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FROM THE 1964 CABINET CRISIS¹ TO THE 2014 CABINET IN MALAWI: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CHURCH'S PUBLIC ROLE WITHIN A CONTEXT-CHANGING CHURCH² AND STATE RELATIONS

ABSTRACT

There is always a reason behind a paradigm shift that takes place in society. The Presbyterian Church (CCAP) in Malawi is one of the religious institutions that played a critical role in the nation's liberation and fight for independence. Seven weeks into independence a cabinet crisis occurred where some ministers were dismissed, while others resigned in support of their fired colleagues. Ironically, the Church kept a low profile and did hardly anything to intervene. This article assesses how, in 1964, the cabinet crisis impacted on the role of the Church and argues that political conflicts influence relations between the Church and the State. Furthermore, the article contributes to the current

- 1 The 1964 cabinet crisis in Malawi occurred seven weeks into independence, when prominent cabinet ministers rebelled against Dr Banda's dictatorial policy and poor governance in the country.
- 2 In this article, the Church refers to the two Malawian Scottish Presbyterian Synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre.

debate on Church and State relations through the lenses of Calvin's Church and State and the 1964 cabinet crisis. The article is informed by Calvin's Church and State, with the focus on how this conceptual thought influences Church-State relations.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In 1964, seven weeks after Malawi gained its independence, a team of cabinet ministers rebelled against Dr Kamuzu Banda, the then Prime Minister, in what was popularly known as the 1964 cabinet crisis (Williams 1978:213-114; Short 1974:202-203). Scholars (Short 1974:197-230; Williams 1978:212-227; Ross 2009:206-230; McCracken 2012:429-460; Baker 2001:109-129, 194) have contributed to this debate by stating that this political crisis was sudden and unexpected. It flows from within the larger historical narrative of the Church and State relations in Malawi dating back to pre-colonialism (Ross 1997:377). This cabinet crisis not only reveals the role played by the Church in the nation's history, but also shows the relationship that prevailed between the Church and the State in pre- and post-independent Malawi. As the founding pillar of the nation, the Church occupies a fundamental space in dealing with the event that led to the cabinet crisis of 1964. A proper understanding of this crisis demands a probe into the role of the Presbyterian Church, which not only was the first to settle into the country prior to British colonialism, but also played a critical frontline role in the nation's liberation process (Williams 1978:45-46). Scholars (Du Plessis 1929:300-303; Laws 1934:8; Chilenje 2007:23, 46-47) agree that the Presbyterian Church first appeared in Malawi in 1875 and 1876 via the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions. Towards the end of the 1880s, the missionaries became concerned about the territorial ambitions of the Arabs and the Portuguese who, through Harry Johnston, were planning to have all missionary land fall under the Rhodes British African Company. The missionaries did not approve of this, and called for a total British cover (Ross 1997:377-379). Pachai (1973:70-80) and Ross (1997:377) agree that the Church influenced the British colonisation of Nyassaland to protect its territories from the Portuguese. Thus, in 1891, Britain declared Nyassaland a British protectorate, with Johnston as commissioner and consul general (Williams 1978:52-53; McCracken 2012:50-57). It was not until the 1890s that the British protectorate and the borders of what is now known as Malawi were established (Pachai 1973:83-92; Ross 1995:52). However, Williams (1978:124-128) and McCracken (2002:71) state that, by the time colonialism was officially introduced, the Church had reached a larger population in all of the three regions of the country, with graduates in positions of influence, particularly in the emergence of Native Associations, which later led to the formation of the Nyassaland African Congress.

However, by 1953, the colonial government instituted the federation of Rhodesia and Nyassaland against the wishes of the majority of the African populations and the Church (Mbaya 1997:47; Munyenyembe & Hofmeyer 2016:16). The Presbyterian Church community and the African population in Malawi unanimously and bitterly opposed a federation (Ross 1996:200). McCracken (2002:77) adds that the vast majority of teachers and churchmen associated with the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) were involved in the anti-federation campaign where the tensions remained high from April 1958 onwards. McCracken (2002:78) and Ross (1997:387) agree that, even though Malawians and Scottish churchmen were accused of encouraging Africans to oppose the federation, they were practically determined to end the federation. Thus, from 1960 to 1963, when the federation was abolished and self-rule granted, there was a strong unity between the Presbyterian Church and the State, since the majority of those who were critical of the liberation, and now in senior positions within the congress, were mission-school graduates at Blantyre and Livingstonia (Ross 1996:222). I agree with Mbaya (1997:51) that the emergence of the political status quo at independence was a direct product of the missionary churches, in particular the Presbyterians, since many of the freedom fighters were mission-school graduates (Mbaya 1997:53).

On 6 July 1964, Malawi became independent, with Dr Kamuzu Banda remaining as prime minister who formed the first ever cabinet to take care of the affairs of government (McCracken 2012: 429-440; Chirwa, Patel & Kanyongolo 2000:2). Seven weeks into independence, the nation experienced a political upheaval, called the cabinet crisis, where, due to misunderstanding over several governance issues (Hansard 1964), Prime Minister Banda dismissed four prominent cabinet ministers: Orton Chirwa (Justice), Augustine Bwanausi (Planning and Development), Kanyama Chiume (Foreign Affairs), and Rose Chibambo (Chipembere 1981:93; Williams 1978:217; Short 1974:209-210), while three ministers, namely Willie Chokani (Labour), Yatuta Chisiza (Home Affairs), and Masauko Chipembere (Education) resigned in solidarity with their dismissed comrades (Kamwambe 1993:28-29; Pike 1968:165). The 1964 cabinet crisis generated the social political instability of the newly born nation (Kayuni & Tambulasi 2010:411; McCracken 2002:83-84). Dr Banda unleashed terror and arrested all those who sympathized with the dismissed ministers, some of whom went into exile (Chirambo 2008:147). Ironically, after the cabinet crisis, the Church, a bedfellow with the new government in the liberation struggle, remained silent and could not intervene in the terror being unleashed, due to its history and connections as product of the Presbyterian missions (Ross 1997:146-95). Thus, the fight for liberation was the child of the Presbyterian Churches (Blantyre and

Livingstonia), and eight of the ten first cabinet ministers were the product of these two Presbyterian missions (Ross 1997:386). For the ensuing thirty years, fear gripped the Church that appeared to be ideologically captured by the Banda regime, as its ministers were often called to officiate at State functions (Ross 1997:386) and at every Sunday prayer for the long life and prosperity of the dictator (Ross 1996a:38, 1996b:113). The Church failed to preach justice, truth and mercy; instead, it was coopted to support the Banda dictatorship and unquestionably legitimated the one-party state (Ross 1996b:115). This silence was enforced by the regime through the Malawi Young Pioneer's brutality and killings unleashed on all sympathizers of the dismissed cabinet ministers (Mbaya 1997:76).

On 8 March 1992, the Church was awoken from a slumber by the Catholic Church's pastoral letter, "Living our Faith", which offered the first ever open criticism against the Banda regime's injustices and dictatorship (Ross 1997:386-387; Thompson 2005:575). Soon after the pastoral letter was issued, the Presbyterian Church, led by the Livingstonia and Blantyre missions, intensified the struggle and called for political pluralism, freedom, and democracy in the country (Ross 1996a:41). He asserts that the two Presbyterian synods of Livingstonia and Blantyre, along with the World Alliance of Reformed Churches, met Dr Banda to call for structural reforms in the country. As a way of intensifying the struggle for total freedom, the Church led the formation of the Public Affairs Committee (Thompson 2005:585), an umbrella body for all churches in Malawi, in the fight for pluralistic change and the birth of a multiparty democracy (Ross 1996a:42-43). Thus, from 1994 to 2014, the Church took part in promoting good governance and the rule of law.

This article assesses how the 1964 cabinet crisis has impacted on Church and State relations since independence. It examines how the role of the Church influences such changes in Church and State relations and what lesson could be drawn for the future effective governance of Church and State relations. The article contributes to the current debate on Church and State relations in Malawi, with a focus on the 1964 cabinet crisis that continues to impact on, and shape Church and State relations.

Calvinism is the conceptual framework that has governed and informed this study based on John Calvin's position on the separation of Church and State in terms of Malawi's political and ecclesiological context. This is pertinent to the discussion, because the Malawian Presbyterian Church (CCAP) is of Scottish Presbyterian origin, which happens to be the offshoot of Calvin's Presbyterian reform tradition. Calvin advocated that the Church and the State must maintain separate roles in society, while simultaneously working together for the common good (McNeil 1964:71-75;

Calvin 1962:IV.20.2). However, this article's key argument is that the sustainability of the Church's prophetic voice depends on the nature of its relationship with the State. If the Church is a bedfellow with the State, it cannot raise its critical voice against the regime's injustices and oppression. The Church must thus maintain a well-calculated and operational distance between itself and the State if it has to effectively fulfill God's mandate to stand up against injustice and for the voiceless.

2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK: CALVIN'S SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

Many scholars (Torrance 1990; Packer 1988; Van Til 2001; Muller 2000; Barth 1995) have written about the struggles and life of John Calvin from his childhood, education, and entry into political activism in Geneva, to his contribution to Reformed Theology through his popular *Institutes of Christian religion*. This section presents Calvin's view on the separation of Church and State in terms of his opinion on government and law, and his position on individual participation in politics, since the law governs both the Church and the State. All this hinges on the peoples' participation in the process. These intertwined issues need to be dealt with simultaneously, in order to understand Calvin's stand on the separation of Church and State.

Calvin believed in the total separation of the Church and the State, even though they are both ruled and controlled by God within his sovereignty (Gatgounis 1996:60; Calvin 1962:IV.20.1). Calvin further states that, though distinct, the two are interdependent entities (Van Til 2001:95) and must cooperate, while each one maintains its operational space for the sake of achieving the common good (McNeill 1964:88). According to Monter (1987:467-84), Calvin believes that there is a unity of purpose for Church and State in that, where the State supports the Church, the Church does not obstruct the State. For Calvin, the essence of the Church and State relationship lies in *ius circa sacra* (the right of religion) and not in *ius in sacra* (the right to the community) (Dreyer 2010:174). Gatgounis (1996:60) summarises Church and State relationship as follows: the State rules the Church's environs by maintaining domestic peace so that the Church can achieve its mission to evangelize and make disciples of all citizens. By fostering the maturity of its Christian flock, the Church nurtures the State by producing model citizens. Calvin holds that the State and the Church are mutually spiritual, because the State adjudicates temporal matters under God and the Church adjudicates specific spiritual matters, and both oppose evil (Gatgounis 1996:61). Calvin firmly believes that the State promotes true religion, cherishes the outward worship of God, defends sound doctrine, and protects the position of the Church (Macleod 2009:13).

On the law, Calvin emphasises that no government should be above the law (Bauer 1965:267-269) and that the people ought to defy their leaders when they rise up against God, since it is better to obey God rather than men (Rom. 13; McNeill 1964:86). Calvin also regards the law of God as supreme and that all governments must subject themselves to the law of God (Dreyer 2010:172). Macleod (2009:5-6) and McNeill (1964:78) agree that the law requires us to obey the magistrates or leaders who are constituted by the ordination of God, and that to despise their power is to offend God, even under bad governance, as under Nebuchadnezzar and Nero. According to McNeill (1964:78), Calvin believes that we ought to regard leaders as vicars and lieutenants of God whom we cannot resist without resisting God himself, and whose offices are a sacred commission from God, and that all Christians are bound to pray to God for the prosperity of the superiors and lords of their country, to obey the statutes and ordinances that do not contravene the commandments of God, and to promote the welfare, peace, and public good. McNeill further mentions that, according to Calvin, governments should govern to the benefit not only of the Church, but also of all individuals so that they may receive what is theirs (Dreyer 2010:176; Wendel 1978:27). Calvin emphasises that God's design in human government is the security of the good and the restraint of the wicked, and that the State provides for the safety of mankind. To disobey the ruler is "to avow ourselves public enemies of the human race" (McNeill 1964:79). In this regard, Calvin stipulates that the people must obey and respect their government in everything that is good and to the glory of God (Calvin Inst. 4.20.22), even when this institution persecutes the people, because he argues that it might be God's way of punishing the people for their sin (Calvin 1962:IV.20.25; Dreyer 2010:177).

Finally, on the issue of individual participation in the political agenda, Macleod (2009:16) indicates that Calvin believes that the Church has the right to participate in the political process, since politics affects everything, and that, if left unchecked, the political machine will plunge the poor into even deeper poverty and deprive the powerless of all freedom. This is the kind of participation where the Church is not aligned to a particular political party, but influences the political processes. Calvin emphasises that the clergy should be neither politicians nor churches aligned to political parties; that the pulpit should not be politicised, and that, on special occasions, both the Church and the clergy can raise their voice against injustices and evil structures (Macleod 2009:17). Calvin advocates for the constitutional regulation of the power of leaders, because he believes that "wherever absolute power is given to a prince, there the glory and the dominion of God is injured" (Gatgounis 1996:65). Calvin further holds that unchecked power is unjustified power, since he believes that too often power, especially absolute power, has corrupted those who hold it (Gatgounis 1996:60; Calvin 1962:IV.20.7).

3. THE MAIN CAUSES OF THE CABINET CRISIS

Scholars (Lwanda 1993:64-70; Ross 2009:206-230; Thompson 2005:583) agree that the 1964 cabinet crisis was a political rupture that occurred seven weeks after independence when Dr Banda dismissed founding members of the Nyassaland African Congress (now the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), for opposing his policy and his claims to absolute rule (Rotberg 1971:317-321). Fearing for their safety, some fled the country, and some were pursued by MCP special branch officers who targeted them for assassination and abduction (Kaspin 1997:479). Merely one month after the independence celebrations, the majority of the cabinet ministers demanded that Dr Banda cease his autocratic governance (Rotberg 2010:42-43). However, local and international factors led to this political turmoil in Malawi.

First, the cabinet ministers noted Dr Banda's unbecoming, autocratic behaviour and poor governance in his many aggressive and dictatorial statements that showed signs of his hatred of ambitious politicians (Short 1974:225). He disliked competition, but wanted to have the final authority on everything. On 24 May 1964, Dr Banda spoke at the Colby Community in Blantyre:

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

Central to Dr Banda's autocratic leadership at this stage was that he began to single-handedly make all the decisions in governing the party and the government. He was under no obligation to consider the views of his subordinates (Williams 1978:213; Kayuni & Tambulasi 2010:413). His autocratic leadership is further evidenced by his statement that whatever he said was final and unchangeable (Short 1974:201-203). Chiume (1982:201-202) comments that Dr Banda publicly insulted cabinet ministers in front of their juniors, saying that he would not mind arresting or even detaining (10,000 or 100,000) those with opposing views, since he believed that building a nation involved carrying out some nasty things.³

Furthermore, Dr Banda refused to Africanize the civil service, which was one of the key campaign issues that was promised to civil servants prior to independence, namely that Africans would take over all the top jobs from Europeans (Power 2010:184; Williams 1978:216). Dr Banda

3 Dr Banda's speeches on 24 October 1964 and 1 April 1965 (Short 1974:225, 256).

refused to Africanize, because he much admired the traditions of the British civil service and was wary of over-hastily promoting the locally based officers who witnessed the corruption and inefficiency in Ghana to which Africanization could lead (Short 1974:199-207). The ministers deplored Dr Banda's appointment of Michael Blackwood, a federalist, to chair the Malawi Development Corporation and the Reserve Bank of Malawi, and of the United Federal Party's Mr Lislie, to head the Malawi Development Corporation, which compromised and defeated the very purpose of the struggle (Sahle 2001:95).

The Skinner Report was also crucial. The government was to effect a 7.5% reduction on African civil servants' salary, and introduce a three-pence hospital fee (Williams 1978:198-201). For McMaster (1974:61-62), the hospital fee caused hardship for the poor, ordinary villagers who were in a situation they could not afford (Chipembere 1981:89). This became a challenge, because, prior to independence and during colonialism, people had free medical cover and naturally expected this to remain, in addition to better facilities, after independence. Thus, the cabinet ministers demanded the reverse of such a plan, causing Dr Banda to view the cabinet ministers as rebels. The Skinner Report concerning the reduction in African civil servants' salaries, while promoting salaries of White expatriates, revealed Dr Banda's segregative and biased attitude (Chipembere 1981:88; Chiume 1982:203). The cabinet ministers wanted a policy shift that would benefit the locals and demanded that Dr Banda rescind this decision.

Finally, the international bone of contention was Dr Banda's refusal to cut ties with apartheid South Africa and Portugal, along with a stand to recognise China (Chipembere 1981:90; Power 2010:183). As Pan-Africanists, cabinet ministers who were conversant with the wind of African liberation, wanted Dr Banda to cut ties with those regimes that were still oppressing fellow Africans. At the Pan African conference in Cairo, Dr Banda defended his action as based purely on the economic survival of Malawi. The resolution to cut all relations with apartheid South Africa and Portugal was impossible to accept (Hansard⁴ 1964:15). On the issue of China, the cabinet ministers opposed Dr Banda's refusal to recognize China, which offered the sum of GBP 18 million (Mphande 2005:9). Dr Banda refused to take up the offer from China, because there was evidence that it was an initiative of his Foreign Affairs Minister (Chiume), with whom Dr Banda had little in common on foreign policy, and the recognition of Mainland China would have undermined his leadership (Lwanda 1993:65; Williams 1978:213).

4 Speech at the extraordinary emergency meeting of the House of Parliament, where Dr Banda responded to demands by his cabinet ministers.

4. ENGAGING CALVINISM IN THE 1964 CABINET CRISIS AND CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS

Using a Calvinist conceptual framework, how do we understand the effect of the 1964 cabinet crisis? What would Calvinists expect of the Church in the situation in which the Church found itself in Malawi after the cabinet crisis? How would the Calvinist separation of Church and State address the issue of Church and State in Malawi following the cabinet crisis and beyond?

4.1 State manipulation of the Church hampers effective Church-State relations

From the onset, Calvin advocated the total separation of Church and State, even though he allowed the two institutions, in some critical instances, to work together for the common good, while, at the same time, the pastor must not be involved in politics, just as the church should not become an extension of any political party. A critical analysis of the Malawi situation shows that, prior to the cabinet crisis, and particularly during the fight for liberation, the Church and the liberation movement (which this time became a government) were bedfellows, whereas, after independence, the Church found itself in a compromising position. It could not step in as the effective prophetic voice, because it could not criticise the same people with whom it worked in the liberation process. Thus, the pre-independence relations had serious consequences in post-independence life, and worsened after the cabinet crisis. Kansilanga (1996) indicates that the silence of the Church was costly to thousands of Malawians who lost their lives and spent their time in prison. Due to the closeness, assimilation, and alignment with nationalist fighters, the Church lost its ability to admonish or speak pastorally to the government (Ross 1996b:114). Thus, the Church leadership could only be invited to State functions to pray for the oppressive leadership's long life (Ross 1995:222). The Church remained silent for three decades of oppression, suffering, nepotism, segregation, and every manner of regional way of life until the dawn of democracy in the early 1990s. In 1994, political change restored and returned the critical voice in the Church in providing checks and balances in the governance of the State and it created a vivid distinction in the separation of Church and State through their Church and society departments, respectively. However, the continuation of the Calvinist tradition to provide a critical voice tended to be compromised, with the State appointing critical clergy onto various parastatal boards (Water Boards, Malawi Broadcasting Cooperation, and others) so as to minimise and destroy the once powerful voice of the Church.

4.2 The supremacy of the law is fundamental in engaging Church and State relations

Critical to engaging Calvin's Church and State relations in Malawi's context has been the application and space of the law, where it is argued that the nature of the law and the leadership of the country determine the practical and effective separation of Church and State. Thus, the separation of Church and State directly hinges on the nature of the law that governs both Church and State systems. For the total supremacy of the law of God (Calvin 1962:IV.20.25; Dreyer 2010:172-177), the Calvinist and reform traditions advocate that nobody must be above the law, and that people are at liberty to remove leaders who violate the constitution and break the laws of God (Van Till 2001:96-97). Within the Malawian context, it is abundantly clear that Dr Banda operated above the law as he was the law in himself (Short 1974:269-270). He controlled the soul of the nation's press, army, politics, judiciary, and legislature. Everything in Malawi happened the Banda way with no opposition (Short 1974:270-271). Through the Preventative Dentation Bill, Dr Banda could order the arrest of anyone who defied and undermined his government, and he dictated the judicial outcome of court cases involving those perceived as dissidents (Short 1978:225; Lwanda 1993:223). This implies that the Calvinist approach to criticise Dr Banda either as individual or as institutional Church was a non-starter. Being the president and all the opposition parties being banned (Lwanda 1993:275), no presidential elections were held over the three decades of his rule and he could never be removed, while at the same time, all governance institutions operated to rubber-stamp Dr Banda's aspirations and demands (Virmani 1992:108; Chiume 1992:57), even forcing the Church to pray and attend all Dr Banda's meetings. It was until the birth of a multiparty democracy that, with the change in the national constitutions, government had hardly anything to dictate in the welfare of the Church.

4.3 Uncompromised Church and individual participation in politics is critical

Alluding to Calvin's position against dictatorship, in an absolute monarchy and system, power accumulates in the hands of the few (Baron 1939:32; McNeill 1964:90); the Institutional Church can participate in political processes; the Church cannot support a particular party or candidate; the pulpit must not be politicised; pastors cannot be directly involved in politics (Macleod 2009:17), and individual Christians can singly, or through Christian organizations, approach the government for solutions to problems that are within the government's sphere (Van Reken 1999:198-199). How then could this view be engaged in within the Malawi political context in

relation to the cabinet crisis? Against all Calvinist principles, Dr Banda was a dictator and ruthless leader, surrounding himself with few ethnic and political elite from among his tribe, who could support and enforce his rule. Within this dispensation, what Calvin advocates would not have worked out, because the Church could not participate in political processes apart from politicising the pulpit through endorsement and prayer for the autocratic rule for fear of Dr Banda's reprisals (Ross 1996:222). It was unthinkable during this reign, even for any system, to oppose the regime, because Dr Banda was government and government was Dr Banda (Short 1974:254; Lwanda 1993:122; Banda 1963:1-3). Though Calvin (Van Reken 1999:200-201) indicates that the Church must be free to speak against government injustice, the Church remained silent for three decades when Dr Banda's regime, through the MYP and Youth League, openly brutalised and tortured Jehovah's Witnesses and destroyed their properties across Malawi (McCracken 2012:454). However, the post-Banda Malawi has some Church institutions and clergy who align themselves with the regime for financial and other opportunities, as was the case in pre-Banda Malawi; a situation which compromises the separation of Church and State, in that the Church institutions are not able to critically rebuke the State against injustices.

5. TOWARD ASSESSING THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE 1964 CABINET CRISIS WITH LESSONS FOR THE FUTURE IN MALAWI'S CHURCH AND STATE RELATIONS

5.1 It influenced the politics of regionalism, nepotism, and tribal patronage

The crisis influenced the politics of regionalism, nepotism, and tribal patronage, as Dr Banda originally surrounded himself with people from various tribes (McCracken 2012:366-402). It was apparent that, after the cabinet crisis, Dr Banda surrounded himself with central region politicians as his inner circle, thus causing more regionalism, nepotism, and discrimination against people of other regions. Dr Banda's refusal to Africanize the civil service, because the majority of the qualified personnel were from the north and the south, was a sign of regionalism (Williams 1978:216). Nepotism was evident as early as 1963, when Dr Banda appointed John Tembo to take over the late Du Chisiza's portfolio of finance, which many within the cabinet viewed as nepotism (Lwanda 1993:44-48, 63, 105; Short 1974:208), in addition to him chairing over a dozen parastatals. Lwanda (1993:259) agrees that discrimination was viewed through the lenses of the 1968 and 1989 national language

and teachers' deportation. Thus, the cabinet crisis was the seedbed of the politics of regionalism, tribalism and nepotism, in that Dr Banda focussed on his central region, Chewa; Muluzi (Yao), Muthalikas (Lomwe), Joyce Banda (Yao-Tonga-Tumbuka), Chihana (Tumbukas), Tembo, and Chakwera (Chewas) (Zeze 2015:179-186; Thorold 2000:135-137). In addition, this crisis shows that, like Dr Banda loved to be surrounded by those who could not challenge his mental power, political leaders have always surrounded themselves with those who could not challenge their political and mental power.

5.2 It revealed that the Church and State bedfellowship has negative consequences

How far the Church is from the State determines how far the Church can publicly raise its voice against the State. Calvin called for a total separation of these two entities, so as to promote easy engagement with each other without conflict of interests. The closer the Church is to the State, the more opportunities there are for the Church to benefit from the State. This simultaneously leads to the Church's inability to stand up against the State in times of oppression and injustice. It is thus noted that the cabinet crisis explains the failure of the Church to rise and intervene in the nation's oppression, as the Church and the State were bedfellows during the entire liberation dispensation. Post-1967, the Church could not intervene when the youth brigade (MYP) launched a nationwide manslaughter of all those who were against Dr Banda; when the entire Moto village in Mangochi was wiped out by Dr Banda's youth league boys, and when Jehovah's Witnesses were killed (Ross 1995:56; Lwanda 1993:264).

5.3 It exposed Dr Banda's ruthless nature

The cabinet crisis revealed Dr Banda's autocratic nature. If it were not for the cabinet crisis, Malawians would not have known Dr Banda's ruthlessness, as this political episode showed his true, cruel character. He killed those whom he viewed as competitors; he came only to rule and not to be ruled (McCracken 2012:344-345). Even Chipembere agrees that, by 1960, four years prior to independence, the senior leadership of their party began to feel Dr Banda's controlling, absolute, and cunning nature (Ross 2009:208). By 1963, Dr Banda went as far as openly criticising his ministers, who were later placed under surveillance (Baker 2006:265-266). Thus, this political crisis exposed the autocratic political journey the nation was to go through during Dr Banda's entire reign until 1994 (McCracken 1998:97) when a new political dispensation was born.

5.4 It showed that the Party's inner circle and the Church contributed to making Dr Banda a dictator

How great a leader can become depends on how united, in terms of ideology, the inner leadership is. The party's inner circle and the Church contributed substantially to making Dr Banda a dictator. The behavioural actions of Banda's inner circle and the Church indicate beyond reasonable doubt that they aided in making him a dictator. Post-1958, the inner circle was led by Chiume who composed songs worshipping Dr Banda, "*zonse zimene nzakamuzu banda*", meaning "all things belong to kamuzu" and "*zivute zitani ife a Malawi tili pambuyo pa Kamuzu*", meaning "no matter troubles and difficulties can be we are behind Kamuzu" (Williams 1978:205-206; Ross 2009:208). Everything was focussed on Kamuzu and Kamuzu alone as the messiah (Ross 2009:197; Short 1974:170-171; Lwanda 1993:80). The Church's silence in the midst of outrageous citizen torture, planned car accidents, brutality and death contributed to Dr Banda's autocratic rule. Even when Dr Banda introduced the Preventative Detention Bill in August 1964 (Lwanda 1993:66, 107; Short 1974:225), the Church was silent. The bill turned Malawi into a police state, with no one speaking against Dr Banda or any injustices (Ross 2009:235). Thus, by keeping silent, the Church endorsed the brutal and oppressive leadership. In line with Calvinist principles, the Church was not meant to allow hero worshipping, but it could have intervened in any situation of injustice and promoted dialogue between Dr Banda and his inner circle, in order to iron out their differences.

6. CONCLUSION

This article assessed the 1964 cabinet crisis in terms of how it affected the Church and State relations in Malawi. Due to the intimate nature of the relations, the Church in pre-independent Malawi was unable to rise up against oppression. Although Church leaders knew about the evils such as systematic torture, disappearances, and planned car accidents perpetrated by the State machinery, they remained silent, as the leadership was overshadowed and captured by the State. Although the Church remained in a state of fear for thirty years, it was still able to do meaningful mission through its stand after the 1992-1994 political change. In conclusion, therefore, the 1964 cabinet crisis played a considerable role in the history of the Church in Malawi. It is also understood that the cabinet crisis cannot be separated from the history of the Church in Malawi, due to its long relationship with the State.

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