

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CHURCH IN THE SECOND REPUBLIC 1973-1991

INTRODUCTION

The chapter examines the role of the Church in the politics of the One Party State of the Second Republic 1973 to 1991. The One Party State came about through a constitutional amendment to change the governance of the country from the multi-party system of democracy to the one-party participatory democracy. The United Independence Party (UNIP), as the ruling party, became the only party without any other political party in opposition to give checks and balances to its rule up to 1991. The year 1991 stands as an historical landmark in growth of democracy in the Zambian politics. In this year, Kaunda and his party paved the way to multi-party politics.

After 1976 was also the period in which the Zambian economy declined sharply. The Church slowly moved away from the position that was more of collaboration and supportive as demonstrated in the First Republic to that of opposition in the 1980s of the Second Republic. The Church emerged as a pressure group by nourishing checks and balances to the UNIP rule through the use of its own media. Unlike the Government owned News papers, the Church newspapers were circulated throughout the country including rural Zambia.¹

By using the declined economy coupled with the attempt to introduce scientific socialism, Church Organisations together with Labour Movement, students, the Church owned press and professional Associations exerted pressure on Kaunda and his Government and called for a National Referendum on whether Zambia should go back to multi-party democracy.² With consented effort, Zambia became a multi-

party democracy, bringing to an end the UNIP era in 1991. Unlike the imposition of the one-party participatory democracy in the period of 1973-1991 by the UNIP leadership, the re-introduction of multi-party democracy in 1991 came through the ballot.

To start with the chapter will give the historical background to the introduction of the one party state. Then it will investigate the role that the Church played in the introduction of one-party politics in 1973. This will be followed up by government's attempt to introduce Scientific Socialism and how the Church reacted to this "new" form of humanism. The chapter will later examine the Church Mass Media as one of the most important tools that the Church used effectively to sensitise the masses in order to achieve its intended objective which was to bring change to Zambian politics. In the final analysis, the chapter will demonstrate the major political role played by the Church in the preparations for 1991 elections which brought about a peaceful transition of power and the end of one party-state.

The One-Party State

The 1964 Zambia's political independence introduced into the country a competitive multi-party democracy that lasted up to 1972. It was a political style that subjected the contesters to stiff competition before ascending to the seats of authority with majority votes. The two major political parties then were the United National Independent Party (UNIP) which captured massive support and won more seats (155) in the National Assembly than its immediate rival the African National Congress (ANC) which managed to get only ten (10) seats.³

UNIP campaign methods before independence ranged from novel politicking, special sit-in sessions to teach people on how to vote and providing transport to every candidate for electioneering purposes. A special band was organised to tour the

entire country teaching people through catchy songs on how to vote.⁴ But what worked for UNIP was the demand for political identity of UNIP cards in streets, roads, bus stops and terminals.⁵ UNIP cadres used criminal acts such as arson to intimidate Watchtowers, UNIP opponents, chiefs, law enforcement officers and those that refused to join the political party.⁶

By 1967 there were physical and verbal confrontations mostly based on ethnic and regional differences. UNIP was termed as a Bemba party and ANC was seen to be a party for Tonga Zambians. Party leaders sought support in those regions where they were best known and understood. For this reason Zambia's political competition took on a tribal character.⁷ This was also associated to regions in which these parties had massive support. UNIP followers went as far as calling ANC cadres idiots, simple souls, and Tonga peasants. Even President Kaunda, who was the top most leader of UNIP, was quoted calling the opponents of UNIP as silly and small men.⁸

ANC viewed UNIP founders and supporters as uprooted and poor 'thieves' whose ambitions were only to rob the nation, of their Tonga women, cattle, and their hard won fruits of the agricultural labour. The Tonga UNIP cadres like Mainza Chona and Elijah Mudenda were called educated fools and mere tools of the Bemba Regime.⁹ Unfortunately, ordinary members of political parties were indoctrinated with these instigations which they accepted as truth. In turn, these were orally passed on from one generation to another. Today these instigations are still barriers to national unity.

In readiness for 19th December 1968 presidential and National Assembly polls, the rate at which physical confrontation was reported, was alarming. For instance, *Times of Zambia* of 9th January 1968 reported on the arrests made in Lusaka in two separate incidents in connection with UNIP-ANC political clashes. In old Kanyama

shantytown for example, four arrests were made; while another eleven people were arrested in Kalingalinga. This was the second outbreak of political violence within nine days. In both incidents, Police reinforcements in full riot kit were deployed to enforce peace and order.¹⁰

As a newly independent country, there was great need to create national unity in Zambia. The country failed to find the solution to political violence and tribal divisions in the multi-party democracy.¹¹ The verbal and physical weaponry targeted at the opponents was disgracing and a threat to national unity. Yet this was only after four years of western type of politics among indigenous Zambians. In a multi-party democracy contesters are exposed to public scrutiny in all aspects of life. However, Zambia started disintegrating into ethnic or regional politics phasing out the unity of purpose that was experienced during the liberation struggles for political independence.

Externally, from Zambia's relationships with the four white minority regimes were hostile. She publicly supported the liberation struggles waged by Africans for majority rule in the southern African region. Freedom fighters passed through Zambia's territory to their own countries with consent from the Zambian Government. This put the nation in a very dangerous position against the militarily advanced neighbours.¹² For this reason, a good number of people in the early 1970s started complaining that President Kaunda was too pre-occupied with issues relating to the liberation of southern Africa that made him to be insensitive to people's suffering within the country. This vulnerability was one of the reasons put forward by the UNIP leaders in pursuit for a one-party state. A single-party, they argued, would protect the security of the Zambian state from external subversion. Zambia was on the frontline of liberation struggles in southern Africa.¹³

Despite calls for the introduction of a one-party state, the majority of Zambians were only interested in bringing to an end political violence experienced in the multi-party politics. In the first place, none of them had any total knowledge of a single party system. The majority of Zambians were mostly interested in having food on the table and other social services. It did not matter what type of political system the country embarked on as long as their basic needs were met.¹⁴ Others like the ANC though in the minority put up a spirited fight all the way through the decision to introduce a single-party system. It even refused Government's offer for representation on the Chona Commission. They said it was the means to have absolute political power over everyone else.¹⁵ Despite the opposition, UNIP was determined to be a single party even by force.

It must be emphasised that one-party rule was not new to the African continent at the time when Kaunda and UNIP leadership thought about abandoning the multi-party system in favour of single party rule in Zambia. Ludwig Sondashi has traced its origins from Guinea when the French community granted unconditional independence to the ill-prepared Guinea in 1960. Sekou Toure, the then president, raised the status of his party as being supreme and above the level of people and the nation. All other institutions in the land were subordinated to his party. From Guinea, the idea of a single party spread to Ghana under NKwame Nkrumah and then to other countries.¹⁶

Some of the reasons which Sekou Toure and Nkrumah put forward to justify a single party ideology were that a single-party system of government was consistent with African Tradition and culture which was against opposition. The idea of multi-party politics was seen as western and that importing "parliamentary opposition parties"

into Africa would lead to violence. In this way opposition parties would be likened to traitors by the majority of Africans.¹⁷

Thus between 1960 and 1970, many independent African countries had moved to single party rule. Therefore, the single party system in Africa originated from the African content and as much as from the Eastern bloc. In these countries, the campaign for single party rule began with the ruling class who so to say, were interested in securing their leadership positions in government. This was why Arthur Lewis noted that among African states no power went to the polls in a free election seeking a mandate to create a single-party system. Single power system was seized, not granted by voters.¹⁸

In the same way, UNIP as a ruling party was advantaged to create itself into a single party in Zambia by simply abolishing the referendum as the method of amending the Constitution. When Simon Kapwepwe later resigned from UNIP, he also acknowledged the fact that abolishing the referendum was a more flexible and less expensive means of effecting any changes to the constitution considered necessary by the government.¹⁹ In fact, what Kaunda professed in August 1967 contradicted the steps taken later in the imposition of UNIP as a single-party in Zambia. The August 1967 UNIP General Council Minutes had quoted President Kaunda as having said:

We are in favour of a one-party state, we do not believe in legislating against the oppositions. By being honest to the cause of the common man, we would, through effective UNIP and government organisation, paralyse and wipe out opposition thereby bringing about the birth of a one-party state. Any disappearance of the parliamentary opposition in this country and the

introduction of the one-party state system would not be, and I emphasize, would not be an act of the UNIP government, but would only be according to the wishes of the people of this country as expressed at the polls in any future elections.²⁰

There is clear evidence that from independence, UNIP's leadership had been arguing that the introduction of a one party-state was necessary to reduce increasing political violence as contained in the above stated Minutes. Kaunda thought change would occur through the ballot box, where the electorate would be in favour of a house consisting of members of one party only, and that party would be UNIP.²¹

However, in 1967 there were two major events that took place, that is, the launching of the philosophy of Humanism as a national ideology, and the UNIP Central Committee election. The former was perceived to be one way of inculcating national unity among the seventy-two ethnic groupings, while the later demonstrated the democratic process as practised within the UNIP Party leadership. Reuben Kamanga the then vice President had been appointed by President Kaunda to that position. He was replaced by Simon Mwansa Kapwepwe who was democratically elected as Vice President in the UNIP Central Committee election of 1967.²²

Meanwhile, non-Bemba members (exclusive of the Tonga) within UNIP did not recognise the results of the elections. It was the Bemba and Tonga alliance in the 1967 Central Committee elections which secured for Kapwepwe the position of UNIP deputy leader and Zambia's Vice President.²³ Kaunda was of the view that Kapwepwe's victory was a consequence of foul play by the Bemba clique in the Central Committee. He stated that "We have canvassed so strongly along tribal,

racial and provincial lines....was it really necessary to win votes by being tribal, racial, or provincial?"²⁴

Kaunda went as far as instituting a Commission of Inquiry to establish the facts so that Kamanga could be brought back as Vice President instead of Kapwepwe. But the findings were in favour of Kapwepwe.²⁵ Therefore, divisions in UNIP continued to exist even at the highest level of the party leadership. The 1967 UNIP elections had shaken Kaunda in the sense that it was clear to him and his government that Zambia shall never come to a one-party state through a popular vote. Additionally, there was no permanent solution for the problem of sectionalism in the struggle for power. In these circumstances, the introduction of a one-party state was more appealing than the struggle for power through a popular vote.²⁶

Meanwhile UNIP started to lose support in the Western Province with the presence of United Party (UP) which was formed by Nalumino Mundia in 1966 and later on crossed to the Copperbelt in 1968. In December 1968, Kaunda took a desperate step which showed that he too lacked the understanding of multi-party democracy in real sense by imposing heavy sanctions on UNIP's opponents. Kaunda ordered Justin Chimba who was by then Minister of Trade, Industry and Mines, to ensure that none of the eight opposition members of Parliament elected in Western Province was granted a new licence to run a business or had his old licence renewed. Failure to comply with this directive, Chimba was threatened with a sack.²⁷ Kaunda expressed resentments of UNIP opponents in the following terms:

I cannot see how I can continue to pay a police or a civil servant who works for Nkumbula. How dare they bite the hand that feeds them? They must learn

that it pays to belong to UNIP. Those who want to form a civil service of the opposition must cross the floor and get their pay from Harry Nkumbula.²⁸

It appears as though the one party state was already in the system. Those who knew the constitution and their rights were afraid of intimidation or of being sacked from their privileged positions in the civil service or in government.²⁹

Politics of intimidation worsened when Kapwepwe, the vice president resigned from UNIP and formed his own political Party, the United Progressive Party (UPP) in 1971. Kapwepwe attracted many defectors from UNIP to his UPP.³⁰ UNIP employed tactics ranging from refusing permits for meetings to dismissal of known opposition supporters from government employment. UNIP carders stoned and burnt houses of the oppositions as well as detentions of opposition leadership.³¹

When the United Progressive Party came on the scene and captured popularity among the Bemba speaking provinces of Northern, Luapula and Copperbelt. Kaunda, who considered himself a man of God with strong belief in non violence, saw the possibility of inter-party conflict between his own party UNIP and Kapwepwe's followers during the by-elections of December 1971.³² In the by-elections of 1971 UPP lost all but only Kapwepwe easily won one seat in Mufulira without any campaign at all. Kapwepwe's victory disturbed the UNIP administration.³³

Kaunda acted fast. Hence, on the 4th February 1972 he banned UPP and detained Kapwepwe together with one hundred and twenty-three (123) other leading UPP members. While these were detained, on the 25th February 1972 Kaunda pronounced his cabinet's decision to establish a one-party state through a constitutional change.³⁴

To this the Church reacted. The initial reaction of the Church came through a personal letter written by Bishop Elias Mutale of the Roman Catholic Church to Kaunda expressing his concern over the treatment of UPP detainees. Mutale noted that it was wrong for Christians to sit and watch a situation where citizens were doubtful of the Government's attitude in the exercise of its duty of carrying out justice.³⁵ Kaunda only released the UPP detainees once the one-party system was introduced. He was by then sure that there was no possibility of having an opposition party.

The Church in the One-Party State

As already discussed, before Zambia was declared a one-party state UNIP campaign methods for membership ranged from arson to intimidation of opponents, refusing permits for meetings, dismissal of those that were known to be UNIP's opponents and stoning the houses of the opponents.³⁶ The question one might ask is where was the Church when UNIP followers committed such political crimes against its opponents? In answer Reverend Martin Kapenda of the Evangelical Church said: "The Church only steps out of its comfortable zone when there are serious problems in the country".³⁷ In other words these were not serious problems that would have called for the Church's interventions. Contrary to Kapenda's response, what affected the society affected the Church too in exactly the same way. This was what Reverend Lukas Soko, a lecturer in Practical Theology observed by stating that:

What happened in society affected the Church too. The Church leadership was colonial (white led) before and immediately after independence. For this reason it could not speak out against the government even in critical situations that called for its urgent intervention.³⁸

The Church leadership was aware of its weak position. White leaders (especially in the Catholic Church) feared to be branded as interfering neo-colonialists. At independence the Church white leadership was haunted by feelings of guilt of the colonial past and made its aim to rally behind the black government.³⁹ Most Church leaders expressed eagerness to support the independent Zambia. In this way, the Church tended to downplay its role as the conscience of the Nation. The Government also saw the Church as partner in development.⁴⁰ The Church was made up of individuals in society and therefore, it was not different from the society it served. It can lastly be said that the Church was also afraid of being intimidated by the UNIP leadership and the cadres.

The predicaments faced in the first decade of independence, made the church appear as an accomplice in the creation of the One-Party State in Zambia. Kapenda stated that before and immediately after independence Kenneth David Kaunda was perceived by the Church to be a very devout Christian having been the product of both Church education and a Christian family, whose father was a missionary pastor. This put the Church in a very comfortable position to have a committed Christian in the highest political position in the country. On the other hand, the economy was booming. From this perspective, the Church lived in harmony with the government and the state.⁴¹

The Church in the Chona Commission

President Kaunda played his cards very well. To start with, he came to realise that Matthias Mainza Chona whom he had sent in 1969 as an Ambassador to the United States of America was a Tonga and from the Southern Province, the stronghold of ANC which was the only surviving opposition political party. He was quick to recall Chona and made him the Vice President in 1970. Kaunda assigned Chona, as the

chairperson of the National Commission of Inquiry in February 1972 to make recommendations for the constitution of a 'one-party participatory democracy', and to recommend the structure for the one party state. The Commission was referred to as the Chona Commission. It was composed of independent intellectual persons like Kasuka Mutukwa, Lavu Mulimba; churchmen like Bishop Elias Mutale, Reverend Jackson Mwape and Bishop Mataka.⁴²

The terms of reference did not permit the Commission to discuss the pros and cons of Kaunda's decision.⁴³ It was to determine people's attitude towards one-party participatory democracy. Its emphasis was placed on making recommendations and not to make laws. The Commission's major duty was to make suggestions and nothing else. Parliament was mandated to leave out whatever it thought could not be included.⁴⁴ The African National Congress (ANC) boycotted the Commission and unsuccessfully challenged the subsequent constitutional change in courts. This was because the ANC's voice was very small both in Parliament and the country at large.

The Chona Commission Report was based on four months of public hearings and was submitted in October 1972.⁴⁵ Although the Second Republic was inaugurated in December 1972, the National Assembly did not approve of the new constitution until August 1973. It was modelled on the Soviet Union's one-party system. The constitution upheld the supremacy of the single party (UNIP).⁴⁶

While the ANC opposed the suggestions for creation of the one-party rule, the Church rallied behind UNIP and advocated for its establishment. The Church leaders revealed in their pastoral writings that the Church's support for the single-party system was because the multi-party politics gave way to violent divisions in the nation. To pull the country together in the quest for nation building, the Church rallied behind the one-party system.⁴⁷

Church leaders further felt that this approach was more appropriate to the African culture and style of governing. Since in tradition Africa, there was only one head in a village and one chief in any given area; opposition was carefully controlled. Therefore, the one-party approach was believed to keep down tribalism and regional divisions, realities of life which threatened to break up the new nation. “One Zambia, One Nation” was a political slogan which represented the desire to promote national unity and develop national consciousness.⁴⁸ Additionally, the one-party system was seen to be less expensive and more efficient in a young developing country, while at the same time it reduced on time and energy spent on campaigning. It was felt that multi-party politics was a luxury which Zambia could not afford. In any case, Zambia was simply emulating other African countries like Tanzania which had managed to create unified nations.⁴⁹ With this in mind, it can be enunciated that the one-party system was created by the UNIP leadership with the blessing of the Church which strongly believed that unity would be established in Zambia through this type of governance.

Parliament accepted the one party state under the constitution where the fundamental human rights, the independence of the Judiciary, the professional independence of the legal practitioners and government were to be controlled by Parliament. The parliamentary criticisms were to continue in which members of Parliament were to be free to speak and vote in Parliament, and freedom of speech among back benchers were mandated to speak their minds.⁵⁰ This could have been the vision the Church had in mind when it supported the proposed one-party system before it was implemented.

When the country finally became a one party state, it underwent major constitutional changes through the introduction of the one party democratic state. The constitution

was amended to provide for UNIP as the sole and only recognised political party under the law. Eligibility to contest elections for presidential and Parliamentary seats was confined to card carrying members of UNIP. A successful Presidential candidate had to garner fifty per cent plus one of the votes cast.⁵¹ Furthermore, the Party played a central role in electing which candidate would stand in Presidential elections and accordingly, whoever was cleared stood unopposed in the national polls. There came a time in the 1980s when citizens were required to vote either “yes” or “no” for the candidate who stood against the symbol of a frog in order to secure President Kaunda in power.⁵²

The constitution was compromised; the institution of Parliament or National Assembly which was representative of all eligible adult voters, regardless of tribe, race or religion was supposed to re-establish its authority as a supreme law-making and legislative body in the land. This did not happen. Instead, even the laws passed by Parliament were compromised.⁵³ The system created two classes of citizens: Citizens with Party membership and citizens without Party membership. The abuse of power concentrated in the hands of a few gave way to corruption, nepotism and inefficiency. The supremacy of the One-Party System led to ill-conceived economic decisions and policies whose ultimate results were bound to undermine the economy of the nation and the management of its resources.⁵⁴

The Central Committee and its organs had power above all other national institutions in Zambia. In other words, UNIP moved away from its original status as a political party. The party stopped depending solely on its supporters and sympathisers for its financial support. The party no longer depended on its investments in party subscriptions and donation for funding and for materials to

carry out its functions as a party.⁵⁵ For its survival, the UNIP party came to depend on the tax payers' money from the national treasury.⁵⁶

The single party system did not work for Zambia. As we have observed it became a living hell to most Zambians. This caused some UPP detainees like John Chisata and Faustinus Chinkangala Lombe to write to Bishop Elias Mutale requesting him to defend his recommendations from scrupulous, selfish, and desperate political malcontents who were crucifying the masses. Some Catholics went further accusing Mutale of legitimizing an undemocratic exercise. These accusations went as far as questioning the Bishop's role in Government and what he was getting from supporting the system. The outcry was that he sanctioned the evils of the one-party system. This was the time when Bishop Mutale wrote to Kaunda to release the UPP detainees; arguing that it was wrong for Christians to sit back and watch what was going on in Government.⁵⁷ In short, many Zambians lost confidence in the one party system right from its inception. It can be acknowledged that the single party system was imposed by Kaunda and his party UNIP and not granted by voters.

The Church and Scientific socialism

Scientific Socialism was an ideology or a philosophy which aimed at achieving a perfect society. All political power was to be consolidated in the hands of those who believed in Scientific Socialism and accept its discipline. The ruling party was to have all the power on the behalf of people in society. The party was to make the decisions that would lead the people into this perfect society.⁵⁸

Additionally, the needs of the state were to override and dominate the desires of individual citizens. Meaning, if individual interests stand in the way of achieving the perfect society, the individual was to be subordinated to the needs of the state. The

freedoms of speech, of the press, of association, of privacy, and of movement are not guaranteed because these individual freedoms are subordinated to the needs of the state. Religious belief in God is criticised as a hindrance to the achievement of the perfect society. The life of the Church is controlled, and religious expression and action arising from religious beliefs were to be compatible with and supplement the goals of the Party. The Party was to be supreme over all.⁵⁹

In 1967 Kaunda declared that the Party would strive to establish a true Socialist State. And that it would not be possible to be Humanists without being socialists since the former could not be instituted without the later.⁶⁰ By then a true socialist state was not clearly understood. Many translated it to African socialism, a communion way of living.

'The true Socialist State' aspect was understood in 1979 when once again the Party and its Government made another attempt to introduce scientific socialism in schools⁶¹ The Church's reaction came in a pamphlet entitled *Marxism, Humanism and Christianity*. It was a combined letter, prepared by the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), and Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) in Lusaka to all their members about Scientific Socialism⁶². They explained the definitions and teachings of Christianity, Humanism and Marxism.

In the letter the Church leaders called upon Christians for action, asking them to take a stand to protect present liberties and call on the government leaders to ask the party (UNIP) to keep its own principles. The Church took a stance not to allow any oppressive system to be introduced in the country. They observed that it was not enough for them to be against scientific socialism or capitalism or any isms, without

first reflecting on the social teachings of the Churches and the gospel in order to contribute to the building of a society where the dignity of man is fully respected.⁶³

President Kaunda noted that the Church leaders had expressed themselves very clearly in their letters which revealed their anxiety on ‘Participatory Democracy and the move towards Scientific Socialism.’⁶⁴ It was from this background that President Kaunda called the Church leaders for a discussion. The seminar was aimed at discussing “Humanism and Development”. It was held at Kabwe, Mulungushi Rock Hall, from 18-19th March, 1982. The main objectives of discussions were: *Zambian Humanism Ideals, An evaluation of Zambian Humanism, Scientific Socialism, Churches and Government Responses to the Present situation.*⁶⁵

The 11th May, 1982 combined Pastoral letter of the three mother bodies, the ZEC, CCZ and EFZ was sent to all their members about what was discussed in the President’s seminar on “Humanism and Development”. In response to the President’s speech the Church leaders made about 22 observations.⁶⁶ The Church called for a public debate on Scientific Socialism and dialogue between the Church and government. At the same time the Church wondered why parents were not consulted as to whether Scientific Socialism should be introduced as a subject in schools. The Church also expressed its wish to collaborate with other religious groups like Hindus and Muslims and urged the government to introduce a syllabus based on Zambian Humanism in Teachers Training Colleges and not Scientific Socialism. They argued that Scientific Socialism which denies the existence of God cannot be taught side by side with religion.⁶⁷

In his reply, the President called for a new approach to his Scientific Socialism which was not discussed in the seminar. In reality Kaunda did not adhere to the

request of embarking on Zambian Humanism and to get rid of scientific socialism. He said the government intended to establish an egalitarian society in which every person has an equal opportunity to develop to his or her fullest potential.⁶⁸

Meanwhile the government had embarked on sending political educators and party cadres to central Europe for training. To make matters worse, even the political and ideological education syllabus which had been rejected by the Church had not been withdrawn from the teacher training colleges. Hence, when the Catholic bishops asked Father Jean-Loup Calmettes in early 1983 to pay special attention to the emergence of Scientific Socialism in the country, he reported back that political educators and party cadres were regularly sent to Central Europe for training.⁶⁹

In February 1983 the Church was hit by the same shocking news which was in less than a year that the Party was to teach Scientific Socialism not only in schools but also in Churches. According to an ambitious programme released by the Minister of National Guidance, a highly powered team led by National Guidance Minister, Arnold Simuchimba was to deliver lectures on Humanism to Churches in Lusaka in March 1983. The Churches to be visited included the New Apostolic Faith, African Methodist Episcopal and the Anglican Church. These were to receive their first lectures on 5th March, 1983.⁷⁰

For the Evangelical Church in Zambia, Reformed Church of Zambia, and the Baptist Church's lectures were scheduled for 12th March, 1983. The programme was aimed at explaining the differences between Humanism and Scientific Socialism which rejected God. According to the Party and its Government, these lectures were to take place because the Churches did not seem to understand the realities of Scientific Socialism. It was the wish of the Party and its Government to build Humanism

through Scientific Socialism in order to transform Zambia into a perfect and classless society. The lectures were also extended to private companies and government institutions.⁷¹

The Church received the message with shock; the chairperson of the CCZ, Philip Simuchoba and his General Secretary, Reverend Kingsley Mwenda and the Anglican Bishop, Steve Mumba, were all perplexed by the move and wondered what else was in stock for them.⁷² This was the greatest blunder made by Kaunda's Government. Kapenda observed that the Church is not different from the society; it is human. It never puts up a spirited fight, but when it is confronted with a non theological issue, the Church unites and stages a spirited battle to defend the faith.⁷³

The Church lost confidence and trust in the government. It started using its media for its voice to be heard by the Government and the Zambian society. The fact is that the Church is an element of the public sphere. It has its own influence in the public, it can advocate for its own change and the society. It has power to influence society to its own advantage and to eliminate unwanted elements in the society.⁷⁴

It is important to note that among Church leaders and even the clergy, there were those who did not see anything wrong in teaching of Scientific Socialism in schools as a subject in the school curriculum. Reverend Sampa Bredt observed that the knowledge of Scientific Socialism would have given a broader knowledge and understanding to the Christian faith. Bredt saw Scientific Socialism as something good that could have exposed Zambians to other philosophies. She said the philosophy only lacked personnel to teach it correctly to the people of Zambia. According to her, if Scientific Socialism was taught correctly, Zambians could have been empowered to make informed choices and decisions.⁷⁵

Furthermore, Brecht argued that those that fought against the teachings of Scientific Socialism in schools were the missionaries, especially those who came from socialist countries or had passed through its influence. These were the ones that fought against it and influenced others. Otherwise many Zambians did not know what Scientific Socialism was all about. It was not a philosophy to fear because Zambians who had been to communist countries, none of them had anything good to say about their Scientific Socialism experiences in those countries. Brecht also sympathised with President Kaunda whose ideas of Scientific Socialism were not clearly understood by the Church.⁷⁶

In the end the Church won the fight against Scientific Socialism. It won because of several reasons. To start with, Christian missionaries had played a very important role in the social development programmes like youth development, training, and community development programmes. They also brought in much needed foreign aid to finance these programmes and actively initiated their own local programmes in partnership with the government. These were coupled with the Christian background of Kaunda that could not have allowed him to abandon his religious convictions. More importantly, the Church was fully aware of its influence on the government.⁷⁷

The Church in the Mass Media

The Church's historical involvement in the media goes as far back as the early 1960s. On 28th April, 1961 the Roman Catholic Church started a weekly tabloid, called *The Leader*. It was published in Lusaka by the Church's own Teresianum Press. It was an attempt to bring together the warring whites and blacks but it was seen as a political misfit by both blacks and whites. The paper was badly edited and faced with financial difficulties for its operations. On the 17th August 1962 it closed down, bringing its life span to only 16 months.⁷⁸

Within seven months of the end of its existence, *The Leader* was replaced by another weekly paper called *The Northern Star*. This paper was also started by the Roman Catholic Church whose editor was an American layman, Alexander Macdonald. It aimed at giving a weekly report of political, economic and social development in the country and the rest of the world. The paper covered news without partisan or racial bias like *The Leader*. It called for the dissolution of the tenuous first Black Government made up of UNIP and ANC, emphasising the need for a strong, clear majority government. On the 16th January, 1964, it became a fortnightly news review and ceased to be a newspaper in October 1964 due to lack of funds.⁷⁹

The historical involvement of the Church as an ecumenical body in the use of the media can also be traced as far back as the 1960s, when Churches worked together in the field of electronic media through radio and television. It was only in the early 1970s that the Church began to pay serious attention to the media as the means of disseminating the teachings of the Church. In 1970, the Churches incorporated a media organisation called Multi-media. This was set up by Father Adrian B. Smith of the Catholic Secretariat and Father John Houghton who at one time was the Dean of the Anglican Cathedral in Lusaka. It was the CCZ and ZEC that came together as equal partners and had equal membership on a board of governors. The Multimedia had five sections: radio, television, film unit, press, publications, and visual library of photographs.⁸⁰

The Mirror/National Mirror

Two years later, in January 1972, the Multimedia Press section was able to publish its first issue of a monthly Christian newspaper called *Mirror*. From 1972 the paper was simply called the *Mirror* until about 1983 when it was renamed as *National*

Mirror. The *Mirror* started as a monthly paper. It was founded at the time when both the *Times of Zambia* and the *Zambia Daily Mail* were facing the possibility of censorship by government in 1972-1973.⁸¹ The paper aimed at being a mirror to the nation in the absence of pressure groups to apply checks and balances on the governance of the country, free to praise or criticise where praise or criticism was due. The Church declared that the mirror was not the “pious” Churchy paper but would be published for those outside as well as inside the Church.⁸² In its editorial policy, the *Mirror* pledged to exercise diligent scrutiny of public affairs at all levels and to co ordinate the political thinking of all parties so as to bring about the maximum amount of intelligent co-operation for the general good of the community.⁸³ At the same time, the *Mirror* promised to encourage readers to become actively interested in the wider social issues as well as political ones. In reality the *Mirror* paper was a method the Church used to train the people for true citizenship and acceptance of responsibility.⁸⁴

With the introduction of the one-party state system the absence of a pressure group disturbed Kaunda, the Church, and persons like Dunstan Kamana, one of the *Times of Zambia* editors. It was an outcry that Kaunda made in November 1972 to the Church and the Judiciary to act as mirrors to the nation so that the Government and the Party would be enlightened of their mistakes. Kaunda stated that: “we have the opportunity all the time to turn to the church, to the Judiciary to see how clean we are in our mirror.”⁸⁵

In fact, President Kaunda often talked of the seven pillars of *Zambian society* which were: parliament, the Party, the Church, Trade Unions, the University, the Judiciary, and the Industrial and Commercial sector. Kaunda stressed that each of these shared

the responsibility of seeing that the Rule of law, the rights of individuals and the principles of the Constitution are kept inviolate and intact.⁸⁶

It can be noted that it was not only Kaunda that urged the Church to act as a check on the Party and its Government, but even his cabinet had the same message of appeal. The examples that we have are the speeches made in 1973 by first, the Prime Minister, Maiza Chona when he addressed the 1500 Christians of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) at Kafue.⁸⁷ Secondly, the Minister of Information, Broadcasting and Tourism, spoke to an international conference of Christian Communications at Mindolo Ecumenical Foundation.⁸⁸ The third speech was made by Sikota Wina when he officially opened the Multimedia Centre in Lusaka in 1973.⁸⁹ Wina went further to emphasise that the role of the Church could not be accomplished merely from the pulpit. He called upon the Church to identify itself with all the forces available in the nation. He said time has gone when the Church merely pointed at the evils leaving the fight to bring about good to others. The Church was asked to join in the fight against these evils that affected society.⁹⁰

Therefore, the *Mirror* paper took up the challenge. True to its editorial policy, the *Mirror* was read avidly by people in places where the Party and its Government did not reach. It can be noted that Churches were the only institutions which managed to preserve a free press, as other papers were owned by either UNIP or Government. The press freedom that the Church utilised was not always appreciated by the Christians.⁹¹ For this reason, Father Joseph Brankin, the director of Multimedia, visited many places in Zambia sensitising people to be more aware of this privilege of helping them to become more politically articulate in a country where freedom of expression was gradually being stifled.⁹²

The *Mirror* was quickly noticed by the politicians. Sikota Wina, the then Minister of Information remarked in the National Assembly, on 13th February 1973 that this Newspaper reached the farthest corners of the country within a relatively short time. This made the Party and its Government to be alert. The potential political impact of this paper was noticed by the President's office and from then onwards its content were routinely scrutinized by its officials.⁹³

Icengelo

Icengelo is a Bemba word, meaning twilight or light.⁹⁴ It was another important publication which started in June 1970 as a Bemba Catholic Newspaper. It was a monthly paper which came as a voice of all the Bemba speaking Catholics of Zambia. The paper was born out of active co-operation of the Catholic dioceses of Ndola, Kasama, Mbala, and Mansa. It incorporated the *Bwina Kristu* (what it means to be Christians), of the Mbala Diocese and the *Nkombe* (Message), the lay Apostolate bulletin of the Ndola Diocese. This was made possible by the willing and effective co operation of the white fathers of the Northern Province and the Franciscan Fathers on the Copperbelt.⁹⁵ This paper was produced by the Mission Press in Ndola. His Right Reverend Nicolas, the second Bishop of Ndola said that:

Icengelo Newspaper is an attempt to give a voice to Catholic people and the means to express their views and their contribution to the Religious and cultural development of everybody who appreciates the eternal teachings of the Gospel of Christ and its application to the daily life of the Christian citizen of Zambia.⁹⁶

Father Davoli Umberto who was the Chief Editor of *Icengelo*, in the early 1980s and early 1990's also emphasised that *Icengelo* Magazine was not the mouth-piece of the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC) or the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), but

that it was a Christian Magazine meant to analyse Zambia's situation in the light of Christian principles and messages.⁹⁷ Therefore, *Icengelo* Newspaper did not start as a political paper; instead, it started for the purpose of evangelisation, Christian growth and application of gospel values to life as Zambian citizens. Initially, the paper started with a circulation of only twenty-five thousand.

It was only in May 1981 when the Vatican imposed its influence on the paper. Pope John Paul II addressed the world on human rights and on the freedom of expression, which he regarded as a universal right. The Ndola Mission Press took up the challenge and started the regular translation of charters on human rights, encyclicals and the Church's Social teaching in the *Icengelo* paper. This enabled people to become gradually well informed and politically more articulate on human rights as enshrined in our Zambian Constitution. The paper was able to reach the farthest outstation in a shortest time and was read by all people, not only Catholics. Hence, the *Mirror* and *Icengelo* were the only papers that were able to reach the remotest parts of Zambia.⁹⁸ This did not augur well with the Party and its government.

The Workers' Challenge

There was another paper on the Copperbelt in the 1980's, a small Catholic publication which was published monthly, titled *Workers' Challenge*. It was edited and produced by Fr. Joseph Komakoma together with the Young Christian Workers of Ndola. The main aim of the Workers' Challenge was to sensitize the workers about their rights and educate them to be in solidarity and concern for the weakest people in society, especially the women. Frederick Chiluba was often given space in which he articulated his opposition to the atheistic ideology of the Party and its Government. For throughout 1984, the Catholic Church became suspicious about the possibility of atheistic intentions of some Government Officials⁹⁹

Pastoral Letters

The Pastoral letters were very small publications which leaders of the Churches sent to their Churches for the purpose of evangelisation and in which they expressed their thoughts on what affected the Christian communities. These were often read on the pulpit in Churches on Sundays. At times the three mother bodies, that is, CCZ, EFZ and ZEC would issue a combined Pastoral letter, to speak as one united Church with one voice like the 1979 pastoral letter on ‘Marxism, Humanism and Christianity’,¹⁰⁰ and the report on the first Church leaders’ seminar on Humanism and Development of 1982.¹⁰¹

Diocesan Newsletters/Church Newsletters were simple publications which reported on the political involvement of small Christian communities and the editors were encouraged to send their publications to the National Office in Lusaka. As such, the Catholic Church leadership was well informed of all political activities in all Christian communities throughout the country.¹⁰²

Therefore, between 1982 and 1990, the Church leaders became more and more critical of the Government policies. The Church papers carried out critical articles about many issues and aspects of the One-Party regime. This caused Kaunda to cry out that the Church had taken the role of an opposition party to the Government.¹⁰³

The Church and the end of the UNIP Era

From independence up to about 1979, the Church leadership often urged Christians to rally behind the government. The Church leaders recommended to all the Christians to study and practice the philosophy of Humanism, which was proposed for the direction of the lives and conduct of the people of Zambia.¹⁰⁴

Unfortunately, the Church-State relationship slowly started deteriorating in 1972 especially between the Catholic Church and the government. This came about as the result of the amendment of the Termination of Pregnancy Act in 1972 which coincided with the introduction of the one-party system of government and the declining of the economy. Though there were many factors responsible for Zambia's poor economic performance such as the falling of copper prices, transport problems for a landlocked country and hostile neighbours as a frontline state. But the soundest reasons as understood by most Zambians were the inexperienced, incompetence and corruption of Kaunda's Government. These were the key factors responsible for a lot of suffering among the people at the grass roots level, especially those in rural areas. This caused Kaunda and his Government to make an attempt at introducing Scientific Socialism in 1979 as the means of narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor.¹⁰⁵

Scientific Socialism became a major the bone of contention in the period of 1979 to 1990. There was a lot of tension between Kaunda's government and the Church due to a number of reasons: Firstly, the Philosophy of Humanism which the Church gave a Christian interpretation to turned into Scientific Socialism that denied the presence of God and then put man as the final authority. Additionally, the Educational Reforms proposed by the Mwanakatwe Commission of 1976 excluded the teaching of Religious Education from the school curriculum.¹⁰⁶ As these were not enough, there was also a proposal that Church halls should be used as classrooms. These upset the Churches and argued that Church halls were holy places. To do that the Church felt would be adopting the atheistic approach of humanism.¹⁰⁷

The atheistic part of Humanism was also taken up as campaign strategy against Kaunda's Government by the opposition, Fredrick Chiluba and the Movement for

Multi-party Democracy (MMD). Chiluba gained appreciation of the Churches for he was not only a member of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) on the Copperbelt, but also became a 'born-again' Christian in 1981 during the time he was imprisoned by Kaunda and he later received the gift of tongues.¹⁰⁸

As Kaunda's government became more and more corrupt and oppressive, Chiluba's credentials were more and more pronounced such that he began to declare himself as a true spirit-filled believer. Some Christians associated Chiluba with the role played by David in challenging Goliath in the Bible. At the same time Chiluba was equated to Moses who was to bring the people of Zambia to freedom after wondering in the wilderness of the single party system of the UNIP government.¹⁰⁹

Another reason for the tension between the Church and Government was the news that spread among the people of Zambia that Kaunda had forsaken Christianity and fallen under the sway of Eastern gurus. It was rumoured that he was now interested in the Indian spirituality.¹¹⁰ This was because in 1976 Kaunda replaced his Christian advisor on religious matters with an Indian guru Dr. M. Ranganathan.¹¹¹ The guru man later assisted Kaunda in establishing David Universal Temple at State House. To many Christians this was seen as blasphemy especially among the Pentecostal Christians. It was said that Ranganathan's activities were not from God but from the devil.¹¹² Ranganathan used his time at State House also to write a book titled *The Political Philosophy of President Kenneth D. Kaunda of Zambia*, Published in Lusaka by the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation in 1986.

In 1991 Kaunda and his government were desperate in their haste to improve the economy; Kaunda also welcomed the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi to join with him in a project to make Zambia a 'Heaven on Earth'. This had a devastating effect before

even the project was carried out. The people had lost confidence and trust in the UNIP government. This was worsened by a television programme on this scheme which was screened just a few days before the 1991 elections. A number of Christians linked this to some demonic forces. Many Born Again Christians claimed that the devil had 'mobilised his forces of darkness to fight against and could destroy the nation Zambia.'¹¹³ This caused Kaunda to lose popularity among the Zambians.

Meanwhile, the Christian press provided coverage for the campaign advertisements and manifestos of both the MMD and UNIP but more especially for the MMD towards the 1991 elections. Zambians read and analysed the content themselves.

Furthermore, there were pastors like Bishop John Mambo and Joe Imakando¹¹⁴ who denounced the links of President Kaunda with the Maharishi Mahesh Yogi spiritual powers as demonic. They argued that the Government banned the registrations for more Churches but permitted occult systems to enter Zambia. Bishop Danny Pule in particular urged the Christians for the peaceful transition and demolition of "demonic" strongholds by Divine power. Pule also stated that there were some presidential and parliamentary candidates that were relying on witchcraft and demonic powers to win the elections which invited spiritual darkness into the land.¹¹⁵ The "some" in the statement also included Kaunda as a presidential candidate, and his David Universal Temple were among them.¹¹⁶ In this way, Bishop Pule as an overseer of thousands Christians campaigned against Kaunda to his large following.

Another source of tension between the Church and government as already alluded to was the Christian media: *Icengelo*, *National Mirror* and the *Workers' challenge*. These played a critical role in informing the readers on the political happenings in the country. Some politicians like Alexi Shapi, the Secretary for Defence and

Security in the early 1990s, perceived *Icengelo* magazine to be “mischievous” because it carried articles that were not subjected to Government censorship. Shapi called the magazine as “mischievous” for carrying out articles on Zambia Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) chairman Frederick Chiluba on his campaign for multi-party democracy. In reply to these remarks, Father Umberto wrote:

We gave Mr. Chiluba space because we felt he had something for our readers. If the Party and its Government want to challenge Mr. Chiluba on multi-party, we are prepared to give them space in our paper as well, and let the people judge who tells the truth. We shall carry on these fights against social injustices, and no one is going to stop us. After all, isn't it President Kaunda himself who has repeated over and over again that the Churches should be the critical voice of the nation, never afraid to speak out for what is right. So why do they complain when we do that?¹¹⁷

On 20th November, 1989, Father Umberto the Chief Editor of *Icengelo Magazine* was summoned by Home Affairs Minister General Kingsley Chinkuli to his office, in Lusaka. Present were the Inspector General of Police, the Attorney-General, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and the Minister of State for Home Affairs, Wezi Kaunda, and five others. This was due to one of its publication in which *Icengelo* published a cartoon which read in Bemba, “*Bamukakila Umunwe kumo no Lubangu,*” meaning they are like slaves who cannot express themselves.¹¹⁸ Father Umberto was also accused of being a foreign spy. The Government officials demanded from the Bishop of Ndola the immediate removal of Father Umberto from *Icengelo* newspaper in order to declare him a prohibited immigrant. In reply Bishop Dennis de Jong reminded them that the Franciscan Order had been in the country

since 1930s and had the freedom to express themselves like any person in the country.¹¹⁹

Additionally, silencing of the opposition political parties through the creation of a one-party state continued and was extended to the Church. Any movement perceived to cause a breach of peace was viewed as an uprising against the State. For example, the raid on the Lumpa Church by UNIP forces under Kenneth Kaunda was an example of the Party and its Government's determination and its political will to silence even the Church.¹²⁰

The papers were accused strongly of preaching hatred against the Party and its government leadership. *Icengelo* and the *National Mirror* were castigated for being anti-government in their publications. President Kaunda said this in his official opening speech to four hundred delegates that gathered from 29th October to 2nd November 1990 at Mulungushi International Conference Centre in Lusaka.¹²¹

Shortly after his official opening speech at Mulungushi Conference, on 1st November, 1990 President Kaunda had a Press Conference at State House. At this Press Conference, he took an important decision during the question and answer session to ban Government-owned companies and departments from advertising in the *National Mirror*. Here Kaunda accused the *National Mirror* and *Icengelo* of printing half truths. The *National Mirror* was further accused of abusing God's name by publishing rubbish and downright lies as he said:

I don't want to see any government institution or parastatal [companies] to advertise in that rubbish paper, unless the paper changes its policies. How is it possible for the Church publications to put in print what *Icengelo* and the *National Mirror* are able to publish about those of us in the government?¹²²

Kaunda's castigation of the *National Mirror* also led to his down fall for this announcement attracted the attention of many people from within and abroad expressing their shock at the "sour decision" taken by President Kaunda. The Multi-media Zambia, the publishers of the *National Mirror*, was flooded with telephone calls from various parts of the country and abroad. From as far away as London and Zimbabwe, people phoned to express their support for the Newspaper. One caller from London said, "Carry on with the good work. Your job is to reflect to the nation the truth. And we are absolutely convinced you are doing that, hence the predicament you find yourself in today."¹²³

One other reader from Harare, Zimbabwe, said, "It is high time our African leaders appreciate that checks and balances in any system are a must. Therefore, the *National Mirror* somehow has to carry on that role in a situation where there was no opposition and even if it was there."¹²⁴

Many people who stood in sympathy with the *Mirror* were shocked by the action taken by the President that it was sudden, unjustified and highhanded because the paper was the only one in the country which stood for truth in its reports. Expressing solidarity with the paper Brighton Mafunda of Kabwe noted that whatever happens; we shall stand for the *Mirror* and see to it that the paper exists in the interests of the nation. We are ready to support it financially.¹²⁵

In fact, the campaigns to ban the *Mirror* had started as way back as 1978 when the paper revealed the intentions of Robert Chiluwe and Harry Mwaanga Nkumbula to challenge Kaunda by contesting presidential elections. For this reason the newspaper was called Anti-Party. But the *Mirror* stood steadfast. The paper observed that presidential elections must be democratic and Kaunda cannot stand unopposed in

free elections. It cautioned the Party not to threaten people under the guise of teaching them on how to vote. It strongly opposed the Government's proposed Press Council Bill through which the Party attempted to make the press subservient to it. It dubbed the proposed Bill a "package of threats."¹²⁶ Later in January, 1980 at Mulungushi Hall in Lusaka, Kaunda scolded the Church for using the *Mirror* as the platform for attacking the Party and its Government. He said it was shameful that they were using the *Mirror* for their selfish ends.

Soon after being scolded, the *National Mirror* organised and published a Kaunda's face to face interview with Chipimo just after his release from detention in connection with the 1980 coup plot to topple the Government. Kaunda later told Chipimo, "Why are you Chipimo using the little *Mirror* to say things against us? The *Mirror* will not save you; it is just a small Church paper."¹²⁷

This is clear evidence beyond doubt that the Church publications played a real role in articulating opposition to Kaunda and his government that resulted into a high voltage of tensions between Kaunda and the Churches.

The Church Media and its coverage on Frederick Chiluba of the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions

During the 1990 and 1991, *Icengelo* and *National Mirror* coverage consisted of religious news, a range of background articles on African leadership, economic collapse, university students' grievances, and donors' reluctance to lend to Zambia and interviews with former detainees. The two papers also offered full-page advertisements for the Movement for Multi-party Democracy and extensive interviews with Fredrick Chiluba, the president of the Zambian Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU).

Chiluba's articles attacked the Party and its Government in all points of weakness. This made Kaunda to drop some Ministers and members of the Central Committee who were suspected of revealing secrets to ZCTU and those that were supporting the re-introduction of the multi-party system in the country. Among those that Kaunda sacked were veteran politician and chairman of the Finance and Economic Committee of the Central Committee, Axon Soko and Defence Minister Fredrick Hapunda. Benson Fumbelo who was Mines Minister was demoted to the position of Minister of State.¹²⁸

In February, 1990, tension mounted between the Church and the government. The Archbishop Elias Mutale died in a mysterious car accident shortly after visiting Kaunda at State House. Mutale's death had tremendous negative impact on Kaunda and his government. It was rumoured that Kaunda's one-party regime was directly involved in the tragic death of Mutale.¹²⁹ For this reason the Church leaders came out in the open to declare their opposition to the continuation of the one-party regime.

Father Umberto Davoli, in reaction to allegations by the Secretary of Defence and Security, Mr. Alexi Shapi argued that the *Icengelo* Magazine was promoting the interests of those who advocated for multi-party politics in Zambia. He observed that:

It is true that *Icengelo* is backing the multi-party. We feel that Zambia badly needs the balancing role of opposition to check against the rampant abuse of power in the nation. We know that power, when never challenged, is contaminating. A big temptation arises to forget about the common good and think more of the personal advantage.¹³⁰

Therefore, in July 1990 the Church leaders openly took part in the national Democratic Alliance against the one-party regime. They started preaching liberal theology from their pulpits. The Church leaders accused the one-party leadership for corruption in high places and total neglect of economic well being of the majority of the people.¹³¹

1990 Food Riots and the Attempted Coup

The accusations made by Church leaders against the One-Party Government on the total neglect of the economic well being of the majority of the people resulted into riots and looting on the 25th June, 1990. The riots were initiated by the University of Zambia students who incited residents of Kalingalinga and Mtendere shanty-towns urging them to reject the new maize meal price and call for resignation of President Kaunda from his presidential position. It was difficult to maintain law and order because some police officers and soldiers urged the rioters in the township to loot maize meal shops. This riot spread from Lusaka to Kabwe, Kitwe and Kafue resulting in millions of kwacha worth of damage and with the official death toll of 29 of which one was a police officer. To bring the situation to normal, the Zambian government deplored soldiers from Zimbabwe and Uganda.¹³²

The students were brave in the way they staged their demonstration over the maize meal grievances. On the 28th June, 1990 the students carried anti government posters and placards denouncing Kaunda's 26 year rule. They read: "The struggle continues unless Kaunda resigns." "Your time is up KK, resign now" and "Power-hungry Kaunda must go now."¹³³ In addition to the 29 deaths, more than 100 people suffered gun-shot wounds, and about 1,000 were arrested during the disturbances, an indication that the protests were serious.¹³⁴

Thirty-four students were detained in connection with the riots and the University of Zambia was closed indefinitely. These students were identified as ring leaders; however, Kaunda blamed the advocators of multi-party for inciting students to rise against the Party and its Government. The Zambian society including the Church did not castigate the students for initiating the riots but blamed the One-Party State for poor governance of the economy and called for multi-party politics.

Shortly after the fierce rioting and looting which broke out in the main towns along the line of rail on 25th June, 1990, Lieutenant Mwamba Luchembe from the Signal Corps of the Zambian Army sneaked into the Zambian National Broadcasting Corporation Studios in Lusaka around 3 am on 30th June 1990 and announced that the army had taken over the government. Surprisingly, many Zambians welcomed the news. There was great celebrations, dancing, some chanted songs against the Zambian government and sang revolutionary verses in praise of Lieutenant Luchembe in streets. Some top leadership fled their homes to seek refuge elsewhere and diplomats were about to leave the country.¹³⁵

The Church cannot be divorced from its own society. What goes on in the society affects the Church too. Some Church leaders publicly welcomed the coup. Bishop John Mambo, the overseer of the Church of God went further; he announced on foreign radio services a welcome of the coup. He was later publicly rebuked by Kaunda in these words: “Do you know what would have happened if Luchembe and his colleagues had succeeded? What happened nearly brought another Amin and we all know what took place in Uganda, even priests were not spared.”¹³⁶

This rebuke caused other Church leaders to come together and meet President Kaunda at State House for reconciliation. At this meeting Kaunda reminded the

clergy that the Church was not only one of the pillars of the nation but also the mirror of society and the very conscience of the people.¹³⁷

The Church in general condemned the power gained through a coup and its effects on the people. It expressed fear about coups because those who step into power may not be the people's popular choice. Military leaders may not have the skill or programmes to improve the lives of the people and once they are in power it would be difficult to dislodge them. Hence, the military takeover was considered not the solution to Zambia's worsening economic problems.¹³⁸

However, the Church appealed to the government to make necessary adjustments in good time. This meant issuing fewer threats, subjecting leaders to the popular vote, putting more thought into those who deserved to be appointed into key positions and saving the tax payer from spending about a billion kwacha a year on the running of UNIP. The Church also advised the government that if the present leadership feels that the burden is too weighty for them, they should courageously go back to the people and say so. People were to be given a chance to freely elect new leaders so that there was a smooth handover of power.¹³⁹

Like the Church, those who were blamed for plotting against the government made use of the Church media to react to the allegations for the public to know the truth and their attitude towards the government was revealed. These included even those that committed serious political crimes like treason. They put the blame for the crimes on the many problems that affected the country due to the abuses of power by those in power. In fact, the Church media became the mouth piece for those that were detained without trial and all those that suffered under undemocratic forces of the government. Examples of such persons included Peter Mutafungwa,¹⁴⁰ Valentine

Musakanya¹⁴¹Elias Chipimo¹⁴², Frederick Chiluba¹⁴³, Edward Shamwana and Mwamba Luchembe¹⁴⁴. It can be noted that from the publications of both the *National Mirror* and *Icengelo* reflected the feelings of the Church leaders who at the time embarked on the freedom of expression.

What finally changed the mind set of Kaunda and UNIP leadership to go multi-party were the riots and looting of 1990, Mwamba Luchembe's coup attempts (a single man's show) and the Church media publications. For it was within the four days of the riots on the 29th June, 1990 at Ndola International Trade Fair where President Kaunda announced October 17, 1990 as the day of the referendum when Zambians were to decide on whether or not they wanted the country to revert to multi-party system.¹⁴⁵ President Kaunda realised that even the police, the custodians of law and order urged the rioters to loot the shops and the civil society. The Church, on the other hand justified the riot by blaming the government's move to hike maize meal prices by more than a hundred per cent.

It was again within three months of Luchembe's attempted coup that on the 24th September, 1990 at the 25th National Council meeting at Mulungushi Conference Centre in Lusaka where Kaunda announced the cancellation of the Referendum which was to take place on the 17th October, 1990, and replaced it with multi-party elections which were to take place in October, 1991. According to Kaunda, this was the only way to avoid bloodshed as the multi-party advocates were on the warpath in thought, word and deed.¹⁴⁶ The attempted coup revealed that most people wanted change. It gave courage to advocators of multi-party to exert pressure on the Party and Government. They observed that the K50 million put aside for the referendum was a mere waste of money when it was clear from their rallies that people were for multi-party rule.¹⁴⁷

Another major role played by the Church in 1991 elections was to bring reconciliation and peace to the two warring parties and their leadership to a peaceful election. The process started with the meeting held in the Anglican Cathedral in Lusaka on 23rd June 1991. Both Kaunda and Chiluba with their advisors were in attendance. The meeting was sponsored by the Churches and the Churches that attended were leaders from the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and other Protestants Churches. The major issue of the meeting was to try and persuade Kaunda and Chiluba to break the dead-lock on the constitutional changes proposed by the members Mvunga Constitutional Commission. Dennis de Jong who was then the Catholic Bishop of Ndola chaired the meeting.¹⁴⁸ De Jong with other Church leaders did a lot of ground work before Kaunda met Chiluba at this forum. One such ground work was the bishops' clarification of the position of the Church on politics in the Pastoral Statement issued on 'Economics, Politics and Justice' in July 1990. In the Pastoral Statement, the Bishops spoke on the political issues in the following terms:

We speak as religious pastors and not as politicians, as preachers of the Gospel and not as proponents of political systems. The Church cannot make decisions concerning the type of political system to be adopted by any nation. But the Church insists that it has the right to pass moral judgements even on matters touching the political order, whenever basic personal rights... make such judgements necessary.¹⁴⁹

A month later, from 23rd to 25th July, 1991, Church leaders hosted a meeting at the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka, under the chairmanship of Bishop Stephen Mumba. The meeting was attended by the representatives of the MMD and UNIP with their Presidents, Frederick Chiluba and Kenneth Kaunda respectively.

Reverend Violet Sampa Bredt who was that time the Deputy Secretary General of the Christian Council of Zambia, described the meeting as having started with a high voltage charge of tensions. Bredt said the tension was only neutralised by Grey Zulu, the Secretary General of UNIP whose punctuated humorous remarks and his democratic skills were exhibited throughout the two day meeting.¹⁵⁰

The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the proposed Constitution and ways to facilitate an orderly election. During the meeting, a joint committee of experts under the leadership of Bishop Mumba was formed to examine areas of the constitutional bill to which MMD had raised objections. At the end of the meeting, the committee produced resolutions which both parties agreed to abide by. At the same time, the clergy appealed to the two leaders to put the interest of the nation in the forefront and to give the nation a peaceful Zambia. In turn President Kaunda expressed satisfaction with the role the Church had played in bringing the two parties together.¹⁵¹ Mwanakatwe noted that the meeting was a success due to largely Bishop Mumba's patience and determination, the rigid positions of the two leaders and their followers were modified.¹⁵² What came out of this meeting was that the new constitution and election law were accepted on 4th September 1991.

Towards the October 1991 elections, the Churches made their contributions to a peaceful transition by uniting into a Christian Churches Monitoring Group which led to the formation of the Zambia Elections Monitoring Co-ordinating Committee (ZEMCC). The Churches trained a grassroots "army" of young people to observe the right procedures at all polling stations on Election Day itself. Father Calmettes of the Catholic Church travelled extensively in order to conduct seminars on the social and civic education with a team that consisted of Sister Theresa Walsh, Paul Njekwa, Samuel Mulafulafu and Mulima Akapelwa. When the Election Day, 31st October

1991 was announced, the grassroots were well prepared. This helped Kaunda when Frederick Chiluba won a landslide victory, to accept defeat with dignity.¹⁵³ There was smooth handover of power. Dr. Kenneth Kaunda demonstrated true values of his philosophy of Humanism, 'love your neighbour as you love yourself'. It was a true reflection of Zambia as a Christian nation when President Kaunda invited Chiluba for a conducted tour of the State House, showed him every corner of the House including its inbuilt security compartments and handed over the keys.¹⁵⁴

All the international observers concluded that the elections of 1991 in Zambia were free and fair. Many international observers paid tribute to the Zambian people in particular for leading the way in Africa by providing that a change of government can be effected by the people in a peaceful way through the ballot box. This was according to the motto of ZEMCC: "Setting a standard for Africa: Free and fair election."¹⁵⁵ Zambia was a shining example of peaceful political change to many African countries devastated with civil wars and coups.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that religion and politics in the Zambia cannot be separated. The Church has been instrumental in developing Zambian politics which is very unique on the African continent in its peaceful transition of political powers as was demonstrated in 1991.

In Zambia the Church has been present in all major political events as a force behind the desired influence on society and counteracted to that which was seen destructive to the nation. The Government was conscience of the Church's power on society. For this reason the Government used the Church in many ways to influence society in implementing its policies. This comes out clearly in the way the government used the Church to interpret the philosophy of Zambian Humanism and give it a Christian

face. The Government also used the Church in the establishment of a single-party system in Zambia.

The history of the Church and politics in Zambia 1964-1991 has established the fact that the Church is a reflection of a human society, which is a component of different personalities and groups. In short the Church is made up of individuals with different beliefs and denominational differences. But when the Church is faced with a non-theological issue unites despite the denominational differences and puts up a spirited fight for its own existence and that of the voiceless people. This was the case when Kaunda's Government attempted to introduce scientific socialism that denies the presence of God.

The Church partnered with government in development and in the provision of social services with its funds often sourced from abroad throughout the political history of Zambia. This made the Church to have a grip on the Government and the Zambian society in achieving its political influence on the nation. What has worked for the Church in Zambia as the means to influence society and to bring about political change as highlighted in this study is the ecumenical unity of purpose that the Churches embraced. More especially in the way they disseminated information to all parts of the country within the shortest time through the media, pulpit and conferences.

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