allusions are not made on the sacrificial cultic obligations. However, the priestly language sees the service of witnessing and praising as typologies of priestly sacrifices of the Old Testament. Much of the language is connected to the mediatorial aspect of priestly service.²⁸⁴ This aspect involves the representing the Kingdom of God within the hostile socio-political sphere of Rome at a time when there was an impending and wide spread persecution.

²⁸² Anthony, Gelston. *The Royal Priesthood*.<http://www.semanticscholar.org>> (accessed on 23/7/2019).

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Anthony, Gelston. *The Royal Priesthood*.<http://www.semanticscholar.org>> (accessed on 23/7/2019).

Another critical theological trajectory is on the priestly overtones of the Church as the agent of the Kingdom.²⁸⁵ It is important to note the book of Revelation makes frequent reference to the priestly task of believers in the earth and also in heavenly Jerusalem.²⁸⁶ Interestingly, in the Old Testament priesthood was hereditary and required no other but those of the tribe of Levi to fulfill priestly obligation (Numbers 3:4-14). However, contrary to this fact Exodus 19:6 served as a primary basis of the promise that God wishes all of his people to fulfill collectively the priestly duty in the nation and the covenant community. Notwithstanding this arrangement, the essential duties of the priests were to serve God in cultic issues and also in the affairs of men in relation to God's law. Consequently, the Church therefore through this verse is assigned this task by their God to act in priestly manner in reference to the Kingdom.

Much of what is called the priestly service of the Church in the New Testament is seen through the lenses of Paul who among other things argues that "the church is mandated to pray to God for the world not only this but to proclaim the gospel. In I Timothy 2: 1-4 Paul admonishes that "prayers and thanks giving be made for all men".²⁸⁷ He proceeds to direct prayers be made for those in authority in the socio-political sphere. Such intercession in the priestly perspectives of the church in the New Testament reflects the uniqueness of the role of the Church in the socio-political arena.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 7.

²⁸⁶ Paul, M. Hoskins. *Priesthood in the Book of Revelation* <http://equip.sbts.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/SBJT-22.2-Priesthood-in-Revelation-Hoskins> (accessed on 19/05/2019).

²⁸⁷ Anthony, Gelston. *The Royal Priesthood* .<http://www.semanticscholar.org>> (accessed on 23/7/2019)

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

In the book of Revelation and the other writings, the Bible portrays that state authorities to be prone to degenerate and become instrument of terror and tyranny in the world to the extent that the mission of church is affected.²⁸⁹ Consequently, the book of Revelation is significant in presenting as is verse 6 that the church is “a priestly kingdom”, meaning that she has priestly prerogatives in relation to the world and to God. Therefore, this verse is significant for the clergy in Malawi in view of the current socio-political affairs.

In summary, the exegetical analysis has achieved two things. It has unveiled that the Church can engage the socio-political sphere without compromising its mission. It has also shown that the concept of “Kingdom” or “Kingdom of God” is a Mission imperative for the Church in the socio-political. Blending with the Old Testament priestly motif the study has shown some aspect of priesthood which have practical bearing for the clergy’s socio-political engagement.

In this regard, it is critical to outline some of the major problems that members of the clergy encounter as they engage the socio-political landscape. The purpose hereby is to merge mission imperatives of Revelation 1:4-6 to engage with Malawian context.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS OF REVELATION 1:4-6 AND ITS RELIGIOUS CONTEXT FOR THE CLERGY IN MALAWI

5.1 Introduction

In the light of the exegetical findings of Revelation 1:4-6 and its socio-political and religious context, it is possible to argue for the roles which the clergy can play in Malawi's social political context. This chapter focuses to investigate the challenges of the clergy in Malawi's post one-party era. The chapter also argues the implication of the exegetical analysis for the clergy in Malawi.

5.2 The Clergy's in Malawi's Post One Party era

Martin Ott in the book *Malawi's Second Democratic Elections* discusses some critical roles which the clergy have embraced to engage and influence the socio-political sphere in Malawi. These include the prophetic and institutional roles.²⁹⁰ It is important to note that these roles gained prominence at the dawn of multiparty era and the post multiparty era. However, in the pre-multiparty autocratic era, the clergy had other means which were similar to these, but they did not essentially have much impact like at the dawn of multiparty democracy in 1992.²⁹¹ Nonetheless, during the multiparty era the clergy

²⁹⁰ Martin Ott. "The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)", in Martin Ott et al, *Malawi's Second Democratic Election Process, Problems and Prospects*. (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000), 121.

²⁹¹ Martin Ott. "The Role of the Christian Churches in Democratic Malawi (1994-1999)", in Martin Ott et al, *Malawi's Second Democratic Election Process, Problems and Prospects*. (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2000), 121.

collectively embraced both the prophetic and institutional roles as major ways in which they can impact the socio-political sphere.²⁹²

Since 1992 the prophetic voice of the Roman Catholic Clergy has set the standard for the prophetic voice of the clergy in socio-political affairs. It is important to note that Catholic Bishops pastoral letter titled “Living Our Faith,” ignited the clergy’s zeal to fight for the cause of human rights and the dignity of the values of the Kingdom.²⁹³ The clergy through this prophetic voice were willing to stand for truth despite their doctrine difference and this bold proclamation against injustice and oppression bore fruits as Malawi realized a new era of democracy.

Arguably, not only was the prophetic voice necessary, the clergy also needed to consolidate their positions in socio-political affairs by establishing Church departments to promote good governance and development. Speaking in the context of Zambia Austin Chiyeka states “these departments were considered as part of civil society institutions, and played a critical role of shaping political systems and processes of the state”.²⁹⁴ Such Church departments as Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP), Church and Society are seen and involved in civic education, advocacy, election monitoring and policy formulation and implementation of relief and development projects. These supplemented the efforts being advanced by the clergy in the socio-political sphere of Malawi.

²⁹² Ibid.

²⁹³ Desmond, Duwa Phiri. *History of Malawi* (volume 2), (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2010), 340.

²⁹⁴ Austin, Chiyeka. *The Church, State and Politics in the Post-Colonial the Case of Zambia*, 179.

5.3 Challenges of the Clergy in the Socio-Political Affairs

There are a number of challenges that the clergy faces as they do their ministerial vocation. Such challenges hinder them as they do their priestly roles effectively to the glory of God and to the benefit of the nation.

5.3.1 The Problem of Political Allegiance

In the first place, during Kamuzu's regime the clergy of the Nkhoma Synod were seen to have unwavering support of the MCP government which governed Malawi for over thirty years.²⁹⁵ This staunch support was centered on several reasons. First, it was centered on the basis that late Dr Banda who was a Presbyterian Christian was officially an elder of Church of Scotland, a church which formally in Malawi is identified with the C.C.AP.²⁹⁶ Second, the Synods which form the C.C.A.P together with the Nyasaland African Congress later the MCP fought together in the 1950's against the Federation of Nyasaland and Rhodesia.²⁹⁷ This background served as the basis of the cordial relationship between the Synod and the Life President. It can be observed that since the 1970s after MCP had established its autocratic rule, the Synod began a common practice of sending to the government loyal messages, which indicated the loyalty of the synod to the leadership, the

²⁹⁵ Willy, Zeze. Christianity: A State-Sponsored Religion in Malawi? A critical Evaluation of the Relationship between the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the MCP-led Government (1964-1994) <https://classic.iclrs.org/events> (accessed on 12/5/2019).

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

party and government. These messages were sent annually by the Synods General Conferences. For instance, in 1977 the Nkhoma Synod wrote the following to Ngwazi:

We of Nkhoma Synod C.C.A.P wish you a successful meeting and blessing from God. May He grant you wisdom and knowledge in all deliberations. In Proverbs 14:34-*Righteousness exalts a nation...*”We gladly pray for our President, the party and our government.²⁹⁸

Such practice as exemplified above showed the strength of the relationship between the synod and the Government. Consequently, the Nkhoma Synod arbitrarily made use of these loyal messages to express in strongest terms that they identified themselves and supported the government.

It can be viewed that such practice did not just have implications, it changed the public face of the church. The Church through this tightrope relationship with the Government, ostensibly found itself being influenced by government leadership and adopting a culture of silence.²⁹⁹ The implication of such developments was that the Church bluntly ignored its prophetic calling toward the state and was unable to guard the nation on socio-political issues.³⁰⁰ Analyzing this situation Willy Zeze elucidates that “this scenario made it very difficult for Nkhoma Synod to distance itself in any way from the MCP government or in any way to be critical to the social and political problems Malawi was facing during the regime”.³⁰¹ To a greater extent the situation from this period reveals that the Church used its prophetic and priestly role in legitimizing MCP’s dictatorial regime.

²⁹⁸ Willy, Zeze. Christianity: A State-Sponsored Religion in Malawi? A critical Evaluation of the Relationship between the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the MCP-led Government (1964-1994) <https://classic.iclrs.org/events> (accessed on 12/5/2019).

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

The use of the scripture to validate the government became a common practice even among other churches. Churches used loyalty letters or even the podium to preach support of the government.³⁰² It is not surprising therefore that while the socio-economic and political situation of the country during Kamuzu's era was deteriorating, the political regime becoming autocratic and being characterized with human rights abuse, the church adopted a culture of silence even when the atmosphere was conducive for exercising its prophetic role.³⁰³

Consequently, these dramatic events in the history of the Church in Malawi draws to attention in this study to the context the book of Revelation where the Roman Regime used the imperial cult to legitimize its authority and to propagate its agenda. Though this is a secular first century example in the third century AD, a very vivid example on how political regimes practically used religion to its advantage can be observed. The history of the Church usually makes reference to the time of Constantine, convincingly because the state during this period took advantage of religion in to order force the Church to take some doctrinal stance which protected the interest of the state.³⁰⁴ The Kamuzu's regime was not an exception to this strategy, the Church was influenced to take a stance that defended the interest of the government's exploitative and repressive policies.

The regime of Bakili Muluzi in the post multiparty era was a mixed bag, some section of the clergy rendered support for him for various reasons. The central reason for

³⁰² Willy, Zeze. Christianity: A State-Sponsored Religion in Malawi? A critical Evaluation of the Relationship between the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the MCP-led Government (1964-1994) <https://classic.iclrs.org/events> (accessed on 12/5/2019).

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Earle, E. Cairns. *Christianity Through the Centuries: A History of the Christian Church*. (Michigan: Zondervan, 1996), 21.

this support was based on the fact that he was the father of multipartyism and democracy, and also that he had worked hand in hand with the Catholic Bishops and the clergy in other Christian Churches to achieve political transformation despite his religious affiliation to Islam. However, all this support was soon fading due to a number of problems. Among which was his proposal to introduce the Third Term Bill in Parliament. This irresponsible step attracted much criticism by the clergy in Malawi. In his article in the Nations Newspaper titled *Blantyre City Clergy Against Third Term* Pilirani Semu Banda narrates how during an international prayers held at Jamba Freedom Park in Blantyre different members of the clergy spoke against the bill. His article reads:

During international prayers held at Jamba Freedom Park in Blantyre Bishop Matonga of the Pentecostal and Charismatic said “Malawi will really know that there is God in heaven when the bill fails”. Reverend Billy Gama of Blantyre synod said that “the country wants change and that Jesus will not fail to provide it for them”. Father Enoch Kanjira of Catholic Church prayed that “MPs should have courage to vote against the bill”.³⁰⁵

This demonstrates how members of the clergy stood against the proposition of the third term bill which was being propagated by Muluzi’s Government. While during the proposition of the Third Term Bill the clergy exercised their prophetic role and priestly role in holding joint public prayers, the situation changed when it came to the 2004 presidential elections.³⁰⁶ Evidence shows that the clergy were vigorously involved in the campaign of candidates. In Daily Times article on 2 July 2004 the editor states: “before and after the campaign period for May 20 election, churchmen from different denomination came out to openly and sometimes clandestinely campaign for opposition and ruling party.

³⁰⁵ Pilirani, Semu Banda. “*BT Clergy Against Third term*” the Nation Newspaper, 23 January 2003. p.4.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

Individual and organization threw their weight behind the clerics and vehemently defended this partisan stance”.³⁰⁷

Sadly, it seems that despite the Church’s formal institutional stance of being politically neutral in politics, the clerics in this period begun to use party politics to advance their own agenda.

The context of the problem of political allegiance goes further in contemporary times such that one part of the section of the clergy gives prophetic critiques while the other section of the clergy render support to the government of the day and endorses political leaders. Consequently, political candidates have found the formula to use the Church and tap from its endorsing powers. In 2012 Rev. Levi Nyondo of Livingstonia Synod publicly made the following statement; “The Livingstonia Synod will support and endorse Dr. Joyce Banda to be president in the 2014 tripartite election.”³⁰⁸ It seems evident that the church exchanges allegiances when a leader is connected to their region or is a member of these churches. However, while some churches explicitly endorse candidates, the Roman Catholic Bishop in their Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM) statement categorically states.

While we wish to reiterate that the churches encourage Catholics to take active role in politics power i.e. seeking political at all levels of national governance structure, “the Catholic Bishops in Malawi cannot and shall not support or endorse any particular politician or political party.”³⁰⁹

This statement could not go without criticism because even though the Catholic Bishops issued this statement in readiness of the campaign period of the 2019 tripartite election,

³⁰⁷ Pilirani, Semu Banda. “BT Clergy Against Third term” the Nation Newspaper, 23 January 2003. p.4

³⁰⁸ www.news24.com/africanews (accessed 07/06/2019)

³⁰⁹ Episcopal Conference of Malawi Statement (ECM) 15 September 2018, see appendix 2.

their churches, Bishops and member of the clergy were open for the then Vice President of the republic of Malawi Dr Klaus Saulos Chilima a Roman Catholic member and a presidential candidate in the election.

A critical analysis of the pre-multiparty and post-multiparty era can also reveal how churches changed from being aligned to the government to supporting their preferential presidential candidates. For instance, Presbyterians mainly the Nkhoma Synod who were very aligned to Kamuzu's government before the multiparty era, have now in the present and the post-multiparty become critical of the government. For example, a critical look at a pastoral letter by the Nkhoma Synod in 2019 titled, *An Opportunity to Choose a Leader with good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom (Acts 6:3)* shows however the synod critiqued presidential candidates. This was stated as follows:

For the first time in the history of this nation, we have two serving members of the cabinet; the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi and the Minister of Health all challenging the incumbent State President under whom they are currently serving with strong allegations that this government is corrupt. Others promising Malawians to give evidence of such but nothing has been given yet. This is a vote of no confidence in the regime's leadership to which they are part of. Ironically they feel they can do a better job than the incumbent, yet they are part of the system and using state resources to campaign without conscious.³¹⁰

While this statement shows the bold stance of the Synod, this quote has also attracted criticism from both political analysts and other section of the church. For example, by explicitly mentioning the caliber of people contesting the election the Church was venturing into endorsing the MCP and its candidate. This however shows that the clergy are eager to support and endorse candidates and parties.

³¹⁰ CCAP Nkhoma Synod, *An Opportunity to Choose a Leader with Good Reputation, Full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom (acts 6:3)*, Pastoral letter (April, 2019 Published by CCAP - Nkhoma Synod).

In 1992 the Blantyre Synod of the C.C.A.P stated:

If we look at our own history as C.C.A.P during the time of the struggle we will see that Blantyre was very much in support of the Nyasaland African Congress because of the verbal stance the C.C.A.P was aligned closely with government and became so assimilated that the Synod gradually lost its ability to admonish or speak pastorally to the government.³¹¹

This is one of the evidence which shows the strong position the Synod took in Church and State relations in this period. It is important to note that, the Synod general secretaries and moderators from 1992 to 2003 were very instrumental in giving critique check and balances to government systems and leaders. These influential leaders of the Synod include Rev Silas Ncozona, Rev Kansilanga and Rev Daniel Gunya.³¹² Rev Silas Ncozona was instrumental in the formation of Public affairs committee (PAC).³¹³ Rev Kansilanga served as the chair of the Public affairs committee (PAC) was very critical to the government. Rev Gunya during Muluzi's Government fought aggressively against the proposition of the Third Term Bill by the U.D.F government and influenced members of the clergy to staunchly oppose the Bill.³¹⁴

Despite such notable achievements of the leadership of Blantyre Synod in giving critical checks to the government, the clergy found themselves in another predicament during the late President Bingu Wa Muthalika. In a series of events where the Roman Catholic was critical of the regime through its pastoral letters, it was unbelievable that the

³¹¹ Felix, Chingota. "The Use of the Bible in Social Transformation", in Ross, Kenneth (ed) *God, People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective* (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 57.

³¹² See: Desmond, Duwa Phiri. *History of Malawi* (Volume 2), (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2010), 344.

³¹³ Kenneth, Ross. "The Transformation of Power in Malawi 1992-94: The Role of the Christian Churches"; in Kenneth Ross (ed), *God People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective*. (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 57.

³¹⁴ Pilirani, Semu Banda. "BT Clergy Against Third term" the Nation Newspaper, 23 January 2003. p.4.

nation witnessed clergy members of the Blantyre Synod responding to the Roman Catholic pastoral letter. Behind this letter were two top most clergy the Moderator and the Deputy General Secretary of the Synod. In press conference they organized, Rev Mangisa the Moderator and Rev Chimenya the Deputy General Secretary accused the Roman Catholic Bishops that it was wrong in writing the pastoral letter to their own flock instead of the Bishops addressing the issues raised in the letter to president Bingu wa Muthalika who was their member.³¹⁵ Surprisingly, rumors were circulating in the media that the duo were conniving with government and that they had received some money.³¹⁶ The Synod however was displeased with the actions of the two and it instituted a commission of inquiry which investigated the two and they were removed from office by the Emergency Synod meeting.

Despite having these top members of the clergy removed from office, the clergy in Blantyre Synod have tolerated politics to play in the administration of the church. As noted by Yamikani Simtowe “politicians have been seen to be sponsoring synod candidates on positions of General Secretary and Synod moderators”.³¹⁷ In his article, he gives information which shows that within the Synod polls of august 2015, the candidates were being sponsored by politicians. He argues that “the then current offices bears were being sponsored by the ruling party Democratic Progress Party (DPP) whilst their opponents were being sponsored by Peoples Party (PP) to campaign for the post”.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Mc Donald, Chapalapata. “Mangisa gets Injunction”. The Daily Times, Friday December 3, 2010 pg. 1

³¹⁶ Mc Donald, Chapalapata. “Government Organized Mangisa Press Meet-Report” Malawi News, Vol. 55 No 2947, December 4-10, 2010 pg. 1, 2, 4.

³¹⁷ Yamikani, Simtowe. Political Affiliation Causes Division in C.C.A.P Blantyre Synod <https://www.nyasatimes.com>politi> (accessed on 27/11/2019).

³¹⁸ Ibid.

Evidently, instead of speaking on the abuses of the government, the Synod has in recent times been silent. One of the basic reasons for this silence has been to the fact that political leaders have constantly financed some of its prominent bi-annual Synod elections as indicated in the foregoing and those who win in these elections pledge their allegiance to the political leaders who support them. In addition to this, the Government has used appointments into various parastatals bodies to make the clergy in the Blantyre Synod to be aligned to its side. Hence, instead of giving a prophetic critique the synod remains silent because its General Secretaries and Moderators occupy top seats in the government corporations like Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority (MERA), Water Boards, Education bodies like university councils, Broad casting bodies like Malawi communication Regulatory Authority (MACRA), Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC).

5.3.2 Restricting the Witness of the Gospel

It is very imperative to note the submission of Chingota, who argues that the Bible was very instrumental in the advent of multiparty democracy.³¹⁹ Chingota's analysis is backed up with the view that during Kamuzu's regime the clergy and the laity continually engaged the Bible on various issues emanating from the socio-political sphere of Malawi.³²⁰ Of particular interest was his submission that biblical based expositions, Pastoral letters and Public sermons instilled the zeal for political transformation.³²¹ Apparently, there were those who felt that the Church was abusing its spiritual authority in

³¹⁹ Felix, Chingota. "The Use of the Bible in Social Transformation", in Ross, K, R (eds) *God, People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective* (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 41.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ Ibid.

diverting into socio-political affairs; however this was mainly government propaganda in order to let the laity abhor the efforts of the clergy in achieving political transformation.³²² According Heyns the Church does not come to say something to politics out of interest, but it is fundamentally because the scripture has something to say about politics.³²³

However, notwithstanding the propaganda by those in government to restrict the gospel to spiritual matters, the clergy have played a role in relating the gospel in politics. Credible evidence points to facts that today the prophetic stance of individual members of the clergy is being restricted to only in matters dealing with election period.³²⁴ According to an article by the reporter, indicates how administrative authorities of the Blantyre Synod cautioned fellow clergy men on the use of the pulpit in proclaiming the uncompromised word in the socio-political.³²⁵ In this article the following was captured by one of the clergy who had just been elected into the administrative position of Synod: He stated that

Leadership will ensure that church ministers who are accused of being morally corrupt and those using the pulpit to advance any political agenda are disciplined, decision within the synod are not made by one person. If for example a minister uses the pulpit to advance a political agenda evidence shall be examined and verdict passed accordingly. Only during election is the clergy allowed to guide the flocks on attributes of good leaders.³²⁶

Though these words show the direction on how critical strides will be taken in addressing the immorality of some of the members of the clergy, the predisposition that the clergy

³²² Felix, Chingota. “The Use of the Bible in Social Transformation”, in Ross, K, R (eds) *God, People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective* (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 41.

³²³ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 220.

³²⁴ Archchibad, Kasakula. *BT Synod Speaks on Sticky Issues*. Malawi News Vol 26. No 174. Thursday 29 August 2019.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ Ibid

should only be allowed to speak to the flock during election is a stumbling block to the prophetic witness of the clergy to socio-political affairs.

Apparently, the Blantyre Synod has been reluctant to speak against government leadership when issues which compromise the integrity of government leadership emerge. Consequently, the Synod has been in a habit of disciplining some members of the clergy who speak their mind on the impunity in the political arena. The Synod has in many times claimed that these members of clergy have no authority to speak on the behalf of the Synod on National matters. With such statements from senior members of the clergy of the Blantyre Synod, this presents a problem where the clergy are finding it difficult within the public sphere to transmit Christian convictions in the structure and mechanisms of politics.

5.3.3 The Influence of Material Gains

Another issue evident is that of appointment in various parastatals boards and foreign government offices (high commission and embassies). This analysis falls under ‘material gain’. It is important to note based on historical experience that only a few members of the clergy accept such positions with the interest to serve the nation. Alluding to this it can be argued that the manner in which those appointed in boards of statutory corporation behave when appointed into such position raises questions on their integrity to serve the nation.³²⁷

For example, members of the clergy who served in various boards of statutory corporation decided to form the Forum for Peace, Justice and Dialogue which was to tackle

³²⁷ Lloyd, Chitsulo. *Mbvumbwe led Initiative Discredited*. The Nation Newspaper Wednesdays 31 July 2019 Vol. 26 No.152, p.1.

issue amidst the post 21 May 2019 election violence and national standstill.³²⁸ This forum received criticism even before its establishment because it was composed of members of the clergy who had a history of aligning with the government at the expense of their churches and the interests of the nation. According to staff reporter in the Nation newspaper dated Wednesday 31 July vol 26 no 152.

Newly formed interfaith forum for peace justice and dialogue chaired by Bishop Joseph Mbvumbwe to mediate in post-election stalemate, under fire for comprising to be aligned to government, Members are Board chairpersons of Malawi Energy Regulatory Authority. Political commentators have described the outfit as mercenaries of government, on their objectivity in serving the interest of Malawians.³²⁹

Consequently, other members the clergy became critical of this forum particularly in stances where the leadership of Malawi Assemblies of God , Seventh Day Adventists and Living Waters Churches plus many others withdrew from the Forum for Peace, Justice and Dialogue an institution which was to be established.³³⁰ The focal reason behind this was that churches saw no objectivity in formation of the forum and also that their individual churches were skeptical of its purpose because it seemed to counter that of Public Affairs Committee (PAC).

5.4 Comparative Trajectories of Churches in Asia Minor and the Clergy in Malawi

There are a number of issues which members of the clergy in Malawi correspond to the church leaders in Asia Minor. It is important to note that the Church and Church

³²⁸ Ibid.

³²⁹ Ibid

³³⁰ Ibid.

leaders in Asia Minor encountered both internal and external pressures. One of the issues which correspond to the Malawian context is the issue of the influence of the government in the socio-political witness of the gospel. It can be noted that church leaders were prone to accumulating wealth for themselves. This is shown through a warning in which the author warns the church leaders on their claim of riches (Rev 3:13). The claims to the material gains have also compromised some of the clergy members in Malawi. It has been observed that the clergy are manipulated by various regimes to ignore their prophetic role in the socio-political affairs. The clergy are offered opportunities which present a conflict of interest with the work of the Kingdom as well as national interest versus personal gains.

Related to this, is a comparative view in which the clergy fear the decrease in financial commitment of the laity. This is an area in which Calhoun Brown's hypothesis becomes a problem. This hypothesis advocates for the clergy to engage local congregation in socio-political affairs through public proclamation of the gospel.³³¹ However, evidence shows that some members of the laity may be irritated with such a move and decide to decrease their contribution of finances. Therefore, in view of these, the clergy refrain from their prophetic role in order to maintain the status quo of cash flow in the churches.

Mike Berry mentions the critical situation in which the church and its leaders were in Asia Minor.³³² For him, the socio-political attitude of the contemporary people was also a threat to the socio-witness of the gospel.³³³ For example, the author of the book of

³³¹ Austin, Chiyeka. *The Church, State and Politics in the Post-Colonial the Case of Zambia* (MA Dissertation), (Zomba: Chancellor College, 2003), 179.

³³² Mike, Berry. *The Seven Churches of Asia Minor* 5oceandrivechurch.org. (accessed on 6/07/2019).

³³³ Ibid.

Revelation speaks of a city whose description is labeled the seat of Satan (Rev 2: 13). “The activities and norms of this city were so decayed such that the practices in this city had penetrated the socio-political life of the church”. A similar description can be seen within the socio-political fabric of the church and the clergy in Malawi. It can be noted that issues which are dominating the attitude of people are now penetrating the church. For instance, nepotism and corruption which were issues discussed outside the Church as a critique of the political regimes have now crept into the church. These issues are challenging the Kingdom values of which the clergy are called to defend and uphold. Sins such as fornication, adultery and corruption which are dominating society are now hitting the heart of the church because the church has refrained to critique such practices as sin, in the socio-political sphere.

5.5 The Role of the Clergy in Malawi’s Socio-Political Affairs in the Light of Revelation 1:4-6.

In the light of Revelation 1:4-6, it is possible to argue for the roles which the clergy can play in Malawi’s social political context. It can be said that in light of the problem as pointed out in Chapter 1 of the study, there is need to refocus the clergy to become more serious of their prophetic and institutional roles. Therefore, the study proposes the practical roles of the clergy in Malawi’s socio-political context.

Firstly, there are certain socio political situations that require the clergy not only to approach the socio-political affairs with a Kingdom view but also with a priestly view. This is not to affirm or to advance that the clergy are equivalent to priests in the Old Testament but to argue that some aspects of ancient priestly function, are pivotal in the role of the clergy in the socio-political sphere of Malawi. Therefore, the study does not chiefly rely

on what the priestly data in the book of Revelation says, but also those in the Old Testament. It has been observed in the study that much of what can be said as the priestly role of the clergy has been seen when the clergy pledge their support and legitimizing governments, by officiating government activities through prayers and sending loyal messages.³³⁴ However, these have been misused as platform for party politics in the church. Therefore, the priestly service to the nation must rise above these deeds.

Consequently, with respect to this, the priestly role of the clergy in Malawi ought not to succumb to blind loyalty and submission to the government but it has to be an acknowledgement that the State ought to function as ordained by God, promoting law, order, justice and peace. Hence, it is necessary for the clergy in Malawi who are part of the church which is a “Kingdom”, “priest” that they should strive for a priestly service to the nation to promote law, order, justice and peace. There are certain times when the clergy ought to rebuke the political sins in the nation in times when political regimes or political leaders drag the nation into chaos through corruption, abuse of human rights and nepotism etc.

Therefore, the priestly service in such times can be in letting the people know the socio-political sins in the nation. Sins in the political life of the nation can hinder the advance of the Kingdom of God and can be reflected in governance of a nation.³³⁵ Issues like injustice, corruption, moral decadence, secularism are sins that affect the fabric of a nation, its politics, governance, its laws etc. If members of the clergy neglect their priestly

³³⁴ Willy, Zeze. Christianity: A State-Sponsored Religion in Malawi? A critical Evaluation of the Relationship between the CCAP Nkhoma Synod and the MCP-led Government. (1964-1994) <https://classic.iclrs.org/events> (accessed on 12/5/2019).

³³⁵ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 220.

service in the light of promoting the values of the Kingdom of God, it can adversely affect the church and its mission because some of the political sins which are within the political life of the nation can creep into the church. Evident in rampant vices like nepotism, tribalism and corruption which were mostly talked outside the church now manifest within the church. This is an issue challenging the clergy today.

Secondly, the priestly role can help the clergy in Malawi to consistently proclaim the message of the kingdom. The Old Testament priestly service embraced the function of preaching and teaching the moral code which not only tackled the religious affairs but also the socio-political issues. Priests proclaimed Yahweh's intent on social ethics, justice, political affairs, economics, and governance. It could be unfortunate that today the clergy's socio-political witness to the Kingdom is only being limited to a period of campaign and general elections as in Blantyre synod for example. The church and the clergy tell their members to choose leaders who will promote justice, fairness, equity, economic prudence, good governance, moral uprightness, but immediately when the post-election period emerges, the clergy are unable to preach or embark on checking the political leaders on these particular aspects by means of preaching. This situation needs critical attention and redress. It must be viewed that preaching about justice and peace as principles of the Kingdom is part of the solution the church has to offer to a broken society, therefore the clergy must not relent from preaching and teaching as priestly agents of the Kingdom.³³⁶ Hence, "Pastoral letters or public sermons, royal message must not be tools subjectively used for propaganda. The clergy should continually fight for leaders of the nation to promote justice, fairness, equity, economic prudence, good governance, moral uprightness.

³³⁶ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 219.

This can be done if the church adopts a priestly and prophetic role to comprehensively proclaim the values of the Kingdom to the nation. This is the reason why pastoral letters must not be written in haste or hate but in the light to defend the interest of the kingdom and justice in society’.

Therefore, derived from the overcoming motif elucidated within liberation and redemption paradigms in chapters 1- 3 of Revelation, the Kingdom, Priest concept admonishes the clergy to overcome all forces that are inimical to the Kingdom of God.³³⁷ This is being said in reference to political governance systems that oppose the values of the Kingdom. The clergy through their prophetic role and institutional role have the responsibility not to conform to political governance systems which suppress their prophetic roles. Consequently, as did the clergy in Peru and South African because of the impeccability for being advocates of good, the clergy should always function to overcome all issues within the socio-political sphere of Malawi which are for the common good of the Kingdom and stand in obedience to God and not men.³³⁸

Therefore, it is imperative to argue in the light of above task that the Church needs grace and peace to be present in their ministry in socio-political affairs. “Grace and peace” is more than an epistolary blessing which apostolic letters proclaimed to the Churches. It is a reality that can be realized in the churches today and most importantly among the members of the clergy today. In view of lack of solidarity among the clergy this blessing

³³⁷ Charles, H.A *Critical and Exegetical Commentary of Revelation of John*. (Edinburgh: T & T CLARK, 1920), 22.

³³⁸ Allan, Boesak, “The Black Church and Struggle in South Africa,” *The Ecumenical Review*, 32 (Jan. 1980), 23

and prayer can be of prime importance to bring about the much desired solidarity among the clergy. Suffice to argue that the notion of “Kingdom, priest” also points to solidarity in the churches mission in the socio-political sphere. It can be argued that the notion that the church serves God as chosen people, a royal priesthood points to their solidarity in this service.

However, although solidarity is a difficult task, complex and multifaceted issue in the socio-political nature it is however necessary to have one voice of the clergy in terms of socio-political transformation in the light of Kingdom. This does not mean the clergy should blindly follow or silently assert to objectives of institutions like the Public Affairs Committee (PAC) or religious bodies like Malawi Council of Churches (MCC), Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), Evangelical Association of Malawi, however in critical socio-political times the clergy should be in solidarity as people of God stand out to agree and back all socio-political issues that are for the common good and for the advancement of Kingdom values in the nation. Desmond Duwa Phiri rightly states that “the Synods of Blantyre and Livingstonia of Church of Central Africa Presbyterian issued a joint statement supporting the Bishop’s pastoral letter... the world Alliance of Reformed Churches (WARC) based in Geneva, Switzerland supported the stand taken by the two Synods of the C.C.A.P”. This therefore indicates that in Malawi 1992 change was inevitable because most Churches and religious groups suddenly decided to back the call of the Catholic Bishops for socio-political transformation.³³⁹ In the same regard, socio-political issues today need the clergy to stand in solidarity.

³³⁹ Desmond, Duwa Phiri. *History of Malawi (volume 2)*, (Blantyre: CLAIM, 2010), 344.

Critical to the missionary task of the clergy in socio-political affairs are allusions to the phrase the “*faithful witness*” in Revelation 1:4. This element has been observed as a Christological title which designates the obedience of Christ to the gospel. Furthermore, it designated an allegiance to mediating the revelation and witnessing to the truth from God and constant witness (cf. Rev 2:13; 11:3; 17:6). It is important therefore to note that within the Malawian context in the pre-multiparty era the Catholic Bishops stood firmly to the message which brought hope and political transformation in Malawi. They were faithful witness to this cause to the extent that they were willing to lay down their lives in defense of the gospel. Even the other members of the clergy from Presbyterian, Anglican, Baptist were faithful witness to prophetic voice and willing to stand for truth despite their doctrinal difference. This bold proclamation against injustice and oppression is much needed today as it was in the early 1990 so that the nation experiences peace and tranquility.

Therefore, based on exegetical analysis of the study it can be rightly inferred that there is a need for the clergy to be accountable to the public face of the Kingdom of God. The Old Testament narrative has overwhelmingly showed that Israel was urged to be accountable to the statutes and values in the law of holiness for its statutes as Kingdom, priests to be realized. In line with this the study argues that the clergy being part of the New Testament community which has been conferred the privilege of being a priestly Kingdom ought to be accountable to the values of the same Kingdom God. Klaus Fiedler in his article, *even in the Church's the Exercise of Power is Accountable to God* clearly states that:

The church, its message, its personnel, its institutions constitute a power in the land, a political power indeed, and depending on the historical constellation, its exercise of the power may have far reaching effects.³⁴⁰

Certainly, how the personnel of the church or the clergy exercise power in socio-political affairs can have far reaching effects on the morality of the church in political affairs. The culture of silence is destructive and does not build the spirituality of the nation. In fact it demonstrates that the clergy are not hearing from the word of God or not being accountable to it.

Therefore, the continuing call for the people of God to be accountable to the values of the Kingdom or the dictates of God with respect to exercising power in the socio-political sphere is inherently relevant for the clergy in Malawi. The fact that some members of the clergy have compromised or not adhered to the call does not necessarily justify that the way in which they have interacted with the state which has posed challenges and weakened the public role of the church. The biblical scheme should be regarded as being normative to the way the clergy should behave in socio-political affairs. Apparently, while the nature of political organization of the church enables senior members of the clergy to work hand in hand with the government, the clergy must not willingly detach themselves from the ethics of the Kingdom. No matter what some members of the clergy think and how they behave in socio-political affairs, no matter what gains they receive from the government to remain silent, the clergy will always be condemned if they do not show political neutrality and promote ethics of the Kingdom. Therefore, as elaborated in a foregone paragraph the clergy should engage in priestly and prophetic fashion to entrench

³⁴⁰ Klaus, Fiedler. “Even in the Church the Exercise of Power is Accountable to God”. In Kenneth Ross (ed), *God People and Power in Malawi: Democratization in Theological Perspective*, (Zomba: Kachere, 1997), 187.

the ethics of the Kingdom in various positions entrusted to them by the state. This would surely be commendable by all churches in the world.

For the interest of promoting the Kingdom and its agenda for liberation, two historical albeit contemporal on how the clergy can serve the nation as agents of the Kingdom merit out attention. The first scenario is that of the Peruvian church in South America. The clergy in this nation adopted a liberation paradigm in its mission as a church.³⁴¹ The Peruvian members of the clergy begin to remind the administration of the church that the gospel of Christ is for the liberation of those who are oppressed and marginalized.³⁴² In his article “‘Spirituality of Liberation’” Gustavo Gutiérrez states:

To place oneself in the perspective of the Kingdom means to participate in the struggle for the liberation of those who are oppressed by others. This is what Christians who have committed themselves to the Latin American revolutionary process have begun to experience.

Gustavo Gutiérrez spearheaded a movement which not only critiqued the political landscape but also the clerics who for a long time stood in support of the oppressive political regime and the rich people in the nation.³⁴³

While this movement was in its initial stage, encountered constraints and were accused by the institutional church for accusing the church for siding with oppressive regimes in Peru which institutionalized injustices.³⁴⁴ However, the Church realized the mistake of not obeying its missionary mandate to the poor and marginalized people.³⁴⁵ The

³⁴¹ Gustavo, Gutiérrez. “‘Spirituality of Liberation’”.in Deane William Third *World Liberation Theology* (New York: Orbis 1986), 17.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ Gustavo, Gutiérrez. “‘Liberation and the Poor: The Puebla Perspective’”, in Deane William Third *World Liberation Theologies* (New York: Orbis 1986), 29.

³⁴⁴ Gustavo, Gutiérrez. “‘Liberation and the Poor: The Puebla Perspective’”, in Deane William Third *World Liberation Theologies* (New York: Orbis 1986), 29.

³⁴⁵ Ibid.

basic concerns in this movement for the clergy were for the church to side with the poor because God has special interest in their welfare and also that the Kingdom of God was for the liberation oppressed the poor.³⁴⁶

Obviously such movements could be lessons for the Malawian clergy. In contrast to the clergy in Peru the clergy members in Malawi have in many times become partisan or pledged allegiance to a political regime. This study is of the view that for a continued transformation of the political sphere, the clergy should borrow a leaf from their counterparts in Peru. consequently, members of the clergy in Malawi should spearhead a movement that not only seeks to reform the socio-political sphere but also seek to reform the leadership of the Church from being structured in a manner that allows members of the clergy in leadership position like bishops, moderators, general secretaries from being partisan or being entangled with the state in such a way that the mission of the church as being an agent of the Kingdom in the socio-political sphere is not realized.

Coming from the experience of Peruvian church, the next are those of the South African Church which fought against the apartheid regime. It is important to note that the apartheid regime in its endeavors to propagate racism and discrimination against the black race, utilized the institutional church and its doctrine to fortify its propaganda.³⁴⁷ The Church instead of being the agent of the Kingdom became an agent of the apartheid regime. However, with the rise of black consciousness movement, liberation theology and black theology change begun among some of the clergy and the political situation in South

³⁴⁶ Ibid

³⁴⁷ Allan, Boesak, "The Black Church and Struggle in South Africa," *The Ecumenical Review*, 32 (Jan. 1980), 23

Africa. In this regard, it is important to note what Allan Boesak one of proponents of these movements in South Africa said in reference to liberation of the church and the clergy from the apartheid regime.

The time has come for the black church to tell the government and its people: we cannot in good conscience obey your unjust laws because non co-operation with evil is as much as a moral obligation as is co-operation with good. So we will teach our people what it means to obey God rather than man....³⁴⁸

This extract is very critical even for the church and the clergy in Malawi. Whist it is seen that in Malawi the church or the clergy work hand in hand with the government in areas such as health and education, this scenario should not be used to make the Church complacent and neglect its moral and spiritual obligations to obey God when government unleashes unjust laws. The Church ought to know that being agent of the Kingdom in the political sphere involves obeying God rather than men, hence it important that the Church fight against the unjust laws which political regimes or ruling parties perpetuate in the systems of government in order to achieve their ends.

Consequently, the church ought not to found itself in a situation when people are fighting for better services in public domain but the members of the clergy sit in these parastatal boards just observing and overseeing bad legislation practices being adopted by these boards. The members of the clergy do not regard these platforms as places where

³⁴⁸ Allan, Boesak, "The Black Church and Struggle in South Africa," *The Ecumenical Review*, 32 (Jan. 1980), 23

they can push for change and transformation but unfortunately as places where they can oppose those who are pushing for transformation.³⁴⁹

The members of clergy must not conform to the prevailing evil system when dealing with the socio-political sphere. As part of the Kingdom and its agents they must act in accordance with the values to promote justice, peace and fairness. This therefore means that the clergy must not be controlled by secular system principles because God has not sent them for any other purpose but to fulfill demands of the Kingdom of God and its righteous values. The members of the clergy must always remember some of the critical scriptures as they serve God in Malawi. These include:

1. You are salt of the earth (Mathew 5:13-16).
2. You are light of the world (Mathew 5:13-16).
3. I send you forth as a sheep among wolves (Mathew 10:16).
4. What does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)
5. Therefore thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, concerning the shepherds who care for my people: “You have scattered my flock, and have driven them away, and you have not attended to them. Behold, I will attend to you for your evil doings, says the LORD (Jeremiah 23:2).

³⁴⁹ Lloyd, Chitsulo. *Mbvumbwe led Initiative Discredited*. The Nation News Paper, Wednesdays 31, July 2019. Vol 26 No. 152.p,1,2.

These verses are very important for guiding members of the clergy in their role in the socio-political. They serve to inform members of the clergy of their moral obligation to maintain integrity in their missionary endeavor in Malawi's socio-political context.

5.6 Analysis of Findings

It is clear from this chapter that Revelation 1:4-6 is not confined to sacral and religious categories, for the application of the statement "*Kingdom and Priests*" is intertwined with a socio-political understanding. This understanding shows that even the appropriation of the text in various contexts like Exodus 19:5-6 and 1 Peter 2:9-10 undergird an interpretation which carries overtones of socio-political categories. This chapter's analysis has responded to several questions posed in the introductory part of the study. One of the questions was primarily dealing with restricting these concepts "*Kingdom and Priests*" to the sacral sphere. Evidently, it can be observed that the terms were not necessarily to affirm the religious aspects of Israel or the church. The study as demonstrated in its exegetical analysis points to conclusion that the functions of these terms in socio-political context are conceived with respect to the historical context and the life setting of the verses.

The book of Revelation sets out in the prologue the new identity and mission of the church within the Kingdom of GOD, with the obligation ascribed to this new dignity as to serve God who is the King of this Kingdom. Even though the phrase is originally from the Old Testament text, at first glance one carries the impression that the reference of the phrase to the church was primarily for religious purposes. The understanding implied in the Old Testament context in regard to the identity as a Kingdom and priests was that Israel would enjoy this privilege before God if they follow and obey Yahweh's commands

which were prescribed in the Decalogue and the Levitical code.³⁵⁰ This promulgated the reign of Yahweh and sovereignty of Yahweh over Israel's affairs. Therefore, within the context of Israel it has been observed that the notion of Kingdom and Priest, affirmed the nation hood of Israel, the Election of Israel as the people and the priestly role of Israel in safeguarding the law of Yahweh and the covenant.³⁵¹ The socio-political of the Old Testament text was pushed further to demonstrate how the Kingdom and Priest fits into the functional administration of the state and the people.

Consequently, several issues were raised: First, the idea of "Priests" in the ancient world was linked to mediation between people and the deity. Second, in ancient Israel and also in other Ancient Near Eastern society, priests were charged with the responsibility of teaching the law of God.³⁵² On this part it largely involved the teaching of the laws of GOD and reminding the kings about the necessity of the covenant loyalty for the survival of Israel. Third, this task also reflects their role in the midst of the nations.³⁵³ In relation to other nations the idea of priest was simultaneously the role of bringing the knowledge of God to the nations and the awareness that God is behind the course of history. It is important to note that these functions of the priesthood was instrumental in the functional understanding of Israel as a "Kingdom and Priest". This is the reason why socio-political connotations undergird the understanding of this text.

³⁵⁰ Brueggemann, Walter. "The Book of Exodus: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections", *NIB* Vol. 1. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 243.

³⁵¹ Ibid.

³⁵² Anthony, Gelston. *The Royal Priesthood*.<http://www.semanticscholar.org>>(accessed on 23/7/2019)

³⁵³ Ibid.

By using the tri-polar approach, the text and the findings from the analysis context were made to interact with the Malawian context. The major problem observed in the Malawi context is on how the clergy irrespective of the biblical witness to advance the Kingdom, have to a large extent become allies with political regimes and engaged in party politics at the expense of the gospel and the oppressed masses. The study observed that the clergy are plunged into this problem because of the following reasons. First the material gain in service to the state, second, using the pulpit to legitimize political regimes and spearheading divisions in socio-political inter-religious dialogues. The problems have been adequately enumerated with concrete examples from Malawi's church and state relations. The study has also related these problems to the context of the seven churches. First, it has been argued that the seven churches in Asia Minor had a functional problem of compromising the gospel for material gain. Second, it was also discussed that the churches were struggling to overcome the influence of contemporary society in its mission, because as observed, the influence of the Roman imperial cult societies in Asia Minor were making Christians to compromise the values of the gospel.

Therefore, this chapter has also responded to the question raised in chapter one which seeks to understand whether the clergy support the kingdom values in their engagement in the socio-political affairs of the nation. To a large extent, the clergy have to live up to this call, because some of their senior members in the administrative positions of the Church have been used to compromise the prophetic role of the Church. This has been done by giving them positions in statutory corporations, which puts them in a position of material gains. Consequently, the Church through this is disabled to tackle injustices and corruption in these statutory corporations because their leaders are part of the system.

Up to this far, this study has pointed out how Church leaders and government behave and operate. The study has revealed that depending on the church affiliation of those in government, the clergy in many cases take a distance from giving a prophetic critique on the affairs of the state. However, that does not fare well with other sects of the clergy who do not have government officials or even the president affiliating to their churches. Consequently, this continues to make the prophetic critique to be of double standards and in effective, because the when the political regime changes, the clergy who have political leaders in the new government cease to critique the government and its abuse of power. Furthermore, political leaders in the new regime mock the other sect of the clergy as being partisan just because they do not render support to the government by legitimizing it. To some extent the claim of being partisan from the study may be true in two scenarios. First, the clergy offers critique using methods used in the civil society organizations instead of using biblical frameworks. This is observed in drafting of pastoral letter which have no biblical basis of critique. Second, the clergy criticizes the government just because the leaders are not affiliates of their church and this is seen as the only option left. This therefore brings us to the conclusion that some of the clergy are not objective in representing the values and biblical ethics of the Kingdom as far as prophetic ministry of the church is concern.

However, the study has argued the concept of Priestly, Kingdom can be advantageous in enabling the clergy to be objective in engaging the socio-political sphere. The reason advanced in this view is that, the church as part of the Kingdom is necessary for bringing about social ethics, justice, economics, and good governance. This is premised from the Old Testament understanding of the priestly service which went beyond the sacral

and religious sphere. Such understanding brings to attention the observation of Heyns who among other things viewed “submission of the church to earthly governmental authority must not constitute blind submitted to the state when it degenerates into an object of oppression”.³⁵⁴ The church must issue that as part of the Kingdom advance in their role in the socio-political affairs the principles of Kingdom based on the fact that this is truly submitting to the ordinance of God as far as the state is concerned.³⁵⁵ Therefore, the clergy should by no means silently or explicitly endorse political regimes, but must defend that which is ideal in God’s ordinance of the work of the state.³⁵⁶

Anchored from this concern, the study has demonstrated how the use of the concept of Kingdom and priest in sync with the theoretical framework of political theology be used to make the prophetic and institutional roles of the Church effective. The primary basis of this was to supplement the already existing measures being used to create an environment in which the Clergy can represent the Kingdom in practical means. Therefore, this study has basically sought to reveal data which can be appropriated by the clergy in their involvement in the socio-political sphere.

It can be rightly inferred that there is need for the clergy to be accountable to the public face of the Kingdom of God. This accountability is hereby referred to reference to the clergy’s exercise of the power invested in the church. With respect to the exegetical study it was observed that the imperial cult wanted to influence even the affairs of the

³⁵⁴ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 220.

³⁵⁵ Ande, Titre. “Leadership and Authority” In TitreAnde(ed) *A Guide Leadership* (London: SPCK, 2010), 21.

³⁵⁶ Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 220.

church in Asia Minor. However, the Churches denial of this eventually turned into persecution. The church then was mindful of its allegiance to the Kingdom of God and not to the imperial system. From the Old Testament counterpart, it was observed that abiding to the statutes and values in the Decalogue and the law of holiness was pivotal to Israel's statutes as priestly kingdom and nationhood. Therefore, the study has argued that the clergy's mission in socio-political sphere be comprehensively aligned to the values of the Kingdom and be held accountable to them. This aspect is important because it demonstrates that by being accountable to these values the Church does justice to its mission in the socio-political affairs. It has been observed that in a state where the clergy are aligned to political regimes or exercises political neutrality the church becomes silent and tolerant to socio-political vices. On the contrary, the churches allegiance to the Kingdom values promotes truth, justice and renewal in the socio-political state of the nation.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Summary of Findings

The study addresses the problem where members of the clergy undertake their roles in the political-sphere while being aligned to political parties. In this regard the study set out to exegete Revelation 1:4-6, which points out that the Church is made a Kingdom and priests. This was done to see the implications of the verse and its historical setting to the Clergy in Malawi. The aim of this exegesis was to answer the following questions:

- What theological and political issues are exemplified in the exegetical analysis of Revelation 1:4-6?
- What is Malawi's post one party socio-political context?
- What challenges undermine the clergy in engaging critical socio-political issues in Malawi as agents of the Kingdom and priests?
- What are the implications of an exegetical analysis of Revelation 1:4-6, that can help the clergy in the socio-political context?

In view of the first question, the analysis shows that the writer of this doxology links the fulfillment of Churches' identity as Kingdom and priests as being affirmed through the redemptive work of Christ (Rev. 1:6, 5:10). This framework was understood to be similar with the Old Testament narrative of redemption from Egypt (Exodus 19:5). The verses in Exodus 19:6 revealed that the phrase was not strictly applied to the sacral function of Israel or cultic obligation of the priesthood only. The context of Exodus 19:6 showed an extension to the application in the socio-political sphere of Israel in the Ancient Near East. Evidence has shown that the phrase was connected to: "the Nationhood of Israel and the practice of

laws within socio-political sphere, covenant loyalty and the Comprehensive priestly duty in line with the nation of Israel and other nations’’.³⁵⁷

Therefore, scholarly analysis of Revelation 1:4-6 shows evidence which underscored the socio-political identity of the Church. From this spectrum several issues were identified. First, Roman imperial cult priesthood which was instrumental in divinizing the Roman emperor was an antithesis to the framework of the Kingdom of God.³⁵⁸ This imperial priesthood posed a challenge to the mission of the Church. However, the Church identity as a Kingdom and priests meant that in general Church leaders and the Churches were called to advance and serve the interest of the Kingdom of God in the most trying times in first century AD.³⁵⁹ The implication of this in the light of the historical situation is that ‘‘this new dignity and power to the Church meant that they are to serve God and his Kingdom in both the religious sphere and the socio-political sphere regardless of the systematic tribulation’’.³⁶⁰

In the light of the second and third research questions, the analysis provided a historical background of how the clergy in the Roman Catholic Church and the Presbyterian Church responded to the calls of socio-political transformation. It was observed that pastoral letters provided socio-political critiques which called for entrenchment of values that respect the human rights. It has been observed that the Bible and theological frameworks were instrumental in bringing about a message which touched

³⁵⁷ Byron, Wheaton. *The Church as Heir of Israel's Vocation as Royal Priesthood* <https://equip.sbts.edu>>. (Publication accessed 08/06/2019).

³⁵⁸ Charles, Henry. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary of Revelation of John*. (Edinburgh: T & T CLARK, 1920), 22.

³⁵⁹ Elizabeth, Schüssler Fiorenza. *The Book of Revelation; Justice and Judgment*. (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985), 68.

³⁶⁰ Ibid.

on the socio-political needs of the nation during the pre-multiparty era. Though in this era some of the clergy did not support the move for transformation, however the movement was strong because the clergy understood through biblical reflection the need for such transformation.

The post one-party era has been marred by diverse positions and behaviors. Analysis has revealed that the prophetic and institutional roles of the clergy have been destabilized because of the direct involvement in party politics and attempt to win a strategic advantage in socio-political sphere. Major challenges that the clergy encounter in representing the concerns of the Kingdom of God include:

1. The problem of political allegiance;
2. The lack of solidarity in socio-political critiques;
3. Restricting the witness of the gospel;
4. The influence of material gains

Lastly, in regard to the fourth research question the study has shown how the concept of Kingdom and priest can be used to help the clergy to engage the socio-political affairs of Malawi. It has been observed that the basic concerns of the Kingdom include righteousness, peace justice, law and order. Using Old Testament lenses it was observed that the priests through the Levitical Code were engaged comprehensively on all aspects of socio-political life. The Priests were engaged in teaching the moral code and safeguarding its implementation in the fabric of Israel's society. Against this background the study blended with the context of Revelation 1:4-6 to demonstrate ways in which the clergy in Malawi can engage the Kingdom in socio-political affairs. What guarded the

demonstration of these findings is the theoretical framework of this study which advocates for the use of socio-political categories of the Bible to socio-political issues in current contexts.

The study has argued that the analogy of Kingdom and priest is critical in entrenching solidarity among the clergy in their socio-political roles. The premises of this argument is based on the fact that the analogy shows that the church collectively has its identity as a priestly Kingdom, therefore there is need for solidarity in its ministry in the socio-political sphere. The need for this solidarity is necessary based on the findings which showed that religious institutions are fighting each other trying to discredit the pastoral messages of the other. Such phenomenon is against the spirit of solidarity demonstrated during the dawn of multiparty era. However, the Kingdom and priestly framework demonstrates the necessity of the church or the clergy in the socio-political affairs to understand that there is need to act in solidarity to advance the values of the Kingdom.

Furthermore, the study observed that there are some socio-political issues that require the clergy to act with a priestly face. This finding was a blending of Old Testament priest function of teaching and preaching the values of the Levitical code and the Decalogue which defended the national-hood of Israel. The study argues that the clergy in Malawi through this framework of Kingdom, priest, can vigorously defend the truths of the values of the Kingdom which uphold good governance. The clergy must not forfeit this role just because the government has put them on an advantage position of being close to it. But as with the case of the church in the book of Revelation they must stand up to fight against the socio-political policies which are against the value of the Kingdom of God. Through Kingdom and priest analogy the study also argues that the clergy can utilize the priestly

and prophetic mouth piece to proclaim against the political sins in the fabric of the nation. These sins are those which are against the values of the Kingdom. Within the contemporary Malawian context it has been observed that political sins such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism and lack of constitutionalism has begun to affect the mission of the church, hence the need for the clergy to fight against these.

Finally, the study argued that the clergy must not undermine the socio-political dimension of their calling. It has been observed that many sections of the clergy and scholars have interpreted Roman 1:26 as advocating the clergy to submit to the government. From the findings it was observed that the clergy demonstrate this by legitimizing the political regimes through the pulpit and sending royal messages which outlines the support of the clergy to the government. In turn political regimes reward senior members of the clergy with administrative position in government statutory corporation as board members. Consequently, these develop a culture of silence and blind submission of the clergy to political regimes. The implication of these is that the socio-political dimension of the church is forfeited.

6.2 Implications

From the study, it can be observed that continuing approaching socio-political affairs using an interface of relevant biblical framework is imperative for the clergy in Malawi. History has recorded events on how biblical frameworks such as Liberation Theology and Political Theology have enabled the Clergy to contribute to socio-movements of transformation and defense for values of human dignity.

Therefore, in regard to this, the first implication is that the clergy within the Malawian context need to go back to these frameworks in order to effectively contribute to the entrenchment of Kingdom values in the socio-political sphere. Apparently, the clergy have abandoned these frameworks and are using frameworks used by liberal civil society organizations; they are few references to the biblical framework in their prophetic critique. Consequently, despite this unfortunate development in the socio-political role of the clergy, there is need to continue reminding the clergy that it is not only the sacral or religious sphere where they have influence but there is also a sphere which their influence is much needed. The clergy can through the Kingdom of God challenge socio-political evils such as corruption, nepotism, tribalism, bad governance, moral decadence, and lack of constitutionalism, problems which secular solutions and frameworks have failed to curb. This approach agrees vividly with what Qeko Jere argued using his *kenosis* framework.³⁶¹ For him, secular approaches do not deal with these problems sometimes fail because they do not deal with sin in people's hearts, hence the need for theological socio-political frameworks.³⁶²

The second implication is based on the analysis of Revelation 1:4-6 which expounds on the Christological title of Christ as a Ruler of kings of the earth. It has been discussed in this analysis that in Christ the politics of this earth has not be left to the secular powers or rulers of this world because God is sovereign over both the sacral and political

³⁶¹ Qeko, Jere. *Pastoral Letters and the Church in the Public square : An Assessment of the Role of Pastoral Letters In Influencing Democratic Process In Malawi*<http://dx.doi.org/10.4102/ve.v39i1.1844> (accessed on 24/08/2019).

³⁶² Ibid.

sphere. The combination of Christ being the ruler of the kings of the earth and also the head of the Church is pivotal to the Church's role in the socio-political arena.

Consequently, based on this, it is inevitable for the Church to impact the political sphere so that the secular powers or the state should not degenerate into an instrument of the Kingdom of Satan. As with the analysis of Martin Luther, Dietrich Bornhoofer, Karl Bath, Heyns, James Tengatenga, the clergy should realize that the Kingdom of God is a complex phenomenon which includes the Church and the State.³⁶³ Therefore, members of the Church can be both participants of the Church and the State. However, it is possible for these members to entrench the values and ethics of the church and the Kingdom into the state so that it does not degenerate into a system of oppression.

The third implication is based on the study's position that the role of the clergy in the social politic affairs should be interfaced with the notion of the Kingdom and Priestly intervention. This resonates perfectly with the study's hypothesis, which has emphasized that clergy engage the socio-political within the missionary lines of being Kingdom and Priests to God as exemplified in Revelation 1:4-6. Philomena Njeri Mwaura in his article *Christian Identity and Ethnicity in Africa: Reflection on The gospel of Reconciliation*, argues that "Christian mission founded upon theological themes like salvation, reconciliation and liberation and authentic Christian witness promotes justice, peace and unity".³⁶⁴ The implication in this study is that of the concept of Kingdom and priest is

³⁶³ See: Erling T. Teigen. Two Kingdoms: Simuliususpeccator: *Depoliticizing the Two Kingdoms Doctrine* www.blts.edu>2014/08>e (Accessed on 08/10/2019), Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980), 213-220, James Tengatenga. *Church, State and Society: The Anglican Case*. (Zomba: Kachere, 2006), 192-196.

³⁶⁴ Philomena, Njeri Mwaura. "Christian Identity and Ethnicity in Africa: reflection on The Gospel of Reconciliation", in Diane B. Stinton et al, *African Theology on The Way: Current Conversations* (London: SPCK, 2010),129.

imperative and a useful socio-political and theological paradigm which can drive virtues like justice, peace and unity among the clergy. Therefore, through the phrase *βασιλείαν* (Kingdom) and *ἱερεῖς* (priest) the clergy can realize the priestly service of the Church to the state. It can be demonstrated that the application of the phrase *βασιλείαν* (Kingdom) and *ἱερεῖς* (priest) in relation priestly service in both Old and New Testaments is not restricted to sacral or religious duties. Following the views of Heyns and Mvula, on which Heyns on one hand views that the priestly service in the socio-political sphere involves primarily guarding the nation from its socio-political sins and Hermann Mvula on the other hand, argues for the entrenchment of biblical ethics in constitutionalism, this study strongly argues for clergy as those who belong to a priestly Kingdom to be instrumental in realizing this.³⁶⁵

6.3 Recommended area for further study

The study recommends “eschatology and judgment” motifs in the book of Revelation as relevant to the socio-political sphere of Malawi as an area of further study.

³⁶⁵See: Johan, Heyns. *The Church*. (Pretoria: N.G. Kerkboekhandel, 1980) and Hermann, Mvula. *The Use of Old Testament Ethical Principles in Entrenching Constitutionalism in Malawi*. (PhD thesis) (Zomba: Chancellor College, 2018).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: ECM STATEMENT

THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF MALAWI



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Off Chimutu Road
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MALAWI

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OUR REF:

YOUR REF:

THE EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF MALAWI (ECM) STATEMENT

Thursday, 13th September 2018

"Blessed are those who are persecuted" (Mt. 5:10)

We the Catholic Bishops in Malawi, having reflected on some disturbing developments taking place in the country as we prepare for the forthcoming tripartite elections judge it necessary to state the following:

1. We denounce the recent attack on the *person* of the Holy Father, Pope Francis and Head of the Roman Catholic Church. We wish to state that an attack on the Holy Father is an attack on the whole Church that is, One Holy Catholic and Apostolic. We call upon all political leaders, those governing and those in opposition to desist from dragging the name of the Holy Father into petty party politics.
2. We further denounce the recent attacks on the *Catholic Church* and the victimization of *her members* for cheap political gain. We the Catholic Bishops, ever aware of our duty to foster unity and charity among individuals have collaborated with all religious mother bodies in Malawi in the pursuit of inter-faith dialogue, promotion of the common good and rule of law, respect for human rights and human dignity through bodies such as MIAA, ACEM, CHAM, PAC just to mention but a few. All these efforts point to *what we have in common* and *what draws us to fellowship*. Vatican II's *Nostra Aetate* reminds us that: "Humanity forms but one community. This is so because all stem from one stock which God created to people the entire earth (cf. Acts 17:26), and also because all share a common destiny, namely God" (*no. 1*). In the same spirit of *Nostra Aetate*, we wish to state that the Catholic Church has a high regard for Muslims. "They worship God, who is one, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth, who has also spoken to humanity" (*no. 3*). Therefore, any form of religious intolerance and provocative sentiments should not be condoned. We call for mutual respect and understanding, tolerance and peaceful co-existence among people of different religions in the country; for the benefit of all, so that together we can preserve and promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.
3. Just as we stated in our June 2018 statement, we wish to reiterate that while the Church encourages Catholics to take an active role in politics i.e. seeking political power at all levels of the national governance structure, "the Catholic Bishops in Malawi cannot and shall not support or endorse any particular politician or political party" (*ECM June 2018 Statement no. 3*). Once again, we urge all eligible Malawians to register and vote in the forthcoming elections. Voting in such elections is not only a right but also an obligation of every eligible Malawian.

Vision: Family of God filled with the Holy Spirit living in Harmony, Peace and Solidarity

All official correspondence to be addressed to the Secretary General

Appendix 2:

NKHOMA PASTORAL LETTER



CCAP NKHOMA SYNOD

**AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHOOSE
A LEADER WITH GOOD REPUTATION,
FULL OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND WISDOM**

(ACTS 6:3)

**PASTORAL LETTER
APRIL, 2019**

*Published by Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) - Nkhoma
Synod*

PREAMBLE

May the grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, and the Holy Spirit the Advocate of our Faith be with you all. We, the Clergy of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod, met at Lilongwe CCAP on 26th April, 2019 noted with great shock and deep concern on the issues that are harmfully affecting the livelihood of all believers and Malawians in general. Our country is faced with a myriad of issues, which includes spiritual decadence, mushrooming of false teachers, institutionalized corruption, tribalism, and nepotism, political party sponsored violence, Albino killings and many more. The main purpose of this pastoral letter therefore, is to bring to your attention these issues, and to ask all Christians during this Easter period to earnestly pray for our country. Apart from praying, Christians are also encouraged to go and cast their vote on 21st May, 2019 so that Malawi may have a leader with good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.

1. SPIRITUAL LIFE

1.1 Choosing Life Instead of Death

The Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (C. C. A. P.), Nkhoma Synod Clergy would like to remind their members that Easter is an opportunity for all Christians to examine ourselves on our standing before God and appreciate the choice God set before us on the cross; the choice between life and death, blessings and curses. The Clergy, therefore, would like to urge their flock to choose life (Deuteronomy 30:19). Jesus has prevailed over death so that we can have his abundant life; so let us repent of everything that belongs to our old life, including our immorality and bad choices as believers and indeed as a nation.

1.2 Spiritual Decadence

The Clergy have observed that there is rampant spiritual decay in all areas of church life, which affect both the leadership and the flock. Instead of the church being the light of the world and the salt of the earth as Jesus said (Matthew 5:13-16), many Christians are in pursuit of instant wealth and miracles without regard for the state of their relationship with God. As a result, they choose to listen to what will satisfy their itching ears (2 Timothy 4:3). As such, the Synod would like to remind all Christians that the love of money is the root cause of all evils (1Timothy 6:10) and it has led many parishioners to lose their focus on God. Let us therefore resist the devil's efforts to steal, kill and destroy the church (John 10:10).

1.3. False teaching's in the church

1.3.1 Warning Members against False Teaching and Prophecy.

The CCAP Nkhoma Synod Clergy understand and acknowledge that there are true prophets and teachers of the Word of God. However, the Clergy have also observed with dismay the unprecedented growth and proliferation of false teachers who teach false doctrines and prophets that perform counterfeit miracles (Luke 21:8). The Word of God warns the faithful to be aware of false prophets, who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves (Matthew 7:15). 2 Peter 2:3 says: "In their greed these teachers will exploit you with fabricated stories. Their condemnation has long been hanging over them, and their destruction has not been sleeping" (NIV). Righteousness and holiness are key to prosperity. The Holy Scripture teaches us all to rely on God and also to work hard (2 Thessalonians 3:10). Therefore, the Clergy leadership warns all members against false teachings and prophecies. We urge our members to remain faithful to the truth and teaching

of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. “Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (Matthew 6:33)

2. GOVERNANCE

2.1 Leadership

The Clergy are dismayed that the governance situation in Malawi has continued to deteriorate. Tribalism, nepotism and regionalism is still rampant as recruitment of employees and award of contracts in the public institutions is based on tribe, ethnicity and personal relationship with the ruling elite notwithstanding their qualifications or competencies. This results in substandard works being done on roads and bridges that are easily washed away like the Mchesi Bridge in the City of Lilongwe, and the Linthipe 1 to the road. Leaders are serving their own personal interests or interests of their cronies other than that of Malawians.

2.2 Endemic corruption

The Clergy are greatly saddened that corruption has persistently continued, despite numerous calls from the faith based, civil society organizations and the opposition political parties to arrest the vice. It is being institutionalized at all levels in all ministries, departments and agencies without the leadership demonstration of political will in action. The numerous unresolved corruption cases attest to this fact. For instance: The food Ration Gate - The K145 million scandal shamefully involving the Head of State, Pioneer Investment, and the Police which was revealed through a leaked ACB report is still outstanding. The Tractor gate - Over K37 Billion was lost due to the corrupt manner in which the tractors were disposed, most of which were sold to PS, Ministers and other DPP sympathizers, according to the Supreme Court judgment dated 11 February 2019. The

government obtained a loan of K37 Billion from the Export and Import Bank of India for Agriculture machinery to be distributed to poor Malawian farmers. While each tractor cost K38 million they were sold at K5.2 Million, sadly this loan will have to be paid by taxpayers. Fuel gate - The 4.2 million litres, which is 114 tankers carrying 35,000 litres each translating into K 3.7 billion at pump price was lost. Shamefully, the Government of Malawi blamed the ESCOM security guards as a scapegoat. Where on earth would a security guard steal this amount of fuel? To date the nation has not been told anything on this development. Maize gate – Millions of kwachas were lost in the miss-procurement of maize from Zambia, and the subsequent millions of Dollars found in one minister's house. The case has not been concluded till now and worse still offices that contained vital information were deliberately burned down at Capital Hill. It is sad to learn that ADMARC which 2 years ago borrowed money to purchase maize is now busy destroying tons of maize because it has rotten due to inefficiency and mismanagement. Meanwhile the poor Malawian masses are suffering with hunger. Sadly, the government is very quiet as if nothing serious is happening.

OPC K29 Billion Gate - It is alleged that on 15 February 2019, a 29 Billion kwacha cheque was released from OPC to Green Belt Trust, which the public is suspicious. We therefore call upon ACB to investigate this matter before the May 21, 2019 tripartite elections. K4.4 Billion Allowance and Fuel Gate: According to the Nation Newspaper dated 3rd April 2019, Government officials had abused over 4.4 Billion in allowances on trips that never took place and fuel that was never bought. This is very distressful. The list of Gates continues, like the K53 Billion Escom Gate, the immigration Uniform gate where one shirt is bought at MK700,000; Genset gate, K444 Million Foreign affairs gate, K3.2 Billion etc.,

all these under the watchful eyes of the current administration and its machinery. As a Church, we believe it is immoral, unthinkable and unreasonable for any sane person to believe that things are normal when poor Malawians are languishing with poverty.

2.3 Killings of people with albinism and other innocent people.

Killing people with Albinism: The Clergy lament the heartless killings of people with albinism, although there is a national action plan to curb this vice and promote the living standards of people living with albinism, the current government has not funded its implementation. Mr. Buleya Lule the man whom all Malawians believed had information leading to discovering the root cause of the killings was murdered in the police cell. Nothing has been done to explain to the nation what happened. The Clergy are aware that many commissions of enquiry have been set up in the past with no conclusive deterrent results, and this one is not an exception. Murder of Mr. Issa Njauju, the Anti-Corruption Bureau Deputy Director was murdered and the ACB itself as an investigative agent has done nothing, not even demanding an enquiry. The government cannot do anything since those who are committing such atrocities, are rumored to be close to the people in power. The Chasowa case and others, how long will Malawians endure such senseless murders of its own citizens and no action taken on those mentioned in the commission of enquiry reports.

2.4 Evidence of vote of no confidence

For the first time in the history of this nation, we have two serving members of the cabinet; the Vice President of the Republic of Malawi and the Minister of Health, all challenging the incumbent State President under whom they are currently serving with strong allegations that this government is corrupt. Others promising Malawian to give evidence

of such but nothing has been given yet. This is a vote of no confidence in the regime's leadership to which they are part of. Ironically they feel they can do a better job than the incumbent, yet they are part of the system and using state resources to campaign without conscious.

3. ELECTIONS AND ELECTORAL PROCESSES

3.1 Praying for Free, Fair, and Credible 2019 Tripartite Elections.

The Malawi Electoral Commission has officially launched the campaign and has emphasized on a free and fair election with no violence. The Clergy would like to remind all congregants that it is now only three weeks to the polling day. All eligible voters will go to the polls to elect the President, Members of Parliament, and Local Ward Councilors. It is the cherished desire of the Clergy that Malawi should produce free, fair, and credible tripartite elections on May, 2019, acceptable to all elections stakeholders. The Clergy's prayer for free, fair, and credible elections is premised on the fact that they are critical parameters for the acceptance of election results. Furthermore, they enhance the legitimacy and acceptability of the elected public officers, especially the President, by the majority of the populace. Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) The Clergy would like to call upon MEC and MACRA to Censor MBC on programs that promote hatred and hate speech. MBC must also open its airwaves to the Opposition parties. The public broadcaster should be reminded that they run on tax payer's money and therefore to ensure free and fair elections. MACRA must treat all media houses equally without favor. Transfer of public officers and promotions The Clergy are very suspicious that lot of transfers of public officers at a time like this, most of whom are from the district assemblies. These are officials who will be presiding officers. While the Clergy applauds the government for

promotions of teachers and police officers, the timing and manner of which raises some questions. For instance, some teachers who have been promoted are deceased and others retired already but have been promoted. Promotions should not be done for election purposes but because the government appreciates the services of our teachers and police officers. The government must desist from such malpractices.

3.2 Political Violence and Intimidation

The 2019 tripartite elections are likely to be highly contested. This has already been demonstrated in the primary elections for all political parties. The Clergy have noted with great concern that the DPP leadership though speak against violence but do not condemn or discipline its cadets. The cadets have consistently terrorized Malawians across the country with current event where they even used guns and pangas yet the police could not even bring them to book. The Clergy would like to put it on record that the DPP and indeed all political parties will be held accountable and responsible for any loss of lives or property due to political violence. Political parties and candidates should know that Malawians are not going to be intimidated, as political violence has no place in our nascent democracy. We encourage all Malawian to refrain from this act or behavior and also to take notice of those perpetrators.

3.3 Avoid Election Fraud and Rigging

The Clergy is aware that the 2014 tripartite elections were considered by many electoral stakeholders to have been rigged. They were so replete with election irregularities that the incumbent State President then, nullified them and called for fresh elections. The determination of the elections was hurriedly done at night and the swearing in was

shamefully done at dawn. The concomitant result was to usher into corridors of power people who seem to have not been prepared to lead the country. Another example is the burning of electoral materials when the court ruled that the vote should be recounted in Lilongwe City West constituency. The Clergy therefore urges the Malawi Electoral Commission to ensure that there is absence of electoral fraud and rigging.

3.5 Leadership Qualities to Consider Before Voting the Clergy urges all its members to pray for people who will be voted into power. The Clergy are therefore endorsing a leader who will have the following qualities to be voted into power:

1. A leader with good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom (God-fearing)
2. A leader who has no records of corruption, and do not have the spirit of nepotism, tribalism, and regionalism.
3. A leader who will unite Malawians regardless of their tribe, region where they come from and beliefs,
4. A leader who will not defend thieves, mafias and terrorists. A leader who will not promote cash-gates; tractor gate, ESCOM gate, Fuel gate, Uniform gate, Food ration gate, Drug gate, road construction gate to benefit their political parties as the current leadership.
5. A leader who will respect the constitution of Malawi and implement good policies that are in place.
6. A leader who will develop this nation without favoritism; and will not tolerate substandard workmanship in any infrastructure development and open unfinished projects.
7. A leader who will promote justice without fear or favor.
8. A leader who will not promote abortion and same sex marriages. A leader who can speak openly and make his stand known to everyone on these issues.

9. A leader who will not reduce our respected Traditional Authorities to puppets.

CONCLUSION

We, the Clergy of the CCAP Nkhoma Synod encourage all voters to vote into power the one, and only leader who has the above listed leadership qualities as the President of the Republic of Malawi. The man with good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom (Acts 6:3).

Rev BCK Nkhoma., Rev ADK Saka MODERATOR SENIOR CLERK