

# SYMPOSIUM ON THE ROLE OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN PEACEMAKING AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFRICA: ZAMBIA'S CASE

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## INTRODUCTION

The Zambian people chose a new president on 31 October 1991 after almost twenty years under one party rule. This action brought to an abrupt and unexpected end the rule of Dr Kenneth Kaunda and his United National Independence Party (UNIP) after twenty seven years in power. It was a humiliating defeat in that UNIP only got about 25 per cent of the popular vote. They managed to win only 20 seats out of the 150 parliamentary seats.

The transition from a single to multi-party democracy was peaceful following the free and fair elections. This made Zambia an example of a new wave of democratization which is sweeping across Africa in this last decade of the twentieth century.

This paper looks at the role of religious leaders in peacemaking and social change in Zambia. It also discusses how the Christian Church (Catholic and Protestant) has worked together on political and social issues in Zambia.

## 1. THE MAJOR POLITICAL EVENTS AND THE CHURCHES' INVOLVEMENT

### 1.1 DURING THE FIRST REPUBLIC: 1964-1972

Zambia attained its independence on 24 October 1964. There were a lot of expectations among the people of Zambia then; especially that colonialism, which politically oppressed them and economically exploited them, had

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come to an end. However, the people who occupied political positions were not only political amateurs, they were also economically poor. What this meant was that political power became a means to economical power.

Zambia started as a multi-party democracy at Independence in 1964. General elections, that is, both parliamentary and presidential, were held every five years. However, because of the fact that political power meant access to economic power, those who gained this political power at Independence made sure that they maintained it at any cost. This kind of development resulted in clashes between political parties, leading to the deaths of some people.

### 1.1.1 THE NIGHT WITHOUT A PRESIDENT

In 1967, UNIP held its General Conference at Mulungushi Rock near Kabwe at which they elected a new Central Committee.

The elections were held at Mulungushi (near Kabwe) in August 1967, in conjunction with the triennial general conference of the Party. Of the seven contested seats, three were particularly important: Those of the national Vice-President, the National Secretary and the National Treasurer. The contestants divided into two main camps: A primarily Bemba/Tonga-speaking alliance under the leadership of Kapwepwe, Foreign Minister and the incumbent UNIP Treasurer; and a Lozi/Nyanja-speaking alliance which ranged behind Reuben Kamanga, the Party and National Vice-President. In a bitter campaign the party was almost torn apart by intense sectionalism of its leaders (excluding, of course, Kaunda himself) and their followers. The Kapwepwe group dubbed their opponents intellectuals and alleged that they were CIA agents; the Kamanga group responded by accusing the Bemba/Tonga Alliance of having sold out to the communists (Tordoff 1974:112-113).

This division within the party was to remain like a thorn in the flesh for quite sometime.

After August 1967, however, the split within UNIP went too deep to be healed by what had become a familiar balancing device, by which President Kaunda had successfully balanced the various factors within his party in making appointments to both the Central Committee and the Cabinet ... Personal recriminations within UNIP, with their tribal and provincial overtones, had not abated by February 1968, when the National Council held a stormy meeting in Lusaka. On 5 February 1994 a disgusted Kaunda announced his resignation as national president (Tordoff :114).

The real cause of the problem during the National Council meeting at Chilenje was the fact that the new Central Committee which was elected the previous year at Mulungushi was not recognized by people from Eastern, Western and North-western Provinces (Wina 1982:35).

When it was time for the council to adopt the resolutions of the National Council, all were read and adopted. According to Sikota Wina (1982:33, 34),

One floor delegate stood up and said there was a serious omission in the entire structure of the draft resolutions. I refer, of course, to the complete omission of any mention of the recognition of the Central Committee. ... At this stage it became very apparent that everybody also had been waiting for this opportunity to declare to which group he belonged and the debate was going to reopen and drag on, leaving behind a trail of bitterness which was completely new with the rank and file of UNIP.

The Vice-President, Simon Kapwepwe, the man who was at the center of the whole problem, backed the group which wanted the recognition of the new Central Committee openly included in the Chilenje resolutions.

Most of the people who spoke, opposed the inclusion of the recognition of the Central Committee in the resolution because they were convinced that its members were not genuinely elected (Wina 1982:36).

There was only one man who could save the situation and that man was

Dr Kaunda. However, this evening he was badly hurt, a disappointed and disillusioned leader who was witnessing before him the apparent disintegration of what had taken him more than seventeen years to build. Indeed, he was hurt because Kaunda, himself, did not believe in tribalism.

The amendment was made which included the recognition of the Central Committee and, therefore, the National Council chairman, Mr Grey Zulu, asked the amended resolutions to be read. "As I sat down", recalls Sikota Wina, "pandemonium broke loose on the convention floor. There were cries of 'Resolution accepted' countered by 'We do not recognize the Central Committee - resolution rejected'" (Wina 1982:39).

While this confusion was still raging, Dr Kaunda moved to the microphones and Council fell dead silent.

Fellow countrymen, I have for the past several hours listed to the views expressed in this hall. I must say how deeply shocked I have been to realize for the first time how deeply divided the party is - and even more shocked to learn that this division is purely along tribal lines.

During my tenure of office as your President, I have done all I could to try and point out that if we fall prey to tribalism, we might as well write off the Republic of Zambia. I had hoped, with God's help, that I would succeed, but it is now clear that all my efforts have been in vain. This afternoon I sent a note to Attorney-General, James Skinner, asking him what legal steps are necessary before a Head of State can resign. There were unanimous shouts of No, No, No, No - we need you ... Now, having cleared the legal technicalities, Dr Kaunda said: I wish most sincerely to thank all of you for the cooperation you have given me in the past. I have known some of you for well over a decade and it is with a very heavy and sad heart that I, hereby and forthwith, tender my resignation as President of both UNIP and the State (Wina 1982:42, 43).

Kaunda walked out of the Chilenje hall and headed for the old government house, where he stayed for the night. Meanwhile, Simon Kapwepwe and Grey Zulu followed President Kaunda and tried to persuade him to come back. The President returned for a brief moment to say he was not a

man who took decisions lightly. "I am very much touched by your devotion to me, but it is too late" (Wina 1982:45).

Rumour had also travelled fast to the home of some clergymen for whom Dr Kaunda had a very high regard. A procession of Reverends invaded State House to appeal to Dr Kaunda to return to the hall and take up his leadership position.

The writer interviewed<sup>2</sup> former President Kaunda on this issue and he said the following: "

At the National Council which met in Chilenje, Lusaka in 1968, people were shouting at each other. 'I saw tribalism at its worst.' When I started to speak, I told them that I could not lead a party which was divided along tribal lines, then I announced my resignation. As I was walking out of the room, Patterson Ngoma, one of the members of the Council, blocked my way and shouted, 'Ken, Son of David, please come back!' I did not come back. I went to the old Guest House which is near State House. As I was going out, mothers were crying.

Later I saw a group of church leaders who were led by the Anglican Bishop of Lusaka, Philemon Mataka. They told me that they appreciated the problems which made me to resign. However, there was need for me, to see how much the country would suffer if I did not decide to go back. After about two hours with church leaders, I decided to go back. What made things easier for me to go back was the fact that I had not yet taken the constitutional step of submitting my resignation in writing to the Chief Justice.

When I emerged into the room where the council meeting was taking place, there was ululating and wild cheering. I told them I did not want history to hold it against me and because church leaders pleaded with me to go back I reversed my decision.

2 Interview with Dr Kenneth Kaunda in Lusaka on 17 February 1993.

### 1.1.2 THE DEATHS OF THE FAMILY OF FIVE

In 1971, a family of five was petrol bombed in Matero Township, Lusaka and all of them perished. Investigations revealed that the bombing was politically motivated. The man who died, together with his family, belonged to the opposition party and was a potential challenger to the person who was the member of parliament in the area.

After this incident, which was one of several all over the country, the writer wrote President Kaunda suggesting to him how the political killings could be minimized. The letter reads in parts:<sup>3</sup>

The present political situation in Zambia has compelled me to write to your Excellency in my capacity as both an ordinary citizen and a minister in the Reformed Church. Experience during the last seven years of independence in Zambia, has shown that the system of Democracy which we have (adopted) in Zambia is contrary to the actual way of life of the Zambian people. It is too western than African. I, therefore, feel that there is a very urgent need for the introduction of a one party state in Zambia, failure to which Zambia is bound to face more political disturbances in the not too distant future.

The African democracy works better where there is no legal opposition political party. Opposition parties in Africa are there not for constructive opposition. They will not appreciate anything the party in power does ... People could still enjoy democracy in the one party state.

Eight days later the writer received a reply from President Kaunda<sup>4</sup> which reads in parts as follows:

3 Letter by the writer to President Kaunda dated 21 October 1971.

4 (see appendix B).

I thank you most sincerely for your letter dated 21 October 1971, on the important subject of a one-party state ... I look forward to hearing from you on these important national matters.

The writer of the letter to President Kaunda was obviously motivated by the bad political situation in Zambia. It was an attempt to stop the deaths of many people. Zambia never experienced the death of even one person who died as a result of political differences after the introduction of the one party participatory democracy. The creation of the one party state came into existence by consensus through the Choma declaration.

Unfortunately this political system was soon abused and the suffering of the people took a different form. Democracy was denied to the people of Zambia. Those in power were deciding about who should participate in the political life of the country, not the people themselves.

## 1.2 DURING THE SECOND REPUBLIC 1972-1991

### 1.2.1 AN ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM

On 27 April 1967, National Council of UNIP, which met at Matero, adopted *Zambian Humanism* as a philosophy to guide the *Zambian nation* on her path to national development. For *Zambian Humanism* "man is the center of all human activity. All of us are God's creatures and this is a firm enough foundation to see us through what we are about to do - that is to lay down a solid foundation on which to build one Zambia one Nation."<sup>5</sup>

Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the then President of the Republic of Zambia pronounced an affinity between *Zambian Humanism* and Christianity, calling the philosophy "*Christian Humanism*" by which term he meant that:

We discover all what is worth knowing about God through our

5 *Humanism in Zambia*, Part 1, 4.

fellowmen and unconditioned service of our fellowmen is the purest form of service to God. I believe that man must be the servant of a vision which is bigger than himself, that his path is illuminated by God's revelation and that when he shows love towards his fellowmen, he is sharing the very life of God, who is love (Meebelo 1973:18-19).

Christians in Zambia did not find any problem with the philosophy of humanism. In *A letter from the leaders of the church in Zambia to their members about the President's Seminar on Humanism and Development* dated 11 May 1982,<sup>6</sup> under the sub-heading, *The response from the churches*, point 10(3) of the letter states:

We accept Zambian Humanism and a Socialism based on it which agrees very well with our Christian beliefs about God and man. We wish to emphasize traditional African Social values and Gospel values in accordance with them. We will collaborate in teaching Humanism.

The introduction of Scientific Socialism did not only render itself unacceptable to Christians but church leaders were also prepared to fight its emergence at all costs. In their first letter to all their members about Scientific Socialism entitled *Marxism, Humanism and Christianity*, the church leaders started their letter by saying:

There is much talk today about advancing to Humanism through Scientific Socialism. Christians have been advised not to worry about this because there is no intention of introducing atheism or attacking religion. Indeed we have been assured that one can be a Scientific Socialist and a Christian as well.

6 This letter was jointly written by Zambia Episcopal Conference, Episcopal Conference, Christian Council of Zambia and Evangelical Fellowship.



The church leaders then pointed out that:

On the other hand we know that Scientific Socialism normally treats religion as an enemy to be destroyed. Governments who follow it usually try to wipe out belief in God and place many difficulties in the way of the church.

After the church leaders' letter of October 1979, the government appeared to have abandoned the idea of introducing Scientific Socialism. In 1982 the President invited the churches to discuss with him matters of such vital concern to the nation and on which agreement was difficult.

In response to what President Kaunda said about Scientific Socialism again, the church leaders wondered whether Zambian Humanism had failed so that there was then need to import a new ideology from outside. They strongly argued:

We have failed Humanism due to lip-service to its ideals, greed among leaders, laziness, inefficiency, lack of discipline, unfair distribution of wealth between rich and poor, dishonesty and theft in government offices, corruption and intimidation of non-party members.<sup>7</sup>

The letter concludes with this message:

Let us continue to pray for our country, our President and the leadership in church and state that together we may find a wisdom that will lead us into development, justice and peace.<sup>8</sup>

Since 1982 no further attempts were made to introduce Scientific Social-

7 *op cit*, point 10.(5).

8 *op cit*, point 16.

ism in Zambia. The objectives of the church leaders were namely to prevent the introduction of Scientific Socialism in schools and to ensure that the Zambian Christians were not robbed of their belief in God. The secret of their success in this particular case was the fact that they acted together and spoke with one voice.

### 1.2.2 THE 30 JUNE 1990 COUP ATTEMPT

The writer returned from Germany on the morning of 29 June 1990. At about 03:30 there was a knock at the front door of the house. When the writer asked who it was, the voice came: "Students, open the door!" When the students entered the house they looked terrified and they reported the take-over of the government by the army.

This "take-over" by the army lasted about four hours because at 07:30 the Secretary General of the Party, Mr Grey Zulu, then, appeared on Television Zambia. He informed the nation the coup had failed. All this happened when President Kaunda was on the Copperbelt to open the Agricultural Show.

On Monday 2 July 1990, the writer met the Secretary General of UNIP who promised to make an appointment for the writer to see President Kaunda. He brought the message to the writer who was to see the President on Wednesday 4 July 1990.

The appointment was for 11:00 on Wednesday. When the writer entered the office of the President, an unusual thing happened. The writer had been seeing the President at a number of occasions. Each time he went there the President would just offer him a place to sit. This day the President stood and moved towards the writer in a state of shock. They hugged, emotions rose and tears began to drop. After about a minute of hugging they sat down.

After sitting down, the writer asked the President how he got the information of the army takeover. He explained how the police officer who looked after him knocked at the door of the President's room and informed him of the army takeover. The bodyguard suggested to the President that he should fly to Lusaka the same night. He did not accept the suggestion. He would remain in Ndola. He advised the officer that in the event of the soldiers' coming to look for him, he should not attempt to protect him.

Asked how he felt and what he did next: "I dropped on my knees to pray."

Then he said to the writer: "I think I have been too lenient with those

who have attempted to stage coup d'etat in the past. I should send Luchembe to the gallows." (Luchembe is the name of the Army officer who led the June 30 coup attempt.)

Please do not dare do that", said the writer. "Do you know what has made you to survive the previous two coup attempts?" Then he corrected the writer and said that, in fact, there were three previous attempts. There was another one in 1967 which was not known by many people. Several army and police officers were retired. "You survived all these three coup attempts because you never shed blood of those who rose against you. Remember, that 'those who kill with the sword will die by the sword'. If I were you", suggested the writer, "I was going to do the unexpected thing, something that would surprise the whole world. I would release all the political prisoners, including Luchembe himself. Do not think that an act like that would be an act of weakness. Yes, some people might perceive it like that. If anything, it would be a sign of strength."

Two weeks later he did it. All those who were alleged to have staged the 1981 coup, including a prominent lawyer in the Zambian Society, Edward Shamwana, and Luchembe were released.

The iron of the whole thing was the fact that a day previous to the day President Kaunda released these political prisoners, his counterpart in one of the West African countries, executed by firing squad about forty two soldiers who staged a coup attempt in that country. The release was televised and it was interesting to see the President shaking hands with his enemies in person. We find here the greatness of former President Kenneth Kaunda whom the writer feels will go down in the history of Zambia, Africa and the world, as one of the greatest leaders the world has ever seen.

### 1.2.3 THE NATIONAL CONVENTION OF 15TH AND 16TH MARCH 1990

The above convention met to discuss national issues. For the first time the church leaders, including the writer, were invited to attend. Many people, including Zambia's ambassadors abroad were called back to participate in the convention. During this conference people showed a different spirit although they were all UNIP members. They called for the reintroduction of multi-party democracy in Zambia.

The state responded by proposing that it should be put to the people of

Zambia by means of a referendum to decide whether they wanted the political system to change. The nation was going to spend K50 000 000 which was an equivalent of about US\$ 2 000 000 at that time, on this referendum.

Both Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) and the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ) instructed their social justice and peace committee to discuss the question of a referendum and advise the mother bodies what they should say on this issue.

The CCZ Social Justice and Peace Committee was chaired by the writer. It had a membership of four, one of whom was a woman Court Justice. The recommendation of this committee was that there was no need to conduct the country-wide referendum, on the issue since it was quite clear that the people of Zambia wanted political change.

The referendum did not take place. However, a commission had to be appointed to revise the constitution to allow for this change to Multi-party system. President Kaunda appointed members of the commission which included one Catholic Bishop and the chairman of the Christian Council of Zambia. The commission was headed by Prof. Mvunga and is referred to as the "Mvunga Commission".

#### 1.2.4 THE FEELING OF UNEASINESS IN THE COUNTRY DUE TO THE POLITICAL ATMOSPHERE

Article 4 in the Republican constitution was repealed in December 1990 to allow for the creation of other political parties. Within the next six months of the existence of the multi-party system, Zambia saw the creation of more than 10 political parties.

Meanwhile, the report of the Mvunga commission was out. It soon became very clear that the opposition parties, particularly the Movement for Multi-party Democracy, were not happy with some amendments in the Draft Constitution. They threatened that they would not participate in the first multi-party presidential and parliamentary elections whose date was still not announced by the President.

There was "a feeling of uneasiness and tension in the country" due to the political atmosphere caused by the general unhappiness concerning the handling of the Draft Constitution prepared by the Mvunga Commission and the aggressive election campaign practices.

This report pointed out the fact that there was a drift towards serious

political trouble in the country. "People and politicians are turning towards the churches for guidance" because they (the churches) were perceived and trusted as neutral and there was need to examine what the church leaders could do "to preserve unity and peace".

### 1.2.5 CHURCH LEADERS HOLD A CONSULTATIVE MEETING TO EXAMINE THE POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY

On Saturday, 13 July 1991, church leaders from the Christian Council of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference met in the Boardroom of the Catholic Secretariat. The Secretary General of ZEC explained briefly the purpose of the meeting. The meeting felt that the situation in the country was explosive and that there was need to do something about it. "We need to examine what we can do as churches and what might happen if we take no action", suggested one of the Catholic Bishops.

Mr Philip Simuchoba, one of the Protestant church leaders and chairman of the CCZ was also a member of the Mvunga Commission and he admitted that the Mvunga Commission had very little time for good consultation.

This meeting resolved to send a delegation to seek for an audience with the President of the Republic of Zambia. The proposed members of the delegation were Archbishop Adrian Mung'andu, Bishop Dennis de Jong, Fr. Ives Bantungwa, representing ZEC, Bishop Stephen Mumba, Mr. Bennet Nkonga (acting General Secretary of Christian Council of Zambia) and two other CCZ delegates.

It was also resolved that "a press statement should be prepared and issued 1 or 2 days after the meeting with the President."

The church leaders' delegation met the President on the afternoon of 19 July 1991, at State House. According to the press release dated 20 July 1991,

9 The Confidential Report on the Interdenominational Consultative Meeting, ZEC/CCZ, Saturday July 13, 1991, p. 1. At this meeting almost all Catholic Bishops and church leaders.

the delegation met "the President to discuss the current political situation in the nation and ways in which the churches could promote reconciliation and peace."

The press release ended by stating that:

At the earliest convenient time, we will host a meeting to discuss the proposed constitution and ways to facilitate an orderly election. This meeting to which representatives of all the parties will be invited, will be held in a neutral venue (eg. one of our Cathedrals) and will be chaired by neutral persons (eg. a church leader).<sup>10</sup>

## 1.2.6 THE JOINT MEETING BETWEEN GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA AND MOVEMENT FOR MULTI-PARTY DEMOCRACY

On 24 July 1991, the above meeting was held at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross, chaired by the Anglican Bishop Stephen Mumba. Present were experts from the government side and also representatives for the Movement for Multi-Party democracy. The purpose of this meeting was to hear arguments from both sides on the constitutional issue and to come up with specific recommendations concerning the new constitution and how to move forward in the spirit of unity and reconciliation promoted by the parties concerned. The joint meeting came up with a number of resolutions among which are the following:<sup>11</sup>

### 1.2.6.1 Appointment of ministers from outside parliament

Noted that at the meeting between the Government and MMD, attended by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Zambia

- 10 Press release, 20 July 1991, Department of Communication, Catholic Secretariat, Lusaka.
- 11 Resolutions of the meeting of the Joint GRZ/MMD committees of Experts on the Constitutional Bill, 1991, held on Wednesday 24 July 1991, at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross.

and the President of MMD, it was agreed that ministers would be appointed from Members of Parliament.

#### 1.2.6.2 Ending of the State of Emergency

- a. Recommended that His Excellency, the President, considers lifting the State of Emergency immediately;
- b. That the subject of the lifting of the State of Emergency be discussed when His Excellency the President meets the MMD delegation led by the MMD President, Mr FJT Chiluba;
- c. That the period of a State of Emergency declared by the President by proclamation, published in the Government Gazette, be reduced from 28 days to seven days and a declaration approved by resolution of Parliament be reduced from six months to three months;
- d. That the president could in consultation with Cabinet declare war and the State of Emergency could then continue until the cessation of hostilities;

#### 1.2.6.3 Establishment of a constitutional court

Noted that at the meeting between the Government and MMD, attended by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Zambia, and the President of MMD, it was agreed that there would be no constitutional court.

#### 1.2.6.4 Appointment of members of parliament

Agreed that the nominated members of Parliament should not be more than 8.

#### 1.2.6.5 Immunity of a president from prosecution

Agreed that civil proceedings could be instituted against a president after leaving office and criminal proceedings could be instituted only with approval of Parliament by a simple majority.

#### 1.2.6.6 General powers of the president

Agreed that the role of the Cabinet should include policy-making and being advisory to the President.

The coming together of the two parties under the chairmanship of the church leadership provided an answer to the question which was the bone of contention; namely, who should approve the proposed constitutional

amendments since Parliament at this time comprised of people from one political party - UNIP.

## 1.2.7 THE FORMATION OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES MONITORING GROUP

The break-through which was made by GRZ/MMD Committee of Experts on the Constitution, under the chairmanship of the church leadership, did not end the fears members of the public had about the political tension in the country. It was expected that if nothing was done about it the country was going to be plunged into civil war. It was rumoured that some people were preparing to wage bush war if the Presidential and Parliamentary elections were rigged.

One indicator to the seriousness of the situation was the fact that many people started to buy food in bulk in readiness for the period of trouble. On the 19th of September 1991, church leaders met again at the Catholic Secretariat to discuss what role they were going to play to ensure that elections would be conducted under a peaceful atmosphere. They agreed to form the Christian churches monitoring group. It was then decided to elect office bearers who would spearhead the work of this group. The writer was elected chairman of this group.

Four days later the group merged with other local monitoring groups, namely the Law Association, the Press of Association, the Women's Lobby, Non-government Organizations and the University students union. The name changed to Zambia Elections Monitory Coordinating Committee (ZEMCC). The new organization resolved that the chairmanship should remain in the hands of the church leadership. The writer remained chairman of the new and larger monitoring group.

The monitoring group was created six weeks before the day of elections - 31 October 1991. During this period the chairman, either by acting together with the executive or alone, went to discuss with the then President of Zambia, a number of issues among which were:

### 1.2.7.1 The lifting of the state of emergency

Members from the opposition parties complained that there were many policeman and army officers, especially those from the para-military wing, in almost all townships in Lusaka and the



copperbelt. They were found there mostly at night, therefore rendering free campaigning almost impossible.

The Monitoring team appealed to the President on a number of occasions to lift the State of Emergency which he did not do until the day of the elections came.

1.2.7.2 The allegation that the President had hidden some army weapons at the border with Malawi

This rumour was so strong in the nation that the chairman of ZEMCC had to lead a delegation of members of the executive to State House to discuss with the President the question of the hidden weapons. It was alleged that the weapons were hidden there in order for the United National Independence Party to use them in the future against the government that would take power. The President denied any knowledge of this.

1.2.7.3 The proposed meeting between president Kaunda and Mr FTJ Chiluba, President of MMD

It was felt by the local monitors that there was need for the two leaders to meet under the chairmanship of ZEMCC before the day of election. If they met, they would discuss the handing over of power to the winning Presidential candidate, since it would be happening for the first time in the history of Zambia. President Kaunda refused to meet President Chiluba of MMD. The last attempt was made two days before the day of election at which time the chairman of ZEMCC was told that the President had agreed to meet Mr Chiluba, but after the elections. The ZEMCC chairman replied by saying this would not happen under his chairmanship.

1.2.7.4 The detention of Bishop John Mambo

Bishop Mambo was an executive member of ZEMCC and very vocal in the affairs of the nation. The State alleged that Bishop Mambo was not a citizen of Zambia since he was born in South Africa and of parents who were not Zambians. The immigration officers were sent to his village to interview the parents, the headman and the local chief. One afternoon, at the end of the Board Meeting of ZEMCC, Rev Joe Imakando, who was Secretary, reported to the Board that Bishop Mambo had been detained early

that afternoon and that the State was planning to deport him to South Africa or Swaziland, the country of his mother's birth.

The first reaction of the members was to organize a big demonstration the following day to demand for his release. The chairman, who had been invited to attend a luncheon at State House, asked the Board members to give him a chance to speak to the President about the release of Bishop Mambo.

In the evening the President agreed to meet him on this subject. The chairman was accompanied by his vice, Bishop Stephan Mumba. They wanted to know why Bishop Mambo was detained. The President told them that he was not responsible for Bishop Mambo's detention but his minister of Home Affairs, Kingsley Chinkuli was. He was asked to release him that night which they did.

## 2. THE ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS OF THE INVOLVEMENT OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS

The Zimbabwean situation has historically been very unique in that since the time of Zambia's independence, the Christian Church has spoken with one voice on important national issues. It should also be remembered that President Kaunda never developed an ideology or practical policy which could antagonize or alienate the church (Adrian Hastings 1979:187).

When there was the threat of Scientific Socialism to be introduced in our institution of learning, the three mother bodies, the Christian Council of Zambia, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia and the Zambia Episcopal Conference acted together and were all signatories to the letter on Marxism, Humanism and Christianity which was sent to all their members in 1979.

The second letter on the same issue which was sent to all the members was equally signed by the three groups.

When Zambia was changing from one-party state to multi-party democracy, the church acted together again to ensure that peace was maintained.

Zambia is said to comprise of 80 % Christians. This being so, we can not doubt the tremendous influence the church has on Zambia's politics. In 1979, the writer preached when the nation was celebrating Zambia's 15th anniversary of Independence. He pointed out a number of bad things which were happening within the government circles and which were tolerated by

the political leadership. One general manager had stolen K244 000 from a para-statal company and used the same money to defend himself by hiring a lawyer. The State was not very strong on this case. The allegation was that some of the leaders were equally involved in such things and, therefore, they could not take serious action against this person.

It is said that one of the Cabinet Ministers, who was present in the service that day, went to President Kaunda to complain that was too much of an attack on the political leadership and wondered whether the preacher should not be questioned on the same issue.

However, it is reported that President Kaunda did not agree with this person. Instead this man was told that in the absence of opposition parties, the country should consider itself fortunate if the church was making constructive criticism against the party and its government. He referred to the church as "our Mirror into which we can look and see where we did not do well". From that time it became like a slogan to Kaunda, in that, in many of his future speeches he referred to the church as "our Mirror" and one of the pillars of the nation.

After the 1991 presidential and parliamentary election, President Chiluba invited a few church leaders to meet him at Government House where he first stayed. The writer was among the five church leaders. He told them that he had invited them in order to thank them for the role they had played during Zambia's transition to multi-party democracy. He pointed out that the story would have been different if the church had not played that role.

The people of Zambia are now used to turning to the church whenever there is a crisis in the country. During this time when we have many political parties, the church leaders have seen some political leaders who have come to ask them to do something about a given situation. The church and its leadership have won for themselves the confidence and trust of the people of Zambia.

However, in some cases as we have noted, the church appeared to have compromised with the State on certain issues. The impression has been given that "the churches have been, in fact, gently harnessed to the ruling system and the Catholic Bishop Mutale even agreed to serve as a member of the commission for instituting a one-party state" (Hastings 1979:1881).

I want to strongly state that the church in Zambia has never compromised with the State. The same Bishop Mutale became so critical on the question of the prolonged imprisonment of the 1981 coup attempt prisoners. When the same Bishop died tragically in a car accident in 1989, there was a

strong suspicion that it was not an ordinary accident but that the State could have a hand in it in order to get rid of the critic.

The church refused to keep silent on what they considered to be injustice. If the church kept silent on established evils, it would identify itself and the Christian religion with injustice. Therefore, where it was deemed necessary to cooperate with the State, the church cooperated. In all cases the church acted independently.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The Christian Church in Zambia has a proud record in the area of guiding the nation during the time of crisis, as we have seen. This is also true of the churches in some other African countries.

There will be more to do on the part of the church during this time of the "second liberation" of Africa. Is the church going to continue with its present strategy of coming in when there is a crisis in the nation? Or is the church coming up with a new approach of involvement in national issues?

Time has come when churches in Africa need to discuss how they can guide African nations so as to minimize the incidents of crisis. This is the right time to do it when people still have great confidence and trust in the leadership of the church in Africa. This favoured position might not always be there.

The All Africa Conference of Churches should come up with new strategies which will meet the new challenges. The second liberation of Africa which has come by means of the democratization process needs to be supported. The church in Africa is placed in a much better position to play this role.

Would the setting up of a new department to deal with social and political change in Africa, in which Christian social and political scientists on Africa could be used, be an answer to this challenge? This would be enhanced by the establishment of similar departments in all national Christian Councils of Churches. Such a department at whatever level would be responsible for drawing up programmes of action. Throughout the known history the Africans have never enjoyed social and political stability, and now it is the economic instability which is haunting Africa in form of debt crisis. The attainment of independence of many African states three decades ago gave Africans a lot of expectations. It did not take long before it became

clear that "the beautiful ones were not yet born". For how long is Africa going to wait for the beautiful ones to be born? We cannot wait for another three decades before we see the Africa which will know peace and live in peace. This is the challenge of the church in Africa. Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called sons of God (Matt 5:9).

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## APPENDIX A

21 October 1971

The President of the Republic of Zambia ,  
Dr. Kenneth David Kaunda  
State House  
LUSAKA

Dear Your Excellency

## A ONE PARTY STATE

The present political situation in Zambia has compelled me to write to Your Excellency, in my capacity as both an ordinary citizen and a minister in the Reformed Church.

Experience, during the last seven years of Independence in Zambia, has shown that the system of Democracy which we have in Zambia is contrary to the actual way of life of the Zambian people. It is too Western than African. I therefore feel that there is a very urgent need for the introduction of a ONE PARTY STATE in Zambia failure to which Zambia is bound to face more political disturbances not in the too distant future.

The African Democracy works better where there is no legal opposition political party. Opposition parties in Africa are there not for constructive opposition. They will not appreciate anything the party in power does. Whether there is development, as is the case in Zambia, in the country, they will not agree only because they interested in making the ruling party unpopular in the face of the general public.

People could still enjoy Democracy in the One Party State. When it came to elections, two or more candidates of the same party would contest one seat. Voters would vote for a candidate of their choice.

The earlier Your Excellence takes action, the better for Zambia and her people.

I remain, Sir  
Your obedient servant

(REV) FD Sakala

## APPENDIX B

State House  
Lusaka  
The Republic of Zambia

29 October 1971

Dear Mr. Sakala

I thank you most sincerely for your letter dated 21st October 1971, on the important subject of a one-party state. Obviously, your thoughts are based on our traditional approach to problems. The only thing I can say at the moment is that what you have said in your letter has been said by thousands of our fellow citizens, and most of these including our chiefs have spoken on behalf of many others.

It would be very wrong for me therefore to ignore the voice of the majority on this issue. I can therefore assure you that this matter will be considered alongside with others by the Central Committee.

I look forward to hearing from you on these important national matters. Once again, thank you very much indeed.

Your sincerely

PRESIDENT