

# Malawi - a Hundred and Ten

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

Last year the Catholic Church in Malawi celebrated the centenary of its permanent establishment in the country. March, 2002, is also the tenth anniversary of when Malawi's Catholic Bishops published their Pastoral Letter 'Living Our Faith'. Both events are historically very important for Malawi and its people. Here we take a look at what the two occasions mean for the country (see the following articles and the maps on pages 16-17 for background details on Malawi).

## DR. BANDA AND SILENCE

For many years the Catholic Church in Malawi was criticised for its silence under the rule of Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda. All the main churches of the country took their turn to say the prayers at official Government functions and did not openly attack the wrongs done in the name of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP)-Government. This silence meant complicity to many people, especially to human rights organisations that were based outside Malawi.

True, there was a surface silence but beneath it there was a constant niggling at the regime.

*Footnotes: 1 - Examples of this are: when a senior Government Ministers was called to face the complaints of a Malawian Bishop; some White Fathers taught and preached against corruption and injustices on a local level; they helped Jehovah's Witness refugees returning from Mozambique when the Government told people not to do so, as they had been declared an 'unlawful society' in 1967, persecuted and chased out of the country into Mozambique and Zambia; they also complained to the Government about the difficulties in ecological, health and education issues, especially when there were cholera outbreaks; and when there were food shortages, which officially did not exist, they attempted to help out, sometimes with large publicised projects.*

*2 - The reasons for the apparent silence included the following: there was no real distinction between the Government and the MCP; the Dr. Banda regime held the country together by fear, secrecy and through it's Chewa dominance from the Central Region; there was tight control over media and information and thus ignorance was fostered; there were spies in every village (MCP members, Malawi Youth, Malawi Young Pioneers [MYP]); the MCP structure was built up from the village head man/chief to Dr. Banda; the activities of 'Chitikuko cha Amai mu Malawi' - 'Mbumba ya Kamuzu' (CCAM-Development of Women in Malawi) controlled family life from the village level up; all Malawians had to be card-carrying members (in some cases even unborn children); at nearly every police station there were CID-Special Branch (Security) Police; major Politicians who opposed Dr. Banda often had 'car accidents' or became 'food for the crocodiles'; there was detention without charge or trial; 'political' trials were held in 'traditional' courts, 'customary law' from British times, where there was no right to a defence and the judges were appointed by Dr. Banda; it was very difficult to get any proof of human rights abuses, disappearances, knowledge of prisoners, their arrest and detention, save for rumours, on which village life thrived. The true extent of the activities of the MYP, especially, and the CID-Special Branch was only realised after the Banda regime fell. During Dr. Banda's time Western countries, kept the silence, armed and financed Malawi, as they saw the country as their only ally in this part of Southern Africa during the Cold War.*

Things were said and done by members of the Catholic Church to improve the situation on a local level, but no great movements or opposition arose. [1] None of these small actions were earth shattering and they were not heard of outside the area where they took place, never mind outside of the country.

There were many reasons for the apparent silence. [2] We missionaries kept quiet mainly because of the fear of what would happen to our Malawian colleagues if we spoke out and they became involved. We were caught up in the whole web of fear and mistrust which bound the Dr. Banda rule together. How could we justify the imprisonment, or death, of a single Malawian because of what we may think to be something worthwhile speaking out about? We were just guests, temporarily staying in the country, the ordinary people had to live there all of their lives.

A Malawian Monsignor explained the situation to me very simply in the early 1980s: "Inu ku Chileka, ife ku Dzaleka". Translated this

meant: "You (expatriate missionaries) to Chileka (the then international airport, near Blantyre), us (the Malawians) to Dzaleka (then a prison where political prisoners were held and tortured, two others were at Nsanje and Mikuyu, near Zomba)". Dzaleka (60 kms. from Lilongwe in Dowa District) is now a refugee camp. This rang true as during the 1970s and 1980s many missionaries were deported, PI'd - Prohibited Immigrant, for different reasons.

When three Government Ministers and an M.P. were murdered in a faked car accident in May, 1983, for the first time people spoke out plainly in the villages and discussed politics. [3] There was hope that the silence was beginning to crack, but it worked in the opposite way. They were shocked by the deaths, and especially by the way in which the victims were buried without any ceremony or respect. The majority of people said if such a thing could happen to people high up in Government, what chance did an ordinary Malawian have. What indeed!

## 'LIVING OUR FAITH'

Then everything changed in March of 1992 when the Catholic Bishops issued their Lenten Pastoral Letter - 'Living Our Faith' - and openly criticised the Government for the first time. The Bishops had spoken up before, but never in such a deliberate and public way. [4] They had seen things grow worse in the country and could not let the situation deteriorate further. Issues which they raised included: poverty, unjust

*Footnotes: 3 - Aaron Gadama (Minister for the Central Region), Dick Matenje (Secretary General of the MCP and Minister Without Portfolio), John Sangala (Minister of Health) and David Chiwanga (M.P. for Chikwawa) 'disappeared' after a debate in Parliament on the 17th. May, 1983, in which they opposed John Tembo's appointment as caretaker President while Dr. Banda was out of the country and spoke out for electoral changes. In the Malawi media they were reported as being traitors who had tried to escape from the country. They were all found shot in a car on the Mwanza road, near*

*4 - At the time the Bishops who wrote and signed the Pastoral Letter were: Archbishop James Chiona (Blantyre), Bishops Felix Mkhori (Chikwawa), Matthias A. Chimole (Lilongwe), Alessandro Assolari (Mangochi), Allan Changwera (Zomba), Gervazio Moses Chisendera (Dedza) and Monsignor John Roche (Apostolic Administrator of Mzuzu). Archbishop Tarsizio Gervazio Ziyaye, who was then the Auxiliary Bishop Elect of Dedza Diocese, was also questioned*

*with the Bishops.*

*Picture above: the late Dr. Hastings Kamuzu Banda*



People will not be scandalised to hear these things; they know them. They will only be grateful that their true needs are recognised and that efforts are made to answer them. Feeding them with slogans and half-truths - or untruths - only increases their cynicism and their mistrust of government representatives. It gives rise to a culture of rumour mongering. Real progress can only be attained when the true problems and the real needs are identified and all resources are channelled towards solving them.

... People in positions of responsibility have an obligation to know the actual conditions in which their people live and to work tirelessly for their betterment. They should be willing to allow their performance to be judged by the people they serve. Accountability is a quality of any good government.'

Such criticism would not be noticed in most countries, but not so in Malawi. Speaking out always had its cost and when the Letter was read in all churches on the 8th. March, 1992, the reaction even surprised the Bishops. The majority of the people were in favour of what was said, but the Government and its followers were not! On the 10th. March, the Bishops were ordered to go to the Kanjedza Police Station, Blantyre, to explain their Pastoral Letter. They were questioned for eight hours and were obliged to stay at the Archbishop's House overnight.

The next day there was an extraordinary meeting of the Malawi Congress Party (MCP), at the MCP Headquarters in Lilongwe, after which senior officials voted unanimously that the Bishops should be killed by mob violence or poisoning. The Malawi Broadcasting Corporation's (MBC) announced: 'The Office of the Inspector General in Lilongwe has advised the general public that the episcopal letter titled, 'Living Our Faith', which is in a booklet form and was released recently for circulation and

use in Roman Catholic churches throughout the country is seditious. A press release from the Office of the Inspector General of Police said anyone who bought, received, procured or otherwise got hold of the said episcopal letter, should surrender it to the nearest police station. The press release added that continued circulation of the said letter or possession of it, is in itself sedition and will result in criminal prosecution.' Despite this the Pastoral letter was photocopied, faxed and distributed around the country even more.

Immediately Monsignor Roche was pinpointed as the main figure behind the Letter. In his address to the Central Region MCP in Lilongwe, which was broadcast on MBC, Dr. Banda stated that the "Catholic Church in Ireland is very much against the Presbyterian Church in Scotland ... I'm an elder of the Presbyterian Church". The same theme was repeated in the Editorial of the Malawi News of 14-20th. March, when it said: 'That an Irish Catholic was the brains behind the drafting of the letter tells the story. We are not prepared to condone any bishop whose aim is to import IRA terrorism into this country to spread the chaotic situation in Northern Ireland by non-conformist and satanic Catholics'.

In what was to follow portraying the issue as being sectarian was to prove unwise. Leaders from all the main churches, and of the Muslim community, in Malawi came out in support of the Bishops. Together with people from the business and the legal profession they formed the 'Public Affairs Committee' (PAC) to discuss and plan Malawi's future with the Government. The PAC carried out a series of educational programmes leading up to the Referendum and the Elections. Through these they taught the people about their rights and the practicalities of how to cast a ballot. [5]

Over the next few months the whole movement for change grew. There were pro-democracy demonstrations and strikes all over the country. People were no longer afraid to speak out, even when they were detained for doing so. The Police and MCP officials questioned Presbyterian ministers and elders, and Catholic priests, about their sermons and some were even arrested. Intimidation was common, especially by the paramilitary Malawi Young Pioneers (MYP), and PAC members suffered greatly. The MYP were eventually broken up by the Army, who remained neutral all the time, and they destroyed MYP bases when the organisation refused to disband,

despite having been officially disbanded by Parliament on the 30th. March, 1994, as part of the agreement for moving the country towards multiparty democracy.

Once the silence was broken it was seen to be the right time for people throughout Europe and North America to give their support to the churches and an incredible ecumenical network was built up. The external church support was not there to speak on its own behalf, but to listen to what Malawians said and to echo it further afield. With previous actions of the Banda regime in mind the church groups also had the central reason for their work being concern for the safety of the Bishops. It was thought that it was best to make as much noise as possible about their situation in the hope that Dr. Banda and the MCP would not carry out their threats. From a country that gets very little media coverage, Malawi became heard of all over the world. The work done by the Church of Scotland, the

Church of England and the Catholic Church in Great Britain and Ireland was extraordinary. All this encouraged the Bishops, who continued to write influential Pastoral Letters, and other members of the PAC, in the run up to the referendum and the elections.

Gradually the MCP-Government realised that they had no choice but to agree to a referendum on whether Malawi should become a multiparty state. This was held on the 14th. June, 1993, and 63% of those who voted did so for a multiparty system. On the 21st. May, 1994, Malawi held its first multiparty elections and Bakili Muluzi and the United Democratic Front (UDF) ousted the Dr. Banda and the MCP. President Muluzi was re-elected on the 15th. June, 1999. The UDF Government brought in many changes. These included the freeing of political prisoners, closing three prisons which were renowned for torture, repealing many of the repressive laws, allowing more freedom

*Footnote: 5 - By February, 1993, the Public Affairs Committee 'comprised of influential pro-democracy organisations and Churches that include the Roman Catholic Church (the Episcopal Conference of Malawi - ECM), the Protestant Churches (the Christian Council of Malawi - CCM) the General Synod of the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian, the Anglican Dioceses of Lake Malawi and Southern Malawi, the Associated Chambers*

*of Commerce, the Muslim Association of Malawi, the Malawi Law Society and two pressure groups: Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) and United Democratic Front (UDF). - from PACs Proposal for Education for Participatory Democracy (EPD) and PAC Referendum Monitoring (PACREM) Programmes.*

*Picture above: the late Mgr. Lorenti Mangani with people outside Dedza Parish church*



of speech, reforming the Police, and the writing of a new constitution. [6]

What the old Malawian Monsignor said to me did come true for three Kiltegan missionaries. On Good Friday, 19th. April, 1992, Monsignor Roche was served a deportation notice and had to leave the country. The same day Fr. Pat O'Máille had his employment permit revoked at the airport when returning home on sick leave. Fr. Tom Leahy was also deported.

### 1992 AND AFTER

Encouraged by the events of 1992 the Catholic Bishops have spoken out on many occasions and have continued to write challenging Pastoral Letters. The subjects which they have tackled vary and include the following: corruption, low wages and working conditions on tobacco plantations; [F11] education, the possibility that Catholic schools in Malawi may be forced to teach the Koran if changes are made to the Junior Certificate Examination Syllabus. Some see this as an attempt to 'Islamise' the country due to pressure from Muslim donor countries. [F12]

The honeymoon is over with the UDF and they are well into their second term of government. Some cracks have now appeared in their Administration. There are accusations, similar to those levelled against the Banda regime, of wide spread corruption, nepotism, and attempting to control the media. There are also accusations that the silence has returned, especially to the Church. President Muluzi, who is a Muslim, has built up diplomatic relations with Muslim countries such as Iran, Kuwait, Libya, Malaysia and Saudi Arabia. This, and other developments

such as the expansion of mosques and scholarships to study in Saudi Arabia, has increased tension between Christians and Muslims within the country. In previous years many mosques were built with funding from the Agha Khan and no comment was made - maybe this was because there were no Muslims in high Government positions at the time and information did not circulate as much as now.

The old problems which were there in Dr. Banda's time continue to trouble the country. Some of these are not due to the Government and they do receive publicity not like before.

**FOOD SHORTAGES** - There are still continual food shortages and in October, 2001, half the districts were reporting that they had very little maize, the staple food, and that up to 78% of the rural poor would not have food by December. Things were made worse in that the price of a 50kgs. bag of maize increased in price by 170% to US\$12. The Government has placed an emergency order of 150,000 tonnes of maize from South Africa, in a US\$33m. deal, to help relieve the shortages. [IRIN1]

**THE ECONOMY AND POVERTY** - Poverty is on the increase and the economy is not too healthy according to Malawian economic experts. In a paper prepared for Donor countries last December they ask for US\$1 billion in debt relief. The number of Malawians living below the poverty line has increased from 60% before 1997 to 65.3%. The economy has grown by 2% per annum over the last ten years. Malawi is ranked 163 out of the world's poorest 173 countries according to the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP). [IRIN2] In August, 2001, inflation in Malawi rose from 26% in July to 30%. This was mainly due to the fact that the Agriculture Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) increased the consumer price of maize that month. In an effort to increase maize production in 2002 the Government, the European Union and Britain are spending US\$8 million into free agricultural inputs, such as fertiliser and seed, for a million rural households. [IRIN3]

**HUMAN RIGHTS** - Between 1999 and 2000 cases of human rights abuses doubled in Malawi. Part of the reason for this increase is that people are more aware of their rights, but it is also due to political violence during by-elections, land disputes, labour disputes and the lack of access to justice. A catalyst for all this is the widening gap between the rich few, who are accumulating wealth, and the poor majority. [IRIN4] Some sources claim that there has been a crack down on media and trade unions in an attempt to control what is said in the country.

**PRISONS AND PRISONERS** - Despite improvements Amnesty International have still reported violations of human rights. Seventeen prisoners died of suffocation in January, 1997. The Government appointed a commission of inquiry in September which made a series of recommendations. In July, 1998, trials began of 64 prisoners charged with murder, which carries a mandatory death penalty, ten people were also under sentence of death in Zomba Central Prison. In the year 2000 fifty-three people were sentenced to death but no executions have been carried out since 1994. President Muluzi is opposed to the death penalty and so far has commuted all death sentences. Prison conditions remained atrocious and the same month the Government acknowledged that three prisoners a day were dying in

Zomba Central Prison mainly from tuberculosis, AIDS and other infectious diseases. In 2000 the Inspectorate of Prisons reported that 140 people died in prison between January and December 1998. Between January and December, 1999, 213 prisoners died at Zomba Central prison alone. There are still reports of Police ill-treating people on arrest and of them torturing prisoners.

**COUP ATTEMPT** - In March, 2001, it is alleged that there was an attempt to overthrow the Malawi Government. The trial of the accused - Sudi Adaki Sulaimana, Colvin Kaumira, Moses Bwanali and Nelson Psyontha - began on the 25th. September, 2001. They are charged with treason - a capital offence - stealing military equipment, and of plotting to take over Sanjika Palace, the presidential palace, and the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation (MBC). Sulaimana and six others were arrested on the 18th. March.

*Footnotes: 6 - The Presidential and Parliamentary elections take place every five years. The National Assembly has 192 seats. The last elections took place on the 15th. June, 1999, and there were 5 million eligible voters (93.8 %). President Muluzi was re-elected and the results were as follows: Elson Bakili Muluzi (United Democratic Front [UDF]) 52.4 %; Gwanda Chakuamba (a coalition of the Malawi Congress Party [MCP]-Alliance for Democracy [AFORD]) 45.2%; and Kamulepi Kalua (Malawi Democratic Party [MDP]) 1.4%.*

*The National Assembly Elections (02.3 % - 192 seats) results were as follows: United Democratic Front (UDF) 47.3%, 93 seats; Malawi Congress Party (MCP) 33.8%, 66 seats; Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) 10.6%, 29 seats; and Non-partisans 7.1%, 4 seats.*



*Fides International references: F11 = 3rd. April, 1998, and F12 = 14th. July, 2000.*

*UN - Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) references: IRIN1 = 5th. September, 5th., 15th., 24th. & 29th. October, 2001 - The World Food Programme (WFP), World Vision International, 11th. October, 2001.*

*Footnotes: UN - Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) references: IRIN2 = 17th. September, 2001;*

*IRIN3 = 24th. September, 2001, National Statistical Office; IRIN4 = Fr. Alfred Nsope, chairperson of the Human Rights Commission, 18th. September, 2001.*

*Picture above: the ADMARC maize silos at Kanengo, Lilongwe*



The charges were dropped against three people who are now State witnesses. Sulaimana had been arrested in 1993, in connection with a coup attempt against Dr. Banda, but was pardoned by Bakili Muluzi in 1994. Brown Mpinganjira, the leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), was also arrested in October, 2001, in connection with the coup attempt. He faces charges of treason, which is a capital offence in Malawi. [IRIN5]

**REFUGEES AND FLOODS** - The hundreds of thousands of Mozambican refugees have nearly all returned to their homes. Still there are other disasters than the civil war in Mozambique which unite the two peoples and lead them to have almost open borders. Early in 2001 there was flooding in Malawi, a repeat of the previous year, which resulted in several deaths, and the displacement of about 200,000 people. At the time it was believed that Malawi needed about US\$1.5 million to provide emergency relief to the affected areas in the south. The floods also resulted in water borne diseases, such as cholera, in the east and south of the country. This disaster also effected people in Mozambique and Zambia. In Mozambique some 80,000 people were stranded along the Shire River, near the border with Malawi. It created a refugee problem when about 3,000 Malawians crossed into Mozambique and an estimated 100,000 Mozambicans crossed into Malawi. Malawi hosts 6,000 refugees [PANAI] and regularly receives refugees and asylum seekers from Angola, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia, Sudan and Zimbabwe. Between January and June, 2001, new arrivals in Malawi rose by 23%, from 3,900 to 4,810.

#### MISSION CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

Cardinal Francis Arinze, the President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue in the Vatican, represented the Pope at the Cen-

tenary celebrations. Between the 25th. and the 28th. July, 2001, the Cardinal visited Balaka, Blantyre/Limbe, Lilongwe, and Mzuzu where he presided at various ceremonies. At the closing Mass in Lilongwe Cardinal Arinze said that "The Church in Malawi gives thanks to God for the gift of faith in Jesus Christ ... Gratitude is due to the missionaries who brought the faith to Malawi and who continue to share that Good News of salvation ... This is also the day to express gratitude to the Malawian chiefs and people who welcomed the missionaries, to the Malawians who embraced faith in Christ especially in the early days, to the catechists past and present, and in a particular way to those Malawians who have answered God's call by becoming priests or religious sisters or brothers". [F13]

These words followed on from 'Celebrating the Centenary with gratitude and focusing on the present and future challenges of the Church', the title of the Pastoral Letter which the Bishops issued in March, 2001. The Bishops are hopeful about the future as was said by Bishop Allan Chamgwera, Bishop of Zomba, in an interview with 'Fides International': "We have many hopes for the future. We have a good number of vocations, for the diocesan clergy and religious life. We have a numerous involved lay persons who serve the Church. These are reasons for hope. In fact, as Malawi is a country in peace, we can work in a favourable environment. Moreover there is no tension with other religions, indeed we have established good relations with everyone. ... This first century was marked by the fatigue of missionaries to this land who planted a Church which is today the most important religious institution in the country. This new century belongs to the local Malawi Catholic Church and our task is to consolidate the fruits achieved and so become missionaries ourselves." [F14]

It is strange that when you read about the changes which took place in Malawi in the early 1990s, very often there is no mention of the role which the Catholic Bishops played. It is almost as if the silence of Dr. Banda's time still continues. Let us hope that it is not so within Malawi, or in the rest of the world, and that Malawians will eventually be able to truly prosper.

*Sources: Aid to the Church in Need, 'Religious Freedom in the Majority Islamic Countries 1998 Report'; AMECEA; Amnesty International; Atlapedia Online.htm; CIA World Fact Book Almanac of politics and government; Election-world.org; Encarta; Fides International; IFES Elections Today; UN, Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN); Lonely Planet; MalawiNet; The National Statistical Office, Malawi; Political Resources on the Net Governments on the WWW Yahoo! Government; Refugee NewsNet; Poli-Sci.com - http://www.polisci.com; US Country Reports on Human Rights Practices - 2000, February 2001; World-TravelGuide.Net; Zenit. See Issues: No. 298, June-July, 1991; No. 308, Feb.-March, 1993; & No. 336, Oct.-Nov., 1997.*

## Notes on the Church in Malawi

By Fr. Bill Turnbull W.F.

- 1861 - January, Universities Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) arrive in Nyasa. 4 die in the first months the rest leave after a year.
- 1875 - Presbyterians of the United Free Church of Scotland Mission (UFCSM) establish missions in Northern Region of Malawi.
- 1876 - Established Church of Scotland (CMS) in the Southern Region (Malawi).
- 1878 - 24th. February, Pope Leo XIII gives Cardinal Charles Lavigiere ecclesiastical jurisdiction over Equatorial Africa. 10th. April, White Fathers set out from Marseilles to the Missions of Tanganyika and Nyasa.
- 1880 - 27th. September, the Propagation of the Faith raise the Missions of Tanganyika and Nyasa to Apostolic Pro-Vicariates.
- 1881 - UMCA return and establish themselves on Likoma Island.

- 1888 - the Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa (DRCM) and Scottish Baptists arrive in Nyasa. December, Chief Mponda II - a powerful Yao Machinga chief, a Muslim and a slave trader - sings a treaty with Portugal.
- 1889 - 3rd April, Fr. Deguerry (acting WF's Superior General) arrives in Quelimane, Mozambique, to find the route to Nyasa. 18th. June, Lavigiere makes accord with Portugal that a mission may be founded at Mponda, near Mangochi Boma, south of Lake Malawi. 12th. July, 5 White Fathers leave Marseilles for Quelimane. \* 31st. July, White Fathers' Mission to Nyasa Northern Rhodesia erected as the Apostolic Pro-Vicariate of Nyasa. 15th August, the area around Mponda is declared a British Protectorate. 21st. August, remaining 4 White Fathers

\* They are Bros. Chrétien Hermann (from Metz, Alsace) and Antoine Verkulen (from Utrecht, Holland); and Frs. Valentin Heurtebise, Adolphe Lechaptois, and Joseph Mercui. Bro. Chrétien dies near Zanzibar on 3rd. August, 1889. *Picture above: the late Bishop Cornelio Chitsulo*

arrive at Quelimane and reach Mponda (28th. December) in the middle of a territorial dispute between the British and Portuguese.

1891 - 16th. June, White Fathers leave Mponda and go to the Tanganyika Vicariate. 14th. May, the Nyasaland Districts are declared a British Protectorate.

1895 - 10th. December, the limits between the Nyasa Pro-Vicariate and Tanganyika Vicariate redefined due to change in political boundaries.

1896 - first Catholic school in Nyasa opens at Kayambi. It is a boarding school and in 2 years it has 800 pupils. 18th. January, Fr. Joseph Dupont W.F. is appointed Administrator of the Nyasa Pro-Vicariate and he resides in Kayambi (Zambia).

1897 - 12th. February, Pro-Vicariate of Nyasa becomes a Vicariate and Fr. Joseph Dupont is appointed its Vicar Apostolic. 2nd. August, 3 more White Fathers arrive. 15th. August, Fr. Joseph Dupont is consecrated Bishop.

1898 - 23rd. October, Chilubula mission founded.

1900 - 17th. August, Mgr. Dupont begins negotiations to invite Montforts into Nyasa.

1901 - 19th. January, Bishops Livinhac (Superior General of the WFs) and Dupont, and Fr. A. Maurille (Superior General of the Montfort Fathers) sign a contract for the Montforts to work in southern Nyasa as auxiliaries under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Nyasa. Found the Shire region. 24th. May, 3 Montfort priests leave Naples for Nyasa. \* 24th. June, the Montfort arrive at Port Herald (Nsanje). Montforts found missions at Mzama (25th. July), at Lubwe (September), and at Lunzu.

1902 - 2nd. February, first Catholic school in South Nyasa opens at Mzama. 7th. September, the White Fathers return to Nyasa to stay. Fr. Jean Louveau and Bro. Wilfred arrive at Chiwamba. 13th. September, White Fathers found Mua Mission.

1903 - January, White Fathers open a school at Ntakataka. It was closed by the acting

government Administrator in Dedza. April, Fr. Guillemé buys land, 20 kms. from Blantyre, and sets up what is now known as Nguludi Parish. 10th. May, Frs. Georges Guyard and Dequeker arrive at the Bua mission, later renamed Kachebere after the near by stream. It lies on the border between the Fort Manning (Mchinji, Malawi) and Fort Jameson (Chipata, Zambia) districts. 1st. July, founding of Likuni by Fr. Bellière and Bro. Lucien Murrer. 13th. August, White Fathers leave Chiwamba for good and go to Likuni, the house is inaugurated on 15th. August. 2nd. September, White Fathers arrive at Nguludi - causes friction with the Protestant missionaries who had been in the south for some time. November, White Fathers move into a new house at Mua. 3rd. December, Shire Mission is erected as an Apostolic Prefecture and is entrusted to the Montforts. First 4 Daughters of Wisdom (Montfort) Sisters arrive at Nguludi. 8th. December, Chilubi mission founded.

1904 - Bishop Dupont returns to Nyasa and begins building the backbone of the Church through the work of local Catechists. 11th. June, Fr. Guillemé hands over the Nguludi Mission to the Montfort Fathers. 7th. July, Bishop Dupont, Fr. Guillemé and Fr Louveau make a request to open a mission at Bembeke. This is refused because the Dutch Reformed Church had 2 mission stations nearby at Mlanda (founded 1902) and Mphunzi (founded 1903), 18 and 25 kms. respectively from Bembeke. 15th. September, the Civil Authorities give permission to build a sanatorium at Bembeke.

1905 - school at Ntakataka reopened as an outstation of Mua. 2nd. caravan of White Sisters arrives at Kayambi, Zambia.

1906 - June, there are now 202 Catholic school.

1907 - May, the Civil Authorities give permission to open a school at Bembeke.

1908 - 2nd. December, Ntakataka becomes an independent mission.

1910 - 16th. May, Catechists School opens at Ntakataka. 3rd. October, division of the Nyasa Vicariate announced - new Angoniland Prefecture made in the south. 6th. October, first White Sisters arrive at Mua. 11th. October, Bishop Dupont resigns. He consecrates Bishop Louis Auneau S.M.M. as Apostolic Vicar of the Shire Vicariate at Chilubula (1st. November). 8th. December, Bembeke becomes an independent mission station.

1911 - 12th. February, Catechists School transferred from Ntakataka to Mua. April, V. Rev. Mathurin Guillemé is to be the next Vicar Apostolic of Nyasa and is consecrated on 18th. June. 5th. August, Bishop Guillemé arrives at Chilubula. 5th. September, Bishop Dupont finally leaves for Europe. September, Chitundu founded, near Chiphwanya Parish. Closed in May, 1912, as is too near the Dutch Reformed Church mission at Nkhoma.

1913 - 28th. January, second partition of the Nyasa Vicariate. The southern part keeps the name Apostolic Vicariate of Nyasa. Minor Seminary is opened at Mua and a presbyterial school at Ntakataka. Bembeke becomes the residence of the Apostolic Vicar.

1914 - With the onset of the First World War missionary activities are reduced. Due to the fall in numbers of Catechists and their work the Catechists School at Mua is closed. 12 White Fathers and White Sisters are put at the disposal of the Government as medical orderlies and caravan leaders.

1915 - May, Fr. Jean-Louis Lesueur W.F. begins building Bembeke cathedral.

1918 - Catechists are sign up as carriers in the war effort. 2nd. February, Fr. Lesueur is called up and returns on the 18th. December.

1919 - 19th. July, celebrations throughout the Nyasaland Protectorate over the Peace Treaty. 30th. October, Bembeke Cathedral completed.

1920 - Cornelio Chitsulo, from Mua mission, enters Mua Minor Seminary. He went on to Kipalapala Major Seminary, near Tabora, Tanzania, in 1927. Ordained priest in 1937, the first Malawian priest. In 1957 he became the first Malawian Bishop of Dedza Vicariate.

1921 - December, 23 new recruits at Mua Minor Seminary, one is Lorenti Mangani from Ntakataka. He went to Kipalapala in 1929 and was ordained in September, 1939, was Vicar General of Dedza Diocese.

*Picture above: The ruins of the huge church at Ntakataka, which still stands despite being underwater for many years. Some of its bricks were collected by the young people, see the picture on page 15, and used to build a new church at the nearby outstation of Chimseu.*

1925 - 15th. May, the Government grants 200 acres of land near Kasina village, half way between Bembeke and Likuni, to build a mission. Building begins of the Minor Seminary in 1927.

1928 - at the end of this year Nambuma mission, Dowa District, is founded.

1930 - September, the Minor Seminary at Mua is transferred to Kasina.

1933 - 23rd. May, the Apostolic Vicariates of Nyasa and Bangweolo are divided to create the new mission of Luangwa.

1935 - 19th. March, Guillemé mission founded, 34 kms. From Kachebere and 83 kms. from Likuni. 24th. March, Bishop Guillemé consecrates his successor, Bishop Oscar Julien, at Bembeke Cathedral. Bishops' Conference

of Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland established. Chipaso mission, Kasungu District, is founded.

1937 - Prefecture Apostolic of Fort Jameson (Chipata, Zambia) is erected and detached from the Nyasa Vicariate. July, northern part of Nyasaland brought back into Nyasa Vicariate. 5th. September, Cornelio Chitsulo is ordained priest.

1942 - 7th. April, Bishop Guillemé dies.

1957 - Ordination of Bishop Chitsulo, Vicar Apostolic of Dedza, the first African Bishop.

1959 - Establishment of the Catholic Hierarchy in Nyasaland(Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia).

Sources: 'Fides International', 'The Apostolic Vicariate of Nyasa 1889-1935' by Fr. Roland Vezeau W.F.

## The Dioceses of Malawi

### Blantyre Archdiocese

Area: 3,537 sq.mls.  
(9,161 sq.kms.)  
Population: 3,700,000  
Parishes: 36  
Catholics: 651,379  
Catechumens: 9,79163

**History:** Part of the Nyasa Vicariate entrusted to the White Fathers in 1897. The Shire Prefecture Apostolic (Southern Region & Ntcheu District, Central Region) was established on the 3rd. December, 1903, under the Montfort Fathers. Raised to Vicariate Apostolic on the 14th. April, 1908. The northern part became the Vicariate of Zomba in 1952 and the south the Vicariate of Blantyre and an Archdiocese.

**Bishops:** Rt. Rev. August Prezeau S.M.M. 1903-1909  
Rt. Rev. Louis Auneau S.M.M. 1910-1950  
Rt. Rev. John-Baptist Theunissen S.M.M. 1951-1967  
M. Rev. James Chiona D.P., Auxiliary 1965, Archbishop 1968-2001  
M. Rev. Tarsizio Gervazio Ziyaye D.P. 2001-present

### Chikwawa Diocese

Area: 2,963 sq.mls.  
(7,676 sq.kms.)  
Population: 763,862  
Parishes: 12  
Catholics: 112,178  
Catechumens: 5,318

**History:** The Diocese was erected as a Suffragan see of the Archdiocese of Blantyre on the 22nd. March, 1965. It covers of Nsanje District, Chikwawa District and part of Thyolo District in the Southern Region.

**Bishops:** Rt. Rev. Eugenius. F. J. Vroemen S.M.M. 1965-1979  
Rt. Rev. Felix Mkhori D.P. 1979-2001  
Chikwawa is a 'sede vacante' at present.

### Dedza Diocese

Area: 1,641 sq.mls.  
(4,250 sq.kms.)  
Population: 826,452  
Parishes: 15  
Catholics: 201,549  
Catechumens: 9,421

**History:** The Vicariate Apostolic of Dedza was erected on the 30th. April, 1956. It is made up of the two of Dedza and Ntcheu Districts and part of Salima District, in the Central Region. Dedza District had been part of the Likuni Vicariate, and Ntcheu District part of the Zomba Vicariate. It became a Diocese in 1959.

**Bishops:** Rt. Rev. Cornelius Chitsulo DP 1957-1984  
Rt. Rev. Gervazio Moses Chisendera D.P. 1984-2000  
Rt. Rev. Tarcisius G. Ziyaye D.P. Auxiliary Bishop 1992-1993  
Rt. Rev. Remi Joseph Gustave Ste-Marie W.F. Auxiliary 1998, Bishop 2000-present.

### Lilongwe Diocese

Area: 9,276 sq.mls.  
(24,025 sq.kms.)  
Population: 3,571,027  
Parishes: 31  
Catholics: 466,835  
Catechumens: 33,696

**History:** The Vicariate of Nyasa covered the whole of present day Malawi and was erected on the 12th. February, 1917. Its name was changed to Likuni in 1951. It became Lilongwe in 1957 and a Diocese in 1959.

**Bishops:** Rt. Rev. Joseph Dupont W.F. 1897-1911  
Rt. Rev. Mathurin Guillemé W.F. 1911-1935  
Rt. Rev. Oscar Julien W.F. 1935-1951  
Rt. Rev. Joseph Fady W.F. 1951-1972  
Rt. Rev. Patrick Kaliombe W.F. 1972-1979  
Rt. Rev. Matthias A. Chimole D.P. 1979-1994  
Rt. Rev. Tarcisius G. Ziyaye D.P. 1994-2001  
Rt. Rev. Felix Eugenio Mkhori D.P. 2001-present.

### Mangochi Diocese

Area: 4,396 sq.mls.  
(11,385 sq.kms.)  
Population: 1,050,000  
Parishes: 14  
Catholics: 150,000  
Catechumens: 5,025

**History:** The Apostolic Prefecture was erected on the 31st. May, 1969 (covers Mangochi District & most of Machinga District, north of the Shire River). It was entrusted to the Italian Montfort Fathers and became a Diocese on the 19th. October, 1973.

**Bishops:** Rt. Rev. Alessandro Assolari S.M.M. Prefect Apostolic 1969, Bishop 1973-present.

### Mzuzu Diocese

Area: 13,728 sq.mls.  
(35,555 sq.kms.)  
Population: 1,100,000  
Parishes: 13  
Catholics: 155,000

**History:** The Prefecture Apostolic of Northern Malawi was erected on the 18th May, 1947. It was made a Diocese on the 3rd. March, 1961.

**Bishops:** Rt. Rev. Marcel St. Denis W.F. 1847-1957  
Rt. Rev. J. L. Jobidon W.F. 1957-1987  
Msgr. John Vincent Roche S.P.S. Apostolic Administrator 1987-1995  
Rt. Rev. Joseph Zuza D.P. 1995-present.

### Zomba Diocese

Area: 1,360 sq.mls.  
(3,522 sq.kms.)  
Population: 534,972  
Parishes: 15  
Catholics: 174,625  
Catechumens: 2,538

**History:** The Zomba Vicariate was entrusted to the Montfort Fathers on the 15th. May, 1952 and it became a Diocese in 1958.

**Bishops:** Rt. Rev. Lawrence P. Hardman S.M.M. 1952-1970  
Rt. Rev. Mathias A. Chimole D.P. 1970-1979  
*Notes-Abbreviations* - D.P. = Diocesan Priests; S.M.M. = Montfort Fathers; S.P.S. = St. Patricks Missionary Society, Kiltegan Fathers; W.F. = White Fathers.  
Source: 'Malawi Catholic Directory 1995'.

# MALAWI

# MALAWI - SOME FACTS AND FIGURES

**POPULATION:** 10,385,849 (2000 est.), 10,548,250 (2001 est.).

**LAND:** total: 45,745 sq.mls. (118,480 sq.kms.).

land: 36,324 sq.mls. (94,080 sq.kms.)  
water: 9,344 q.mls.  
(24,400 sq.kms.)

**AGE STRUCTURE:**  
0-14 years: 45% (male 2,335,440; female 2,324,012)  
15-64 years: 52% (male 2,671,580; female 2,766,560)  
65 years and over: 3% (male 117,932; female 170,325) (2000 est.)

**ETHNIC GROUPS:** Chewa, Nyanja, Tumbuka, Yao, Lomwe, Sena, Tonga, Ngoni, Ngonde, Asian, European.

**LANGUAGES:** English (official), Chichewa (official, Central and Southern Regions), other include are Tumbuka (Northern Region) and Yao (Central and Southern Regions).

**RELIGIONS:** Protestants 34%; Catholics 28%, Muslims 16%, Animist (indigenous beliefs) 19%, others such as Hindu (mainly Indian immigrants).

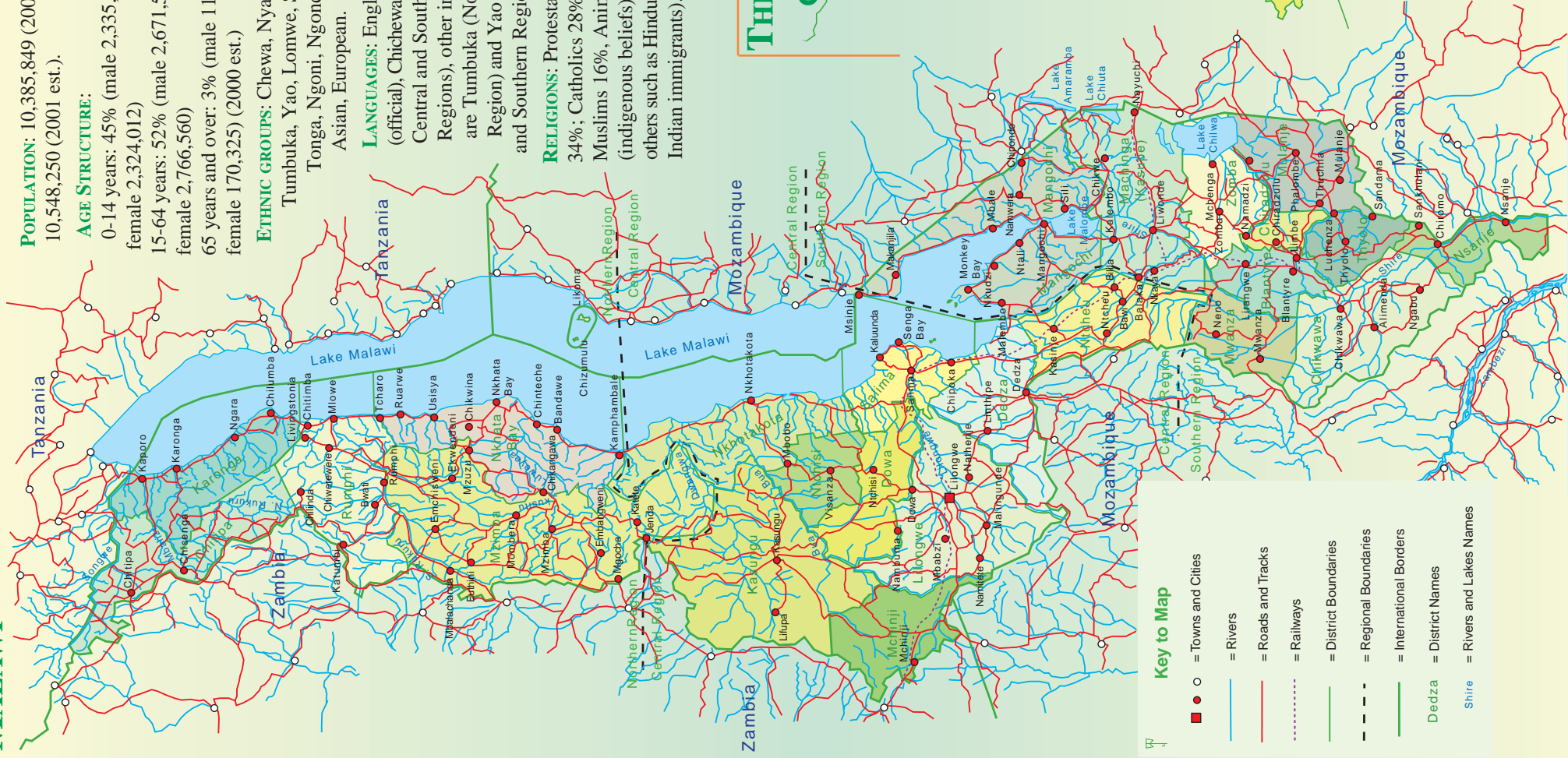
**Elevation Extremes:** Four major topographical regions: the Lake to the east, 3,551 mls. (5,71.5 kms.) long and 1,542 ft. (470 ms.) above sea level, and the Great Rift Valley; high tableland between the Lake and the Luangwa River 4,501 to 8,002 ft. (1,372 to 2,439 ms.); the Shire Highlands Plateau 2,001 to 5,272 ft. (610 to 1,607 ms); and the lowlands of Lower River Shire Basin in the south.

The lowest point is 120 ft. (37 m.) at the junction of the Shire River (Lower River Shire Basin) and international boundary with Mozambique. The highest point is Sapatwa (Mount Mulanje) 9,850 ft. (3,002 m.).

**CLIMATE:** sub-tropical, the temperature ranges from 63°F (17°C) to 84°F (29°C); the highlands are cooler

than the areas around the Lake and the Shire Valley; there is a rainy season (November to May) and a dry season (May to November); the average rainfall varies with altitude; 29 ins. (73.7 cms.) at Mangochi, 102 ins. (259.1 cms.) on the slopes of Mount Mulanje.

## THE DIOCESES OF MALAWI



### Key to Map

- ● ○ = Towns and Cities
- = Rivers
- = Roads and Tracks
- - - = Railways
- = District Boundaries
- - - = Regional Boundaries
- = International Borders
- Dedza = District Names
- Shire = Rivers and Lakes Names

