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MODERN SECTARIAN MOVEMENTS IN NYASALAND.

R.L.WISHLADE.

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in the University of Durham.

1961.

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I carried out the fieldwork upon which this thesis is based as a Research Fellow of the International African Institute. I wish to record my gratitude to the Institute's trustees, and in particular to its Administrative Director - Professor Forde -, for enabling me to undertake the research.

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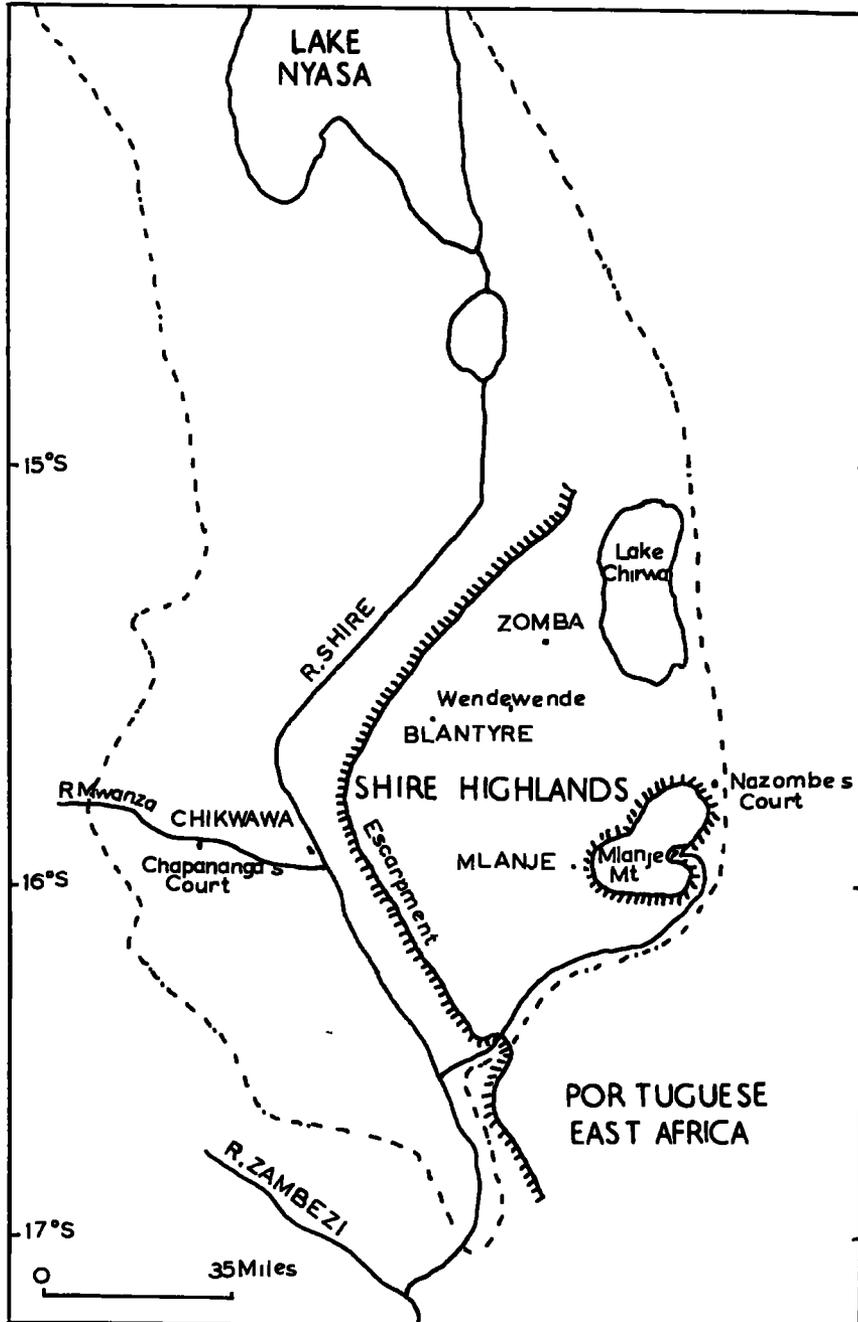
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# SOUTHERN NYASALAND



**PART ONE.**

**INTRODUCTION.**

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## PART ONE.

## INTRODUCTION.

## CHAPTER ONE.

The Nature of Sectarianism.

One of the characteristics of the history of the major religions of the world has been the development of sectarianism, the formation of new religious groups by secession from existing ones. This is not the foundation of a new religion; the members of the new group still consider themselves to be followers of the original founder of the religion, but they assert their independence of other groups of followers. The followers of Mohammed include the Ismaili, the Kharijites, the Bahai and many other independent groups. The followers of Buddha include the Zen, the Nichiren and others, and Sikhism may be regarded historically as a Hindu sect.<sup>1</sup>

Sectarianism, or the development of sects, has been particularly characteristic of the history of Christianity. Some of the sects have disappeared, but a very large number have survived and some have developed into fully-fledged churches, with the result that there are in the world to-day several thousand independent autonomous religious groups considering themselves to be Christian.

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1.) Hastings, J. (ed.) "Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics".  
1908. Vol. XI. p. 507.

In Africa the process of sectarianism is most highly developed in the Union of South Africa. It has been estimated that in 1953 there were 2,000 sects regarding themselves as Christian with entirely African membership in South Africa, and that this figure compares with 76 in 1918, 320 in 1938 and 800 in 1948.<sup>1</sup> Here the development of new sects has been very rapid, and their numbers appear to increase in a geometrical progression. It has also been estimated that the total membership of the African sects has scarcely increased, and that the membership of the new sects is drawn very largely from disaffected elements within the ones from which they have seceded.<sup>2</sup>

Although nowhere else in Africa has sectarianism assumed such large proportions, African sects have a wide distribution in many parts of the continent. In Ibadan, for instance, there were seventeen African sects with a total of some 10,000 members in 1950,<sup>3</sup> and their presence is also recorded in the Ivory Coast,<sup>4</sup> Sierra Leone,<sup>5</sup> Kenya<sup>6</sup> and Tanganyika<sup>7</sup> to cite but a few instances.

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- 1.) Schlosser, K. "Eingeborenkirchen in Süd und Südwest Afrika". Kiel. 1958. p. 4.
  - 2.) Schlosser, K. op. cit. p. 10.
  - 3.) Parrinder, G. "Religion in a West African City". London 1953.p. 108
  - 4.) Platt, W.J. "An African Prophet". London 1934.
  - 5.) Banton, M. "Adaption and Integration in the Social System of the Temne Immigrants of Freetown". Africa Vol. XXVI. 1956.
  - 6.) Leakey, L.S.B. "Defeating Mau-Mau". (Chap. 4. pp. 354-368.)
  - 7.) Wilson, M. "Communal Rituals of the Nyakyusa". 1959. (pp. 190ff.)

In addition to the many African Christian sects which have been founded as a result of mission activity there are a number of cults and sects which have been started by Christian converts, but whose members would not now consider themselves to be Christians. These include Kimbangism in the French and Belgian Congo,<sup>1</sup> and Deima on the Ivory Coast.<sup>2</sup>

The first sect to be established by an African in Nyasaland was the Providence Industrial Mission, founded by John Chilembwe in 1900.<sup>3</sup> There are now over thirty Christian sects with entirely African membership in the Southern Province of Nyasaland, and it is with some of these that this thesis is concerned.

#### A Definition of the Sect in Nyasaland.

The arrival of the Christian missionary in Nyasaland has resulted in the formation of new social groups based upon religious affiliation. The missionaries have established a number of different religious associations each based upon a particular interpretation of the Christian message, and more have been formed by African converts. The term Christian does not admit of an easy definition, the various religious associations each have their own criteria by which the term is defined. For the present purposes it is most convenient to ignore all the theological issues involved in defining what is Christian, and to use the term to refer to all those groups which call themselves Christian, thereby casting the net very wide to include a wide

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- 1.) See Balandier, G. "Sociologie Actuelle d'Afrique Noire". pp417-487.
  - 2.) See Kobben, A.J.F. "Prophetic Movements as an Expression of Social Protest". Int. Archives of Ethnology. Vol XLIX 1960 pp 138-143.
  - 3.) Shepperson and Price "Independent African" 1958 p. 127.

range of different religious beliefs. The common factor which all of these divergent groups possess is that they consider themselves to be Christian and followers of Christ. This is not, of course, to say that the members of one Christian group will consider members of all the others to be Christian.

There are in Mlanje (an administrative district in the Southern Province), twenty-eight different Christian religious associations, some of which are part of larger associations with headquarters outside the Protectorate, and some of which are autonomous in Nyasaland and independent of outside control.

These religious associations may be divided into a number of different categories on the basis of a number of criteria. The first broad distinction which it is possible to make is that between churches and sects. Yinger<sup>1</sup> has made this dichotomy the basis of a finer classification of a typology of religious grouping but this finer typology is not a useful one to employ in the area under consideration.

Yinger states: "The church as a type is a religious body which recognizes the strength of the secular world and, rather than deserting the attempt to influence it or losing its position by contradicting the secular powers directly, accepts the main elements in the social structure as proximate goods...."

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1.) Yinger, J. Milton. "Religion, Society and the Individual"  
New York 1957. pp. 142-155.

The emphasis of the church is on sacrament and creed, whilst that of the sect is upon 'right behaviour' ". He goes on to say that the term sect refers to "any religious protest against a system in which attention to the various individual functions of religion has been obscured by extreme emphasis upon social and ecclesiastical order. It is either hostile or indifferent to the state and opposes the ecclesiastical order."<sup>1</sup>

Yinger, following Troeltsh, regards the relationship with established order as one of the main criteria of distinction between the church and the sect. This distinction is not an easy one to employ in Southern Nyasaland or indeed in any colonial situation. Many of the religious associations in the Protectorate have been introduced by missionaries, from Great Britain and elsewhere. The relationships between the religious association in Nyasaland and the established secular authorities are not necessarily similar to relationships with these authorities in the country from which the missionaries have come. For instance the Church of Scotland, in Scotland, is the established church and is not generally regarded there as being a hot-bed of sedition. In Nyasaland, however, the Church of Scotland has been opposed to many of the policies of the government, and has become the focus of a considerable amount of discontent with the

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1.) Op. cit. pp. 145-146.

government, and the relations between the two, at the time of my field-work in the country, were characterised by conflicts.

I am employing the criterion of scale to distinguish between the church and the sect. There is a wide variation in the size of the various religious associations in Mlanje, but two of them are very much larger than the remainder. The Roman Catholic Church has 206 congregations in the District and the Church of Scotland has 127. The next largest is the Watch Tower with 39 congregations. These figures relate to Mlanje alone, but they are fairly typical of the proportionate distribution in the Southern Province as a whole. On the criterion of scale the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland are of a different order from the remaining 26 religious associations, and I am therefore classifying them as churches and the remainder as sects.

Associated with the difference in scale are a number of other factors. The fact that a greater number of people are included in the churches necessitates a well-defined form of church government, with more emphasis being placed upon it than is the case in some of the small sects where government is largely conducted in terms of face to face relationships. The difference in scale is also associated with the development of a wider range of secular welfare and educational services.

Both of the churches have a number of hospitals in the Southern Province, while only two of the twenty-six sects possess hospitals. The churches provide almost all the provision for secondary education, (that is education beyond Standard Three), apart from those facilities provided by the government. The two churches also run maternity clinics, and possess teacher training facilities.

Within the category of sects, the distinction may be made between those which are under entirely African control, and those which have white missionaries.<sup>1</sup> Some of those which are under African control are completely independent, whilst other have links with other religious associations in other parts of the world, notably in the United States of America, and are thus counterparts of organizations elsewhere. Of the European sects, the majority are branches of a parent body in the United Kingdom, the United States, or Australia. Two of them are autonomous "Industrial Missions" which are interdenominational in character, but receive financial aid from mainly Baptist sources in the United Kingdom and Australia. One European mission is completely independent, having been formed as the result of secession by a European missionary from the sect with which he was working in Nyasaland.

My main concern is with those sects which are under African

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1.) For the sake of convenience I refer to those sects under African control as African sects, and those under white missionaries as European sects. The latter include those under the control of American missionaries.

control, but these can only be understood against the background of the European sects.

## CHAPTER TWO.

Categories of Sects.

Sects are formed as the result of a protest against the state of affairs within an existing religious group. Sectarianism is essentially a process of secession from a religious group and the subsequent formation of a new one. All protests do not however result in the formation of a new sect. During the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, for instance, the term "Puritans" was applied to groups of people who protested against the middle way which the Church of England was taking between Rome and Geneva. Despite the Act of Uniformity passed by Charles II in 1662 throwing about 2,000 "Puritan" Clergy out of their benefices, this did not lead to the formation of any new sects, the "Puritan" movement was contained within the Church of England.<sup>1</sup> In Uganda the Bamalaki, a group of Anglicans who eschewed the use of medicine, remained in the Anglican Church for a few years after they had made protests against the Anglican doctrine on the use of medicine, eventually however secession took place and a new sect was formed.<sup>2</sup> In some cases those who make the protest have

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- 1.) "Puritanism", Encyclopedia Britannica, 14th Edition, Vol. 18. p. 780.
  - 2.) Welbourn, F. "East African Rebels", 1961. p. 34.

no wish to form a new sect, but this action has been forced upon them by the parent body. John Wesley, for instance, originally had no desire to leave the Anglican Church, but this was later forced upon him by the latter's opposition, and he then laid the foundations of the Methodist Church which has remained an entirely separate institution.

In some cases those making the protest have formed a new group within the existing church. These are distinguished from sects by the fact that they still recognize the authority of the church, although possessing an ecclesiastical organization of their own. Typical of this process is the formation of monastic orders, which in Christianity is particularly associated with the Roman Catholic Church in the pre-Reformation period when such orders as the Benedictines, Augustinians, Franciscans, Dominicans and Carmelites were founded.<sup>1</sup>

In many cases, however, protests have led to sectarianism. Some of the sects may grow in size and become churches, others may remain small, and still others disappear. In Southern Nyasaland none of the African sects have been in existence long enough to develop into large religious organizations which might be designated as churches.

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1.) Wach, J. "The Sociology of Religion". pp. 186-187.

Protests may be made against the doctrine of the original group, against its forms of worship or against its ecclesiastical organization.<sup>1</sup> They may also be against the attitude of the parent body to the socio-economic conditions in the area concerned. In Southern Nyasaland African sects have not generally been formed as a result of protests against doctrine or forms of worship.

Sects may be classified according to a number of criteria, including the type of protest which has resulted in their formation. With reference to Southern Nyasaland, the distinction has already been made between European sects, that is those which have been introduced by white missionaries, and African sects, founded by Africans. This is a distinction which has value for descriptive purposes in this thesis and which does not necessarily have any universal application.

Sects may also be classified as follows:

- 1.) Revivalist sects, which may be subdivided into:
  - a) Pentecostal sects.
  - b) Legalistic sects.
  - c) Communistic sects.
  - d) Healing sects.
- 2.) Nativistic sects.

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1.) Wach, J. op. cit. p.189.

- 3.) Messianic or millenarian sects.
- 4.) Simple secessionist sects.

Religious "revivals" have been characteristic in the history of Christianity and it has been suggested that there is a "law of periodicity" determining their incidence.<sup>1</sup> The revival of interest in Christianity has frequently been associated with a protest against existing religious groups and the formation of new sects. Such sects generally protest against the laxity and indifference of the larger religious organizations<sup>2</sup> and implicit in this is a desire for a revival of the way of life of the early church. The term "revivalist" may thus have two meanings, referring to a re-awakening of interest in religion and to a desire to revive the doctrine, ritual and organization of the early church. A number of sects were formed in the United States during the period of the "Great Revival" in the middle of the Nineteenth Century, a few of these are to be found amongst the European sects in Nyasaland. A "Revival" has been described by Taylor in the Anglican Church in Uganda.<sup>3</sup> This revival did not result in the formation of a new sect in Uganda where it has been contained within the Anglican Church, but it has formed the basis for the foundation of the Church of Christ in Africa a new African

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- 1.) "Revivals", "Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics".
  - 2.) Wach, J. op. cit. p. 161.
  - 3.) Taylor, J. V. "Processes of Growth in an African Church", 1958 pp. 15ff.

sect in the Nyanza Province of Kenya.<sup>1</sup>

A number of categories of Revivalist sects may be distinguished on the basis of the emphasis which they place upon particular aspects of the teaching of the early church.

The "Pentecostal" sects are distinguished by their emphasis upon "speaking with tongues" as they believe the disciples did at Pentecost. One of the African sects in Southern Nyasaland, the Sent of the Holy Ghost Church started as a simple secessionist sect and later became affiliated with an American sect, the Pentecostal Holiness Church, which has a White missionary in Lusaka. This African sect however exhibits little evidence of Pentecostalism.

A category described by Clark as "Legalistic" may be distinguished by their emphasis upon "certain rules, objective forms or observances ... essential to true religion"<sup>2</sup>. These rules etc. are believed to be those practised by early church. In many cases the distinguishing feature of such sects is the rejection of practices of the larger churches. Several of the European sects in Nyasaland may be regarded as being primarily of this type, and consequently the African sects which have been formed as a result of simple secession from them exhibit legalistic

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1.) Welbourn, F. "East African Rebels", 1961. p. 10.

2.) Clark, Elmer T. "The Small Sects in American Christianity."  
New York, 1949. p. 23.

features. Perhaps the most clear-cut examples of this type of sect in the area are the various Churches of Christ. An idea of the strength of the belief in legalistic prohibitions in these sects can be gained from the poem which is quoted as Appendix A to this thesis. This poem was sent out by an American Church of Christ<sup>to</sup> an African sect with its headquarters in Mlanje.

Some Revivalist sects may be termed "communistic". The members of such sects often start new settlements and engage in economic enterprises attempting to create what is envisaged as the ideal Christian economic community. The Amish in the United States are perhaps the best-known of this type of sect, but examples are also to be found in Africa. The "Ibanda Lika Krestu" a wealthy African sect in the Union of South Africa falls into this category.<sup>1</sup> On the Copper Belt an African sect the "Bana ba Mutima" (Children of the Sacred Heart) which has seceded from the Roman Catholic Church may be placed in this category on the basis of its emphasis upon charity.<sup>2</sup> None of sects in Southern Nyasaland may properly be called communistic. Although three "Industrial Missions", the Zambesi Industrial Mission, the Baptist Industrial Mission and the Nyassa Industrial Mission were founded by white missionaries in the hope that they

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- 1.) Mgoti, L. and Mkele, N. "A Separatist Church - Ibanda Lika Krestu." *African Studies*, Vol. 5. 1946. pp. 106-125.
  - 2.) Taylor and Lehmann, "Christians of the Copper-Belt." London, 1961. pp. 106-108.

would be self-supporting by the production and sale of agricultural produce, the experiments were not a great success and the "Industrial Missions" still depend upon financial aid from outside the Protectorate.

The final category of Revivalist sects which I wish to distinguish are the Healing sects. These sects lay their emphasis upon faith healing, stressing the connection between religion and disease. They often eschew the use of more generally accepted medical or magical techniques. The Christian Scientists are a famous example of this type of sect. Such sects are found in Africa, in South Africa, for instance they are well represented by what Sundkler terms the "Zionist" or "Bethesda" sects.<sup>1</sup> In Uganda the BamalaMi is a sect of this type.<sup>2</sup> Two of the African sects in Nyasaland - the Watchman Healing Mission and the Zion Restoration Church - may fall into this category, but I had no contact with them. The Assemblies of God, a European sect in Nyasaland, lays emphasis upon divine healing but not to the exclusion of other medical practices.

In many parts of the world where pre-literate peoples have been brought into contact with Western civilization "nativistic movements" have developed. These have been defined by Linton as

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- 1.) Sundkler, B. G. M. "Bantu Prophets in South Africa", 1st Edition, 1949. Chapter 6.
  - 2.) Welbourn, F. "East African Rebels" Chapter 3.

"any conscious organized attempt on the part of a society's members to revive or perpetuate certain aspects of its culture."<sup>1</sup>

Nativistic movements need not be religious in character and Linton distinguishes between those which are "rational" and those which are "magical". It is in this latter category that nativistic sects may be placed. These sects are a protest against some of the doctrines and practices introduced by the White missionaries, particularly those which attempt to destroy features of the indigenous way of life. They are an attempt to revive or perpetuate certain aspects of the indigenous religion alongside certain aspects of Christian doctrine, the emphasis upon each varying from sect to sect. Linton cites the Ghost-Dances of the North American Indians as movements of this type. The Christian content of the Ghost-Dances is small. Sects of this type are widespread in the Union of South Africa, both the Ethiopian and Zionist sects described by Sundkler often contain nativistic elements.<sup>2</sup> There is only one example of this type of sect in Southern Nyasaland. This is the "Ethiopian Church" an African sect, often known as the "Calici ca Makolo" (The Church of the Ancestors), a reference to its doctrine combining elements of Christianity with elements of the indigenous practice of ancestor

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- 1.) Linton, R. "Nativistic Movements" American Anthropologist, Vol. XLV 1943 pp. 230-240.
  - 2.) Sundkler, B.G.H. op. cit. Chapter 7.

eneration.

The distinguishing feature of the messianic or millenarian sects is their pre-occupation with a belief in a rapidly approaching millenium. Typically such sects are formed by prophets claiming supernatural revelation that the millenium is at hand. The belief in the millenium is, of course, an essential part in the doctrine of most, if not all, Christian churches and sects, the millenarian sects are distinguished by their belief, often fanatical belief, in its imminence, sometimes forecasting a specific date for its arrival. Messianism is not restricted to Christianity; the expected coming of the Mahdi is an Islamic parallel,<sup>1</sup> and the Cargo Cults of Melanesia usually have a little of Christian doctrine in them.

Millenarianism or Messianism has however been characteristic of the history of Christianity, the Book of Revelations frequently providing a basis for the prophecies. Cohn has described some of the millenarian sects of Medieval Europe in his "Pursuit of the Millenium" and many other sects of this type have started in the United States during the past 100 - 150 years. Two of the American sects which started with strongly millenarian doctrines, Watch Tower and the Seventh Day Adventists now have missionaries in South Nyasaland, but their emphasis has shifted to other aspects of Christian teaching. None of the African sects in

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1.) See "Mahdi" in "Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics."

in Southern Nyasaland are of this type. The idea of an imminent millenium was expressed on occasions during my fieldwork in 1958 - 1959 by a few individuals, but it did not form the basis of any organized social action or the formation of a new sect.

The final category of sects I wish to distinguish are the simple secessionist sects. These are formed as the result of protests not against the doctrines or worship of the parent body, but against its organization or against personalities within its organization. The founder of a simple secessionist sect may have been involved in a personal conflict with an official of the parent body. Differences of doctrine and worship may be introduced into the new sect but they are not its raison d'etre. The Methodist Church in England was not founded by Wesley as a result of differences of belief between himself and the Church of England, but because he quarrelled with its organization. The distinguishing doctrines of Methodism were largely introduced after Wesley's death.<sup>1</sup>

Some of the African sects are of this type. Sundkler gives examples of secessions from African sects over the question of leadership.<sup>2</sup> The African Greek Orthodox Church in Uganda is a further example.<sup>3</sup> In Southern Nyasaland all of the African sects

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- 1.) See "Wesley and the Church of England", Part 6 of the article entitled "Wesley" in Hasting's Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
  - 2.) Sundkler, B.G.M. op, cit. pp. 161-167.
  - 3.) Welbourn, F. op. cit. pp. 77-112.

with which I had contact, are basically of this type - with the exception of the Ethiopian Church. In this thesis I am very largely concerned therefore with the process of simple secession, a process which can only be understood in relation to the social organization of the area in which it is found.

In this chapter I have attempted to classify sects into various categories. These categories however are not mutually exclusive some sects may possess features associated with more than one category.

## CHAPTER THREE.

A Theoretical Basis For A Sociological  
Study of Sectarianism.

There have been many attempts to explain the existence of sectarianism, particularly in areas of rapid social change, on a psychological or psycho-analytical level or on a sociological level or by a combination of both.

Such explanations frequently involve the use of a concept of "deprivation", often of an economic nature.<sup>1</sup>

Cohn in his analysis of medieval messianic movements states that certain historical developments "will tend to diminish the cohesion and stability of a social structure .... and may then produce an emotional disturbance so widespread and acute, such an overwhelming sense of being exposed, cast out and helpless that the only way in which it can find relief is through an outburst of paranoia, a sudden, collective and fanatical pursuit of the millenium."<sup>2</sup>

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- 1.) Nash, P. "The Place of Religious Revivalism in the Formation of the Intercultural Community on Klamath Reservation." in Eggen, F. "Social Anthropology of the North American Tribes" 1955. pp. 377-444.  
Worsley, P. "The Trumpet Shall Sound." 1957.  
Clark, E. T. "The Small Sects in American Christianity." N.Y. 1949.
- 2.) Cohn, N. "The Pursuit of the Millenium." 1957 p. 314.

M. J. Field has recently made an analysis of spirit-shrines amongst the Akan in Ghana, (spirit-shrines which exhibit some of the features of African sects, using modern psycho-analytical techniques,<sup>1</sup> and these have brought forth comments from Professor Carstairs.<sup>2</sup>)

In this thesis I am concerned only with a sociological analysis of sectarianism. As Wach has pointed out this is but one aspect of a study of religious phenomena and does not necessarily provide a causal explanation of it. He states: "It is important that we avoid falling into the same type of error which was made by the proponents of the new psychology of religion a few decades ago. Some students, dazzled by the new light, had imagined that they had now been provided with the universal key to a complete understanding of religion. Those of us who study the sociological implications of religion will err equally if we imagine that our work will reveal the nature and essence of religion itself. This injunction is directed particularly at those theorists who apply the philosophy of Marx and Comte to the study of religion and society. Durkheim, for example, impaired the validity of his analysis of primitive religious institutions by his unwarranted assumption of an

- 
- 1.) Field, M. J. "The Search for Security" 1960.
  - 2.) Carstairs, E. M. "The View from the Shrine." The Listener, March, 2nd 1961.

identity of the worshipping subject with the object of religion.

Our aim will be more modest. We hope by an examination of the manifold interrelations between religious and social phenomena to contribute to a better appreciation of one function of religion, perhaps not its foremost, but certainly an essential one." <sup>1</sup>

Later in his book when dealing specifically with the development of sects Wach states: "It has recently become popular to explain sectarianism as a result of predominantly or even exclusively economic and social factors and conditions. Though there is some truth in this theory, it should not be pressed to the point of ignoring the genuine religious experiences which more often than not supply the initial impulse. The socio-economic factor has become increasingly important in the development of sectarianism in modern times, especially in the nineteenth century, both in the East and the West. The growth of sectarian groups in the United States has been even more affected by those factors than those abroad."<sup>2</sup>

Firth has recently made a similar statement, though not specifically in relation to sectarianism; - "Ultimately religious transformation in systems as a whole must be expressed as differences in personal religion. As a hypothesis one might say

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1.) Wach, J. op. cit. p. 4-5.

2.) Wach, J. "The Sociology of Religion." London 1947. p. 205.

that such religious transformations never occur in isolation, but are always associated with social, especially economic and political changes. But it would be wrong to say that these economic and political changes alone are the cause of the religious transformations. The latter must be triggered off, given meaning by religious interpretation, and this in the last resort must be meaning for individuals." <sup>1</sup>

A sect is an organized group of people which exists primarily for religious purposes. Its officials and other members form its personnel who take part in its activities both religious and secular. Each sect has its laws or norms of behaviour which its officials enforce, ideally, by the imposition of sanctions, the ultimate sanctions being expulsion from the group. Its doctrine is its charter. This doctrine is based upon a particular interpretation of the bible. In the case of the simple secessionist sects it may share this interpretation with other religious groups, then the history (or the myth) of the events leading up to its foundation may form its charter.

The sect is an autonomous group for religious purposes and within the religious sphere recognizes no superior authority. In some cases sects have attempted to isolate themselves from outsiders in other spheres of social activity and to become as far

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1.) Firth, R. "Problems and Assumption in an Anthropological Study of Religion" Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute. Vol. 89. No. 2. 1959. p. 34.

as possible self-sufficient communities. Many of the Mennonites and Amish in the United States have attempted to isolate themselves geographically and socially from their non-believing neighbours.<sup>1</sup>

In some cases missionaries in Africa when they started attempts at conversion of the indigenous population established new villages for their congregations away from their pagan neighbours. This was done for instance by Lutheran and Moravian missionaries working amongst the Nyakyusa of Tanganyika.<sup>2</sup>

In most cases, however, membership of a sect does not involve a complete, or an attempt at complete withdrawal from contact with non-members and non-believers. Members of a religious sect are at one and the same time members of other social groups. They are members of families and therefore have a place in the kinship network, they are members of villages and thus subject to the authority of a village headman as well as a chief, they have economic relations with people outside the sect and in many cases in Southern Nyasaland their personal friends are not sect members. None of the sects in Southern Nyasaland has made a concerted effort to withdraw itself from all other social activities in the area.

Even in sects where membership does involve as complete a

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- 1.) See "Mennonites" in Hastings Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.
  - 2.) Wilson, M. "Communal Rituals of the Nyakyusa." 1959. p. 166.

withdrawal from the social life of non-members as possible the social organization of non-members is not irrelevant, recruitment to the sect comes from the outside world.

X I have already indicated that the African sects in Southern Nyasaland are of the simple secessionist type. Their charter is not generally a difference of doctrine from the body from which they have seceded, their charter is generally the story of a social conflict with officials of the parent body, and subsequent members are often recruited as a result of such conflicts.

In order, therefore, to see the factors associated with sectarianism in the area it is necessary to analyze its total social organization. Members of sects have their roles to play in this wider social organization, and I hope to show that conflicts in this total social organization may be resolved through the creation of African sects.

It is particularly important in Southern Nyasaland to see the social organization of the sects in relation to the power structure of the area. I use the term power to describe the ability of a person to influence or control the actions of others. The person possessing power is in a position of super-ordination over those whom he is able to influence or control.

In the maintenance of a position of super-ordination the

distinction may be drawn between leadership and authority.<sup>1</sup>

A leader is able to influence the actions of others and to maintain his position by virtue of his possession of the personal characteristics demanded by his followers. On the other hand, a person in a position of authority is able to impose socially accepted sanctions upon the behaviour of his subordinates, and maintains his super-ordination not by his own personality, but by his occupation of a position in a social structure which carries with it the right to impose such sanctions. Leadership and authority are not, however, mutually exclusive; in the areas under consideration positions of super-ordination are acquired and maintained by a combination of both factors, and the interplay between them provides the dynamics of the social organization.

Three types of authority can be recognized; authority based upon kinship, bureaucratic authority and charismatic authority. Such tripartite classification is the basis of Weber's analysis of types of authority.<sup>2</sup> As the classification of types of authority which I am using for Southern Nyasaland is not quite the same as Weber's it is important to define the terms I am using.

Bureaucratic authority is essentially authority which is delegated from above; a bureaucracy is a hierarchical structure

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- 1.) The scheme of analysis put forward here is a tentative one worked out with reference to my field material. It is valuable for the analysis of this material but I do not claim that it has any universal validity; to test this would require further research.
  - 2.) Gerth, H. H. and Mills, C. W. "From Max Weber - Essays in Sociology." London 1948. Chapters 8 and 9.

with the occupants of positions in that hierarchy receiving their authority from a higher level in it. The bureaucratic office holder imposes sanctions upon his subordinates by reference to a super-ordinate authority to himself. The occupant of a position at the top of this hierarchy cannot, by definition, hold bureaucratic authority; he must be dependent upon kinship, charismatic authority or upon personal qualities of leadership.

The possessor of charismatic authority is believed by his subordinates to hold such authority as a "gift of grace" from a supernatural agency. This is a narrower usage of the term than Weber's; it is, however, justified not only as useful analytical concept but also by the derivation of the term 'charisma' - a 'gift of grace'. Weber and others have used the term charismatic authority to include phenomena which I would classify as leadership; they have used it to describe positions in a purely secular sphere, positions such as that of a "war lord". I suggest that it is more useful to reserve the term charismatic for a position of super-ordination derived from a supernatural agency. Both charismatic leadership and charismatic authority can be distinguished. A charismatic leader is one who has personal charisma derived directly from God or the spirit world; the archetype is the prophet. Personal charisma does not form the basis for super-ordination in Southern Nyasaland. Charismatic authority is that which is attached

to a particular office. Charisma may become institutionalized so that it is attached to a particular office rather than a particular person. The incumbent of such an office wields charismatic authority by virtue of position in a social structure which is supported by supernatural sanctions. The Roman Catholic priest possesses charismatic authority (though this is not the sole basis of the position); at his ordination he receives a "gift of grace" according to the doctrine of "Apostolic Succession".

Weber also distinguishes "patriarchal authority"; "patriarchal" is, however, an inappropriate term in this area where the matrilineal principle of descent is most important in the formation of kinship groups. I therefore use the term kinship authority to describe that authority wielded by a person by virtue of his position in the kinship system.

These three types of authority, bureaucratic, charismatic and kinship authority are not mutually exclusive; the authority attached to a particular position in the social structure may be a combination of these types.

Cutting across this tripartite classification of types of authority the distinction between formal and informal authority may be made. Formal authority is that which a person in a superordinate position in a social structure may wield in accordance with the ideal system of values which is part of that structure.

The incumbent of a position of super-ordination may also, however, wield informal authority. It is recognized that, ideally, he does not possess such authority but his right to impose sanctions in some contexts may enable him to maintain a position of super-ordination in others. He has the ability but not the right to wield power.

During the course of my description and analysis of the social organization of the two areas of Southern Nyasaland, Mlanje District and Chapananga's area, I hope to show the inter-relations between the distribution of power and the process of sectarianism. In this area the two are closely interrelated. The ability to command a following is an indication of prestige throughout much of Central Africa. The African sects provide new opportunities for the acquisition of followers in areas where positions of power in the wider social organization are now ascribed rather than achieved as they frequently were in the past.

The formation of new sects is widespread in Africa but not universal. In Southern Nyasaland sectarianism has taken place in the Shire Highlands, but not in the Shire Valley. It has taken place in the rural areas of the Shire Highlands but not in the urban area of Blantyre Limbe. It is also associated with Protestant missions but not with Roman Catholic ones. I hope to show that the incidence of sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland is associated with

the distribution of power in the total social organization, and with the distribution of power in the Catholic and Protestant missions working in the area. It is therefore necessary first to discuss the social organization of Southern Nyasaland in so far as it is relevant to our topic.

**PART TWO.**

**THE BACKGROUND TO SECTARIANISM IN  
SOUTHERN NYASALAND.**

## PART TWO.

The Background to Sectarianism in  
Southern Nyasaland.

## CHAPTER FOUR.

Tribes and Tribalism.

In some parts of Africa sects and churches have been associated with particular tribes,<sup>1</sup> furthermore anthropologists have generally used the "tribe" as the isolate for study. We must therefore, at the beginning of this description examine the concept of the tribe in Southern Nyasaland.

The term "tribe" has been used by anthropologists to denote a number of differently defined entities. In view of this, the most useful approach to the subject for our present purposes appears to be to (arbitrarily) define an "ideal-type" tribe and to see how far units of population in Southern Nyasaland measure up to our "ideal-type" concept.

The tribe may thus be defined as a group of people possessing a common and distinctive culture, and language may often form a convenient yardstick for assessing this, members of one tribe speaking one language or mutually intelligible dialects of one

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1.) See for instance Schapera, I. "The Tswana" Ethnographic Survey of Africa, Southern Africa, part iii 1953. p. 58.

language. This common culture is associated with a common historical background. Members of a tribe are conscious of this cultural uniformity and can distinguish themselves from members of other tribes by cultural criteria. The tribe is demographically compact and is ideally in sole occupation of a stretch of territory which is identified with it. The tribe possesses a degree of political solidarity, in some cases the tribe may consist of a single state, others may be acephalous but it is still possible to recognize political boundaries.<sup>1</sup>

In Southern Nyasaland individuals recognize that they belong to a "mtundu", this is generally translated as "tribe". The population is also classified into "tribes" in the population censuses. How far do the categories denoted by these terms correspond to our "ideal-type" tribe?

Prior to the establishment of the Protectorate in 1893 there were two peoples inhabiting the area that now forms the Southern Province. The aboriginal inhabitants, known as the Nyanja or the Mang'anja and the Yao who entered the area as invaders during the Nineteenth Century from that part of Portuguese East Africa lying between the Rovuma and Lujenda rivers. After the establishment of the Protectorate large numbers of immigrants from Portuguese East Africa

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1.) A Nuer tribe for instance has no pyramidal structure, but is defined as the unit within which blood-wealth is demanded. See Evans-Pritchard, "The Nuer." 1940 p. 5.

entered the Southern Province of Nyasaland, the Nguru or Lomwe from that part of Portuguese East Africa lying to the East of Nyasaland and the Cikunda from that part lying to the West. A few Ngoni people, descendants of refugees from the activities of Shaka Zulu in the 1820's also moved from the Central Province where an Ngoni Kingdom had been established to the Southern Province. The 1945 Population Census shows the distribution of population in the Mlanje District of the Shire Highlands as follows:-

|        |         |
|--------|---------|
| Nyanja | 45,190  |
| Yao    | 11,684  |
| Nguru  | 150,644 |
| Ngani  | 751     |

and in the Chikwawa District in the Shire Valley as:-

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| Nyanja  | 28,609 |
| Cikunda | 23,477 |

The importance of immigrant peoples can be easily seen.

The Nyanja, Yao, Cikunda and Nguru peoples appear to have had many common cultural traits even before the advent of the British administration. They all reckoned descent in the matrilineal line and lived in small matrilineally linked family groups, features of their indigenous religious beliefs also appear common. There were however some significant differences between them. The Yao and the Nguru held boys' initiation ceremonies, the Nyanja did not.<sup>1</sup> Many of the Yao, as a result of their contact with Arabs on

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1.) Werner, A. "British Central Africa" 1906. p. 127.

the East Coast were Moslems, the others were not. To-day any cultural differences which formerly existed between these peoples have now largely disappeared. Nguru and Nyanja and sometimes Yao boys may be initiated together, either by Nyanja, Nguru or Yao headmen, (that is if they are initiated at all). There are Yao who are Christian and a few Nguru and Nyanja Moslems to-day.

Linguistically the Yao, Nyanja and Nguru were distinct groups. In 1949, however, Atkins estimated that out of a total population of 230,000 in Mlanje only 8,000 were non-Nyanja speakers.<sup>1</sup> Clearly cultural distinctions between these peoples have become very blurred indeed. Linguistic differences do not form the basis for the formation of new sects in this area. Informants are unable to point out any cultural distinctions and there is thus no "conscious cultural uniformity".<sup>2</sup> The number of Ngeni in Mlanje and Cikwawa is very small, and they too are not culturally distinct from the other peoples in these districts.

The various "mitundu" in Southern Nyasaland are not demographically compact. No one people is in sole occupation of a stretch of territory and there is no term in the Nyanja language to correspond with the Bemba term "Lubemba" - Bemba Country. In some cases the aboriginal Nyanja were pushed by the invading Yao into

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- 1.) Atkins, G. "The Nyanja-speaking Population of Nyasaland and Northern Rhodesia." African Studies Vol. 9. 1950 p. 36.
  - 2.) Nadel, S. F. "A Black Byzantium." 1942. p. 15.

remoter parts of the territory and in some cases they were absorbed into Yao villages and chieftaincies. The immigrant Nguru and Cikunda have entered Nyasaland in small matrilineally linked family groups and attached themselves to existing villages or started new villages with the permission of existing chiefs. Today almost every hamlet and village in the area is heterogenous in terms of its mtundu affiliation. The invasions and immigrations have not led to the development of a stratified society on the basis of ethnic origins as has been the case in parts of East Africa.

There is little evidence of tribal solidarity today. Inter-marriage is frequent and tribal affiliation does not appear to be a factor involved in the choice of a spouse. Exogamous clans extend beyond the boundaries of the mitundu.

None of the mitundu form a single state. Even before the arrival of the British this was not the case. Each of them consisted of a number of independent petty autonomous chieftaincies. The tribe was not and is not a political unit. There are no tribal age-sets or military organizations nor any tribe-wide administrative or ritual authorities.

The mtundu then indicates ethnic origin or putative ethnic origin. It does not form the basis for social action. There is no correlation apparent in this area between Christian religious affiliation and tribal affiliation. The first African sect to be

formed in the area the Providence Industrial Mission was originally called the "Ajawa (Yao) Providence Industrial Mission.",<sup>1</sup> but the "Ajawa" seems to have been dropped soon after its foundation and certainly today it has many more Nguru members than Yao.

There is no correlation apparent between membership of Nationalist Political Parties and tribal affiliation. The Malawi Party is the only African Party of any size and is tribally heterogeneous, moreover any conflicts existing within it do not appear to be on tribal lines. "Tribalism" is an inappropriate term to apply in reference to Southern Nyasaland.

It will now be clear that the "tribe" is not a meaningful unit to isolate for the purpose of description and analysis of the social organization of this area. It is for this reason that I use as isolates units in the present administrative system - Mlanje District - an administrative district consisting of six chieftaincies in the Shire Highlands and Chapananga's area - a chieftaincy in the Cikwawa District of the Shire Valley.

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1.) Shepperson, G. and Price, T. "Independent African" 1958. p. 127.

## CHAPTER FIVE.

Geography, Demography  
and Economic Organization.Geographical Background.

My fieldwork was carried out largely in two districts of Southern Nyasaland, Mlanje District in the Shire Highlands where there are many African sects, and Chapananga's area in the Chikwawa District in the Shire Valley where there are none.

Mlanje District covers an area of 1,512 square miles. One of the most striking features of the district is Mlanje Mountain, a volcanic massif rising to almost 10,000 feet above sea level and some 7,000 feet above the surrounding country. The remainder of the district consists of a fairly level plateau with a few small isolated hills rising steeply from it. These hills and Mlanje Mountain are devoid of population except for European-owned tea estates on the south-western side of the mountain, where a large African labour force is resident. About half the district is drained into Lake Shirwa, an inland drainage lake in the east of the district, the remainder is drained into the Shire River and thence to the Zambesi. Few rivers flow perennially; most cease from April or May until the beginning of the rainy season in November. The availability of water seems to have had

only a limited effect upon the settlement pattern. In some settlements women walk up to a mile to fetch water in the dry season. A few areas are devoid of settlement due to the lack of water, but small shallow wells are to be found scattered throughout the district, and the government during recent years has sunk a large number of bore-holes which give a perennial supply of good water.

All parts of the district (though not every settlement) are accessible by motor vehicle during the dry season, and it is possible to take a motor vehicle to most parts of the district during much of the wet season. The district is linked with Blantyre/Limbe - the commercial centre of the Protectorate and Zomba, the administrative capital, by a tarmac road. There is a frequent bus service between the administrative headquarters (Boma) at Mlanje and Blantyre and a daily service to other parts of the district. All parts of the district are therefore fairly accessible. This is significant in reference to the development of Sectarianism as it enables ministers and other officials to visit their headquarters fairly easily by bicycle or 'bus, or occasionally by taxi, and for new congregations to be established without great difficulties of access.

The district is bounded on the Eastern side by the boundary between Nyasaland and Portuguese East Africa. There has been large

scale immigration. from the latter into Nyasaland during the present century with the result that the Nyasaland side of the boundary is very densely populated whilst the adjacent part of Portuguese East Africa is virtually uninhabited bush. The boundary was drawn in the latter half of the last century with no regard to ethnic or geographical factors - but it now has a considerable significance in the distribution of population.

Chapananga's area lies in the valley of the river Mwanza, a tributary of the Shire. Much of the area lies only a few hundred feet above sea level. In the lower reaches of the river are some flat swampy areas and settlement tends to be concentrated along the edges of the flood plain. In the upper reaches of the river the terrain is broken and settlement occurs in the isolated pockets. Water is in short supply in the upper reaches of the valley during the dry season, but lower down the river provides a perennial, if somewhat impure, supply.

Communications in the Shire Valley are more difficult than in the Shire Highlands. There is one dry season road from Chikwawa Boma to Chapananga's Court a distance of some twenty-five miles.<sup>1</sup> Chikwawa Boma is connected with Blantyre, some thirty-five miles distant, by a dirt road which climbs steeply from the Shire Valley. This road is impassable for short periods during

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1.) A new all-weather road was being constructed in 1959 but was not completed during my term in the field.

the wet season. There is a 'bus service twice a week between Blantyre and Chikwawa, but none in Chapananga's area.

Chapananga's area also adjoins Mozambique but here the boundary runs through more broken and less densely populated country and the contrast either side of the boundary is less marked than in Mlanje.

There are thus several contrasts between the geography of Chapananga's area and Mlanje which are significant in the development of sectarianism in Mlanje. The difference in altitude; Chapananga's area lies at only a few hundred feet above sea-level, whilst most of Mlanje District lies at some three thousand feet. The low altitude of Chapananga's area has not encouraged European settlement, there are no Europeans resident in the area, the only Europeans resident in Chikwawa District are government officials and two Roman Catholic missionaries.

The inhabitants of Chikwawa are generally considered to be "backward" by the inhabitants of other areas. This is largely the result of climatic factors. The low altitude has discouraged the settlement of Europeans, and fewer congregations, schools and medical centres have been established in the Shire Valley. Only two European missions are represented in Chikwawa - the Zambesi Industrial Mission and the Roman Catholics.

Mlanje on the other hand has a considerable number of

European residents in addition to government officials. There are a number of European owned estates growing tea and in a few cases tobacco. Moreover the favourable climatic conditions due to the higher altitude attracted missionaries at an early date, and the Church of Scotland started evangelistic work there in 1889, and soon afterwards established a permanent mission station near to Mlanje Boma. Today there are White representatives of several missions resident in the area and the easy communications in the district enable visits to be made to outlying congregations. The presence of eleven different European missions in Mlanje provides the example for further sectarian developments by the African population.

#### Demography

The contrasts in the geographical environment of Mlanje and Chapananga's area are also reflected in the contrasts in demography. The total African population of the Southern Province of Nyasaland in 1957 was estimated at 1,296,522,<sup>1</sup> and this represented a density of 107 per square mile. These figures are, however, an estimate calculated mathematically from the last census which was taken in 1945; it is the 1945 figures which must be used if more detail is required. The total population of the Southern Province was enumerated as 1,003,610 in 1945 and

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1.) "Report of the Secretary for African Affairs," Zomba, 1957.

the 1957 figure is thus an increase of 29<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> of the 1945 one.

In the Southern Province as a whole the density of population in 1945 was 82.8 per square mile, for Mlanje 138.6 per square mile and for Chikwawa 31.4. This is a very high density indeed for Central Africa. For comparison the overall density for Southern Rhodesia is 14 per square mile and for Northern Rhodesia is 6 per square mile. Amongst the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia "the density of the population never reaches a greater figure than 3.5 per square mile." <sup>1</sup>

The population density of Mlanje is particularly high, part of the district consists of uninhabited mountain and so the density of the settled areas is still higher than the figure quoted. In this district the typical unit of settlement is a cluster of from three to ten huts and such clusters are found every two hundred yards or so, and are connected by an intricate network of paths. Rarely is one out of sight of such a cluster.

This has repercussions upon the social organization of the area. The number of people with whom a person may interact is not limited by the distance which he has to travel in order to do so. An individual is able to exercise a greater degree of choice in the selection of his personal friends than in an area where the population is more sparsely distributed. From the point

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1.) Richards, A. "Land Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia."  
London, 1939 p. 18.

of view of the development of sectarianism the high density of population is significant in that it permits the establishment of a number of congregations of differing religious denominations within a small area, and a person is therefore able to change his religious affiliations fairly easily. A high density of population is not a sufficient cause for sectarianism, but it would appear to be a necessary condition for such developments on any scale. Some of the settlements in Mlanje have four or five prayer-houses or church buildings of different denominations within half a mile radius.

The population density of Chikwawa is considerably lower than that of Mlanje and here there are considerable tracts of uninhabited land. In much of the district the population is concentrated into larger settlements typically consisting of between thirty and one hundred huts. Such settlements are between one and two miles apart in the more densely settled areas and rarely does such a settlement contain a prayer-house of more than one of the two missions operating in the district.

The high population density in Mlanje is partly due to immigration from Portuguese East Africa as well as the accelerated rate of natural increase as a result of the improvement of medical and other services. This large-scale immigration has had considerable repercussions on the structure of the area

and is thus of considerable importance in an understanding of sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland. The changes which immigration has brought about in the authority structure are discussed in greater detail below.<sup>1</sup>

Table I which has been compiled from the Census Reports for 1931 and 1945 shows the increase in population during the intercensal period. The increase in the total population of Mlanje represents 59% of the 1931 total compared with a figure of 28% for Nyasaland as a whole. The increase of Nguru was greatest of all (63%) so that by 1945 71% of the total population were Nguru - that is 71% of the population of Mlanje were immigrants who had arrived in the Protectorate since the beginning of the century - or the descendents of such immigrants. This situation was commented upon in the Census Report for 1945:- "The increase in the Lomwe (Nguru) of 144,000 is significant for it represents an increase of 61% during the intercensal period (1931 - 1945) as compared with 95% for the decennial period 1921 - 1931. The Nguru invasion which took place in 1921 was commented upon in the 1931 report where the inference was drawn that much of the increase in population was due to immigration from Portuguese East Africa. The 1945 figures indicate that

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1.) See Pages 89 -99.

TABLE IPopulation Increase 1931 - 1945.

|              |      |               |                |               |                  |
|--------------|------|---------------|----------------|---------------|------------------|
|              |      | YAO           | NGURU          | NYANJA        | TOTAL            |
| MLANJE.      | 1931 | 8,618         | 92,736         | 32,411        | 134,431          |
|              | 1945 | <u>11,684</u> | <u>150,644</u> | <u>45,190</u> | <u>209,522</u>   |
| INCREASE     |      | 3,066         | 57,908         | 12,779        | 75,091           |
| % of 1931    |      | 35%           | 63%            | 40%           | 59%              |
|              |      | NYANJA        | NGURU          | CIKUNDA       | TOTAL            |
| CHIKWAWA.    | 1931 | 23,036        | 600            | 10,781        | 35,892           |
|              | 1945 | <u>28,609</u> | <u>4,270</u>   | <u>23,477</u> | <u>59,664</u>    |
| INCREASE     |      | 5,573         | 3,670          | 12,696        | 23,772           |
| % of 1931    |      | 22%           | 612%           | 118%          | 65%              |
|              |      |               | NGURU          |               | TOTAL            |
| S. PROVINCE. | 1931 |               | 235,636        |               | 757,541          |
|              | 1945 |               | <u>373,371</u> |               | <u>1,003,610</u> |
| INCREASE     |      |               | 138,735        |               | 246,069          |
| % of 1931    |      |               | 59%            |               | 32%              |
| NYASALAND.   | 1931 |               |                |               | 1,599,888        |
|              | 1945 |               |                |               | <u>2,044,707</u> |
| INCREASE     |      |               |                |               | 444,819          |
| % of 1931    |      |               |                |               | 28%              |

immigration has at least slowed down, although considerable numbers must have entered the Protectorate since 1931. As was to be expected the districts most affected are Mlanje and Cholo, where the increase in this tribe is recorded as 99,000 out of a total of 144,000.<sup>1</sup> The government has made efforts to curtail this immigration - but it appears to have met with only limited success.

In Chikwawa whilst the increase in population during the same period was proportionately larger (65%) than in Mlanje this represented an increase in density of only 12.5 per square mile. In this district, too, the increase in immigrants (in this case Chikunda) is most marked - 118% above the 1931 figure. In this district, however, the immigration has not led to a shortage of land, there is still land available for the creation of new settlements. This is of considerable importance for the authority structure of the two districts.

#### Economic Organization.

The vast majority of the population is engaged in subsistence hoe cultivation; maize, millet, cassava and rice are the most important crops. Domestication of animals is of minor importance and animals do not play any significant part in ritual

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1.) "Census Report for Nyasaland, 1945", Govt. Printer. Zomba.

or ceremonial activities nor do they provide a means of storing wealth. Hunting is unimportant. Fishing, however, is important.

The system of cultivation involves leaving areas fallow for a number of years, but this does not involve the moving of settlements as for instance among the Bemba.<sup>1</sup> The settlements are stable and this provides the personnel for the establishment and maintenance of a congregation.

There are two important cash crops, tobacco in Mlanje District and cotton in Chapananga's area. Most people grow one of these and most of it is marketed through the Agricultural Production and Marketing Board - a government organization. The average amount grown per grower is however small, and may yield an income of £5-£10. per annum. In a few cases "master farmers" grow more and obtain a more substantial income. Small amounts of the crops grown for subsistence are also sold. The growing of crops for sale has not led to the development of a wealthy class. There is only a very limited amount of economic differentiation. Money can be obtained from the growing of cash crops, from fishing and fish trading, the latter in particular is an occasional activity for men when they require a small amount of cash. There are a large number of small "Kantini" (stores) scattered throughout

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1.) Richards, A. I. "Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia." p. 19.

Chapananga's area and Mlanje District. These are often started by returning labour migrants with the capital which they bring back with them.

A steady source of income can be obtained by working as a government employee - for those with sufficient education - as clerks, agricultural demonstrators etc., and for others as labourers. Clerks may earn £8 per month or more whilst labourers are paid around £2 per month. Teachers, too, have a secure income as do pastors and ministers in the mission churches. In almost all of these cases, however, the people concerned have gardens on which they are dependent for the majority of their foodstuffs. Much of the money which is earned goes to pay taxes, and to acquire some of the "status" symbols of a European way of life, clothes, bicycles, spectacles, etc. Teachers and pastors in the mission churches are also often at least partly dependent upon their gardens for their subsistence. In the case of officials of African sects the majority of them are entirely dependent upon their own labour for their food supply.

The range of economic differentiation in these areas is thus limited, there are few opportunities to amass wealth. The African sect does not provide a means for acquiring wealth as has been the case with some of the African sects in South Africa,<sup>1</sup> the

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1.) See Mgotsi and Mkele: "A Separatist Church: Ibandla lika-Krestu" African Studies 5. 1946. pp. 105-125.

inhabitants of the area generally have little surplus wealth to be transferred to the sect, and as will be shown later some of the more successful African sects are in fact dependent upon outside financial support from the United States.

The economic development of Nyasaland by the Whites has been very much less than that of the Rhodesias and the Union of South Africa, largely as a result of the absence of mineral deposits in the Protectorate. There are few opportunities for employment in Nyasaland and consequently there is a considerable amount of labour migration from Nyasaland to the urban areas of Salisbury, the Northern Rhodesian Copper-Belt and the Union of South Africa. According to the 1945 Census some 3% of the total population of both Chapananga's area and Mlanje District were absent as labour migrants. From a small sample in the Chikwawa District I found that 64% of the adult male population had been out of the country at some time as labour migrants, almost all of them after they had married. For our present theme labour migration is significant in that it brings a large proportion of the adult male population into contact with conditions in the urban areas of Southern Africa, and in particular it brings them into contact with other sects, both African and European, which are operating in these areas, and in a few cases congregations of

these sects have been established in Mlanje as the result of the activities of returning labour migrants.

## CHAPTER SIX.

Kinship and Marriage.

The inhabitants of Chapananga's area and of Mlanje all belong to the so-called matrilineal belt of Central Africa. As has already been pointed out the social organization of the Nyanja, Yao and Nguru peoples is identical and there is no need to distinguish between them in this context.

Membership of descent groups is acquired matrilineally, and inheritance and succession pass theoretically in the matrilineal line, although today there is an increasing tendency for those who have any possessions to attempt to pass them to their own sons rather than their sister's sons. In terms of the distinction which has been made between leadership and authority<sup>1</sup> a mother's brother has authority over his sister's children and this is manifested in particular in his position as marriage witness (unkhoswe) for them. The father on the other hand has power over his children by virtue of his personality rather than as a result of his structural relation to them.

Succession to political office is in the matrilineal line although a few examples are to be found of sons succeeding their

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1.) See pages 26 - 27.

their fathers as village headmen, in such cases, however, circumstances exist which do not invalidate the matrilineal principle. I found no examples in African sects where offices had been inherited at all. In only one case is the founder of the sect not still at its head, and in this case the present head was appointed on the basis of his educational qualifications and not on the basis of any kinship relation with the founder of the sect.<sup>1</sup>

Marriage is generally uxorilocal except for the heads of mbumba (effective minimal matrilineages) who live virilocally in order to be able to look after their matrilineal kin, and for village headmen and chiefs.

In order to discuss the relevance of the kinship system to the question of sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland I propose first to indicate the social groups which are formed on the basis of kinship and marriage and to show for what purposes they are significant.

#### The Elementary Family.

As in most languages there is no term in Nyanja which corresponds to the "elementary family". Barnes in his discussion of the Fort Jameson Ngoni translates the Nyanja term "banja" as

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1.) This is the Providence Industrial Mission founded by John Chilembwe and now under the control of Dr. Daniel Malehebu. See "Independent African" Shepperson and Price, 1948, which is the story of John Chilembwe and the Providence Industrial Mission.

"elementary family";<sup>1</sup> a more accurate translation would be "household". A man's married children are members of his elementary family, they are not members of his "banja".

The elementary family is however the core of the "banja" and it is in this context that it is significant. If we ignore married children the elementary family is the important domestic unit. The children under the age of puberty live in a single hut together with their parents, or occasionally they are sent to live with their maternal grandparents, older children live in a gowels<sup>2</sup> together with their siblings or maybe matrilineal parallel cousins of the same sex. These adolescents are, however, still members of the "banja" for all other purposes.

The elementary family (less married children) is the land-holding unit, and the unit of production and consumption. It has its own hearth and often a kitchen as well as its own hut. The hut is occasionally surrounded by a bamboo fence in the Mlanje District - but this is rare. Religious grouping sometimes cuts across the elementary family, or across the household. Husband and wife are generally members of the same religious group, and one or other of them may have changed their religious affiliation on marriage. There are a few cases of differences of

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1.) Barnes, J. A. "The Fort Jameson Ngoni" in Colson and Gluckman "Seven Tribes of British Central Africa" 1950 p. 221.

2.) This is a small hut used for sleeping by adolescent boys or girls.

of religious affiliation between husband and wife, in these cases one is usually a Christian and the other a pagan. More examples are to be found of differences of religious affiliation between parents and children, not only are there examples of pagan parents with Christian children, but there are also examples of parents who are members of one denomination whose children are members of another. All examples of this which I found were in Mlanje, in Chapananga's area all Christians within a village are usually of one religious denomination. The differing religious affiliation of parents and children is the result of the provision of schools. Not all of the churches and sects have them, and consequently those which do attract the children of parents belonging to other denominations. Furthermore some of the denominations charge lower school fees than others and therefore attract other children. This is, however, discussed more fully below.<sup>1</sup>

#### The Mbumba.

The most important descent group is the mbumba. Mitchell in his description of the Machinga Yao who use the same term as the Nyanja has translated this as "sorority group",<sup>2</sup> whilst Marwick

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1.) See pages

2.) Mitchell, J. C. "The Yao Village" 1956 p. 145.

writing about the Cewa has translated it as "female dependency group".<sup>1</sup> Bruwer also working amongst the Cewa has translated it "matrilineal sib".<sup>2</sup> Cullen Young considers that the term approaches the content of the Roman "familia" and that it is therefore reasonable to use the term "family" as an equivalent.<sup>3</sup>

In the midst of these various translations I consider that it is most useful to retain the vernacular term and to attempt to indicate the nature of the group to which it refers.

The mbumba is, in Fortes', terms an effective minimal matrilineage.<sup>4</sup> It is however the only corporate group based upon descent. The Nyanja/Yao/Nguru social organization is not rigidly segmented like that of the Tallensi,<sup>5</sup> but providing this is borne in mind the mbumba is the matrilineal equivalent of the Tallensi effective minimal lineage. Fortes has distinguished between the morphological minimal lineage and the effective minimal lineage, the latter he states "may contain two or three generations of aguates .... but the group that constitutes an

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- 1.) Marwick, M. "The Kinship Basis of Cewa Social Structure" South African Journal of Science, March, 1952.
  - 2.) Bruwer, J. "Kinship Terminology amongst the Cewa of the Eastern Province of Northern Rhodesia." African Studies No. 7 1948. pp. 185-187.
  - 3.) Cullen Young, T. "The Meaning of the term "family"" Man. Vol.31 June 1931. Article 126.
  - 4.) Fortes, M. "The Web of Kinship amongst the Tallensi" 1949. p. 7
  - 5.) Mitchell, J. C. op. cit. p. 133.

effective minimal lineage in one generation may in the next generation split into two or more effective minimal segments.<sup>1</sup>

The mbumba consists of a group of sisters and their children, under the leadership of a brother of the sisters (mwini mbumba). Most informants consider that younger brothers of the mwini mbumba are members but a few do not. Marwick states that the Cewa apply the term mbumba to the female relatives of the mwini mbumba and that the term mphw- is used to designate younger male relatives, he does, however, state that mbumba may also be used to designate both male and female dependent matrikin. In sensu strictu the mbumba is the core of the residential group, and this group consists of related females and their spouses together with the mwini mbumba and his wife. The mwini mbumba has however rights and obligations to his younger male matrikin as well as the female ones despite the fact that under the system of uxori-local marriage they will normally be living in another residential group. The boundaries of the mbumba are then to a certain extent fluid, dependent upon the context in which the term is used; the female dependents form its core, but the male dependents are still involved in certain contexts.

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1.) Fortes, M. "The Web of Kinship amongst the Tallensi" 1949 pp. 7-9.

The mbumba is important as the core of the residential group. This consists of a group of from three to ten huts inhabited by a group of matrilineally linked females and their spouses and unmarried male children under a matrilineally linked male relative who has married virilocally in order to look after his female dependents.<sup>1</sup> The women of this group work together informally and may be found pounding maize or sweeping the areas around their houses together. Periodically they may be visited by their other brothers who have married elsewhere. The spouses of the members of the mbumba are/<sup>not</sup> reckoned as being part of the group and are in fact clearly distinguished from it, this is reflected in the use of the term kamwini (stranger) to address or refer to the spouse of a female member.

The mbumba, although the most important descent group, is not the land-holding unit. Land is allocated by the village headman to households rather than to the mbumba. The mbumba is not important economically, it is particularly important in the regulation of marriage - but this involves no transfer of wealth except/<sup>that</sup> in the case of a divorce compensation is almost inevitably demanded and the mwini mbumba is expected to help his female dependents to find such compensation. A returning labour migrant

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1.) Appendix A. gives the details of a number of such groups found in Wende-Wende village in Mlanje District.

may make a small gift to his mwini mbumba - but his first obligation is to his wife and he may also make a gift to his father who is not a member of his mbumba.

In the sphere of magico-religious activity the mbumba was an important group. Its importance has declined in this respect with the conversion of a large proportion of the population to Christianity. The indigenous religious activity revolved largely around the spirits of the matrilineage.<sup>1</sup> The intermediary between the members of the mbumba and the spirits is the mwini mbumba. Offerings are not regularly made, but when a member of the mbumba dreamt that one of the spirits wanted placating he went to the mwini mbumba and informed him. The mwini mbumba then led the mbumba to the grave of the spirit concerned and made an offering of beer. The fact that this takes place only to a very limited extent today has undermined the position of the mwini mbumba, his place as a religious official has been taken largely by the Christian minister or elder.

The shaving of their heads by the relatives of a deceased person is limited generally to the members of the deceased's mbumba together with the spouse of the deceased and maybe his or her marriage witness. Christians and pagans demonstrate the

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1.) I use this term in preference to the more usual term "ancestral spirits" as it includes spirits of collateral relatives as well as lineal ones. See Marwick op. cit. p. 262.

solidarity of the mbumba in this way, though in some cases Christians do not conform. Furthermore members of the deceased's mbumba are expected to refrain from sexual intercourse for a month after death when purification rites are held. Some informants state that at the end of the period of prohibition the mwini mbumba should be the first to have sexual intercourse with his wife. It seems that many Christians no longer observe this ritual prohibition.

Today the mbumba is frequently heterogeneous in the religious affiliation of its members, and generally membership of the mbumba is not a significant factor in influencing religious affiliation. Some members of the mbumba may be Christian whilst others may be pagan. In Mlanje where Christians have often a choice of two or more congregations within easy walking distance members of one mbumba may not be members of one denomination. In cases where all the members of an mbumba are of the same denomination, this is not necessarily a direct result of their common descent, it is rather the result of their co-residence and membership of the local congregation. In Chapananga's area, the Christian members of one mbumba are generally of one denomination as here various localities are associated with one or other of the two denominations in the area.

On the other hand in cases where the mwini mbumba is also

an ecclesiastical official, he may use his kinship position in order to increase his following in the religious association. This can be seen from the religious affiliation of the relatives of Severe, the founder of the Faithful Church of Christ.<sup>1</sup> This is not however necessarily a reflection of the solidarity of the mbumba vis-a-vis other mbumba, the church official is anxious to increase his following and will do so wherever he can irrespective of descent groupings.

The position of mwini mbumba is one of superordination. He has power over his dependents, power which is partly associated with his structural position in the system of descent, and is thus authority according to the usage defined earlier. In order to maintain his position, however, he must also display personal characteristics of leadership. Included in these are taking an interest in the affairs of the members of the mbumba, especially visiting them when sick, and helping them in any disputes which they may have with their spouses, and if necessary support them if such a dispute is taken to the chief's court. The position of mwini mbumba is thus one which carries with it a certain amount of prestige, the mwini mbumba is the person in charge of the small residential cluster inhabited by his

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1.) Appendix A. details the religious affiliations of residents in part of Wende-Wende Village. It can be seen from these details that most of Severe's matrilineal relatives are members of his sect, but that his patrilaterally linked ones are not.

followers. Although his following is not large it traditionally formed the potential nucleus of a new village in which the mwini mbumba would be village headman. There is an expressed rule of succession to the position of mwini mbumba by the eldest son of the eldest sister. Often however there is competition between brothers for the position and sometimes competition between matrilineal parallel cousins; although in such a case there is more frequently a split of the old mbumba into two or more new ones each composed of a group of sisters and their children. Often a younger matrilineal relative may start to take over the duties of the mwini mbumba before his death. Mitchell states that amongst the Machinga Yao the asyene mbumba (i.e. the mwini mbumba) may take over the position as a very young man - little more than an adolescent.<sup>1</sup> This does not seem to be the case in Mlanje. I never came across a mwini mbumba under thirty years of age, and the great majority are considerably older. Most people recognize their mother's brother or, if he is still alive, their mother's mother's brother as mwini mbumba, and do not consider a new mbumba to have been formed until the death of the senior matrilineal relative of the old one.

The mbumba has no rigidly defined boundaries in terms of

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1.) Mitchell, J. C. "The Yao Village" 1956. p. 152.

generation depth. Mitchell emphasises the links between a man and his sisters as being the significant ones amongst the Machinga Yao<sup>1</sup> and not the links with the sister's children.

In the Machinga Yao area pressure upon land seems to be less than in Mlanje and a man may take his sisters with him and found a new settlement and a new mbumba. The power of the mother's brother vis-à-vis the sister's son amongst the Machinga Yao is thus less than in Mlanje - amongst the Machinga Yao the fact that the mother's brother is living some distance away has this result. In Mlanje there is little land available for the creation of new residential units. As a result of immigration the density of population in Mlanje is now very high and it is difficult for a man to take his sisters away and to found a new mbumba. Having married uxorilocally a man does not now normally return to his natal village unless he is about to succeed to the position of mwini mbumba from his mother's brother. There are now fewer opportunities for the acquisition of power within the framework of kinship.

As the boundaries of the mbumba are to a certain extent fluid, so also the position of mwini mbumba is not rigidly defined. Examples occur, for instance, of two sisters living

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1.) Mitchell, J. C. op. cit. p. 146.

in adjacent houses one of which recognizes her brother as mwini mbumba, the other recognizes her mother's brother. The position is therefore not one of a specific office with rigidly defined rights and obligations, qualities of leadership are necessary too. A few informants state that they belong to no mbumba at all. This is generally either because they have no close matrilineal relatives or because the person whom they formerly recognized as mwini mbumba has failed to give them the support that they felt he should have done.

There may be competition between brothers for the position of mwini mbumba even if one of them has been mwini mbumba for some time. In Nkhulambe village in Mlanje District a fight broke out between a mwini mbumba and his sister's husband in which the younger brother of the mwini mbumba supported his sister's husband and ultimately the dispute between the two brothers was brought to the Native Authority. The Native Authority then split the mbumba stating that the younger brother should look after the sister whose husband had been involved in the fight and another sister, and he ordered the village headman to find a new site for them to build on in another part of the village.

Mitchell records further examples of disputes between brothers for the control of the mbumba amongst the Machinga Yao.<sup>1</sup>

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1.) Mitchell, J. C. op. cit. p. 154-155.

In some cases these conflicts led to a split of the mbumba and the physical separation into two new mbumba. Although conflicts do arise in Mlanje such physical separation is more difficult due to the greater pressure on land. I did, however, record a number of examples of this having taken place in the past.

Occasionally conflicts between matrilineal parallel cousins may exist for control of the mbumba but generally it has split into separate ones before such conflicts are likely to arise.

The mbumba is the only corporate group based upon unilineal descent. It is not a segment in a wider system. Barnes has made a distinction between segmentation and fission.<sup>1</sup> It is fission and not segmentation which is characteristic of Mlanje and Chapananga's area. The principle of descent does not form the basis for the articulation of the units of the political system. The principle of descent is the basis of two other social units, the clan and the breast, but these are not corporate groups.

#### The Breast.

The Bere (breast) is a larger grouping based upon matrilineal descent. It consists of the members of several mbumba descended from a common ancestress some three or four generations removed.

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1.) Barnes, J. A. "Seven Types of Segmentation" Rhodes Livingstone Journal. Vol. 17. 1955 p. 20.

It is an ill-defined unit - sometimes its members are capable of tracing the relationship with each other - sometimes not. The bere has no leader, it is non-corporate and does not form the basis of any social action beyond exhortation of mutual hospitality between members. It is not significant in a discussion of sectarianism in this area.

#### The Clan.

I use the term "clan" as a translation of the Nyanja terms "mfunda" and "pfuko". As the term clan has been used in a variety of ways in anthropological literature it is necessary to describe what it denotes in the present context. They are the maximal putative descent groups which are ideally exogamous. Their main significance is in the regulation of marriage. Breaches of clan exogamy do occur amongst Christians and pagans but provided there is no close relationship between the spouses they are not treated as serious delicts. The clans are not totemic, and the clan-names are not translatable. The clans are dispersed and are not associated with a particular stretch of territory. As occurs amongst some other Central Bantu peoples the clans extend beyond the "tribal boundaries", and the rule of exogamy also extends beyond these boundaries.<sup>1</sup> Clans are not ranked,

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1.) See for instance McCulloch, M. "The Southern Lunda and Related Peoples" Int. African Inst. p. 19.

there is no paramount chief of the area whose clan might be regarded as higher in rank than the remainder.

The clan has no head, and is therefore not a significant unit in the struggle for power and prestige which is characteristic of the area and which is associated with sectarianism. Clans have not formed the basis of modern associations.<sup>1</sup>

### Marriage.

Marriage is regarded as a sacrament by practising Christians in Western Europe and many of those who are not members of a Christian congregation are still married in church by a priest or minister with the attendant ritual and ceremonial.

The development of independent sects in Africa is often popularly supposed to be due to the dislike of marriage regulations imposed by missionaries.<sup>2</sup> In order to assess the validity of this argument it is necessary to describe the system of marriage found in the area.

The selection of a spouse is very largely a matter of individual choice within the bounds of exogamy. A marriage

1.) As for instance among the Baganda.

2.) "Thousands of Africans in Nyasaland are flocking to join a church designed exclusively for sinners and people who wish to continue sinning and which regards polygamists and adulterers as its most saintly members." Article entitled "Sinners are Saints in 'Do What you like Church.'" purporting to be an account of the Ethiopian Church in Southern Nyasaland in the 'Sunday Mail' published in Salisbury dated Feb. 19th 1961.

prohibition extends to members of the same matri-clan and to father's brother's children. There is an expressed preference for cross cousin marriage either patrilateral or matrilateral - informants suggested stronger preference for marriage between classificatory rather than actual cross cousins.

There is some evidence to suggest that religious affiliation is one factor in the choice of a wife; often Christians express a preference to marry other Christians, but there are cases of Christians marrying pagans. Some Moslem informants suggested that an important means of recruitment to Islam was through marriage, that when a Moslem marries a pagan the pagan becomes converted to the Islamic faith. Membership of a church or sect congregation may provide the meeting ground for adolescents and a few informants stated that they found their wives in this way. On the other hand many Christians, particularly in Mlanje, marry spouses of other denominations, and in such cases one of the spouses, usually the man, changes his religious affiliation. Only the Roman Catholics have a strong rule of denominational endogamy, and a non-Catholic marrying a Catholic nearly always becomes a Catholic.

Traditionally there appears to have been little ceremonial involved in marriage. A man wishing to marry a girl goes to his mother's brother (ambuy) who then goes to the girl's

mother's brother and informs him that his sister's son wishes to marry his sister's daughter. If this is agreed then the bridegroom goes to the bride's village together with three members of his mbumba the mwini mbumba his mother and his brother. His mother takes with him a hoe, an axe and a sleeping mat. There is no large-scale transfer of wealth involved. The bride then cooks a meal for the bridegroom's relatives and they then return to their own village. The bridegroom has then to build a house for his bride and does not sleep with her until this has been done, he remains in a gowelo (a hut for unmarried boys). When the house is finished the couple move in and are then regarded as married, and are exhorted by a "phungu" (counsellor) to inform their mwini mbumba if there is any trouble between them.

The marriage witnesses (unkhoswe) have a key role to play in pagan marriage. The senior witnesses are the mwini mbumba of the spouses and the junior ones are their brothers. It is the privilege of the senior marriage witnesses to give their assent to the marriage and the junior witnesses generally act as go-betweens between the senior ones. It is the duty of the witnesses to attempt to settle any disputes which arise between the spouses and if they are unsuccessful and a case is brought at the Native Authority Court it is the duty of the marriage

witness to attend and to support the member of his mbumba. Today some liasons are contracted between couples without having marriage witnesses. This is less common in the rural areas than in the urban areas.<sup>1</sup> It is justifiable, I think, to regard such liasons as not being marriages, if such a couple come before the court for a divorce and <sup>for</sup> compensation to be determined, no compensation is awarded due to the absence of witnesses.

Both Christians and pagans have marriage witnesses although there may well be a difference of religious affiliation involved. Neither missionaries, nor African sect officials have, so far as I am aware, made any attempt to undermine the position of the marriage witness, they recognize his position. Severe, the head of the Faithful Church of Christ, states that in some cases church deacons will fulfill the functions of a marriage witness in the ceremonial of a Christian wedding. I came across <sup>no</sup> examples of this in the field.

Marriage residence is normally uxori-local. It is permanently uxori-local for all except mwini mbumba, village headmen and chiefs. This leads to a number of conflicts in the contemporary situation. Men who have a business in their own village are obviously reluctant to move to their wife's village

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1.) See Ngwane H. D. "Some Aspects of Marriage in Peri Urban Villages in Blantyre/Limbe" Rhodes-Livingstone Communication, No 17. 1959.

and this is sometimes grounds for divorce. In some cases when a person takes over the position of mwini mbumba or village headman his wife may refuse to move with him to his own village and a divorce results. Today there is an increasing category of men living novolocally, as well as those in the urban areas there are in the rural areas such people as storckeeper, schoolteachers and church pastors and ministers. It is the last category which are of particular interest for our present purposes.

Many of the pastors in the European missions, particularly in the larger ones are living novolocally and have been given a grant of land by the village headman for gardens and this is then taken over by succeeding pastors. Pastors and ministers in the African sects are more frequently found to be living virilocally, in many cases they are the founders of the congregation and in order to build a prayer house they have to obtain land from a village headman, they are able to do this more readily from the headman of their own natal village than from the headman of their wife's village where they are "strangers".

Marriage establishes a series of rights and obligations between spouses. In Southern Nyasaland some of these are of recent origin dependent upon the introduction of cash. Marriage does not give a man legal or jural rights over his children these remain with the child's matrilineal kin. Marriage does not give

a man the right to remove his bride to his own village, although many informants thought that if he had a good house there his bride would be very stupid not to go with him, and her marriage witnesses would be stupid not to allow her to do so. A man is expected to build a house, and to provide his wife with enough money to clothe herself and her children, and if he is away as a labour migrant he is expected to send money back for her. Failure to keep these latter obligations is frequently the grounds for the application for divorce in the Native Authority Courts. The wife is expected to provide the husband with food, though he himself will have helped in its cultivation there being no rigid division of labour in this sphere. A man also has exclusive rights of sexual access to his wife. I witnessed several cases in the Native Authority Court where a man wanted a divorce from his wife because she had committed adultery. I did not witness any cases where a woman was attempting to get a divorce from her husband for that reason. On the other hand pastors and ministers in African sects as well as in European churches and sects condemn adultery by either party.

Polygamy is practised by some pagans, but many pagan male informants state that they have no desire for more than one wife, that polygamous marriage involves many obligations which they would find too tiresome. Two houses have to be built,

assistance given in the cultivation of two lots of gardens, clothing provided for two wives, and as the wives would often be living in different villages frequent journeys would have to be made between them. There does not appear to be the same incentives for a man to take a plurality of wives as exist amongst the Southern Bantu and some other patrilineal people. The possession of many wives does not appear to confer a great deal of prestige on a man. One village headman in Chapananga's area possessed fifteen wives; this was a source of amusement to the inhabitants of the area, he was ridiculed rather than respected.

All of the missions enjoin monogamy as do all of the simple secessionist sects in the area.<sup>1</sup> Polygyny is not, therefore, an important issue in the development of African sects in this area, although members of the nativistic Ethiopian Church sometimes recommend it to others as permitting polygyny. On the other hand although enjoining monogamy many of the African sects will accept members who have been expelled from other churches and sects for taking a second wife, provided that they renounce one of them.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1.) In conversation with Rev. J. V. Taylor he told me that in his experience the majority of African sects in the Copper Belt and also in Uganda had a rule of monogamy which they attempted to enforce.
  - 2.) See below p. 219.

Gluckman has suggested that "divorce is rare and difficult in those (societies) organized on a system of marked father-right and frequent and easy to obtain in other types".<sup>1</sup> Marriages in Mlanje and Chapananga's area are unstable and divorce appears frequent. Marwick has commented upon this amongst the Cewa, suggesting that the conjugal and matrilineal ties conflict to the detriment of the conjugal ones.<sup>2</sup>

Traditionally divorce was obtained by the mutual exchange of a chicken by the marriage witnesses of the husband and wife. Today compensation is inevitably demanded by one or other of the spouses and frequently by both. The Native Authority is the only person empowered to enforce the payment of compensation and consequently a large proportion of the cases coming before the Native Authority Courts are divorce cases.<sup>3</sup> In most cases failure to meet the obligations demanded of a spouse were alleged, but in a few cases the spouses merely stated that they were tired of each other.

Both Christian and pagan couples come before the Native Authority Courts seeking a divorce. Unfortunately I have no data capable of revealing whether divorce was more or less

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- 1.) Gluckman, M. "Kinship and Marriage amongst the Lozi of Northern Rhodesia and the Zulu of Natal." in Radcliffe-Brown A.R. and Forde, D. "African Systems of Kinship and Marriage." 1950. p. 190.
  - 2.) Marwick, M. "The Kinship Basis of Cewa Social Structure" South African Journal of Science. Vol. 48. March, 1952. pp. 261.
  - 3.) Out of a total of fifty-seven cases which I attended at random at the court of Native Authority Nazombe in Mlanje thirty-six were divorce cases.

frequent amongst Christians compared with pagans. The Roman Catholic Church does not recognize divorce. N. A. Nazombe, himself a Roman Catholic, always asked couples if they were Christians, and if so to what denomination they belonged. He refused to hear cases involving Roman Catholics, telling them to go to the Roman Catholic priest. Other denominations appear less rigid in their attitude treating each case on its individual merits. It is still the case, however, that divorce is a common reason for expulsion from the Protestant missions and that this provides a fruitful source for recruitment to African Sects. In many cases where Christians want a divorce, whether they have been through a Christian form of marriage ceremonial or not, they go to an ecclesiastical court before the case comes to the Native Authority Court. In the case of a dispute between spouses the marriage witnesses make an attempt to settle it, if they fail the village headman holds a court in the open space usually found in front of his house, again in an attempt to reconcile the spouses. The pastor may hold a court for Christian spouses either before or after the village headman has heard the case; members of the congregation attend and attempt to reconcile the spouses. Before a divorce case comes to the Native Authority it must be heard by a village headman. A few cases were recorded

where the Native Authority heard a case which had been heard by an African minister in one of the larger European missions. Two cases were recorded where the head of the Faithful Church of Christ, an African sect, attempted to by-pass the village headman in a similar way: he was unsuccessful, the cases were referred back to the village headman by the Native Authority Court.

During a case held at a village headman's court in Tombondera village in Chapananga's area in which a member of the local congregation of the Zambesi Mission (a European sect) was alleged to have committed adultery, the pastor was asked by the village headman why he was allowing such things to happen. The pastor replied that he had nothing to say, that the case should not have been brought to the village headman's court, but that it should have been heard first by the members of the congregation. The ability to settle disputes is regarded as one of the major attributes of leadership, and the instability of marriage in this area provides a rich field for attempts to exercise such abilities, village headmen and pastors or ministers are sometimes in competition with each other in their attempts to regulate the marriages of their subordinates. There are, however, few effective sanctions which either of them can impose in this sphere, the ultimate sanction of the ecclesiastical

court being expulsion from the congregation - a not very effective sanction particularly in Mlanje where there are many other congregations for the expelled person to join. The pagan husband of a Church of Scotland wife complained about her behaviour to the local Church of Scotland pastor, he considered that he would be able to bring some sanctions to bear, in the event he later brought a case for divorce against her in the Native Authority Court.

I attended no weddings involving Christian ritual, this was largely because very few such weddings occur in the Protestant churches and sects.<sup>1</sup> I recorded many examples of elders, and in some cases ministers, who had not been married according to Christian rites. This may be due to a reluctance by missionaries to marry couples in an area where marriage is traditionally unstable. This situation is typical of the African as well as the European sects. Marriage is not the occasion for elaborate ceremonial either in the traditional or in the contemporary situation.

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1.) Writing of the N. Rhodesian Copper-Belt Taylor and Lehmann state "The Free Churches seem to have very few of their marriages celebrated in church" Taylor, J. V. & Lehmann, D. "Christians of the Copper-Belt." 1961. p. 111.

## CHAPTER SEVEN.

Political Organization.

Schapera has suggested that it is useful to regard "political organization as that aspect of the total organization which is concerned with the establishment and maintenance of internal co-operation and external independence."<sup>1</sup>

In some societies authority (as distinct from leadership) is minimal.<sup>2</sup> In others authority and leadership are both important in the maintenance of social order. Today in Southern Nyasaland those who wield political power have authority as office-holders in the government's administrative hierarchy. Traditionally qualities of leadership were of greater importance in the wielding of political power, and a person possessing such qualities was often able to acquire a political office.

The principle of descent is not the basis of the political organization as it is in societies of the classical segmentary type. Political units have a territorial basis, and members of one unilineal descent group may be members of different political units as a result of their physical dispersal. Social groupings based upon kinship are not coterminous with those based

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1.) Schapera, I. "Government and Politics in Tribal Societies" 1956. p. 218.

2.) For instance amongst the Bushmen as described by Schapera, op. cit.

upon political affiliation.

The political organization of Mlanje and Chapananga's area has undergone a number of changes under British rule. These have altered considerably the indigenous pattern of leadership and authority and conflicts arising in the organization can no longer be resolved by the traditional mechanisms. An understanding of these conflicts and the present distribution of political power is crucial to an understanding of sectarianism in the area. Pauw writing of the Tswana on the Taung Reserve in South Africa has stated "The opportunities for leadership in the churches now make up for the loss of such opportunities in the political and administrative sphere." <sup>1</sup> The same statement may equally well be made with reference to Mlanje, and the recognition of this fact is the key to understanding the simple secessionist sects to be found there.

In order to understand the present political organization and the stresses within it, it is necessary to attempt a description of the indigenous political organization as it appears to have existed before the advent of White administrators.

There is some evidence to suggest that at one time, before the arrival of the Yao in the area the Nyanja chiefs were united under a Paramount Chief "Undi". Livingstone refers to such a

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1.) Pauw, B. A. "Religion in a Tswana Chiefdom." International African Institute. 1960. p. 77.

chief ruling over the area from the River Luangwa to Lake Shirwa, but whose "empire" had already been broken up by the time that he arrived in the area in 1860.<sup>1</sup> It is difficult to estimate how close were the links with this paramount chief, and how far he was in fact regarded as chief by all the Nyanja people. It seems certain that he had no control over the inhabitants of Mlanje or Chapananga's area in the period immediately prior to the arrival of the Whites.

Werner also refers to a "Paramount Chief Lundu" who was ruling over the area from the Shire River to Lake Shirwa and the River Ruo in 1861.<sup>2</sup> A matrilineal descendent of Lundu still rules over a small area of the Shire Valley and is recognized by the government as a Sub-Native Authority. He has, however, no power over any of the other chiefs in Mlanje or Chikwawa. Again the extent and effectiveness of Lundu's authority over the large area referred to by Werner appears to have been very limited even before the arrival of the Europeans.

During the latter half of the Nineteenth Century the areas that are now Cikwawa and Mlanje Districts were ruled over by a number of petty autonomous chiefs, of which Chapananga was one in the Cikwawa District. The charter for chieftaincy was "the

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- 1.) Livingstone, D. "Narrative of an Expedition to the Zambesi and its Tributaries" 1858-1864 " London 1865. p. 198.
  - 2.) Werner, A. "The Native Tribes of British Central Africa" op. cit. p. 256.

principle of primacy".<sup>1</sup> The first of the Nyanja to settle in a particular area was recognized as chief over that area, and in the case of the Yao the first of the invaders to subjugate the indigenous Nyanja was thus the chief. The present chief Nazombe, for instance, who now rules over an area to the East of Mlanje Mountain, is a matrilineal descendent of the first Nazombe, a son of an adjacent chief Mkumba. The first Nazombe left his father's chieftaincy and established a new one to the East of the mountain. The present chief states that he has been appointed chief by the government because his ancestors (makolo) were the first people in the country.

A similar system appears to have operated amongst the Nguru. One of the Nguru headmen in Nazombe's area considers that he should be appointed chief over the area by the government as his ancestors were the first Nguru to enter a particular area.<sup>2</sup>

A second and most important principle of the political organization was the characteristic process of binary fission. It has already been shown how the mbumba split into two parts as a means of resolving conflict. Similarly new chieftaincies were formed in this way. Village headmen who disagreed with the

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1.) Mitchell, J. C. "The Yao Village" 1956. p. 61.

2.) See my "Chiefship and Politics in the Mlanje District of Southern Nyasaland" Africa. Vol XXXI No. I 1961. pp. 36-45.

chief were able to go off and found new chieftaincies of their own, providing they had a sufficiently large following to enable them to do so. At least one of the present chieftaincies in Malnje was formed in this way. The first chief Mkanda, a Yao, was a village headman under chief Mpama, whose successor is to be found near Chiradzulu Mountain. Mkanda rebelled against Mpama and went to live at the foot of Mlanje Mountain some thirty miles away and became a chief over this area.<sup>1</sup> Under such circumstances there appears to have been little that the chief could do in the face of opposition from one of his powerful headmen without employing physical force; even in this case it is unlikely that he would have been able to prevent his dissident followers from leaving him.

Personal qualities of leadership were thus most important for the acquisition and maintenance of the position of a chief. Without personal qualities of leadership the chief was likely to find that part of his chieftaincy had seceded and moved elsewhere under one of his powerful village headmen. There was no formal executive machinery through which the chief could maintain his position, there was for instance no age-set organization and no tribute which the chief could use for

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1.) Duff MacDonald "Africana - the Heart of Heathen Africa"  
1882 Vol. 1. p. 32.

redistribution. There were frequently no bonds of kinship between the chief and a large number of his followers. The qualities of leadership required of a chief were his ability to settle disputes fairly and to appoint village headmen who would support him but who in turn would be supported by their villagers.

The chief was known as "Mwini dziko" (literally the owner of the country). It was the duty and privilege of the chief to organize a dance in supplication of his ancestors that they might send rain to the area. If he was successful in this it would act as a buttress to his position, if he was unsuccessful it would likewise weaken his position.

The position of a chief was, and is, hereditary, and succession to the chieftaincy matrilineal. The heir was ideally the eldest son of the eldest sister of the deceased chief, but if he is considered unsuitable then the position went to another matrilineal relative.<sup>1</sup>

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1.) "Mfumu ikafa, woyenera kulowa m'malo wace ndi mwana mwamuna woyamba kubadwa m'mimba ya mlongo wace wamkulu. Koma ngati mwanayo aonetsa mkhalidwe woipa kamodzi-kamodzi nduna za mfumu zimasankha mphwace wina ndi kumpatsa mzinace weni-weni wa mfumu." If the chief dies there ought to enter into his place the first-born male child of the womb of his eldest sister. But if this child shows a bad character the advisors of the chief meet another male matrilineal relative and give him the name of the chief. Malekebu, B. et al. "Makolo Athu" Zomba 1949.

The chief was an intermediary between the inhabitants of the country and the spirits of his matrilineage, and particular with the spirit of the first chief of the area who was regarded as taking an especial interest in its welfare.

Thus before the arrival of the White administrators there were a number of petty autonomous chieftaincies with little executive machinery and each likely to be subject to binary fission. Each of them appears to have contained less than 10,000 inhabitants.<sup>1</sup>

The Nyanja term for the position which I have termed "chief" is "mfumu". "Mfumu", however, is also the general term for a village headman. In general conversation the two are terminologically indistinguishable. If it is necessary to make the distinction the term mwini dziko (the owner of the country) is used for the "chief" and mwini mudzi (the owner of the village) for the village headman. The chief was also a village headman.

Each chieftaincy was composed of a number of villages, each of them under a village headman. The chief was the first village headman to settle in a particular area, others followed him and he allocated land to them for huts and gardens.

Villages usually consisted of two or three mbumba linked

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1.) Estimated from a rough estimate of the population divided by the number of chiefs.

either matrilineally or patrilaterally. The patrilaterally linked mbumba consisted of patrilineal descendents of the headman or a previous headman who had married virilocally and its founding ancestress was his wife.

It is likely that in the traditional political organization Cluster H of Wende-Wende village would have been a village in its own right.<sup>1</sup> Mitchell has described the composition of the villages of the Machinga Yao in considerable detail.<sup>2</sup> The Machinga Yao have been subject to much less immigration from Portuguese East Africa than the people of Malanje or Chapananga's area and it is likely that the composition of the villages described by Mitchell resembles fairly closely the composition of the villages of the Shire Highlands before the advent of the Whites.

The village then, consisted of one or more residential clusters inhabited by a group of matrilineally or patrilaterally linked relatives together with their spouses. The actual composition of the village varied in accordance with a number of factors not the least of which was the personality, or the qualities of leadership, displayed by the headman. A popular

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1.) See Appendix B.

2.) Mitchell, J. C. "The Yao Village" Chapters V & VI.

headman would be likely to retain a larger following than an unpopular one.

The village headman was not merely the mwini mbumba of the dominant mbumba, he was appointed by the chief to be a village headman, and thus had a certain amount of bureaucratic authority for which he was dependent upon the chief. The principle of primacy operated for village headmen as well as for chiefs, and the headman was a matrilineal descendent of the first headman on the site of the present village. The principle of primacy was also important in the ranking of village headmen, the successors to the first headmen to enter a chieftaincy ranked higher than the later arrivals.

In return for a grant of land to the headman the chief expected his loyalty - he also received a small amount of beer or a basket of maize at the first harvest after the establishment of the village - but he did not receive any subsequent tribute. The headman thus had a certain amount of bureaucratic authority for which he was dependent upon the chief.

The headman was responsible for the allocation of land to elementary families in his village, not by virtue of his kinship relations with villagers but by his political relationship with the chief. He was also responsible for the maintenance of law and order within the village. Each headman had an open space near to his house where he sat and heard disputes, those being

involved having the right to appeal from the headman to the chief.<sup>1</sup> The settlement of disputes was an important part of the headman's duties and skill at reconciling disputants was recognized as one of the important qualities of leadership required of a village headman.

The headman also had certain ritual functions. He interpreted the omens in the selection of a new village site. Many headmen also had the right to hold initiation ceremonies, most had the right to hold girls' ceremonies and a smaller number the right to boys'. This was a right granted by the chief and the possession of boys' initiation ceremonies was a mark of status of the headman.

Village headmen were ranked according to a number of criteria, by the "principle of primacy", by the size of their village and by the possession of girls' or boys' initiation ceremonies. The second named being very much dependent upon the qualities of leadership displayed by the headman.

These principles of ranking did not lead to any rigid hierarchy of political offices. The system was characterized by the continual competition for marks of rank. Political office was not purely an ascribed status, personal achievement was

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1.) Sir Harry Johnston, "British Central Africa" London 1897 p. 468.

important too.

Succession to the office of a village headman was similar to succession to a chieftaincy. Other things being equal the eldest son of the eldest sister was the preferred heir, but very often other things were not equal and another matrilineal relative succeeded. In some cases the chief had some influence in the choice of a successor to a deceased headman, the extent of this influence is not clear, but probably in outlying villages it was very little.

In the same way that chieftaincies were subject to binary fission so were villages. It was possible for men wishing to achieve status to break away from the village and to go off and form a new one if they had sufficient followers to enable them to do so. The line at which the village split appears to have been between constituent mbumba - one of the patrilaterally linked mbumba moved off and founded a new village with the mwini mbumba becoming the new village headman. I recorded a number of examples of this having taken place in the past in Mlanje and Mitchell has recorded the process amongst the Machinga Yao in some detail.<sup>1</sup> A chief was generally only too willing to recognize an aspiring headman. If his own chief would not recognize him then he would apply to another chief.

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1.) Mitchell. "The Yao Village" op. cit. Chapter 8.

Chiefs were in competition with each other for followers as were village headmen, and an aspiring headman bringing potential subjects with him increased the following of the chief. The similarity of this process to one of the processes involved in recruitment to African sects is striking and is described in Chapter 16.

The sanctions lying behind the authority of the chief or village headman were thus weak. If the chief or headman failed to display the qualities of leadership required of him or attempted to force his will upon unwilling followers he was likely to find that many had left him and joined other chiefs or headmen who would welcome them as they increased their following and thus their prestige. Again there is a striking parallel to the position of the ecclesiastical official in the present social organization of the area.

The competition for followers, the lack of a paramount chief or a rigid hierarchy of officials, a much lower population density than obtains at present were associated with binary fission which was characteristic of the political organization of the area. This resulted in the continual creation of new political units completely independent from the ones from which they had seceded. Conflicts were resolved neither by revolt nor by rebellion but by fission and the creation of a new political unit.

This is no longer possible in the present political organization, although it is possible in the present ecclesiastical organization of the Protestant Churches and sects, and the parallel between the social processes involved in the development of sectarianism in Mlanje and the social processes involved in the traditional political organization are striking.

#### The Present Political Organization.

The present political organization of Mlanje and to a lesser extent of Chapananga's area differs from that outlined above largely as a result of the intervention of two sets of factors. Firstly the arrival of the Whites and the establishment of British administration and secondly the large-scale immigration from Portuguese East Africa. To take the latter first, the immigration into Southern Nyasaland from Portuguese East Africa has been particularly marked in Mlanje District where 70% of the total population are Nguru immigrants or their descendents. This has resulted in a very rapid increase in population and consequently there is little land available for the creation of new villages in Mlanje. Chapananga's area has also received Chikunda immigrants from Portuguese East Africa but here the numbers involved have been smaller and there is still some land available for new village sites.

The first representative of the British Government was a Consul appointed in 1883, and in 1891 a Protectorate was

proclaimed over the territories adjoining Lake Nyasa. At first the British administration pursued a policy of "direct rule" relying largely upon a recruited police force for the implementation of its authority. A significant step in the development of the present political system was the passing of the District Administration (Natives) Ordinance in 1912. This ordinance was not applied in full to Mlanje District until 1928 due to difficulties in areas that had been alienated to Whites. The aim of the Ordinance is clear from the following passage from the Annual Report for 1911 - 1912, "The decay in the power of native chiefs and the tendency all over the Protectorate to the splitting up of villages into small family groups continues .... It becomes increasingly clear that some paid native local authorities are required who shall be responsible to the District Resident for the good order and administration of their villages or areas.<sup>1</sup>"

The Ordinance provided that "Each District or sub-district was divided into such number of Administrative sections, each under the charge of a Principal Headman, as conditions rendered necessary ... Each administrative section to be divided on similar principles into Village Areas (groups of villages), each in charge of a village headman"<sup>2</sup>

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- 1.) Quoted by Murray, S. S. in a "Handbook of Nyasaland" Govt. Printer Zomba. 1932 p. 129.
  - 2.) Murray. p. 129.

It is not clear on what basis the principal headmen and village headmen were selected, but in Mlanje it appears that those who were previously considered to be chiefs were appointed Principal Headmen, and the more important of the traditional headmen were appointed administrative village headmen. The Government records show the same people as Principal Headmen and Village Headmen at different times. However the essential point is that not all of the traditional village headmen were appointed administrative headmen, and that the administrative village was larger than the traditional village - often including two or three of the latter. The position of Principal Headman has now been abolished, but the village headmen remain, their position being virtually that laid down by the 1912 Ordinance.

In 1933 the "Native Authority Ordinance" and the "Native Courts Ordinance" came into force. These were the implementation of the Colonial policy of "indirect rule" in Nyasaland - chiefs were appointed Native Authorities and given a greater amount of bureaucratic authority than they had previously possessed. The Native Authority was given power to inflict punishment, make his own laws (subject to the approval of the District Commissioner) and to raise money for a "Native Treasury". Courts were built and clerks were employed and the chief became, as Native Authority, the local head of an administrative bureaucracy. By no means all

of the former Principal Headmen were appointed Native Authorities - in the area now ruled over by Native Authority Nazombe there were previously four Principal Headmen. Again the basis of selection of Native Authorities is not clear, but it appears to have been based upon a recognition of the "principle of primacy".

Both Mlanje and Chikwawa Districts have six Native Authorities, each of which is responsible to the District Commissioner for the administration of his area. No one of the Native Authorities is regarded as senior and so there has been no attempt to appoint a "Paramount" or "Senior Chief". The Native Authorities today have a brick-built house constructed in a European style. They are paid a salary by the government and from the Native Treasury funds which in some cases gives them an income of about £40 per month. This salary by its regularity enables the chief to live at a higher standard than the vast majority of his subjects. At the Native Authority Court cases are heard by the chief, and he is empowered to inflict punishment, or, as is more frequently the case, to order compensation to be paid. At the court are offices where taxes are paid and where licences are issued for bicycles, dogs, beer-brewing, trading, etc. It is also the local distribution centre for mail, etc. At the court are employed clerks, messengers and other officials. Barnes has stated that the Ngoni "warrior chief has

become in effect the only member of the Administration who does not go home to Britain on leave<sup>1</sup>, the Mlanje chief is in a similar position.

In the case of one Native Authority in Mlanje the functions of the traditional chief and the administrative functions of the Native Authority have been divided, by mutual arrangement, between the traditional chief and his sister's son who is the Native Authority. It is an indication of the relative importance of the two positions that the traditional name of the chieftaincy has been taken by the Native Authority and his mother's brother is known by his personal name.

The village headman as well as the chief is now an official in the bureaucratic hierarchy. In the Nyanja language the distinction is now drawn between the mfumu who is the village headman recognized by the administration, and the nyakwawa, who is in charge of one of its component units, units which were traditionally independent villages. English speaking informants use the term "assistant village headman" as an equivalent of nyakwawa, such an official is not recognized by the Administration. In the remainder of this chapter I use the term "village headman" to refer to the administrative village headman, and nyakwawa for the traditional headman who is not recognized by the Administration. There is now considerable

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1.) Barnes, J. A. "Politics in a Changing Society." 1956 p. 172.

justification for defining the village as that unit under an administrative headman.<sup>1</sup> This is the significant unit in daily life. Asked where he comes from a man will invariably give the name of the village headman and not the nyakwawa. This is the name that appears on his bicycle licence, on his tax receipt and on all the other documents associated with the Administration. The village headman must hear a dispute before it goes to the Native Authority, and he must be consulted before a prospective labour migrant may leave the country. A prospective sect official must receive permission from the village headman before he may erect a prayer-house. The village headman is involved in all the paraphernalia of a Western-type bureaucracy, the nyakwawa is not. Such a bureaucracy is playing an increasingly large part in the daily lives of the inhabitants of the area.

A striking example of the importance of the village is provided by the title of the Head-quarters of the Faithful Church of Christ, an African sect in the Mlanje District. The headquarters are situated in a large village containing some 430 taxpayers, Wende-wende, and in a section of the village some distance from the headman's house and courtyard. The nyakwawa of the section was the father of the founder of the sect and himself a member of it. The village headman is a Moslem. However the official title

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1.) See also Colson, E. "Marriage and the Family amongst the Plateau Tonga." 1958. p. 35. where she states that the same is true of the Plateau Tonga village.

and address of the sect is:

Wende-Wende Mission,

P.O. Box 562,

Limbe.

This is not a matter of postal convenience as the address is a P.O. Box Number.

As the village now consists of a number of traditional villages and there has been a large amount of immigration the village headman is related to only a very small proportion of his villagers, and is not dependent upon his descent for the maintenance of his position.

The duties of the village headman fall into three broad categories, ritual, administrative and judicial. In the sphere of ritual activity the position of the village headman is now of limited importance. Only a very small proportion of the adolescents go through initiation ceremonies and traditional offerings to the matrilineal spirits of the headman are only occasionally made. In a few cases a nyakwawa has the right to hold girls' initiation ceremonies, but not boys'.

The administrative duties of the village headman are largely the result of his position in the government hierarchy. He is responsible for ensuring that government regulations are adhered

to in his village, particularly those concerned with the payment of tax, sanitation, the clearing of village paths, etc. He also allocates land to elementary families within the village and gives permission for immigrants to settle within its village boundaries.

Near the house of every village headman is an open space which serves as a court (bwalo). Here the headman together with the villagers hears disputes involving members of his village. His role in such a dispute is that of a mediator attempting to reconcile the parties involved, but all disputes with a few exceptions heard in the Native Authority Court must first be heard by a village headman. Most of these cases are divorce or adultery cases or cases involving bad debts of fighting.

The village headman receives a small remunerative payment from the government, but does not generally receive tribute or presents from his villagers. There is little economic differentiation between village headmen and villagers. If a beer drink is being held in the village he may be given a pot of beer, but this will depend partly upon whether or not the drink is being held in his section of the village or in a section which is under a nyakwawa and partly upon the popularity of the headman concerned. Some informants stated that the headman should receive some beer as it was his responsibility to settle any disputes arising

from its consumption. Others used the same argument to support the view that a pot should be given to the nyakwawa rather than the headman.

In the indigenous system village headmen were ranked on the basis of a number of criteria. The administration recognizes no such form of ranking. It does, however, recognize "Group Village Headmen" the position being hereditary and associated with the headmanship of certain villages. The selection of Group Village Headmen appears to have been based partly upon the "principle of primacy". The functions of a group village headman appear to be little different from those of a village headman except that he is responsible for attempting to settle disputes between village headmen in his group.

The Native Authority and the village headman are now officials in the administration's bureaucratic hierarchy. They thus possess bureaucratic authority, on several occasions I have heard a village headman threaten to send disobedient villagers to the Native Authority, and similarly the Native Authority threaten to report recalcitrant subjects to the District Commissioner. As bureaucratic officials the Native Authority and the village headman are now in a secure position, where previously the chief could do little with disobedient subjects he can now employ sanctions backed by the administration, and

also has an executive force of messengers to ensure that his orders are carried out. The village headman, too, finds himself in a more secure position. Formerly he was liable to lose part of his village when an aspiring village headman broke away to attempt to form a new village of his own. This is still possible to a certain extent in Chapananga's area where there is land available for the foundation of new villages. It is not possible in Mlanje where the vast increase in population has led to a dearth of land for new village sites.

The political official is now dependent upon bureaucratic authority far more than upon his personal qualities of leadership, although if he shows himself to be completely incompetent in the eyes of the government he is likely to be replaced.

The possession of followers is still an important indication of status, and the position of Native Authority and of village headmen are thus positions of prestige for which there is competition. Under the present system it is not possible for anyone other than a matrilineal relative of a Native Authority to take over the position. The whole of the country is divided into Native Authority areas and there is no room for further appointments - in cases where the Native Authority has been deposed for incompetence or inefficiency he has been replaced, not by one of his powerful village headmen

who have been aspiring to the position, but by one of his matrilineal relatives. Similarly in Mlanje it is no longer possible for the aspiring village headman to realize his ambition. Whatever qualities of leadership he may possess he cannot form a new village of his own, there is no land available and the administration is loth to appoint new headmen in this area. The traditional avenue to power and prestige is thus blocked. The political units associated with the administrative structure are relatively stable, their stability is due to the presence of the superior authority of the Colonial administration and is not a reflection of the indigenous political system upon which the present system is ostensibly based. Fission no longer takes place in the political system in Mlanje and the aspirant for power must attempt to find an office in another sphere of social life. The fission which was characteristic of the indigenous political system is now to be found in the religious organization of Mlanje, and within the African sects and congregations are to be found striking parallels to the indigenous political organization.

## CHAPTER EIGHT.

Pagan Magico-Religious Activity.

The sphere of pagan magico-religious activity is one of the most difficult areas of investigation in Southern Nyasaland at the present time. Christian missionaries have been active in the area since the last quarter of last century and today 60% of the adult population recorded on my sociological censuses consider themselves to be Christian. Not all of these have completely abandoned pagan activities, but they are most reluctant to talk about them. This reluctance is also shared by people who do not consider themselves to be Christian. Alice Werner, writing as early as 1908, when missionaries had only been in the country for some thirty years recorded a similar situation.<sup>1</sup>

In some parts of Africa nativistic sects have been formed in which Christian doctrine has been mixed with indigenous pagan beliefs. There is only one nativistic sect in Southern Nyasaland, the remainder are not of this type - but of the simple secessionist type and I found no evidence of indigenous pagan beliefs in the expressed doctrines of these sects.

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1.) Werner, A. "British Central Africa" 1908.

Religion.

It is not clear whether the notion of a supreme deity is indigenous to the area or not. If so he was too remote to interest himself in human affairs and therefore did not provide the basis for any religious activity. "Mulungu", the term now used by Christians for "God", may have referred to a supreme deity or it may have referred to the totality of the spirit world. Werner records the word being used in both senses at the beginning of the century.<sup>1</sup>

The indigenous religious activity centred around the belief in the participation of the matrilineal spirits in the welfare of their descendents. The social groups involved in pagan magico-religious activity were coterminous with the political and descent groups already described. The spirits of the predecessors of the mwini dziko were interested in the welfare of his country and able to provide rain for it, and the mwini dziko was the intermediary between his subjects and the spirits of his matrilineage. Similarly the spirits of the predecessors of the village headman were interested in the welfare of his village and the headman was their intermediary. The spirits of the matrilineage were concerned with the welfare of the matrilineage, and the mwini mbumba was responsible for making offerings on its

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1.) Werner, A. op. cit. p. 48.

behalf.

Informants suggest that today the spirits of deceased village headmen or nyakwawa are not regarded as being very important. More important are the spirits of the deceased mwini dziko and mwini mbumba, but that even so most people neglect the spirits.

The usual time for offerings to be made to a spirit is when one of his matrilineal descendants dreams that he is neglected. He tells the mwini mbumba of his dream, and he then calls the members of the mbumba together and makes an offering (nsembe) of flour at the grave. Some informants suggested that the mwini mbumba would in any case make an offering every two or three years regardless of the spirit being the object of a dream. One informant stated that this was the same thing as the Christian pastor calling together the members of the congregation to clear the weeds away from the graves of deceased Christians in order to keep them tidy.

Chirapula, the Pa mwini dziko of N. A. Nazombe's area in Illanje District gave a similar account of the making of offerings to his predecessor's spirits. He stated that a lack of rain indicated that one of the spirits of his matrilineage considered that he had been neglected. The actual spirit is revealed in a dream either to the mwini dziko himself or to another close matrilineal relative. The mwini dziko then orders

that beer be brewed, one pot for offering by the adzukulu,<sup>1</sup> and one for offering by the mwini dziko himself. A circular fence is built around the grave and the offerings are made inside this.

From the point of view of the development of sectarianism in the area, apart from the fact that the doctrine of the Ethiopian Church is partly based upon the indigenous beliefs, there are a number of significant features of the system of spirit veneration which may be indicated. The groups involved in the indigenous religion are the groups delimited by kinship and political affiliation. There are no specific pagan religious associations (except for the Nyau association found in some areas and described briefly below) The religious officials are those with authority in other aspects of the social organization, there were no specifically religious officials. Neither possession nor any other form of dissociation had any part to play in the indigenous religious activity and is likewise not found in any of the modern sects in the area.

Prophecy, or the interpretation of dreams did not form the basis for a position of leadership or authority. Although the

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1.) These are burial partners - no-one is buried by their matrilineal relatives - but by special partners - an institution frequently found in Central Africa. See for instance Stefaniszyn, R. "Funeral Friendship in Central Africa" Vol. 20 No. 4. 1950 pp. 290-306 and Richards, A. I. "Reciprocal Clan-Relationships Amongst the Bemba" Man Vol. 37. 1937 Article 122.

particular spirit who considered himself to be neglected, was revealed through a dream. The dreamer did not thereby have authority, but told his dream to the mwini mbumba who carried out the ritual. In some parts of the world new sects have been started by prophets claiming to have divine revelation which forms the basis for a position of charismatic leadership or authority. None of the sects with which I had contact had been started by prophets, and although two prophecies of messianic nature were recorded these did not form the basis for the development of a new sect. This may well be associated with the lack of institutionalized prophecy in the indigenous way of life. There is no precedent for prophets.

The indigenous religion offers no opportunities for acquiring status independently of the kinship and political systems in Mlanje - the Christian religious associations do offer such opportunities.

In Chapananga's area a dance known as Nyau appears to have some religious significance.<sup>1</sup> The dance is absent from Mlanje. I witnessed only two performances of this dance and was unable to obtain any information about its supernatural aspects. Informants discussed it only in terms of a social event and a competition for prizes.

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1.) See also Rangeley, W. E. H. "Nyau in Kota-Kota" Nyasaland Journal Vol. 2 No. 2 July 1949.

Nyau is performed at the end of initiation ceremonies, at the burials of chiefs, village headmen and other important people and at the end of the period of mourning for such people. The dance is in the form of a masquerade, the dancers wearing animal masks. Ideally only those who are members of the association are allowed to witness performances, but the efforts made to chase away small boys and women at the dances I witnessed were feeble.

Prestige is attached to the ability to dance well at Nyau, there usually being between four and six dancers, who dance individually accompanied by drummers. It is possible that Nyau in Chapananga's area provides an alternative means of gaining prestige to the political hierarchy.

Missionaries have consistently opposed Nyau, and at those dances I attended there were few, if any, Christians present. Nyau dancing, which is absent from Mlanje, is not a feature of the pagan magico-religious activity which has been perpetuated by the Ethiopian Church.

#### The Ritual Involved in Life Crises.

As with the other aspects of pagan beliefs and practices the rituals surrounding the life crises of birth, the attainment of puberty and death have partly been replaced by Christian beliefs and practices. A desire to perpetuate these indigenous practices has not been the raison d'etre of sectarianism, except perhaps

in the Ethiopian Church.

Pagan customs of naming a child have sometimes been retained, but have not come under fire from missionaries. A large number of boys are however now given Christian names even before baptism, both boys and girls frequently change their names/<sup>or</sup> baptism. The Roman Catholic Church which practises infant baptism only baptizes those with a saint's name. I did not record any other information about ritual surrounding births.

In some parts of Africa, and notably in Kenya opposition by missionaries to the perpetuation of indigenous initiation ceremonies has been associated with the development of African sects which have maintained the practice.<sup>1</sup> This has not been the case in Southern Nyasaland, the Ethiopian Church does not hold initiation ceremonies and neither do any of the other African sects. In a few cases sects hold classes for adolescents in which they are segregated for a few days and taught the doctrines of the church and their way of life. Such ceremonies are said by sect officials to take the place of initiation ceremonies.

Even amongst pagans only a small proportion of adolescents are today initiated, and a village headman with the right to hold initiation ceremonies may have to draw his initiands from

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1.) Welbourn, F. "East African Rebels" 1961 p. 135.

from a wide area in order to obtain sufficient to make it worth-while.

I witnessed several funerals carried out partly at least according to indigenous rites. Burials are carried out by burial partners (adzukulu) who stand in a permanent reciprocal relationship with the deceased's matrilineage. Burial takes place in a graveyard away from the settlement usually secluded in a grove of trees, and usually the day after the death after prolonged periods of wailing by the deceased's relatives. The heads of close matrilineal relatives are shaved after the burial has taken place, and the house of the deceased is destroyed. Some of his property may also be destroyed and the pile of rubbish placed at the intersection of two paths. The pole of the deceased's house may sometimes be left standing as a kacisi (shrine), but it does not appear to be the object of any ritual attention now. Sexual intercourse is forbidden for close matrilineal relatives and the spouse of the deceased for a period of one month, and this period is terminated by the mwini mbumba having ritual intercourse with his wife.

The degree to which pagans still carry out these practices varies considerably. Christians ostensibly bury their dead according to Christian beliefs and practices<sup>1</sup> but many also

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1.) See below pp 177ff.

observe some pagan ones; for instance Christians, too, may pull down the house of a deceased person, they may also keep the prohibition on sexual intercourse, they too may wail when a death is announced but the wailing is not generally so prolonged. Rarely are the heads of Christians shaved at a funeral and often the burial partners are replaced by Christian deacons. The degree to which these practices are carried out by Christians appears to be no greater amongst members of the simple secessionist sects than amongst members of the European ones.

#### Witchcraft.

The concept of witchcraft is very relevant to a discussion of leadership and authority in this area, and accusations of witchcraft are found between ecclesiastical officials in the area.

The Nyanja term "ufiti" is frequently used to explain phenomena which cannot be explained by reference to empirical observation. The term is usually translated as "witchcraft".<sup>1</sup> The inhabitants of the area do not make the terminological distinction between "witchcraft" and "sorcery" made by Evans Pritchard.<sup>2</sup>

There is considerable evidence to support the hypothesis that witchcraft accusations indicate the areas of conflict in

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- 1.) See for instance Scott, D. C. and Hetherwick, A. "A Dictionary of the Nyanja Language" 1929.
  - 2.) Evans-Pritchard, E. E. "Witchcraft Amongst the Azande" London, 1937 p. 10.

the social structure. Marwick cites considerable evidence in support of this hypothesis from the Cewa who are of the same Maravi stock as the Nyanja, and whose social structure is very similar to that of Mlanje and Chapanga's area.<sup>1</sup>

Accusations of witchcraft are frequently associated with competition for positions of power. I have already suggested that one of the points of conflict in this area is between the chief and powerful headmen, the headmen who could have left him and formed new chieftaincies of their own in the indigenous structure. N. A. Nazombe, for instance, stated that he was afraid of "ufiti" from one of his powerful headmen, Nkhulambe, and a number of accusations of witchcraft had passed between them. Nazombe, however, as a well-known Roman Catholic was reluctant to make such accusations in public.

One of the African sects in the area, the Seventh Day Baptists, was stated by some informants, (who were not members), to be a bad church because it was full of witchcraft. Its members, they said, used witchcraft against each other in order that they might become pastors and ministers.

One African sect in the Shire Highlands, the African Nyasa Church, was founded as a result of an accusation of witchcraft. Phombeya, its founder, was previously a pastor in the Nyasa Industrial Mission, a European sect. He was accused of

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1.) Marwick, M. "The Social Context of Cewa Witch Beliefs" Africa Vol. 22 1952 pp 120 - 135 and 215 - 233.

witchcraft by his wife's brother, a teacher in the same Industrial Mission. This Phombeya denied and a case was eventually brought to the Native Authority Court. The allegations, however, continued and many members of the congregation supported the teacher. Phombeya then seceded from the Nyasa Industrial Mission and founded a sect of his own. This sect still maintains friendly relations with the Industrial Mission.

The accusations of witchcraft, which Marwick has shown indicate the points of conflict in the Cewa social structure, also indicate the points of conflict in the newly emerging social institutions-of which the African sects are one category. Missionaries have attempted to eradicate beliefs in witchcraft with only limited success. I have no evidence to suggest that belief in witchcraft or witchcraft accusations are any more or any less frequent in African sects than in European ones. Neither accept a belief in witchcraft as an explicit part of their doctrine.

PART THREE.

THE SECTS IN SOUTHERN NYASALAND.

## PART THREE.

The Sects in Southern Nyasaland.

## CHAPTER NINE.

The Historical Development of the Sects.

Before attempting a sociological analysis of the sects it is useful to attempt to place them into historical perspective.

The earliest missionary activity in Nyasaland was that of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, an Anglican body, who started a mission at Magomero in what is now the Zomba District in 1861. They were, however, forced to withdraw in the following year owing to the continual warfare which was being waged in the area, as a result of Yao slave raiding. The mission returned to Likoma Island in Lake Nyasa in 1881. The Universities' Mission has no congregations in Mlanje or in Chapananga's area but is most important in the Central Province.

The first effective mission station to be established in the Southern Province was founded in Blantyre in 1876 by the Church of Scotland. The establishment of Scottish missionaries in Nyasaland was the result of a joint effort by the established Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland. The established Church sent missionaries to Blantyre, and the Free

Church to Livingstonia in the Northern Province. These two churches have since joined with the Dutch Reformed Church to form the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian). The Dutch Reformed Church has no branches in the Southern Province. Members of the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian) still refer to themselves as members of the Church of Scotland, and are referred to as such by pagans and members of other religious associations. Only a few of the higher officials stress that they are members of the C.C.A.(P). In conformity with the general usage in Southern Nyasaland I have used the title Church of Scotland to refer to that branch of the C.C.A.(P) which operates in the area. The Church of Scotland established a mission station in Mlanje in 1889, being the first Christian religious association to commence work in that area.

The representatives of the Roman Catholic Church in Mlanje are Montfarist Marist Fathers, a society founded in France in the 18th Century. Most of the missionaries of this society in Southern Nyasaland are however of Dutch descent. The Montfarist Marist Fathers established their first mission in Nyasaland in 1901, and established mission stations at Chikwawa and Mlanje shortly afterwards.

Of the twenty ~~seven~~<sup>six</sup> sects now operating in Mlanje I have only had personal contact with twenty one, and there is a

considerable variation in the amount of contact that I had with these. Table 1 shows the numbers of congregations belonging to each of the religious associations in Mlanje. I had no contact with the "Mthenga wa Mulungu", an African sect with one congregation in Mlanje, the Zion Restoration Church, an African sect with three congregations, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, an African sect which has spread into Nyasaland from the Union of South Africa, and which is associated with a Negro American sect of the same name. It has two congregations in Mlanje. The remaining sects with which I had no contact were the Apostolic Faith Mission, a European sect with one congregation in Mlanje, and the Watchman Healing Mission, a split from Watch-Tower with two congregations in Mlanje. Furthermore my contacts with the African Church Crucified Mission were at the time of the "Declaration of a State of Emergency" in Nyasaland, and despite a number of visits to the congregation of this sect I was unable to obtain any reliable information about its history. This congregation has recently been formed in N.A. Nazombe's area, but the headquarters of the sect in Nyasaland are in the Ncheu District in the Central Province.

Of the twenty one sects with which I had contact twenty of them are linked historically with the activities of Joseph Booth. The only sect not introduced by Booth or formed by a

TABLE 2.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF CONGREGATIONS IN MLANJE

|   | No. of Congregations | Totals     |
|---|----------------------|------------|
| <b>CHURCHES</b>                                       |                      |            |
| Roman Catholic  | 206                  |            |
| Church of Scotland                                    | <u>127</u>           |            |
|   |                      | <u>333</u> |
| <b>EUROPEAN SECTS</b>                                 |                      |            |
| Watch Tower   | 39                   |            |
| Seventh Day Adventist                                 | 23                   |            |
| Zambesi Industrial Mission                            | 16                   |            |
| Mikalongwe Mission                                    | 10                   |            |
| Nyasa Industrial Mission                              | 7                    |            |
| Church of Christ                                      | 6                    |            |
| Central African Conference of Seventh<br>Day Baptists | 6                    |            |
| Assemblies of God                                     | 2                    |            |
| Apostolic Faith                                       | <u>1</u>             |            |
|   |                      | <u>110</u> |
| <b>AFRICAN SECTS</b>                                  |                      |            |
| Providence Industrial Mission                         | 28                   |            |
| Faithful Church of Christ                             | 19                   |            |
| Seventh Day Baptist (Alexander Makwinja)              | 14                   |            |
| Seventh Day Baptist (Joshua Chateka)                  | 12                   |            |
| Sons of God   | 12                   |            |
| African United Baptist Church                         | 11                   |            |
| Ethiopian Church                                      | 10                   |            |
| African Church of Christ                              | 8                    |            |
| African Full Gospel Church                            | 5                    |            |
| Zion Restoration Church                               | 3                    |            |
| Church of God   | 3                    |            |
| Watchman Healing Mission                              | 2                    |            |
| African Methodist Episcopal Church                    | 2                    |            |
| African Church Crucified Mission                      | 1                    |            |
| Mthenga wa Mulungu                                    | 1                    |            |
| Kagulu ka Nkhosa                                      | 1                    |            |
| Sent of the Holy Ghost                                | <u>1</u>             |            |
|   |                      | <u>133</u> |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  |                      | <b>576</b> |

member of one of the sects which he introduced, is the Assemblies of God. This is an American sect which first entered the mission field in South Africa, and which extended its work to Nyasaland in the 1930's when a white American missionary was sent to establish a mission at Limbe. This sect has now two congregations in Mlanje.

Joseph Booth has been described by Shepperson and Price as a "religious hitch-hiker",<sup>1</sup> an apt description of a man who was directly responsible for the introduction of no fewer than seven missions into Nyasaland, six of which now have congregations in Mlanje, - the Zambesi Industrial Mission, and Nyasa Industrial Mission, the Baptist Industrial Mission, the Seventh Day Baptists, the Seventh Day Adventists, the Churches of Christ, and Watch-Tower.

Joseph Booth was born in England but emigrated to Australia as a young man. Whilst in Australia he had the idea of establishing an inter-denominational and self-propagating "industrial mission" in Africa. He came to Nyasaland and established the first of these missions, the Zambesi Industrial Mission, at Matsidi near Blantyre in 1892. The mission was

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1.) Shepperson, G. and Price, T. "Independent African" Edinburgh 1958. p. 19. This book is an excellent history of the Chilembwe Rising of 1915, and the events leading up to it. Chilembwe was the founder of an African Sect - the the Providence Industrial Mission, and a detailed history of this sect and others is given by the authors.

situated near to the Church of Scotland mission at Blantyre, and at once aroused the opposition of the Scottish missionaries who considered that Booth should have gone further afield.

When the Zambesi Industrial Mission had been started Booth turned his attentions to the formation of another similar mission to be financed from Australia. This resulted in the establishment of the Nyasa Industrial Mission in 1893. This was a separate and autonomous mission and is still operating under European supervision, it has seven congregations in Mlanje.

In 1895 Booth launched an appeal in Scotland for support for another Industrial Mission. This led to the formation of the Baptist Industrial Mission at Gowa in the Central Province. Soon, however, there was a disagreement between Booth and the missionary who was sent out from Scotland, and the mission became independent of Booth's control. The mission was taken over by the Churches of Christ in 1929.

Booth then visited the United States returning in 1899 as the agent of the Seventh Day Baptists and buying land in the Cholo District to start a Seventh Day Baptist Mission. The parent body in the United States withdrew their support from Booth in 1901, later in 1914 sending a missionary of their own to take charge of the station. This missionary was deported in

1915 for alleged complicity in the Chilembwe Rising, and the sect was for some time entirely under African control. It has now split into three autonomous sects, two of which are under African control and one having a European at its head. All three sects maintain relations with Seventh Day Baptists in the United States. All three have congregations in the Mlanje District.

After breaking with the Seventh Day Baptists in 1901 Booth contacted the Seventh Day Adventists, also in the United States. This resulted in the sending of an American Negro missionary to Nyasaland and the foundation of a Seventh Day Adventist mission in Cholo. Booth appears to have been annoyed that he was not put in charge of this mission, and soon broke with the Seventh Day Adventists and was "dis-fellowshipped" in 1906. The mission continued, however, and soon white American missionaries were sent and later the mission acquired a good reputation for its medical facilities and for its leper colony.

In 1907 Watch Tower was introduced into Nyasaland. Booth had been to America again in 1906, and had met Russell the author of the "Millennial Dawn" pamphlets out of which the Watch Tower movement grew. Booth then returned to the Union of South Africa, and whilst there was visited by one of his former converts - Kamwana. Kamwana learnt the Watch Tower doctrine from

Booth, and on his return to Nyasaland he had considerable success in the conversion of others. Booth sent many pamphlets and books to Kamwana from South Africa. Watch Tower had no white representative in Nyasaland until 1925, but had gained considerable support under African control.

In 1906 Booth was also in contact with the British Churches of Christ in the hope of interesting them in missionary work. His proposals were rejected on the grounds that he was considered to be too much implicated in politics. He then turned to the South African Churches of Christ, who sent a white missionary who took over one of Booth's former mission stations. The British Churches of Christ then supported the South African missionary. After the Chilembwe Rising in 1915 the missionary was deported, and the sect remained under African control until the arrival of an English missionary in 1929. The arrival of this missionary precipitated the break up of the Churches of Christ into a number of new sects.

The Providence Industrial Mission was the first of the sects under African control to be established in Nyasaland. The development of the sect and the activities of its head - John Chilembwe have been described in considerable detail by Shepperson and Price, and the title of their book "Independent African" refers to Chilembwe himself.

Chilembwe had been a servant of Booth's household, and became a member of the Zambesi Industrial Mission. In 1897 he was taken by Booth to the United States where he remained for some two years receiving theological training at a Negro Baptist seminary. On his return Chilembwe started the Providence Industrial Mission at Chiradzulu. It was to be another of the self-propagating Industrial missions on the pattern of those established by Booth. Chilembwe was assisted for a few years by a number of Negro Americans, but they departed in 1906 leaving him in sole charge of the sect. The Providence Industrial Mission was the focal point of the Chilembwe Rising in 1915, and as a result of this the mission was destroyed by the government, and Chilembwe, who is still remembered by some informants as a national hero, was put to death together with many of his followers.

The sect was allowed to restart again in 1926 under Dr. Daniel Malekebu, a Nyasaland African who was one of its early members. Dr. Malekebu had gone to the United States in 1906 and there received University training. He was not in Nyasaland at the time of the 1915 Rising. He is still today the leader of the Providence Industrial Mission.

These eight sects may be regarded as the parent generation

from which new sects have emerged and the process of sectarianism has continued. Information concerning the foundation of the second generation of sects has been derived mainly from the leaders or other officials of the sects concerned. Their historical development is illustrated diagrammatically in Figure

There are two sects with congregations in Mlanje whose founders were previously members of the Zambesi Industrial Mission. The founder of the "Sent of the Holy Ghost Church", Maloya, was a local minister in the Zambesi Mission. He states that in 1927 a European missionary introduced a law into the Z.I.M. forbidding smoking and consumption of sweet beer. The introduction of these laws led to quarrelling and there was no righteousness in the mission. Maloya therefore left and founded a sect of his own, the "Sent of the Holy Ghost Church" from former members of the Zambesi Mission. This new sect was formed by the section which kept the new rules, stated its leader. In 1956 Maloya came into contact with a white American missionary from the "Pentecostal Holiness Church", who was working in Lusaka in Northern Rhodesia. As a result of this contact the Sent of the Holy Ghost Church became part of this mission. Maloya stated that he had found that the doctrines of the two sects were the same, and so he was receiving financial aid from America and had

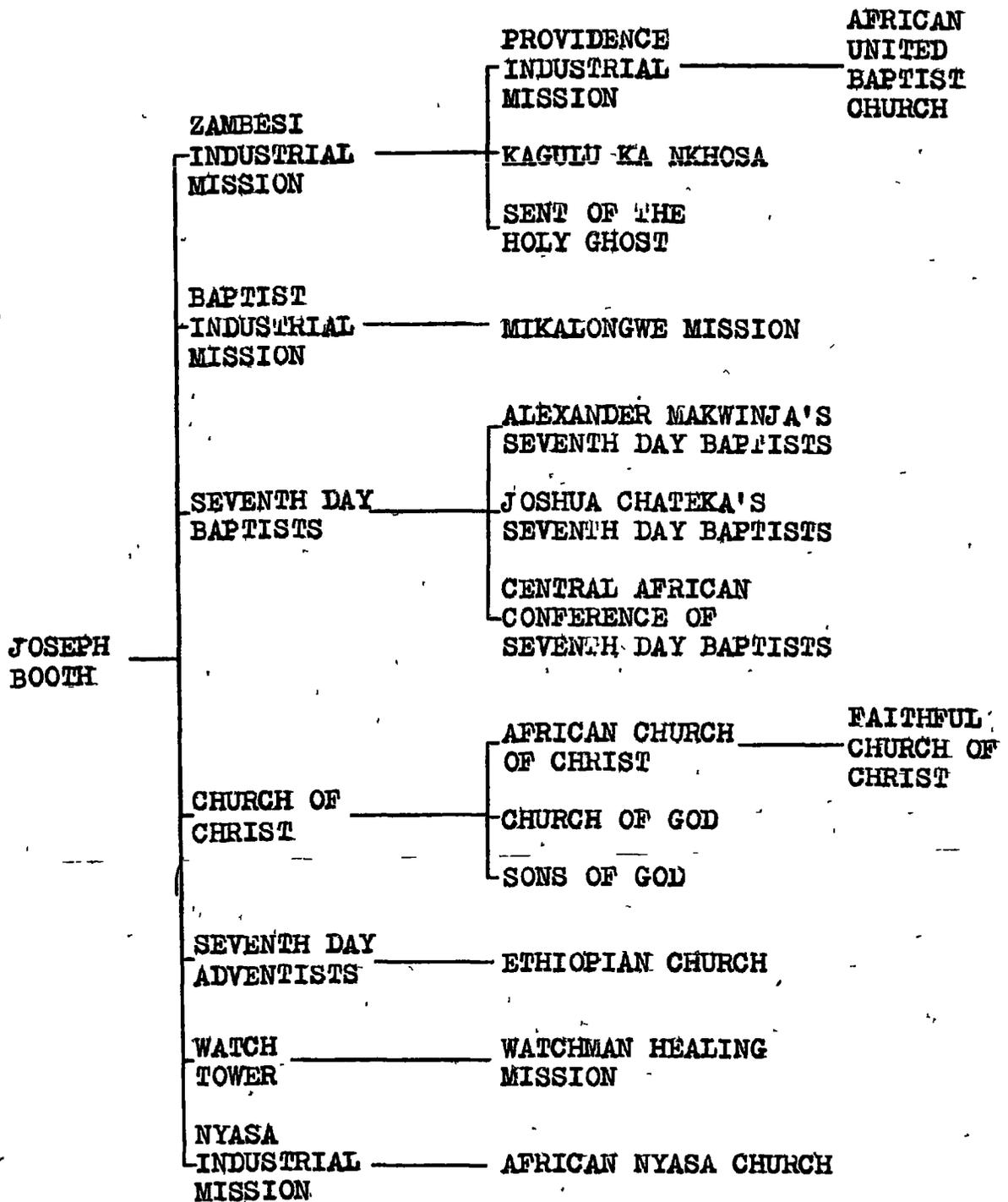


Figure. 1.

taken the name of the Pentecostal Holiness Church for his sect. He is now visited annually by the white missionary from Lusaka, but is still in full control in Nyasaland. The affiliation with the American sect led to a split in the Sent of the Holy Ghost Church, the second-in-command attempting to form a new sect of his own, though with very little success. The Pentecostal Holiness Church has one congregation in Mlanje, and its headquarters are in the adjacent district of Chiradzulu.

The founder of the "Kagulu ka Nkhosa" - ("The Congregation of the Lamb"), the Reverend Rogers, was an elder in the Zambesi Industrial Mission who states that he left and founded a sect of his own because members of the Zambesi Mission were not adhering to its rules. This sect was founded in 1932 but still has only one congregation, and receives no financial support beyond the contributions of its members. Rogers states that two former members of the Kagulu ka Nkhosa have left and attempted to start sects of their own, but with little success.

The African Nyasa Mission was started in 1946 by Phombeya, a former pastor in the Nyasa Industrial Mission. There are no branches of the African Nyasa Mission in Mlanje, but its headquarters and three other congregations are in the adjacent Cholo District. Phombeya states that whilst he was a pastor in the Nyasa Industrial Mission he was accused of witchcraft by

his wife's brother, a teacher at the school attached to his congregation. Most of the congregation apparently supported the teacher, and so the case was taken to the Native Authority, but was not proved. Phombeya therefore left the Nyasa Industrial Mission and founded a sect of his own. He has been more successful than Maloya or Rogers, having several congregations, and a government supported school attached to his sect. He also states that relations are now good between his sect and the Industrial Mission.

The Mikalongwe Mission is the only sect formed as a result of secession from the Baptist Industrial Mission which has congregations in Mlanje. There are ten such congregations. The sect was started in 1929 at Mikalongwe in the Cholo District by Cuthbert Smith, a European missionary sent out to the Baptist Industrial Mission. He had a disagreement with the missionary in charge of this mission and so left and founded one of his own.

The Seventh Day Baptists have now split into three independent sects. The White American missionary who took over the mission in 1914 was deported after the 1915 Rising for alleged seditious activities. Two of his African assistants, Alexander Makwinja and Joshua Chateka were detained in prison for the same reason.<sup>1</sup> The Seventh Day Baptists virtually

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1.) File S2/391/22 Central African Archives Zomba.

collapsed under government pressure. After the release of the two detained ministers in the mid 1920's there was a disagreement between them and both formed separate sects, each taking the name of Seventh Day Baptists. Makwinja was stated by members of Chateka's sect to have been released first and to have introduced new doctrines forbidding members to wear cloths on their heads and stating that they should wear beads around their necks. Chateka when he was released, disagreed with this and so started an independent sect in the Central Province. Both of the sects now have branches in Mlanje, and both have contacts with the Seventh Day Baptists in the U.S.A., but neither of them receive financial support from there. Makwinja is still alive and in charge of his sect. Chateka is also still alive and recognized as the head of his sect in spite of the fact that he is now detained in Zomba Mental Hospital. An Australian Seventh Day Baptist Missionary has since arrived in the Protectorate and established a mission at Sandama. This sect, known as the Central African Conference of Seventh Day Baptists, has drawn some of its support from former members of both Makwinja's and Chateka's sects.

The "Ethiopian Church," the one nativistic sect, was founded by Peter Nyambo in the Ncheu District in the Central Province. The sect is more popularly known as the "Calici ca makolo", The Church of the Ancestors. Nyambo was a member of

the Seventh Day Adventists in 1910, but in 1914 he went to London with a petition for the king complaining about conditions in Nyasaland. He later returned to South Africa, but did not return to Nyasaland until some twenty seven years after his departure in 1914. He founded the Ethiopian Church shortly after his return. It is the only sect operating in Mlanje with a doctrine substantially different from that of any of the European sects. At the end of 1958 there were ten congregations in Mlanje, but it expanded rapidly during the following year, a phenomenon which was associated with the political upheaval in the Protectorate, and which is discussed later.

A number of sects have arisen out of the activities of the Churches of Christ. The tendency towards fission in this sect was noted and deplored as early as 1919 by government officials:-

"In its organization there appears to be little cohesion, and we find here the same inability on the part of the local heads to hold together their missions, seduced by proselytism. They in their turn shake themselves free of even this nominal control and form independent churches of centres in which all the evils of Ethiopianism are developed." <sup>1</sup> The missionaries of the Church of Christ were deported in 1915 and some of its African members

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1.) "Report on the Smaller Missions". File S1/488/19.  
Central African Archives Zomba.

imprisoned. The sect continued under African control until 1929 when an English missionary came to take it over. The missionary, however, soon quarrelled with one of the African ministers, Masanjano, who left and founded the Church of God. At the same time another sect was founded, the African Church of Christ, by another African minister of the Church of Christ. Later two other sects, the Church of Christ in Africa and the Sons of God seceded from the Church of Christ.

In 1950 an American missionary visited the African Church of Christ with the object of giving it financial support, he was, however, dissatisfied with the organization of the sect. He therefore encouraged the foundation of the Faithful Church of Christ by a former teacher in the African Church of Christ, E. C. Severe. This sect receives financial support from the United States, but it is entirely under African control, apart from visits by American members of the Church of Christ, which have taken place approximately every five years since its foundation. It was with the Faithful Church of Christ that I had most contact during my fieldwork, living for approximately three months at its headquarters.

There have been numerous attempts at further secession from the various Churches of Christ, including three attempts at secession from the Faithful Church of Christ. None of them

have, however, succeeded in establishing a regular congregation with a church building or prayer house in Mlanje District.

The African United Baptist Church was started in 1946 by a former pastor in the Providence Industrial Mission, Nakule. Nakule had a disagreement with Malekebu, the head of the P.I.M. The African United Baptist Church is affiliated with another sect of the same name with its headquarters in Johannesburg. Both the P.I.M. and the A.U.B.C. are associated with the same Negro Baptist group in the United States.

## CHAPTER TEN.

Distribution of the Sects.

Some of the sects have a wide distribution of congregations throughout Nyasaland, and form part of an organization which has its headquarters outside the Protectorate. All except one of the European sects and some of the African ones are so linked. The Faithful Church of Christ is attached to one of the Churches of Christ in Los Angeles, the Seventh Day Baptists retain links with the parent body in the United States. The African United Baptist Church and the Providence Industrial Mission retain contacts with Negro Baptists in the United States. Generally those African sects which are linked to other bodies outside the Protectorate are more successful than those which are not so linked.

Within Nyasaland itself, the European sects have generally a wider distribution throughout the territory than the African ones, some of which are very localized. The African Nyasa Mission for instance, has four congregations all of which are in the Cholo area, the Kagula ka Nkhosa has only one. On the other hand some of them have a wider distribution, the Faithful Church of Christ has its headquarters in Mlanje District, but has congregations in Blantyre, Chiradzulu, Zomba and Cholo Districts.

In some cases labour migrants have been responsible for making contacts with religious associations outside the Protectorate and for their extension into Nyasaland. Watch Tower first entered the country in this way; Kamwana went to work on the mines in South Africa and whilst he was there made contact with Booth who taught him Watch Tower doctrine and sent him back to Nyasaland. The Zion Restoration Church is said to have been introduced into Nyasaland by a returning labour migrant. The affiliation of the Sent of the Holy Ghost Church with the Pentecostal Holiness sect was the result of contacts made by one of its members who had gone to Northern Rhodesia as a labour migrant, and there met the missionary of the Pentecostal Holiness sect.

Although it has no formal links with South Africa the Ethiopian Church, led by Peter Nyambo, has obviously been influenced by its leader's long stay in the Union; Nyambo was not, however, a migrant who went through the usual labour recruiting channels.

In some cases sects which had no connections with religious associations outside the Protectorate have made, or attempted to make such connections after their foundation. The Sent of the Holy Ghost Church became affiliated with the Pentecostal Holiness sect some 22 years after its foundation.

One official of the Faithful Church of Christ attempted to secede from the sect and to form a new one of his own and then to affiliate his congregation with the Church of the Nazarene, a small American led sect which has recently founded a new mission near Blantyre. On several occasions I was given a warm reception by officials of African sects on the assumption that I was an American interested in the sect and looking for a possible extension of missionary activity. Disillusionment led to a rapid deterioration in the degree of rapport between us! This desire for affiliation with the United States is partly for financial reasons, some of the sects receive money for the stipends of ministers from there, and partly because positions in those sects which are known to be associated with Whites generally carry with them a greater degree of prestige than positions in those which have no such connections. This is a theme which will be discussed in greater detail later in this analysis.

In the Southern Province of Nyasaland the African sects are a rural rather than an urban phenomenon. This is in contrast to the African sects in the Union of South Africa where they are found in both rural and urban areas.<sup>1</sup> African

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1.) Sundkler, BG G. M. "Bantu Prophets in South Africa."  
London 1948. pp. 80-86.

sect leaders when asked why they had no congregations in the urban area of Blantyre/Limbe stated that the cost of erecting a church building there was too high, and that planning authority was required.<sup>1</sup> This would seem to account for their absence in the urban areas. Sundkler points out how great the expenses of a congregation in Johannesburg are compared with those of a rural congregation, and states that in many cases the urban congregations are subsidised by the rural ones.<sup>2</sup> Sect leaders are anxious to erect prayer houses or church buildings as an indication of the importance of their sect, and the general economic level of the rural areas of Nyasaland is insufficient to enable them to subsidise building in the urban area. Furthermore the urban area of Blantyre/Limbe is very much smaller than urban areas in the Union of South Africa, or in other parts of the Central African Federation. It is not separated by any great distances from the densely populated rural area as for instance is the case in Salisbury of the Copper Belt. African led sects are to be found in the rural areas near to Blantyre/Limbe, particularly in the Chiradzulu District where the Providence Industrial Mission had its origin. Many, though by no means all, of those employed in

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- 1.) They were referring to the powers vested in the Blantyre/Limbe Town and Country Planning Committee set up under the terms of the Town and Country Planning Ordinance No, 30. 1948.
  - 2.) Sundkler, op. cit. p. 83.

the urban area live outside it,<sup>1</sup> and members of African sects may well work in the urban area and attend services in the rural areas at the week-ends. The majority of the congregations with which I had contact were situated too far from the urban area for this to take place.

In Chapananga's area there are no African sects. In fact there are only two missions operating in the area, the Zambesi Industrial Mission and the Montfarist Marist Roman Catholic Mission. This would appear to be partly the result of climatic factors; in conversation European missionaries expressed themselves reluctant to go to the Chikwawa District, most of which lies in the Lower Shire Valley, one of the hottest and most mosquito-ridden parts of the Protectorate. The Mont Farist Marist Fathers have a mission station at Chikwawa, while the European staff of the Zambesi Industrial Mission only visit Chapananga's area from Blantyre during the "cool season". The plethora of missions which characterizes Mlanje and other parts of the Shire Highlands is absent from Chapananga's area.

The absence of African sects from Chapananga's area is also partly associated with the absence of the European sects

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- 1.) Bettison, D. "Migrancy and Social Structure in Peri-Urban Communities in Nyasaland". In "Present Interrelations in Central African Urban and Rural Life" The Proceedings of the 11th Conference of the Rhodes Livingstone Institute, Lusaka 1958. pp. 24-39.

forming an example for secession, and also I suggest with the smaller amount of immigration from Portuguese East Africa which has taken place into Chapananga's area. This latter factor means that there is still land available for the fission of villages still to take place, and that those people wishing to acquire a position of leadership and authority are able to do so in other spheres than that of the African sect. This hypothesis is discussed more fully in the concluding chapter.

In Chapananga's area villages are generally associated with the one or the other of the two missions. Informants will state that one village is a "Catholic Village" whilst another is a "Zambesi Mission Village". This does not mean that all the inhabitants of that village are members of one religious association, but there is a degree of homogeneity amongst the Christian inhabitants of particular villages which is absent from Mlanje. In Tombondera Village in Chapananga's area 46 out of a total of 116 adults consider themselves to be Christian. Of these 40 are members of the Zambesi Industrial Mission which has a prayer house and a school in the village. The other 6 are Roman Catholics, these are the storekeeper and his wife who have recently moved into the village as employees of the store-owner, two "strangers" who have married pagans in the village, and one woman who has married a Roman Catholic husband uxorilocally.

This appears from observation and discussion with inhabitants of other villages to be typical of Chapananga's area. The religious affiliation of Christians is largely determined by the denomination of the nearest prayer house.

In Mlanje no such simple correlation exists; many villages contain two or three different prayer houses, each belonging to a different religious association. In this area villages, and indeed matrilineages are heterogenous in their religious affiliation.<sup>1</sup> In Mbeza village in N. A. Nazombe's area, of the 35 adult matrilineal relatives of the village headman and their spouses resident in the village 16 are pagan, 9 are members of Watch-Tower, 3 are members of the Church of Scotland, 5 are Seventh Day Baptists, 3 are members of the Providence Industrial Mission, and 1 is a member of the Ethiopian Church. In this area the various religious associations compete with each other for members.

In the Union of South Africa one of the features of sectarianism has been the emergence of tribal sects. Tribal affiliation and tribal sentiment have led to the establishment of such sects as "The Zulu Congregational Church" and the "National Swazi Native Apostolic Church of Africa".<sup>2</sup> There is no parallel

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- 1.) See also Bettison, D. "The Social and Economic Structure of Seventeen Villages, Blantyre/Limbe Nyasaland" Lusaka 1958. p. 50  
Bettison records a similar situation in the peri-urban area.
  - 2.) Sundkler "Bantu Prophets of South Africa" op. cit. Chapter 2.

to this in the Southern Province of Nyasaland. It has been stated in the "Introduction" that tribal affiliation in this area is of little significance as a basis for social action.<sup>1</sup> There are no tribal sects in the area. Even the Ethiopian Church which lays stress upon the importance of ancestor veneration is tribally heterogeneous, being composed of people who call themselves Ngoni, Nyanja and Nguru and others. When it was first formed the Providence Industrial Mission was known as the "Ajawa ( an alternative form of Yao) Providence Industrial Mission".<sup>2</sup> "Ajawa" was, however, dropped from the official title not long after its foundation, and it appears that at no time was the sect tribally homogenous; it is certainly tribally heterogeneous today.

In Mlanje some Nyanja informants suggested that the African sects were composed mainly of immigrant Nguru, whilst the Nyanja favoured the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. I found no evidence to support this hypothesis.

In order to put the African sects in their true perspective it is necessary to make some quantitative assessment of their membership in comparison with the membership of the other Christian religious associations. This is a somewhat difficult

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1.) See pp 31 - 36.

2.) Shepperson and Price. "Independent African" op. cit.

task to carry out accurately as the basis of membership varies from one association to another, and there is also a wide degree of variation in the reliability of membership figures given by the various churches and sects. Figures for church attendance which were recorded by the Faithful Church of Christ, for instance, were found to be approximately three times the actual figure. The most satisfactory basis for a comparison of the membership of the various religious associations is the comparison of the number of congregations which they possess within a given area. I have used the Mlanje District for this purpose.

Of the 28 religious associations with congregations registered in Mlanje,<sup>1</sup> two are churches, nine are sects with a European missionary permanently resident in Nyasaland, and 17 are sects under African leadership.

The total number of congregations in Mlanje is 576. The two churches, the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland have between them 333 congregations, that is 57.8% of the total. The 9 European sects have a total of 110 congregations, 19.2% of the total, and the African sects have 135 congregations, 23.0% of the total. The average number of congregations per European led sect is a little higher than that for the African sects, 12.2

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1.) The permission of the Administration has to be obtained before a prayer house or church building can be erected, and the Government register of prayer houses is therefore a record of the number of congregations.

compared with 8.0. These figures do not give any idea of the total size of the sects of each type, but only of their relative size in Mlanje.

The size of the congregation varies considerably from one congregation to another. Visits to a congregation do not give an accurate idea of its membership. African sect leaders dislike surprise visits, always wishing to be warned of an impending visit by a European. Preparations are made for the visit, and this usually results in a larger attendance than normal. Continuous contact with one congregation results in a diminution of attendance at the services of that congregation as the novelty of having a European observer in their midst wears off. Visits to several congregations of the same sect in one area also reveal that members of one congregation may attend the services of another if the appearance of a European is known to be taking place. Generally, however, the size of the congregations in the African sects is considerably smaller than that of the European led sects and churches where congregations may number up to 200 members. There are, however, some exceptions to this, the congregations of the Faithful Church of Christ and the Providence Industrial Mission, two to the larger African sects, are generally larger than those of other African sects and average about 40-50 members. Amongst the European led sects the

congregations of the Mikalongwe Mission appear to be rather smaller than the average, and smaller than some of the African sects. In general it appears that the size of the congregation is roughly proportional to the total number of congregations, and so the membership of the churches is an even greater proportion of the total number of Christians than the proportion of their congregations would suggest.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN.

Doctrine I:  
The European and  
Simple Secessionist Sects.

From the point of view of doctrine there is a basic distinction between the Roman Catholic Church and all the other religious associations in the area. Whilst there are distinctions between the various Protestant religious associations, they have a good deal of common ground. This is not the occasion for a theological analysis of the differences between Catholicism and the Protestant doctrines which are held by the various sects in the area. I do, however, wish to point out some of the differences which are significant for a sociological analysis of sectarianism which is my main concern. None of the African sects in the area have been formed as the direct result of secession from the Roman Catholic Church, and only a very small proportion of their members were formerly Roman Catholics.

In the Protestant churches and sects the main emphasis is upon the bible and its teachings. The Roman Catholics lay less emphasis upon the bible and more upon the teachings of the Church itself. In all of the Protestant churches and sects many members have a copy of the Nyanja bible and are encouraged to

to read it and to interpret it. Varying interpretations of the bible provide the doctrinal rationals for sectarianism, though in the case of the African sects they are not the cause of secession.

Perhaps the most fundamental difference in doctrine between the Catholics and Protestants which relates to sectarianism is the Catholic doctrine of "Apostolic Succession". (I had no contact with the African Methodist Episcopal Church which holds a similar doctrine, and the only other Protestant Church holding it in Nyasaland is the Anglican Church which has no congregations in Mlanje.) The doctrine of Apostolic Succession results in a completely different form of Church government in the Roman Catholic Church, and a different basis of authority for its ecclesiastical officials. As a result of this doctrine Roman Catholic priests possess institutionalized charismatic authority; no other religious officials in the area possess this.

Between the various European sects there are many differences in doctrine, and a detailed discussion of these would not assist very greatly in an understanding of the development of African sects in the area. Some of the more significant differences should, however, be pointed out. All of the sects believe in "Baptism by Total Immersion", only the Roman Catholics and the Church of Scotland do not hold this as one of their tenets. Some of the sects demand an examination to ensure

that those who are about to be baptised have an elementary knowledge of the fundamentals of the Christian faith, others do not. Most prominent amongst this latter group are the Churches of Christ who hold the doctrine of "Believer's Baptism" whereby all those who declare their belief in Christ are eligible for Baptism and thus for membership of the sect.

In terms of doctrine the two Industrial Missions, the Zambesi Mission and the Nyasa Mission appear to be identical, having a common point of origin in Joseph Booth, it is the source of their financial support which differentiates them. There is moreover an interchange of preachers between the two missions, a phenomenon which does not regularly occur in other sects.

The Assemblies of God lay more emphasis upon the power of prayer in the healing of disease than do other sects, who rely more on the provision of medical facilities. They are chiefly distinguished by this and their American evangelistic techniques of conversion.

Watch-Tower and the Seventh-Day Adventists originated in the United States as millenarian sects, but this aspect of their teaching is not emphasised so greatly in the teachings of the Nyasaland missionaries. The Seventh Day Adventists are chiefly distinguished, in the minds of the African population,

by their adherence to the Seventh Day principle which is also held by the Seventh Day Baptist sects.

The doctrine of the Mikalongwe Mission appears little different from that of the Industrial Missions, and very similar to the Baptists in Great Britain. This is as would be expected, the founder of the Mikalongwe Mission having seceded from the Baptist Industrial Mission on personal, rather than doctrinal grounds.

Differences of doctrine are often strongly felt by the European staff of the various churches and sects, and are sometimes felt by African ministers and pastors. They are not so strongly felt by the lay members of the congregations. This situation is, of course, not peculiar to Southern Nyasaland, ecumenical movements in Western Europe are usually more enthusiastically supported by the laity than the clergy, who have a more detailed knowledge of the doctrinal issues involved. An indication of the strength of the feeling of doctrinal differences felt by the European sects is given by the poem quoted in the Appendix. This poem was printed at the beginning of a tract given to me by the leader of the Faithful Church of Christ, an African sect, which receives American support, the tract came from the United States. The American supporters of the sect do not believe in Sunday Schools or in the plurality of communion cups,

both niceties of doctrine which have little or no meaning to the majority of the members of the Faithful Church of Christ in Mlanje.

With the exception of the Ethiopian Church which is discussed later, the most striking feature of the doctrines of the African sects is that they are virtually identical to those of the European sects from which they have seceded.<sup>1</sup>

The leader of the Kagulu ka Nkhosa, which seceded from the Zambesi Industrial Mission in 1932, was unable to think of any differences in doctrine between his sect and the Zambesi Mission. He was prompted by one of his elders who stated that women had to wear a covering on their heads when they went into the prayer house in the Zambesi Mission, while women in the Kagulu ka Nkhosa had to wear such a covering on their heads all the time. (This is in fact done by the majority of women, both Christian and pagan.)

The leader of the Sent of the Holy Ghost Church, which seceded from the Zambesi Mission in 1934 stated that there were no differences of doctrine between his sect and the Zambesi Mission. He stated that they both had the same laws, but that the members of his sect kept them, whilst the members of the Zambesi Mission did not. This is an example of one of the types of protest leading to secession discussed by Wach:- "Sometimes

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1.) Parrinder notes a similar phenomenon in Nigeria when he states that some of the sects in Ibadan are "Surprisingly orthodox". Parrinder, G. "Religion in an African City" London 1953. p. 108.

a secessionary protest takes the form of objection to general attitude and policy of the religious community to particular social or political institutions which are regarded as manifesting a spirit which is incompatible with, even hostile to the professed religious ideals. The radical 'perfectionist' objects to compromises with religious and ethical standards on the part of the ecclesiastical bodies." <sup>1</sup> In 1956 the Sent of the Holy Ghost Church was able to become affiliated with the Pentecostal Holiness Church, an American Pentecostal sect, "because", the leader stated, "the churches were the same".

The leader of the African Nyasa Church also stated that there were no differences in the doctrines of his sect and those of the Nyasa Industrial Mission, and that it was a personal quarrel involving accusations of witchcraft which had led to his secession from the Nyasa Mission.

The doctrines of the two Seventh Day Baptist sects are also virtually identical; ministers of Joshua Chateka's sect state that in 1930 Alexander Makwinja introduced a new doctrine demanding that women should not wear coverings on their heads, but that they should wear necklaces of beads. Joshua Chateka is reputed to have started an independent sect because he did

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1.) Wach, J. "The Sociology of Religion". London. 1947. p. 189.

not believe in this new doctrine. These differences do not, however, appear to be keenly felt even by ministers of the two sects, who on the other hand are generally only too willing to criticize members of the other sect on personal grounds, and it would appear that they were not the reason for secession, but rather added afterwards as distinguishing features.

The African Churches of Christ and the Sons of God were formed not as a result of differences of doctrine but over a disagreement with a newly arrived white missionary about the baptism of converts who had been expelled from the Church of Scotland.

All of the African sects use the same hymn-book, a book which is also used by the Church of Scotland and most of the European sects. It is published by the Nyasaland Federation of Missions, of which the members with the greatest number of congregations are the Church of Scotland and the Dutch Reformed Church. None of the African sects have produced hymns of their own, though the leader of the Faithful Church of Christ stated that he hoped to do so. Sundkler states that the "Independent Churches" of Zululand all use hymn books produced by White missions, but that there is a tendency for each sect to use a selection of hymns which it regards as its own "property".<sup>1</sup> The

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1.) Sundkler, B. G. M. op. cit. p. 193.

number of hymns used by the Faithful Church of Christ during the course of numerous services which I attended was indeed but a small fraction of the total contents of the book. Hymns are, however, chosen by members of the congregation as well as elders and ministers, and those hymns which are popular in one sect also appear to be popular in others. It must also be remembered that most members of African sects have previously been members of another religious association, and therefore there is a tendency for them to choose the hymns which were popular and which they enjoyed singing before they joined the African sect. Occasionally attempts were made by ministers in the African sects to introduce new hymns to their congregation, this, however, did not appear to be very popular with their followers.

Differences of doctrine do not provide the basis for the secession of African sects. Such differences as do occur appear to be a rationalization of secession rather than its raison d'etre. The emphasis of the Protestant Churches and sects upon the use of the bible enables almost any interpretation of it to be made, and provides the justification for a minor difference over a detail of doctrine, which the leader of a sect may then use as its distinguishing feature.

Although the explanation of the existence of African sects is not to be found in terms of differences of doctrine, the transfer of allegiance from one religious association to

another is sometimes stated to be for this reason. The leader of a new sect when he secedes takes with him a proportion of the members of the parent body, In order to expand the membership of the new sect efforts are made at proselytizing amongst members of other religious associations. The Faithful Church of Christ, for instance, which was formed as a result of secession from the African Church of Christ has drawn part of its present following from former members of the Church of Scotland. Some of these people gave reasons of doctrine for their change of allegiance, in particular questions of baptism. Several members stated that they had left the Church of Scotland because they disagreed with their doctrine of baptism and quoted Matthew 3. 13. in their support. This quotation, ("Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him"), can be accepted as a justification for leaving the Church of Scotland, but it cannot be accepted as a justification for joining the Faithful Church of Christ rather than any other of the sects, all of which practise baptism by total immersion. Again it is suggested that the transfer of allegiance is not due to doctrinal factors in any but a small minority of cases, but that doctrinal variations may be quoted afterwards in justification of a change which was in reality due largely to other factors, chief of which is the struggle for positions of status and prestige.

In preaching emphasis is not laid upon the doctrines of the particular sect (with the exception of the Ethiopian Church), but is in more general terms, stressing the need for obedience to the church leader, avoiding witchcraft, attending services regularly, and especially the preparation for the "Day of Judgement".

Individuals within a religious association often have differing ideas about the doctrine of that association. In Southern Nyasaland it is to a certain extent a reflection of the different standards of education received by members of one church or sect. One elder in the Seventh Day Baptist sect of Joshua Chateka justified the Seventh Day Baptist principle by saying that in Nyasaland there were three groups of people, the Whites, the Indians and the Africans. The Whites celebrated Sunday, the Indians Friday (a reference to Islam), and so the Africans should celebrate Saturday. This explanation was not supported by other informants from this sect.

The Seventh-Day Baptists display some elements of Africanism, and many of them hold the same views as members of the Ethiopian Church about Africans being the "descendants of Ham". The Seventh-Day Baptists are also noted for their opposition to government rules which cannot be supported by reference to the bible. These Africanist sentiments do not, however, play a

significant part in the doctrines of the other African sects with which I had contact in Mlanje, and do not form their raison d'etre.

Sundkler discussing the "Bantu Independent Churches" of Zululand states that the "colour-bar" is one of the main factors in the development of sectarianism in the Union of South Africa. "If it is a fact - and I believe that it is - that nowhere else has the Separatist Church movement grown to such dimensions as in the Union of South Africa, this must mean that there is, in South African society some particular root cause not found elsewhere, at least to the same extent, which leads to this result. This root cause is the colour-line between White and Black." He goes on to state that:- "there is a discrepancy between the missionary's Christian message and the European Christian life. This discrepancy is above all revealed in the colour-bar within the Christian Church 'Net vir Blankes - For Europeans only' is figuratively, but no less virtually written on many church doors in the Union. And this fact is one of the reasons for the emergence of Independent Bantu Churches."<sup>1</sup>

This is not the case in Nyasaland. Apartheid is not a Government policy in the Protectorate. There are no "Native Reserves" and no "urban locations". Furthermore, in any

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1.) Sundkler, op. cit. p. 32.

discursion. of the relations between White and Black in Nyasaland the demographic factor must be remembered. The African population of the Protectorate is some 3,000,000, whilst the European population is 8,000. Admittedly the ratio of Europeans to Africans is highest in the Southern Province but even here it is very low when compared with the Union of South Africa, or with the Rhodesias. The religious associations organized by Europeans in Nyasaland are primarily missionary associations concerned with the conversion of the African population to their ranks. The churches in the urban area are not primarily European Churches, they are attended by both Africans and Europeans, and services here are conducted both in English and in Nyanja.

The exclusiveness of European Churches was in no case given as a reason for the formation of an African sect by its leader. One Muslim informant, the Governor of an Islamic school and who called himself a sheikh, felt that Islam was better than Christianity because there were no distinctions of colour in Islam, both Indians and Africans praying together, but this is not an easily justifiable argument in Nyasaland. It must, however, be remembered that Nyasaland is not socially isolated from the remainder of Southern Africa, many people have been

to the Union of South Africa as labour migrants and have seen the operation of the apartheid policy, and many others have been told about it by returning labour migrants.

European missionaries have been reluctant in some cases to hand over control of the missions to Africans until they had reached what they considered to be a reasonable standard of education. On the other hand the Church of Scotland is now under the nominal control of Africans with White missionaries attached to it - moreover the White missionaries of the Church of Scotland are well known for their sympathetic attitude towards African Nationalistic aspirations. In Nyasaland White missionaries are sometimes identified with the remainder of the White population; but the White population is not large enough for separate churches to be built for them, or even for special services to be held.

Sectarianism occurs in parts of Africa where relations between Whites and Africans are vastly different from South Africa. African sects are to be found in Sierra Leone,<sup>1</sup> and in Nigeria.<sup>2</sup> The relationship between Africans and Whites is one of the factors associated with the type of sects which are formed in a particular area but it is far from being the only

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1.) Banton, M. "An Independent African Church in Sierra Leone" Hibbert Journal, LV. pp 57-63.

2.) See for instance Parrinder, G. "Religion in an African City". op cit

factor involved in such developments.

In some parts of Africa there has been a close association between African sects and Nationalist political organizations. Leakey has pointed out the connections between the "Kikuyu Independent Churches" and the Kikuyu Central Association in the early history of Mau-Mau.<sup>1</sup> Sundkler, however, sums up the relationship between the "Bantu Independent Churches" and Nationalist Political movements in South Africa as follows:-

"Claims that 'political' reasons are behind the Separatist Church movement miss the mark. The few instances of radical party affiliations of certain Ethiopian or Zionist groups do not offer sufficient proof of any definite political trends; and even admitting the existence of much outspoken anti-White propaganda in most Independent Churches, one should not forget that the attitude of the leaders and masses of these Ethiopians and Zionists has, on the whole, been loyal, not least during the war. A different question altogether is that the Separatist Church movement both in its Ethiopian and Zionist form is often nationalistic. The term 'Ethiopian' has definite nationalistic connotations."<sup>2</sup>

This statement is also true of some of the African sects in Nyasaland. Whilst three of them, the Ethiopian Church

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- 1.) Leakey, L. S. A. "Mau-Mau and the Kikuyu". London 1952. p. 91. and Welbourn, F. "East African Rebels". 1961. Chapter 8.
  - 2.) Sundkler, op. cit. p. 295.

discussed in the next chapter, and the two Seventh Day Baptist sects have Africanist beliefs as an inherent part of their doctrine, they are not major foci of anti-government activity. This has not always been the case. The Providence Industrial Mission was directly concerned in the Chilembwe Rising of 1915, and the history of the Rising as recorded by Shepperson and Price is very largely a history of the development of the mission. The founder and leader of the P.I.M. was the instigator and leader of the 1915 Rising. After the Rising the government kept a close watch on the sects operating in Nyasaland in order that they should not develop into centres of opposition to the maintenance of law and order. Periodically members of the Seventh Day Baptists clash with the government, particularly over the enforcement of agricultural rules and the payment of taxes. This leads to the arrest and imprisonment of some of the ministers and members of these sects, but on the other hand there are also many Seventh Day Baptists who are obedient to the government ordinances.

The centre of opposition to the government is now not the African sect, but the Nyasaland African National Congress (or it was before its proscription in March 1959). This has a far wider membership than all of the African sects put together, and provides a far more powerful threat to the authority of the

government. There is no overt connection between the African National Congress and the African sects, and I have no evidence to suggest that active participation in Congress is more widespread amongst the members of the African led sects than amongst the members of any other religious associations in the area, except the Roman Catholics.<sup>1</sup> Shepperson and Price state that in the disturbances in 1953, associated with the establishment of the Central African Federation, political organizations expressed themselves in a Christian form. They quote a report that meetings were held on Sundays, and that they were started with prayers.<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered, however, that meetings were held on Sundays because it is on that day that people have a holiday from work, and that meetings are likely to have a more religious tone than similar meetings in the United Kingdom as they are organized by the more educated elements in the society, and the main source of education is the Christian mission.

The sociological significance of the simple secessionist sects does not lie in their expressions of Africanist sentiments, or as centres of political agitation. At the time of the 1915 Rising the African sect was the only voluntary association which

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- 1.) The impression that a significantly lower proportion of Roman Catholics were involved in Congress activities was gained from conversations with Government Officers after the arrest of Congress officials in March 1959. The information was, however, based upon a confidential government document.
  - 2.) Shepperson and Price. op. cit. p. 413. note.

was capable of organizing political agitation. Since then the formation of the African National Congress has proved a far more effective vehicle for the mobilization of African Nationalist sentiments.

None of the African Sects in Southern Nyasaland are of the millenarian or messianic type. Two of the European sects, the Seventh-Day Adventists and Watch-Tower originated in the United States in the last century, but the emphasis in the teachings of these sects has now shifted to other aspects of Christian doctrine. The millenarian message of Watch-Tower in particular, based upon pamphlets on the "Millennial Dawn" doctrine written by Charles Taze Russell, caused grave concern to the Nyasaland Government in the early stages of its missionary activity in Nyasaland around the time of the Chilembwe Rising in 1915. Watch-Tower is not now, however, generally regarded with such suspicion.

The leaders of the African sects are not prophets or charismatic leaders. The idea that the end of the world is rapidly approaching is expressed by individuals, but this has not crystallized into the formation of a new religious association. In Chapananga's area, an area not characterized by the development of African sects, after I had been collecting a number of genealogies the following rumour arose. It was suggested that

the end of the world was coming, and that the end would be precipitated by another flood, similar to the one endured by Noah. My job was that of writing a new Nyanja Bible which would survive the flood, and which would tell how the people of the area had been related before it came, it was appreciated that the Old Testament contains similar details of the ancestors of the Israelites.

In Nazombe's area shortly after the declaration of the "State of Emergency", when aircraft were passing overhead on reconnaissance flights and dropping leaflets, and troops were known to be in the vicinity another rumour arose. Quoting Revelations 17:10. "And there are seven kings, five are fallen and one is, and the other is not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short space.", it was suggested that the end of the world was near at hand because George VI had been the sixth king, and Elizabeth was therefore the seventh and last. This rumour appeared to have emanated from a teacher in a Church of Scotland school, its acceptance was not widespread and it did not provide the basis for any social action or result in the formation of a new sect. The millenarian idea is found in Southern Nyasaland, but it appears that a prophet with a strong personality would be required before it could crystallize into a movement.

Alice Lenshina, a prophetess in Northern Rhodesia who seceded from the Church of Scotland, now has a large following in Northern Rhodesia and parts of Nyasaland. Her influence does not however extend to either Chapananga's area of Mlanje.

One of the characteristics of the African sects in Zululand has been the emphasis upon faith-healing in many of the "Independent Churches" which Sundkler classifies as "Zionist".<sup>1</sup> Sundkler states that the emphasis upon healing is the central tenet of the Zionist Churches. The notion of faith healing is absent from all of the African sects in Mlanje with which I came into contact. It appears to be of some significance in two of the other sects in the area, the Zion Restoration Church, and the Watchman Healing Mission, but I have no first hand details of their practices. The Assemblies of God, an American sect under White leadership, expresses a belief in faith-healing, but it is not the central tenet of its doctrine in the same way as it apparently is in the Zionist sects of Zululand. The missionary in charge of this sect in Southern Nyasaland felt that some of his colleagues over-emphasised this theme, and he encouraged members of the sect to take advantage of medical facilities provided by the government. Discussions with African members of this sect

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1.) Sundkler, B. G. M. op. cit. Chapter VI.

also revealed that faith-healing was not considered by them to be the central feature of the doctrine in which they believed. In view of the fact that all of the simple secessionist sects lay emphasis upon baptism by total immersion it is perhaps surprising that the notion of divine healing plays little part in their activities. Divine healing in the Zionist Churches is associated with baptism when sins are washed away and illnesses cured. The reasons for this may be two-fold, in the first place the simple secessionist sects are essentially replicas of the European sects from which they have seceded, and only one of these, the Assemblies of God, lays any stress upon divine healing and there have been no secessions from this sect. Secondly traditional healing practices do not appear to have been as closely connected with religious activity as was the case amongst the Zulu, though my information on this point is scanty.

In the case of the two sects which do practise divine healing although I have no first-hand contact with their congregations I believe that they have been introduced into Nyasaland by returning labour migrants from the Union of South Africa. The congregations of these sects are moreover but a small proportion of the total number of African sect congregations.

## CHAPTER TWELVE.

## Doctrine II:

"The Ethiopian Church"  
A Nativistic Sect.

There is only one religious association in Mlanje which can thus be regarded as "nativistic",<sup>1</sup> namely the Ethiopian Church. The doctrine of this sect is a blend of indigenous magico-religious beliefs, and some of the doctrines of the Protestant sects. The emphasis upon the nativistic element is reflected in the name by which it is popularly known, the "Calici ca Makolo", the "Church of the Ancestors". This sect was founded by Peter Nyambo, an Ngoni, and an ex-Seventh Day Adventist who spent many years in the Union of South Africa, returning to Nyasaland in 1942, and founding the sect at Nohu in the Central Province. The title of the sect appears to be of South African origin, but the sect has no formal links with those with a similar name in South Africa, it is an autonomous body in the Protectorate, although some of the doctrines are probably of South African origin.

Informants who are members of this sect state the need for the retention of the "ways of the ancestors". Passages from the Old Testament in which reference is made to ancestors,

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1.) See page 15.

forbears and forefathers are frequently quoted in sermons and in discussion. The need for the Hebrews to retain the ways of their ancestors is taken as applying equally well to the Africans, and members of this sect criticize European missionaries for ignoring these passages and cheating them. The following scriptural passages are amongst those which formed the texts for sermons in this sect:- Deuteronomy 32:7, "Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations, ask thy father and he will show thee, ask the elders and they will tell thee." Malachi 2:10 "Have we not all one father? Hath not God created us? Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother by profaning the covenant of our fathers?" Job 8:8, "For enquire, I pray thee of the former age, and prepare thyself for the search of their fathers." The widow of a Nguru village headman, and a member of this sect in a discussion of its beliefs pointed out how the younger generation only wanted to become like the Europeans and were therefore forgetting the ways of their ancestors. She stated that their ancestors would not have intercourse with their menstruating wives and that the breaking of this rule was the cause of a great deal of disease in the country.

Particular emphasis was placed, by preachers and other members of the sect, upon the recognition of the ancestral spirits, and the offering of the appropriate sacrifices to them.

This again was justified with reference to the Old Testament, Leviticus 2:14 "And if thou offer a meat offering of thy first fruits unto the Lord, thou shalt offer for a meat offering of thy first fruits, green ears of corn, dried by the fire, even corn beaten out of full ears." It was pointed out that here was the injunction to make an offering of flour (ufa) exactly as their own ancestors had done. Such offerings in the Ethiopian Church should be made annually by the minister at the time of the harvest, but at all other times should be made by the mwini mbumba in the traditional way. One minister suggested that the communion bread was the European form of offering to their ancestors, the fact that it was consumed made no difference.

Preachers also emphasize the importance of supplicating the ancestors for rain. They suggest that the Europeans do likewise, but that the ancestors of the Europeans will not help the Africans. One preacher drew an analogy with a letter, he stated that if a person sends a letter they must put the right address on it, otherwise it will not arrive, similarly if offerings are made to the ancestors for rain, then they must be made to the right ancestors. This emphasizes the importance of the mwini dziko, and it is significant that the Ethiopian Church was invited into Nazombe's area by one of his village headmen, Ntepha, shortly after a court-case in which he was alleged to

have organized a rain-dance, regarded as being the privilege of the matrilineage of the Native Authority Nazombe.<sup>1</sup>

A very important element in the doctrine and teaching of the Ethiopian Church is the rejection of many of the rules of the other Christian religious associations. In the other Christian associations the rules against the consumption of beer and against polygyny are strongly emphasized, though not of course, always kept. The Ethiopian Church rejects the injunction against drinking beer, again with biblical justification - Luke 7:34 "The Son of Man is come eating and drinking".

Preachers stated that members of the sect should attend services on a Sunday, but thereafter they may drink beer. Several members of the sect condemned the Church of Scotland for having a rule against drinking beer which everyone knew was not kept, except when the European missionary paid them a visit. One member stated pithily "Sali kuopa Mulungu iai, ali kuopa anthu basi" "They are not afraid of God, they are only afraid of men." He went on to say that if a member of the Church of Scotland reported another for drinking, then he would be made a deacon. This rejection of the rules of the other churches and sects has led to the Ethiopian Church being dubbed the "Zoipa Citani" Church (literally "Do Bad Things").

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1.) I have analysed this case in detail in my article "Chiefship and Politics in the Mlanje District of Southern Nyasaland" Africa Vol. XXXI. No. 1 Jan. 1961. pp. 36-45.

The Ethiopian Church permits, and even encourages polygyny, a practice which is categorically condemned by all the other churches and sects.<sup>1</sup>

There is a general belief amongst the members of the Ethiopian Church that the European missionaries are hood-winking the Africans, that they are only teaching them some of the things which are in the Bible and deliberately holding others from them. The emphasis placed upon the Bible is as strong in this sect as in any other, and sermons may contain as many as sixteen separate quotations from it, the majority of them from the Old Testament. The sermons in the Ethiopian Church are similar to those in other sects in as much as they consist of numerous texts followed by a brief exposition. After one service the preacher at a congregation which had newly been formed, asked for questions and was heckled by a member of the Church of Scotland asking for his comments on various passages of scripture referring to the Day of Judgement. These questions were answered by the preacher by reference to further passages of scripture, and the discussion developed into an opportunity for the heckler and the preacher to display their not inconsiderable ability to quote the chapter and verse of passages which they thought relevant.

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1.) See "Sinners are Saints in 'Do What You Like Church'" an article in the Sunday Mail published in Salisbury (Southern Rhodesia) on 19th Feb. 1961 which stresses this aspect of the Ethiopian Church to the exclusion of others.

In addition to using the bible as the basis of their doctrine, the hymn book which they use in their services is that of the Federation of Missions, and identical to that used in the majority of the other churches and sects. They appear to sing hymns at random from this book, with little regard to doctrinal implications of the words.

There is expressed in the doctrine and beliefs of the Ethiopian Church a considerable amount of anti-European feeling. My contact with this sect was however at a time when relations between Europeans and Africans were particularly tense in Nyasaland, and it is possible that such "Africanist" sentiments played a greater part in sermons and discussions than they would have done at any other time. Discussion with the Administrative Officer of the District in which the headquarters of the sect are situated revealed that the sect was not considered by him to be associated with any political activities of a subversive nature, but was one of the most "respectable" of the African sects in Ncheu District.<sup>1</sup> The expression of Africanist sentiments in the congregations with which I had contact may have been a local phenomenon, and not characteristic of the sect as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1.) In the Central Province of Nyasaland.
  - 2.) My information on the Ethiopian Church is drawn entirely from my contact with the congregations in Mlanje. I had made arrangements to meet the leader of the sect, Peter Nyambo, at Ncheu, but was unfortunately prevented by illness from fulfilling them.

Although the services and sermons of all the churches and sects in Mlanje are in the Nyanja language, on several occasions preachers in the Ethiopian Church switched in the middle of a sermon into Nguru. This was obviously designed to prevent me, as a European, from understanding what was being said. The following are some of the texts which were used during part of a sermon which was given in Nguru:- Deuteronomy 28:48-49. "Therefore shalt thou serve thine enemies which the Lord shall send against thee in hunger and in thirst, and in nakedness, and in want of all things, and He shall put a yoke of iron upon thy neck, until He hath destroyed thee. The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth, a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand." The parallel between the tribulations of the Hebrews, and the tribulations of the Africans under European rule has not gone unnoticed in other parts of Africa.<sup>1</sup>

One text was particularly appropriate to the situation in Mlanje at the time and was read with great emphasis by a preacher shortly after a nearby village headman Misomali had been sent to prison as a result of his altercations with a Forest Guard.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1.) See for instance: Sundkler. op. cit. p. 277.
  - 2.) A number of people had been brought before the Native Authority Court for defying the orders of the Forestry Department by cutting down wood from the Forest Reserve without a permit. The necessary permit may be purchased for 3d. from the court. Misomali was among those who fought with the Forest Guard.

"Remember O Lord what is come upon us; consider and behold our reproach. Our inheritance is turned unto strangers, our houses to aliens. We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are widows. We have drunken water for money; our wood is sold unto us." (Lamentations 5:1-5).

Members of the sect emphasized that Europeans had introduced many rules for which there was no justification in the bible: rules about the construction of ridges for cultivation, and the digging of latrines.

Associated with the Africanist sentiments expressed in this sect is the doctrine that the Africans are the children of Ham. This is an idea which is familiar from the literature on the African sects in South Africa, and which has also been used by Europeans there as a justification for the policy of apartheid. It is, however, with no sense of shame that this doctrine is expressed. One minister in discussion after a service stated that Africans were the children of Ham, Cush and Nimrod and referred his listeners to Genesis 10:6-9, he then said that Ham, Cush and Nimrod had killed no man, and defied anyone to find anywhere in the bible where it stated that they had.

In common with the "Ethiopian type" sects in South Africa, the Ethiopian Church equates Ethiopia with Africa as a whole,<sup>1</sup>

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1.) Sundkler. op. cit. p. 57.

and biblical references to Ethiopia and the Ethiopians are taken as referring to all Africans. In one sermon Isaiah 20:4 was quoted illustrating the plight of the Ethiopians, "So shall the King of the Assyrians lead away the Egyptian prisoners and the Ethiopian captives, young and old, naked and barefoot, even with their buttocks uncovered to the shame of the Egyptians."

This sect is not, however, a major focus of anti-European sentiment although it grew considerably in size shortly after the proscription of the African National Congress in March 1959. Previously it had only ten congregations in Mlanje. A recent guess though probably not a very inspired one, puts the number of followers "between 8,000 and 10,000 in the Cholo-Mlanje-Zomba area of the Southern Province." <sup>1</sup>

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1.) See "Sinners are Saints etc." op. cit. Sunday Mail. Feb. 19th 1961.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Ritual and Worship

Almost all the religious services of a congregation take place inside the church building or prayer-house except for parts of the baptismal service which are held in the open near to a river, and funeral services. In most congregations the prayer-house is of wattle and daub construction with a thatched roof, though in a few cases prayer houses built of Kimberly brick have been erected, these latter usually being found at the mission headquarters or at some of the larger congregations. There is a considerable range of variation in the size of prayer houses, but all of those belonging to the Protestant churches and sects are similar in design. At one end is a platform raised some six inches above the level of the floor of the remainder of the building, and on this platform is placed a table. Behind this table sits the officiant at the service, together with elders of the congregation, and occasionally deaconesses. The remainder of the congregation are seated on benches made of mud, women on one side of the main aisle and men on the other.

In all of the churches and sects the main service of the week is held on a Sunday, with the exception of the Seventh Day

Adventists and the Seventh Day Baptists who hold theirs on a Saturday. About noon, or shortly before, the congregation are summoned to the service by a bell. A very effective bell is often made by suspending a discarded brake drum from a tree with a length of rope, and striking it with a bolt. In some cases the men wait outside the building until all the women have taken their places inside, this is not however an invariable rule, as it seems to be associated with particular congregations rather than particular sects.

The pattern of the service in all of the religious associations, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, is essentially similar, the services of the Ethiopian Church being distinguished by the content of the sermon rather than by any variation in the pattern of service. Before the actual service starts two or three hymns chosen by members of the congregation are sung. The officiant then rises and announces the number of another hymn which the congregation then rises and sings. After this an extempore prayer is made by the officiant; this is usually a lengthy prayer covering a wide range of subjects. It is followed by the Lord's Prayer repeated by the whole congregation, and then by another hymn. A passage of scripture is then read by the officiant, or by one of the elders of the congregation. This passage is chosen by the officiant,

there is no lectionary as there is in the Roman Catholic Church. It may be followed by another hymn, or directly by the sermon. The sermon is the central feature of the service in all the Protestant churches and sects. It consists of a number of scriptural quotations, each of which is followed by an exposition. In some cases as many as sixteen separate passages of scripture are read, either by the preacher himself or by one of the elders. If they are being read by an elder, the preacher will often interrupt him in the middle of a sentence in order to make another point. In some cases the preacher is interrupted by a member of the congregation who starts to sing a hymn, the remainder of the congregation soon join in and the preacher is forced to a standstill, only to resume again undaunted after the last verse has been sung. It is not uncommon for there to be two sermons, separated by a hymn, by two different preachers. This results in the service lasting anything up to two hours, most of which is spent in preaching. Almost all the sermons which I heard, except those given by senior officials and white missionaries of the European sects and the Church of Scotland showed little evidence of advance preparation. There is generally no distinguishable theme running right through, and they are more in the nature of a series of extempore expositions of a number of passages of scripture, and are frequently very

repetitive. After the sermon follows another hymn and a short extempore prayer which includes a blessing.

The Assemblies of God services follow the same pattern but on one occasion, when the officiant was a White American missionary, the service assumed the character of a "revivalist meeting". The missionary was accompanied by his wife playing an accordion, and they punctuated the singing of the hymns with loud "Alleluya's". Also at this service the missionary adopted the "revivalist" technique, at the end of his sermon, of asking all those who "loved Christ" to raise their hands. This, however, appeared to be an unfamiliar technique and no hands were raised. I did not see such techniques employed at any other services.

The services of the Protestant Churches and sects, both those under African and those under European leadership, are characterized by the absence of ritual and symbolism, and by the extent to which the officiant is left to his own devices in the choice of passages of scripture, the subject of his sermon, and the subjects of his extempore prayers. The services of the Roman Catholic Church are in complete contrast to this. At the mission stations where one or more priests are resident Mass is celebrated daily, and the ritual involved is the same as that associated with Roman Catholic services throughout the

world. In the outlying congregations where no priest is resident, mass cannot be celebrated, and the service which is held on a Sunday is taken by a lay official of the church. The form of the service is clearly laid down in a missal which most members of the congregation possess. There is little room for variation by the officiant and there are no extempore prayers. The passages of scripture appointed to be read are laid down in a lectionary, and not left to the discretion of the officiant. The sermon is much shorter than in the Protestant sects, and is not the main focus of the service. Repetitive chanting plays an important part in the ritual of the Roman Catholic services, but is completely absent from the others.

In most of the Protestant religious associations the Eucharist is celebrated only infrequently at each of the congregations. This is partly in accordance with the practices of the parent bodies of many of the European missions, and partly due to the fact that many of the congregations are under the care of an official who is not high enough in the ecclesiastical hierarchy to be entitled to celebrate. In the Church of Scotland the Eucharist is only celebrated infrequently in the parent church and this practice is also followed in Nyasaland. In the Roman Catholic church mass is celebrated daily at the larger mission stations; the outlying congregations of the Roman Catholic

Church are, however, in the care of a lay official and Mass is only celebrated on the occasion of the visit of a priest. In some of the Churches of Christ, notably the Faithful Church of Christ, the Eucharist is celebrated more frequently, usually at the end of the weekly service; here elders are entitled to celebrate, but little ritual surrounds the celebration, and the doctrines of transubstantiation or consubstantiation are absent.

Occasionally similar services to those held on a Sunday may also be held during the week. Such services take place when an important official of the religious association visits the congregation. It is impossible for such officials to make visits to all the congregations on a Sunday, and so special services are held on other days to hear them preach. Other mid-week activities include bible classes which in some of the religious associations are necessary preliminaries to baptism. In some churches and sects mid-week services specially intended for women are also held; these follow the same pattern as the Sunday services.

### Baptism.

In all of the sects baptism is by total immersion, in contrast to the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church where it is by a token sprinkling of water. Total immersion is carried out in a nearby river. The baptismal service of the

Protestant sects is the occasion on which ritual is most highly developed, though even at this service its development is not comparable with that of the Roman Catholic Church. The following description of a baptismal service which I attended at a congregation of the Faithful Church of Christ may be taken as typical of the baptismal services of other Protestant sects, though the words used were different from those in which an examination is demanded before Baptism.

The congregation assembled at a temporary grass prayer house, where its services normally took place, at about 11 a.m. This was a new congregation which had not yet erected a permanent prayer house. Some hymns were sung whilst those present were waiting for the remainder of the congregation to arrive. When all were present, the head of the sect (Rev. E. C. Severe), two of the ministers, and several of the male members of the congregation who possessed bicycles rode to the bank of the river about a mile away. The remainder of the congregation proceeded on foot, singing hymns as they went. On arrival at the river bank more hymns were sung, and then a short sermon was given by Severe on the meaning of baptism.

At this particular service there were four candidates, a girl of about sixteen, two boys slightly older than her and one slightly younger. Each of them was dressed in old clothes

and accompanied by a deacon (in the case of the girl by a deaconess). The male members of the congregation and the ministers then waded out to a sand bank in the middle of the river, whilst the women remained on the bank. Severe also remained on the bank, stating (to me) that the river was infested with likodzo (bilharzia). The candidates then came to Severe one by one and the following questions were put to them:-

"Kodi ukhulupirira kuti Jesu Kristu ndi Mwana wa Mulungu wa Moyo?" (Do you believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God?)

"Kodi ukhulupirira kuti adzakupulumitsa pa tsiku lomaliza?" (Do you believe that He will save you on the Last Day?)

"Kodi ukhukupirira kuti adzakulanga pa tsiku lomaliza ngati ubwelela mbuyo?" (Do you believe that He will punish you on the Last Day if you go back from the Christian way?)

These questions were answered in the affirmative by all the candidates, and they were then given the following admonition by Severe:-

"Ngati ukhulupirira conco khala wodala kufikira Iyo akadza." (If you believe this remain faithful until He shall come.)

After this the candidates went one by one to the minister standing in the middle of the river, to the accompaniment of another hymn. They were then totally immersed in the water by the minister, this being the crucial point in the Baptism. They then made their way out of the river and were met on the bank by the deacons and deaconess who had charge of their best clothes which they then retired to the bush to put on. The congregation then made its way back to the prayer house in twos and threes and then dispersed.

In some cases baptismal services are held before the weekly service and the congregation returns to the prayer house for the service after the baptism.

Baptism in all the sects (though not the churches) symbolizes entry into the sect, and in many cases baptism in one sect qualifies a person for membership of another should he wish to change. Baptism which has not been by total immersion does not however qualify a person for entry into any of the sects; he has to be baptised again according to the rites of the sect which he wishes to enter.

#### Ritual associated with Life Crises.

Occasionally weddings are solemnized by a religious ceremony. This, however, is comparatively rare, even amongst

practising Christians. Many of the ministers with whom I came into contact had not been married according to Christian rites. It was largely for this reason that I was unable to witness a wedding ceremony in any of the sects with which I came into contact.

It has already been suggested that this may be associated with the instability of marriage ties in the area and the consequent reluctance of missionaries to perform Christian marriage ceremonies when there is a likelihood of an early divorce. Christian marriages are also infrequent in African sects who have probably copied the European ones in this as in most other respects.

Practising Christians who die are buried according to Christian rites. The following is a description of a funeral which took place in the Faithful Church of Christ, the sect with which I am most familiar. The funeral service does, however, appear to be typical of that of all the sects, there being little variation between them.

James, the five year old son of Cipolopolo, a minister in the Faithful Church of Christ at Chaima village in the Zomba District, was sick. The mwini mbumba who in this case was living some distance away, was informed and the child was given African medicine. This was not efficacious and the

child died about two days later at nine o'clock in the morning. Another minister in the congregation came and informed Severe, who was visiting there at the time, of the death, and then slowly tolled the bell outside the prayer house to announce the news to the rest of the congregation. Members of the congregation and others were told that the funeral would be held on the following day, and one of the members of the congregation who was a carpenter set to work to make the coffin.

The following day people gathered at the house of the parents of the deceased child, and at his mother's sister's house which was adjacent to it. As it was raining people were gathered inside the house and in the verandah. A bowl was also on the verandah for contributions towards the funeral expenses, in particular for the provision of food for visitors who had come some distance; as visitors arrived they put a penny in the bowl.

Several hymns were sung by those gathered in and around the houses, and then as the rain ceased the coffin was brought outside. It was carried by two male members of the congregation who were neither relatives of the deceased child nor officials of the congregation. The people then moved out of the houses and the verandahs into the open, the women sitting separately from the men. More hymns were then sung, followed by an

extempore prayer by another minister of the sect who was living in the same village. Another minister then preached a sermon which consisted of a long harangue about the inevitability of death, and the necessity of being prepared for it. This was followed by another hymn and another extempore prayer. Those present then went in procession to the graveyard about a quarter of a mile distant, led by two deaconesses who were followed by two deacons bearing the coffin. The coffin was placed alongside the grave which had previously been dug by members of the congregation. When everyone had arrived at the graveside further hymns were sung and another sermon given. This sermon was mainly on the subject of witchcraft, warning those who believed in witchcraft that they would be punished by God. During the singing of further hymns the coffin was lowered on to a reed mat which was then folded over the lid. This was stated by informants to prevent the soil from spoiling the coffin. Still to the accompaniment of hymns the grave was filled, a blessing was given, and those present dispersed.

About a hundred people were present at the graveside, this number being made up of relatives of the deceased child, and members of the congregation of the Faithful Church of Christ. Christians and pagans were not separated at the funeral, both sitting together. All arrangements for the funeral were,

however, made by the members of the local congregation. In funerals of practising Christians (or their small children) the social grouping based upon religious affiliation is the most important one, though members of the same social group as the deceased, defined by other criteria, may also attend the funeral.

The child's father, despite his position as a minister in the Faithful Church of Christ, had no part to play in the funeral service, he merely sat to one side of the grave on the top of an anthill watching what was taking place. This is paralleled with the indigenous funeral rites where close relatives played no part in the funeral which was organized by the burial partners.<sup>1</sup> In the Christian funeral service the place of the burial partners has now been taken by the minor ecclesiastical official, the deacon. Deacons are generally responsible for digging the grave, for bearing the coffin, and for its burial at the funerals of practising Christians.

In some of the sects "camp meetings" are held; these consist of a series of meetings held in one particular area in order to establish a new congregation or to revitalize an existing one. Such meetings are usually held in July or August when there is little work to be done in the gardens. The head of

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1.) See pl. 107.

the sect, or some of his more senior ministers, stay in the area for about a week, and meetings are held at a different settlement each day, with as many as possible of the existing members attending and trying to convert more people to membership of the sect.

Also at this time of the year some of the sects, and in particular the Faithful Church of Christ, hold "initiation ceremonies" for boys and girls. The ceremonies are held separately for each sex. There are periods of instruction lasting for two or three days, and held at the headquarters of the sect, or of one of the larger congregations. They do not involve any period of seclusion, any physical operation, or any dancing - features which were associated with the indigenous initiation ceremonies. They are purely periods of instruction and are held by some of the European sects as well as African ones.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Ecclesiastical Organization  
of the Sects.

Churches and sects are groups which in common with other social groups must have some formalized structure if they are to remain in existence over a period of time. Social relationships exist between members of the same church or sect, and with outsiders; I am concerned in this section with social relationships which are the result of religious affiliation.

Whilst the African sects in Southern Nyasaland are not doctrinally distinguished from the European sects from which they have seceded, they are separate and autonomous social units. The African Nyasa Church is not doctrinally distinct from the Nyasa Industrial Mission, the Kagula ka N khosa is not doctrinally distinct from the Zambesi Industrial Mission; what separates these sects is the fact that they are autonomous social units each with its own separate structure.

The ecclesiastical structure of all sects, both European and African, and of the Church of Scotland is essentially similar. That of the Roman Catholic Church is, however, very different from that of the Protestant bodies; it is based upon

different doctrinal concepts, especially important in this connection being the doctrine of Apostolic Succession.

Welbourn makes a further important distinction between the Roman Catholic and Protestant officials. He states "The Roman Catholic Church has an African priesthood trained at every point to equality with their European colleagues and guiding a flock whose freedom is rigidly controlled; and all find their ecclesiastic focus in Rome. On the other hand, Protestants, aiming at the ultimate development of national churches use large numbers of poorly trained clergy and lay-readers, taking to every man the open bible. This in Latin colonies is seen as the main source, not only of heresy, but of sedition."<sup>1</sup>

In all of the religious associations, including the Roman Catholic Church, ecclesiastical officials have functionally generalized roles. They are primarily preachers or priests, having certain ritual functions and also certain teaching functions. In addition to this the ecclesiastic (I use this term to denote an office-holder in any of the religious associations) has administrative duties. Ecclesiastics are responsible for the administration of the finances of the sect or one of its congregations, for the organization of the erection of the prayer house and its maintenance in a good state of repair, the writing of letters making arrangements for a visiting

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1.) Welbourn, F. "East African Rebels" 1961 p. 197.

preacher, etc. Ecclesiastics also have judicial functions. Offences against the rules of the religious association are dealt with by ecclesiastical courts composed of members of the congregation concerned, and presided over by the ecclesiastic in charge of the congregation. Matrimonial disputes, for instance, are frequently heard by an ecclesiastical court as well as that of the village headman in an effort to reconcile the spouses.

Although ecclesiastics are ranked there is little specialization of function associated with any particular level in the hierarchy, all levels are concerned with ritual, administrative and judicial matters, although within these categories different levels have their own particular functions. It is only at the headquarters of the sects, and at some of the larger mission stations of the churches that specialised offices are found, here for instance there is a secretary, concerned specifically with administration. At the level of the local congregation no such specialization normally exists.

The pattern of the ecclesiastical hierarchy is similar in all the Protestant Churches and sects, but the titles by which the occupants of the positions in the hierarchy are known to vary from one religious association to another, and also in some instances between congregations of the same sect. In all cases the titles are English ones. There are four positions in the male hierarchy (excluding the founder of an African sect) and one in the female.

Deaconesses.

Women officials are known as deaconesses in most sects and as sisters in others. The title "Deaconess" or "Sister" is not added to their personal name, nor is it used as a term of address. They do not usually wear any special uniform, although in a few sects, notably the Seventh Day Baptists, they have white robes which they wear at Baptisms. They are not paid officials, but are chosen by the minister and members of the congregation. Each congregation usually has between two and five deaconesses, one is often the minister's wife. A deaconess accompanies each girl at her baptism, leading her to the edge of the water, holding a towel and dry clothing for her, and going with her into the bush after the immersion when she goes to change her dress. Deaconesses, under the leadership of the minister's wife, usually prepare food for preachers and other visitors to the congregation. They have little formal part to play in services, although they may take the lead in the selection of hymns to be sung before the service actually starts. Occasionally one or more may sit at the table at the front of the prayer house with the minister and elders. On one occasion, at a service of the African Church Crucified Mission, a deaconess was

called upon by the preacher to make an extempore prayer after the sermon, but this is not a general practice in other sects.

### Deacons.

There are four levels in the hierarchy of male officials in most of the sects, although in some of the very small ones with only one or two congregations not all of the levels are represented. These four levels do not include the founder of the African sect, or in the case of the Providence Industrial Mission his successor. Again the different levels are known by different titles in different sects. For the sake of convenience I am using the terminology of the Faithful Church of Christ, the sect with which I am most familiar, but indicating the alternative forms found in other associations.

The lowest level in the male ecclesiastical hierarchy is the deacon ( in some sects known as a monitor). This is the corresponding male office to that of the deaconess. (again the term should not be confused with its usage in Great Britain where it often refers to a full time paid official). There are a number of deacons in each congregation; they are appointed by the minister together with the members of the congregation. There is no ceremonial involved in their appointment, and they wear no insignia of their office. The duties of a deacon include acting as guardians to male members

undergoing baptism, and carrying out many of the functions of the burial partners at the funerals of Christians. Deacons also act as counsellors to the minister in the judgment of disputes which come before the congregation, and also act as a "go-between" between disputing members of the congregation, in a few cases assisting the unkhoswe (marriage witness) in maintaining harmonious relationships between Christian spouses. In most cases, however, such disputes go straight to the minister in charge of the congregation. Deacons are also expected to play a leading part in the corporate activities of the congregation such as the repairing of the prayer house, the plastering with mud of a new house of one of the members of the congregation, or the cultivation of the gardens of a sick member. Deacons are appointed largely on the basis of their personality, and also on the length of time for which they have been members of the sect. The office of a deacon carries with it little prestige, and the duties attached to the office are regarded as being rather menial. It is, however, the first rung on the ladder of the ecclesiastical hierarchy, and most deacons hope to rise higher.

#### Elders.

The next rung in the ladder is the position of the elder. There is no female equivalent to this position. Each

congregation usually has two or three elders, although in the case of some of the smaller ones there may only be one. In some instances elders are in sole charge of some of the small outlying congregations. This appears to be more common in the European sects than in the African ones which are more ready to appoint ministers. Elders have an important part to play in the worship of the congregation, and during services they sit at the table facing the remainder of the congregation. They often read the passages of scripture, make extempore prayers, and on some occasions preach sermons. They are appointed by the minister in charge of the congregation together with its members, and such an appointment is ratified by a more senior official of the church or sect. They are appointed as elders in the congregations of which they are members, elders are not, like ministers, appointed from one congregation to serve in another. There is no ritual surrounding their appointment, and they do not wear any insignia of their office, and neither are they paid. The position of an elder is, however, one of prestige, he is a person who is able to read from the bible and able to preach from it. These two qualities, together with the person's character, are the main criteria by which elders are selected.

The office of elder is the highest level in the hierarchy of the Church of Scotland, of the European sects, and of one of the African sects (the Providence Industrial Mission)

to which a person can rise without having received a certain standard of education and undergone a period of training. This is not the case in other African sects which generally do not have the facilities for the training of ministers.

#### The Local Minister or Pastor.

The local minister ( in some congregations known as a pastor or evangelist) is normally in charge of a congregation. He is responsible for its worship, officiating at its services, and for the administration of its affairs. It is also his duty to attempt to settle minor disputes which may arise amongst the congregations members and to judge minor breaches of the rules of the church or sect. The local minister usually officiates at most of the services himself, although he may be assisted by an elder who reads the lessons, and makes some of the prayers. He is often addressed by the term "Pastor", and this may be added to his personal name to form a title, this "Pastor Business" although in other sects the mode of address "Mr." or "Che" may be used. The local minister does not wear any insignia of his office.

In most of the European sects, and in the Church of Scotland, local ministers are given a small stipend which, by its regularity, enables them to live at a slightly higher standard than the majority of the members of their congregation who are dependent upon subsistence cultivation, with an occasional cash crop. Some

Some are also provided with bicycles enabling them to visit members of the congregation more easily, and to attend meetings at the headquarters of the mission or at other congregations.

The local minister in the European sects and in the Church of Scotland usually receives a period of training varying between six months and two years at the headquarters of the mission, or at a special training school. He is here given instruction in the bible, and in the doctrines of the sect; he must be literate in Nyanja, but many have little or no knowledge of English.

The local minister is responsible for the preparation of candidates for baptism, and for their examination. Usually, however, in European sects the baptismal service is carried out by a European missionary, or by one of the senior African officials of the sect, who also gives the candidates an oral examination before baptism. The local minister usually carries out the immersion of the candidates in the river whilst the European or senior official stands on the river bank and conducts the service.

A local minister is appointed to a congregation by senior officials of the church or sect, be it African or European. He is not necessarily appointed to a congregation situated near to his place of residence prior to his period of training, but some are appointed to such congregations. Local ministers are not entirely dependent upon their stipend for their subsistence, but

have gardens upon which they rely for their food supply. In cases where local ministers are appointed to congregations away from their own villages or those of their wives, they are usually given gardens by the headman of the village. This does not, however, always apply to local ministers of African sects some of whom may continue to live in the village where they have rights over land, whilst being in charge of a congregation in another village.

The position of a local minister in the Church of Scotland or one of the European led sects is a position of prestige, not only amongst the members of the church or sect but amongst other inhabitants of the area. His congregation is his following, and in the same way as the status of a village headman is partly determined by the size of his village, the status of a local minister is partly determined by the size of his congregation. He also holds a position in a European organization, and in an area where strenuous efforts are made to copy the ways of the European the local minister is seen as a person who has been at least partly successful in the process of acculturation. On the other hand, at times when relations between European and Africans are characterized by tension, the local minister is sometimes the object of attacks by those who are active Africanists, for his position in a European organization. Generally, however, his

position is one of some prestige. Disputes are taken to him for his judgement, even when one of the disputing parties may not be a Christian, and both Christians and pagans recognize that the local minister should be able to influence the behaviour of his congregation. In Tombondera village the local minister was upbraided by the village headman, a pagan, for failing to punish a member of his congregation who had committed adultery with her cross cousin.<sup>1</sup> In Mlanje Makuta, a pagan, complained to the local minister of the Church of Scotland about the behaviour of his wife who was a member of his congregation, and the dispute was heard by the local minister and the congregation.<sup>2</sup>

The position of the local minister in an African sect does not generally carry with it the same amount of prestige outside the sect itself, as does the same position in a European sect. It is generally recognized that their standard of education and understanding of the bible is usually considerably less than that of their counterparts in the European missions. In all the African sects with which I had contact, except the Providence Industrial Mission, there is no organized scheme of training for local ministers, and they sit no formal examination. They are merely appointed by the head of the sect.

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1.) See page 75.

2.) See page 76.

In the African sects very few of the local ministers receive any stipend. A few of the local ministers in the Faithful Church of Christ are paid, as the sect receives financial assistance from the United States, although it is entirely under African control. The majority of African sects have insufficient financial resources with which to make any payment to their local ministers. Local ministers of these sects are usually appointed to congregations in villages where they already have rights over garden land, or if they are appointed to other congregations they often continue to live in the village in which they possess such rights.

The fact that many local ministers are in charge of congregations in their own or their wife's natal village is partly associated with the way in which congregations are formed in the African sects. Many of the local ministers in the African sects have previously been elders or deacons in another sect or in the Church of Scotland, and have had a disagreement with the local minister or one of the other ecclesiastics, or with some facet of the doctrine or organization of the sect concerned. They have then left the European church or sect and applied for membership of one of the African ones, taking with them part of the congregation of which they were formerly members, in some cases the larger part. This forms the

nucleus of a new congregation of the African sect over which the dissenting elder or deacon is appointed the local minister.

The leader of an African sect is usually only too willing to allow this process to take place, as it extends his sphere of influence and thus his prestige.<sup>1</sup> This process of binary fission is parallel to that which operated in the indigenous political organization. An mbumba head who disagreed with the village headman moved off to another chieftaincy and set up a new village, an aspiring headman was generally welcomed by a chief whose following, and therefore prestige, were thus increased.

Where a change in religious affiliation takes place no physical migration is necessary, another prayer house may be built within the same village. On the other hand, some village headman may refuse permission for the erection of another prayer house in their village, and the congregation is forced to seek a site elsewhere. There are many examples of congregations of the African sects having been formed in this way. At Chaima village in N. A. Nwambo's area of the Zomba District, Gresham Chimanya was an elder in the Sons of God. He had a disagreement with the leader of this sect and applied to become a member of the Faithful Church of Christ, he was accepted and brought most of the congregation with him. He was very soon appointed a local

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1.) Pauw discusses a similar situation amongst the Tswana of the Taung Reserve. See Pauw, B. A. "Religion in a Tswana Chiefdom" 1960. p. 55.

minister. A new prayer house belonging to the Faithful Church of Christ was erected about one hundred yards from that of the Sons of God. Chimenya and other members of the congregation state that they left the Sons of God because they did not provide schools. On the other hand the Faithful Church of Christ has only one school, and that is at its headquarters, some forty miles from Chaima, and no members of the congregation at Chaima attend it.

Examples of such secessions by elders and deacons and their subsequent appointment as local ministers and ministers in African sects are numerous. In the Faithful Church of Christ there are sixteen local ministers and eight ministers,<sup>1</sup> (all of whom have previously been local ministers). Out of this total of twenty four, ten were previously elders in another sect or in the Church of Scotland, five were previously deacons in another sect or in the Church of Scotland, and seven were previously members, though not office holders in other Christian religious associations. Only two of the twenty four had not previously been members of another church or sect. None of them had previously been local ministers or ministers in other churches or sects. Most of the local ministers and ministers, in fact fifteen out of twenty four, had previously been office holders in another religious association, the largest single

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1.) The minister is the next stage in the ecclesiastical hierarchy and is in charge of a number of congregations.

category being that of those who had previously been elders.

Some local ministers in the African sects have been officials of a number of religious associations. Michael Chinga, a local minister in the Faithful Church of Christ, was first a member of a Roman Catholic Church, from which he was excommunicated for divorcing his wife, and became a member of the Providence Industrial Mission, where he subsequently became an elder. Here he was alleged to have embezzled some of the funds of the congregation, and so he left and became a member of the African Church of Christ, where he was accepted as an elder on his admission. After some time the minister in the African Church of Christ wanted to demote him, so he transferred his allegiance to the Faithful Church of Christ, where he was again accepted as an elder, and was later appointed a local minister.

Local ministers are appointed by the head of the African sect, or by one of the senior officials of the European sect. The appointment of a local minister involves a certain amount of ritual. The following description relates to the appointment of a local minister in the Faithful Church of Christ, but from discussions with informants belonging to other sects, it may be regarded as typical of the appointment of local ministers in most of the African sects. After the conclusion of the weekly Sunday service Severe explained to the congregation

that the appointment was to be made. Muwati then came from his seat amongst the elders and stood in front of the congregation. Severe then asked him, in a voice audible to the whole congregation, if he agreed to keep the laws of the Faithful Church of Christ. He replied that he did agree. Severe was then joined by three other ministers, and the four of them then stood in a circle around Muwati, each of them placing a hand upon Muwati's head, and praying silently. Whilst they were still in this position, the congregation and ministers together repeated the Lord's Prayer, and the service was thus completed. Muwati shook hands with the ministers and was then given a bible and a hymn book by Severe.

#### The Ministers.

The next level in the ecclesiastical hierarchy is that of the minister. In the Church of Scotland and the European sects this is a position of considerable prestige. They have generally acquired at least a Standard VI certificate of education, and have thus usually a working knowledge of English. In some sects, and in particular in the Church of Scotland, they are referred to as "Reverend" and wear a clerical collar. This is not the case in all sects, either European or African. In many of the European sects white missionaries do not style themselves "Reverend" and wear no insignia of their office, and in the African sects which have seceded from these the ministers are similarly

indistinguishable from members of the congregation by terms of address.

Ministers are in charge of the larger congregations, but are also responsible for supervising the local ministers of smaller congregations within a particular area, and they travel around these other congregations preaching and baptizing. Often the congregation of the minister has a school attached to it, and the minister may have certain duties relating to the supervision of the school. Ministers in the European sects and in the Church of Scotland are paid. In many cases they are appointed to congregations away from the area in which they were born or were residing prior to their appointment. The minister spends a greater proportion of his time on the affairs of the sect or church than does the local minister, and is often away from his own congregation visiting others or attending meetings. They have, therefore, less opportunity for subsistence cultivation than local ministers (although their wives may do some cultivation), and are therefore dependent to a greater extent on their stipends for the purchase of food.

The ministers of the church or sect together form a synod, which is responsible for the administration of the association and making certain decisions of policy. In some cases, for

instance in the Church of Scotland, there are regional synods, composed of the ministers of a particular area, and they send representatives to meetings of the central synod of the church. In some of the smaller sects, where there are only a few ministers, local ministers may also be members of the synod. In other sects and churches the local ministers are represented through the ministers.

#### The Founder or Head of the Sect.

Above the level of the ministers are the White superintendents in the European missions, and in the African sects, the founders of the sect or, in the case of the Providence Industrial Mission, his successor. In the Church of Scotland, now officially the Church of Central Africa (Presbyterian), some of these positions have been taken over by Africans. Such Africans are educated at least up to a Cambridge Junior Certificate level, and may be regarded as operating almost entirely within a European system of values. In some cases Africans and Europeans hold equal positions on the staff of Church of Scotland missions. In most of the other European sects the white missionary is a full-time member of the staff of the sect in the United States or in Great Britain who has been sent to superintend the work of the branch in Nyasaland. In the case of the two Industrial Missions, the Zambesi Industrial and the Nyasa Industrial Mission, the European members of the staff are not the employees of any

particular sect, but are the employees of associations, composed mainly of Baptists, which exist for the specific purpose of mission work in Nyasaland. In the organization of the Church of Scotland and all the European sects the position of the European missionary is essentially similar. The superior status of the European qua European, which is characteristic of Southern Africa, is of more significance in relations between missionary and church or sect member than differences between sects. This does not mean that racial discrimination is practised by European missionaries in the area, but the pattern of European superordination is so much a part of life in Southern Africa that it is difficult for missionaries to be dissociated from this attitude. This superordination of the European missionary is not, however, in itself, a major cause of sectarianism in Nyasaland.

I am, however, here concerned with the organization of African sects. The leaders of African sects attempt to operate as far as possible in the same way as their European counterparts. In all the African sects with which I had contact, except one, the leader of the sect was also its founder. It is only possible to speculate on

what will happen when the founder of the sect dies.

Phombeya, the leader of the African Nyasa Church suggested that one of his local ministers, possibly his son, would succeed him as leader of the sect. His son would, however, succeed him because he was a minister and not because he was his son. The idea of the inheritance of the leadership of the sect is not expressed. This is in contrast to some of the sects in Zululand where leadership has been inherited patrilineally.<sup>1</sup>

The only sect in the area, with which I had contact, where the present leader was not the founder is the Providence Industrial Mission. This sect was founded by Chilembwe but disbanded by the government after the 1915 rising when Chilembwe was put to death. It was allowed to start again in 1926 under Dr. Daniel Malekebu who is still its leader. Dr. Malekebu was a member of the sect shortly after its foundation, but in 1907 went to the United States of America, where he later gained a doctorate. He returned in 1926 to restart the sect, acquiring the position of leader of the Providence Industrial Mission on the basis of his superior education, and his superior knowledge of the ways of the Whites, amongst whom he had lived in the United States for nearly twenty years.

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1.) For instance the Zionist Church of Isiah Shembe was taken over by his son on the death of the founder. Sundkler op. cit. p. 117-121.

In many religious associations outside Nyasaland, the death of the founder has placed his following in a dilemma, and the resultant crisis has led to sectarianism. The beginnings of Islam were characterized by such a crisis on the death of Mohammed. This crisis has not yet occurred in the African sects, as with the exception of the P.I.M. their founders are all still alive. The death of the founder may well provide the basis for further sectarianism in the African sects, as there is likely to be competition for his position.

All the leaders of the African sects have previously been officials of other sects. Severe, the head of the Faithful Church of Christ was previously an elder and school-teacher in the African Church of Christ. The head of the Kagulu ka Nkhosha, Rogers, was previously an elder in the Zambesi Mission, and the head of the Seat of the Holy Ghost Church, Maloya, was formerly a local minister in the same sect. Phombeya the head of the African Nyasa Church was previously a minister in the Nyasa Industrial Mission. Chateka the head of one of the Seventh Day Baptist sects was previously a minister in Alexander Makwinja's Seventh Day Baptist sect and Makwinja was formerly an assistant to an American Seventh Day Baptist Missionary. Nakule, the head of the African United Baptist Church was previously a minister in the Providence Industrial Mission. The heads of the Sons of God

and the African Churches of Christ were previously ministers in the British Churches of Christ.

None of the heads of the sects are prophets or charismatic leaders. All are attempting to operate largely within a European system of values (with the exception of the Ethiopian Church leader). The degree to which the head of the sect is successful, as measured by the size of his sect, is largely correlated with his understanding of the White way of life and the extent to which he has assimilated it. The most successful of the sects, measured in terms of its following, is the Providence Industrial Mission, the oldest of the African sects, whose leader qualified in an American University, and who spent nearly twenty years in the United States. The head of the Faithful Church of Christ, which is the next most successful of the African sects, having started in 1949, and now having some thirty congregations, has a Standard VIII education, and has also been to the United States for a few months.

At the other end of the scale, the Reverend Rogers, who is the leader of the Kagulu ka Nkhosa, only received education to a sub-standard level, and although the sect was formed some twenty five years ago it has expanded little since then, still having only one registered congregation. Rogers lives in an average wattle and daub type house, with almost no European

type furniture, and his standard of living is below that of a local minister in one of the European sects.

Being self appointed there is no ritual involved in the appointment of the head of a sect. (Possibly, however, there might be some ritual involved in the appointment of a successor, but this remains so far a hypothetical question). Some of the sect-leaders style themselves "Reverend" but others do not. This again is in accordance with the practice of European missionaries. They do not have any insignia of their position, this too being a further example of their adherence to the ways of the European mission from which they have seceded - most of the European missionaries outside the Church of Scotland do not wear "clerical collars". In no case do the heads of the sect have any insignia to compare with the black cloak of Isiah Shembe.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the heads of sects have gardens upon which they are dependent for food, in addition to whatever income they may receive as religious leaders. In some cases this income is virtually nil. They have usually established the headquarters of a sect in a village where they already possess rights over land. In his own village the founder of a new sect may attempt to attract a following from amongst his relatives and friends, and may be given permission by the village headman to build a

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1.) Sundkler, S.G.M. op. cit.p. 113.

prayer house. A number of the founders of sects are sons of chiefs or village headmen, and may thus be able more easily to gain permission for the erection of prayer houses in their father's village. This point is discussed more fully in the concluding chapter. In some cases, such as that of Rogers, the leader of the Kagulu ka Nkhosa, the leader of the sect cultivates his own garden with the aid of his wife, in other cases he is able to employ others to do it for him. Severe, the head of the Faithful Church of Christ, is entirely dependent upon employed labour for the cultivation of his garden. The fact that his sect is supported financially from America has enabled him to accumulate sufficient capital to be able to invest it in the labour for cultivation, and to make a profit by the sale of agricultural produce in times of scarcity. The heads of those African sects which receive financial support from the United States are able to maintain a higher standard of living than those which do not.

#### The Administration of Sects.

The administration of the African sects is modelled upon that of the European missions, and the attempts made to copy the details of procedure used in a European administrative system sometimes lead to the appearance of a caricature of that system.

Meetings of ministers and other ecclesiastics are held often and letters pass to and fro between them at frequent intervals. The following account of a meeting of ministers and local ministers of the Faithful Church of Christ illustrates the importance which is laid upon procedure.

The meeting was described by Severe, the head of the sect, as an "Extra-Ordinary Meeting" (the ordinary meetings being held quarterly). It was held in a schoolroom at the Headquarters of the sect at Wendewende, starting at 10.30 a.m. on a Saturday. Severe sat at a table facing the remainder of the ministers who were sitting on benches. The meeting started with a hymn, which was followed by the Lord's Prayer and then the reading of Romans 16:16 by Severe ("Salute one another with a kiss. The Churches of Christ salute you") - an oft quoted passage in the Faithful Church of Christ and one which may be regarded as providing its "charter".

Severe then opened the meeting with an apology for the lack of typed agenda, stating that the secretary of the sect had gone to his own village for the week-end. He then started the circulation of a piece of paper, upon which the ministers and local ministers were asked to sign their names as a record of their presence at the meeting. (There were eleven ministers and local ministers present). Whilst this was circulating he

introduced the first item of business as "The Presidential Address" (sic), using the English term, although the meeting was conducted in Nyanja. This was an introduction of the subject of the disobedience of one of the ministers, Lupya, who was not present at the meeting. Lupya was a minister in charge of a number of congregations in the Cholo District. The local minister of one of these congregations, Chidothe, had been expelled from the Faithful Church of Christ by a previous meeting of ministers for contracting a polygamous marriage. Chidothe, however, continued to hold services in the prayer house, and in this he was supported by a large proportion of his congregation and by Lupya. Lupya did not attend the meeting, but the previous week a delegation of ministers had visited him to find out why he was allowing Chidothe to continue to officiate at services in the prayer house belonging to the Faithful Church of Christ. These ministers were then called upon to report on their visit to Chidothe and Lupya. They stated that Lupya's argument was that he was ignoring the authority of Severe and the other ministers because he himself was one of the first ministers to be appointed in the Faithful Church of Christ, but that he still did not receive financial support from the United States - as did most of the other ministers. Other ministers present at the meeting then

then suggested that Lupya should have brought this complaint to the "Faculty of Ministers" (sic), and that what he was trying to do was to leave the Faithful Church of Christ and to start a sect of his own. After further discussion Severe suggested that another letter be sent to Lupya informing him that four ministers were coming to visit him the following week, and that if he did not support the expulsion of Chidothe, then he himself would be expelled. This was then put as a motion to the meeting, and voted upon by a show of hands, it was passed unanimously.

The second subject for discussion was also introduced by Severe. He pointed out that the original prayer house at the headquarters of the sect had been pulled down because it was unsafe, and that they were then using the school as a prayer house. Again a formal motion was put that the prayer house should be rebuilt, and was passed unanimously by a show of hands. The building of more schools was then discussed, many village headmen and others had approached Severe to start a school in their villages. It was pointed out that the main problem was money, and one of the ministers suggested that each of the congregation should be asked to contribute a little, and then the government should be approached for a grant. This was agreed to informally.

The last item to be discussed was the posting of preachers to visit various congregations, and after this had been arranged for the following few weeks, the meeting was closed with an extempore prayer by Severe.

The whole meeting was characterized by its formality - the "Presidential Address", the apology for the lack of typed minutes, the circulation of a piece of paper for the recording of the attendance, the voting procedure, and the speakers standing to address the meeting (not a usual procedure at village headmen's courts, and not always done at the Native Authority Courts). This may have been partly the result of my attendance at the meeting, but it does appear that those attending were familiar with the procedure, and so it is unlikely that it had been "laid on" for my special benefit. Even if this had been the case the point is still clear - the attempt was being made to conduct the meeting as far as possible in accordance with what was considered to be the way in which such a meeting would be conducted by Europeans.

#### The Ethiopian Church.

The one "nativistic" sect, the Ethiopian Church also has a hierarchy of ministers, local ministers and deacons. My knowledge of this sect is, however, drawn largely from two new congregations which were formed in N.A.Nazombe's area in April 1959

after the "Declaration of a State of Emergency". Those appointed as officials in charge of these congregations were both previously pagans, and not members of any other religious association. One was village headman Ntepha, who at that time had been deprived of his tax-register for the organisation of a rain-dance in the village of Msikita.<sup>1</sup> The other was a nyakwawa (an assistant village headman not recognized by the administration) in the village of Phodogoma. Neither of these people had officially been appointed local ministers, but they had started the congregation in their villages and invited ministers from other congregations of the Ethiopian Church to come and preach. Both Ntepha and Kwatula, the nyakwawa, held positions of status in the indigenous system of values. Ntepha in particular was recognised as the descendant of the first Nguru village headman in the area, and had made efforts to acquire a position of higher status in the political system but had failed to do so. In the Ethiopian Church Ntepha's status according to the indigenous values was recognized, and was the basis of his position within the sect. The Ethiopian Church recognizes the importance of the ancestral spirits, and the spirits of Ntepha's matrilineage are important ones in the area. It would appear that Ntepha was attempting

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1.) See pages. 266.

and also my article "Chiefship and Politics in the Mlanje District of Southern Nyasaland" Africa Jan 1960. Vol. XXXI. pp.36-45.

to achieve the recognition of his status in the Ethiopian Church after he had failed to achieve recognition in the political system supported by the Administration. Peter Nyambo, the head of the Ethiopian Church, is also a village headman in the Ncheu District. One of the important characteristics of the Ethiopian Church would then appear to be that its ecclesiastical officials have a status according to the indigenous system of values, and that this may form the basis of appointments to offices which have similar titles to those of other sects. Considerably more quantitative data is, however, required before this hypothesis can be substantiated.

#### The Roman Catholics.

In no case in Nyasaland has the Roman Catholic hierarchy provided a model for the ecclesiastical structure of an African sect.

In the Roman Catholic Church, the rule by the synod, or committee, which is characteristic of the Protestant associations, is absent. The Roman Catholic Church has its own rigid hierarchy of lay officials and priests, and the gap between these two groups is only bridged by ordination after a period of training lasting many years and following the acquisition of a Standard VIII or higher education. There are African priests in the Southern Province of Nyasaland, but they are considerably outnumbered by

European ones. Roman Catholic priests are ordained by Bishops, the Roman Catholic Church being the only body in Mlanje to possess bishops (with the exception of the African Methodist Episcopal Church with which I had no contact). The administrative structure of the Roman Catholic Church is pyramidal, the ultimate authority being the Pope, but for practical purposes in Nyasaland the ultimate authority is the bishop - a single person, and not a synod. This pyramidal structure is based upon the doctrine of "Apostolic Succession" by which ritual authority is handed down through bishops to priests. The dividing line between priests and laity is thus not only in terms of their training, but also in terms of their ritual authority. Such a distinction is not made in the Protestant associations.

The ordination of a Roman Catholic priest involves a considerable amount of ritual and ceremonial.

The congregations of the Roman Catholic Church are under the immediate care of a lay official. These acolytes have not the same degree of autonomy as have the ministers and local ministers in the Protestant churches and sects. As has been stated before, mass is the central service of the Roman Catholic Church and can only be celebrated by priests. Other services are held in the prayer houses of the local congregation, and the form of these services is laid down in a service book and there are no extempore

prayers, and although there is a sermon it is not the central feature of the service as it is in the Protestant associations. In the Roman Catholic services only the officiant stands at the front of the prayer house, he is not accompanied by elders sitting on either side of him as is the officiant of the Protestant services.

The most significant differences in the hierarchy of the Roman Church and the Protestant ones are, in the first place, the possession of ritual authority by the priests, secondly, the smaller amount of latitude allowed to minor officials to conduct services as they wish and thirdly the possession of autocratic bishops rather than the democratic synod.

#### The Sanctions Possessed by Ecclesiastical Officials.

If ecclesiastics are to maintain their position, either in the Roman Catholic or in the Protestant bodies there must be sanctions which they can employ, sanctions which are accepted by their followers. In religious associations supernatural sanctions may be used to uphold the social order. In the Roman Catholic Church this has been formalised. Bishops and priests have Divine Authority, and the priest hears confessions and prescribes a suitable penance for wrongdoers, being recognized as having the authority to do so. Confessions must be made by all those wishing to partake of the sacrament at Mass.

In the Protestant churches and sects this has not been formalised. The supernatural sanction operates only in a diffuse and rather ill-defined way. Those who transgress the laws of the Protestant churches and sects, are constantly threatened in sermons with dire punishments on the "Day of Judgement". The fear of the wrath of God which was characteristic of the non-conformist sects in Great Britain, especially during the Victorian era, and which still persists to a lesser extent, is today to be found in the Protestant churches and sects of Southern Nyasaland. In one sermon to a congregation of the Faithful Church of Christ, Severe stressed the need for obedience to the "Laws of God" and went on to say that obedience to the "Laws of God" meant obedience to the elders and ministers of the sect. It is, however, difficult to determine how far the fear of supernatural repercussions is a determinant of social behaviour. There must of course, be a considerable variation between individuals, a variation partly correlated with the strength of their beliefs in Christianity. Christians are often stated by pagans, and by members of other sects, to have no fear of God. As one member of the Ethiopian Church referring to the members of the Church of Scotland stated "They are not afraid of God, they are only afraid of men". If this is true, then there must be other sanctions which officials can employ.

Public opinion may be invoked as a sanction. In the Faithful Church of Christ confessions are occasionally heard in public before a celebration of the Eucharist. During a service at Chaima village, Abesse, an unmarried girl came forward and spoke to the local minister. The local minister then related what he had been told to the congregation. Abesse had been to a dance (of a Western type) and whilst she was there a fight broke out between two men because she was dancing with one and not with the other. Abesse had stated that she had come to confess that the fight was her fault, that if she had not been at the dance then it would not have happened. The minister then asked the members of the congregations to raise their hands if they would forgive her, practically all the congregation did so. The local minister then told her and the congregation that she must not go to a dance again. This was the only confession of this kind that I witnessed, and informants stated that most of the sects do not have such an institution. In this case Abesse told the story with little appearance of shame, and it is difficult to imagine that it was not told without a certain sense of pride that two men had fought for her favours.

In conversation with Severe he stated that a sin committed in public required a public confession. He gave the example

that if he became drunk at a beer-hall and members of the sect learnt about it, he would have to make a public confession. Such a confession was not necessary, he stated, if the sin was not publicly known.

Those who offend against the laws of the sect may be brought before an ecclesiastical court.<sup>1</sup> Here the minister or head of the sect acts in a judicial capacity. This court operates in a similar manner to that of the village headman, the deacons and elders acting as advisors to the minister. Those present may also take part in the hearing. There are, however, few sanctions which such a court can impose, the ultimate sanction being the expulsion of the erring member. Such a court, however, is regarded as being able to impose some sanctions. Makuta, a pagan, must have considered that the Church of Scotland was able to impose some sanctions when he reported the behaviour of his wife to the local minister.<sup>2</sup>

One sanction which can be employed against office-holders is the threat of their removal from office. Cedrick was a deacon in the Zambesi Industrial Mission at Tombondera. This mission has a rule against smoking, and during a year when his gardens produced insufficient food Cedrick bought cigarettes in

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- 1.) These ecclesiastical courts are found in other parts of Africa. Missions appear to have a distinct legalistic trend. Pauw, B. A. cites their presence in the Taung Reserve. op. cit. 1960 p.218
  - 2.) See page 76.

bulk, and resold them in smaller lots at a profit. He was brought up before a court composed of the congregation and its officials, and deprived of his office for dealing in tobacco. Gedrick remained a member of the Zambesi Mission, the only one operating in Tombondera.

In the Faithful Church of Christ, the threat of removal from office is an important sanction wielded by Severe. This sect receives financial support from one of the Churches of Christ in California, and a large proportion of this amount is used for the payment of stipends to ministers and local ministers. Some of the ministers receive twenty-five dollars a month, a large amount in relation to the general level of wages in Nyasaland, and one which they would be unlikely to receive elsewhere in view of their low educational standards. Thus deprivation of office in the Faithful Church of Christ means the deprivation of a substantial stipend. The payment of the ministers is in the hands of Severe; at one time all the money was sent to Severe from Los Angeles and he was responsible for its distribution. Now each of the ministers who receives support receives it directly in the form of a cheque from one of the congregations in the United States. Severe states that this system was introduced because he was unable to find anything in the bible which stated that "Peter should be paid through

Paul"; "Peter should be paid direct", he said. Other informants suggested that the new system was introduced because Severe was becoming "too fat". Severe, however, still retains financial control over his subordinate officials. The payments to them come from America in the form of American Express cheques, which have to be cashed at a bank; the ministers bring the cheques to Severe who cashes them through his own account. This was a complicated procedure, and few of the ministers had much knowledge of the value of dollars in sterling. They still considered, moreover, that Severe was becoming "too fat". Ministers in the Faithful Church of Christ send a periodic report of their activities to the United States. These reports are sent in English, and, as Severe is the only official of the sect capable of translating the vernacular reports of the ministers into English, he has an effective control of the relationship of the ministers and the continuation of their financial support.

All of the religious associations are voluntary associations. This means that the sanction of expulsion can be employed against erring members, but it also means that if the rule of the ecclesiastical officials is judged to be too harsh the members may leave. Members of the churches and sects are expelled for such offences as divorcing a wife, contracting a polygynous marriage, drunkenness and failure to pay dues. Church officials

are also expelled for the embezzlement of funds: two of the local ministers in the Faithful Church of Christ have previously been expelled from other sects for this reason.

Generally it appears that the European sects are less reluctant to expell members than African ones. European missionaries are anxious to keep the moral standards of their congregations high, and the ultimate sanction which they can employ to this end is that of expulsion. The leaders of the African sects, especially the smaller ones are anxious to retain their members (and thus their status) and are therefore more reluctant to employ the sanction of expulsion. Such expulsions do however take place. Chidothe a local minister in the Faithful Church of Christ was expelled for marrying a second wife whilst his first was in hospital with leprosy.

On the other hand, African sects are willing to accept members of other sects who have been expelled. The Sons of God and the African Church of Christ were formed as a result of an argument with a newly arrived European missionary of the British Churches of Christ about the baptism of people who had been expelled from the Church of Scotland. Robson, a member of the Faithful Church of Christ, was formerly a Seventh Day Adventist, but was expelled from that sect for marrying a second wife. He joined the Faithful Church of Christ after having deserted his

first wife. Severe emphasises that monogamy is one of the rules of the Faithful Church of Christ, and that if Robson had taken a second wife whilst he was a member then he would have been expelled, but as the offence was committed before he applied for membership he was accepted. In the same congregation as Robson are two men who state that they were expelled from the Church of Scotland for not paying church dues (they have not paid any in the Faithful Church of Christ either). European missionaries, and members of European sects and churches have sometimes stated that a considerable proportion of the membership of African sects is composed of people who have been expelled from European missions. There is some truth in this.

The fact that churches and sects are voluntary associations weakens the sanctions which their officials are able to invoke. A member of the congregation, or subordinate official may leave if he finds that the superordinate officials are irksome or oppressive. The ecclesiastical official has always to bear this in mind, and as his status is partly dependent upon the size of his following, he will usually try to avoid alienating sections of it. The ecclesiastic is thus in a similar position to that of the indigenous village headman or chief who was liable to lose part of his following if his rule was thought to be too oppressive. In the case of the ecclesiastic his position is even more precarious, for the secession of part of the congregation

does not entail a change of residence with all the attendant labour of building new huts and clearing new garden land.<sup>1</sup>

Members of a sect wishing to secede from it merely cease to take part in its activities.

A very high proportion of members of African sects have previously been members of other religious associations. One reason for secession has already been suggested, the desire for an office for which he is not held to be qualified in a European mission often leads a person to secede and join an African sect. Secession is also due to disagreements based upon a clash of personalities, the refusal to pay church dues, and is perhaps also occasionally due to a disagreement over the doctrine of the European mission. The baptism by sprinkling which takes place in the Church of Scotland was put forward by some members of African sects as the reason for their secession from the Church of Scotland. Secessions for these reasons may be of individuals or of sections of a congregation.

Marriage is a frequent occasion for the changing of religious affiliation. The Roman Catholic Church in particular tries to insist that its members only marry other Roman Catholics,

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1.) Religious affiliation does not form the basis of residential grouping in this area as it does in some parts of Central Africa. See for instance Watson, W. "Tribal Cohesion in a Money Economy" Manchester 1958, p. 84 and Wilson, M. "Communal Rituals of the Nyakyusa." London 1959. pp 166-167.

and so there is a tendency for the non-Roman Catholic partner to change his or her religious affiliation. Apart from this there is a tendency for the husband to change his religious affiliation to that of his wife on marriage. This is associated with uxori-local marriage, whereby the husband is likely to become a member of the same congregation to which his wife also belongs. This is not, however, an invariable rule.

Out of a total of 54 members of the Faithful Church of Christ resident in two villages, Chaima and Wendewende, 35 had previously been members of one other Christian church or sect, 11 members of two others, and one a member of three others, only 7 had previously been pagans.

In Tombondera village in Chapananga's area, however, only two people have been members of more than one church or sect, and these changed their religious affiliation on a change of residence.

As has already been stated African sects accept new members who have been baptised in another sect by total immersion, without the necessity for a second baptism in the new sect. Movement from one sect to another is therefore easy. Joseph was an elder in the African Church of Christ; and as he felt that the minister was neglecting to visit him as often as he should he left the African Church of Christ and applied for membership of the Faithful Church of Christ. He applied to the minister in charge of

the congregation at Matewere in the Zomba District, and after a Sunday service was called forward to speak to the congregation. He explained his reasons for leaving the African Church of Christ and asked to be admitted to the Faithful Church of Christ. After he had finished speaking the minister asked those members of the congregation who were willing to accept him to raise their hands. Almost all the congregation did so, and Joseph thus became a member.

**PART FOUR.**

**A SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF SECTARIANISM.**

P A R T F O U R

SOCIAL ANALYSIS OF SECTARIANISM

CHAPTER 15

THE SECT AS A SOCIAL GROUP

Churches and sects are voluntary associations, based ostensibly on the common religious beliefs and experiences of their members. These experiences are formulated in doctrine and expressed in worship. In both doctrine and worship the majority of the African sects are little different from the European ones from which they have seceded. It would seem therefore that common religious experience is not the sole factor involved in the determination of religious affiliations. The beliefs and practices of particular churches and sects must fulfill certain psychological - or spiritual - needs of their members, but any examination of this would be beyond the scope of this enquiry.

One of the most important factors in determining religious affiliation is place of residence. A person who changes his residence may be forced to change his religious affiliation, not due to any new religious experience, but to the absence of a congregation of his former church or sect in the area into which he has moved. Christopher, an inhabitant of Tombondera village in Chapamanga's area, was a member of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, an Anglican mission operating in the

Central Province of Nyasaland. When he moved to Tombondera he became a member of the Zambesi Industrial Mission, whose doctrine is considerably different from that of the Anglo-Catholic U.M.C.A.

In Chap<sup>an</sup>anga's area there are only two Christian religious associations, the Roman Catholics and the Zambesi Industrial Mission. Here the settlement pattern is a nucleated one, and the settlements which in some cases are coterminous with the villages are generally homogeneous in the religious affiliations of their Christian inhabitants. This is partly the result of the pattern of settlement, which means that congregations may be some distance apart, and partly due to the fact that there are only the two missions in the area. There also appears to be an informal agreement between the missions not to encroach upon each other's territory. This is not the situation in Mlange, although even here place of residence is of some significance in religious affiliation. Place of residence is a limiting factor rather than a determining one, the majority of Christians are members of a nearby congregation, and only a few travel to congregations some distance away. In describing the peri-urban area of Blantyre/Limbe Bettison states "In certain villages ... it was clear that religious affiliation was of considerable weight in the delineation of cluster formations".<sup>1</sup> In Mlanje I would suggest that it is the

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1. Bettison, D.C. "The Social and Economic Structure of Seventeen Villages. Blantyre-Limbe". Rhodes-Livingstone Inst. Communication No.12 p.58.

converse of this statement that is nearer the truth - residence is more significant in determining religious affiliation,, than religious affiliation is in determining residence. This does not generally apply to Roman Catholics; Roman Catholic prayer houses are widely distributed throughout Mlanje, and the majority of settlements are within reach of one. There is, moreover, less mobility from the Roman Catholic Church than from the Protestant bodies.

Spouses are generally of the same religious affiliation, and in some cases one or other spouse changes religion on marriage. It is usually the husband who changes as he changes his place of residence. The choice of a spouse is largely an individual matter in the areas under consideration, and in some instances, particularly in the case of Roman Catholics, the religious affiliation of a possible partner appears to have been one of the factors influencing the choice. In all cases where I recorded the change of a married man's religious affiliation from one Christian group to another, his wife had also changed.

I recorded the details of the religious affiliation of the spouses in 99 marriages in Mlanje and Chapananga's area, in 80 cases both spouses were of the same religious affiliation - in 55 they were both Christians, and in 25 they were both pagans. In 14 cases the husband was pagan and the wife Christian, and in 3

cases the husband Christian and the wife pagan. These three include one woman who was a member of the Church of Scotland who left to brew beer, and one widow who had recently married a Christian widower, and was still living in a house erected by her former husband. In only two cases were the husband and wife of different Christian denominations. Unmarried children are generally of the same religious affiliation as their parents, but here the factor of education is important. Children of pagan parents may be attending Christian schools and may have been baptised or attending baptism classes in the church or sect to which the school is attached. Furthermore, there are fewer schools than congregations, and Christian parents may send children to schools of other congregations than the one to which they belong if there is no school of their own denomination in the area. The children may later become members of the church or sect from which they received their schooling.

Unilineal descent groups are generally more heterogeneous in their religious affiliations than elementary families. This is partly a result of their dispersion, and in cases where the members of a unilineal descent group are members of the same religious group this is a function of their co-residence rather than of their common descent. In a few cases, however, where the mwini mbumba is a minister or important official of a church

or sect he may make efforts to include his mbumba in his following. Severe, when he first established the Faithful Church of Christ, gained some of his first members from his mbumba. Today almost all the mbumba and their spouses are members of his sect, but his patrilaterally linked relatives resident in Cluster H of Wendewende are not.<sup>1</sup> An ecclesiastic appears to be able to use ties of kinship to increase his following only amongst close relatives resident nearby.

There is no correlation apparent between religious affiliation and membership of wider kinship groups.

#### THE SECT CONGREGATION AS AN INCLUSIVE SOCIAL GROUP.

The congregation is primarily a social group for religious purposes. To what extent is it a corporate group in other spheres of social life?

Religious affiliation does not provide the basis for residence, and so congregations are not residential groups, but they may be corporate groups for certain economic purposes. Christians who are sick and unable to cultivate may appeal to the pastor for help. The pastor

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1.) See Appendix A where I have analysed the composition of households near the headquarters of the Faithful Church of Christ.

then appeals to the congregation for help in the cultivation of the gardens of its sick members. Such an appeal is usually made at the end of the Sunday service, or at another convenient time. The congregation then acts as a corporate group in the garden cultivation. When a Christian builds a new house, he first builds the framework of wattle and may then ask the co-operation of the congregation to help him plaster it with mud. The male members of the congregation dig a large hole into which water - brought from the well or stream by some of the female members - is poured and mixed with soil by the men and turned into mud. This is then carried to the house by other women and children where it is plastered on the wattle by other men. No payment is made for this, but the owner of the house is expected to provide refreshments for those who are helping him. He usually provides bananas or mangoes which are consumed whilst the work is in progress. The congregation provides the basis for such co-operative activity, but people who are not Christians may also help. Discussion with the participants in such an activity revealed that many were members of the same congregation as that of the owner of the house, but some were not, these latter were mainly people who stated that they were helping on the basis of personal friendship (cibwenzi) with the owner. Pagans generally plaster their own houses with little or no assistance from others. Membership of a religious association does provide the basis of co-operation in certain economic

activities, but even in these activities people who are not members of the association may take part.

Such co-operative activities take place in both the European missions and in the African sects. Generally, however, the smaller size of the African sects generates a stronger feeling of belonging to an "in-group", and the members of congregations of African sects co-operate with each other to a greater extent than the members of the large congregations of some of the European missions.

The congregation is also a very significant unit in the funeral rites of one of its members, its officials making all the arrangements for the funeral service and for the burial, so that amongst Christians the burial partners no longer have any part to play.

It has already been pointed out that the congregation may form a corporate group under the leadership of its minister in an attempt to reconcile two of its members who want a divorce.

The congregations of churches and sects are not exclusive groups, they admit non-members to their services and other activities. The churches and sects, do not, however, permit people who have not been baptised (or in the case of the Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church - confirmed) to receive the sacrament of bread and wine in the Eucharist. This service is, however, only infrequently held in all of the churches and sects with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church. Services

are attended not only by members of the congregation and others who are intending to become members and making the necessary preparations for doing so; on a number of occasions services are also attended by pagans who state that they have no intention of becoming members. The visit of a European missionary to the congregation of the Zambosi Industrial Mission at Tombondera, to baptise new members, was the occasion for the attendance at the service of a number of pagans who donned their best clothes for his visit. One old man, a confirmed pagan, who poured scorn on the Christians on other occasions mainly for their non-attendance at beer drinks and for their practice of monogamy, borrowed a complete suit and a red cap from his son to attend the baptism and the subsequent service in the prayer house. The Christian groups in this respect are thus a contrast to the pagan Nyau dancers, who exclude the uninitiated from their performances.

Pagans as well as Christians observe Christian festivals, albeit in a different way. Both cease work on Sundays, even in areas well away from European employers. It is the day for services in the prayer houses and beer drinks elsewhere. Similarly other Christian festivals are also observed by pagans. Good Friday was the occasion for a very large beer drink held at the house of N.A.Nazombe's mother. This was attended mainly by pagans, but also by a number of Christians who were members of sects which prohibit the consumption of alcohol.

The usual term for any form of celebration is termed "making Christmas" by both Christians and pagans. Chirepula, the pagan mwani dziko of N.A.Nazombe's area when describing how supplications are made to the ancestors for rain used the phrase "tali kupanga Christmas" (we make Christmas).

The sects which possess schools also admit children who are not members of the sect into their classes. Most of the children are too young to have been baptised into a sect, but in other cases children who have been baptised into one church or sect are accepted as pupils of another - although in the majority of cases they change their religious affiliation. Children of pagan parents are, of course, admitted to Christian schools in the hope that they will be converted to Christianity.

### SECT ECONOMICS

Cash is required to a greater or lesser extent by all but the very smallest of the sects. In the European missions it is required for the salaries of the white missionaries and the African ministers and pastors, and to pay their travelling expenses. Many ministers are provided with a bicycle to enable them to attend meetings of the church or sect. As many African ministers spend a good deal of their time involved in activities connected with their ecclesiastical office they have a limited amount of time available for the cultivation of their gardens and are consequently partly dependent upon their salary for the purchase of food.

Money is also required for financing the medical facilities provided by the churches and some of the European sects; the government provides many of the hospitals and dispensaries and their staff and also gives grants to the missions for their medical work, but the missions still have to find some of the money themselves. Money is also required for the provision of schools and teachers. Education is almost entirely in the hands of the churches and to a lesser extent, the sects. Again the government pays the salaries of qualified teachers and makes grants towards the construction of school buildings in approved cases.

A certain amount of money is also necessary for the construction of a church building or prayer house and in some cases for building a house for the minister. Many of the buildings, however, are of wattle and daub construction with a thatched roof and a mud floor, the only furniture being a table and may be a few chairs which are brought in for the service from the pastor's house. In this case the cost of the building is not high, the prayer house is built by members of the congregation and probably the only thing which has to be bought is some of the larger pieces of wood forming the frame of the building. Other prayer houses are more elaborate being made of Kimberly brick and roofed with corrugated iron. These are more expensive as even if the bricks are made by members of the congregation, the corrugated iron has to be purchased. In a few cases elaborate church buildings are erected with glass windows and

elaborate furniture. These are generally restricted to the headquarters or larger stations of European churches and sects, although the elaborate buildings at the headquarters of the Providence Industrial Mission at Chiradzulu are striking in this respect.

The missions under control of white missionaries receive financial support from their parent bodies in Europe, America, or Australia. In the case of some of the American missions this support would appear to be on a fairly lavish scale. Some of the African sects also receive financial support from the United States, the Faithful Church of Christ for instance receives money for the salaries of all ministers and some of its pastors from one of the Churches of Christ in Los Angeles. The Sect of the Holy Ghost Church became affiliated with the Pentecostal Holiness Church, an American sect with a branch in Lusaka, in 1956 and since that time has received financial support from the United States. Generally, however, the African sects have much less money than the European ones.

The other source of money for religious activities is from the pockets of the members of the congregations. The churches and several of the European sects have a fixed minimum of dues which their members are expected to contribute. A member of such a sect who fails to pay his dues may eventually be expelled from such a sect, and a number of such people are not to be found as members of African sects. Church dues, however, are not a great source of wealth either to the European missions or to the

African sects. Nyasaland is a relatively poor country, most of the members of congregations are subsistence cultivators maybe growing a little tobacco or cotton for cash. There is nothing to compare with the wealthy cash croppers in Uganda or Ghana and the amount of money which Christians are able to contribute towards the expenses of the sect is comparatively little.

When Joseph Booth established the three "Industrial Missions" in Nyasaland in the 1890s it was his intention that they should be self-propagating and self-supporting. In order that they could be self-supporting Booth acquired land which he turned into plantations. Booth's dream that these missions should be self-supporting has never been realized, they still receive support from outside the Protectorate, but they nevertheless partly pay their own way. None of the African sects which have seceded from the "Industrial Missions" have attempted to copy this aspect of their organisation. Three possible explanations present themselves. When Booth established his "Industrial Missions" there was much lower density of population than is the case today. At the present time it would be difficult to find land for such a project. Moreover, capital would be required for its initial development. The founders of those sects which have seceded from the "Industrial Missions" have seceded from outlying congregations and not from the centre, and have therefore little knowledge of the organisation involved in the plantation.

It also seems that the founders of these sects lack ~~the~~ initiative and education required for such a project. In the Union of South Africa one sect, at least, has grown very wealthy as a result of the commercial and agricultural activities of its founder.\*

There are no parallels to this in Southern Nyasaland. Severe, the founder of the Faithful Church of Christ, has been able, by virtue of his ability to manipulate the funds which are sent over from the United States, to buy a maize mill. This is operated by a paid servant and he is also able to pay labourers to cultivate his gardens. His gardens are extensive by comparison with the average holding in the area; informants suggested that he was "clever" (wanzeru) and had inherited land to which he was not entitled. I have no information about the extent to which profit from this was used for sect purposes, but Severe was notable for his "conspicuous consumption"; for instance, in his use of taxis - some weeks he spent up to £8 in taxi-fares'. This sometimes earned him the ridicule and annoyance of other members of the sect.

Those African sects which are entirely dependent upon the financial contributions of their members are sometimes very poor. The Kagulu Ka Nkhosa, for instance, has only one prayer house of wattle and daub construction with a thatched roof. It has been in existence since 1934 but has not expanded.

In the Union of South Africa some of the congregations of

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x. Mgotsi, L. and Mkele, N. "An African Separatist Church Ibandla Lika Krestu" African Studies Vol. 5. 1946 pp. 106 - 135.

African sects in rural areas are able to send money to congregations in urban areas whose expenses are much higher. There are no congregations of African sects in the urban areas of Nyasaland and one of the reasons appears to be the expense of constructing and maintaining a prayer house. Several informants who were members of African sects were aware of the large number of sects in the United States, and in a few cases sect leaders or aspiring leaders had contacted American sects in the hope of getting money from them. In one case the founder had been successful - the "Sent of the Holy Ghost Church". Without such aid the African sect in Southern Nyasaland is generally financially very poor.

In the case of two African sects, the Providence Industrial Mission and the African Nyasa Mission, the members have been able to build school buildings of a sufficiently high standard, and employ teachers qualified to receive government support. Such money must, however, be used to maintain the school and frequent inspections are carried out; it is not a means of lining the pockets of the sect officials.

There appears to be little financial inducement to become an official or a member of an African sect which does not receive money from outside the Protectorate. It is not impossible for ecclesiastical officials to enrich themselves out of church or sect funds; in fact a few officials in African sects had previously been expelled from European missions for this very reason. It is possible for an official of an African sect to

convert money belonging to the sect to his own use, but unless the sect has American support the amount is small and unlikely to provide an incentive for people to become officials in such sects. Pastors or ministers in African sects which receive no financial help from outside may receive occasional gifts from members of their congregations, but the amounts are small.

THE AFRICAN SECT'S ATTRACTION FOR FOLLOWERS.

In any discussion of the attraction of African sects it must be remembered that only a relatively small proportion of Christians are members of them. Out of 576 congregations in Mlanje only 133 belong to African sects. Moreover, the size of congregation is generally smaller than in European missions. It may, therefore, be fairly assumed that the African sects have less attraction for followers than the European missions.

Apart from the psychological or spiritual satisfactions of membership of a church or sect there are a number of other attractions. Southern Nyasaland is characterized by large-scale immigration of small groups of matrilineally linked kin from Mozambique. Congregations are social groups into which such strangers are accepted and within which they can make social contacts.<sup>1</sup>

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1.) Pauw also makes this point in reference to the Taung Reserve. Pauw.B.A. op. cit. 1960. p.67.

"I was a Seventh Day Adventist - but was expelled- and when I came to this village I was alone and so joined the Faithful Church of Christ", stated one informant.

The aim of all churches and sects is a universal appeal, and none restrict their membership to certain groups.

On the other hand the area is characterized by uxorilocal marriage, and residential clusters are inhabited by groups of matrilineally linked females and their spouses. Men are the "strangers" (kamwini), and so it might be expected that the churches and sects would have a greater appeal to them. In all the congregations I visited however, except those of the Ethiopian Church, there were more women than men attending the services. The fact that the congregation is a social group into which strangers may be integrated is, therefore, of only limited significance in attracting members.

The Ethiopian congregations had more male than female followers, and were unique in this respect. This may be the result of their encouragement of polygyny. Dr. Wilson has noted a similar feature in two African sects amongst the Nyakyusa of Southern Tanganyika.<sup>1</sup>

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1.) Wilson.M. "Communal Rituals of the Nyakyusa." 1959. p. 190.

The greater attraction of Christianity for women than men appears to be widespread, not only in Nyasaland, but also in many other parts of the world including Western Europe. This is a feature which seems to be unrelated to the type of social structure within which churches and sects are found beyond the fact that Christianity often seems to appeal to the less privileged - who in most social structures are women. It is difficult to imagine, for instance, that the insistence of the majority of the Christian bodies upon monogamous marriage accounts for the smaller membership of men than women in Western Europe.

One of the major attractions of the Christian religions associations is that they provide educational facilities. Education in Nyasaland is almost entirely controlled by the missions, the Roman Catholics and the Church of Scotland being responsible, with the aid of government subsidies, for the majority of the schools in the Southern Province. Almost all of the European sects, however, have a few schools which provide education up to standard three and in some cases beyond, although there is a considerable variation in the attitude of missionaries of the various churches and sects towards the provision of educational facilities. The Roman Catholics and the Church of Scotland regard it as a major part of their work, and at the larger mission stations there are schools which provide teaching up to, and in some cases beyond, standard six. At the other end of the scale, the Assemblies of God missionaries state that they regard education as primarily the concern of the government, though they

do provide a few schools with classes up to standard three.

Many of the African sects have no schools, but the African Nyasa Church has one which was built with a government subsidy and whose teachers are qualified and paid by the government; the Providence Industrial Mission also has several such schools. The Faithful Church of Christ has one school at its headquarters at Wendewende, which provides classes up to standard three. This school is, however, financed entirely from mission funds; an application made for a government subsidy having been rejected.

The failure of the African sects to provide schools makes them less attractive to followers than the European missions. This failure is largely due to lack of funds; although the government subsidises schools some capital is still required to build them. The government, moreover, appears to be more reluctant to grant subsidies to African sects for the provision of schools. Most religious associations provide schools not only for the children of their members, but also for the children of pagans. In some cases they also attract children of parents of other denominations. In Mbeza village, for instance, in N.A.Nazombe's area, some members of the Church of Scotland send their children to the Assemblies of God school, which is the same distance away as the one belonging to the Church of Scotland, but charges lower fees. The school which an adolescent attends is often an important factor in determining the religious

association into which he is baptised.<sup>i</sup> In all of the sects adult baptism is practised, and so baptism is not a condition of entry into the school, but may take place after a few years' attendance. On a number of occasions when Severe was visiting congregations of the Faithful Church of Christ he was asked by village headmen and others to provide schools in their villages. It was lack of money which prevented this from being done. The desire for education is great, and the secession of a large part of the congregation of the Sons of God at Chaima was said to be due to their failure to provide schools, although as had been pointed out, in 1959 the Faithful Church of Christ into which the secessionists were admitted had also failed to provide a school in the area.

A large proportion of the population of the area are anxious to live as far as possible according to their concepts of the European's way of life. This leads to the caricature of European institutions that has so often been described for many parts of Africa. In Southern Nyasaland this desire is expressed in many forms - the wearing of European clothes, for instance, is almost universal, especially amongst the male population, and the wearing of spectacles, often with no glass, is common. Some people use European cutlery, and most people use European mugs or cups. The desire to be addressed as Mr., and

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i. See also Bettison, D.G. "The Social and Economic Structure of Seventeen Villages". op. cit. p.52.

the love of writing and receiving letters, and the use of English when the vernacular language is much better understood are further examples. At a European-type dance in Zomba, English was spoken continuously by all those who attended, despite the fact that there was no European present (except myself). Christianity is associated with the European way of life, and this is one of its major attractions.<sup>1</sup> Those churches or sects which are run by European missionaries are recognised as the genuine article and thus have a greater attraction.<sup>2</sup> The outstanding characteristic of all the simple secessionist sections in Mlanje is their attempt as far as possible to be like the European ones. The caricature of the European type of committee meeting which took place in the Faithful Church of Christ has already been described. At one service the Faithful Church Christ the officiating minister took the service with a camera hanging from his neck; it was in a leather case which open to reveal the camera,, and on top of it was mounted a flash gun (without a bulb) although it was midday, and the skies were clear. I did not appreciate the full significance of this until I later attended a service of the Assemblies of God, where an American missionary took a large number of photographs of the congregation to send to the parent body of the mission in the United States. At the

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1. It is perhaps worth noting that Islam is not associated with Western European civilization and is less attractive than Christianity in this respect.
  2. cf. Pauw's statement that "Non-separatists feel that their churches are 'just a bit more genuine' than the separatists". Pauw, B.A. op. cit. P.109

same service in the Faithful Church of Christ Severe's wife, Cecilia, brought with her a young baby and also a brief case. During the service the baby began to cry, and she opened the brief case and brought out a feeding bottle full of milk and attempted to quieten the infant with it. She was unsuccessful and after several attempts she resorted to the more traditional method of feeding and met with instant success.

Many Christians, both in the African and European sects possess their own bibles, and many of them have a very good knowledge of their contents and are able to quote chapter and verse to support a number of arguments. A popular form of informal discussion is the quotation of passage after passage from the bible. Those possessing bibles take them to the services, and when lessons are being read conscientiously follow them, one member of the Faithful Church of Christ equally conscientiously followed them in a battered copy of "Tom Brown's Schooldays".

Some of the African sects have not only tried to imitate as far as possible the European ones, but in some cases they have attempted to become affiliated with American sects, after their foundation. The sect of the Holy Ghost Church, for instance, founded in 1934, has succeeded in becoming affiliated with the Pentecostal Holiness Church; one of the ministers in the Faithful Church of Christ who had seceded and was attempting to form a sect of his own, was also attempting to become affiliated with another American sect - the Church of the Nazarone. Such

affiliation has a double attraction, it provides financial support, and it is also a criterion of status for its officials. The simple secessionist type of African sects are not generally anti-White, in fact on the contrary they are sometimes anxious for White support, and the most abundant source of this support is the United States.

Several informants who were not members of the Faithful Church of Christ attributed its success, no doubt at least partly correctly, to the parcels of clothing which are sent over from the United States for distribution amongst its members. Such parcels are obviously a great attraction of membership, and this is made evident by the conflicts which their distribution causes amongst the officials of the sect.

Thus far all the attractions of membership of a church or sect have been weighted heavily in favour of the European mission, and indeed these missions do have a membership at least five times as large as that of the African sects. Nevertheless membership of the African sects does offer specific attractions. In the first place, they accept members who have been expelled from other religious associations. The Faithful Church of Christ draws a large measure of its support from this source. The African Church of Christ and the Sons of God were formed as the result of a dispute over this very issue with a European missionary who had recently arrived to take over the British Churches of Christ after they had been under African control for some time.

Although the simple secessionist sects have substantially the same rules as the European missions, they appear more reluctant to enforce them as this would involve a diminution of the membership and a consequent loss of status for the officials of the sect.

In many of the African sects no examination is required before baptism, and so membership is obtained easily, all that is required being a statement of belief. This also applies in a few of the European sects, but in the larger ones and in the two Churches a period of training and an examination are necessary before candidates are admitted to full membership.

The attractions of the Ethiopian Church are rather different from the attractions of the other sects. It is "nativistic" in its outlook, and specifically rejects many of the values introduced by the Europeans. This has an attraction for certain followers, though in relation to the total number of Christians in the area the membership of this sect is very small indeed. There is, however, some evidence that the Ethiopian Church expanded fairly rapidly shortly after the "Declaration of the State of Emergency" in Nyasaland, and that this may have been associated with an increase in the tension in relationships between Africans and Europeans. The appeal of the Ethiopian Church is generally to an older section of the population than is the case in the other churches and sects, and in particular to those who have a vested interest in the maintenance of ancestor veneration, that is those whose descent gives them a high status

according to traditional norms. It has already been noted that the Ethiopian Church's encouragement of polygyny gives it a greater appeal to men than to women. The lack of a prohibition upon the consumption of alcohol is an attraction which is not present in any other church or sect with the exception of the Roman Catholics.

So much for the attraction of the African sects for members. In the next chapter I consider their attraction for officials which provides a key to the understanding of the simple secessionist sects.

CHAPTER 16

LEADERSHIP AND AUTHORITY IN THE AFRICAN SECTS

One of the major attractions of the African sects is that they provide the means of acquiring an ecclesiastical office for those unable to do so in a European mission. Ministers and local ministers in the African sects do not generally have to undergo any period of training and do not need any educational qualifications beyond those necessary to enable them to read the bible in the vernacular. Many informants who are not themselves members of an African sect account for their existence in these terms, and sectarianism in Nyasaland has been described by missionaries as "Symptomatic of the African disease of 'mafum& onse' (chiefs all)."

The existence of a struggle for positions of leadership and authority is often recognised by members of the sects themselves. Severe, the leader and founder of the Faithful Church of Christ, stated that he had always to be watching the people immediately subordinate to him as these were the people who were jealous of his position and liable to secede and start a sect of their own. Sündkler found a similar situation in some of the African sects in Zululand and quotes the following passage from the constitution of the National Swaziland Native Apostolic Church of Africa:

"No minister leaving this church shall form a branch of it, he had better join another church." <sup>1</sup>

Phombeya started the African Nyasa Church as the result of accusations of witchcraft resulting from competition for office. Chief Nazombe on a visit to the Seventh Day Baptist Church stated that it was a bad church because it was full of witchcraft, on being pressed further he stated that the leaders were jealous of each other.

This competition for office results in the overstaffing of African sects, a tendency which has also been noted by Sundkler.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately I have no figures for the ratio of ministers and other officials to members of the congregation in these sects, but it is undoubtedly much higher than in the European churches and sects. Many services of the Faithful Church of Christ are attended by a minister and a local minister and several elders in cases where the total congregation is less than forty. This phenomenon is not encountered in the European sects and churches.

In the Introduction I suggested a distinction between leadership and authority - leadership being power which a person possesses as the basis of his personality and character, and authority being power which is associated with a position in a social structure. I also suggested that a distinction could be

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1. Sundkler, B.G.M. op. cit. p.146.

2. Sundkler, B.G.M. op. cit. p.127

made between three types of authority - kinship, bureaucratic and charismatic. I now wish to compare and contrast the power structures of the churches and sects with the power structure of the area as a whole on the basis of this typology.

The mwini mbumba has a position of superordination in the kinship system. He is recognized as possessing authority over the mbumba in certain social contexts on the basis of his genealogical position. The sanctions which the mwini mbumba can invoke are weak as the mbumba is constantly liable to fission; members of the mbumba, who find the mwini mbumba uncongenial, can go off and found a new mbumba. If the mwini mbumba is to maintain his position he must, therefore, also possess personal qualities of leadership in order to dissuade his subordinates from leaving him. Qualities of leadership are also necessary to acquire the position of mwini mbumba, other things being equal the eldest brother has the strongest claim to the position, but if he does not possess qualities of leadership he may be passed over and the position may go to another matrilineal relative. The personal qualities which are demanded of the mwini mbumba are an interest in the affairs of its members, particularly in the case of illness, and his support in any disputes in which members of the mbumba are concerned, in particular in disputes with their spouses.

The village headman in the pre-colonial political system was dependent upon kinship and bureaucratic authority and upon

leadership for the acquisition and maintenance of his position. The position of a headman was acquired either by succession to an existing position or by the creation of a new village. In either case the village headman was normally the mwini mbumba of the dominant mbumba in the village. Genealogical position was therefore one of the bases for the acquisition of the position of headman. In the maintenance of his position the village headman, as mwini mbumba of the dominant mbumba, was also partly dependent upon kinship authority. He also possessed a certain amount of bureaucratic authority. Rights over the allocation of land were delegated from the chief to the village headman, who was responsible to the chief for the maintenance of law and order in the village. The village headman could, moreover, call upon the chief for support in dealing with recalcitrant villagers; this was of some significance in dealing with unrelated accretions to the village. In order to acquire and maintain the position of headman qualities of leadership were, however, essential. Kinship was the basis of succession to a headmanship but within the range of possible candidates the actual heir was chosen partly on the basis of his personal qualities as a leader. The qualities desired in a village headman were an interest in the affairs of the villagers, and the ability to judge disputes and to allocate land fairly and an ability to make effective offerings to the spirits of his matrilineage who took an interest in the affairs of the village. In order to found a new village qualities of leadership were also necessary, an aspiring village headman had

to persuade sufficient people to follow him to enable him to form a village. Furthermore, if an existing village headman was to maintain his position he also required qualities of leadership; if he did not display such qualities he was liable to find that a section of the village had left him and formed a new village elsewhere. The authority of the village headman over unrelated or patrilineally related groups within the village was weak and the emergence of an aspiring village headman from within such groups was often sufficient to cause a split in the village and the formation of a new one.

The basis of the position of superordination of the present-day village headman is rather different, particularly in Mlanje. To maintain his position the village headman is now very much dependent upon bureaucratic authority, he frequently invokes the support of the chief or of a government officer to deal with recalcitrant villagers. The position of the headman is greatly strengthened by his possession of an office carrying bureaucratic authority in a Western administrative system. Some qualities of leadership are, however, still necessary if the village headman is to maintain his control over the villagers, in particular he must still possess the ability to allocate land and judge disputes fairly. The threat to an inefficient or ineffectual village headman now comes not from the possibility of secession of part of the village, but from the chief or administrative officer who may remove his tax register if he fails to perform his duties satisfactorily.

Binary fission can no longer take place in the political units in Mlanje and the only means of acquiring the position of a village headman is by succession to an existing office. For this some qualities of leadership are necessary, the actual heir being chosen partly on the basis of his personal characteristics from the matrilineal kin of the previous headman. As the creation of new villages is no longer possible kinship is of more significance in the selection of village headmen than it was in the traditional system. Kinship authority is, however, of less significance in the maintenance of the village headman's position than previously. Today villages are much larger and contain a greater number of accretions unrelated to the headman.

The position of a chief in the indigenous system could be acquired in one of two ways, either by succession to an existing chieftaincy or by the formation of a new one. In either case qualities of leadership were required; succession to an existing chieftaincy was partly on the basis of kinship but personal qualities were important in the selection of the heir from within the range of potential successors. New chieftaincies were formed by powerful village headmen seceding from the chieftaincy and setting up new ones in a new area; in order to do this they had to be able to attract a sufficiently large following to make it difficult for the chief to prevent their secession, for this qualities of leadership were required. The chief also required qualities of leadership to maintain his position. Being autonomous

and not dependent upon a higher level in a hierarchy, the chief did not possess bureaucratic authority. Kinship authority was insignificant in maintaining the position of the chief; his own mbumba formed a very small part of his following and his relationship with his village headmen was not framed in the idiom of kinship. To a certain extent the chief had institutionalized charismatic authority, he was the intermediary between his subjects and the spirits of his matrilineage who sent rain to his area, and this supported his position in the political sphere. The qualities required by the chief included the fair judgment of disputes, the appointment of suitable headmen and the granting of the right to hold initiation ceremonies to such headmen, success in making the necessary offerings to his ancestral spirits to ensure an adequate supply of rain, and, particularly in the case of the Yao, ability as a war leader. A chief who did not display these qualities was liable to find that he had lost part of his following to a powerful village headman who had started a new chieftaincy.

The position of the Native Authority is a very different one from that of the traditional chief. The position can only be acquired by succession to an existing one. It is no longer possible for a powerful village headman to set himself up as a chief. Kinship is the basis of succession to the position of Native Authority, but the Administration has an interest in the appointment and the selection of the heir from within the range of potential matrilineal successors is partly based up on the

Administration's assessment of his personal qualities. To a certain extent these are qualities of leadership; for the Administration to appoint a chief who did not command the respect of his subjects would be against its interests. A Native Authority who does not exhibit qualities of leadership is not threatened by the secession of part of his chieftaincy, but he is threatened by removal from office by the Administration. In all the cases that I recorded in Mlanje where chiefs had been removed from office they had been replaced by matrilineal relatives and not by one of their more powerful village headmen. There is thus no opening for the village headman who aspires to become a chief.

The position of the Native Authority is a position in an administrative hierarchy, and the Native Authority possesses bureaucratic authority. This is in contrast to the indigenous chief who was autonomous and unable to invoke a superior power to support him. Kinship authority is not significant in the maintenance of the position of a Native Authority and charismatic authority is less important than was the case for the traditional chief. N.A.Nazombe once stated that he had been appointed by God to be chief over his area, this did not, however, appear to provide him with the ability to impose supernatural sanctions.

There are several contrasts between the positions of superordination in the religious associations and these in the kinship and political systems. A person is born into a kinship system, and cannot easily escape the obligations inherent in his

position in it without a change of residence. Similarly every one resident in the area is subject to a village headman or a Native Authority and a change of residence only results in a change in the individual occupying the superordinate position. The churches and sects on the other hand are voluntary associations. Those holding subordinate positions in these associations can leave if they find their superiors uncogential, all that is required is for the member to cease to take part in the activities of the association. Positions in the ecclesiastical hierarchy are thus very different from those in the present political hierarchy; the Native Authority and the village headman can employ effective sanctions against their subordinates, sanctions which can be supported if necessary with force by the Colonial Administration. The position of an ecclesiastical official is more precarious; any sanctions which he may employ are effective only so long as his subordinates are willing to remain in the church or sect. The parallel here is with the traditional political officer-holder, who, if his rule was too oppressive, lost part of his following. A further significant contrast between the office holder in the political hierarchy and the office holder in the ecclesiastical hierarchy is that the former is appointed specifically for the purpose of maintaining law and order, this being his primary function; the ecclesiastic, on the other hand is responsible for the teaching and preaching of Christianity and for the conduct of worship, the control of the behaviour of his congregation being but one

aspect of his work. Nevertheless ecclesiastical officials are in positions of superordination over their congregations.

For the purpose of analysis the ecclesiastical officials found in the area may be divided into five categories: 1) Officials in the Roman Catholic Church; 2) Officials in the Church of Scotland and the European sects; 3) Subordinate officials in the simple secessionist African sects; 4) The founders and leaders of African sects - excluding the Ethiopian Church; 5) Officials of the Ethiopian Church.

The structure of the Roman Catholic Church is that of a pyramid with the Pope at the apex. Every official in the Roman Catholic Church is dependent upon officials in a superordinate position in the hierarchy. Weber is thus correct when he describes the Roman Catholic Church as "one of the examples of rather distinctly developed and quantitatively large bureaucracies".<sup>1</sup> On the other hand the distinctive feature of the Roman Catholic hierarchy vis-à-vis other ecclesiastical hierarchies in Southern Nyasaland is that its officials possess charismatic authority. As has already been stated, in this church the doctrine of "Apostolic Succession" is held and at the ordination of a priest the "gift of grace" is imparted. The Roman Catholic priest possesses the ability to impose supernatural sanctions, and

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1. Gerth and Mills. "From Max Weber". op. cit. p.204

excommunication from this church commits a believer to the realm of the damned. Lay officials in the Roman Catholic Church, whilst not themselves possessing charismatic authority, are appointed by priests who do possess such authority. These lay officials have bureaucratic authority and are appointed largely on the basis of their education and suitability for the appointment as judged by the priests. They have only limited opportunities for the exercise of qualities of leadership - the forms of service are laid down in detail, there are no extempore prayers and the sermon plays a much smaller part in services than in the Protestant churches and sects. The official in the Roman Catholic Church is less likely to lose part of his congregation than the official in other ecclesiastical hierarchies; there are no other religious associations in the area with a similar doctrine which dissenting members can join. Roman Catholics do, however, sometimes leave the church and become members of African sects, but the number who do this is very small indeed in relation to the total number of Roman Catholics in the area.

The basis of the position of subordinate officials in the Church of Scotland and in the European sects is rather different. These associations have no bishops, no priests, and no doctrine of "Apostolic Seccession". No "gift of grace" is believed to be conferred upon the officials on their appointment. They are not believed to be able to impose supernatural sanctions; these are

for God himself to employ. The supernatural sanction in these churches and sects operates in a more diffuse and vague way and is of only limited significance in supporting the ecclesiastical hierarchy. These ecclesiastics, therefore, do not possess charismatic authority. The deaconesses, deacons and elders in these associations have little authority, but act rather as advisors to the minister or local minister who is in charge of the congregation. The authority of the local minister or minister is delegated to him by the European missionary who holds a superordinate position in the ecclesiastical hierarchy; it is thus bureaucratic authority. The European missionary himself may possess a limited amount of bureaucratic authority in as much as he is supported from Europe or the United States. This support is financial and the European missionary's control over the funds enables him to wield bureaucratic authority over his subordinate officials. More important than this, however, is the fact that the European missionary is considered to possess qualities of leadership; this is partly the result of the general pattern of social relationships in Southern Africa where a European qua European is regarded as a person of superior status and able to influence or control the actions of Africans. (European missionaries have not been exempt from the anti-European sentiments recently expressed in the Protectorate, but they still generally command the respect of the members of their own missions.) The suitability of a person for the position of a minister or local minister is judged by the senior officials of the mission on the

basis of his personal character and education. Before his appointment to the bureaucratic position he receives a period of training at a bible school. The local minister or minister in the European mission must display qualities of leadership if he is to maintain the size of his congregation. He has to be an acceptable preacher and bible instructor, he has to arbitrate fairly in disputes in which members of his congregation are concerned. The minister must also display tact in dealing with his subordinate local ministers, and the local minister must also display tact in dealing with the subordinate officials in his congregation. If they do not succeed in displaying such qualities of leadership they are likely to lose part of their congregation, who either cease to be active Christians or join another sect. It appears that the officials in charge of Protestant congregations are in a much weaker position than officials in charge of Roman Catholic congregations as the number of secessions from Protestant congregations is much greater.

The local ministers and ministers in the African sects are in a similar position to their counterparts in the European missions; they are, in fact, trying as far as possible to act in the same way as the officials of the European sects. They receive bureaucratic authority from the head of the sect, but this is likely to be weaker than that possessed by the minister or local minister in the European body because the position of the head of the sect is generally weaker. The ministers or local ministers in the African sect are not appointed on their educational standards

or after a period of training (except in the Providence Industrial Mission). They are, however, appointed on the basis of their personal qualities of leadership. Many ministers and local ministers in the African sects have previously been elders or other subordinate officials in the Church of Scotland or another sect; on joining the African sect they have brought part of their old congregation with them - thus demonstrating their capacity as leaders. Heads of African sects are then willing to accept them as local ministers, thereby increasing the membership of their sect and also their prestige. Heads of African sects are anxious to increase the membership of their sect, and in order to do so often appoint local ministers whose sole qualification is their ability to command a small following. Generally these local ministers do not possess many of the qualities demanded by a congregation of its ecclesiastical officials, and this is reflected in the smaller size of most of the congregations of African sects compared with their counterparts in the European missions.

The founder of the African sect is almost entirely dependent upon the possession of personal qualities of leadership to maintain his position. He does not claim personal charisma, being in no sense a prophet, nor does he claim that charismatic authority is attached to his office as head of the sect. To a very limited extent their positions in the kinship system have been used by the heads of two sects; Rogers, the founder of the Kagulu Ka Nkhosa, and Severe, the founder of the Faithful Church of Christ both used

their positions as mwini mbumba to influence members of their mbumba to join their sect.<sup>1</sup> This, however, is the exercise of informal rather than formal kinship authority - it is not generally accepted that the mwini mbumba has the authority to force members of his mbumba to become members of any particular religious association. The founder of the sect is autonomous, does not generally recognize any superior authority and therefore does not exercise bureaucratic authority. There are, however, a few exceptions to this. A few African sects, notably the Faithful Church of Christ, receive financial support from the United States; the head of the sect has the authority to dispense this money, and this contributes considerably to his ability to control his subordinate officials. Apart from these factors the head of the African sect is entirely dependent upon personal qualities of leadership to maintain his position. The qualities demanded of him are largely the qualities of a European missionary; and, as has been stated, there is a correlation between the size of the sect and the extent to which its head displays these qualities. Many potential founders of sects have not succeeded in establishing a single congregation.

My contacts with the Ethiopian Church were limited, and consequently any remarks about its ecclesiastical hierarchy can only be tentative. In the congregations with which I had contact, one of the bases of the authority of the officials was their

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1. See Appendix B. for the religious affiliation of Severe's relatives.

position in the kinship and traditional political systems. The officials in charge of both congregations were people in positions of authority according to the tradition system of values. The Ethiopian Church is a "nativistic" association and lays emphasis upon the maintenance of ancestor veneration. The officials of the sect appear to be people who hold important positions in relation to the ancestral spirits of the area. These officials also have some bureaucratic authority, having been appointed to positions in charge of congregations by the head of the sect. Officials of this sect also require qualities of leadership if they are to be successful in attracting and maintaining a congregation; ancestor veneration has declined very considerably since the arrival of Christian missionaries, and qualities of leadership are necessary to persuade people to revive the practice.

What hypotheses emerge from this brief attempt to analyse the positions of superordination in the area? It may be taken as axiomatic that within the area there are a substantial number of people who are anxious to acquire status and prestige. In Southern Nyasaland there are two important ways of doing this; firstly by the acquisition of a following over which a person is in a position of superordination, and secondly by assimilating as far as possible what is conceived to be a Western way of life.

The acquisition of followers requires the exercise of qualities of leadership. In the indigenous social organization

it was possible for a person possessing such qualities to secede from the mbumba and become a mwini mbumba, for a mwini mbumba to increase his following by seceding from the village and forming a new village, and for a powerful village headman to secede from the chieftancy and form a new one. Today in Mlanje this is not possible in the political sphere. It is, however, possible in the religious associations. A person may become an elder in one of the churches or sects, and may wish to acquire a following by becoming a local minister in charge of a congregation. If he has the necessary education and is willing to undergo the necessary training he may be appointed to such an office in one of the European missions, if not he may become a local minister in one of the African sects. Traditionally the mwini mbumba aspiring to the position of a village headman left the village taking with him as many of the villagers as he could and founded a new one. Today the elder in a congregation aspiring to the position of a local minister may leave the congregation taking with him as many of its members as he can and found a new one. The aspiring headman was welcomed by the chief of another area as this increased his own following and thus his prestige. The aspiring local minister is welcomed by the head of the African sect as this increases his following and thus his prestige. In both cases the new social unit is a replica of the one from which it has seceded; the new village has a similar structure to the old one, and it had already been emphasized that one of the most striking features of the

congregations of the African sects is the degree to which they attempt to be the same as their counterparts in the European sects. A similar parallel exists at the next level in the hierarchy. A powerful village headman who wished to acquire a larger following left the chief and founded a new chieftaincy taking with him his own villagers and any others who would support him. Similarly the local minister who wishes to increase his following may secede from the sect of which he was a member and found a new one, taking with him his own congregation and as many others as will support him. Again both the new chieftaincy and the new sect are essentially replicas of the ones from which they have seceded. The indigenous process of binary fission has been replaced by the modern process of sectarianism.

The impression was gained in the field that there is a high proportion of sons of chiefs and important village headmen in offices in the African sects. This unfortunately is only an impression gained from a large number of examples and I do not possess sufficient statistical material to demonstrate it conclusively. This will be a most significant line of investigation in future fieldwork as there is evidence to suggest that in the traditional political system it was sons of chiefs and village headmen who often founded new villages and chieftaincies.

All of the African sects, with the exception of the Ethiopian Church are modelled upon the European mission from which they have

seceded. None of them, however, has seceded from or is modelled upon the Roman Catholic Church. This appears to be associated with the Roman Catholic doctrine of "Apostolic Succession". As a result of this doctrine the officials of this church possess charismatic authority which is given to them from a higher level in the hierarchy. The Roman Catholic priest is appointed from above, and it is therefore impossible for a person to appoint himself the head of a sect modelled on Roman Catholicism unless he has already been ordained. The Roman Catholics do not ordain priests without a long period of training which makes it unlikely that one of them would secede and try to form a new sect, he has a greater amount of prestige as a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. The Protestant bodies have no such doctrine, and their ministers possess no institutionalized charisma and their hierarchy is therefore more susceptible to imitation.

The Ethiopian Church provides an opportunity for those with status in the traditional system of values, status which has gone unrecognised in the establishment of the present political hierarchy, to acquire a position in an organisation which is partly, at least, modelled upon a European administrative system. Though these people have less political authority than they consider to be their due, they now have authority and a following in another social context. A court case involving village headman Ntephia and his subsequent joining the Ethiopian Church illustrates this.<sup>1</sup>

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1. I confine myself here to the salient features of this case as I have described it in greater detail in my "Chiefship & Politics in the Mlanje District of Southern Nyasaland" Africa Vol. XXXI No.1 Jan. 1961 pp. 36 - 46.

Ntepha is a village headman in N.A. Nazombe's area whose predecessors were referred to as "chief" in early District Books and later became Principal Headmen. He is generally regarded as the descendent of the first Nguru in the area.

About a month after the declaration of the "State of Emergency" in Nyasaland in March 1959 Nazombe summoned a number of Nguru headmen, including Ntepha, to his court. They were asked if they had attended a meeting about a month previously at Msikita's village. One replied that he had heard that Ntepha was to hold a meeting there and then admitted that it was Ntepha himself who had informed him. A councillor of Chirapula (mother's brother of Nazombe and mwini dziko) then stated that he had been at Msikita's village that day and witnessed a dance organized by Ntepha at which he had sacrificed a goat and chickens to his ancestral spirits for rain. Nazombe stated that Ntepha had no right to organize this dance; this was a privilege of his mother's brother - as mwini dziko. Ntepha said they had been performing it for some time.

Another witness then stated that after the dance a meeting was held with a local official of the African National Congress as chairman. At this meeting it was said the real mwini dziko was Ntepha, and Msikita should be Native Authority as he was Ntepha's nephew and know

English having been a school teacher. Nazombe emphasized that he was Native Authority because he had been appointed by the Government. He then took the tax registers from four of the headmen including Ntepha and Msikita and told them to return the following week with two councillors from each village when he would appoint a committee (sic) to do the work of the government in the village until he had informed the District Commissioner of what had taken place. In fact the District Commissioner never was informed and the headmen were given their tax registers back about three months later.

About a fortnight after this had taken place I was invited to attend an opening service of the Ethiopian Church in Ntepha's village. The invitation came from Ntepha himself and from a local minister of the sect who was to take part in the service. Up to this time there had been no Ethiopian congregations in Nazombe's area, but there had been four in the adjacent chieftancy. Ntepha had apparently invited ministers of the Ethiopian Church to start a congregation in his village and the opening service was held outside his house, after his wife had prepared food for the visitors. During the service Ntepha was called upon to stress the importance of the maintenance of ancestor veneration in the area, and he also explained his position as the descendent of the first Nguru immigrant into the area and the consequent importance of the spirits of his matrilineage.

After the service the visiting minister suggested that Ntepha should make a note of the people present and that he should continue to hold services in his village trying to build up a congregation. This Ntepha did. Ntepha was thus using his position in the indigenous political structure as the basis for acquiring a following in the Ethiopian Church, a following which was wider than his own village and which recognized the importance of the spirits of his matrilineage. The government had failed to recognise his status when Nazombe had been appointed Native Authority, the Ethiopian Church did recognize it.

#### THE NYASALAND AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS <sup>1</sup>

It is convenient at this stage to analyse the position of the Nyasaland African National Congress in the power structure of the area. Ntepha invited the Ethiopian Church to his village shortly after the court-case in which he had his tax register removed from him and also shortly after the proscription of Congress, some of whose officials had been present at the time of the dance.

Congress was formed in 1944 as a convention of a number of associations concerned with African advancement and welfare, none of which appear to have been connected with African sects. At the time of its foundation there was no single national grievance

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1. After its proscription in March 1959 the Nyasaland African National Congress was subsequently reformed under the name "Malawa Party" by which it is known today. Here I continue to use the name by which it was known at the time of my fieldwork.

which strongly united all its members. The federation of Nyasaland with the Rhodesias in 1953 provided this. Congress was the only active African political party in Nyasaland in 1958/9 and therefore the focus of all discontent.

Congress publicly declared itself opposed to Federation and was associated with a number of "disturbances" in various parts of the country including the Shire Highlands in 1959. The "Report of Nyasaland Commission of Enquiry" in 1959 suggests that these disturbances were probably due to "a general feeling of unrest rather than to anti-Federation views". It further states "the Africans in those parts had grievances relating to the tenure of land and the disturbances had apparently a non-political source".<sup>1</sup> Informants suggested that some of the minor disturbances in February - March 1959 were only partly connected with Federation. In these cases the disturbances were associated with conflicts arising from the application of the policy of indirect rule to the indigenous political organization of the area.

Native Authority Nazombe, both at his court and in addressing village meetings, repeatedly avowed his support for the government and his disapproval of Congress activities. He was aware, and he emphasized, that his power was the power of the government. He made such statements on several occasions during the trial of Ntephja and the other headmen. At this time Congress was engaged

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1. Para. 23

in anti-government activities and gained the support of Ntepha, Msikita and others in the area not primarily because of its campaign against Federation, but because of its general opposition to the government and its representatives. The government's representative in the area was Nazombe, and those already in conflict with him found an ally in Congress. The conflict between chief and powerful village headman, traditionally resolved by fission, is now manifested in terms of a new institution, the Nationalist political party

In an adjacent chieftaincy the situation was reversed. The Native Authority, Mkumba, was himself a member of Congress. Bwanaisa one of his powerful headmen was anxious for his position and was attempting to undermine his authority by currying favour with the government. He met with a certain amount of success but when the Native Authority was deposed (in October 1959 after I left the field) he was replaced, not by Bwanaisa but by another member of his matrilineage.

During the period February - March 1959 a number of disturbances took place at Native Authority Courts. The "Report of the Commission of Enquiry" cites an example of such a disturbance. "On 27th February the first shooting in the Southern Province occurred at the court of Chief Chigaru. The trouble was foreshadowed by an incident which took place at the court of another chief, Lundu, Some days before Chief Lundu had summoned a meeting of village headmen for February 21st. Several did not come saying they had to attend a Congress meeting. So he summoned them

to appear, presumably for contempt, at his court on February 24th. They came with a crowd, threw down the summons with "Kwaza" <sup>1</sup> written across it, and <sup>said</sup> that he must not prosecute any more for breaches of agricultural rules.<sup>2</sup>

Lundu is a Nyanya chief in the Chikwawa District and an acknowledged government supporter. It would appear that a similar situation to that in Mazembe's area also existed in Lundy's area.

It would be erroneous to suggest that this kind of conflict was the only source of support for Congress. Obviously in the urban areas many other issues were involved. In Mazembe's area at least, this was however the main source of Congress support, though Congress was not as powerful as this chieftaincy as in other parts of the Southern Province.

Congress, like the African sects, is also organized on the basis of a western bureaucracy. It has its central and local committees with their secretaries, chairmen, treasurers, and other officials. In the same way as the sects it provides a hierarchy in which an aspiring official can attempt to find an office and thus to find prestige. There are, so far as I am aware, no formal links between the African National Congress and any of the African sects, and I have no evidence to suggest that

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1. A Congress slogan which literally means "dawn".

2. Report of the Commission of Enquiry. op. cit. Para 133

the proportion of active Congress members was higher in the African sects than in the European ones. It appears that the African sects and Congress are alternative means of acquiring an office, and that from the point of view of officials they are alternatives. Ecclesiastics are not Congress officials at the same time. It would be difficult to attempt to isolate the factors involved in determining in which of the hierarchies an aspiring official will attempt to acquire an office. Personality and the career history of the individual concerned appear to have a major part to play - but I lack enough comparative case histories to make any useful comparison at this point.

The hypothesis that in Southern Nyasaland the African sects and the African National Congress are alternative avenues of expression is supported by the fact that the Ethiopian Church in particular expanded rapidly after the proscription of Congress. It was not for instance until after Congress had been banned and was unable to give active support to Nlepha that he approached the Ethiopian Church.

Both the African sects and the African National Congress are able to offer opportunities for the acquisition of positions of status and prestige for those unable or not wishing to do so in the European administrative or mission hierarchies. There is no alternative available according to traditional norms - the religious grouping co-incided with political and kin groupings. There

were no age-set organizations or secret societies, with the exception of Nyau, which is not found in Mlanje.

CHAPTER 17

## THE INCIDENCE OF SECTARIANISM

In the Introduction it was stated that sectarianism was widespread in Christendom, and had characterized the history of Christianity. It is widespread in Africa, but far from universal - it is found in parts of Southern Nyasaland and not in others, in Mlanje for instance, but not in Chapananga's area, in the rural areas of the Shire Highlands but not in the Blantyre/Limbe urban area. The presence or absence of African sects in Nyasaland appears to be partly associated with a number of socio-economic factors. Furthermore the type of sect which is formed is also associated with the socio-economic background of the area and the type of missions which have established themselves within it.

In some cases disagreements among members of a religious group do not lead to secession and the formation of a new group. It has been noted already that two prophecies of a Messianic native were recorded in Southern Nyasaland but no new religious group was formed with these prophecies as its charter. Pauw records the existence of a prophetess Botlhale, an Anglican, in the Taung Reserve. In 1909 she was possessed by the "Spirit of God" and was able to prescribe treatment for the sick and to make magical use of water that had been prayed for. She was especially remembered as a prophetess with abilities as a rainmaker. Botlhale never organized a church or congregation of her own,

but when she died in 1952 she was buried by the African United Church.<sup>1</sup>

In Uganda a revival movement started within the Anglican Church about 1929, this spread through much of Uganda, and later into Kenya. This was a protest against hypocrisy in the Anglican Church and involved the introduction of public confessions. It did not lead to the development of a new sect in Uganda, but in Kenya it was the basis of the establishment of the Church of Christ in Africa.<sup>2</sup> This is possibly associated with the different power structures of Uganda and Kenya - a hierarchical state system being characteristic of Uganda and a more localized distribution of power characteristic of Kenya, it may also be associated with different types of mission contact.<sup>3</sup>

Sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland is found in Mlanje and not in Chapananga's area, and this is associated with several socio-economic factors which have already been described and which I summarize here.

There are considerable differences in the amount of contact each area has had with missionaries; this being partly associated with climatic factors. There are only two European missions operating in Chapananga's area. The diversity of European sects

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1. Pauw, B.A. "Religion in a Iswana Chiefdom" London 1960 pp.48-49

2. Welbourn, F. "East African Rebels" pp.9-10

3. See below p. 292.

found in Mlanje is absent and so therefore is the example of sectarianism given by the European missions. The density of population is much higher in Mlanje than in Chapananga's area, the pattern of settlement is nucleated in Chapananga's area and communications are more difficult. A new sect in Mlanje has a more densely populated catchment area from which it can recruit followers. The development of good communications in Mlanje encourages the mobility of the population (particularly by bicycle, the presence or absence of roads makes little difference to those on foot). Pauw has suggested that the "mobility of the native population plays an important part in the multiplication of denominations in a given area".<sup>1</sup> Taylor and Lehmann have pointed out the contrast between sparsely populated Northern Rhodesia and densely populated Nyasaland in the devolution of authority within missions. They suggest that in Nyasaland missionaries have been able to establish many congregations leaving Africans in sole charge without having to leave them unsupervised for months at a time. In Northern Rhodesia the sparse population has encouraged the establishment of large mission stations where there are schools with boarders, the remainder of the work being carried out by itinerant unordained workers.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that the greater devolution of authority in Nyasaland and

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1. Pauw op. cit. 1960. p.52

2. Taylor, J.V. and Lehmann, D. "Christians of the Copper Belt" 1961 pp. 20 - 21.

particularly in Mlanje is associated with sectarianism.

The African ecclesiastical official becomes a person of status and there is a greater desire to achieve such positions.

I have attempted to show that one of the main factors involved in the development of sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland is that African sects provide opportunities for positions of power and prestige for those unable to achieve such positions in the political hierarchy. I have also attempted to show that the lower density of population has important repercussions on the power structure of Chapananga's area vis-a-vis Mlanje and suggest that this is associated with the lack of sectarianism in the former.

Sectarianism in Nyasaland is characteristic of the rural area of the Shire Highlands but not of the urban area. The situation here is the reverse of that found amongst the Tswana by Pauw. The headquarters of the African sects found in the Taung Reserve are mainly to be found on the Witwatersrend whilst the older missions in South Africa mostly originated in the rural areas and spread into the towns. In Southern Nyasaland many of the missions started work in what is now the urban area of Blantyre/Lambe and then spread into the rural areas, whilst the African sects started in the rural areas and have remained there. The explanation for this is to be found in the different types of urban development. In Nyasaland the urban development

has been small and has been associated with commerce - the establishment of the Church of Scotland in Blantyre led to the beginning of commercial activity and the town grew up around the mission. The urban area of the Witwatersrand is an industrial area and its location was determined by the availability of raw materials for industry and not by previous European settlement. The location of mission stations can be seen to be an important factor in the location of commercial centres but not in the location of industrial ones.

Sundkler has pointed out that some African sects in Johannesburg are financially dependent upon their rural congregations,<sup>1</sup> the cost of running a congregation in a city being high. In the African township of Nchanga in Chingola on the Northern Rhodesia Copper Belt although there are congregations of African sects only one of them has a church building, the African Methodist Episcopal Church, it seems that the difficulties of building a prayer house in the urban areas are too great.<sup>2</sup> The founders of African sects in Nyasaland stated that the cost of erecting church buildings to the required standard was too great. I have suggested that one of the characteristic features of the simple secessionist sects in Southern Nyasaland is that they provide

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1. Sundkler "Bantu Prophets in South Africa" p. 83.

2. Taylor, J.V. and Lehmann, D. op. cit. 1961 p. 214

an opportunity for people to become officials and acquire prestige - in order to acquire prestige it is necessary to be associated with a church building, and so the "homeless" sect congregations found in the industrial copper belt and Witwatersrand are not found in Blantyre/Limbe. The sects in these other areas are not predominantly of the simple secessionist type that are found in Southern Nyassland. Moreover, the Blantyre/Limbe urban area is comparatively small and is surrounded by a densely populated rural area from which a proportion of the urban workers travel daily, in this surrounding rural area African sects are to be found.

A further factor appears to be that in the urban area alternative means of achieving status exist and there is not therefore the same stimulus for the foundation of simple secessionist sects. In the larger urban areas of the Copper Belt many of the missions also have European congregations. In these circumstances the European officials find themselves placed in a difficult position having to serve both African and European congregations, often their primary allegiance is to their European congregations, by whom their stipend may be paid. There are difficulties over admission of Africans to European services and this leads to accusations of hypocrisy.<sup>1</sup> Such accusations result in the

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1. Taylor and Lehmann. op. cit. Chapter 8.

development of sectarianism. In Blantyre/Limbe the situation is rather different. Here the missionaries were the first people to arrive in the town and the European population is very much smaller; the European churches and sects have retained their character primarily as mission churches and their officials' ministrations to the European population are incidental to their primary activities as missionaries. There is one exception to this - the Anglican Church has a church building and priests in Blantyre who cater primarily for the European population. This, however, is not a source of conflict as there are very few African Anglicans in the area.<sup>1</sup>

The geographical distribution of sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland is fairly clear, the incidence of membership of African sects amongst various categories of the population compared with the incidence of membership of other religious associations is not so clear. Some of the categories of people which could be relevant in this context are differentiated on the basis of sex, age, class, education, tribe, position in the administrative hierarchy, membership of the African National Congress and position in the kinship system.

It has already been stated that both African and European

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1. Bettison did not record any in his study of the peri-urban villages. See: Bettison, D.G. "The Social and Economic Structure of Seventeen Villages, Blantyre-Limbe, Nyasaland." Lusaka 1958 Section C. pp. 54 - 57

sects have a greater number of women adherents than men.<sup>1</sup>

There is no apparent difference between them in this respect, this is with the exception of the Ethiopian Church which has a larger proportion of male adherents.

There appear to be two differences in the age structure of the congregations of African and European sects. In the first place there is a much smaller number of children in these African sects which do not have schools. Secondly, the age of the members of the Ethiopian congregations which I attended was higher than that in the African secessionist sects and in the European sects.

In the United States a correlation between membership of sects and social class has been noted, the lower social classes (based upon occupational categories) having a higher incidence of sect membership.<sup>2</sup> A similar correlation between social class and Anglicanism and Methodism has also been documented in Banbury, Oxfordshire.<sup>3</sup> Weber pioneered research into the relationship between social class and sect membership, but he used the term "sect" for some entities which according to the typology I have adopted would have been termed churches. In the rural areas of Southern Nyasaland distinctions of social class based upon occupation do not generally arise, except in as much as clerks,

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1. See page 239.

2. See for instance Dynes, R. "Church-Sect Typology and Socio-Economic Status" *American Sociological Review* 1955 pp. 555 - 560. This is also the general theme of Listar Pope "Millhands and Preachers" New Haven 1942.

3. Stacey, M. "Tradition and Change" A Study of Banbury" 1960. Chapter 4

teachers and dispensers may be regarded as being of a higher social class. This is little differentiation on the basis of land-holding. I found no teachers, clerks or dispensers who were members of the rank and file of African sects. The greatest majority of such people are members of one of the European missions. Pauw also states that in the Taung Reserve distinctions of social class do not generally arise and so cannot be correlated with sect membership.<sup>1</sup>

A few informants in Southern Nyasaland suggested that there was a correlation between membership of the tribe and religious affiliation. They suggested that the members of the African sects were Nguru immigrants and that the Ngonja people wanted only the Roman Catholic Church and the Church of Scotland. This was denied by other informants and subsequent investigation did not substantiate the statement.

Such correlations either do or did, however, exist in other parts of Africa - Schapera writing of the Tswana states "Missionaries by 1870 were established in all the larger tribes. They would usually succeed in converting the chief. Until fairly recently many tribes had missionaries of one denomination only so that the Christianity of say, the Ngwaketse (Congregationalist)

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1. Pauw op. cit. 1960 p.221

differed in some features from that of the Kgalla (Dutch Reformed) or Maletse (Lutheran) - now denominational monopolies have largely disappeared".<sup>1</sup>

Amongst the Baganda "although chieftainships were rigidly divided between the Roman, Anglican and small Moslem parties, the dominant place in the native administration and in education has been held by the Anglicans",<sup>2</sup> again this was the result of the missionaries approaching and converting the chiefs.

Suudkler has also shown a close link between one of the Bantu Independent churches in South Africa and the Swazi Royal Family.<sup>3</sup> In all of these cases the tribe constitutes a single state (the Tswana tribes are defined in this way) and the dominance of one denomination has been the result of the conversion of the chief to that denomination. I have already shown that the tribe in Southern Nyasaland was not a single state structure but was composed of a number of unstable petty chieftaincies at the time of the arrival of the missionaries. It was therefore impossible to convert the tribe by converting its chief, furthermore tribal sentiment is less strong in Southern Nyasaland than in, say, Buganda.

Taylor and Lehmann found that in the tribally heterogeneous Nchanga township on the copper belt some members of the African

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1. Schaperc "The Tswana" Ethnographic survey of Africa - Southern Africa. Part III 1953 p.58

2. Welbourne op. cit. p.16

3. Suudkler, B.G.M. "Bantu Prophets in South Africa" 2nd Edition in Press

Methodist Episcopal Church had joined because the minister spoke their own language (Sindebele).<sup>1</sup> All services in Mlanje and Chapananga's area are in Chinyanja which is spoken by almost the entire population. Thus language is not here a factor in sect membership.

Welbourne has traced the relationship between two of the most important African sects in Buganda and the state organization. Here church and state have been closely connected. The Bamalaki, a sect which eschewed the use of medicine was founded by Mugema, who "was, by inheritance, one of the largest landholders in the country, as head of the Monkey clan standing in close ritual relationship with the Kabaka and as a county chief the one remaining personal link, below the Kabaka, between the ancient clan system and the more modern system of centralized administration. Reuben Spartas (the founder of the African Greek Orthodox Church), though the son only of a village headman is one of the best-educated and most able men of his generation. Both were deeply involved in the political and social issues of their day."<sup>2</sup> The secession of both men from the Anglican Church was thus bound up with their attitude towards the state.

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1.) Taylor and Lehmann op. cit. p. 200.

2.) Welbourn. F. op. cit. p. 15.

In Southern Nyasaland there is no parallel to this. The administrative system has not been associated with any particular church or sect and the foundation of new sects is not associated with the political system in this way. Here the African sect is an alternative means of acquiring prestige for those denied it in the new administrative hierarchy - this does not necessarily involve it in conflict with this administrative hierarchy. The relationship between the two has already been described.

I have no evidence to suggest that membership of African sects is correlated at all with membership of the Nyasaland African National Congress. Support has been given to Congress by the Church of Scotland, whose adherents are frequently Congress members or officials, but this does not appear the case in the African sects in the area. The Nyasaland government has been wary of African sects since its experiences with the Providence Industrial Mission and the Chilembwe Rising in 1915. They have considered them with suspicion as likely centres of sedition, now however, the religious and political protests are found in separate organizations. Taylor and Lehmann suggest that a similar situation is characteristic of the Nchanga Township on the Copper Belt: "At Nchanga no Congress leader was an office-bearer in any church in 1958".<sup>1</sup> Pauw suggests that the African

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1. Taylor and Lehmann op. cit. p.168

churches on the Taung Reserve are not violently anti-European and suggests that this is associated with the lack of large-scale wars in the history of the area and with the absence of a strong indigenous military organization.<sup>1</sup> These do not, however, seem to me to be the crucial factors involved. Sundkler has pointed out the comparative lack of seditious activities of the Zulu Churches - and the Zulu did have a strong indigenous military organization.<sup>2</sup>

So far in this chapter I have attempted to relate the incidence of sectarianism and of membership of African sects in general to the social background. In Africa, however, there are a number of types of sects, only two of which are represented in Nyasaland. The presence or absence of particular types of sects may be influenced by three major sets of factors - first, the indigenous social organization and religious beliefs and practices; and secondly, the type of mission with which the inhabitants of the area have been in contact; and thirdly, the amount and type of other European settlement in the area.

In Southern Nyasaland I came into contact with one nativistic type sect and eleven of the simple secessionist type. I did not come into contact with any of the healing type of African sect, though conversations with informants suggested that two of

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1. Pauw op. cit. p.234

2. See Sundkler op. cit. p.295

the sects with which I had no contact might fall into this category, and that they had both come from the Union of South Africa. Although the rumours of a millenarian nature were recorded, in neither case did these lead to the foundation of a new sect, and there were no sects which could be classified as Messianic in Southern Nyasaland.

Pauw discusses an "important difference between separatism in Taung and amongst the Zulu, viz. the absence of such a nativistic trend as that found amongst the Zulu Zionists." He goes on to say "The absence of such distinct nativistic trends in Taung must probably be related to the advanced stage of disintegration of the traditional culture. A traditionally less elaborate ancestor cult amongst the Tswana may also be responsible for this difference". In this context it is significant that the one nativistic sect in Southern Nyasaland was started by an Ngoni in the Central Province. The Ngoni had a more elaborate ancestral cult than the Nyanya, Nguru or Yao and also appear to have maintained a greater degree of tribal solidarity in the Central Province than any of the "tribes" to be found in the South. The founder of the Ethiopian Church also spent some twenty-seven years in the Union of South Africa. This nativistic sect was not founded in the social background of Southern Nyasaland, but this background has been sufficiently receptive for its introduction and subsequent expansion in the area.

I have already suggested that the lack of healing sects and

messianic sects in the area is probably partly associated with the lack of prophets and the lack of the phenomenon of "possession" in the indigenous organization of Southern Nyasaland. Neither prophecy nor possession formed the basis for the acquisition of a following in this area.

The outstanding characteristic of sectarianism in Southern Nyasaland is the overwhelming pre-dominance of the simple secessionist type sects. I have suggested that this is associated with the struggle for positions of leadership and authority and the withdrawal of opportunities for achieving status in the political system. It is also associated with the lack of strong tribal sentiments in the area and the strong desire amongst a large proportion of the population to adopt as far as possible the way of life which they consider to be European.

The type of mission which has been responsible for much of the missionary work in Southern Nyasaland is the type generally known as "non-conformist". This type is distinguished, for our present purposes, by the absence of an episcopacy and any elaborate ritual. The Roman Catholic Church, however, is the largest single religious organization in the area, but there have been no secessions from it. Furthermore, the number of members of African sects who were formerly Roman Catholics is relatively very small. I have suggested that the absence of simple secessionist sects based upon Roman Catholic doctrine and practice is associated with their doctrine of "Apostolic Succession". The lack of

secessions from the Roman Catholic Church appears characteristic of African sects generally, and not merely of those in Southern Nyasaland. There are a few exceptions, but the number is small. One such exception is the Bana ba Mutima (the Children of the Sacred Heart) an African sect which has seceded from the Roman Catholic Church on the Copper Belt and some of whose activities are described by Taylor and Lehmann.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately the ordination and functions of its priests are not described.

A comparison between the African Greek Orthodox Church in Uganda, described by Melbourne in his recent book "East African Rebels" and the simple secessionist sects of Southern Nyasaland brings more sharply into focus some of the essential features of the latter. There are a number of contrasts between them, partly it appears associated with the indigenous social structure of the area and partly with the type of missions which have been working in it.

The African Greek Orthodox Church was introduced into Buganda as the result of the activities of Reuben Sparta. Sparta was baptized in the Anglican Church as a child and then won a scholarship to King's College, Budo, "at that time the highest rung of the educational ladder in East Africa". In 1914

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1. Taylor and Lehmann op. cit. pp. 106 - 108

Spartas joined the Army and during the 1920s as a result of reading the "Negro World", published by Marcus Garvey, learnt about the African Orthodox Church which had been started amongst the American Negroes in the United States. This church had its episcopacy from the Eastern Orthodox Church though its validity has been questioned by theologians.<sup>1</sup> An African Archbishop, Archbishop Alexander, was consecrated and posted to the Union of South Africa. Spartas eventually made contact with him, and was at first appointed a lay-reader of the African Orthodox Church in 1929 after he publicly announced that he had broken with the Anglican Church. Following this was a protracted series of negotiations resulting in Archbishop Alexander making the journey from South Africa to Uganda in 1931 to train Spartas and a friend, and finally to ordain them as priests of the African Orthodox Church in 1932. A most significant point of contrast with the simple secessionist sects in Southern Nyasaland is the amount of time and money spent by Spartas in ensuring that he was properly ordained and given valid orders. Later Spartas learned that the African Orthodox Church was, in fact, a break-away from the Greek Orthodox Church. There followed another series of protracted negotiations for the church under Spartas in Uganda to be recognised by the Orthodox Patriarch of Alexandria. He was eventually successful and the African Orthodox Church in Uganda

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1. Welbourne, F. op. cit. p. 78-79

eventually became a part of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Uganda presents a great contrast to Southern Nyasaland in its power structure. Politically it consists of a single hierarchical state under the Kabaka. From the religious point of view it is perhaps unique amongst British territories in that missionary activity has been entirely in the hands of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches, both of which are characterised by a pyramidal power structure. There appears to have been little or no precedent for a man wishing to acquire a following seceding either from the church or from the state. Positions of power were delegated from above, authority appears to be more important than personal qualities of leadership. Spartas disagreed with officials of the Anglican hierarchy, but still wished to operate within what he understood to be the historically valid church. His studies of ecclesiastical history showed him that at an early stage the church split into East and West and that the Eastern Church had valid authority (i.e. institutionalized charismatic authority). Spartas then spared no effort to acquire this authority.

In Kenya members of the African Independent Pentecostal Association approached the Anglican bishop of Mombasa in 1933 with a request that he ordain two priests for them. This request was refused. Consequently in 1935 Archbishop Alexander came to Mombasa and ordained African priests, both, it appears, for the African Orthodox Church and for the African Independent

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Pentecostal Church. Later deacons were ordained in these sects without a bishop. Welbourn states that "In the absence of a bishop, Kikuyu independents were prepared - as the A.G.O.C. in Uganda clearly is not - for presbytal ordination. Like other differences in the two movements this may reflect different patterns of leadership in the tribal societies in which they operate."<sup>2</sup> In Kenya, as in Southern Nyasaland, there was no pyramidal state structure. On the other hand a further factor may be involved. Welbourn also states later that "Low has remarked upon the coincidence which sent episcopal Anglican missionaries to Uganda, with its centralized administrative system, and Presbyterians to Kikuyu, where administrative control was far more localized."<sup>3</sup> Here, as in Southern Nyasaland the African sects had the example of the European sects with bureaucratic authority to follow.

The African sects in Kenya have tended to multiply, those in Uganda have not. The African Greek Orthodox Church in Uganda has apparently remained one and undivided, whilst in Kenya it has split into a number of smaller local sects. The "Revival" in Uganda has been contained within the Anglican Church, in the Nyanza Province of Kenya it has led to the formation of a new sect, the Church of Christ in Africa.

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- 1.) Welbourn. op. cit. pp. 147 - 148.
  - 2.) Welbourn. op. cit. p. 154.
  - 2.) Welbourn. op. cit. p. 190.

There appears to be a reluctance to form new sects in Uganda, it was not until the movement had been in existence for some time that the Bamalski broke away from the Anglican Church,<sup>1</sup> and then it was not without reluctance. When Nabel Enser the European founder of the Mengo Gospel Church, a split from the Anglican Church, finally left Uganda - the sect disintegrated and many of its members joined the Anglican Church. This is in contrast to the situation in Southern Nyasaland where conflict either in the indigenous kinship or political systems or in the present religious organisations appears to lead immediately to secession.

Pauw writing of the Taung Reserve states "tribal unity was not inviolable and the splitting of tribes is not an uncommon feature in the history of the Tswana ..... The transition from the traditional small-scale society to the large-scale society is of course in progress, but the pattern of thought of many members of the society is still conditioned by the traditional background. To this background the idea of a church as a corporate body of people which far transcends the geographical area known to the individual and which remains united indefinitely is clearly foreign. I suggest that under these circumstances, unless the unity of the Church is very strongly accentuated, malcontents easily secede, and that this is an important factor in the progressive

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1. Welbourn op. cit. p.34

fragmentation within Separatism.

Protestant missions in South Africa have probably failed to draw enough attention to the doctrine of the Church amongst peoples to whose traditional background ideas such as church unity and ecumenism are completely foreign. In the Roman Catholic Church, on the other hand, the unity of the church has a very strong sanction in the doctrine that there is no salvation outside the Church (extra ecclesiam nulla salus) and in the notion that secession from the Church endangers the eternal salvation of the soul. This sanction has no doubt acted as a strong deterrent to Separatist secessions from the Roman Catholic Church." <sup>1</sup>

These remarks are equally applicable to Nyasaland, and one might add, far from presenting ideas of church unity - the large number of European denominations in the area has given an obvious example to African secessionists.

In the first paragraph of this thesis I pointed out that sectarianism was not only characteristic of Christianity, but also of other religions including Islam. Islam has its adherents in Southern Nyasaland as a result of the contact between the Yao and the Arabs on the East Coast. The question must then be asked: "Is sectarianism characteristic of Moslems in Nyasaland as it is of Christians, and if not, then why not?"

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1. Pauw op. cit. p.237

Informants stated that during the early 1950s a split had occurred in Islam in Nyasaland over the question of singing at funerals. This dispute was settled by a visiting Sheikh from Zanzibar and since that time all Moslems in Nyasaland have remained in one corporate group owing allegiance to Zanzibar.

Three possible explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, may be put forward to account for this lack of sectarianism. Christianity is associated with the way of life of the white population, a way of life which a large proportion of the population are anxious to adopt and to be seen adopting as far as possible. To hold an office in a Christian institution is therefore to hold a position of status in the changing values of the area. An office in an Islamic congregation does not have this attraction. Secondly, from the point of view of the Nyasaland Moslem Islam has a pyramidal power structure centring on Zanzibar which a few Nyasaland sheikhs have visited, in this it is similar to the Roman Catholic Church. Thirdly, only one branch of Islam has been introduced into Nyasaland, and there is not the example of sectarianism which exists in Christianity. To assess the validity of these explanations and to make further comparisons between Christianity and Islam in this area would require a further period of research.

**APPENDICES.**

APPENDIX. A.

This poem is the introduction to a tract called "Proof", sent from a Church of Christ in the United States to the Faithful Church of Christ.

"(READ FIRST LETTER OF EACH LINE FOR TITLE OF POEM.)"

Sunday School is like a tree,  
Under which men like to be,  
Never doubting what is taught  
Division is by Satan brought,  
All trees are known by fruits they bear,  
You see my friend what kind is here.

Such fruits, won't you stop and think?  
Cannot please God but soon must sink,  
How deep my friends no one can tell,  
One thing we know a place called hell,  
Old Satan is the captain there,  
Look out for trees by fruits they bear.

For when earth's millions shall appear,  
Remember what I tell you here,  
Unto God's word account we'll give  
In which no Sunday School does live,  
Wherein is found no Sunday School,  
So who on earth now is the fool?

Surely friends you will agree,  
As these truths I offer thee,  
To the Bible all must go,  
and by this fact the truth we know,  
Nowhere in Scripture will you find  
Sunday School to be devine, (sic)

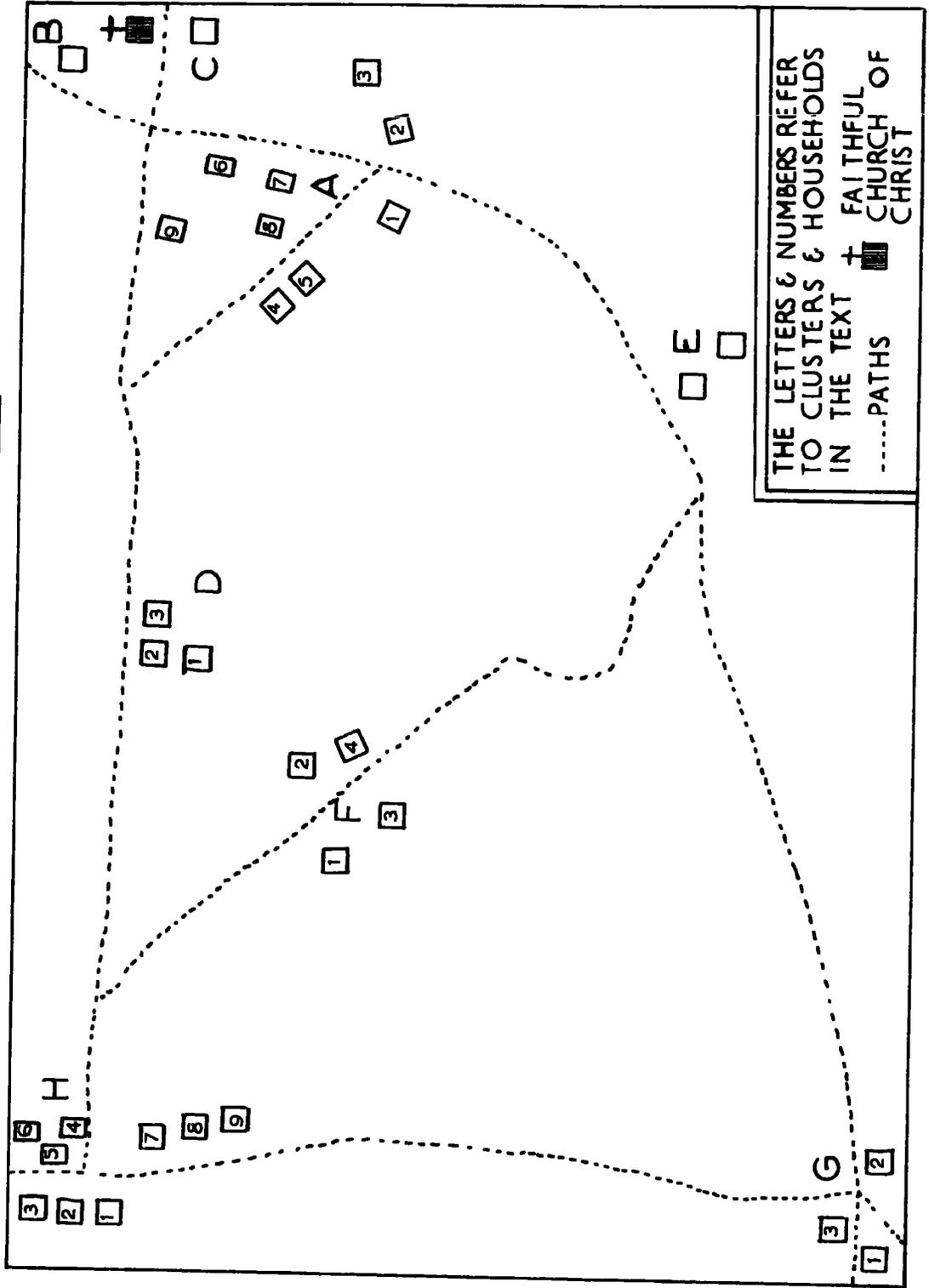
What old Satan likes to do, is  
Everywhere divide the pew,  
And what he'll use to make success,  
Poor deluded folks like best:  
One thing I know, by Heaven's rule,  
No Church will have the Sunday School."

WILSON J. P.

ANALYSIS OF THE COMPOSITION OF SEVERAL  
 HAMLETS OF WILSONVILLE VILLAGE IN CHIEF  
 WILSONVILLE DISTRICT OF THE DISTRICT OF  
 CHIEF.

The hamlets whose composition I wish to analyse are part of Wilsonville village in Chief Wilsonville area in the Wilsonville District. Both Chief Wilsonville and village headman Wilsonville are Yao. There are, however, no Yao living in the hamlets under consideration, the majority of the inhabitants are Murnu but there are some Yao who have entered the village after the Murnu. Wilsonville is a large village consisting of some 430 households, and it is divided into several sections each of which is under a nyakwawa. The hamlets analysed here are under the nyakwawa 'APARA, a patrilineal cross cousin of SIVLE, the founder of the Faithful Church of Christ. The hamlet in which 'APARA'S household is situated is not included in this analysis, but hamlets composed of relatives of the previous 'APARA, SIVLE'S father and the first nyakwawa are included. It appears that the previous

PART OF WENDEWENDE VILLAGE (Not to scale.)



THE LETTERS & NUMBERS REFER TO CLUSTERS & HOUSEHOLDS  
 IN THE TEXT + FAITHFUL CHURCH OF CHRIST  
 -...- PATHS

LAPARA moved into the village some time in the 1950's, bringing with him relatives of his wife as well as his own matrilineal relatives. He moved from a site in the Blantyre District some twenty miles from Wendewende and was granted a site in Wendewende village. The first LAPARA died in 1956 and at that time his son SEVERE attempted to take over the position from him, but was unsuccessful. Village headman Wendewende insisted that the title went to a matrilineal relative. My contacts were based upon a relationship with SEVERE, and the conflict existing between him and the present LAPARA explains why I have no details regarding the latter's household.

SEVERE was able to obtain land for the headquarters of the Faithful Church of Christ when his father was nyakwawa and he started the sect in 1950.

There are two clusters of nine houses (Clusters A and H on the map), one of four houses (Cluster F), two of three houses (Clusters D and G), one of two houses (Cluster E) and two single houses (B and C) in the area.

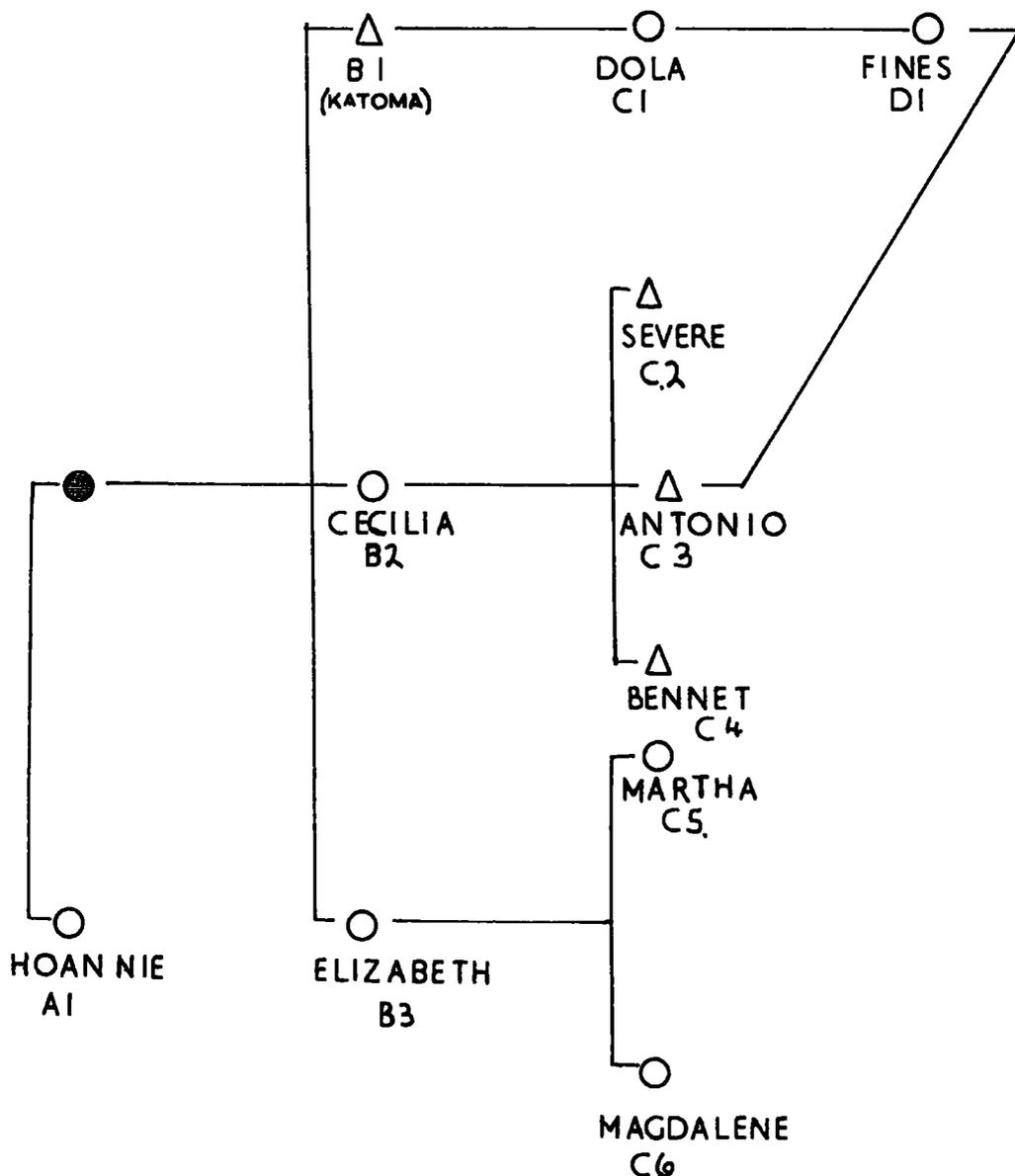
Cluster A.

The genealogical ties of the inhabitants of this cluster are shown on Wendewende Genealogy No.1.

HOUSEHOLD NO.1. consists of a simple primary family, comprising SEVERE (C2 on the genealogy) and his wife CECILIA and six children all of whom are living in the house. This house is a large brick one with several rooms, glass windows and a considerable quantity of European furniture, including a three piece suite, carpet, beds etc. Later, after the time that the census upon which this analysis is based was taken, the house was extended so that it was well above the average standard, even for educated Africans, in the district. Near the house is a maize-mill belonging to SEVERE, this is a twin cylinder diesel model which was purchased new at a cost of over £250, and which does a thriving trade. SEVERE is recognised as mwini mbumba by all of the people named on Genealogy No.1 with the exception of KATOLA's patrilineal descendents. KATOLA is recognised as the real mwini mbumba, but he has now settled in Northern Rhodesia, and SEVERE is recognised as mwini mbumba for all practical purposes.

Wendewende Genealogy No 1.

(Cluster. A)



NB C I AND D I ARE LINKED PATRILATERALLY TO THE REMAINDER OF THE GENEALOGY

SEVERE has married his wife, who is Uguru, virillocally; he did not transfer money to her family. SEVERE is the leader of the Faithful Church of Christ, which he started nearby in 1950, and for which he receives financial support from the United States, and he has a considerable influence in the area. Attached to the household is a paid servant, whose main duty is the supervision of the maize mill, but who also helps to clean the house: he lives about a mile away. SEVERE's wife and children are all members of the Faithful Church of Christ.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 2 consists of a rejuvenated family, comprising CECILIA (B2) mother of SEVERE and her husband EDSON. CECILIA is a widow by the death of SEVERE'S father CHIMBAYA, and married EDSON - a widower. There are no children by this marriage. EDSON has married CECILIA uxorilocally, he is Uguru. Both are members of the Faithful Church of Christ: CECILIA was a Roman Catholic before the foundation of her son's sect, and EDSON was a member of the Providence Industrial Mission before marrying CECILIA.

HOUSE NO. 3. There is no household No. 3; the

house numbered 3 on the diagram has been built to accommodate visitors to the Faithful Church of Christ. It is used mainly by church ministers attending meetings at the headquarters of the sect.

HOUSEHOLD NO.4. consists of a simple primary family comprising ANTONIO (C3), a brother of SEVERE, and his wife ELISE (D1) and two infant children. This house is of traditional wattle and daub construction, but is larger than average and has large windows. ELISE is a mother's brother's daughter's daughter of ANTONIO and the marriage between them is an intra-village one. ANTONIO, who has been educated up to Standard Three, is a pastor in the Faithful Church of Christ; before the foundation of the sect by his brother he was a Roman Catholic, and before that a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses. ELISE also, was a Roman Catholic but is now a member of the Faithful Church of Christ.

HOUSEHOLD NO.5 comprises an aged widow JOANNIE (A1), a sister of CECILIA's mother and a mother's mother's sister of SEVERE and ANTONIO. The house is separated by barely two yards from that of ANTONIO who is looking after her. JOANNIE

has two daughters living in another part of Merdenende village, but she prefers to live near A. O. I. O. whom she brought up as a child. MAMA IM was a Roman Catholic but states that she is now a member of the Faithful Church of Christ.

HOUSEHOLD 0.6. consists of a rejuvenated family comprising ELI P. (P3) and her husband I. O. O. O., and two children of ELIZABETH's former marriage, who are unmarried and sleep in a lowelo. ELIZABETH is a sister of CACILIA, mother of M. V. E. E., whom she recognises as mwini mbumba. She divorced her previous husband in 1943 and married the present one ten years later. The marriage is uxorilocal. ELIZABETH has two daughters who are married and living in the homlet, and two sons who have married uxorilocally. Both she and her husband have received a sub-standard education. Both are members of the Faithful Church of Christ, ELIZABETH being a deaconess; she became a member on its foundation having previously been a Roman Catholic. MENDOZO was also previously a Roman Catholic but was excommunicated for divorcing his former wife and joined the Faithful Church of Christ on his second marriage.

HOUSEHOLD 0.7 consists of a residual family comprising M. AKTUA (C5) and her infant daughter.

MAR'IA is divorced from her husband and appears to be suffering from some form of psychosis which, informants state, has developed within the last two years and which has rendered her incapable of looking after a household. She is now being looked after by her mother ELIZABETH.

HOUSEHOLD NO.8. consists of a simple primary family comprising MAGDELENE (C6), her husband, MOKIAS, and four children. Magdelene is the daughter of ELIZABETH and thus a matrilineal parallel cousin of SEVERE whom she recognises as mwini mbumba. She has married MOKIAS uxori locally. Both MOKIAS and MAGDELENE are Roman Catholics, and MAGDELENE is the only person in the cluster who recognises SEVERE as mwini mbumba but who is not a member of the Faithful Church of Christ. The three eldest of her four children attend a nearby Roman Catholic Mission School.

HOUSEHOLD NO.9. consists of a residual family comprising DOLA (C1) and her two unmarried children. She has been divorced twice. DOLA is a matrilineal cross cousin of SEVERE and recognises her brother who has married uxori locally in another part of Wendewende village as mwini mbumba. She has four children, a daughter FINES (D1) who is married to

ALMONTIO (C3), and a son who has married uxorilocally, and two unmarried daughters who are attending a nearby Roman Catholic School. DOLA states that she herself is a Roman Catholic in spite of the fact that she has been divorced twice.

HOUSE. B.

This isolated house is occupied by a widow IUMALAYEKHA, who is living alone. She has recently moved into the area from Portuguese East Africa on the death of her husband, having followed her son LUCIANO, who married uxorilocally in Cluster H. She has no other relatives nearby and recognises LUCIANO as mwini mbumba. Since having been given a site in the area she has become a member of the Faithful Church of Christ.

HOUSE. C.

This house is occupied by LELRICK, a teacher in the school attached to the headquarters of the Faithful Church of Christ, and secretary of the sect. He has no gardens in the area and only lives in the house from Monday to Friday whilst he is working in /endewende. He goes to his wife's village, about

eight miles away, on a Friday evening, and returns on a Monday morning. EDMOCK is Nuru, but is unrelated to anyone else in the area, he has merely come for employment. Although employed by the Faithful Church of Christ he is a member of the Church of Scotland, and states that he has no intention of changing. He has been educated to Standard Six.

CLUSTER 2.

Genealogy No.2 shows the relationships between the inhabitants of this cluster. This pattern of relationships is complex and atypical of the area.

HOUSEHOLD NO.1. consists of a rejuvenated family comprising SINGATIYA and SUWEDI. SINGATIYA SINGATIYA was the second wife of NAPATA who had first married his patrilineal cross cousin ERISSA. SINGATIYA was a matrilineal cross cousin of NAPATA through a slave wife of his mother's brother. He was allowed therefore, to bring her to live virilocally. Both NAPATA and ERISSA have now died, and Singatiya has married SUWEDI who has moved to where SINGATIYA was previously living. NAPATA was a matrilineal cross cousin of SEVENE's father CHLOMYA. Both SINGATIYA and SUWEDI were members of the Faithful



Church of Christ, but have now joined the Roman Catholic Church, stating that as Catholics they were allowed to brew beer.

HOUSEHOLD NO.2. consists of a section of a compound family comprising AFAWE and her four children. She is the first wife of MALI LO, who spends half of his time with her and half with his other wife some twenty miles away. AFAWE is a daughter of the marriage between NAPALA and SINGATIYA. The marriage between AFAWE and MALI LO is based upon uxorilocal residence. AFAWE states that she is a Roman Catholic, but that her husband is a pagan.

HOUSEHOLD NO.3. consists of EDINA who has recently divorced her husband STEPHANO and who is living alone, having no children. EDINA is a daughter of the marriage between NAPALA and SINGATIYA. She is a member of the Faithful Church of Christ.

CLUSTER B.

This cluster consists of two households unrelated to any other households in the area.

HOUSEHOLD NO.1. consists of EFLINA, a widow living alone. She has been living at the present site since 1952, when she came with her brother who has since

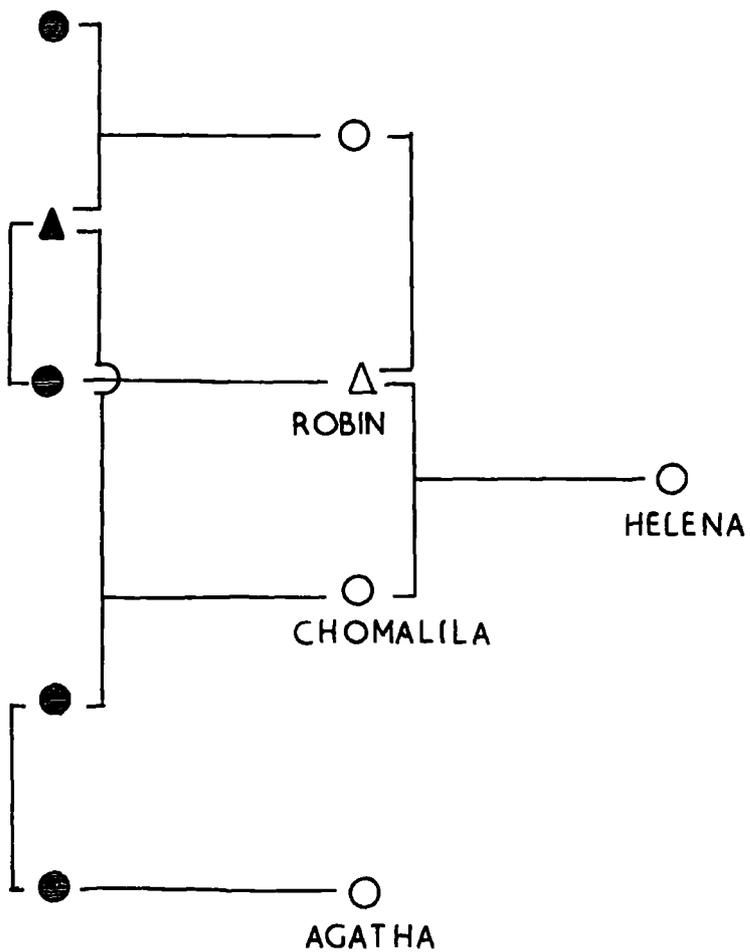
died. He came and begged land on which to settle after a dispute with some of his matrilineal relatives in a village some five miles away. FELINA has no relatives nearby with the exception of her daughter FALIS who lives in the adjacent house. She has three other daughters who have married uxorilocally in the village which she and her brother left. FELINA is Nyanja and a member of the Faithful Church of Christ which she joined after she arrived in Wendewende, not having been a Christian before.

HOUSEHOLD NO.2. consists of a simple primary family comprising FALIS and her husband RAMSEY and their three infant children. The marriage is uxorilocal having taken place shortly after FALIS moved to Wendewende with her mother FELINA. FALIS is NYANJA but RAMSEY is NGURU. Both of them are members of the Church of Scotland, this being the only church or sect of which they have been members.

#### CLUSTER F.

This cluster consists of four houses but despite repeated attempts it proved impossible to obtain details of the fourth household. This may have been due to the political situation at the time when the census

Wendewende Genealogy No 3.  
(Cluster F.)



was taken.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 1 consists of a section of a residual compound family, comprising ROBIN and his second wife CHOMALIA; ROBIN's mother's brother had two wives and ROBIN has married a daughter of each of them. All the children of the marriage between ROBIN and CHOMALIA are now married and living elsewhere, with the exception of HELENA who is married and living in the same cluster. ROBIN and his second wife moved into endewende some four years ago after having a disagreement with the village headman of their former village. They moved out of the village as an elementary family and were given a place in endewende. The eldest son of the marriage wanted to start a new village of his own, but ROBIN declined to live there. The son has not been able to establish a new village. Both ROBIN and CHOMALIA are Nyanja, neither of them is Christian.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 2 consists of a residual family comprising HELENA, who has recently been divorced from her husband GARNETT, and her two infant children. Being a daughter of CHOMALIA she is Nyanja, she recognises her brother as mwini mbumba. She is a Roman Catholic.

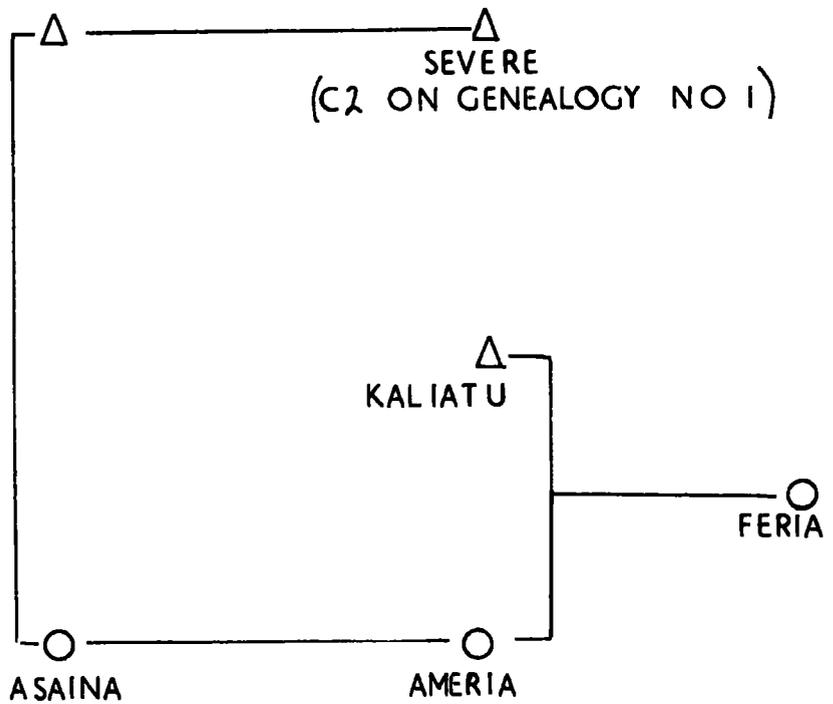
HOUSEHOLD NO 3 consists of ASALMA, a widow, who is living alone. She is a matrilineal parallel cousin of CHOMILLA, and came to join her when her husband died. CHOMILLA is the only relative she has, apart from a son whom she recognises as mwini mbumba and who is living and working in Limbe. ASALMA is a Roman Catholic.

#### CLUSTER G.

This cluster consists of three households, the relationship between the inhabitants of which are shown in Wendewende Genealogy No.4. The inhabitants of this cluster are related matrilineally to the inhabitants of Cluster A. ASALMA is a brother of the deceased nyakwawa LAPAKA, the father of SEVENE - the mwini mbumba of the dominant mbumba of Cluster A.

HOUSEHOLD NO 1 consists of a rejuvenated family comprising ASAINA and her husband ROBERT. ASAINA has one daughter by a previous husband, this daughter is also living in the cluster. After her divorce ASAINA married ROBERT, an Nguru widower, uxorilocally. In the absence of any male matrilineal relatives in the area ASAINA, an old woman and a great grandmother,

Wendewende Genealogy No.4.  
(Cluster G.)



regards herself as mwini mbumba. MELIA is a Roman Catholic, Robert is not a Christian.

HOUSEHOLD NO.2. consists of a rejuvenated family comprising MELIA, her husband KALIAJU, and one unmarried daughter of MELIA by a previous husband. MELIA is a daughter of ASALIA, whom she recognises as mwini mbumba; formerly she recognised the nyakwewa USPARI, her mother's brother, now deceased, as holding that position. She has divorced her first husband, and has married KALIAJU, uxorilocally. She has one married daughter living in the cluster, another married daughter living with her husband who is working in Lilongwe, and a son who has married uxorilocally. MELIA is not a Christian, KALIAJU was a member of the Zambesi Industrial Mission but was expelled for drinking beer.

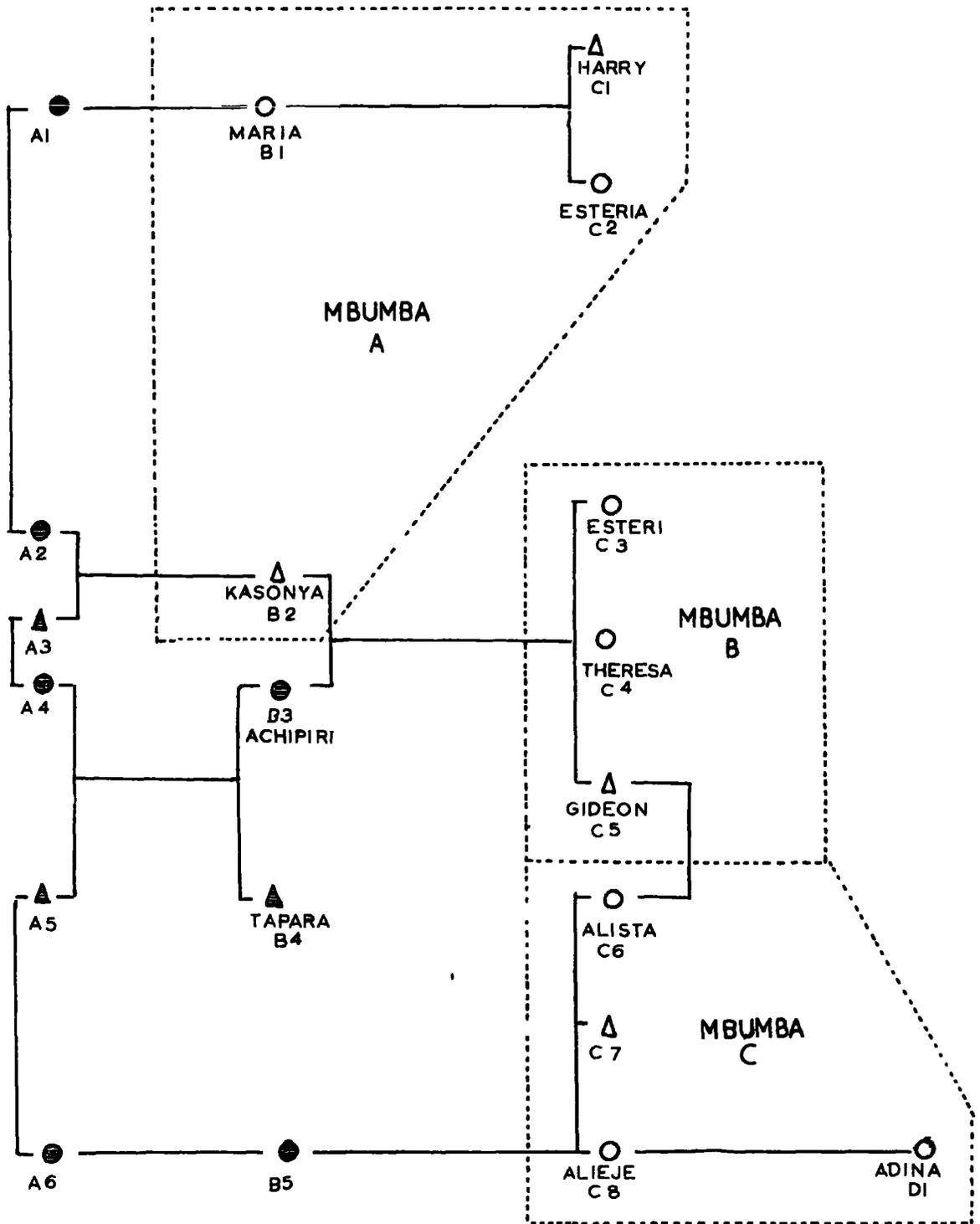
HOUSEHOLD NO.3. consists of a simple primary family comprising MERIA, her husband ALAN and three infant children. MERIA is the daughter of MERIA and recognises her mother's mother ASALIA as mwini mbumba. She has married ALAN uxorilocally. ALAN comes from Zomba some fifty miles away and is employed outside the village during the week as a mattress maker, but he usually spends the week-ends in endewene. ALAN is

penja, though his wife is Turu, he is a member of the Church of Scotland, whilst his wife is a member of the faithful Church of Christ.

CINQUE. H.

This cluster consists of nine houses, the relationships between the inhabitants of which are shown in the appended Genealogy No. 5. There are three mbumba represented in this cluster and with one exception the grouping of the houses within the cluster reflects the matrilineal grouping of the female members of the households. The exception is Household No. 6, where HARRY (us) has married virilocally, and the position of the house reflects his matrilineal affiliation and not that of his wife. The female inhabitants of houses nos. 1, 2 and 3 are members of mbumba P on the diagram (in the case of house No. 1 KASOVYA is a widower, but his deceased wife, AGITPII, was a member of this mbumba.) These houses are separated from other houses of the cluster by a path. Houses Nos. 4 and 5 are inhabited by female members of mbumba A on the diagram, and are separated from houses Nos. 7, 8 and 9, inhabited by female members of mbumba C, again by a path. All three mbumba are linked to the deceased nyakwaga IAPABA by various links. mbumba B

# Wendewende Genealogy No.5. (Cluster H.)



In order to simplify this diagram the relative positions of siblings do not indicate relative age

was, before his death, part of A. A.'s own mbumba, ACHIPHI having been his sister. Mbumba A is linked through the mwini mbumba KASONYA (#2) who is a matrilateral cross cousin of LAMADI, and who married KAPANA's sister ACHIPHI. Mbumba C is linked to Mbumba through the mother of MIEJE (C8) and MISO (C6), who was a patrilateral cross cousin of KAPANA, the link between the two mbumba being strengthened by the marriage of MIEJE (C8) with her classificatory patrilateral cross cousin GIBOM (C5) who is now recognised as mwini mbumba of Mbumba B.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 1. consists of KASONYA (#2) a widower living alone, but looked after by two of his married daughters who are living in adjacent houses. KASONYA has two unmarried daughters who are living with their married sisters ESTERI (C3) and BERESA (C4). Kasonya is Nguru, he is not Christian.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 2. consists of a simple ordinary family, comprising ESTERI (C3) and her husband JOSEPH and one infant daughter. ESTERI is a daughter of KASONYA and ACHIPHI, she has married JOSEPH uxorilocally and recognises her brother GIBOM (C5) as mwini mbumba. Both ESTERI and JOSEPH are Nguru. ESTERI was a member of the Faithful Church of Christ, but is no longer;

similarly JOSEPH is a Roman Catholic but he never attends the church services.

HOUSEHOLD NO 4. consists of a reuverated family comprising MARIA (Bl) and her husband M. J. S. MARIA is a matrilateral parallel cousin of KISOMYA whom she recognises as mwini mbumba. She was a widow when she married M. J. S. a widower, uxorilocally. The two children of her former marriage are living in adjacent houses. MARIA states that she is a Roman Catholic, whilst her husband is a member of the Church of Scotland.

HOUSEHOLD NO.5 consists of a simple primary family comprising ESTERIA and her husband LUCIANO and three small children. ESTERIA is a daughter of MARIA and recognises KISOMYA as mwini mbumba. She has married LUCIANO uxorilocally, LUCIANO is Nguru, and his mother has recently moved into a house in ende wende ( House B ), having followed her son from Portuguese East Africa on the death of her husband. Both LUCIANO and ESTERIA are Roman Catholics.

HOUSEHOLD NO.6 consists of a simple primary family comprising HARRY (Cl), his wife ALICE and six

unmarried children, the eldest of whom are living in a govele. HARRY is the son of MARIA and recognises KASONYA, his mother's mother's sister's son as mwini mbumba. He has married virilocally in the knowledge that he will succeed to the position of mwini mbumba on the death of KASONYA, who is now an old man. He has married his mother's brother's daughter. Both HARRY and ALINE are Nguru, both of them are also Roman Catholics and their two eldest children are pupils at a local Roman Catholic Mission School.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 7 consists of a simple primary family, comprising ALIEJE (CB), her husband GREYSON and four unmarried children. They have three other children, two sons who are both in Salisbury, and a married daughter in an adjacent household. ALIEJE is Nguru, but GREYSON is Nyanja, the marriage is uxorilocal. GREYSON receives a monthly pension from the Government in compensation for wounds which he received as a member of the King's African Rifles. He is educated up to Standard One and has served in India and Siam. ALIEJE recognises a brother living in another part of Wendewende village as mwini mbumba. Both ALIEJE and GREYSON are Roman Catholics, as are all their children with the exception of ADINA (DL). They have all been, or

are being educated in Roman Catholic Schools, one of their sons having reached Standard Four.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 8. consists of a temporary residual potential family. ADINA (D1) is living alone. Her husband DAMSON is in the King's African Rifles and stationed in Northern Rhodesia. ADINA recognises her mother's brother as mwini mbumba. Both ADINA and DAMSON are members of the Church of Scotland, ADINA was formerly a Roman Catholic but joined the Church of Scotland to marry DAMSON who was already a member of that church.

HOUSEHOLD NO. 9. consists of a simple primary family comprising AILISA (C6), her husband GIDEON (C5) and three young daughters, under the age of puberty. This is an intra-cluster marriage, but the house is situated adjacent to AILISA's sister's house. AILISA and GIDEON are classificatory cross cousins, both are Ngunu. GIDEON is mwini mbumba over his four sisters and is living close to them. AILISA recognises a brother living in another section of the village as mwini mbumba. Both GIDEON and AILISA are Roman Catholics, and their two eldest daughters are attending a local Roman Catholic Mission School,

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