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Empowerment of the laity at congregational level: a case study of the Nkhoma CCAP congregation[1]

ABSTRACT

This case study answers the question: *What should be done in the Malawian Church to lead the laity and lay leadership towards a holistic ministry relevant to the contemporary situation in an effort to develop congregations into self-reliant, spiritually matured, all-participatory and social service-providing ones that strive to act as signs of the reign of God?* The setting is the 6500 member CCAP Nkhoma congregation in Malawi where over a period of 18 months three successive rounds of meetings were held in the five zones of the congregation. Participatory action research methodology was used involving the 19 prayer houses and 76 wards in a process of grounded research focused on answering the research question. The outcome was simply amazing and proves that with the right leadership, theology and methodology poverty can be addressed.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of empowerment of the laity has a dynamic transformational role in the life of the church. Empowered congregations can in turn play an important role in the empowerment of local communities by means of participation at different levels, in addressing social problems in their context. This also applies to research." In the interest of such a research paradigm, this article presents a case study that was conducted within the framework of Participatory Action Research in the Nkhoma Congregation of the CCAP[2] in the Nkhoma Synod[3]. The aim of this study was to assess the impact that strategic empowerment of the laity in the church can make within and without the church. The case study wants to answer the question: *What should be done in the Malawian Church to lead the laity and lay leadership towards a holistic ministry relevant to the contemporary situation in an effort to develop congregations into self-reliant, spiritually matured, all-participatory and social service-providing ones that strive to act as signs of the reign of God?*

2. A CASE STUDY AND ITS SETTING

According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006:33), there are three types of case study research designs namely, exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. Their distinctive features are:
- *Exploratory designs* seek to define the research questions of a subsequent study or try to determine the feasibility of research procedures.
- *Explanatory designs* seek to establish cause-and-effect relationships, and

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1 This article is based on the researcher's doctoral dissertation (Msangaambe 2011). Prof HJ Hendriks was the promoter.
2 CCAP stands for Church of Central Africa Presbyterian
3 Nkhoma Synod of the CCAP is one of the five Synods that do constitute the CCAP in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

- *Descriptive designs* attempt to present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context.

This case study engaged all three types, regardless of their affinity towards mere description, because of their ethnographic nature. It study engaged the grassroots laity and their lay leaders at congregational level in the Nkhoma CCAP Congregation. This congregation had *6500 members* spread over *76 wards* that form *19 prayer houses,* which are grouped into *five zones* for administrative purposes. Each zone has a Holy Communion centre. On average, each Church elder is responsible for approximately 90 members.

3. ENGAGING THE LAITY AT CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL

The study took 18 months. Members of the Nkhoma CCAP Congregation participated through training and planning workshops. The resolutions made from these workshops were converted into practical projects. As the resident minister in the congregation, the researcher designed three meetings in each of the five major prayer houses (Holy Communion centres also known as zones). This means that 15 major meetings were conducted. During the meetings, the focus was on a self-evaluation exercise for each of the five zones. These three phases constitute field-research work designed for this study. Much of the work in all the centres was done in group discussions to generate data that represent the target groups' collective opinion. The individual interviews conducted were meant to clarify the information received from the study groups. A description of each of the meetings now follows.

3.1 The first round of meetings: getting started

The first meetings were introductory. It was meant to sensitize and engage the lay leadership in the quest for the Church's expected missional practices. This pastor-researcher deliberately designed it in the form of normal leadership training and skills-development meetings at each of the zone centres. Through a story-sharing process, the participants were oriented and guided into full discussion. All the Church elders, deacons, committee members of all the Church committees, and leaders of women's guild and youth groups participated in these first round of meetings.

Within a month, one subsequent meeting was conducted in each zone. Every meeting started with a briefing session. Enough time was allowed for the participants' discussions, questions and comments in order to put them on board. Their responses and contributions contained enough evidence of their understanding of the subject matter. A summary of overall resolutions in the five zones follows:

- Participants agreed to meet within a week to choose what they would try to do at prayer house level; and to plan for the chosen action.
- Participants agreed to extend the participating groups to all interested members and local traditional leaders.
- Participants agreed to communicate the shared research objectives with all the groups that they represented, e.g., the wards, women's guild and youth groups.
- Participants committed themselves to invite all members and local leaders to the next meeting.

Summarizing: The first round had five meetings, one in each zone. They each had a subsequent follow-up planning meeting which was followed by meetings at the 19 prayer houses where all 76 wards, all groups as well as outsiders were invited to regularly meet to follow through with the process that was set in motion. As such this pattern continued throughout the 18 months.

3.2 The second round of meetings: Charting the way and developing action plans

These meetings took the form of planning workshops facilitated with a focus on empowering the laity. Church members from various Church committees were helped to assess their ministries at congregational as well as zone level, and plan together. In addition to the elected lay leaders of the Church, all congregational members in the various Church committees, as well as local community leaders, were invited, as agreed on in the first round of meetings. Local leaders acted as external evaluators.

At the second round of meetings each zone decided on what activity they could immediately embark upon as a way of exercising self-motivation. The short-listed resolutions are summarised below (Appendix 1). Resulting from the motivational empowerment workshop, every zone decided, independent of the others, on their activity priorities, from which it is evident that the workshops stirred self-esteem in the congregants and motivated them for action. Among themselves, each zone elected a task force committee of eight people to co-ordinate and keep record of events for future prayer house reports. The committee was mandated to call for prayer house meetings when deemed necessary – and this they all did!

3.3 The third round of meetings: Progress assessment

Fifteen months elapsed between the second and third round of meetings. During this period, there were numerous other meetings of both a formal and informal nature. They were part of the normal congregational activities where this researcher conducted routine pastoral visits and engaged church lay leaders in several Church forums. Consultations with co-ordinating teams and Church elders were held at least every three months for progress updating. Different zones demanded special meetings at times, depending on their encountered problems. Other meetings were conducted to evaluate the planned work, and assess transformation in each zone. Eventually, all the zones were invited to meet for reporting at congregational level. The aim was to share stories and harmonize the activities as a way of formulating an overall congregational picture of the impact made due to the deliberate empowerment of the laity.

After all these meetings, this researcher compiled the results of the research and shared them with the participants. In a process of evaluation, the participants discussed the draft report, and recommended adjustments were done.

4. THE QUALITATIVE DIMENSION OF THE RESEARCH, GROUNDED THEORY

This case study took 18 months in order to allow for a natural process of data collection. The researcher was hearing the stories of the people in the congregation and journeying with them in the empowerment process. As qualitative research, there was a need to scrap all presumptions to allow the insiders' story to take shape.

In the process, this researcher never departed from the methodological framework of doing theology that clings to the vitality of God's initiative. Theology is about God and is about the faith community, and about the faith community discerning the will of God, leading to active involvement in church and society (Hendriks 2004:34). The involvement of the faith community people (the church) in the research led to the necessary data development.

As in any qualitative research, the use of grounded theory in this research could not be avoided. Gillham (2000:12) writes, "The case study researcher, working inductively from what is there in the research setting develops grounded theory: theory that is grounded in the evidence that is turned up." In short, grounded theory is a substantive theory that is generated inductively from the data obtained systematically through research (Kunkwenzu 2007:43; Holloway 1997:80; Hancock & Algozzine 2006:9). In this case study, the use of grounded theory was necessary in

order to give a reasonable interpretation of the data generated; with a clear understanding of the context and interactions in the study process. In summary, the use of grounded theory took an upper hand in the development of data in this research.

5. DATA DEVELOPMENT

In this case study, the researcher was guided by ethnographic observations, to generate information from the participants. Kunkwenzu (2007:47) explains, "Data development in a grounded theory study does not proceed through the traditional process of research plan, data development and data analysis. Data development and data analysis occur simultaneously, because the analysis directs the sampling of data."

5.1 The background to this data development
This researcher played a three-fold role in this particular study. The *first role* was being a pastor/ researcher. This study is set within the parameters of normal congregation life where the researcher ministers. As such, he has the advantage of full acceptance by the people involved in the research. A good rapport was developed through the researcher's long acquaintance with the congregation's traditions and values on the ground. The *second role* is that of research moderator or facilitator. This is a common role for any researcher, especially when it involves many participants or when it comes to running focus groups. The *third role* was that of an observer. During the time of study, the researcher carried out his full pastoral duties and naturally interacted with members of the congregation at different levels. Different formal or informal views shared by members were recorded in a dairy and analysed shortly thereafter.

5.2 Data development strategies
(a) Focus group discussion
The outstanding strategy for data development in this study was the use of the focus groups (Abercrombie, Hill & Turner 2006:150-151). Usually, the discussions are held on a number of occasions over time. In this case, the research focus was the empowerment of the church's laity in order to release their potential towards becoming a missional church.

There were a total of 25 focus groups for the entire congregation at an average of five focus groups per zone. For these meetings, the researcher formulated discussion questions. With the help of appointed elders and deacons, who acted as tentative group leaders, the discussions were first organized in simultaneous small groups around the prayer house premises. The researcher/moderator supervised the discussions and guided them where necessary. Each small group appointed their own secretary/reporter who recorded all the group's resolutions. These small group discussions took 60 to 90 minutes. After that, all the groups converged in the church building for a report back session. Each group presented their points that were commented upon, criticized or asked to be clarified, before the house adopted them. All the agreed points were recorded on a separate sheet of paper. Below are the questions and the top five most common group responses:

Figure 1a: Phase 2 meetings' group discussion responses

Question	Common responses
[1] What do you think is the laity's responsibility in the congregation's life?	To give offerings To attend church services and Holy communion To participate in church projects To pray and obey church rules To support one another (members) during funerals and weddings
[2] What is the main role of a church minister in a congregation?	Preaching Administering sacraments Drawing church programs and plans Conducting funeral services Visiting people
[3] What is the church's (the laity's) responsibility towards the life of the general community?	To spread the Gospel To demonstrate love and good morals To help the sick and the poor To pray for it To initiate development (personal and communal)
[4] In what ways can the church (the laity) become involved in addressing the community's social problems?	Intensifying their HIV/AIDS care ministries Sensitizing local leaders Initiating small-scale working groups Organizing community grain banks Communal-care advocacy
[5] What motivation can the church (the laity) have to partner with local authorities in the community's social welfare?	It is part of their mission to the world They have a biblical mandate to care It is the nature of the church to be concerned with others They have the structure in which to operate They are part of the community under the local authorities
[6] Why is the church (the laity) not doing what it is supposed to do?	No knowledge of their potential Lack of self-confidence Lack of the required skills Poor leadership No personal space due to structures

With reference to the list of adopted points of discussion, the house now proceeded towards action planning. Holloway (1997:73) comments, "Focus groups can be combined with individual interviews, observation or other methods of data collection …. The findings from the focus group interviews are often used as a basis for action." (For a compiled list of resolutions and priorities made in all the zones, see Appendix 1.)

(b) Face-to-face interviews
While the focus group data development method can be self-sufficient, it still has room for other methods. Face-to-face interviews are one of them. The type of face-to-face interviews used in this research was semi-structured. Face to face interviews were not used in this study as a primary source, but were employed for corroboration of some of the data generated by the focus groups. For that purpose, interviewees were identified on the basis of availability, and they were also deemed to have the best information to address the topic in focus (Hancock &

Algozzine 2006:40). An interview guide was used and notes were produced immediately after every interview to capture all the valued points that were committed to memory.

(c) Observation and pastoral interaction
The day-to-day interaction, which this researcher/pastor had with people, was found to be an important strategy for data development, especially in the rural setting where the research mainly took place. It was an African communal setting where visiting, chatting and eating together take place naturally. Consequently, congregational work for a pastor in such a setting involves natural interaction in homes, market places and public functions, such as weddings and funeral ceremonies. This researcher's acquaintance with the general community at all levels created an opportunity to probe for more information without raising any suspicion on the part of the contributors. During these interactions, the researcher took the role of a participant-observer. Yin (2009:111) describes participant-observation as a special mode of observation in which the observer is not merely passive. He/she may assume different roles within a case study situation and can even participate in the events under study. Thus, this researcher participated in the ordinary congregation and community life while noting any relevant information that could contribute to the on-going research. In simple terms, an observer should watch what people do; listen to what they say; and, sometimes, ask questions for clarification (Gillham 2000:45). As in the face-to-face interviews, discipline was needed to record important observations as soon as possible, because memory can sometimes lapse.

The strength of the approach used in this case study was in decentralised use of zones; the direct participation of grassroots membership; and the involvement of local leaders and non-members.

6. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Hancock and Algozzine (2006:56) note, "In case study research, making sense of information collected from multiple sources is a recursive process in which the researcher interacts with the information throughout the investigative process." What it means here is that there is an ongoing examination and interpretation of data from beginning to end in a case study research. This differs from other research forms, in which data examination is done at the end of the process.

In this case, the results and the interpretation presented were acquired through the triangulation of pieces of data sourced by means of all the strategies outlined above. Yin (2009:114) defines "triangulation" as a "rationale for using multiple sources of evidence." Therefore, at this point, the analysis and the interpretation of data reflect different aspects of the same case study.

6.1 Significant findings
The following is a list of the remarkable revelations from the analysis and interpretations.

(a) A hazy self-understanding of church members:
From the common responses to the question: "*What do you think is the responsibility of the laity in the congregation's life?*", one can immediately detect that members lacked theological self-understanding. For instance, each of the top five responses placed more emphasis on traditional practices and missed out on correct theological answers. A picture that emanates from the responses is a hazy self-understanding of lay members' position in the church. Their skewed theological understanding of their membership in the body of Christ overshadows

their commitment to what the congregation demands of them. There is an indication that the ministries within the church ministry are taking an upper hand at the expense of members' core responsibility. The laity's focus leans more towards serving the church than being agents of service in the church. The overall missional task of the church is obscured by the in-house demands of maintenance.

(b) A deep-rooted misconception of the role of minister
It was revealed that most church members consider a church minister as the only licensed worker and pacesetter in the church and that all of them should just follow. There is evidence in the data that the laity in the congregation is more on the receiving end than on the giving end. For instance, the common response to the question: *"What can the main role of a church minister be in a congregation?"* depicts the laity as consuming what the clergy produces. The table (1b) below summarizes the scope of the set of role expectancy. It puts the clergy at the hub of more or less everything.

Table 1b: The clergy working for the laity

The clergy	Preaching to ...	...the laity
	Administering sacraments to	
	Drawing church programmes for ...	
	Conducting funeral services to	
	Visiting homes of	

This explains that the church's life circles around the clergy, while the laity plays a passive role. The danger in the faith community is that the church minister becomes the sole producer, while the rest are consumers. This reduces the church's capacity of reaching its missional challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that the laity should be empowered to shift from consuming to producing.

(c) The other side of the church's operational structure
In the face-to-face interviews, an important element about the laity's inactivity was revealed as a confirmation of the focus group's responses to the question: *"Why are the non-leadership laity not doing what they are supposed to do?"* It emerged that the church structure is very important for church administration, but can be detrimental to personal ministries within the church. With due respect to the Nkhoma Synod's church structure, there is little or no space for personal ministries. The analysis of the verbatim face-to-face interviews confirms this. Here is an excerpt from an interviewee's face-to-face interview:

Question: How active are the laity without any leadership position in the church?
Response: Well, they are active but very limited. They don't take the initiative to do what they know best.

Question: Tell me more, why is it like this?
Response: One of the reasons is that our church structure does not make room for personal ministries. You cannot just initiate something or easily present your views, unless you are a church elder. For instance, you cannot just start a prayer cell or Bible study group with fellow

church members if church elders do not approve of it.

It was noted that there is a remarkable misconception among many lay members that all congregational ministries should be initiated by church elders. Because of such a misconception, many lay people even avoid offering voluntary services, such as Sunday School teaching, until they are appointed by the church elders. They think that any personal ministry and initiative by an "ordinary" church member is against church protocols.

Another respondent (an ordinary member, but a teacher in the civil service) even indicated that some church elders hide behind the structure and protocol to discourage individual ministries, because they themselves suffer from an inferiority complex if the non-leadership laity are more active than elders. As such, the church structure has been selfishly used and has become a stumbling block to individual lay ministries, when it is supposed to be enhanced by creating space. The Nkhoma Synod structure has enough room for individual ministries, but it can also easily be misused for personal motives of leadership along the chain of command in the system. In their un-distorted condition, the policies and standing orders require to be clarified for every member to promote participation without fear of offending church traditions.

(d) Low laity training levels: Whose responsibility?
A combination of all data development strategies used in this case study gives the impression that poor levels of church leadership skills among the lay leaders are mostly caused by the clergy. For instance, the focus group's responses to Question 6 (*Why is the church [the laity] not doing what it is supposed to do?)* reflected a lack of proper basic training and the laity's induction to help them acquire the needed basic skill for ministry.

In a face-to-face interview, a respondent (a retired deacon) was quick to say:
"We know that ministers learn a lot in four years and know very well what the church is supposed to do. They have the ability to train all of us in different ministries, but they are too busy for that because of the vastness of their work in a congregation. Instead, they only have time to do routine work and no time for training us in various ministries. For example, I was a deacon for two terms (6 years). All along I expected a special induction session for deacons but, until I retired, we never had one. I just learnt from my fellow deacons how to write receipts and, in turn, I was also able to teach new ones. Otherwise, during the orientation session to which we went with our wives, we were only briefed on our personal morals and conduct, not the job skills."
The reflection here is that church members have great expectations of the clergy in terms of the training and equipping for their roles. They are ready to learn and use the knowledge to serve in the church, but they are not given appropriate training.

(e) There is always potential in the laity
Another important aspect that the case study revealed was that there is always potential in the laity regardless of their social, economic or educational positions. During the second round of meetings each zone produced a list of activities to carry out as a church (Appendix 1). Each zone had four priorities listed in their order of importance. With little facilitation and guidance, each zone independently appraised the need of the congregation and of the surrounding community, before listing activities. The researcher's personal observation was that their resolutions and priority of activities were driven by their theological and social self-understanding. They produced fitting plans that were intelligently conceived and put together within their workable levels. The evidence is that when they were raising funds for the planned projects, they easily met most of their budgets within a short time. Consequently, every zone achieved the first two of its priority church projects within a year (see Appendix 2 below).

6.2 Bottom line statement

The bottom line is that empowerment of the laity is a significant tool in the transformation of a congregation and the surrounding community. According to the case study, any form of empowerment of the laity proved to produce positive results in the Nkhoma Congregation. In this case, empowerment did not end with training the laity, but it demanded that the minister should walk life's journey with the congregation. At congregational level, it was possible to journey together while shifting the focus from addressing only members' needs, to equipping members to address the needs of the wider society. Laity empowerment in the Nkhoma Congregation resulted in creating a spirit of missional movement that opens up to critical self-analysing questions. Sine (2008:42) says, "The missional movement deserves credit for raising important theological questions regarding what it means to be church and do the mission of the church." Since people began to answer questions regarding a real life situation on the basis of their self-understanding, there has been a significant impact both within and without the congregation.

7. OUTCOMES OF THE EMPOWERMENT OF THE LAITY

As any practical theological research is expected to produce transformative action results, this case study had the following outcomes from its focus on the empowerment of the laity:

7.1 Growth of church capacity

The laity empowerment that took place influenced the rate of giving, as well as evangelism in the congregation, resulting in work expansion. The birth of two autonomous congregations, Mkundi and Chipala, in June 2010 is a clear indication that there was both capacity and numerical growth. According to the CCAP Nkhoma Synod Minutes of October 2009 (S.4106), both congregations were officially confirmed during the Synod's General Assembly.

7.2 More sensitivity to community issues

Zone representatives had time to think about their surroundings, which is their immediate mission field. This led into a notable departure from an all-maintenance to a missional church, by creating projects that would benefit the larger community beyond the four walls of the prayer house. Such activities are HIV/AIDS home-based care, orphan care, kindergarten, community food security, water development, youth development and adult literacy.

7.3 Improved coordination

There also is a notable indication of improved coordination The people who participated in the planning were drawn from a cross-section of the church; and other community members were willing to participate in the execution of the plans. Small working groups were formulated to regulate the progress of all the planned activities. The inclusion mentioned above not only refers to church members, but also non-members and even traditional local chiefs.

7.4 Work discipline

Hard work, a team spirit and time-consciousness are also indicated from the plan and report. The fact that the laity set fixed time limits for themselves helped them to work with enthusiasm towards meeting the targets in the specified time. There was a sense of responsibility even about unfinished work. They shared the work willingly. They were motivated to participate in the project with the sense of ownership, rather than mere solidarity.

8. CONCLUSION

In the light of this case study, it is clear that empowerment of the laity is not only a strategy to mobilize the congregation into missional theology, but also a means to address the social constraints surrounding the life of the church. Concurrently, the case study unmasks the long down-played task of training and equipping lay leaders that the clergy have not maximized (See Appendix 3: Box 7A-7E). Due to the culture's openness, there is a wide open opportunity in the Malawian setting so conducive to servant leadership and communal interaction (See Appendix 3: Box 12 A, 12B & 12D). There is need to encourage deliberate reduction of barriers created by the church's hierarchical set-up. They are incompatible in a freely interacting culture. Empowerment of the laity in the Church should focus at promoting personal ministries using the communal spirit that dominates the culture. In the case study, the availability and willingness of the multitude of laity to be equipped was also evident. In an informal discussion, a lay member said (Kenani Mbewe – June 8, 2008 at Mkundi Prayer House):

"I am personally and inwardly convinced that I should participate in teaching kids during Sunday school but I am always hesitant because I do not have any teaching skills. I think I have the ideas for the children's lessons but I don't know how to start it all. When I shared this with our church elder, he only encouraged me to start but he himself had nothing to offer me as an orientation to the job. I waited for the teacher training session at the station until I just gave up. Perhaps God did not allow me to do the job."

This is one of the many available and ready resources for the various church ministries but they lack a kick start. Their cultural environment and academic levels deny them the self-initiating spirit that can only be ignited by basic empowerment.

In this ethnographic research - practically experienced within the CCAP Nkhoma Congregation - it was noted that the laity who are well guided have the potential of making remarkable changes in church and society. The research also proved that the available resources in the Nkhoma Synod's congregations are sufficient to give the church a kick start into self-reliance, spiritual maturity and engaging every member into active participation. Despite some restrictions, motivated by poor leadership and Church's written and un-written policies, the Church has the potential to contribute at substantive levels in the community social services. The clergy are well-positioned to empower the congregations to overcome the obstacles and perform with a missional spirit. By planning together and accompanying the laity, new angles of empowerment required in the Church today are discovered.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: The resolutions and priorities of zonal activity

Priority	Station	Chigodi	Chipala	Mkundi	Chipamphale
1	Establish a grain bank	Construct a new church roof	Work towards be-coming an autonomous congregation	Work towards becoming an auto-nomous congre-gation	Replace locally-made roofing tiles with iron sheets on the church roof

2	Home-based care	Home-based care	Start adult literacy classes	Extend the church building	Intensify orphan care
3	Start a feeding pro-gramme	Open a kinder-garten school	Form youth HIV/AIDS clubs	Expand the orphan day-care activities	Open youth life-skills centre
4	Open IGA tuck -shop	Start adult literacy classes	Start a farmers' co-operative society.	Identify NGOs to assist with safe water utilities	Acquire a communal demonstration garden

Appendix 2: Phase 3 – Evaluative progress report (updated 10/2010)

Zone	Priority	Evaluation	Way forward
Station	Establishing a grain bank	Grain bank constructed and 6 metric tonnes of maize stocked	Women's guild to take responsibility
	HIV Home-based care	Volunteers trained, basic equipment acquired and care started	To train more volunteers
	Start a community feeding programme	Feasibility study under-way	Church deacons to handle the project
	Open tuck-shop as an income generating activity	Old garage identified, renovations started	Women's guild to take charge
Chigodi	Construct a new church roof	Work finished	
	HIV home-based care	Work started	Jointly done with community leaders
	Start adult literacy	Awaiting teaching materials	Need for a quick follow-up
Chipala	Become an autonomous congregation	Process finished, congregation officially launched.	To call a minister within a year
	Start adult literacy classes	Place, teachers and materials identified	Registration should start
	Form youth HIV/AIDS clubs	Co-ordinating committee in place	Youth committee to do a follow-up
	Start farmers' co-operative	Advocacy started	Local chiefs to be involved

Mkundi	Becoming an autonomous congregation	All procedures followed, congregation officially opened	To identify and call a minister.
	Extend church building	Project finished	To proceed with toilets project
	Orphan day-care expansion	Committee in order	More orphans to be registered
	Safe water project	Identifying donors	Need for further consultation with government
Chipam-phale	Church roof renovation	Done	To decorate the outlook
	Intensify orphan care	Volunteers and materials acquired	Advocacy and registration to start
	Establish a youth life-skill centre	Proposals written and submitted	Youth committee to make a follow-up
	Demonstration garden	Awaiting chiefs to allocate land	Development committee to do a follow-up

Appendix 3: Data categories and assessment for the five zones (developed from focus group discussions and face-to-face interviews)

Category	General assessment results in zones				
	[A] Station	**[B]** Chigodi	**[C]** Chipala	**[D]** Mkundi	**[E]** Chipam-phale
[1] Members' self-attitude	Satisfactory giving Influential	Steady fellowship	Trying hard Potential	Can do better United Established	Influential Vibrant
[2] Commu-nity's attitude	Hypocritical Influential	Out-reach-ing Dominating	Isolated	Networking Potential	Strict rules Out-stretching
[3] Member's ability	Reserved Limited	Basic	Trial and error	Limited	Satisfactory Potential
[4] Member's roles	Solicit funds for church work	Solidarity on social issues	Pray and work Patronize church functions	Uphold church traditions	Church attendance
[5] Lay-leadership ability	Just satisfactory	Lack training	Below expectation	Average	Can do better
[6] Lay-leadership training levels	Low	Low	Low	Low	Low

[7] Lay non-leadership training levels	None	Low	None	None	Low
[8] Church-community relationships	Good	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
[9] Social welfare engagements	Not common	Improving	Not satisfactory	Good	Good
[10] Lay Non-leadership participation	Good	Average	Average	Satisfactory	Average
[11] Clerical influences	Medium	High	Medium	High	High
[12] Cultural influences	High	High	Medium	High	Mild
[13] Ecumenical attitude	Reserved	Reserved	Slightly open	Balanced	Tolerant

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