

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

In the first chapter as an introduction, the study focuses on the fact that “religion and politics cannot be separated” especially here in Zambia. This phrase has been unpopular to those who advocate keeping religion out of politics because they have had their economic and political positions to protect in the country. What they have not realised is the fact that the introduction of western politics into Zambia was initiated by missionaries. The North western Zambia was by the assistance of Francis Coillard and North east Zambia by the help of Bishop Dupont. Since then the Church has combined politics and commerce in the work of evangelisation. For this reason the church had to develop good relationships with the governing bodies (from the British South African Company, the British Government and to the Black Government up to 1991) for its own existence throughout the period of this study.

Additionally, all the governing bodies tried to be at peace with the Church because in the past the bulk of the social services were done by the Church especially in the remotest parts of Zambia where the government failed to provide these services. For this reason the Church tend to have a grip on every government in power throughout the political history of this country. Therefore, the success story of the church as a strong political pressure group lies in the fact that the church and government are partners in the provisions of social services and in national development.

The political involvement of the Church as a pressure group on governments goes as far back as 1914 when missionaries formed an ecumenical body, the General

Missionary Conference (GMC) whose one of its objectives was to watch over the interests of the Africans in this country. Through this ecumenical body, they successfully reminded the governing bodies of their economic, political and social duties for the governed. This ecumenism worked very well up to 1950. During the Federation debates, the church failed to speak as one ecumenical body to fight against the political evils of colonialism and to advocate for African rule. This was out of fear of losing the governments' financial support and their existence in this country or that they too simply wanted to perpetuate European political rule in the country.

Chapter two also brings out the views of the wider section of people: the colonial politicians, nationalists, civil society, settlers and Missionaries and their attitude towards African rule. One section of the colonial politicians had their political and economical positions to protect. While the other section of politicians advocated for liberal democracy that incorporated all races without discrimination like Sir Gore Browne because probably he felt it was the right thing to do.

African nationalists wanted most of all political freedom in order to free their own people from political, economic and social injustices as well as from the exploitations of western imperialism. This comes out when the African vote was divided; they quickly formed a coalition government to form the majority. At the same time, we cannot rule out the fact that they too competed for political positions and economical status when we look at the sequence at which the African political parties were formed: African National Congress in 1946, Zambia National Congress (ZANAC) in 1958 which after being banned in 1959 later emerged as United Independence Party (UNIP).

One section of the civil society and settlers, like some colonial politicians wanted to protect their economic and social status under colonial rule. Whereas the other group of settlers wanted equality to prevail to all races in order to bring the two warring races together. These supported the Capricorn Association that advocated for liberal democracy.

Over the Federation debates, the voice of the Church was divided. Some church leaders like Marcel Daubechies of Kasama, advised their followers to avoid politics and shun political parties. To the disgrace of African Christians, the Lumpa African Independent Church with a large following insisted on separating religion from politics in spite pressure exerted on its members from the freedom fighters. They were very few churches and clergy that seriously supported African political freedom struggles for the simple reasons that they too were not different from some colonial politicians, settlers and the civil society. This brings us to the fact that the church is not different to the people it serves.

Though Lenshina and the Lumpa uprising is more or less associated with the Federations, it was discussed right at the beginning of chapter three because it was the Black interim government that ordered the Lumpa massacre, three months before national political independence celebrations. In a way this set precedence of the way UNIP Government dealt with strong opposition in later years with varying degrees. This too affected the main line churches to a certain extent and to make matters worse the church's structure and organisation was still white. Instead of the church exhibiting pressure on the UNIP government and cadres to live with opposition and embark on political education for western liberal democracy, it too advocated for a political system and a humanism ideology that they witnessed being a total disaster in the eastern bloc. This study has directly or indirectly put equal share of blame on

both the Church and Kaunda's UNIP Government for establishing the one party state without public debate.

Chapter three ends with the voice of the Church being divided over the amended Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1972 due to denominational concept of murder and the stage at which termination of human life can be termed acceptable. Here, the study brings out the fact that the church is weak when churches fail to agree on a certain theological teachings and gospel values. When one section of the church seem to be fine with the amended Termination of Pregnancy Act, the other section of the Church and the UNIP Government relationship deteriorated to a certain degree. This was in a way a positive breakthrough for the Catholic Church embarked on educating its membership on the evils of abortion through literature, films and seminars. While the Protestant Churches concentrated on teaching traditional sex education as a means of preventing pregnancies among girls and single women. The question is how effective were these methods to stop this scourge among girls and women?

The unity of purpose was once again experienced starting from 1976 all way through up to 1991. This is when the UNIP Government tried to attack the very core of the church's theological existence by attempting to introduce scientific socialism, an ideology that denies the presence of God. Already in 1979 the church leaders realised that the battle could not be fought alone but must involve all the faithful. Combined Pastoral letters were sent in all the churches even in remotest places in Zambia, read in churches and discussed in seminars as well as in small Christian communities.

In response to this the Government organised seminars with Church leaders to iron out the differences. The church explained its position and thought the matter was resolved. The Church soon realised that Kaunda was secretly sending cadres to the eastern bloc for scientific socialism education it also received shocking news that lectures on scientific socialism were to be conducted in church Halls in the early 1980s. This was the last straw Kaunda somehow committed for the Church not only organised it resources; the media, pulpit, conferences and seminars on the evils of scientific socialism but it also transmitted to the people the knowledge on the rights of a Zambian citizen, economic and political problems of the country. Indirectly the campaign against Kaunda and his UNIP cadres was done in a very diplomatic way with love and understanding, the message was heard clear and sound. Though the students and labour unions applied checks and balances on the government long before in the past, it was finally from the church were these institutions drew their strength to exert pressure on Kaunda and his government for political change.

Finally, the ecumenical Church must be acknowledged for exhibiting its pastoral role in counselling skills for the two warring political parties Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) and United Independence Party (UNIP). It was this spiritual counselling and political evangelisation that quickly healed the wounds of the defeated and quickly peace and forgiveness was restored in the nation. This indeed is a story which has demonstrated that church and politics cannot be separated in Zambia and that the Church has power to influence and change society effectively when there is unity of purpose.

However, the story can be concluded with a warning that religion can also have negative impact on society if certain beliefs and interpretations are not checked by its followers. This scenario runs through this history with aspects coming from

segregations in worship and “hasten slow” policy of the colonial church, and the Lumpas Church’s denial of political participation when the nation demanded for unity of purpose in the liberation struggles.

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