

**THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS IN PROMOTING
ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION RIGHTS IN MALAWI**

Paul Steven MANKHWANDA

Bachelor of Arts (Security Studies) –Mzuzu University

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI

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ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION RIGHTS IN MALAWI**

Master of Arts (Political Science) Thesis

By

Paul Steven MANKHWANDA

Bachelor of Arts (Security Studies) –Mzuzu University

Submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the Master Degree of Arts (Political Science)

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that the thesis has been composed by myself and that the work has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification. It is submitted to the University of Malawi in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Political Science. I confirm that appropriate credit has been given within this thesis where reference has been made to the work of others.

Full Legal Name

Signature

Date

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

We, the undersigned, certify that this thesis represents the student's own work and effort and has been submitted with our approval.

Signature.....Date.....

HAPPY KAYUNI, PhD (Professor)

Main Supervisor

Signature.....Date.....

GIFT SAMBO, MA (Lecturer)

Co-Supervisor

DEDICATION

I am dedicating this thesis to my beloved late father (Steven Julius Dakalira) who meant and continue to mean so much to me. Although he is no longer in this world, his memories continue to regulate my life. Your love taught me to know no bounds and to value hard work. Thank you so much papa, I will never forget you.

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ABSTRACT

Environmentalism has become one of the critical theoretical issues in the field of political science worldwide. Religious institutions play significant roles in this debate and they have different ideological underpinnings contributing to the mitigation of environmental effects. The analysis of the ideologies and strategies used unveils the tenets organisational efforts in promoting environmental rights. The thesis employed qualitative methodology, due to the growing importance of understanding the perceptions and descriptions to understand the ideologies and strategies from higher ranking and authoritative respondents. This scholarship originated to make comparative analysis of ideologies in different Christian organisations on environmental control in Malawi. The study demonstrates that current efforts create a situation with disjointed responses towards the pandemonium, reducing the likelihood of achieving the common goals for countries' development. The thesis contributes to filling the gap in the literature on the comparative understanding of the church based institutional roles in environmental.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACM	-Anglican Council of Malawi
ACEN	-Anglican Communion Environmental Network
ACSA	-EN Anglican Church of Southern Africa's Environmental Network
BBC	-British Broadcasting Cooperation
CADECOM	-Catholic Development Commission in Malawi
CCAP	-Church of Central African Presbyterian
CCPM	-National Climate Change Policy of Malawi
ECM	-Episcopal Conference of Malawi
ECEN	- European Christian Environmental Network
EAM	-Evangelical Association of Malawi
MCC	-Malawi Council of Churches
MAM	-Muslim Association of Malawi
NGO	-Non-Governmental Organizations
QMAM	-Quadria Muslim Association of Malawi
SCIAF	-Scottish Catholic International Aid Federation
SABC	-South African Broadcasting Cooperation
SAFCEI	-Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute
USAID	-United States Agency for International Development

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The chapter introduces the thesis that is organised in five main sections. The first section introduces the thesis, second section presents the background of the study. The rationale/problem statement is discussed in section three while section four presents the objectives and significance of the study. Finally the last section outlines the organisation of the thesis in detail.

The thesis is about the role of Christian organisations in promoting environmental conservation rights in Malawi. Internationally recognised Christian organisations are making efforts to control the depletion of the environment. Christianity as a religion has provided moral stimulation for historically noteworthy partnerships that focus on environmental conservation and sustainable development (Bhagwat, Ormsby & Rutte, 2011). This provides a basis why there is need to understand further steps by such organisations in the country on protection of the environment. The regional Christian organisation which further advances the ideas of their mother bodies also proclaims their stance and need to enshrine the conservation rights as indicated in the international church statutes. Theorist indicate that from the perspective of environmental harms, the science of the environment designates that human factors contribute significantly to the adverse effects on the environment. Nevertheless, some Christian groups believe that change in the natural environment is natural and design by God to occur and man's input

has little effect on this ‘godly’ agenda (Branton, 2006; Piefer, Ecklund & Fullerton, 2014). Malawi perspective on the issue is thinly understood by the few in the Christian organisations hierarchy. It is from this understanding that this study seeks to make an understanding of ideologies, strategies and challenges being faced to unveil the bigger picture of their roles. This was of significant in tandem with Hiagbe (2015) accession that Christianity constitutes a base of what society considers as culture, including human perception, interpretation, and understanding of reality, influences human behavior significantly that can be easily exploited to control environment in the country.

The study takes a particular reference to assess the roles and contribution to these rights in the Lilongwe catholic diocese, Nkhoma Church of Central African Presbyterian (CCAP) Synod and the Anglican Diocese of Lake Malawi as a sample from the evangelical churches. The above organizations function in the central region with a wide range of protected forest reserves, including the Dzalanyama, Tuma, Nkhotakota, and Kasungu. All on the verge of extinction that need to have care for control holistically.

1.1 Background

Conservation of nature and natural resources is meticulously related to the rights of people and the security of their livelihoods. It contributes to the joyful human health, and productive environments and living with dignity. The efforts to conservation objectives contribute positively to realizing many fundamental human rights. On the other hand, it secures rights; for example, land tenure and participation in decision-making can enable more effective environmental stewardship (Springer and Campese, 2011). Conservation activities can also generate negative impacts where links to human rights and well-being are not sufficiently understood or addressed. Weak ownership implementation can also

undercut conservation results. The Earth's surface was created replete with flourishing flora and fauna (Kiarie, 2020). Flora and fauna ensured human sustenance in the newly-created planet. The 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census estimated the total population at 17.6 million in Malawi. 77.3 per cent of the population is Christian and 13.8 per cent Muslim. Christian denominations include Roman Catholics at 17.2 per cent of the total population, Church of Central Africa Presbyterians at 14.2 per cent, Seventh-day Adventist/Seventh-day Baptists (the survey groups the two into one category) at 9.4 per cent, Anglicans at 2.3 per cent, and Pentecostals at 7.6 per cent. Another 26.6 per cent fall under the "other Christians" category. Individuals stating no religious affiliation are 2.1 per cent, and 5.6 per cent represent other religious groups, including Hindus, Baha'is, Rastafarians, Jews, and Sikhs (GoM 2018). The demographics indicate how more significant the influence would be if the Christian organizations were well-versed with environmental conservation.

Notwithstanding their criticality, there remain significant gaps for the masses in understanding ideologies and strategies associated with Christian engagement in environment conservation rights-related development interventions in the country. Asamoah's (2013) study, which was conducted in Ghana on the Church's environmental sustainability, indicated that though the church has the potential to impact on environmental care and sustainability yet, its response to the environment was woefully inadequate. Asamoah's study attributed this glare response to the fact that research on conservation is required primarily to focus on the influence of religious institutions on environmental preservation.

Notwithstanding the active role of Christian organizations concerning promoting environmental management and conservation, Malawi remains short of global targets for social and ecological justice. Malawi currently ranks 174th out of 189 countries on the Human Development Index. It has achieved low success in achieving Millennium Development Goals (Human Development Report, 2020), witnessing a 17 % land degradation in the country. In line with environmental management and conservation-related rights, Malawi faces acute challenges, including extensive and extended rainfall seasons that occur almost yearly. Destruction of natural forests is associated chiefly with wide-scale biodiversity loss, downstream water pollution and other environmental problems (Scheyvens, 1998). This has a more significant effect on human life and needs to be contained.

1.2 Problem statement

The effectiveness of environmental rights must have a method of translating the population's values and culture. Malawi being predominantly Christian, and follows religion values has potential to rejuvenate the extinction of environment from the lost biodiversity and maintain sustainable development (GoM, 2018). This can only be possible if the country engage organized religions and offer alternative methods of conservation which may successfully motivate citizens to participate in such efforts. The success of such initiative rest on, members of the congregation to agree that there is a religious obligation to care for the environment.

Christian organizations' role in environment-related forms of development and governance in Malawi is conspicuously misunderstood in the public domain (Bass, et al,

2011). Christian organisations are assumed as not doing enough to contain the environmental issue in Malawi. The massive deforestation in the country in the eyes of Christian organisations questions the understanding as to what is the role of the organisations that are in the very locations they operate (ibid). While there is increasing evidence of how environmental degradation may affect population, what roles are played by Christian organisation in Malawi and a growing body of literature on possible response strategies, less is known on what ideologies are followed, the actual strategies used and what challenges they face to curb the problem. For instance, Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2018) provided a synopsis of the interplay between climate change and agriculture policies. Their focus is strictly analyses of emerging policy narratives about climate change and agriculture that are stimulating, shaping and influencing the debates.

Despite the huge political importance of Christian organisations in the communities in changing societal activities in the country, minimal studies have been conducted on the role of Christian organisations in environmentalism in Malawi. For example, the churches have brought significant political impact through their pastoral letters condemning the one party system leading to the democratic governance (China, et.al, 1992). Pope Francis has also issued several pastoral letters highlighting the importance of the role of the church and the community in environmental conservation (Sangala, 2015). Studies conducted in Malawi by scholars such as Mwalwafu (2004) centered on the relation between the relationship of religion and the environment in Malawi focusing in the period of colonial masters (1850-1930).

Recent studies on the similar topic include that of Kaire (2020) who sought views on the subject in the eastern part of Africa whose economic, political and social status is different with that of Malawi. Asamoah's (2013) study, which was conducted in Ghana on the Church's environmental sustainability, indicated that though the church has the potential to impact on environmental care and sustainability, its response to the environment was woefully inadequate. Asamoah's study attributed this glare response to the fact that research on conservation is required primarily to focus on the influence of religious institutions on environmental preservation, hence this study. This study matters because it rejuvenates the Christian organisations activeness in environmental conservation making it a major player for controlling.

1.3 Main objective

The main objective was to understand the role of Christian organizations in promoting environmental conservation rights in Malawi.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the study were the following:

- a. To establish the Malawi Christians beliefs/ideologies on environmentalism.
- b. To examine strategies used by church organizations to help promote environmental conservation.
- c. To identify the challenges Christian organizations face in promoting environmental conservations' rights.

1.4 Research questions

The study used the following research questions

- a. What are the established ideologies on environmentalism the Malawian Christians organisations?
- b. What are the strategies used by church organizations to help promote environmental conservation in Malawi?
- c. What challenges are faced by Christian organizations in promoting environmental conservations‘ rights?

1.5 Significance of the study

The study contributes to the body of the knowledge that will assist other researchers in further studies on the phenomenon. The study also benefits the Christian organisations in balancing their efforts towards the fight for environment degradation. It also enhances cooperation among stakeholders involved in environmentalism in the country. Even though the Christian organisations make efforts to quell the environmental problems in the communities, there is little known to the public on their extent within the country. In some areas, there are duplication of work by stakeholders while there is none taking place in the other sectors. This study also seeks to pioneer collaborated efforts among sectors with common goals in addressing issues of environmentalism. It will introduce means of assisting the assessed organisations on how they can handle collaboration among themselves.

The recommendations generated by this study contributes to improvement and cementing the existing strategies and challenges of the Christian organisations efforts. At the regional level, the study provides the significance of different approach of analysis of roles of Christian organisations in environmentalism, as such adding to the existing body of knowledge. Internationally, the study contributes to the body of knowledge on roles of Christian organisations in environmental rights.

1.6 Organisation of the thesis

The thesis is organised in five main chapters and the next chapters are detailed as follows: Chapter two presents and discusses literature review. The chapter also provides the study with a theoretical and conceptual framework to create a deeper understanding of the theoretical and conceptual dimensions within which roles of Christian organisations are discussed. The main theory anchoring the study is structural functionalism.

Chapter three provides an explanation to the research methodology and methods used to help respond to the research questions. It explains the research design, data collection tools, sampling techniques and details the reasons for choosing the tools. Chapter four presents and discusses the findings of the study. Findings and discussions are in line with the data collected to address the research questions and objectives. Chapter five is a presentation of summary of the findings and some conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents literature review and theoretical concepts which underpin the study. It includes presentation of key concepts of environmentalism as well as the Christian organisations and environmentalism nexus. The chapter also presents the structural functionalism theory and its linkages to the study. Ideologies are also discussed and how they are contributing to the research under consideration.

2.1 Key Concepts

2.1.1 Environmental rights

Environmental rights describe a right to the unspoiled natural resources that enable survival, including land, shelter, food, water and air (Macdonald, 2008). These rights include more purely ecological rights, such as the right for a certain beetle, ants and cockroaches to survive or the right for an individual to enjoy an unspoiled landscape. Environmental rights also include political rights such as those of indigenous peoples and other collectivities, the right to information and participation in decision-making, the right to resist unwanted developments and freedom of opinion and expression.

These rights are also believed to be the right to claim reparations for violated rights, inclusive of rights for climate refugees and others displaced by the right to claim ecological debt environmental destruction, and the right to environmental justice (ibid). Environmental rights are human rights, their health, as people's livelihoods, and sometimes their very existence depends on the quality of and their access to the surrounding ecology similar to the recognition of their rights to participation, security, information, and redress.

2.1.2 Christian Organizations and Environmentalism

Christian Organizations can be defined as church-based organizations, places of worship or congregations, specialized Christian related institutions, and registered and unregistered non-profit institutions that have Christian-religious character or missions. Though ‘faith-based organization’ is not a legally defined term, it normally refers to organizations affiliated with a certain faith. Clarke (2008) gives a comprehensive definition of Faith-based organizations: "a faith-based organization is any organization that derives inspiration and guidance for its activities from the teachings and principles of the faith or from a particular interpretation or school of thought within that faith" (p6).

The organizations clearly claim a religious motive and religion in such organizations is "...often expressed in their mission statements, outlining the overall purpose of the NGOs and describing the underlying values and principles (Petersen, 2010:14).¹ The various types of institutions in the list of Christian organizations in the world include World Vision, Hope International, Christian Aid, and Blessings International. In Malawi, some

of these international organizations are operational; however, there are also local Christian organizations that also play a direct role in environmental rights conservation.

Overall, Christian organizations have been slow to make any official responses to the environmental crisis, and as observed in Zimbabwe, the Roman Catholic Church had tended to stay on the fringe rather than get involved (Deane-Drummond, 1997). As a result, the natural world is viewed in an instrumental way- i.e. for the exclusive use by human beings. Theorist observed that the Pennsylvania Catholic Church was initially reluctant to be a total participant of the World Council of Churches meetings which addressed these issues (Clark, 1994; Acora, 1990). The Roman Catholic Church's influence was weaker than it could have been, yet the organization controls a reasonable population in this world.

The destruction of environments and the eradication of wildlife such as air, water and soil through consumption of its assets has contributed to devastating effects on environmental conservation rights. Yet, those in violation of such rights are people living around communities that are aware of the political and social consequences to the community, the country and the world at large. Dealing with environmental conservation rights demand a concerted effort from a wide range of actors one of which is the church who are fully aware of the ideological underpinning, strategies and challenges that they are prone to.

The Christian organizations are an integral part of society and have played a significant role in the life of human beings on earth (Kiarie, 2020). The human impact that the

church has produced in changing the status quo in politics in the dawn of multiparty in Malawi indicates how best churches could assist in a positive contribution to social, economic and political life. The Catholics pastoral letter "Living our faith" (Chiona, et al, 1992) brought the multiparty system of governance and several governance issues. The extraordinary power of organized Christian organizations as a political force, in the absence of a functional government, was also visible during the ethnic tensions in Guadalcanal in 2000, when church organizations served as key conduits in conflict resolution in the absence of other functioning civil society institutions (Liloquila & Pollard, 2002).

The low profile as observed by Catholic Bishop John Arnold of Salford (2021:3), who lamented, "The voices from the communities we work with are ringing out. we cannot and must not be quiet in the face of such suffering and injustice.¶ During the October 2021 United Nations climate change conference in Glasgow, the leaders bemoaned this and further noted that their moral duty is unquestionable. Faith leaders and organizations have to advise advanced economies to tackle climate change and act quickly to protect current and future generations. Despite being largely ignored in scholarship, leading to a significant gap in understanding undertakings they bring and challenges they encounter in environmental management, the author seeks to unpack why Christian organizations take a low profile in environmental management in Malawi.

International Christian organizations have been formed and operationalized to assist in environmental conservation rights. For example, the European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) promotes cooperation in caring for creation. It aims to share

information and experiences in environmental work among widely varied Christian traditions and to encourage a united witness in caring for God's creation (Ecen, 2021). This means that the church has a role in ensuring that the environment is cared for at all levels. On the other hand, the Scottish Catholic International Aid Federation (SCI AF), led by Nikki Neesam of several local churches conducting pilgrimage routes, gave a Scottish welcome and supported carrying their message further to the international community (Ecen, 2021) on climate issues. With the help of the churches in Scotland, the SCI AF supported the pilgrims on their journey to Glasgow to let world leaders know the dangers of climate change that result from environmental degradation and pollution.

Faith Leaders drawn from various Church mother bodies that include Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), Malawi Council of Churches (MCC), Quadria Muslim Association of Malawi (QMAM), Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM), Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) and Anglican Council of Malawi (ACM) have on several occasions been challenged to take a leading role in mitigating effects of climate in the country (Henderson, 2016). The mitigating role was manifested in several joint training organised by the religious organizations' mother bodies. The importance of such training has only been seen when an assessment is made on how the leaders have sent these conservation rights down to the citizen. This paper, therefore, singles out the need to assess the role of the Christian organizations in promoting environmental conservation rights in different forest reserves of Malawi.

Despite Christian organizations showing tremendous progress in the promotion of environmental protection, the publications in Malawi relating to their active roles in the socio-political improvements grasp more focus on the political dimensions. For example, governance, corruption, human rights, and oversight function are abundant. Pope Francis has issued several pastoral letters highlighting the importance of the role of the church and the community in environmental conservation and governance (Sangala, 2015). The pastoral letter "Living our faith: pastoral letter of the catholic bishops of Malawi" (Chiona, et al, 1992)-brought the multiparty system of governance and several governance issues.

2.1.3 Environmentalism in Malawi

Mulwafu (2004) observed that the relationship between Christianity and conservation in Malawi is not easy to establish, partly because there was no official policy on conservation and on the other part because missionaries did not actively participate in this endeavor. The author further argues that as precursors to colonial rule, the missionaries made a significant contribution however to understanding the environmental conditions of the people and the areas they came into contact with at a later stage. They contacted their government to intervene and colonize the territory so that they could carry out their work smoothly and successfully. At the same time, as European imperialism in Africa reached its apogee in the late nineteenth century, ideas about conservation had been embodied in the larger scheme of colonization. Tropical colonies increasingly came to be viewed as paradises where the natural wilderness akin to the Garden of Eden was perceived to have existed (Groove 1995). Subsequent to the establishment of colonial rule in Malawi, the state began to campaign for conservation not because it was driven by any

conservationist ideals but rather because of the growing influence of the theory of evangelical mentality and the writings of the Scottish missionaries. Due to the nature of environmental debates of this era, it was not easy to establish the ideologies followed by the Christian organisations in conservation practice. Their strategies could also not be applicable in the modern era due to the increased changes in technological response to issue.

Nature is the pride of all Malawians, and its magnificence is appreciated worldwide. They attract domestic and international tourists because of their beauty. In return, Malawi flora and fauna makes significant foreign exchange through tourism of the forest areas. The right to environmental protection is important for organisations to join hands in dealing with it as Homer-Dixon (2007) notes that this will be a source of greater conflicts among the population. Homer-Dixon philosophize that during coming decades, environmental scarcity could plausibly yield five general types of violent conflict affecting the nations. The problems will be moving from the most local to the most global type, and these will include disputes arising directly from local environmental degradation triggered, for example, by factory emissions, logging, or dam construction; ethnic clashes arising from population migration and deepened social cleavages due to environmental scarcity; civil contention (comprising insurgency, banditry, and coups d'état which are currently rampant in Africa) caused by environmental scarcity that affects economic productivity and, in turn, people's livelihoods, the behavior of elite groups, and the ability of states to meet these changing demands; Scarcity-induced regional war over, for example, water (a case of problems from Ethiopia and Egypt contention over Grand Renaissance Dam), North-South conflicts (i.e., conflicts between the developed and developing worlds) over

mitigation of, adaptation to, and compensation for global environmental problems like global warming, ozone depletion, threats to biodiversity, and decreases in fish stocks (Homer-Dixon, 2007). The study argues that key factors to understand the role of Christian organisations and their output in Malawi include the tussle coordination among key actors in environmentalism, and eliminating the challenges non state actors face. The creation of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace in 1992 was a catalyst for church involvement in social justice and peace covering the Central Region of Malawi. Religious institutions have also played a critical role in the political changes in South Africa during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Christian churches and interdenominational organizations affirmed and condemned apartheid, and numerous Christian organizations have contributed to the process of South Africa's nation-building experience throughout, e.g. participation in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and civic education efforts (Kuperus, 2011). These Christian organizations changed the face of the political scene through their active participation and commitments toward the need to see the change in the undemocratic governance. Their continued efforts were also observable after the changes as the organizations are seen as watchdogs in the promotion of good governance and a corrupt-free society.

2.2 Understanding Christian based organisation ideologies

2.2.1 Ideology

Marx and Engels (1976) used to coin ideology to denote the most abstract conceptions that populate an imaginary world of ideas independent of material life. The Marxists primarily used it to mean conspiratorial ideational wool pulled over the eyes of the masses. Much as this study will base its understanding on Marx and Engels's defining

concept of ideology, it must be noted that Lanes' (1962) application is not far from the abstract conception. The political scientists use it to denote packages of positions, often confirmed to be unifiable in a single preferred optimal state, and, of course, there are many who use it to show the beliefs, attitudes and opinions of those with whom they disagree (Lane, 1962). These are basic standpoints that one puts his or her trust in and decides to follow it. An ideology should basically and concisely be "a powerful system of ideas." as advocated by philosopher Tracy (1784-1836).

Ideologies are the best tools of communication to the masses. For example, over the past 2,000 years, Christianity has grown from a tiny Judaic sect to the world's largest religious family (Johnson & Grim 2013). The rapid growth of Christianity is a voice note on how one would understand the importance of ideology in the transformation of the population. People get the message better if they are part of the ideological belief. Ideology, as utilized by Veenswijk and Chisalita (2007), is an important theme in the understanding of issues of main concern because it refers to the integration of socially constructed group realities as well as artefacts which are used to symbolize shared beliefs and orientations. Understanding the ideologies being followed therefore provides a best practice toward a known goal for an institution.

Recent publications acknowledge that the theme of ideology is brought up as one of the structuring forces, or "backbones" of community involvement. Ideology refers to the (master) belief system of any social configuration and combines an interpretation scheme or theory about society with a cluster of values about what is right and wrong as well as norms about what to do (Turner, 1974; Oliver and Johnston, 2000).

2.2.2 Christian based organisation ideologies

-Without God... management theory is nonsense and we who teach it are charlatans or worse (Sandelands, 2003:170), while on the other hand Tinsley (2002) derived managerial teachings from the Old Testament's Book of Proverbs. Butts (1999) claimed that businesspeople, managers, and academic researchers should consider that citizens are hungry for spiritual values. These authors submit that management may be discussed from a spiritual perspective. They are among those appealing that organizations should manage spirituality, which can be defined as -a framework of organizational values evidenced in the culture that promotes employees' experience of perfection through the work progress, facilitating their sense of being connected to others in a way that provides feelings of completeness and joy (Giacalone & Jurkiewicz, 2003:13). The result of this pursuit for spiritual sense translates into such values as organizational excellence, the quest for some cosmic purpose and helping humankind. When such an individual endeavor assumes an institutional form (meaning the devotion to dogma and the practice of rituals), it belongs to the field of religion. The inculcation of belief in individuals stems from the strong collation of the individuals and their organisation creed. This propagates these individuals into an arena that can inspire and make them stand tall on the teachings.

2.3 Conceptualizing the strategic approaches to environmental conservation

2.3.1 Why Conservation Needs Religion

Understanding reasons why Christian organisations must be accounted for in the environmental protection assist in knowing the useful approaches and strategies of environmental rights. The need to ensure that Christian organisations are used as a tool for environmental conservation is not new. It is however observed by McLeod and

Palmer (2015) that when conservation organizations do engage religious groups, efforts to do so are often ad hoc and such partnerships may wane over time. Methodical approach is therefore required to directly engage religious communities, develop effective partnerships, support and sustain dialogue aimed at finding common ground despite potentially divergent worldviews, and establish supporting mechanisms to maintain the partnerships that are developed. Effective partnerships between religious and conservation groups represent significant untapped potential which can directly support conservation outcomes; such partnerships are likely to become increasingly important with dwindling support for conservation (McLeod and Palmer, 2015). The increased number of religious related institutions also makes it clear for the reasoning as to why we need religion in conservation. For example, historically, Lodge and Hamlin (2006) indicates that religions have been powerful transformative agents. Religions can support political action and contribute to environmental policies just as equally observed within Malawi too. Three decades ago, the Christian organisations assisted in turning the one-party rule into democratic society. Gardner (2002) also confirms that faith communities form the largest social organizations worldwide with over 80% of the world's population contributing to one of the eleven major faiths (Baha'i, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity, Ormsby, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Shinto, Sikhism, Bhagwat, and Rutte, Zoroastrianism;). The increase creates a pool of individuals who can support environmentalism programs with ease.

Environmental protection is vital because there is only one planet. This, therefore, calls to protect the planet and to change people's negative influence on it positively in the short and long term. Environmental protection in the fight against natural disasters, storms,

droughts or floods is steadily increasing. Globally, the number of climate-related natural disasters has tripled since 1980 (ibid). They destroy entire livelihoods and, not least, jeopardize our lasting food security. Environmental protection is also important to protect people and to have food available in the long term. The more people place themselves above nature, the more often natural disasters will hit them in the future. People must understand that they are only a part of nature - and not nature itself. The importance of the environment is described by Schulz (2020), who notes that it saves lives. In nature, living things are interrelated, and the need to protect them is therefore important. World hunger, global warming, natural disasters, polluted air, water and soil, pesticide use in the fields, extinction of species, crop failures make the world we live in to remain unhealthy. Environmental conservation is therefore so important because it creates rather than do away with livelihoods. It also helps to ensure that vibrant natural resources are available to us in the long term.

These advantages and importance of environmental protection posit that government resources would be saved if the Christian organizations took a long arm assisting in the protection. There is need to ensure that such conservation must be even and be taken by all. Forestry is a critical environmental and economic issue for Malawi. More than half of Malawi's forests and woodlands have vanished over the last 40 years, and those that remain are being thinned through over-extraction and more frequent forest fires. Yet, forests make a substantial contribution to livelihoods and the economy and are needed to protect vital ecosystem services.

The principal emphasis is the country regional level, but some of the implications of national arguments at sub-national levels, and the questions they raise, are also discussed. The study shows how the environmentalism and church based organisations interactions at regional levels is largely framed as an issue of managing the risks on natural resources distribution. The two dominant narratives in Malawi centre on, first, the need to make Christianity robust in the face of environmental control, and second, to consider natural resources (environment) as part of a broader development focus for the country. Repercussions of the accounts are discussed in the ideological underpinnings, environmental challenges and established strategies that guide and describe the role of Christianity in environmentalism.

Detaching the environment from issues of politics has been impossible in the modern world as this phenomenon cuts across all human life in political, social, economic and cultural spheres, and it is an ever-present global thing. Therefore, everyone must meele to live in a healthy and well-conserved environment while designing and following up the various environmental protection initiatives into practice. Several efforts have been made across nations and communities to ensure a sustainable environment that culminates in providing ecological rights. The Stockholm Declaration, for example, insists on the fundamental right of human beings to live in an atmosphere of a quality that permits a life of dignity and well-being and their solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations (Rockefeller, 1996). Such a declaration provides no limits on who is responsible for promoting the declared environmental rights.

Different organisations are known for their roles in mitigating the impacts and dangers of depleting environment globally. Immeasurable ecosystems worldwide which ranges from forests to coral reefs, are in waning, and becoming victims of pollution, with current climate change and resource extraction. Christian organizations are progressively moving in to help restore these natural spaces. In most cases, religious leaders have become environmental influencers, campaigning nature-based solutions that experts say are crucial to saving the ecosystems that underpin human society. For some time, the Christian organisations have been well known for the principle job of spiritual healing. Recent studies however have noted that the church is on the forefront in environmental conservation rights which is a direct response to MaCloud's (2015) hypothesis that Conservationists were being criticized for failing to protect nature in the face of mounting threats including overexploitation, species loss, habitat destruction, and climate change. Resource managers and scientists were yet to fully engage a major segment of the global population in their outreach efforts to protect the environment such as religious communities (McLeod and Palmer, 2015). The world's religions have been recognized as a surprising driver of support for conservation of biological diversity, and numerous examples demonstrate religious and conservation groups working together to achieve conservation outcomes.

The organisations take different approaches, strategies and equally face multiple challenges in dealing with the phenomenon. The strategies, approaches and challenges faced also inform the application and how a targeted population may react to issues. Christian organisations leaders such as the Catholic Church hierarchy, beginning with the Pope more than four decades ago, framed climate change as a moral issue involving _the

future of God's creation' and one best viewed through four principles guiding Catholics' and other Christians worldview (Lieberman, 2012). The narrative was based on the effects of climate change that have made man's life terrible. The leaders delivered their World Day of Peace communication to congregations around the world that there is need to address widespread destruction of the environment in 1990. World peace was seen as being threatened not only by arms, conflict, and injustice, but also by a lack of due respect for nature. Environment worldwide attracts domestic and international tourists because of their beauty and it is a centre of valuable resources that drive economies. The need to conserve the environment is a result of noting the relevance of such resources in the political environment.

2.3.2 Environmental protection- a political issue

Socio-political issues such as environment are deemed to be political when they have a direct impact on the population. Véron (2006) observed that political institutions have usually acknowledged taking a critical role in modelling environmental regulations and results. In submitting that every economic system is integrated within a certain political framework, the author accepts that environmental management cannot be viewed solely as an economic issue. Solutions to environmental issues often involve political developments in which conflicting rights are well-adjusted (Véron, 2006). The differing parties with opposing environmental interests are more likely to conflict with each other under environmental degradation. Environmental issues are consequently closely connected to political and civil rights. It is crucial to comprehend politics that distribute rights and responsibilities to better examine the social forces affecting environmental development (Dasgupta and Maller, 1995; Iles, 2005). The understanding of such rights

will assist in determining that environmental conservation cannot be the role of one entity only in a country.

The other aspect that makes environmental conservation rights a political issue is that protecting the environment requires government interventions and therefore it is heavily reliant on political institutions that shape environmental policy making and enforcement. Political institutional factors, including government corruptibility, democracy development, and the structure of regulatory authority and so on, can exert key influences on the stringency of environmental policies and the effectiveness of environmental regulations (Kraft, 2000). They also change the interactions between governments and entrepreneurs and consequently alter the private sectors' incentives for pollution abatement. Only with a deeper understanding of how political factors affect environmental quality and policymaking can we tackle the challenges posed by environmental degradation (Kraft, 2000; Mukherjee and Chakra, 2013). Tackling such issues demands concerted efforts from the multi-sector arena, including Christian organizations.

According to the national climate change policy of Malawi (NCCPM, 2016), natural resources in Malawi and the environment play a significant role in influencing social and economic development at both household and national levels. The policy explains that approximately 80 per cent of Malawians are dependent on renewable natural resources for livelihoods, and the foundation of the state economy is primarily rain-fed agriculture. In the modern world, the triumph of many significant areas of the economy like tourism,

agriculture, transport, water supply and sanitation, industry, health and education rely on the environment and natural resources to enhance their efficiency and effectiveness.

Nevertheless, environmental degradation and climate change have emerged as major development issues that have adversely impacted food security, water quality and energy security, thereby frustrating government efforts to improve the general livelihoods of both urban and rural communities (NCCPM, 2016). This has forced the international community and local actors to converge for the common good and attempt to control environmental degradation for the better tomorrow. Scientific evidence in Malawi shows an increase in intensity, frequency, and magnitude over the last two decades of extreme weather events (NCCPM, 2016). This weather has led to erratic rains and changes in temperatures in the country. The events include lengthy dry spells, flash floods, intense rainfall, riverine floods and seasonal droughts in some parts of the country.

An emphasis on the link between human justice, peace issues, and environmental rights was once observed in the Vancouver World Council of Churches Assembly in 1983, which first coined the phrase, "justice, peace and integrity. The German Roman Catholic Bishops Conference issued a joint statement with the Council of the Evangelical Church urging a change in attitude to animals and creation, a shift in lifestyle and consumption pattern of resources (Berry, 1981). This statement was, jointly published by two Christian organizations, and indicated a greater need and role for the organizations to take care of the environment. On a different note, Berry further observed that the other positive declarations on the environmental issues included one by the Justice Peace Commission of the Roman Catholic Church in Ghana in 1982, which linked desertification with

human survival and urged the church to preserve the land for the sake of future generations. This declaration provides clear directions for Christian organizations not to stay idle but instead find a way through dealings of issues of environmental conservation rights.

2.4 Christian organizations in environmental conservation

There are some Christian environmental organizations and groups that have faith that going green is the Christian thing to do. Mahoney (2019) reports some notable internationally recognised Christian organisations which put their dedication in green. These organisations include Target Earth, a group of individuals, churches, college fellowship and various ministries that heed the callout to be stewards over everything God created; A Rocha is yet another Christian nature conservation organization that does work around the world in a cross-cultural manner. The organization is identified by five core commitments: Christian, Conservation, Community, Cross-Cultural, and Cooperation; Plant with Purpose sees a connection between poverty and the environment; Eco-Justice Ministries is a Christian environmental organization looking to help churches develop ministries that effectively "work toward social justice and environmental sustainability" (Mahoney 2019;26). Christian Aid in Malawi is one of the Christian organizations that support the marginalized communities to change the status in health and build resilience by participating in and influence development. One of the main aims of Christian Aid is to increase productive assets, small scale livestock, as a high impact strategy for sustaining society resilience to climate-related shocks.

European Christian Environmental Network (ECEN) is another recognized Christian organization at play in the fight for environmental conservation rights. The aim of the ECEN is to share information experiences in environmental work among widely varied Christian traditions and to encourage a united witness in caring for God's creation (ECEN, 2021). ECEN plays its role closely with the Conference of European Churches in tackling the need for environmental commitment and reacting to climate change.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

Structural Functionalism Theory

This study was anchored within the structural functionalism theory. The structural-functionalist theory of social change demonstrates that society is like a human body. Each part is like an organ that exists independently with its own function. Individual parts cannot survive on their own without the complementary role of the other. A major French social scientist, Durkheim as cited by Thomson, (2002), believed that all parts of a society must be harmonious, and this includes the Christian organizational arena, in dealing with issues of the environment. When they are not amalgamated, society is "no more than a pile of sand" that is vulnerable to collapse (Thomson, 2002:44). When one part suffers, all the other parts must adjust. The functionalist theory believes that society always works toward stabilization. When problems occur, they're temporary, but they do need attention from the other parts. This means a change in dealing with environmental conservation rights must not be left to the government alone but rather other sectors too. This notion was also collaborated by English philosopher and biologist Hebert Spencer (1820–1903) as cited by Halmiton (1982), who saw similarities between society and the human body; he argued that just as the various organs of the body work together to keep

the body functioning, the various parts of society work together to keep society functioning (Spencer,1898). The chunks of the general public that Spencer discussed were the social institutions or patterns of beliefs and behaviours focused on meeting social needs, such as government, education, family, healthcare, religion, and the economy.

This study confirms the comparative scholarship view where different Christian organizations will be evaluated to assess their roles and impacts in the Malawian setup. An approach that would best assist in the grounding of this rights-based study is that of historical. This approach shapes the political theory and is only understood when the historical factors are taken into consideration. The theory will highlight the study of the history of every political reality in regard to the environment in order to analyze any situation. Political theorists like Machiavelli, Sabine and Dunning believed that politics and history are strongly interrelated, and therefore, the study of politics always should have a historical viewpoint.

Durkheim believed that individuals might make up society, but in order to study society, sociologists have to look beyond individuals to social facts. Social facts are the laws, morals, values, religious beliefs, customs, fashions, rituals, and all of the cultural rules that govern social life (Thomson, 2002). Each of these social facts serve one or more functions within a society. For example, one function of a society's laws may be to protect society from environmental degradation, while another is to punish criminal behaviours, while another is to preserve public health. This assists in ensuring that all are involved in tackling one aspect.

The unique criticism of the structural-functional theory is that it cannot adequately explain social change. Also problematic is the somewhat circular nature of this theory; repetitive behaviours patterns are assumed to have a function, yet we profess to know that they have a function only because they are repeated. Furthermore, dysfunctions may continue, even though they do not serve a function, which seemingly contradicts the basic premise of the theory. Many sociologists now believe that functionalism is no longer useful as a macro-level theory but that it does serve a useful purpose in some mid-level analyses. The belief, therefore, that other arms would assist in environmental rights through legal or other means would not augur well with Christian organizations as their central belief dictates punishment after death, which might result in massive damage to the environment.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter is divided into six subdivisions that includes the research design and methods, population, sampling and sample size, data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations. The chapter also gives the challenges that were encountered during the course of collecting data from the selected respondents.

3.1 Research Design

This study used an empirical study that was based on the qualitative research design. Qualitative research design was suitable for this study because of its emphasis on data in form of descriptions and perceptions from individuals. To avoid biased results in research on finding out roles of organizations in a community, one needed multiple approaches of gaining information and understanding their views and what they see happening of which qualitative best suits it. This qualitative approach focused on the reactions, comments and perceptions of participants rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data. For example, the research obtained views of the Christian organisation leaders on ideologies that are well known to them as these are formulated by higher ranking officials from the organisations. It also resulted in gaining narrations on strategies and challenges they face in their day to day course of work. This approach vindicates spoken words,

opinions and expressions that are of excellent value when analysing social contexts and institutions (Campbell, 2002). This means there was an impeccable tie between the qualitative research design and objectives of this study.

This study design was a subscriber of the social constructivists' paradigm, a world view that basically relied on the views of respondents to articulate the situations under study. Creswell (2008: 8) confirms that "social constructivists hold assumptions that individuals seek to understand the world in which they live and work". It is from this basis that this study engaged individuals that are mostly in the practical line of the theme under study. The study engaged in open-ended questions that sought to find the deeper explanation of strategies that Christian organizations use in promoting their environmental rights in Malawi. It also sought to realize the narrations on challenges faced by Christian organizations by getting an analysis that look deeper into problems and the approach helped to discover new thoughts and individual views on the problem of study.

3.2 Sampling Method

Purposive sampling method was used to select participants in the study organisations whose population is from Lilongwe Catholic Diocese, Lake Malawi Anglican Diocese and Nkhoma CCAP Synod for the interviews. Data collection for interpretative phenomenological analysis was basically based on purposive sampling, in which participants were selected according to criteria of relevance to the research questions and objectives. Daymon and Holloway (2010) recognize that 'whom you select for your study, where and when depends on judgments you make which are guided by the purpose of your study. It is for this reason that purposive sampling directs the researcher to participants who have knowledge so as to produce tangible results. The researcher

purposively selected the higher-ranking clergy such as bishops, moderators, general secretaries and senior pastors who have been in the organisations for so long and have substantial experience regarding roles of their organisations in environmentalism to provide ideologies and challenges. Burnham and Anderson (2004) confirms that such members are classified as information rich for the interview due to their experience and knowledge on the matter.

The study also used snowballing sampling technique to get in-depth information from the members in the organisations who were not initially known by the researcher and was guided by the respondents. This also ensured that the sampling of date is triangulated. This was a respondent's driven type of sampling which made the study have information from political scientists, program coordinators, senior church leaders, historians and theologians who have engaged a lot with literature on the matter and were well versed with information. The study initially chose respondents (purposively) with certain characteristics who were willing to take part in the study and would provide useful information on the topic, and then, after interviewing them, they would be asked to identify people like themselves for the study who were then interviewed again. Such sampling method helped to gain valuable information of the key issues that an organization was involved in and what their challenges were. This continued until as many people as required to be interviewed reached saturation. Marshall (1996) observed that '...an appropriate sample size for qualitative study was one that adequately answered the research question' (Marshall, 1996: 523), and for this research question to be adequately answered, a saturation point was reached for the respondents. Saturation was recognized when the researcher observed that no new or relevant data seemed to emerge

regarding a category under study, the category was well developed in terms of its properties and dimensions demonstrating variation, and the relationships among categories were well established and validated the new data.

3.3 Data collection techniques

The data for this study were collected through key informant interviews and desk research.

3.3.1 Key Informant Interviews

Through key informant interviews, I collected data from 38 informants of different ranks from several sectors and professions, all involved in the environmentalism in Christian organisations under study. Interviewing several informants from different sectors was important for triangulation and to ensure that the data was reliable. Bryman (2003) perceives key informants as often used in the context of providing quantifiable data on the characteristics, perceptions and views of their organizations and activities. The purpose of employing key informant interviews was to collect information from a wide range of people like senior Christian organizational leaders, and professionals in environmentalism who have firsthand knowledge about the issue under study. Investigating the beliefs/ideologies of an organization demands getting information from people who are well versed with concepts of the environment, and the respondents had capacity to articulate these key issues. The informants engaged in this study were people of seniority who could speak for the organization with authority and those that are knowledgeable on the issue at hand with hands on experiences. These were senior clergy and organizational environmentalists who offered some flexibility to explore new ideas in their response to the interviews. The responses proved the author's assumption that such

a key informant provided the latest and valuable information that greatly authenticated the study as they offered perceptions on ideologies that strengthened and built relationships with the current trends. This type of interview gave the researcher opportunity to engage clients directly on face to face basis which encouraged clients to raise awareness, interest and enthusiasm on their performance in environmental conservation. This was so beneficial as substantiated by arguments from one author who argues that 'face to face interactions is the fullest condition of participation in the mind of another human being, understanding not only the meanings of the words as used by the individual but also a glimpse into how, why and what is the meaning behind individuals' behavior (Krauss, 2005).

A semi-structured instrument (interview schedule) was developed in English that was translated into the local Chichewa language for it to be used during one-on-one interviews and acted as a guide for obtaining information. Translating the questionnaire into Chichewa was crucial as some of the respondents were not willing to and could not conversantly participate in English throughout.

3.3.2 Desk Research

Desk research fundamentally involves collecting data from existing resources; hence it is often considered a low-cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. The desk research was employed owing to the vast and extensive known publications of different denominations on issues that concern them including environment. Recent church related events have been documented by different media platforms worldwide through websites such as that of Caritas website from Roman Catholic, Anglican Communion and Presbyterian website

that have offered Christian organisations annual reports and series of official documents in line with environmentalism. Issues surrounding Christian organizations and environmental rights are equally having a lot of documentation that unveils the different aspects of their affection/challenges in their library shelves. The author availed enough information on strategies in use and challenges that were confirmed in theory by evaluating the organization's documents of their practice and reports that were accessed in their libraries. This study also sought to gather data from the press by reviewing print media outlets in Malawi that are available online and documented like BBC news outlet, SABC news24 and Malawi press, Caritas Malawi, archbishop of Canterbury, and the reformed family who have done related publications on the subject matter. Use of such secondary data ensure the presence of triangulation in the collected data.

The study explored further issues narrated by key informants by reviewing eight books, 16 journals and over 20 reports on the assessment of the roles, challenges and strategies of Christian organizations in environmental conservation rights. There was an incredible amount of data available online on the internet that has informed this research as the author got valuable information from published academicians work from within Malawi and abroad who have had interest in the similar study. It was important for this researcher to be information specific while fetching out this information as there are billions of pages available on the internet. There were two approaches for digging out the relevant information from the internet, one was directly browsing the specific information from industrial, marketing or business sites and extracting the information out of these sites, and the second one was by use of government usually published documents that provide a great extent of data online that can be used in the research process. The other benefit of

this research was that it assisted the author to triangulate the findings with the one obtained through primary research.

3.4 Data Analysis

The thesis used content analysis to analyse the collected data. This method provided an advantage to the author to review messages that were seen as –close toll the communicator. Data analysis aims at describing not only the procedures necessary to analyze data but also to ensure that the analysis has a purpose. The study used content analysis to analyze data that was collected from the interviews and documents that investigated the role of Christian organizations in Malawi by synthesizing the strategies, ideologies and challenges of different organizations in question. According to Bauer (2000), content analysis involves 'Systematic classification and counting of text units to distil a large amount of material into a short description of some of its features' (pp.132–33). Content analysis is also defined by Babbie (2002) as the study of recorded human communication. As the study collected data that was raw from the respondents, content analysis was best suited for this study as it assisted in reducing and transforming the raw data into themes through the coding process. The author sorted out and made sense of the data, understanding that data analysis involves –systematic counting, assessing and interpreting of the form and substance of communication...it is analysis method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns (Krippendorff, 2012:16). Use of initial themes to analyse data was associated both to the research questions of the study and to the research design, which were qualitative. For each research question, attention was paid to the emerging themes, patterns, and trends, which were to be further

interpreted to respond to the research questions. Such a process is echoed by Creswell (2003) as a procedure of organizing gathered materials into chunks before fusing meaning into it. The need for organizing this data into code is resultant of the fact that collected data was obtained from open interviews demanding manageable data organisation. Interview data were merged with online data as it complemented each other through critical sorting of these data. The coding process therefore assisted the researcher to streamline important issues, summarized and created themes from the interviews and documents visited.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The research proposal was cleared by the University of Malawi's Political and Administrative Studies department. The approval by the department meant the methodology and approach was deemed ethically relevant. Consequently, the clearance letters were written and sent to the concerned authorities requesting permission to conduct the study. In addition, informed consent was sought from the participants before collecting data from them. The topic, as well as the aim of the study, was fully explained to the individual participants in order for them to have an insight into what the research was all about.

Participants were told about their rights in order to make an informed decision, participate voluntarily in the study as well as their rights to withdraw anytime without being penalized. After data collection, participants were informed about the full aims of the research, and ideally, they would also have access to a publication arising from the study they took part in. The study, at all costs, avoided deception in the collection of information. The issue of confidentiality was also to be taken into consideration making

good considerations that no clues were left as to who provided information. Therefore, for the purpose of confidentiality assurance, the names of the respondents were not to be presented in this thesis. For acknowledgement of the source of information, footnotes have been shown to describe the position of the respondents.

3.6 Study Limitations

The study faced hiccups during data collection as the COVID-19 pandemic had provided too many restrictions in the community. The disease was a serious barrier to direct access to information which made the key informant interview inaccessible at times. This challenge was dealt with by way of organizing virtual meetings with people who were not accessible for face to face interviews. The office bureaucracy also posed as a challenge as meeting some senior clergy took more time to materialize. The author ensured necessary steps were taken to curb this problem and included pre-booking arrangements that to effectively realize the results.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed how the study was conducted. It has presented the theoretical justification of the methodology and approaches used in the study. Problems encountered during the study (mainly during data collection) have also been outlined in the chapter and how they were mitigated for the success of the study. The next chapter presents the findings of the thesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation and discussion of the findings of the study. It presents the Christian organizations' beliefs or ideologies that are driving their motives for environmental protection. This chapter also presents the strategies being used to ensure and promote environmental conservation. The chapter will finally make a presentation and discussion of challenges or barriers being faced by Christian organizations in the promotion of environmental conservation.

4.1 Christian organizations ideologies on environmental conservation rights in Malawi

An ideology on environment is critical as it provides explanations for the facts and problems of the environmental social life, thereby enabling the religious community, individuals and groups to orientate themselves in society on how to deal with such issues in their denomination. This theme sought to address the key objective; discuss the Christian organizational ideologies on environmentalism which are followed in their organisations and how they improve the conservation rights. The organisations, political scientists and environmentalists provided differing ideologies which guide their organisations in engaging environmental issues. Predominant in all these ideologies is that they are biblically guided to conserve the environment and anything that surrounds it.

This study finds that Christian organizations under study have the ideologies that they follow in tackling environmental issues. The organizational beliefs originate from the biblical understanding of the word of God. In line with this study's definition of an ideology, it is the most abstract conception that populates an imaginary world of ideas independent of material life (Marx and Engels, 1976). Ideology preconceives ideas on the people who are following it. Most often, an ideology brings up a set of political beliefs or a set of ideas that characterize a particular culture.

Green Anglican

The research found strong belief in the Anglican community who pronounce and believe that by establishing a well-known ideology which their followers live in it The Green Anglican was founded on the basis that they should all live in this belief, and the world is likely to revert back to its original position. The Green Anglican belief in Malawi stems from the agreement of the provincial community of the southern region province of the Anglican Church. Anglicans have for the long time been concerned with environmental issues and have manifested it in many phenomenon and thus the bond advanced by Robert (1962) who stressed that an ideology has to be a basic and concisely powerful system of ideas that must drive a community. The Anglican Communion, which is the mother Anglican body, reveals in its fifth mark of mission that it basically aims 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the earth'. This is an accession that is fully concurred by the senior officiating clergy of Lake Malawi Anglican church who laments:

...It is our duty to take all required measures to conserve the world we live in. we have followed and will continue to be guided by tenets of the Green Anglican to ensure that our world reverts back to its original position...¹

The Anglican Church of Southern Africa's Environmental Network (ACSA-EN, 2014) purports to support churches and Dioceses to fulfil God's call to be Earth keepers and to care for the Creation. It is used all over the country and was first introduced in Malawi in 2014. Green Anglican was established in order to ensure that the Anglican community is fully aware of how to care for the resources given by God. The Anglican community established the Green Anglican initially as a movement to champion the care for the environment. Green Anglicans is, therefore, a movement that started by the Anglican Church of Southern Africa, which zooms in on empowering, encouraging and holding the church accountable in taking care for the earth that God has graciously placed us in. In Malawi, this ideology is fostered through several coordinators that are there as project managers in dioceses. They bring messages to the Christian organization community and beyond on how they can uproot evils of environmental degradation, caring for the existing and reclaiming or contributing to afforestation.

As discussed in chapter 2, this ideology is fully supported by several key stakeholders in environmental conservation. For example, most government departments like the forestry department of environment and natural affairs provide their full support owing to the clear understanding that such Christian organizations have a multitude of youth. It is also supported by the Southern African Faith Communities Environment Institute (SAFCEI),

¹ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe, 12 January 2022.

which is a multi-faith organization committed to supporting faith leaders and their communities in Southern Africa to increase awareness, understanding and action on eco-justice, sustainable living and climate change. The youth positively assist in the dissemination of relevant messages to care for the environment.

The Green Anglicans are also aware that environmental rights also encompass several other angles, and therefore, it diversifies its approach to caring for the environment to include creating innovative measures of waste management and taking care of forests with all other creations in it. The Anglican coordinator on environmentalism renders substantive evidence on how they make use of the youth to be guided by the ideals of the ideology:

“...we incorporate and engage the youth to clean wastes and plant trees as guided by the Green Anglican ideology. It does reinforce our built-in efforts of contributing to caring for the world we would ever want to have in the future. The youth provide a better platform and resource that if they are inculcated with the values of the ideology, they will apply it well in future...”²

The approach is the best cement of the structural-functionalism theory that demands multi-concerted efforts towards an activity and being inclusive of anything in it. Such an approach builds the foundation henceforth clearing the critics of structure functionalist theory who thinks the theory can never be applied at macro level (Merton, 1968). The basis for Green Anglican belief is also supported and derived from its mother body which is the Anglican Communion Environmental Network. From this, organ members understand that they have a role "...to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and

² Key informant interview, Senior Environmental Coordinator, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe, 13 January 2022.

sustain and renew the earth..." (ACEN, 2022). The philosophy in this belief has seen many parts of the world local Anglican Churches being given leadership to be advocates for responsible environmental stewardship, providing support and leadership to local initiatives to protect the environment and seeking to educate Anglicans as individuals and as communities to become better stewards of Creation. The multiplicity of understanding guides this study on the importance of multiple actors influencing change in the community. No one arm would suffice to tackle a problem. The belief in question has involved all sectors in the Christian organization, i.e. the Mothers Union, Fathers Union, Sunday school and the youth.

Even though the Green Anglican ideology might, on close examination, be seen as rhetoric, it has truth claims in it. The enforcement is easy although its leadership bemoaned that it needs passionate leadership for it to bear fruits. The ideas advanced in this ideology provide some elements of greater critical thinking and critique of those who damage Creation. It also provides close and adversarial relationships on the management of natural resources. Critical thinkers are able to advance arguments that successfully undermine ideological knowledge claims that authority makes in order to justify its right to rule. It must, however, be known that no person would start thinking without assembling ideas which is a core cornerstone of an ideology. Another political scientist, however, quelled the critical criticism and confirmed that the need to have ideology as a driver for issues is so huge that it would direct youths into the future we need³.

The message portrayed in the Green Anglican campaign as indicated in multiple communication strategies is a manifestation of how committed the church is among

³ Key informant interview, political scientist, Chancellor College, Zomba, 22 January 2022.

several other communications to the nation. Such messages provide a better channel of telling the communities on the many themes one ought to consider when indulging himself in environmental degradation. It also provides a medium that such resources are not only for selected individuals but for the communities, the nation, and the world at large. Such an ideology is a better substance to acknowledge the need of structural-functionalism in dealing with issues of national importance of this nature (Marx and Engels, 1976).

Care for our common home

The Malawi Catholic Christian ideology is derived from the direction of the papacy. The Catholics in Malawi believe that the world that people live in was graciously given by God. The belief is on the understanding that if one does not take care of environments, then he or she will be acting against God's will. This then destroys their own home and future. This ideology is recently seen in Pope Francis' *__Laudato Si'*. It is the second encyclical of Pope Francis that was originally published in 2015. Daniel (2016) observes that the Pope's encyclical is critiques consumerism and irresponsible development, he laments:

.... *__Environmental degradation and global warming and calls all people of the world to take "swift and unified global action. The seven goals, grounded in Laudato Si's concept of integral ecology, are depicted in figure 1 below'...* (Daniel, 2016).

This has been echoed by the Lilongwe catholic senior clergy who strongly offered his position on the need for a general guide to tackling environmental issues:

“...the care for our creation ideology provides a foundation for Catholics community gear to care for the environment. The ideology was based on the response to the voices from the communities church leaders work with as they rung out...”⁴.

Considerations were rife from the fact that climate change is a present reality that is affecting all around the world, particularly those in poor and climate vulnerable communities who have contributed to this issue the least. Catholic leaders observed an increasingly severe and frequent droughts and floods, loss of crops, and destruction of land for them to respond to this. They also had to devise strategies in ensuring a commitment to the ideology by cementing it with possible quicker means as shown in the seven dimensional ways indicated in the Laudato Si’s goals of sustainability shown in the figure 1 below.

⁴ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Catholic Diocese of Lilongwe, Lilongwe, 13 January 2022

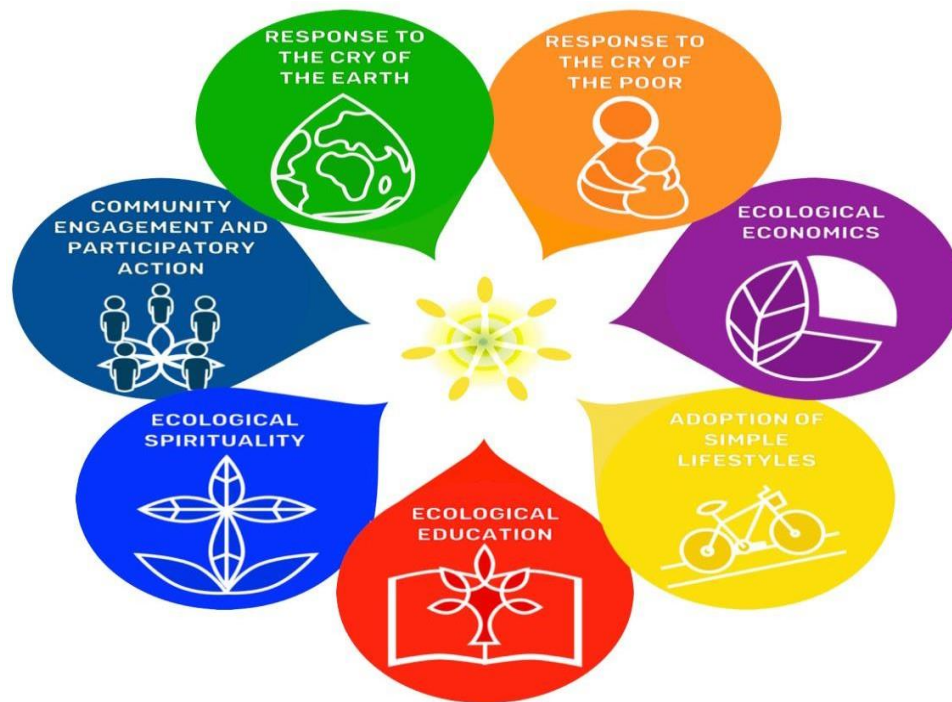


Figure 1: Laudato Si's Goals Launched for total sustainability.

The goals in the Laudato Si concept were formulated to provide an ideological underpinning to the organizational community on the importance of the environment. It is in Pope's emphasis that "the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all" and recognizes that "a number of scientific studies indicate that most global warming in recent decades is due to the great concentration of greenhouse gases (carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxides and others) released mainly as a result of human activity (John Leo Algo, 2020)."

The ideology for care for our home sees a lot of Malawi catholic communities striving to ensure that the environment is protected. The belief is supported by several Christian

organizations, of which some are siblings of the catholic community, such as the Catholic Development Commission in Malawi (CADECOM), Malawi Government Environmental Department and the Forestry Department. CADECOM is under the Social Development Directorate of Caritas Malawi, which works in accordance with the Catholic Social Teaching, especially targeting the marginalized, excluded and poor households and communities of Malawi. It is, however, known that one of CADECOM's core objectives is implementing Environmental and Natural Resources Management: Climate change mitigation and adaptation; Soil and water conservation; Promotion of renewable energy (Caritas-Malawi, 1984). This offers another dimensional arena of dealing with environmental issues by use of a constant arm in the existing organ, a way of highlighting the importance of structural functionalism theory. Multiplicity is power to engaging in socio-political problems that is further explained in the Laudato Si.

Creation Control

The CCAP have a strong drive and belief in permanent control of the Creation. The belief/ideologies linger from the biblical understanding that God created man to rule over the creature. The environment, therefore, serves God by proclaiming His greatness and glory. The research finds that the CCAP also understands that man as a steward is to care and use Creation to the service of God. Genesis 1:12-13 clearly outlines God's proclamation on the Creation as He says, ‘Let the land produce vegetation’. The ideology highly providing man with authority to control by way of ensuring that all exist for the purpose. Two key interviews for senior clergy in Nkhoma synod concurred in a telephone interview when they stressed that:

...Creation control ideology was built on the premise of creating the pillars of the church's belief and stance to own and regulate the environment as God given things. There is no one who can do this job other than the same population we minister...⁵.

The belief in CCAP is generated on the basis that the world need not underestimate the influence of the environment on the people. The influence is known to be very positive so that one's life is enriched by it. This Christian organization works hand in hand with Non-Governmental Organizations (e.g. World Vision), which at times provides tree seedlings. Owing to the understanding that Christians are more concerned with biblical underpinnings in their endeavor, such driven ideologies offer a better basis for implementation.

The results presented on Christian organizational ideologies suggest that an understanding of the three ideologies as advanced by the three Christian organizations provides a clear path through which the organizations follow in dealing with the environment. This is in line with definitive attributes of ideologies whose idea is based on offering a general direction for an activity. In comparison, the Green Anglicans offers a stand out ideology whose tenets and principles are clear. The green Anglican idea is in full support to Mahoney (2019) ideas that it remains faith based organisations roles to ensure that the world remains green. Much as this ideology would seem to stand out, their implementation in the country is still not at an advanced stage as only a few members, and mostly those in the hierarchy, are fully aware of this. The basic understanding of the

⁵ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Nkhoma synod, Lilongwe, 15 January 2022.

catholic and CCAP ideologies equally provide best theoretical posture which has been equally easy for their congregation to grasp. The need, however, for these organizations to intensify the communication of such ideologies would serve better for the organizations.

The findings reveal that the ideologies are only known to the very few higher-ranking officials in the organisations. Most of the leaders and members are not fully aware of their ideological underpinnings on the environment hence making the importance of having an ideology redundant. This entails that a guide is only available to the few, making it difficult for the majority to respond adequately to the pandemonium. The tendency is adding value to Allen (2018) research that while the church has the role in environmental conservation, it equally needs guiding principles that are central to the organizational uniqueness. This helps organizational leadership to transfer the skills from one generation to the other without altering the founding ideas. The results better elucidate the greater idea in practice dictating how Christian organisations must be guided by the founded ideologies.

These findings further indicate that the differing ideologies pose the unique culture that the Christian organisations have an idea that supports the values of having ideologies as dictated by philosopher Tracy (1784-1836). It is, however, most important as suggested by almost all the organisational leaders _that in a quest to resolve one issue that is engulfing the world, these leaders need to come together and have one ideology that

would fit best interest of all.⁶ The differing ideologies make the work of the organisations not fully visible and their progress is seen as lacking. The continuity lacks and this confirms an ideological underpinning of this research that organisations from different aspects must be brought together to ensure they work as one for a common goal.

4.2 Strategies that Christian organizations use to promote environmental conservation

Strategies aid in defining organizational setting of doing things and thereafter provides a set of values and purpose. The strategies used by Christian organisations in promoting environmental conservations helped the researcher to understand what success means in tackling environmentalism. The strategies provided a roadmap for Christian way of engaging the environment while showing destination and identifying useful stopping points along the way. The key question under this objective was: what are the Christian organizational strategies used to promote environmental right known to their organisation? The study finds respondents continuously indicating church organised functions and activities as some of the strategies in use. There was overwhelming evidence that sermons, youth programs and radio programs remained most prominent in the three denominations under scrutiny.

The study finds interrelated results on how Christian organizations advance their quest to retain environmental conservation rights. Firstly, the three Christian organizations use sermons through preaching to convince and woo the masses into the engagement of conservation. For example, in one church function, Manning (2020) observes that it is

⁶ Key informant interview, Senior Environmental Coordinator, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Senior Clergy and Environmentalist in Lilongwe Catholic Diocese, Lilongwe, 13 January 2022.

good to advocating for care of the environment through his publication of –Water is a creed. This was equally confirmed by the senior clergy interviewed from catholic and Anglican organisations who further capsulated of going further to organize separate weekend programs to ensure that such activities are administered on Saturdays⁷. The preaching is a clear dedication to assisting the arms of government in ensuring that people adhere to rules of environmental care by simulating the teachings in the bible and preserving the environment. Sermons usually address a scriptural, theological, or moral topic, usually expounding on a type of belief, law, or behaviours within both past and present contexts. In this context, the sermon is utilized to send an environmental message, and its usage in the sermon may be referred critically to a lecture on morals of destroying nature. The strategy is frequently used in the country by all the churches including some outside the lens of this study.

Secondly, the congregations are encouraged to be involved in periodic calendar tree planting and caring. Christian organizations have shown that they have continuous annual calendars that they share with their congregations and church leaders on the timings of planting and caring for trees. For example, the Anglican Church shows that their tree planting calendar cuts across the month of January each year on the diocese declaration, while the CCAP does its organizational tree planting in the last week of the same month on the pronouncement of the same program of tree planting by the General Secretary. The Catholics, however, never have a fixed programme, and those in authority would choose and make communication to the programme annually. In all these periodic tree planting

⁷ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe Catholic and Nkhoma Synod, Lilongwe, 10 January 2022.

strategies, organizational members are advised through their local church leaders to avail a place and do the planting of the trees.

Thirdly, the Christian organizations conduct youth programs to teach the young generations about the dangers of environmental degradation. Constructive youth development programs strengthen young people's sense of identity, belief in the future, self-regulation, and self-efficacy, as well as their social, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral competence. By using the youth to tackle environmental conservation rights, Christian organizations endeavor their commitment to a longer period fights against the resource degradation. Involvement of the youth can benefit organizations and their programs as well as the youth themselves. Plans that are established in partnership with the youth are more likely to be effective at pleasing the population and, consequently, to have a greater impact. Youth involvement as partners in making decisions that affect them and their society increases the likelihood that the decisions will be accepted, embraced, and grow into part of their everyday lives. Additionally, it empowers the youth to identify and respond to community needs to help them become compassionate, philosophical individuals, setting them on a course to potentially continue such important work in their future. Significant youth engagement underscores the youth as equal partners with adults in the decision-making process.

Liturgical functions initiatives are also another strategy that the organizations use to ensure that members plant trees and care for them to reclaim Creation. Liturgy is the habitual public worship implemented by a religious group, especially by a Christian group. As a religious phenomenon, liturgy represents a communal response to and

participation in the sacred activities reflecting praise, thanksgiving, remembrance, supplication or repentance while propagating environmentalism messages. Using liturgy in disseminating environmental conservation rights issues puts the organization at an advantage as they usually meet every week. This provides the quickest way of information sharing throughout the year and in all the environmental seasons. This would give Christian organizations a basis to indulge in plantation and caring for the environment very easily.

Video shows and seminars is another strategy in use to ensure communities are well versed with the environmental issues. A combination of a number of information dissemination media that is tailored to the specific situation can increase the efficiency of information dissemination and provide people with a lot of time and more precise information to be well-versed and make better decisions. Knowledge dissemination, as observed by Lee-Post (2010), is crucial for progress in a specific discipline. It allows ideas, perspectives, and findings to reach out easily and spawn new advances that would not otherwise exist (Holsapple & Lee-Post, 2010). Gagnon (2009) also confirms that dissemination activities should be carefully and appropriately considered and outlined in a dissemination plan focused on the needs of the audience who will use the knowledge (Gagnon, 2009). Using the different platforms as being done by Christian organizations in Malawi is a clear vision of their efforts in ensuring that the environment is conserved. This strategy offers communities to know some practical areas where they have been heavily hit by the effects of environmental degradation.

4.2.1 Communicating strategies and how they can be improved

Improving the above found strategies would make Christian organizations the best vehicle for tackling environmental degradation. All the Christian organizations under study subscribe to the need for further improvement in their communication strategies to their communities even if they still think it is enough. This was on the basis that, despite their efforts, such programmes are subjected to different challenges that would impede the organizations' objectives. Striving for continuous improvement is an organized approach to identifying opportunities for improvement that can help an organization meet its goals for cumulative profits while reducing costs and fast-tracking innovation. The approach is equally used to enhance the quality of a product or service and to improve safety. The organisations offered a suggestion of adopting digital ways in the dissemination of their strategies. This includes use of fast growing social media platforms that would quickly ensure communities are reached quickly. Use of the radios belonging to the Christian organisations also offers to be the best strategy⁸. This was concurred by other environmentalists who were driven by the power of Radio Maria's transmissions of the need for environmental conservation.

The findings indicate that creativity exists in trying to generate means of ensuring that clients in the fight of environmentalism are aware of how this could be done. The strategies in place are a best practice that a nation like Malawi has in sustaining environmental control in line with its socio-economic handicaps. These strategies are easy to follow and reach the intended people with ease. Much as similar strategies are in place internationally, the unique part of this research finding fills the gap on how families

⁸ Key informant interview, Senior officiating clergy, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe, 13 January 2022.

are followed up in their annual vows to environmental conservation as initiated by different Christian organisations. The new strategy is manifested by the practice that helps communities remember their role as promised during the wedding ceremony that is easily transplanted to their children as part of history. This greatly improves the standard of keeping up with environmental conservation which is usually curtailed when one just plants a tree without taking care of it.

The results further suggest that locals need low saving techniques that would make them understand well how the environment could be conserved. The strategic means followed by the Christian organisations demands no cost from the conservationists. The practice encourages inclusive participation of all communities, genders and tribal partners hence cementing the need for structural functionalism theory.

The mode of communicating the strategies needs more modification to encourage many partners to be involved. Considering that the environment is not a one sector event, Christian organisations must ensure it diversifies means to include all segment functions that will make people from all walks of life to be involved and follow their progress. The study indicates that corroborative efforts need to be emphasized if strategies are to materially reach the intended people which adhesively augment Durkheim's (1893) theory that societies must be harmonious in the effort to tackling issues.

4.3 Challenges faced by Christian Organisations in promoting environmental conservation rights

Most important to understand the challenges is derived from the fact that hard times stimulate growth in a way that good times do not. Confronting challenges and navigating

one's way through them basically shapes resilience capacity. It is therefore critical to knowing that one can overcome obstacles, learn from struggles and benefit from mistakes, which lays a solid foundation for success in later life. Christian organizations face a wide variety of problems in their quest to deal with environmental issues. This theme was built on the substantive question that: what barriers are known to be faced by Christian organisations in the fight against environmental conservation processes? Notable on the list of the challenges as confirmed by the Christian organizations in this study are political challenges, social, economic, legal, intra-religious and environmentally-related challenges. These problems reduce the efforts and stamina of the Christian organizations to curb the environmental problems.

4.3.1 Political challenges

Christian organizations have attributed the involvement of political elites in the environmental degradation as one of the challenges to the fight against environmental rights. Some political elites who are supposed to be champions of environmental rights provide transportation and degradation of the same environment they must protect⁹. This makes the Christian organizations be seen as obstacles when they advance issues of protection of the environment. Mindset change also harbors as a stumbling block to environmental protection by Christian organizations. Most Malawians are coined and deep-rooted in the fact that the only cheap source of fuel is something from wood¹⁰. Changing this notion from the population that has never had access to other forms of fuel at a slightly cheaper rate is not becoming an easy task.

⁹ Key informant interview, political Scientist, Lilongwe, 27 January 2022.

¹⁰ Key informant interview, Senior Environmental Officer, Ministry of Natural Resources, Mining and Energy, Lilongwe, 19 January 2022.

Lack of passion and patriotism for a greener and well-resourced nation is another challenge faced by Christian organizations. The protecting of the environment needs an extra commitment, and people who are effortless cannot make their countries green. It must also be noted that political efforts to deal with the global climate change issues by means of negotiating and implementing a global treaty are progressing at a pace that is far slower than what the large mainstream of climate scientists deem essential for avoiding major climatic changes. The few who are aware that global climate change is a result of worldwide larger industries pollution question the importance of committing their efforts when it will have little impact.

4.3.2 Social challenges

The lack of vibrant media houses in Christian organizations is also another challenge that hampers efforts to curb environmental degradation. Recently, the significance of free, professional and plural media in underwriting to good governance has gained power in the local, regional and international development community. A vibrant media gives people free-flowing access to information, enables dialogue, encourages people to express their views, prompts greater political participation and encourages accountability. Realizing the presence of little effort to establish a media house, the impact is little to the extent that most hard to reach areas that are even being degraded more have no link for such media. The use of national and private media houses proves expensive for Christian organizations as they must pay for the services all the time they decide to do it.

Arsenault and Power (2010) argues that development programmes that strengthened the capacities of local media organizations to be independent, gained prominence during the

late 1980s and 1990s with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. To some extent, civil society and development workers attributed communism's end to the introduction of dissident voices on radio stations such as Radio Free Europe and the underground production and distribution of restricted publications. It is therefore important that Christian organizations must strive to have direct access to the population through their own media houses as lamented by one of the officiating clergy:

„...We need more access to radios so that we may reach out to more people. Ministering the effects of environmental degradation cuts across one religion hence the need for a medium that would be listened by many in the confines of their home...¹¹“

A similar voice was echoed by the catholic clergy who certified that the use of Radio Maria and other catholic radios have been of great importance in reaching out to their congregation and beyond. The CCAP Nkhoma Synod, on the other hand, strives to make such strategy a reality through paid programs with the local media houses in Malawi¹².

Christian organizations have noted that population boom and lack of land is another challenge that makes the war against environmental rights ineffectual¹³. The Christian organizations' observations directly support Zulu et.al.'s (2012) understanding that rapid population growth places increased demands on natural resources such as land, forests and water. Zulu et al. further notes that the wellbeing of the majority of Malawians is dependent on natural resources and highly vulnerable to climate change. Malawi's

¹¹ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe, 13 January 2022.

¹² Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Nkhoma Synod, Lilongwe, 24 January 2022.

¹³ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe RC Diocese, Nkhoma synod, Lilongwe, 17 and 18 January 2022.

population has grown dramatically from about 2.9 million in 1950 to 17.2 million in 2018. The annual growth rate of the population was around 2 per cent in the 1950s, peaked at 4 per cent in the 1980s, and is now at 3 per cent. Malawi's population of about 17.5 million (Figure 1) is projected to grow to 49.7 million by 2050. Controlling the population calls for other sectors' involvement in the communities to provide the link with the existing environmental consequences.

Table 1: Total population 1966-2018

Year of Census	Total Population	Average Annual/ Intercensal Growth Rate
1966	4,039,583	3.3
1977	5,547,460	2.9
1987	7,988,507	3.7
1998	9,933,868	2.0
2008	13,077,160	2.8
2018	17,563,749	2.9

Source: *Malawi government 2018 population census report*

The study further reveals that Malawi's rapid population growth shown in the above table exerts enormous pressure on land and other natural resources, leading to the crumbling of smallholder land holdings and overexploitation of land and other natural resources. Such scramble effects are likely to escalate as the population grows further. The current population density of 126 people per square kilometer is among the highest in Africa, and

it is projected to grow six-fold to 803 by 2050 (Zulu et.al, 2012). Pressure on arable land is even higher as the number of people sharing a square kilometer of arable land is already at 466—the obvious effect of increased population results in the amplified cutting of trees, which reduces soil cover. People also settle or cultivate on marginal lands, leading to soil erosion in all the cultivated areas. The projected population boom, therefore, means further projected deforestation and scramble for resources.

Socially, the study reveals that poverty also contributes to challenging tasks for Christian organizations to curb malpractice. Even though Malawi's economy is bit by bit improving, the country still faces life-threatening poverty, with over half of the population at this time living below the poverty line. This comes with the unavailability of employment from which the population could derive their living. The result of this is wanton cutting and selling of wood so that people can have something in their pocket¹⁴. The Christian organisations, however, attempt to encourage the population to have alternative businesses that would ensure that they divert from deforestation.

4.3.3 Economic challenges

The research finds that Malawi's endowment with plentiful and diverse natural resources is a basis for sustainable economic growth and development (GoM, 2018). Equally, the country's high dependency on these resources, many of which face challenges from degradation and overuse, increases the defenselessness of societies and ecosystems to the adversarial impacts of climate change. Many people in Malawi live underneath the poverty line. Under abject poverty, people are forced to heavily depend on natural

¹⁴ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe RC Diocese, Nkhoma synod, Lilongwe, 17 and 18 January 2022.

resources for energy (fuel wood), food, construction material, medicine, and fodder. Poverty forces people to trade-off long term sustainable resources for short term consumption because they depend entirely on the existing natural resources¹⁵.

Unavailability of alternative sources of fuel and employment is also another economic hardship that derails efforts to environmental rights. People in the village only bank their hope for firewood and charcoal as their source of fuel, for there is no alternative on the same. Equally, those in town ascent to using charcoal due to increased electricity prices in town. The power is also not reliable and hence leading to opting for charcoal. USAID's (2016) report indicates that in Malawi, only nine per cent of the population has access to electricity. Increasing the power supply and increasing access can be achieved most rapidly through renewable sources and deals with independent producers. Currently, Malawi's connected electricity volume is at a mere 351 megawatts. This does not get close to meeting current demand, let alone planning for the future. Equally, in voluminous countries across sub-Saharan Africa, Malawi's plentiful renewable energy resources such as solar, wind, and hydropower are the utmost probable source of faster new generation capacity in the country. Turning these resources into reliable, distributable electricity can be achieved most efficiently through investment in renewable energy power plants by independent power producers (IPPs) that would later generate more power and increase connectivity.

¹⁵ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Nkhoma Synod and Lake Malawi Anglican diocese, Lilongwe, 24 January 2022

The study has also found that even though 40% of Malawians live below the poverty levels, access to and use of electricity and other non-biomass forms of energy remains low. Biomass accounts for 97% of the total primary energy supply, of which 59% is used in its primary form as firewood (52%) and residues (7%), while the remaining 41% are converted into charcoal. According to the 2018 population and housing census, 43.4% of all households in urban areas used charcoal for cooking, 41.8% used firewood, and only 13.6% used electricity for cooking (Kambewa and Chiwaula, 2010). Both charcoal and firewood are obtained from products from different forests and land tenure arrangements, which include government forest plantations and forest reserves, private forest plantations and indigenous wood (customary land). This shows that a lot of people depend on local access to fuel that is wood for their survival. Increasing access to other means of fuel would only be a better way of reducing environmental degradation.

Other organizations that assist in the fight for the environment have planted an allowance syndrome in the population. This has been the case as these organizations give the people a stipend to plant trees. This habit has made it difficult for Christian organizations to further convince many people of the need to plant, care and grow the forests. Most Christian organizations have their congregations as the source of finance through church offerings. This has derailed the efforts by the organizations to have readily available funds that would be used for environmental conservation-related projects. Church financial muscle drives projects easily, and when it turns out that there are no funds, the organizations are greatly affected, and making their effort be in vain.

4.3.4 Religious challenges

Lack of coordination amongst Christian organizations is another challenge that is impeding efforts to environmental rights¹⁶. The differing ideologies are a clear manifestation of a lack of coordination among the organizations. The Christian organizations have indicated that their efforts to come and conduct the programme of environmental conservation has met greater resistance due to differences in priorities of the organizations. Some places have a large number of particular Christian organizations which means if they are not vibrant in protecting the environmental resource, it becomes a big challenge for the others to do so. Lack of documentation transcends to be yet another challenge faced by Christian organizations. Most Christian organizations have no capability to make a record of what their organizations are doing in Malawi. This challenges their ability to make publications of what they have done over the years for future reference.

4.3.5 Environmental challenges

The results of the study equally show that the lack of forestry personnel/expertise in the rural areas is another challenge facing the continued strive to engage the population. Vibrant forestry personnel assist in providing potential advice to both Christian organizations and the communities themselves. The current experts in forestry and environmental issues have always refused to live in rural areas. In some areas, they choose to live in town and commute to their area of responsibility, making their work difficult. The challenges resulting from environmental degradation have been clearly observed by scholars such as Awasthi (2009) who laments that:

¹⁶ Key informant interview, senior officiating clergy, Anglican Lake Malawi Diocese, Lilongwe RC Diocese, Nkhoma synod, Lilongwe, 17 and 18 January 2022.

-Despite the fact that Malawi's greenhouse gas emissions are minuscule, climate change is hitting poor countries like Malawi first, and worst and people are suffering, especially women. (Awasthi¹⁷, 2009)

The changes to the environment have brought greater effects to the Malawi population in the villages. The emission of gases by big countries has resulted in the continued changes in rain patterns making the population's efforts to harvest a huge problem. The resulting effects go to the women who are mostly breadwinners for their families in Malawi, and they resort to cutting down trees for firewood and selling charcoal. Awasthi (2009) further notes that climate change adaptation should take women's needs into consideration. Such considerations should include practical assistance for women caring for orphans to allow them time and energy to cultivate their gardens and implement soil and water conservation and have access to credit to allow them to start small businesses. Dealing with such issues, therefore, demands rich nations, which produce a greater percentage of the world's greenhouse gas emissions which is instrumental in causing dangerous climate change, in slashing their emissions and also providing funds to help poor countries like Malawi. The country is not responsible for the changes in the climate; to adapt is the duty of those damaging it. Malawian government and society (Christian organizations inclusive) encourage the population to take action and to adapt to the whims of climate change and should make it clear that women's participation must be central to any of these efforts.

¹⁷ Sanjay Awasthi was Oxfam Malawi Country Director in Malawi who championed and commissioned a report on the winds of change: Climate change, poverty and the environment in Malawi

4.3.6 Legal challenges

Weak laws on the control of environmental conservation are one challenge that has made the depletion of the environment at a very faster rate. Even though on February 13, 2020 the National Assembly of Malawi passed the Forestry Act Amendment Bill of 2019 marking a critical turning point for environmental protection in Malawi, this breakthrough was long overdue, given that the Forestry Act was last updated in 1997. This gave Malawians a huge time to deplete the environment at a low legal cost. For example, section 64 of the 1997 forestry act gave a very small monetary fine as follows:

Any person who, without authority under this Act—

(a) Fells, cuts, takes, destroy, removes, collects, and uproots any indigenous tree or forest property in a forest reserve or protected area:

(b) Connives with or causes another person to fell, cut, take, destroy, remove, collect, uproot any indigenous tree or forest property in a forest reserve or protected area;

(c) Squats, resides, and erects a building, hut, livestock enclosures or any structure in a forest reserve or protected area;

(d) Clears, cultivates, digs or breaks up land for any road or for any purpose whatsoever and grazes livestock in a forest reserve or protected areas.

(e) Shall be guilty of an offence and liable upon conviction to a fine of K5, 000 and to imprisonment for a term of two years

The old Act was too lenient on the offenders to the extent that those committing the deforestation would challenge and operate in public as the punishments were not

prohibitive (Forestry Act 1977). The new Act proposes a range of increased protections, such as better regulation of charcoal; increased transparency and accountability in the Forestry Sector (Forestry Act 2017); increased conservation efforts with broadened management options for the government; better regulation and law enforcement; enhanced penalties and fines; and the provision of forest development and management fund.

Respondents suggested a high rate of corruption and bribery that have engulfed Malawi is another challenge facing the efforts to stop environmental degradation. A lot of people who are directly working to control this practice and being paid by public funds also indulge themselves in corrupt practices. A clear example was highlighted in the case that all routes leading to a Lilongwe town are covered by police and forestry roadblocks, but find huge volumes of charcoal from Dzalanyama, Tuma and Nkhotakota forest reserves.

The findings indicate that some of these problems are only common to Malawi setup due to the socially established status in the communities. For example, the legal challenges are only softer and not punitive in Malawi. Allen (2003) study indicates that their enforcement legal mechanism assists the church based organisations in ensuring that their efforts bear some fruits by imposing stiffer punishments on offenders. It complements each other's efforts hence augmenting the important role of the structural functionalism theoretical view. The reviewed legal provisions in Malawi are equally fair to the offenders as they can afford to settle the penalties.

The economic challenges indicate that Malawi has a long way to sort out environmental problems due to unavailability of tangible sources of fuel that communities would utilise. The need for the church to intervene is therefore paramount as this will devise alternative means of sources of energy that is most crucial to be a source of revenue for the population. Churches have direct links with international organisations whose role is also to assist in curbing the malpractice. These organisations provide a platform and formidable forces into which Christian organisations would create means of dealing with economic hardships faced by the indigenous Malawians. Agreements made on such motives likely augment the Chinsinga and Chasukwa (2018) propositions that there is need to promote livelihood diversification as climatic patterns become more and more uncertain. The diversification would broaden communities' ability to generate more income other than using deforestation of reserves. Livelihoods diversification is promoted in several ways regarding climate change and agriculture in Malawi.

Religiously, Christian organisations are hampered by problems from within the institutions. There is continued lack of coordination amongst the stakeholders in dealing with environmentalism. Efforts to mitigate such phenomenal hiccups must best be done holistically by all organisations working as one entity. A comparison of ideological underpinnings enhances closure of gaps in mitigation strategies although there is need for comprehensive meetings for all Christian organisations to materialize this idea. Christian organisations need to refrain from politicking the environmental issue for them to make strides in their efforts to dealing with environmental issues. This will be in line with the known meticulous job of Christianity that is in the course of nurturing the people and its livelihood as observed by Springer and Campese, (2011). According to Kiaire (2020), the

role of conserving environment is for no one else except for the humans who hold responsibilities in the Christian organisations hence Malawi need to emulate the passion for conserving it as part of God's creation.

Legal challenges bring strategic effects to solutions towards environmental battles. One knows that when laws are stiffer, they act as a deterrent to communities who opt to deliberately indulge themselves in environmental degradation. Recalling high population growth in Malawi, there is likelihood that use of natural resources will not decrease in use unless laws are firm enough to regulate the use. Chirwa provides for a coordinated and comprehensive future legal framework for environmental protection and management as well as the conservation and sustainable use of natural resources. Lawful actions are authoritative tools for compelling compliance and imposing sanctions for violations of environmental laws. Nevertheless, a person wishing to bring an action before court to enforce a right is required to ‘demonstrate that they have locus standi’ (Chirwa, 2011: 70) (sufficient interest in the matter) that usually does not exist in those prosecuting the violators.

Social challenges confirmed by this study indicate that rapid growth of population heavily contributes to struggle for meagre resources that the country has. The need to control population growth and movements in the country will endeavor to control environment. Putting in place control measures will cement Eunice Kamaras' (2000) theoretical understanding that Christian organisations play principle roles in bringing change to the political circles. Some areas are too immersed in the population boom that has encouraged degradation and lack of resources in their sectors, this made their people

to move to less populated areas where there is recent scramble for the remaining resources. The Christian organisations have better platform that has previously assisted the population growth with the biblical phrase that ‘people must grow like sand’. The euphoria has made churches to expand and make the teachings very easy and the same platform can be used to send messages of birth control thereby controlling environmental conservation in the country and the world.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the key findings and discussion of the study. On the status of the presence of ideologies in the Christian organizations, the chapter has articulated the availability, which has also been confirmed to have been communicated to the congregations. These ideologies provide a framework and guide towards an organizational approach to tackling environmental issues. The discussion and presentation of strategies used by Christian organizations to reach out to their people have also been narrated in this chapter. The chapter has made them clear, and some of the strategies are crosscutting making it clear that the fight is for the same goal and for all the organisations. Finally, the chapter highlighted the challenges faced by the organizations in the quest to fight malpractice. Barriers or challenges always retard development or good initiative, hence knowing them assists in providing the solution to such problems. The results being presented are from the three selected Christian organisations, but they provide a better analysis to offer projection of domino effect to the entire community. The researcher then discusses the results comparatively among the three Christian organisations to see how other non-governmental institutions assist/play their role in environmental rights. The organizations face some political, social, economic, legal and

cultural challenges that have been presented and subsequently discussed. The solutions provided to dealing with these challenges together will have a greater effect to the development of the country and embolden the fight against environmental damage.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusions and implications of the study. It highlights key findings and suggests areas that call for future research.

5.1 Christian organizations ideologies on environmental conservation rights in Malawi

This study found that Christian organizations under study have the ideologies that they follow in tackling environmental issues. The Christian organizations' beliefs originate from the biblical understanding of the word of God offering man control over the use and care for the creation. The study clearly found strong belief of those in the Anglican community that they pronounce and believe that by establishing a well-known ideology, their followers will live with it. The Green Anglican was found on the basis that, should they all live in this belief, the world is likely to revert back to its original position.

The Malawi Catholic Christian ideology is derived from the direction of the papacy. The Catholic Church in Malawi believe that the world that people live in was graciously given by God. The belief is on the understanding that if one does not take care of the environment, then he or she will be acting against God's will. The CCAP have a strong

drive and belief in permanent control of the Creation. The beliefs/ideologies linger from the biblical understanding that God created man to rule over the creature.

5.2 Strategies that Christian organizations use to promote environmental conservation

The study shows interconnected outcomes on how Christian organizations advance their quest to retain environmental conservation rights. Firstly, the Christian organizations use sermons through which they preach to convince and woo the masses into an engagement of conservation. The congregations are also encouraged to be involved in periodic calendar tree planting and caring. This provides a better way of engaging the masses in assisting to reverting the damaged vegetation into its normalcy. Christian organizations have shown that they have continuous annual calendars that they share with their congregations and church leaders on the timings of planting and caring for trees.

Liturgical functions initiatives are also another strategy that the organizations use to ensure that members plant trees and care for them to reclaim Creation. Video shows and seminars are also another strategy in use. A combination of a number of information dissemination media that is tailored to the specific situation can increase the efficiency of information dissemination and provide people with a lot of time and more precise information to be well-versed and make better decisions.

Improving the explained strategies would make Christian organizations the best vehicle for tackling environmental degradation. All the Christian organizations under study subscribe to the need for further improvement in their communication strategies to their

communities. Indulging in frequent modern digital platform forms a better and quickest way that one organisation could use to reach out to the public so easily.

5.3 Challenges faced by Christian Organisations in promoting environmental conservation rights

The challenges envisaged by the Christian organizations are enormous that they would heavily detriment the efforts by the organizations. Notable on the list as confirmed by the organizations in this study are political challenges, social, economic, legal, intra-religious and environmentally-related challenges. Christian organizations have attributed the involvement of political elites in the degradation as one of the challenges to the fight against environmental rights.

Mindset change also harbors as a stumbling block to environmental protection by Christian organizations. Lack of passion and patriotism for a greener and well-resourced nation is another challenge faced by Christian organizations. The lack of vibrant media houses in Christian organizations is also another challenge that hampers efforts to curb environmental degradation. Christian organizations have noted that population boom and lack of land is another challenge that makes the war against environmental rights futile. Socially, the study reveals that poverty also contributes to challenging tasks for Christian organizations to curb the malpractice.

Unavailability of alternative sources of fuel and employment is also another economic hardship that derails efforts to environmental rights. Other organizations that assist in the fight for the environment have planted an allowance syndrome in the population. Lack of

coordination amongst Christian organizations is another challenge that is impeding efforts to environmental rights. The results of the study equally show that the lack of forestry personnel/expertise in the rural areas is another challenge facing the continued strive to engage the population.

Weak laws on the control of environmental conservation are one challenge that has made the depletion of the environment at a very faster rate. Respondents suggest a high rate of corruption and bribery that have engulfed Malawi is another challenge facing the efforts to stop environmental degradation. Devising stronger regulations towards would-be offenders would easily guarantee avoidance of the damage of environmentalism. The political gurus who are responsible for devising laws must periodically review the laws for the betterment of the environment.

5.4 Future Research

From the study findings, discussion, and observations it is clear that issues of environmental conservation rights in Malawi are so important. They concern the distribution of resources that needs a neutral manager who is well aware of what must be taken by who. It is therefore ideal for making considerations in finding out what the role of Christian organizations is in the distribution of such crucial environmental resources country wide. In addition, future studies would be better to measure the impact of Christian organizations' role in environmental protection in the country. Such a study could single out a specific environmental conservation area and do the assessment.

Even though the findings indicate substantial presence of ideological underpinnings of Christian organisations, there is need to explore more on how these ideologies are

delivered to the intended personnel. The strategies also requires some further studies with concentration on how best they can be improved. Since the study only concentrated on the three vibrant Christian organisation, it is this authors understanding that there is further need to engage similar study to the emerging religious organisations on the same.

5.5 Implications of the study

Theoretical and empirical implications have been profoundly delineated by this study in as far as roles of Christian organisations is concerned on environmental conservation. Theoretically, the study has genetically confirmed the significance of the prevailing demands of working as human body at which no one part need to be sidelined from important socio-political aspects such as environment. The church needs therefore to be fully engaged, make their ideologies known and critically address their challenges to ensure their smooth participation in the environmental preservation fight. Particular attention also need to be taken in uplifting their communication strategies that would also improve the theoretical aspects through strategic inclusion of other channels of communication hence substantiating the theory.

Empirically, it is inferred from the results that there is greater need of cohesion and working together of Christian organisations to ensure that all speak with one voice. This would assist ensuring the population follow with ease the ideological understanding with regards to their role on the control of environment.

5.6 Conclusion

Even though Christian organizations participate in acts of protecting the environment, commonly through efforts of planting trees, they can also be more beneficial as a method of gathering and spreading other environmental issues on conservation. Christian organizations' opinions and willingness to participate in the study was very important as it provided the green light that church based organisations are an influential tool for the conservation of the environment. The study therefore made original contribution to unveiling the potential of the Christian organisation revamping the deteriorating environmentalism in the country. The ideologies being followed by these organisations offer a great potential to indoctrinate our youths in how they can positively contribute to the ailing environmental issues that will be to their benefit in the future.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS

1. The Christian organisation belief or ideology on environmental conservation rights in Malawi.
 - a. What are the Christian ideologies on environmentalism?
 - b. How are they supported by other stakeholders?
 - c. Does the Christian organisation practice the talk?
 - d. Are members of the organisation aware of the ideology? Explain
2. To ascertain the strategies that Christian organisation use to promote environmental conservation
 - a. What strategies are there to promote environmental right?
 - b. How were these strategies introduced?
 - c. How long did it take for the said strategies to be introduced?
 - d. Are the strategies known to organizational members?
 - e. Are they documented or verbally communicated?
 - f. How would the Christian organisations improve their strategies?
3. To identify the barriers face by Christian organisations in the promotion of environmental conservation rights
 - a. Are there any barriers to environmental conservation process?
 - b. (Probe: Political, social, economic, and spiritual?)
 - c. How do you solve each of the barriers?

Appendix 2: SEMI-STRUCTURED RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE-EXPERTS

INTRODUCTION

I am Paul Steven Mankhwanda, a serving member of the Malawi Defence Force (MDF) currently pursuing a Master's Degree in Political Science with the University of Malawi-Chancellor College. It is a mandatory requirement for students pursuing a master degree to embark on research related to political science as partial fulfillment condition to the programme. My research topic is -THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION RIGHTS IN MALAWI.

Voluntary Participation: Taking part in this study voluntary and this consent can be withdrawn anytime the participant feels so.

Confidentiality and Ethics: All your contributions to this study will be confidential and used for the purpose of this study only. No information may be revealed without the consent of that particular participant.

SECTION A: RESPONDENT / INTERVIEWER DETAILS

1. Date of the Interview.....
2. Gender of the Respondent
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
3. Christian Organisation
 - a. Roman Catholic.
 - b. CCAP.
 - c. Anglican.
 - d. Other

Section B: CHRISTIAN ORGANISATION BELIEF/IDEOLOGY ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION RIGHTS IN MALAWI.

4. Are you aware of any Christian organisation ideology/belief in environmental conservation right from catholic, Anglican or CCAP?

a. Yes

b. No

5. Discuss the Christian ideologies on environmentalism that you know and how it improves conservation rights?

.....

6. How are they supported by other stakeholders? Is your department/organisation coordinating or offering any support?

.....

7. Does the Christian organisation practice the talk?

Yes

No

8. Are members of the organisation aware of the ideology?

Yes

No

9. Is there any publication of the ideologies?

Yes

No

Support the answer with relevant document

.....

SECTION C: THE STRATEGIES THAT CHRISTIAN ORGANISATION USE TO PROMOTE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

10. Discuss any Christian organizational strategies used to promote environmental right that you know?

.....

11. Are the strategies known to organizational members?

Yes

No

12. How best can the organisations communicate the strategies?

.....

13. How would the Christian organisations improve their strategies?

.....

SECTION D: TO IDENTIFY THE BARRIERS FACED BY CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS IN THE PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION RIGHTS

14. Do you know any barriers that Christian organisations face in their fight against environmental conservation process (whether political, economic, spiritual or social)? Explain.

.....

15. How would they solve the challenges?

.....

16. Do you have any other comments?

.....

Thank you so much for your participation in this interview

Appendix 3: REQUEST FOR CONSENT LETTER-ANGLICAN-LAKE MALAWI DIOCESE

CHILUMBA Barracks

Box 43

KARONGA

10 January 2022

The Rt Revd Francis Kaulanda
The Anglican Diocese of Lake Malawi
PO Box 30349,
LILONGWE 3.

Dear Bishop

REQUEST FOR CONSENT

I am Paul Steven MANKHWANDA, an Officer Commanding at CHILUMBA Barracks in KARONGA. I am a student at university of Malawi, chancellor college; studying for the degree of masters of political science for the academic year 2020/2021.

I am conducting a study on "**The role of Christian Organisations in promoting Environmental Conservation rights in Malawi**". The purpose of the study is to get an understanding on the effective role and make the public aware of the role of Christian organisation in environmental conservation. To get necessary information on the role of Christian organisations, I will conduct key informant interviews with senior leaders of Christian organisation and where necessary conduct focus group interviews. Your organisation selection is based on my understanding that your leaders will provide positive contribution towards environmental rights preservation as the diocese fall in a catchment area where degradation is rampant.

I therefore seek for your consent to conduct interviews with some selected senior leaders of your organisation. I propose that I visit the selected leaders on Saturday 15 January 2022 and Saturday 22 January 2022.

Your consent is sought.

Yours faithfully



Paul Mankhwanda

0999454373/0885570376

Appendix 4: IDENTIFICATION LETTER



ACTING VICE CHANCELLOR
Prof Al Mtenje, Ph.D.
Email: dean_socialscience@cc.ac.mw

UNIVERSITY OF MALAWI
P. O. Box 380, Zomba, MALAWI
Tel: + (265) 524222
Fax: + (265) 525900

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

18th January 2022

Dear Sir/Madam,

INTRODUCING OUR MA-POLITICAL SCIENCE STUDENT: MR PAUL STEVEN MANKHWANDA (MA-PS-06-20)

The above captioned matter refers. I write to certify that the bearer of this letter, **Mr Paul Steven MANKHWANDA** (MA-PS-06-20) is our second-year Master of Arts (Political Science) student and is currently collecting data for his supervised thesis entitled "THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN ORGANISATIONS IN PROMOTING ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION RIGHTS IN MALAWI". The topic was approved by the department hence has been cleared to collect data. Consequently, I write to ask you to provide him with all the support that he may need.

All postgraduate students from our department are required to write a thesis in second year, based on empirical data, in partial fulfillment of their degree requirements. Please note that the data collected is purely for academic purposes hence will be treated with highest level of confidentiality.

If you need more information please contact the undersigned.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "H.M.KAYUNI".

H.M.KAYUNI, BA(Pub Admn) Mhw, BPA, MPA Stell, PhD Western Cape
Professor and Dean
(099078766)

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**Appendix 5: REQUEST FOR CONSENT LETTER-ROMAN CATHOLIC
LILONGWE DIOCESE**

CHILUMBA Barracks

Box 43

KARONGA

10 January 2022

The Lilongwe Roman Catholic Diocese

Archbishop's House,

P.O. Box 33,

Maula

LILONGWE

Dear Bishop

REQUEST FOR CONSENT

I am Paul Steven MANKHWANDA, an Officer Commanding at CHILUMBA Barracks in KARONGA. I am a student at university of Malawi, chancellor college; studying for the degree of masters of political science for the academic year 2020/2021.

I am conducting a study on "**The role of Christian Organisations in promoting Environmental Conservation rights in Malawi**". The purpose of the study is to get an understanding on the effective role and make the public aware of the role of Christian organisation in environmental conservation. To get necessary information on the role of Christian organisations, I will conduct key informant interviews with senior leaders of Christian organisation and where necessary conduct focus group interviews. Your organisation selection is based on my understanding that your leaders will provide positive contribution towards environmental rights preservation as the diocese fall in a catchment area where degradation is rampant.

I therefore seek for your consent to conduct interviews with some selected senior leaders of your organisation. I propose that I visit the selected leaders on Saturday 15 January 2022 and Saturday 22 January 2022.

Your consent is sought.

Yours faithfully



Paul Mankhwanda

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