



Scotland Malawi Partnership Membership

The partnership between the Church of Scotland and the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) has grown together in fellowship for nearly 150 years, with the roots of the Synod of Blantyre and the Synod of Livingstonia being in the Church of Scotland and the Free Church of Scotland respectively. Since the days of the great missionaries, such as Robert Laws and David Livingstone, the Church of Scotland has been intertwined with the Church in Malawi. Our links span the length and breadth of both countries with engagement involving individuals, grassroots congregations, schools, hospitals, projects and at a national level. The links are more than projects or partnerships; they are family links as we are brothers and sisters in Christ. This makes our involvement particularly special. Many of the other SMP links, and indeed the SMP themselves find their roots in the context of faith and have grown from the church.

Historical mission outreach included not just taking the Gospel story to those who had not heard it before, but providing education and health care also. 'Mission Stations' like those at Mulanje in the south and Ekwendeni in the north continue to serve their community through their church, schools and hospitals.

Today, mission outreach is a two way flow of listening, learning and sharing with each other. Members of the Church of Scotland are as much involved with 'receiving' as they are with 'giving' and mutual learning is very much emphasised in all our relationships. Today the same 3 aspects of faith, education and healthcare continue to guide our partnership but the elements within them are ever changing to address issues faced in the world today.

Some recent examples of our relational working include:

A number of congregations in Scotland have developed 'twinning' – these are grassroots relationships; one congregation to another. Each twinning has its own set of criteria and time line as set by the twinning partners but within these are opportunities for visits to Malawi and Scotland, discussions, actions and advocacy for a range of global issues including climate change, human trafficking, HIV, Christian /Muslim relations and others. Most importantly the twinings have allowed a sharing of, and growing in, faith and a moving from friendship to family. A twinning in a congregation allows outreach into the community and engagement at local level with other groups. This includes schools. One example of this is the Kwenderana Twinning which comprises of 4 congregations in Glasgow and Ekwendeni CCAP Congregation who, as part of the twinning embrace the school link between Williamwood High School and Ekwendeni and also Queenspark Football

Club and Ekwendeni. The former have exchange visits each year and the stories of transformation of young lives which are recounted are a tribute to the relational aspect of the twinning programme. The latter has worked with counterparts in Ekwendeni to set up football clubs with training not just in football skills but managing, coaching and refereeing also.

The Church of Scotland continues to have engagement with theological colleges and universities across the country and in particular, Zomba Theological College (ZTC), which receives students from all 5 synods of the CCAP. This institute brings a unity across the Synods of the CCAP. Supporting ZTC in the formation of ministers, whether it be through sending lecturers, volunteers or funds is a priority highlighted to us by our partners in CCAP. Offering scholarships allows study for those who have a calling to the ministry, not just those who can afford the course. Those in receipt of a scholarship have the opportunity to come to Scotland and engage with the Church here. This is a particularly special part of the relationship as it gives the Church here the opportunity to experience some of the vibrancy of faith and worship from a Malawian context. Rev Dr Kenneth Ross, is a Church of Scotland Mission partner and is based at ZTC, where he will lecture, supervise and mentor students and faculty members. The Synods have a priority for, and excellence in, the delivering of education at a primary, secondary and tertiary level. The Church of Scotland has over the years and continues to engage with these through provision of teachers and volunteers if we are requested to do so.

Holistic healthcare and health education have always been part of the work of the Church and this continues today. The Church of Scotland has a dedicated HIV Programme which has been instrumental in allowing partners to develop and support various HIV projects across Malawi, these range from development of orphan and vulnerable childcare centres, marriage counselling, voluntary counselling and testing and youth activities. Each Synod runs at least one mission hospital and also training for nurses, clinicians and pharmacists. We have had the privilege of sending staff and volunteers to each of these over the years; this includes enabling those training for medicine or nursing in the UK to undertake an elective period in Malawi which brings a new dimension to their learning and is always a life changing event. Many go on to serve overseas in their future career.

Church of Scotland Mission Partners, Gary Brough and Linus Malu work with the Synod of Livingstonia's Church and Society Programme in the Legal Department. Together with their Malawi colleagues, they are doing ground breaking work, giving a voice to some of the most marginalised and vulnerable in society. Working with communities to teach them their rights and ensure that they are treated fairly. Many people are supported through mediation and where a case needs to go to court the team are on hand to help. There is also have a one-stop centre for victims of gender based violence where they offer counselling and support. Another important aspect of the work is to speak out against child marriage and intervening to get young girls back into school.

In 2018 the World Mission Council submitted a special report to the Church of Scotland's General Assembly on lessons that can be learnt from the Church in Africa. Our brothers and sisters Malawi and in other African countries helped us to pull together the material needed and in doing so are educated us as we look forward, here in Scotland as a Church. The impact of this report, and its associated Bible Studies, is already proving fruitful.

Over the last 4 years, because of our historical relationship with Blantyre Synod, we have together entered a tripartite relationship with the Evangelical Church of Christ in Mozambique and have seen the strength of Blantyre Synod as they nurture a younger sister Church on her journey. We have laughed together, got frustrated together and even argued at times, but at the end of the day we always remain faithful to one another because we are family.