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THEOLOGY AND ETHICS)**

MASTER'S DEGREE DISSERTATION

**A Theological Critique of the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian
Nation and the Response of the Roman Catholic Church
From 1991 to 2001**

By

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Theology (Ministerial Studies) in the School of Religion, Philosophy and Classics,
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Declaration

I, Dominic Mulenga Mukuka (992231291), declare that this dissertation, *A Theological Critique of the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation and the response of the Roman Catholic Church from 1991 to 2001*, is my own work, and that any and all sources that I have used or quoted have been dully indicated and acknowledged by means of complete reference following the Harvard Style for Referencing and Bibliography. Some aspects of the works represent some assignments I have completed during my Honours and Masters Degrees' years of study at the UKZN. Wherever this has occurred, I have acknowledged it in the text.

Signed:  _____

Date: 17th March, 2015

Name of the Supervisor: Prof Roderick Hewitt

Signature:

Dedication

This work is dedicated to my late mother, Nsimbisai Catherine 'Mabunu' Mkwaturi, who passed away in 1976.

Acknowledgement

My profound gratitude goes to the triune God for wisdom, good health and strength to complete the thesis.

I am most indebted to my inspiring Supervisor, Prof R. Hewitt who took his time to accompany me. Please accept my profound appreciation. You have been a wonderful person and a mentor indeed. I pray that the good Lord may reward your effort and sacrifice.

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Abbreviations

ATR	African Traditional Religion
CCZ	Council of Churches in Zambia
CCJP	Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace
CRC	Constitutional Review Commission
ECZ	Episcopal Conference of Zambia
EFZ	Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia
MMD	Movement for Multiparty Democracy
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NGO	Non-Government Organization
PBO	Public Benefit Organization
UKZN	University of KwaZulu-Natal
UNIP	United National Independence Party
TR	Theological Reflection
STC	Social Teaching of the Church
ZCTU	Zambia Congress of Trade Union

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Abstract

This study utilizes theological reflection as a framework to critically engage President Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. It explores political and religious factors within the Zambian society that influenced the decision and how it affected the nation from 1991 to 2001.

It argues that Frederick Chiluba declared the nation of Zambia to be Christian because of his political and religious convictions that emerged in the 1980s when he embraced a conservative understanding of the Christian faith. Chiluba consistently utilized religious language in his numerous speeches. For instance, when he spoke on behalf of the labour movement (ZCTU), during his speeches in opposition to the former President, Kenneth Kaunda's one-party rule system, and especially during his campaign when he ran for the office of President of the Republic of Zambia in 1991.

The study argues that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation in 1991 led to several conflicts among the following ecumenical Church organisations: the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and the Episcopal Conference of Zambia representing the Roman Catholic Church. Disunity existed among Zambian Christians because of dissensions among these three organisations. The Roman Catholic Church, the CCZ, as well as some Evangelical groups supported the declaration but maintained that there should have been a general public consultation before the declaration was embodied in the constitution as the democratic nature of good governance requires that the people are consulted before major constitutional changes are made.

The research methodology employed is based on two non-empirical perspectives, namely, a critical literature review and content analysis. The literature review component clarifies and elaborates on various angles of the study using secondary textual data analysis. Content analysis is used for analysing themes that have been identified in the thesis.

In conclusion, the study argues that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation by Frederick Chiluba was rooted more in achieving a political agenda than any religious objectives. Chiluba's *modus operandi* was to move the country away from Kenneth Kaunda's brand of socialism and humanism, and reposition Zambia within the political and economic sphere and influence of the West.

Key Terms: *theological reflection, declaration, Christian nation, democracy, Roman Catholic Church, Social teaching, Church and State relations.*

Chapter 1

General Introduction

1.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a general overview of the study including the background and motivation for the study, rationale and purpose, preliminary literature review, research problem, research questions and objectives, principal theoretical assumptions, synopsis of the research design and methodology, and the limitation and scope of the study.

1.2. Background to the Study

This study explores Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation¹ and the response to this declaration by the Roman Catholic Church, through the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ). The context of this study is located in Zambia and is limited to the period from 1991 to 2001 during which Frederick Chiluba served as the second Republican President of the country. In 1990, Chiluba's political party, *The Movement for Multiparty Democracy* (MMD) declared in its *Manifesto* that "Zambia is a country with a Christian majority and will work in harmony with other religions. Therefore, MMD as a political party will commit itself to promoting Christianity in Zambia" (MMD Manifesto, 1991: 1). In 1991, Frederick Chiluba won the election held on 31st October, and two months later, on 29th December, he declared the country to be a Christian nation (Phiri 2003:1).² Chiluba explained that "Zambia as a Christian Nation will seek to be governed by the righteous principles of the word of God. Righteousness and justice must prevail in all levels of authority" (Speech by the Pillars, 1991:1). According to Richard Sakala, the intention of the Christian nation declaration was to herald a covenantal relationship with God in order that his blessings would fall upon the nation (2001: 145).

It should be noted that according to the 2010 Census, the religious constituency of Zambia comprised 87% Christians, 1% Muslims and Hindus, 12% indigenous beliefs and other religions (US Bureau of African Affairs, 2010: 10). It could therefore be argued

¹ This thesis will use the "Christian nation declaration" phrase as a shorter way of referring to "the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation".

² This information was also used in an assignment.

that the 1991 declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation would have far reaching consequences for the nation if the census were taken into account (Muwowo *et al.* 2010: 1). Further, this study also argues that Chiluba's autocratic style of leadership ensured that all of the critical non-governmental voices within the Church and society were neutralized by intentionally preventing their leaders from being involved in constitutional debates on the declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation (Henriot, 1998: 3).

Interestingly, Chiluba's Christian nation declaration had less to do with his commitment to Christianity as a confession of faith and was much more an ideological political agenda to move the country away from socialist principles of the first Republic that was aligned with Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) (Henriot, 1998: 3). Chiluba also intended to reposition Zambia within the political and economic sphere of influence of the West. Therefore, the underlying problem of this thesis is to identify the religio-political factors that influenced the decision of President Frederick Chiluba to declare Zambia a Christian Nation and to determine the theological significance of the decision and the response of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Catholic Church played an important role in the shaping of Christianity in Zambia. As Paul Gifford observes, the "Catholic Church [is] by far the most influential denomination" (Gifford, 1999: 183). Joe Komakoma explains further that the "Roman Catholic missionaries initially established a mission in 1895 among the Bemba tribe in the Northern Province" (Komakoma, 2003: 65). Previously, the Bemba people had traditionally repulsed any missionary activity as a resistance to European encroachment. When the Bemba king, Chitimukulu Sampa Kapalakasha died, his successor welcomed the White Fathers who subsequently opened several missions (Komakoma, 2003: 65). The Jesuits and Franciscan friars spearheaded Catholic mission activity in Southern Province. Currently, the Catholic Church has 3,425,000 members that constitute an estimated 28.22% of the population (Cheney, 2005: 30). The Episcopal Conference of Zambia comprises two ecclesiastical provinces with eleven dioceses: Kasama (with suffragan dioceses of Mansa and Mpika) and Lusaka

(with suffragan dioceses of Chipata, Kabwe, Livingstone, Mongu, Monze, Ndola, and Solwezi) (Komakoma, 2003: 65).

1.2.1. Research Hypothesis

The research hypothesis of this study is that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation was made by President Chiluba without wider consultation because he had undeclared (hidden) intentions for ruling the people of Zambia (Komakoma, 2003: 65). The hypothesis refers to the working assumption that provides guidance in order to arrive at the research objectives. This assumption is provisionally accepted as the basis of arguing, reasoning or carrying out this investigation. The underlying premise of the thesis implies that when Chiluba declared Zambia a Christian nation, he had limited consultation with the relevant diverse stakeholders within the Zambian society because he had undeclared agendas and other ulterior motives which will later become evident in the study. Therefore this study seeks to uncover the plausible reasons for this lack of public consultation and implicit hidden agendas. Chiluba's strategy of giving little information to the nation about his real intentions to constitutionally declare Zambia a Christian nation reveals grave issues about his spirituality and ethics, revealed by his strategy that informed his understanding and his practice of democracy and governance. Allegiance to genuine democratic process requires full consultation with the public before any constitutional changes are made. Therefore, one could argue that since the people were not properly consulted, the legitimacy of the Christian nation declaration is highly questionable and the following dual inconsistencies are brought to the fore: first the presence of many religions in Zambia confirms that it is a multi-religious nation and promoting one religion would therefore be discriminatory unless it was performed through a public referendum, second the proactive role of President Chiluba and his government in declaring Zambia a Christian nation may be construed as an abuse of power and religion for purely political objectives that in the long term could led to mutual distrust between the Church and State (Church and State 2000:15).

1.2.2. Significance and Relevance of the Research

The significance of this thesis is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical value is pursued in what Mouton (2001: 175) calls attaining “conceptual clarity” – a critical factor in academic work - by using a specific three - dimensional theoretical framework of pluralism, theological reflection and Catholic social teaching as explained in section 1.6. In addition, the theoretical value will give us a new perspective enabling us to go beyond the mundane discourse of Church-State relationship to focus instead on the debate surrounding the entrenchment of the Christian nation declaration into the Constitution that would fundamentally alter the secular status of the State. The study is located within the discipline of Practical Theology and therefore employs theological reflections as the framework or lens through which issues in society are critically engaged. Browning (1983: 61) articulates that “Practical Theology attains its political character by articulating praxis criteria of human transformation as well as an explicitly theological critique”. In addition, this study explores the dynamics of Church-State relations in Zambia and seeks to add fresh perspectives to the interplay between religion and politics within the model of democracy that is practiced.

1.3. Motivation for the Study

The main focus of the study is based on the fact that when the Christian nation declaration was made by Frederick Chiluba on 29th December 1991, the Roman Catholic Church, through the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ), expressed four points of concern. First, they argued that the legitimacy of any public pronouncement and policy depended on the quality of consultations undertaken prior to the announcement (Komakoma 2003: 264). Second, they pointed out that it also required a period of preparing the nation so that citizens understood what they were getting into (2003: 264). In the declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation, these elements were missing. The third area of concern by the Roman Catholic Church was that there should have been adequate guarantees that the Christian nation declaration would not compromise the freedom of conscience and the freedom of worship (2003: 264), and finally, the government should create an environment where minority groups felt secure

and included within the reality of the Christian nation declaration. The Roman Catholic Church's leaders also hoped that the separation of the Church and State, even in the context of the Christian nation declaration, would remain entrenched (2003: 264). This is in line with *Dignatatis Humanae* where the protection of religious freedom must be a non-negotiable requirement in the development of any society.

Apart from the four concerns as expressed by the Catholic Church, the other central motivation for this research is triggered by the wide cross-section of people, Churches and non-governmental organisations that criticized the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. For instance, there was a wide range of negative reactions from opposition politicians such as Akashambatwa Lewanika, Violet Sampa Bredt from the Council of Churches in Zambia, and Joe Komakoma, a Priest and Executive Secretary of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (Council of Churches in Zambia Pastoral Statement, 1992: 5). It is also the desire of this study to uncover the theological principles and values that informed Chiluba and the response of the Roman Catholic Church. Also, it is important to identify the hidden agendas behind these non-consultative acts so that the people of Zambia can be empowered to make sense of what happened during the Chiluba's regime.

Another motivating factor for this study is the fact that of the different studies carried out by scholars on Christianity in Zambia and the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, only a few offered an in-depth analysis of the responses to the Christian nation declaration by the Roman Catholic Church and the Episcopal Conference. The following texts primarily address the socio-political and economic realities that informed Chiluba's Christian nation declaration. However, they failed to take into account the responses that came from the Churches, especially that of the Roman Catholic Church which is the focus of my study: Gifford P. (1999) *African Christianity: Its Public Role*; Mthembu-Salter G. (2003) "Zambia: Recent History," in Murison K. (ed.) *Africa South of the Sahara 2004*; Phiri I. (1999) "Why African Churches Preach Politics: the Case of Zambia", in the *Journal of Church and State*; Phiri I (2003) "President Frederick J.T. Chiluba of Zambia, The Christian Nation and Democracy", in the *Journal of Religion in Africa and*

Participatory Assessment Group (2000); The Church's Contribution to Development in Zambia: A Research Report; Smith R.D. (1999) Missionaries, Church Movements.

The response of the Church to the Christian nation declaration is very important because the involvement of the Church in the political process of change in Zambia is generally considered by politicians of all political parties as “meddling in politics”. Their desire is to retain power themselves and not to encourage competition from other sources that may influence the voters. However, the Catholic social teaching outlines that the Church must function as a prophetic voice that warns society of any dangers and social evils (Komakoma, 2003: 66). The social teachings and actions of the Catholic Church therefore serve as a means to expose the hidden agendas behind Chiluba’s declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. In most cases, politicians, acting in their own interests want the Church to adhere to a spiritual agenda and not to get involved in political issues. However, since Chiluba’s political agenda had consistently involved using religious language, issues and leaders to cement his political power during the years of his presidency, it is imperative that the alternative voice of the Church be able to critique unaccountable systems of political power.

1.4. Literature Review

The choice of which authors and texts are relevant to this study has been determined by three methods: Online search engines such as Google scholar, where articles were consulted that refer to the key research terms; Journals that specialize in addressing the issues raised in this study and key secondary literature and post-graduate theses / dissertations linked to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, sourced through the UKZN library.

Of the literature available on the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation and the response of the Roman Catholic Church, this study has limited its scope to the writings of Isabel Phiri (2003); Simon Muwowo and Johan Buitendag (2010); Kwasi Prempeh (2008); Derick Moyo (2010); Richard Sakala (2000) and Frederick Chiluba (1995). All of these authors represent key voices of dissent from within the continent of Africa who have criticised the declaration. Frederick Chiluba’s discourse on democracy serves as

an important treatise in understanding his perspectives on the identity and purpose of the State. He argued that in a democratic State, citizens should be consulted and required to participate in any major decisions. However, when he became President and declared Zambia to be a Christian nation, Chiluba failed to embrace democratic values that encourages public participation by his own citizens. Deception was his trade mark, this was because he failed to inform the nation about his intention to declare the country Christian (Mumba 2012: 12). His own action failed to measure up to his perspectives on democracy because he disregarded the very tenet that insists on consultation with and participation by citizens in any major public decision (Chiluba, 1995: 5).

The writings of John De Beer and Patricia Killen (1994), Howard Stone and James Duke (1996) and the Papal encyclicals regarding the understanding of theological reflection and social praxis serve as references for our theoretical framework and provide the lens through which the issues surrounding this thesis will be explored.

Kwasi Prempeh (2008: 1) offer an insightful critique of Chiluba's contradictory politics stating that as "[...] a self-described evangelical Christian, President Chiluba simply imposed his own religious preferences on his entire nation, ignoring the fact that Zambia has been a secular State since its founding in 1964 and remains a culturally religiously pluralistic society". The issue of the Christian nation declaration is further complicated by Simon Muwowo and Johan Buitendag (in Muwowo *et al.* 2010:1) who disagreed that a nation could not be declared Christian through a Presidential decree, because it can only be done through "cultural determination". This constitutes one of the reasons why the Catholic Church was quick to denounce the declaration because it failed to treat the people with respect and give them room to decide whether Zambia should be declared a Christian Nation.

The issue of whether Zambia should be declared a Christian nation seems to be a *non sequitur* considering that the nation has been overrun by European missionary Christianity for many years since the country came under British colonial rule (Hendriks, 2004:70). It must be noted that electoral politics in Zambia since independence have been dominated by one political party system introduced by Kenneth Kaunda in 1972

(Ranker, 2003:52). This study argues that the ideology of creating a one party political system was responsible for the cultural conditioning resulting in the later introduction of Christianity as the constitutionally preferred religion of the State to the detriment of other religions like Hinduism, Islam and African Traditional Religions. To this end Isabel Phiri (2003: 407) explains that “Zambian politics has [...] played out between supporters of the Christian nation declaration and those who are against it”. One of the critics of the Christian nation declaration, Peter Henriot (1998: 1) argued that the declaration “[was] one event that was never fully debated, though it aroused, to some extent public debate”.

It could be argued that Chiluba, never consulted, encouraged and created a platform for people to debate such an important national issue because it was never in his political interest to do so and he had inherent hidden political agendas behind this ploy (Henriot 1998:1). This is further evidenced by Chiluba’s action against the recommendations that came from the independent Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission (CRC), that advised against Zambia being proclaimed a Christian nation (Constitution Review Commission Report 2005: 2). The Christian nation declaration instigated much public concern and the Mwanakatwe CRC responded by recommending the removal of the Christian nation declaration from the Constitution in a draft report which was released in June 2006 (CRC Report, 2005:2). This correlates with Moyo’s (2010:25) perspectives on modern Zambia which confirmed that the nation was divided on the issue of embracing a national ideology of being declared a Christian nation within the Constitution.

In his book, *Democracy: the Challenge of Change* (1995:4-5), Chiluba discussed his understanding of democracy, in which he identified the valuing of individuals and their consent and the accountability to the rule of law as important characteristics of good governance. However, his practice of democracy in Zambia ran counter to what he outlined in his book. Prior to Chiluba’s presidency, democratic standards of practice in Zambia embraced press freedom, independent judiciary and an anti-Corruption Commission (Sakala, 2000: 2). However, according to Godwin Yoram Mumba (2012: 12), Chiluba, was a shrewd tactician and was interested only in advancing democratic

values that would enhance his own power base and secure more international funds, which was one of the hidden agendas behind his declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. Consequently, this raises serious concerns about the integrity of Frederick Chiluba's democratic values that shaped his presidency.

Although the literature review of this study confirms that other scholars have criticised the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, there are a few gaps identified by this study linked to the criticism of the Christian nation declaration offered by the Roman Catholic and other non-governmental groups in Zambia. Another research gap that is identified is the need to define what is meant by "a Christian nation" and why the clause was included in the Constitution.

Therefore, this study will examine why Chiluba, a democratically elected president, ignored these critical voices and undermined the citizens' right to participate in shaping an important decision that had consequences for the Constitution of the country. Chiluba ignored the very tenets of democracy³ that he claimed to support and his actions resulted in denying citizens the rights of full participation in major decisions that affected their wellbeing. This study argues that a flawed consultation process resulted in a questionable piece of legislation that divided the nation and was deceptively thrust unto the nation with a hidden political agenda

1.5. Research Problem

The research problem of this study seeks to uncover the underlying religio-political factors that prompted Chiluba to declare Zambia a Christian nation and examine the response of the Roman Catholic Church to the Christian nation declaration.

³ In Chiluba's book called *Democracy: the Challenge of Change*, published in 1995, he argued that democracy is about "[...] the idea of the supremacy of the people [...] democracy recognizes that consent of the people makes possible the formation of a government of the people [...] important characteristic of democracy is accountability and the rule of law" (Chiluba, 1995: 4-5).

1.5.1. Research Questions

The major question guiding the research asks:

What were the religio-political factors that influenced the decision of President Chiluba to declare Zambia a Christian Nation?

The following sub-questions will assist in answering the key research question:

1. What were the political and religious factors within the Zambian society that influenced Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia a Christian Nation?
2. What were the constitutional implications of the Christian nation declaration?
3. What were the theological implications of the Christian nation declaration?
4. How did the Church in general and the Roman Catholic Church in particular through its social teachings, respond to the Christian nation declaration?

The above research sub-questions will assist this study at arriving at fresh perspectives in understanding the factors that gave rise to the Christian nation declaration and why key sections of the Church opposed the declaration. Therefore, this study is designed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To identify and criticise the political and religious factors within the Zambian society that influenced Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia a Christian Nation,
2. To assess the Constitutional implications of the Christian nation declaration,
3. To identify the theological implications of the Christian nation declaration, and
4. To outline the responses of the Church and the Roman Catholic Church in particular to the Christian nation declaration in line with its social teaching,

1.6. Principal Theoretical Assumptions or Theoretical Framework

This study uses pluralist theory to examine Zambia's status as a plural society that tolerates all religions. However the declared identity of Zambia as a Christian State called into question its credentials as a plural society that equally respects all religions. Second, theological reflection (TR) is employed as a framework to criticise Church and State relations with special emphasis on the responses of the Roman Catholic Church to the declaration as formed by the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church through papal encyclicals and the CCJP that was established between 1962 to 1965 during the Vatican Council II. This was after the Catholic Church realised that it needed to be more relevant in the modern world of social and political ideological changes. It is

within these frameworks that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation will be critically explored.

The pluralist theoretical framework involves a critical engagement with African scholars whose works have been deemed relevant to the study. For instance, N'diaye (2008:5) argues that pluralism is characterized by “neighbour-hood of people of various origins, cultures, religions, and value-systems”. His argument is that modern society is no longer isolated, but is infiltrated by many people from different ethnic backgrounds and religious orientation. It is this diversity that necessitates the need for pluralism as a functional theoretical discourse (2008: 5). His perspective has highlighted the inescapable need for society to be constructed on principles of wholesome respect for diversity within the society. This understanding will also equip the Church and other religious organisations to be responsible and tolerant of other religions and challenges the State to protect all people to practice their religious beliefs without political interference. Hick (1981:33) argues that no single belief system can monopolize the truth because all religions are equal and all lead to the same purpose. But his view is not supported by Cobb (1975: 18) who claims that “Christianity is the one right or true way”. This stance by Cobb which presumes that Christianity is the one right way is influenced by a brand of conservative Christian theology that regards other religions and even other Churches that do not share this belief as being sub-standard, illegitimate and false. This brand of conservative Christianity takes seriously its monotheistic fidelity and when taken to extremes, can result in gross intolerance for other religions.

Bolaji Idowu (1970:93-94) and Johnson Mbillah (2004:192), two African scholars, support religious pluralism because they accept that all religions lead to salvation. However, they do not state what they understand by salvation. It may be based on the notion that the continent of Africa embraces diverse cultures and pluralism is the norm of living within the different societies (2004:192). This thesis argues that Zambia is both diverse and plural in religion, language, and politics, therefore it becomes theoretically unsound and practically impossible for the nation to function on a mono-religious system or even a monotheistic belief system.

Therefore, it will be very important for this thesis to examine whether Zambia has remained a pluralist society in spite of the Christian nation declaration. This is because Zambia has been a pluralist society since pre-independence.

This study is located within the discipline of Practical Theology because it takes seriously the experiences of people as the subject for critical reflections (Swinton and Mowat, 2007: 5). Theological reflection (TR) therefore employed as a theoretical framework to criticise Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. To reflect theologically is to empower persons of faith to act purposefully and take into account contextual realities (Trokan, 1997: 145). John Trokan has described theological reflection as the framework that:

Involves the process of learning directly from [our] experiences, [and that, theological reflection] is an intentional and systematic activity. Theological reflection [also] attempts to enable individuals to discover God's presence in their experiences (1997: 145).

Since theological reflection facilitates learning from human experiences and how they see God at work within their context it can therefore be used to facilitate discussion between the Church and State within the context of Zambia with special focus on the decade when Chiluba served as President of the Republic.

1.6.1. *Models of Theological Reflection*

According to Patricia Killen and John De Beer (1994); and Howard Stone and James Duke (1996) the process of reflection has three elements in common: *experience*, *reflection*, and *response*. The two models of theological reflection (TR) that are outlined below have similarities, differences and distinctiveness. The most evident significant similarity for the purposes of the study is that none concretely engages with any anticipated 'outcome'. When one engages in theological reflection, it enables them to involve in dialogue with others who may have opposing views. This makes the process of TR to be dynamic as it encourages different views to be considered in order to establish a common ground. Their differences nonetheless warrant a separate discussion of each.

1.6.2. Killen and de Beer (1994): *The Art of Theological Reflection*

Killen and De Beer’s framework for TR is less well-developed and consists of four components: 1. Focusing on some aspect of experience; 2. Describing that experience to identify the heart of the matter; 3. Exploring the Heart of the Matter in conversation with the wisdom of the Christian heritage; and 4. Identifying from this conversation new truths and meanings for living (1994:68-69). The authors demonstrate how these different standpoints of a) certitude; b) self-assurance; and c) exploration influence the way in which reflection is conducted. The standpoint of certitude leads to a type of victimization mentality: their religious framework is certain and unchallengeable. That of self-assurance results in a general discomfort within the religious framework that in time people potentially discard. From these standpoints the authors then go on to emphasize what they term a ‘movement towards insight’ that produces ‘authentic lives’ that can respond to the call of transformation (1994:74). This is outlined in the chart below in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The movement toward insight and framework for theological reflection (Killen and de Beer, 1994:74; emphasis in original)

MOVEMENT	FRAMEWORK
1. When we enter our experience , we encounter our feelings	1. Focusing on some aspect of experience
2. When we pay attention to those feelings, images arise	2. Describing that experience to identify the heart of the matter
3. Considering and questioning those images may spark insight	3. Exploring the heart of the matter in conversation with wisdom of the Christian
4. Insight leads, if we are willing and ready, to action	4. Identifying from this conversation new truths and meanings for living

Killen and de Beer state that the purpose of the Christian faith is to produce ‘authentic lives’ that can respond to the call to transformation.

1.6.3. Stone and Duke (1996): *How to Think Theologically*

For Stone and Duke’s TR involves working with various materials and resonances, application of skill that can be learned and honed over time through concentration and

practice (1996: 2-3). TR therefore becomes interactive, dialogical and a community related process that facilitates ongoing conversation with others. Based on the perspectives of Stone and Duke (1996: 13) the understanding of faith disseminated by Churches assimilated by its members in their daily lives is called embedded theology. The argument is that every Church community sees itself to be conducting its affairs in accordance with the Christian faith (1996: 13).

It could be argued that it was this embedded theology rooted in its social teachings that motivated the Roman Catholic Church to challenge the government over the President's Christian nation declaration that was not done in consultation with the people. Therefore, in the context of Frederick Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, the framework of theological reflection provides all actors the space to discuss and reflect on the issues within an environment that embodies appreciation of diversity, healthy debate and creative tension.

1.6.4 Social Teaching of the Catholic Church (STC)

The Social Teaching of the Catholic Church (STC) is a collection of doctrines developed by the Roman Catholic Church on matters dealing with poverty and wealth, economics, social organization and the role of the State (Komakoma, 2003: 65). The foundation of STC is widely accepted to have been spearheaded by Pope Leo XIII's 1891 encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum*. The encyclical advocated

Economic distributism and simultaneously condemned capitalism and socialism. Its roots however, can be traced to the writings of Church Fathers, like St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Augustine of Hippo, and is also derived from Biblical concepts of distributive justice (2003: 65).

Based on the above statement, in his encyclical letter *Deus Caritas Est* Pope Emeritus, Benedict XVI, further posited that the STC's aim "is simply to help purify reason and to contribute, here and now, to the acknowledgment and attainment of what is just. ... [The Church] has to play her part through rational argument and she has to reawaken the spiritual energy without which justice [...] cannot prevail and prosper" (Pope Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter: *Deus Caritas Est*. 2011: 28).

Furthermore, the foundation of STC as argued by Pope John Paul II, is that the STC: "rests on the threefold cornerstones of human dignity, solidarity and subsidiarity" (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in America*, 1999: 55). Hence, these concerns rekindle the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament, for instance, his declaration that "whatever you have done for one of these least brothers of Mine, you have done for Me" (Matthew 25:40).

However the encyclical letter *Rerum Novarum* was not very effective. This was because it failed to practically engage with the emerging global world therefore its effort was minimal. The reason was that it remained a theoretical document that had less impact in the modern social and political ideologies that emerged in the early twentieth century. Therefore there was a need for the Catholic Church to design a strategy that would be very effective. This was achieved through the Vatican Council II of 1962 to 1965, where the Catholic Church restructured and established the CCJP to be used as a vehicle through which the social teachings of the Catholic Church would be implemented and be relevant to the modern society. It was through the CCJP that the Catholic social teaching became a consistent critique of modern social and political ideologies both of the left and of the right such as liberalism, communism, feminism, atheism, socialism, fascism, capitalism, and Nazism, which have all been condemned, at least in one form or another, by different popes from the late nineteenth century (Komakoma, 2003: 65).

From 1891 to 2009, the Catholic Church has therefore produced numerous encyclicals and other official documents on the STC.⁴ Of special interest to us is *Dignitatis Humanae* which states that:

It is one of the major tenets of Catholic doctrine that man's {sic} response to God in faith must be free: no one therefore is to be forced to embrace the Christian faith against his own will. The act of faith is of its very nature a free act. In consequence, the principle of religious freedom [...] without

⁴The encyclicals and official documents include: *Rerum Novarum* (1891); *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931); *Mater et Magistra* (1961); *Pacem in Terris* (1963); *Dignitatis Humanae* (1965); *Populorum Progressio* (1967); *Humanae Vitae* (1968); *Octogesima Adveniens* (1971); *Laborem Exercens* (1981); *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987); *Centesimus Annus* (1991); *Evangelium Vitae* (1995); *Deus Caritas Est* (2005); *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2005) and *Caritas in Veritate* (2009) (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965: 10).

hindrance [can] be invited to the Christian faith, embrace it of their own free will, and profess it effectively in their whole manner of life (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965:10).

Dignitatis Humanae has thus become fundamental to the CCJP and has been the basis upon which it has critically engaged the government that has abused rights to religious liberty and religious freedoms, like the case in Zambia, where the declaration of the nation as Christian eroded and threatened the rights of non-Christians to worship freely. These aspects are discussed in detail in the following sections:

1.6.4.1. The Fundamental Right to Religious Liberty

According to the *Dignatatis Humanae*, all human beings have “a right to religious liberty, a right with its foundation in the essential dignity of each person. All humans are free to seek the truth without any form of coercion” (1965: 2). Furthermore it postulates that through “[...] the help of the teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue [...] it must be adhered to by personal free assent. The freedom from coercion in religious affairs is to be recognised as a right when individuals act in community” (1965: 2). This is because a society has its own original right to live its own domestic religious life in freedom, especially the freedom to choose religious education (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965: 2). Therefore, the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation compromised the right to religious liberty of non-Christians. Based on the social teaching of the Catholic Church the Christian nation declaration is criticized for eroding the liberty of religions in Zambia and rejecting pluralism that has been the status quo since independence.

1.6.4.2. The Responsibility of the State

According to *Dignitatis Humanae* “the government must protect the rights and equality of all citizens. So that the State’s essential role is in promoting the public good, for the common good, and a wrong is done when a government imposes profession or repudiation of any religion” (1965: 8). Furthermore, religious freedom must be exercised in society; as a result it is subject to certain regulatory norms to ensure the existence of a common welfare (1965: 8). Therefore, responsibility and freedom must be balanced

and religious freedom must also have as its aim the promotion of persons acting with their own greater responsibility (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965: 8). The Catholic Church took upon itself to ensure the promotion of public good. It was also the Catholic's responsibility to advocate for religious freedom in Zambia so that people from other religious groups would not be abused by Christians. They further argued that it was up to the government to offer such protection. This is why they insisted that the Church and State should remain separate because they feared that once Church and State relations were fused together after the declaration, others who did not belong to Christianity would be marginalised and victimised by Christians.

1.6.4.3. Religious Freedom and Christianity

Dignitatis Humanae is deeply rooted in “[...] the dignity of the human person as seen through human reason, based on divine revelation, Christians are charged with an even more conscientious respect for religious freedom” (1965: 9). Consequently, “a human being's response to God in faith must be free [therefore] no person is to be forced to embrace Christianity” (1965: 9). It could be argued that this is a significant aspect of the Catholic faith as elucidated in the Sacred Scriptures and Catholic Tradition. Even, Jesus Christ acknowledged the legitimacy of governments, but he vehemently refused to impose his teachings by force, rather, he explained it and expected people to follow his teachings freely.

Therefore, *Dignitatis Humanae* argues that the “Apostles freely followed His word and example. Consequently, the Roman Catholic Church follows Christ and the Apostles when it recognises the principle of religious freedom, based on the dignity of human persons and divine revelation” (1965: 9). In actual fact, the Church itself also requires a full measure of freedom and a sacred freedom, to carry out its mission (*Dignitatis Humanae* 1965: 9). When the Christian nation declaration was made it was central to the Roman Catholic Church that religious freedom should still be practiced in Zambia because this was also stated in the Preamble of the Zambian Constitution of 1996.

Therefore, the use of the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church is cogently put in context by Cardinal Adam Kozłowiecki who postulated that “as Church leaders [in

Zambia], we have always to speak out for human rights, for the rights of the people. We have the duty to say the truth. When something is unjust we should not hesitate to speak against it” (Komakoma, 2003: 70).

The words spoken by Kozlowiecki have served to guide the Catholic Church in Zambia, where it is required to speak out against the government. The criticism of the Catholic Church was not something new for the Bishops of the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia for they had also criticised the colonial Government for some of its bad laws and policies (2003: 264). Furthermore, they also criticised Kaunda’s One-Party rule. So when the Catholic Church spoke during the Third Republic under the rule of President Chiluba, it spoke on behalf of the people of Zambia. This was the essence of the pastoral letters/statements the Bishops have been writing since 1953 (Komakoma, 2003: 264).

This has placed the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia at the fore front of advocating for human rights that were threatened by the Christian nation declaration made by Chiluba in 1991. Through the CCJP whose board members are bishops that spearhead the ECZ, the Catholic Church realised that it needed to advocate for wider equality and fuller social justice (Hales 1965: xv). It is from this perspective that it would be proper to summarise the background to the Vatican Council II and the formation of CCJP and its role in Zambia in great detail. This will assist us in formulating a Church and State model, because the Catholic Church in Zambia criticised the Church and State relationship based on the authority of CCJP and ECZ which is an essential component of this thesis. This will be discussed in greater detail in 3.4. Sub-titled *Background to Vatican II (1962 to 1965) and CCJP* in chapter three.

1.6.5. Summary

The pluralism theory serves to examine Zambia’s credentials as plural society. The theological reflection theory advocated by Killen and De Beer, and Stone and Duke will interrogate Church and State relations in Zambia and also examine the responses of the Roman Catholic Church to the declaration through the lens of its Social Teaching.

1.7. Synopsis of Research Design and Methodology

Every research project is unique and there are no generic research designs that can fit all research projects. As such, a research design can never be overlaid. Mouton (2001: 180) has suggested that the researcher must first determine the type of problem to be solved and second consider how that problem will be scientifically solved. In this study, the nature of the problem is identified in the undeclared religio-cultural factors that influenced Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation.

Consequently, the next step is to determine how that problem can be examined and resolved. Mouton (2001: 180) lists two scientific methods of solving research problems as empirical and non-empirical. This study is a non-empirical study within the theological discipline of Practical Theology.

1.7.1. Literature Review and Content Analysis

The literary review examines what trends are manifested within specific scholarship and content analysis is used for analysing data gathered through literature review from secondary sources. In this study, a combination of literary review and content analysis is used. The literary review section clarifies and elaborates various angles of the object of the study in order to "evaluate the cogency of evidence advanced, the logical validity of its arguments, and the meaningfulness or ambiguity of the concept" (Erickson, 1998:29 and Bavinck, 1996: 23).

The **data was gathered** from secondary sources on the *object of study*. Data was extracted based on the research questions and objectives. Since this is a non-empirical study, the thesis utilised mainly text-based information therefore various texts were consulted in order to answer the research questions and objectives.

The **method of analysis** is based on content analysis. According to Mouton the challenge offered by this method is that it tends to slant toward dogmatism which has caused 'outsiders' to relegate the results to irrelevance (2001: 179). However, this study has attempted to eliminate the weakness by taking into account the advantage that

comes from the authority of the secondary sources and also by presenting scholarly theological reflections on the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation.

1.8. Limitation and Scope of Study

Since this study is mainly non-empirical in nature, its focus is limited by the methodology. The limitations are imposed by the concentration on literary data collection from textual documents or secondary sources on the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. Since this is meant to be a limited research on the subject it has intentionally avoided other methodologies of data collection because it would take the study beyond its scope.

1.9. Conclusion

In this chapter I have explained what the thesis intends to achieve by outlining important sections that will further be explored in the chapters that follows. I first began by looking at the background of the study. This was followed by the hypothesis of the study where I argued that the Christian nation declaration was made by Frederick Chiluba without consulting the nation. Furthermore, I discussed the significance and relevance of the research. Other areas that were discussed included the motivation of the study and literature review. The major component in this chapter was the discussion on the theoretical framework. In this section I identified pluralist theory to examine Zambia's status as a plural society that tolerates all religions. Theological reflection (TR) will be employed as a framework to criticise Church and State relations with special emphasis on the responses of the Roman Catholic Church to the declaration as formed by the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church through papal encyclicals and the CCJP. The CCJP was established between 1962 to 1965 during the Vatican Council II in order for the Church to be relevant in the modern world. The last area that was discussed was research design and methodology, in this section I identified literature review and content analysis as non-empirical tools to engage in the discussion on the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. In the following chapter I will deal with political and religious factors within Zambian society that influenced Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia as a Christian nation.

1.10. Structure of the Dissertation

Chapter one provides a general introduction to the study. It presents an overview starting with the background and motivation of the study, the research's key question and the sub-questions and objectives, theoretical framework and methodology used in the study. Chapter two focuses on the political and religious factors within the Zambian society that influenced Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia a Christian nation. In Chapter three, the study examines the constitutional implications of the declaration. The theological implication of the declaration will be discussed in chapter four. In chapter five, the focus shifts from the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation to an exploration of how the church and in particular the Roman Catholic Church responded to the declaration. The sixth chapter presents the conclusion and signposts for further research.

Chapter 2

The Political and Religious Factors within Zambian Society that Influenced Chiluba's Decision to Declare Zambia a Christian Nation

2.1. Introduction

This chapter aims to identify and critique the political and religious factors within Zambian society that influenced Frederick Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia a Christian Nation. It comprises of three major sections. The first part addresses religious factors. This will be done by tracing Chiluba's religious life formation from the time his religious orientation came under public scrutiny and when he was chosen to lead the MMD in order to stand as a presidential candidate. Chiluba was to challenge the first president of Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda. After winning the elections that were held on 31st October 1991, he expressed the desire for the country to enter into a covenantal relationship with God. Two months later on 29th December 1991 Chiluba's intentions indeed evolved and became eventually entrenched as he pronounced the country to be a Christian nation. The second section focuses on political factors. Kaunda had ruled Zambia for twenty-seven years before he was challenged by MMD political party that was created in 1990 with the sole purpose of opposing and replacing Kaunda as President of Zambia. The final section considers the response of the Roman Catholic Church to Chiluba's declaration.

2.2. Religious Factors

Before Frederick Chiluba's conversion into Pentecostalism, he initially belonged to the mainline Church called the United Church of Zambia. But at the time of his conversion the country was also going through a Pentecostal/Charismatic transition that saw many Christian communities inclining their form of worship to Pentecostalism. Hence, in 1981, Chiluba was converted to a Pentecostal⁵ brand of Christianity while he was in prison serving time after he was arrested by Kenneth Kaunda's security system because he was leader of the labour movement called the Zambia Congress of Trade Union (ZCTU) that challenged Kaunda's rule (Olsen, 2002: 38). His conversion was deeply influenced

⁵Chiluba's conversion to the Pentecostal Churches coincided with the beginning of a huge proliferation of charismatic (popularly known as born-again) churches (Chiyeka, 2010: 15).

by his reading of the New Testament book of Hebrews chapter 11. Chiluba explained that he did not understand the significance of the faith of those named in the scripture until he was later arrested on charges of insurrection (Olsen, 2002:38). While imprisoned, a pastor brought him another book entitled *From Prison to Praise*. The book and his reading of the Bible led to a conversion experience that Chiluba described: “I knelt on my knees and accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as my savior [...] I forgave everyone connected with my false arrest [...] God has proved to me that he alone is in charge of all things” (Chiyeka, 2010: 16).

His claims of false arrest are however contested by Yorum Mumba who describes Chiluba as a shrewd tactician who had participated in the 1980 coup that was intended to undemocratically remove the elected government of Zambia (2012:60). This alternate view suggests that there were early signs that raised questions about Chiluba’s democratic credentials. This perspective seems to give credence to the idea that Chiluba had a hidden agenda when his government failed to consult the nation before declaring Zambia a Christian nation. His stated conversion experience also raises questions about its motives when one takes into account Phiri’s assertion that it was a “Swedish woman who prophesied over Chiluba that he was going to be a leader of his nation, but he did not take this seriously” (2003: 407). In addition to this external voice, there was another validation from Kabalika. According to Phiri:

In charismatic circles, the testimony of two people is said to be confirmation of God's will and Chiluba began to think about it seriously. He made a private vow to God that if he was indeed chosen to lead the nation of Zambia; he would give the country to God (2003: 407).

The pattern that one sees emerging is that of someone with a deep belief that he was chosen and appointed by God to lead the nation and nothing could prevent him from achieving that objective. At every available occasion Chiluba spoke using God’s name to validate his “chosenness” (Njovu, 2002: 38). I argue that Chiluba wanted political domination through Christianity which provided a common language and was accepted and taken for granted by most people in the country.

By 1990, Kaunda had repealed the law that allowed only one political party, UNIP to operate in Zambia and established a Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) led by Professor Mvunga to assess whether people wanted multi-partism in Zambia (Njovu, 2002: 38). The Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), an umbrella body of the Evangelical Churches in Zambia, was a very influential group among the Pentecostals. It was during the submissions to the CRC that Reverend Joe Imakando, the then Executive Director of the EFZ, submitted a request that Zambia be declared a Christian Nation (*Times of Zambia*, 24 February 1991). However, Reverend Imakando did not explain fully what he meant by desiring Zambia to be declared a Christian Nation. The Review Commission did not recommend the submission for adoption.

Nevers Mumba, a televangelist Pastor from Victory Ministries International (a member of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia) who became popular with his programme “Zambia Shall be Saved”, also issued a statement that Zambia should be declared a Christian nation because Muslims were planning to take over the country (*Times of Zambia*, 24 February 1991). He had formed his Church in 1984 from the converts of his “Zambia Shall be Saved” Crusades, regarded himself as the vanguard of the charismatic thrust in Zambia, was able to organise big international conventions and was given a high profile role in the governing party’s drive for Zambia to be declared a Christian nation (Njovu, 2002: 44). Using the Muslims as a scapegoat became a convenient tool that the ‘pro-Christian nation declaration’ supporters used to create fear in the society by spreading false information about a Muslim secret agenda in Zambia. Pastor Mumba became a politician in 1991 and was appointed one of the candidates in the presidential and general election of 2001 (2002: 44).

Charles Kachikoti provided data on the growth of Islam in Africa that was used by Pastor Nevers Mumba in his political claims for action to be taken against the spread of Islam in Zambia by declaring the country a Christian Nation (Njovu, 2002: 44). What emerged was the coming together of an anti-Islam partnership between the religious right under the faith umbrella of Pentecostalism and Charismatics and the political right under the leadership of Chiluba. Both needed each other to achieve their religio-political goals. Kachikoti’s desire for Zambia to be constitutionally declared a Christian Nation

inevitably contributed to the objective of ensuring the election of Chiluba as the next president (*Times of Zambia*, 9 March 1991). This strategy would eventually contribute to the erosion of Zambia as a plural society that respected religious and political diversity and freedom of choice. The actions of Chiluba and the leaders of his political movement revealed their anti-democratic credentials through their disrespect for other faiths and religions that did not support the Christian nation declaration.

Consequently, when Chiluba assumed the chairmanship of the Movement for Multiparty Democracy in 1990, his main support came from the “born-again” politically conservative Christians. According to Paul Gifford, Chiluba used his credentials as a born-again Christian to impact on his political struggle (1998:193). It could be argued that the Zambian people, many of whom were Christians, had grown disillusioned with Kaunda’s government’s inability to meet their perceived basic human needs by October 1991 and openly campaigned for MMD with the hope for a better life. There were reports of some United Church of Zambia (UCZ)⁶ pastors campaigning from their pulpits (*Mirror*, 23-29 September 1991). As a result, Chiluba won the general elections of October 1991 with a landslide victory (Phiri 2003: 407). The haste with which a process was agreed upon to implement the constitutional changes suggests that a possible deal was struck for the political support of the ‘evangelical right’ Christian groups during the national election.

⁶ Although Kaunda did not declare Zambia as a Christian nation constitutionally, much of his actions and attitude showed that he also was using the Christian ethos to rule the country. He came into power with a strong Christian background, he made a clear declaration in 1965 during the inauguration of the UCZ where he stated that: he wished other Churches could emulate the example of UCZ and come together and formed one United Church of Zambia like the United Church of Scotland (Gifford, 1999:189). In 1970 Kaunda openly declared at a rally that Zambia was a Christian nation that embraces strong Christian ethos, such confession though not constitutionalised can be highlighted to show that the confessional aspect of Zambia as a Christian nation was not a new phenomena, Zambia emerged from colonialist with a Christian ideology, until towards his end of political life when Kaunda began to associate himself with the Eastern religions.

The Chiluba political apparatus, in response to the unpopular governance of Kaunda's era, sought to correct the situation by swinging the political pendulum to another extreme of governance by adopting an exclusivist non-participatory political discourse that also called into question the commitment of the State to uphold the political and religious freedom of all the people. Two key supporters of Chiluba, Mbita Kabalika and Brigadier General Godfrey Miyanda, organised the Christian nation declaration (Phiri, 2003: 407). According to Gifford (1998:193) the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation could be seen as the brainchild of Miyanda. Indeed, Chiluba's presidency was clothed in support from important sections of the conservative Christian community. According to the *Mirror Newspaper*, Bishop Stephen Mumba, of the Anglican Church charged Chiluba at his inauguration as President to "be strong and show himself a man, and to keep the charge of the Lord, to walk in his ways, to keep in his statutes, his commandments, his precepts and his testimonies as it is written in the first and second testament" (*Mirror*, 11-17 November 1991).

The Cathedral of the Holy Cross served to legitimized Chiluba's religious credentials as one who was anointed "as a true spirit-filled believer" (Njovu, 2002: 44). His status was further entrenched during his presidential address on the 29th December 1991, when he identified the nation as Christian (Olsen, 2002:38).⁷ Through such actions, Chiluba amassed political and financial support that empowered him to strengthen his control of the nation by reducing its pluralistic identity in declaring the nation to be Christian when in practice it was not. His undemocratic behaviour breached the Catholic social teachings outlined in *Dignatatis Humanae*: that all persons have a right to religious liberty, a right founded in the essential dignity of each human being and that all persons must be free to seek the truth without coercion (1965: 2).

Using the Old Testament book of 2 Kings 23:3, Chiluba informed the nation that he was convinced that the changes in Zambia were due to the grace of God (*Speech by the Pillar*, 29th December 1991). Using Biblical covenantal language in his speech, Chiluba asserted that the nation would receive blessings if it were on God's side but judgment if it turned against God (*Speech by the Pillars*, 29th December 1991). However, what

⁷ This information was also used in an assignment.

Chiluba failed to declare was the foreign economic support that followed from the declaration, which local and foreign conservative Evangelical Churches would openly support.

To proceed with this anti-pluralistic tendency, Chiluba utilized prayers and key references from Scripture to confirm his status as “one chosen by God” to restore righteousness to the nation of Zambia. It could be argued that he had a ‘messiah complex’ in his political identity. This journey of restoration began with his declaration that the nation be Christian (*Speech by the Pillar*, 29th December, 1991). He specified an end to bribery and corruption and the beginning of a new era of righteousness for the nation (*Speech by the Pillar*, 29th December, 1991). This promise of Chiluba would later haunt him because it did not take long during the era of his presidency for high levels of greed and corruption to envelop his government (Njovu, 2002: 44).

His desire for a dominant conservative Christian belief system within Zambia seems to have been aimed at having political control over religious information that was shared with the public. It implied that the other religious messages did not constitute the same standard of truth and respect as Christianity and therefore could not lead to the same purpose (Hick, 1981: 33). Chiluba was essentially supporting Cobb that Christianity is the one right or true way (Cobb, 1975: 18). Though he was doing this, he still had undeclared intentions for ruling all the people of Zambia.

The conservative Evangelical right-wing of the Church uncritically expressed their joy that Zambia was declared to be a Christian nation. However, other religious groups were more cautious. It could be argued that it was the speed with which Chiluba made the Christian nation declaration and implemented the Constitutional changes that unleashed negative responses from the Roman Catholic Church and other non-governmental organizations (Komakoma 2003: 71). Cardinal Kozłowiecki stated that Bishops since the colonisation era always spoke against any ills in society and the Roman Catholic Church, through the Secretary of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference, criticized the move by saying that “Most Christian Churches regretted the lack of consultation and lack of preparation” (Olsen, 2002:38). The *Dignitatis Humanae* taught

that *the* government's duty is to protect the rights and equality of all citizens as part of its essential role in promoting public wellbeing. Therefore, "a wrong is done when a government imposes profession or repudiation of any religion and in this case Christianity. The religious freedom exercised in society, is also subject to certain regulatory norms, again to ensure the common welfare. Freedom and responsibility must balance and religious freedom must have as its aim to promote persons acting with greater responsibility" (Dignitatis Humanae, 1965: 8). Olsen moreover posits that the nation was not prepared for the Christian nation declaration (2002:38). Furthermore, according to Frederick Chiluba, "the irony about the Christian nation declaration was that the declaration came as a total surprise to many people who could not readily associate the president with religion, let alone his association with strong religious fundamentalism" (Chiluba, 1995:38). The euphoria that surrounded his rise to power and declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation began dissipating as other groups stepped up their criticism.

This disappointment in his Presidency grew when his security forces arrested and imprisoned the former president Kenneth Kaunda on Christmas Day 1997 on charges of insurrection (*Christian Today*, March 2, 1998:76). This was interpreted by the public as politics of revenge and it did not go down well.

Chiluba's use of the religious right to further his political objectives became more evident as he invited Ernest Angley, an American Evangelist, to Zambia who in turn endorsed President Chiluba as one, "chosen by God", ordained by God to lead this great nation (Njovu, 2002: 59). Another American Evangelist called Benny Hinn, also visited Zambia and pledged to raise money and campaign for President Chiluba's re-election (2002: 59). The religious right inside and outside of the country had lined up behind Chiluba. They saw him as their best hope to spread their brand of Christianity that was rooted in a brand of "prosperity" gospel. Chiluba courted this brand of Christianity to maintain his politically conservative base. It is also important to note that the Christian nation declaration brought a lot of inter and intra divisions among different Church groupings (2002: 60). Nevertheless, this is a good example of one of Chiluba's

intentions: the gaining of foreign funds and supports through some of the above mentioned individuals so as to further his political career.

Furthermore, Chiluba's strategic partnership with the religious right has led to those groups behaving as if they owned the president and his government as they sought unlimited access to him and the resources under his government's control (Njovu, 2002: 60). Their religious action instituted a different expression of Church-State relationship. They had moved away from their traditional view that the Church should not get involved in politics to one of strategic partnership rooted in uncritical support for Chiluba's government. Although in the MMD *Manifesto*, the political party called for the separation of the Church and the State, their actions represented a typical example of a direct contradiction between theory and practice (2002: 60).

This close relation with Chiluba's government later backfired when an important Constituency within the religious right Evangelical Churches refused to support Chiluba's bid for re-election to a third presidential term because it was seen as a violation of the Zambian Constitution (Olsen, 2002:38). The diverse groups of Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ) and the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ) formed a united opposition to Chiluba's request. The partnership dissipated as people lost faith in the government's ability to live up to the standard of good governance (Christian Today, April 23, 2001: 26). Political leaders found themselves in difficulty because failures in their family life also exposed them as leaders who were unable to live up to the Christian standard of behaviour (Phiri, 2001: 23). Chiluba himself made matters worse with the Evangelical Churches when he separated from his wife, an event which offered 'ammunition' to his opponents (2002: 39).

Killen and De Beer's framework of theological reflection exposes how the self-assurance of Chiluba eventually produced public discomfort with his religious utterances that were not consistent with his political action and it resulted in his supporters discarding him. Chiluba's political and religious immaturity did not empower him to face the challenges that would equip him to increase his 'movement towards insight' that

produces 'authentic lives' that could respond to the call of transformation (1994:74). In the context of Chiluba's Christian nation declaration, the framework of theological reflection provides all actors the space to discuss and reflect on the issues within an environment that embodies appreciation of diversity, healthy debate and creative tension. However, in Chiluba's case, this was one-sided and not balanced. In addition, his immature behaviour failed to respect the embedded theology (Stone and Duke, 1996: 13) of ordinary people that came through the understanding of faith disseminated by the Roman Catholic and other Churches that they should assimilate in their daily lives. Every Church community sees itself to be conducting its affairs in accordance with Christian faith (Stone and Duke, 1996: 13) and it was this embedded theology and the Catholic Social Teaching that motivated the Roman Catholic Church to challenge the government as it was not empowered through consultation with the people.

2.3. Political Factors

This section specifically identifies political factors within Zambian society that influenced Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia a Christian nation. In September 1990, President Kaunda repealed Article 4(1) of the 1972 Constitution of Zambia which had declared Zambia to be a one-party state with the United National Independence Party (UNIP) as the only political party (in this Constitution referred to as 'The Party') (Republican Constitution of Zambia, 1972). President Kaunda also appointed a *Constitutional Review Commission* headed by Professor Mvunga to gather views from members of the public on how Zambia should be governed in a multiparty system (Njovu 2002: 43).

The Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) had been formed for the sole purpose of challenging Kenneth Kaunda's one-party system. In its *Manifesto*, the MMD stated that Zambia was a Christian country which would tolerate other religions. It also acknowledged the particular significance of Churches and other religious communities (MMD Manifesto, 1991: 58). The MMD *Manifesto* further observed that

The Churches, Mosques and religious communities would be independent and not subject to State influence in the proclamation of faith in their spiritual and social welfare activities (MMD Manifesto, 1991: 58).

Therefore, it is a paradox that the MMD, which opposed a “One Party State”, was prepared to argue for and implement a “One Faith” State and saw no contradiction in her position. This reverts to our hypothesis that Chiluba had undeclared intentions by making Zambia a Christian country and thereby going against the pluralistic ethos of the society and perspectives on good governance advocated in the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church’s *Dignatatis Humanae*. Though Chiluba criticized Kaunda’s party for instituting a One Party State, the MMD had become the one political party advocating “a Christian State”. It had simply exchanged one ideology for another (Njovu, 2002: 58), without responsible theological reflection. When the MMD began receiving criticism of its unethical and immoral conduct in government, it seemed to change course and argued that “it was wrong to give ethical meaning to the conduct of public affairs as stated in the declaration that Zambia was a Christian country which is tolerant of other religions” (2002:58). Backpedalling on their previous positions they tried to ‘water down’ the significance of the Christian nation declaration by suggesting that only the political directorate could offer an official interpretation of the Christian nation declaration and this was the function of the political party and not the State (2002: 58). This position is contradictory considering that the Christian nation declaration was entrenched in the Constitution, hence contradicting an open society and the Catholic’s social teaching. If the Christian nation declaration was only a party position and not that of the State, it could explain why the MMD sought to prevent national debate on such an important subject. However, by entrenching it in the Constitution, it became the right of the people to discuss the law because it is the people who own the Constitution and not one political party (Phiri, 2003: 408). The Church community must see itself conducting its affairs in accordance with Christian faith which is basically non-discriminatory. It also contradicted Chiluba’s own position and understanding of democracy that he argues in his book⁸ (2003: 408), and further exposes a deceptive political agenda as the *modus operandi* of the president and his party.

Another timid excuse given for the Christian nation declaration not being discussed is a ploy that is used by political parties claiming that “the Christian nation declaration was in

⁸The title of Frederick Chiluba’s book is: *Democracy: The Challenge of Change*, published in 1995.

the *Manifesto* [...] and majority of voters voted for MMD meant that the voters were in favour of its party's Manifesto" (Njovu, 2002: 59). This assertion, however, is untenable because not everyone who voted for the ruling party supported the *Manifesto*. In addition, the Manifesto advocated a fair democracy, so this was a contradiction in terms of the MMD Manifesto. When the people voted to replace Kaunda's government in the 1991 general election, it was because they felt that their needs were not being met and they expected the MMD to respond to the challenge and the *tabula rasa* created by the previous regime. The people's desire for a change of government had nothing to do with a deep need for Zambia to be declared a Christian nation. The close relationship that developed between President Chiluba and a cross section of the religious right belonging to the Evangelical and Pentecostal, fundamentalist 'born-again' Churches led mainly by Evangelists from North America and Europe (Njovu, 2002: 59) called into question issues that had political bias and favoritism for those religious communities. The perception of corruption in governance was brought to the President's attention at numerous meetings with these Churches which he thought would support him politically (2002: 59) and most likely financially.

On the other hand Njovu argued that "the Church leaders from the mainline Churches that were against the Christian nation declaration were perceived by the 'born-again Christians' as leaders opposing the President" (2002:59). This came out clearly in the government media's attack on some Church leaders accusing them of orchestrating intense attacks on the government. The separation of the State from the Church was promised in the MMD Manifesto but the MMD, through the State machinery, was seen to be interfering in religious matters. It went against the religious freedom advocated by the Catholic Church in its numerous social teaching documents, especially the *Dignatatis Humanae*. Most of all it denied what Idowu (1970: 94) and Mbillah (2004: 192) state, that the support of religious pluralism is needed as all religions lead to salvation. Without such support principles of division would begin to take root in society. But even if these mainline Churches were guilty of such a heinous accusation, the government of Chiluba also failed, in the words of Violet Sampa Bredt, the General Secretary of the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), to follow the Constitutional

requirement of separation of Church and State by getting involved in organising religious ceremonies (Council of Churches in Zambia, 1992: 30).

2.4. Reactions to the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation

The reactions to the Christian nation declaration have been grouped into two categories. First was uncritical support from groups referred to as the religious right, Evangelical and Charismatics that were aligned to religious right-wing Christian groups from the United States. The second group consisted of those Churches linked to the mainline Churches of the missionary era, whose leaders were excluded from consultation and who felt betrayed by Chiluba. The Roman Catholic Church in Zambia argued that “it was not easy to accept and endorse the declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation because of the hasty manner in which it was introduced which lacked adequate preparation and consultation” (*National Mirror* of March 25 – 31 2000). This was further compounded by the Bishops’ concern for the effects this declaration would have on the right of freedom of religion and Church-State relationship (*National Mirror* of March 25 – 31 2000). In this regard, the Catholic Church appealed to its social teaching which argued that Christianity “is deeply rooted in the dignity of the human person as seen through human reason, based on divine revelation, Christians are charged with an even more conscientious respect for religious freedom (Dignitatis Humanae, 1965: 9). Furthermore, another mainline Church, the Anglican Church, also argued that, “after working on the reconciliation of the various political parties during the period of 1991 election, and after anointing the president later on, it should have been notified of or involved in the process leading to the declaration” (*Mirror*, 30th December, 1991).

In December 1994, the Cabinet Office organised another nation-wide “rededication” of “the Christian nation declaration” and invited Church representatives to attend and participate in various ways. But most Church leaders, particularly those from the three mainline bodies, boycotted the celebration (*The Post*, 20th January 1995). Phiri argues that instead of uniting the nation, the Christian nation declaration exposed disunity among the Christian community (2003: 407). Chiluba’s appointment elevated those Pentecostal Churches that felt marginalized during Kaunda’s era and placed them at the

center of power and privileges and pushed to the margins of influence those mainline Church leaders that previously enjoyed being at the center (Phiri, 2008:30).

2.4.1. Criticisms to the Christian Nation Declaration

The declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation, which was meant to unite the nation, not only divided the Churches but also the nation. The assumption that those who voted for the MMD also supported the Christian nation declaration proved to be incorrect. Some Evangelicals who should have been natural allies of Chiluba's government eventually became critical and accused him of vindictiveness "against political opponents and that he tolerated corruption within the government" (Christianity Today, March 2, 1998: 76).

The core criticism of Chiluba was that his words and actions were not consistent. He called for unity in the nation but used his government to victimize his opponents (Christianity Today, March 2 1998: 76). Chiluba's claims of transformational leadership proved hollow when his government increasingly became discredited because the quality of governance that served the people failed to meet their deep social and economic needs.

The State's core functions include the promotion of freedom of religion which in turn gives freedom and responsibility to individuals who must act with greater responsibility. Therefore the Christian nation declaration of one religion as a national religion goes against religious pluralism. This is because responsible theological reflection invites people of faith to resist forces that deprive them of such freedom. Hence the social teaching of the Catholic Church as articulated in the *Dignatatis Humanae* argues that "the dignity of the human person as understood through human reason, is based on divine revelation through the Gospel" (1965: 8).

2.5. Summary

In this chapter, I identified religious and political factors within the Zambian society that influenced Frederick Chiluba to declare Zambia a Christian nation. Some of these

factors only became apparent after he assumed power, thereby, suggesting that Chiluba had undeclared intentions when he made Zambia a Christian nation. The chapter also stressed that the religious factors were also influenced by Chiluba's understanding of his conversion experience. In addition, it was further argued that after Kenneth Kaunda repealed article 4 (1) of 1972 Constitution of Zambia that allowed only one political party, Chiluba's MMD was successful in the national elections and in response it forced a one-religion system on the nation. Chiluba's alliance with leaders within the religious right Pentecostal Churches led to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. The reactions to the declaration were clearly divided into two categories. There was euphoria among some of 'the born-again' Christians and there was discontent among some Church leaders who were excluded and felt betrayed. The next chapter will investigate the Constitutional implications of the Christian nation declaration, which is the second objective of this study as shown in chapter one.

Chapter 3

Assessing the Constitutional Implications of the Christian Nation Declaration

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter examined the political and religious factors within Zambian society that influenced President Frederick Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia a Christian nation. This chapter assesses the constitutional implications of the Christian nation declaration that was enshrined in the Preamble of the Constitution in 1996. The change in the Constitution had far reaching consequences. The Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission was set up by President Chiluba in 1993, and later followed by the Levy Mwanawasa's Commission. Mwanawasa subsequently succeeded Chiluba as president in 2001. The Mungomba Constitutional Review Commission was established with the sole purpose of drafting a new Constitution that would take into account the objectives of the Christian nation declaration. The Commission also had to take into consideration the opposing views of the Roman Catholic Church that submitted a statement calling for repeal of the Christian nation declaration. In the final part of this chapter, I will briefly discuss the Vatican Council II and its role in the formation of CCJP from 1962 to 1965. It was after CCJP was established and adopted in Zambia in 1986, with the objective of advocating social justice leading to a greater awareness of human rights, that the Catholic Church in Zambia had authority to argue against the fusing of the Church and State by Chiluba's government. Therefore, an examination of Church and State relations in Zambia will be made based on Bonhoeffer's Church and State model.

3.2. The Constitutional Implications of the Christian Nation Declaration

In 1995, the MMD government, through a White Paper, proposed the inclusion of the Christian nation declaration in the Preamble of the 1991 Constitution of the Republic of Zambia that would be amended in 1996 (Gifford, 1998: 200). The leaders of the three ecumenical organisations: the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and Roman Catholic umbrella body, the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ) did not agree with the government's White Paper that the

Preamble of the Constitution should state that “Zambia is a Christian Nation” (Gifford, 1998: 200). Rather, they accepted the position expressed by the Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission’s report that the rights of Christianity or any other religion could be safely secured without any form of Christian nation declaration (*Report on the Constitutional Review Commission*, 16th June 1995). The Mwanakatwe CRC argued that Christianity should not be given any privileged Constitutional recognition (CRC, 16th June 1995) because such an action could lead to the marginalization and discrimination of other faiths. This is consistent with the perspectives argued in the theoretical framework that a one religion State compromises the unity of the State and exposes people of minority faiths to political and religious victimization.

These concerns from the ecumenical movements were ignored by Chiluba and his government because they were considered to be closet supporters of the previous Kaunda presidency. These Churches were much older and influenced by the European missionary heritage that had a greater affinity to the understanding of faith that called for separation of Church and State. In May 1996, the Christian nation status was enshrined in the Preamble of the Zambian Constitution. This ensured that the nation was constitutionally declared to be Christian (Sakala, 2001:145). The words of the Preamble stated:

WE THE PEOPLE OF ZAMBIA by our representatives assembled in our Parliament, having resolved to maintain Zambia as a Sovereign Democratic Republic [...] DECLARE the republic a Christian Nation while upholding the right of every person to enjoy that person’s freedom of conscience or religion (The Constitution of the Republic of Zambia, Act 18 of 1996).

When these amendments to the Constitution were made, there were nationwide divergent views against the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation that had existed as far back as 1992 (Gifford, 1998: 201).⁹ For example, reference was made to a 16th January 1992 Joint Press Statement by ecumenical bodies such as ECZ, CCZ and EFZ that accused the government of failing to hold public consultation before making Constitutional changes to declare Zambia a ‘Christian nation’ (*Times of Zambia*, 3

⁹ This information was also used in an assignment.

October 1995). This exposed the undeclared intentions of Chiluba not to encourage national consultation because limiting the process would help to achieve his objective of accumulating funds and votes from his potential supporters for his political agenda at the expense of the nation's wellbeing. The ecumenical organizations expressed the people's apprehensions that certain sections in the draft Constitution were highly controversial and therefore deserved a widespread debate that would contribute to decisions regarding the final wording (*Times of Zambia*, 3 October 1995).

It could therefore be argued that Chiluba misused the office of the Presidency and the House of Parliament to accomplish his hidden narrow political agenda. Chiluba insisted that the Constitution should change to include a clause that required both parents of a presidential candidate to have been born in Zambia (Phiri, 2003: 407). This was interpreted as a move to bar Kenneth Kaunda¹⁰ from running as the presidential candidate for UNIP in the 1996 general election. Chiluba also overruled the opposition regarding the inclusion in the Constitution that Zambia should be declared a Christian nation. Both actions were un-democratic and strongly reflected the actions of a fearful despot with dictatorial tendencies and an autocratic style of leadership (Phiri, 2003: 407).

Having established Christianity as the preferred established State religion by embedding the declaration into the Constitution, Chiluba and his government changed the dynamics of religion and State relations in the country. This meant that Islam, Hinduism and the African Traditional Religions (ATR) were relegated to a position of second class faiths. The president's duty is to uphold the Constitution; therefore, Zambians who were not Christians would be indirectly discriminated against at certain levels of governance (Henriot, 1998: 2). This situation coincides with the assertion of the conceptual framework of pluralism and theological reflection and, most significantly regarding the social teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, that if the nation were to segregate other religions the freedom of religion within that country would be totally compromised.

¹⁰Both parents of Kenneth Kaunda were Malawians but he was born and grew up in Zambia, in Muchinga Province in a town called Chinsali at Lubwa Missions.

President Chiluba's motivation for declaring Zambia a Christian nation and the inclusion of this declaration in the Constitution stemmed from the belief that Zambia would be specifically blessed by God. His arguments were that there was ample Biblical evidence that a nation is blessed whenever it entered into a covenant with God and obeyed the word of God. Moreover, he also hoped that the Christian nation declaration would end corruption and bribery (Henriot, 1998:2). But the opposite was the case; Chiluba's administration was regarded as the worst since independence for having misappropriated public finances (1998: 2). His ministers were said to be so highly corrupt that they sought bribes in any way they could. Furthermore, there was a public perception that Chiluba used discretionary funding as a way of supporting selective Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches. This practice of only funding Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches led to the exclusion of mainline Churches. As a consequence, the Roman Catholic Church through ECZ was viewed as challenging Chiluba's actions because of his bias towards the Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches. This alleged action by Chiluba led to the accusation on his regime as being corrupt because he used Christianity and selected Churches to legitimize his misuse of public funds (Henriot, 1998: 2). In spite of the Constitutional Review Commission's recommendations to remove the Christian nation declaration from the Constitution and revert to the secular State, Chiluba used his political authority to overrule them.

3.3. The Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission

The Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission was instituted in 1993 by Chiluba to evaluate the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. It had to take into account the main concern of the CCZ and the ECZ which represented the perspectives of the Roman Catholic Church that the Christian nation declaration would marginalize and exclude people from other faiths from active participation in the civic affairs of the country (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010: 3). However, the Pentecostal Movement through EFZ which supported the Christian nation declaration did not agree with such concerns claiming that the change would bring righteousness and blessings to the country.

The arguments of ECZ and the CCZ were that Christianity must not be imposed but should be accepted willingly by those concerned (Njovu, 2002: 40). The ECZ's main arguments were that the Christian nation declaration could lead to abuse of religion for purely political ends and even bring dishonor to the name of Christianity (*American Magazine*, October 25, 2004). But when the Review Commission presented its finding to Chiluba he ignored its recommendations and thereby exposed his dictatorial and anti-democratic credentials. His actions further alienated the CCZ and ECZ from his Presidential leadership.

3.4. The Mungomba Constitutional Review Commission

On April 17, 2004, a forty- one (41) member Constitutional Review Commission (CRC) was appointed to draft a new Constitution after receiving people's responses on what should be included in Zambia's fifth national Constitution (Wamunyima, 2006: 22).¹¹

This CRC had 31 terms of references one of which, the fifth stated: "examine and recommend the elimination of provisions which are perceived to be discriminatory in the Constitution" (*Report of the Mungomba Constitutional Review Commission, 2005*). One would naturally assume that based on the terms of reference of the CRC it would eliminate the concept of 'Christian nation' declaration because of its explicit discriminatory language. Prior to its meeting, religious and political groups had taken sides and caused divisions within the nation.

The ECZ recognized that although Christianity was the religion of the majority of Zambians, there were many Zambians who professed other faiths and belonged to other religions. Since the Constitution of the country belonged to citizens, the adoption of Christianity as a formal preferred Constitutional religion of the State could result in Zambians that embraced other faiths being regarded as second-class citizens or even excluded from public office (*National Catholic Reporter*, November 3, 2004: 4). It stated that it was the duty of the State to ensure that the rights of all Zambians are protected and that they be allowed to participate in running for public office. The ECZ argued that "a nation is not Christian by declaration but through deeds" (*National Catholic Reporter*,

¹¹The other four Constitutions were enacted in 1964, 1972, 1991 and 1996.

November 3, 2004: 4). Therefore they wanted the Church and the State to remain separate.

The perspectives of ECZ assumed that a secular State does not discriminate against anyone. However, secularism is a constructed ideology that can also be used to discriminate against other religions if there are no checks and balances. The recommendation that was presented in the final report of the CRC stated that “Zambia is a secular State without a State religion” (*Report of the Mungomba Constitutional Review Commission 2005 and Draft Constitution 2005 Part II*, Article 8.8.1). A secular ideology of governance does not use religious orientation to determine human worth or value (Carson, 2008: 122 and Mbiti, 1986: 115). Therefore the secular State values the inclusion of all people regardless of their religious or political orientation.

The ECZ’s theological perspective took seriously the experiences of the people, learning and reflecting on their experiences of God in order to discover what the Church’s mission is called to be in Zambia. Through secularism, political space is available for all people of faith and those without faith to express their understanding and practice of their belief systems without political interference.

Before discussing Church and State relations in Zambia, it is essential for this study to provide the background to the formation of CCJP. CCJP was initiated by the Vatican Council II in 1965 in order for the Catholic Church, through its social teachings, to engage practically and deal with Church and State relations effectively in any given society.

3.5. Background to Vatican Council II (1962-1965) and CCJP

This section does not give a detailed account of the Vatican Council II; it briefly highlights how this Council contributed to the Church’s advocacy role. This Council is known as the Vatican Council II because it was a second Council of this nature to be held in the Vatican City. This Council took place during the same period when the theology of liberation was being spearheaded in Latin American. It was actually after this Council that the efforts advocated by the theological proponents of liberation were

officially acknowledged by the Latin American bishops. What was it about this Council that made it unique?

This Council was called by Pope John XXIII and it met in Rome, the Vatican City from 1962 to 1965. It would be useful to understand this Council in comparison with the 1891 *Rerum Novarum*. *Rerum Novarum* acknowledged and officially declared the Catholic Church's concern with human rights (Komakoma, 2003: 65). It expressed the need of the Church to uphold the freedom and justice of the people. The criticism of the Church by Karl Marx (Bokenkotter, 1998:172), suggests that the Church was losing relevance in the modern world. The Catholic Church fought against modernity in a bid to re-establish traditional Christianity (1998: 172). One cannot deny that there had been some attempts at making the Church relevant. *Rerum Novarum* bears witness to such efforts, though to a minimum.

The Vatican Council II presented itself as a solution to this problem. Its radical stance called for change both within the Church and how the Church relates with the outside world. Comblin (2005:82) described the Council as preparing the Church to genuinely start to listen to the actual world. Hales (1965: xi) noted the fact that the few extraordinary years during which this Council took place enabled the Church to meet the world and the world to meet the Church. Pope John XXIII had in effect thrust the problem of change upon the Council when he asked it to enact amendments to make the Church's message more intelligible and acceptable to contemporary person (O'Malley, 2012:47). One of the words commonly used was *aggiornamento* which means 'to bring the Church up to date' (Hales, 1965: xi).

For the first time, Catholics were allowed to vote for Communist political parties and the Pope was prepared to invite Communist leaders to Rome. No Pope in the whole of papal history had ever made so many specific and practical suggestions in the realm of social organisation as Pope John XXIII did (Hales, 1965: xii). Pope John XXIII wanted to approach the problems of the world more empirically, unlike his predecessors who had less to say about justice, practical suggestions and policy changes. He announced that the Church's laws and institutions had to enshrine a wider equality and fuller social

justice (Hales, 1965: xv). The Latin American Bishops who officially accepted Liberation theology were inspired by this Council, which opened the Church to dialogue with prevailing philosophies. It was during this Council that religion altered its description as 'opium'¹². One of the most manifest ways in which the Catholic Church demonstrated its intent for social advocacy was forming the model of Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP).

The idea of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace was proposed during the Second Vatican Council. In the words of a document produced by the second Vatican Council, the purpose of this Commission was 'to stimulate the Catholic Community to foster progress in needy regions and social justice on the international scene (Gaudium et Spes, No. 9027). This proposal was a response to the request that Pope Paul VI¹³ had made to the Pontifical Commission "Justitia et Pax"¹⁴ on the 6th of January 1967. Two months later, in an encyclical written by Pope Paul VI called *Populorum Progressio*, the pope officially named this new body Justice and Peace. *Gaudium et Spes*¹⁵ and this Encyclical constituted the founding texts and points of reference for this new body. On 30th November 1971 during the Synod of Bishops' Second General Assembly¹⁶ a declaration of how the Catholic Church through CCJP was going to operate was expressed as follows:

The uncertainty of history and painful convergences in the ascending path of the human community direct us to sacred history; there God has revealed himself to us, and made known to us, as it is brought progressively to realisation, his plan of liberation and salvation which is once and for all fulfilled in the Paschal Mystery of Christ (Gremillion, 1976: 514).

Furthermore, the Synod of Bishops posited that "action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world [must] fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for

¹²Karl Marx had described the Church or rather religion as the opium of the masses.

¹³Pope Paul VI is a predecessor of Pope John XXIII who died before the end of the Vatican II Council.

¹⁴'Justitia et Pax' is an equivalent of 'Justice and Peace' in English.

¹⁵*Gaudium et Spes* another document produced during the second Vatican Council.

¹⁶ This is a conference where bishops gather to deliberate on a very important question.

the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation” (1976:514).

The arguments by the Synod of Bishops in 1971 provided the impetus for the Catholic Church through its social teachings in Zambia to engage with social and political issues in the context of the Christian nation declaration, through the instruments of CCJP and the ECZ. Therefore, the work of CCJP is recognised as a very important constitutive part of preaching the gospel. After a ten-year experimental period, Paul VI gave the Commission its definitive status on the 10th of December 1976. From its inception the CCJP has been instituted in many different nations where the Catholic Church has a presence. The next section looks at the CCJP in Zambia (CCJPZ).

3.5.1. *Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace in Zambia*

In its effort to be guided in situations where social issues are concerned, the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ) established the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) in Zambia in 1986 (Komakoma, 1997 16). This Commission is a direct response to the challenge of the Vatican to the Zambian local context. The overall aim of the CCJP, as approved by the ECZ, was that of social education and advocacy for human rights. The CCJP was tasked to "awaken God's people", through the process of conscientisation, "to a fuller understanding of their call as Christians with regard to social justice, leading to a greater awareness of human rights and consequent duties" (Komakoma, 1997: 16).

Moreover, the CCJP has a duty to awaken in people "a critical conscience which empowers them to challenge and to act in order to overcome unjust situations" (Komakoma 1997:16). The CCJP had become one instrument that had assisted the ECZ to engage with the issues of the Christian nation declaration during Chiluba's presidency and to argue for the separation of the Church and State. Therefore, its main objective is to promote justice and peace guided by the social teaching of the Church. Its intentions are to create a God-fearing, democratic and prosperous nation where truth, love and freedom exist (Auret, 1992:24). CCJP's role in the Zambian context will

be explored in depth in section 5.2 of chapter 5, sub-titled, *The Ministry and Mission of the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia*.

3.5.2. The Mandate of the CCJPZ is:

- 1) To monitor and document human rights situations in the country for appropriate action.
- 2) To research, investigate and publish situations of justice and violence and use the information to promote justice and peace.
- 3) To inform the faithful and the clergy of their responsibilities to work for justice and peace.
- 4) To promote informed decision-making among clergy and the faithful to influence public opinions according to the Social Teaching of the Church (STCs).
- 5) To make constructive suggestions and input for the enactment of just civil laws and their impartial administration and implementation.
- 6) To empower and capacitate the clergy and the faithful to understand, promote and implement STCs in their lives for the fulfillment of human potential and growth (CCJPZ Annual Report, 2011).

It is through the CCJP that the Catholic Church in Zambia has applied her social teachings on the form of Church-State relations needed. The Catholic Church has always argued that the Church and State should remain separate during the dispensation of democracy and after becoming a Christian State in 1991. The reasons that were put forward were that the Church has the ability to constructively advise the government in areas of human rights, justice and freedom of worship. Based on this assumption, this study will now look at the Church-State model proposed by Bonhoeffer (1955) that will assist in discussing Church and State relations in Zambia.

3.6. Church-State Model

Bonhoeffer argues in the third section of his book *Ethics*, titled 'State and Church', that the Church and State are two legitimate institutions which are different in their services but are servants of the same master¹⁷ and are both necessary for the wellbeing of the community (1955:332-353). It is important to highlight what was behind Bonhoeffer's argument that both the Church and the State as important institutions of the same value under the same Lord although he came from a tradition which saw the purpose and value of the Church as higher than that of the State. According to Bonhoeffer:

¹⁷The master is Jesus Christ according to Bonhoeffer.

The Christian does not live in a vacuum but in a world of Government, politics, labour and marriage. Hence Christian ethics cannot exist in a vacuum. What the Christian needs is concrete instruction in a concrete situation. The roots and background of Christian ethics is the reality of God as revealed in Jesus Christ. This reality is not manifest in the Church as distinct from the secular world such a juxtaposition of two separate spheres is a denial of God's having reconciled the whole world to himself in Christ. On the contrary, Gods' commandment is to be found and known in the Church, the family, labour and government (Bonhoeffer, 1955:353).

Bonhoeffer's model of Church-State relations advocates that God is manifest in the world just as he manifests himself in the Church. Therefore, the Church cannot claim to be separated from the world. Rather, its ministry and mission is to partner the State in response to the felts needs of all creation, but to also maintain a critical distance so as to critique the State if it fails to function as a life-giving institution.

Bonhoeffer's ethical perspective on Church and State relationship has called into question the nature of the Church-State relationship in Zambia. It invites the Church to engage in dialogue and to challenge and criticise the State is the protection of the dignity of humanity. Humanity in this case refers to the ordinary Zambians who need a prophetic voice to speak on their behalf. The plight of Zambian people becomes the basis upon which the ethics of the State-Church relationship is evaluated. The former is expressed by Bonino (1983:17) in his book *Towards a Christian Political Ethics* which calls for a Christian Political Ethics that will avoid the politicisation of Christianity.¹⁸

3.7. Church and State Relations in Zambia

This section describes how Chiluba's Presidency politicised Christianity in Zambia by supporting sections of the Church through policies, financial assistance and tax exemptions (Njovu 2002:58). This approach to governance by Chiluba and his government sought to use the State and the governing political party to use the Church for maintenance of political power. This corrupting approach to Church State relationship runs counter to Bonhoeffer's ethic (1955:332-353) in which he argues that

¹⁸What I mean by 'avoiding politicisation of Christianity' is an effort to avoid the danger of making Christianity an object of political expediency instead of motivating religion for altruism.

the Church can challenge and criticise the State through dialogue. This was done by the Catholic Church through ECZ when Chiluba sought to control the Church through the State apparatus of his specially created government ministry to look after the affairs of the Christian Church (Njovu, 2002: 58). What could be described as an incestuous relationship between the State and the Church became even more intense when Chiluba's government appointed Evangelical and conservative pastors to political positions (2002: 58). Chiluba's action could be interpreted as an attempt to have the Church play a positive role in influencing good governance. However, Chiluba's divisive actions among the Churches were more geared at advancing his political career by utilizing the majority Christian vote. Therefore, the role of the Church in this regard was politicized and its prophetic voice to speak on the plight of Zambian people, especially with regard to human rights, was weakened. This resulted in the prophetic voice of one section of the Church being muted because of its compromised relationship with the State. Other ecclesial voices that were more critical such as the Roman Catholic Church questioned the legality of the Christian nation declaration and spoke out against corruption and bribery in government but they were sidelined by the government (Njovu, 2002: 67).

During the period of colonial rule the relationship between the government and the Church was built on a common strategic purpose of keeping the nation and the people committed to one of their European projects (Gibbs *et al.* 1999:73). During Kaunda's post-independence Presidential rule the Church was seen as central to his vision of governance and he often referred to his Christian roots [his father had been a local missionary who was ordained as a Scottish Presbyterian pastor] in order to affirm external political and religious legitimacy (Njovu, 2002: 67). In spite of this close affinity to the Church, Kaunda never considered the need to declare Zambia a Christian nation. He respected the secular nature of Church and State relationship. Kaunda may have respected the relationships between the Church and State because of his belief that the Church could help the State realise the truth which the Church possesses.

When Zambia became a democratic multi-party State in 1991, the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD) became the ruling political party. Although its *Manifesto*

acknowledged the particular significance and independence of Churches, Mosques, and other religious communities and that these organisations would not be subjected to State influence in the proclamation of faith in their spiritual and social welfare activities (MMD Manifesto, 1991: 58), its attitude changed with the acquisition of political power. In a plural society like Zambia, the people of various origins, cultures, religions, and value-systems are supposed to be tolerated by the dominate religion-Christianity (N'diaye, 2008:5). Therefore, according to pluralist theory, there is a need to create modern societies that can accommodate many people from different ethnic backgrounds and religious orientations (2008: 5). The issue here is that diverse religious groups should be welcomed and given freedom to operate within the framework of the Christian nation declaration; such a move would enable a functional pluralist theoretical discourse within Zambia (2008: 5). Religious pluralism therefore does not marginalize other religious groups. It could be argued that religious pluralism in the country offers the best opportunity to participate meaningfully and respectfully within the society and offer constructive criticisms to the State on issues of injustice and abuse of human rights. This is in *tandem* with Church and State model that advances the notion that both legitimate institutions offer different services but are servants of the same master and are both necessary for the wellbeing of the community (Bonhoeffer, 1955:332-353).

Chiluba should have used the ecumenical organisations that represented the Evangelicals, Pentecostals and the mainline Churches in Zambia such as the Roman Catholic Church, and the Anglican Church, along with other religions such as Hinduism, Islam and African Traditional Religions (ATR) as strategic non-governmental voices within the nation to inform the government on important issues of governance such as its plan to Constitutionally declare Zambia a Christian nation.

The links that developed between Church and State in Zambia during the Presidency of Chiluba resulted in sections of the Church being co-opted to serve party political objectives (Gibbs *et al.* 1999: 74). In this process other religious groups were left out by Chiluba and his colleagues. Ihonvbere refers to this dispensation as a “merger of Church and State” (1996: 199). However, Henriot argues that this perspective simplifies

the situation and prefers to describe the situation as politicising of religion by Chiluba and his colleagues.¹⁹ This was demonstrated in the way Chiluba appointed a number of pastors who supported his election to important positions in government (Gibbs *et al.* 1999: 74), while Church leaders from the mainline Churches and other religious groups were ignored. For example, during the Presidential elections, Reverend Danny Pule in his opposition to Kaunda and support for Chiluba claimed that “some presidential and parliamentary candidates were relying on witchcraft and demonic powers to win the election, which invited spiritual darkness into the land” (Gifford, 1998: 192). After Chiluba’s election, Pule was appointed Assistant Minister of Finance in the new government. Another notable appointment was that of Rev. Stan Kristafor as Assistant Minister of Information, who later banned Muslim programmes on the radio; a ban which was lifted after complaints from NGOs that claimed it went counter to the Constitution’s ruling on the freedom of worship (Gifford, 1998: 201). Such examples clearly illustrate the way in which Chiluba and his political party used some of the Church leaders as instruments to achieve his political objectives. This meant that mainline Churches and other religions that opposed Chiluba were marginalized because they did not share his model of Church and State relations.

The Roman Catholic Church and other religions, such as Islam, Hinduism and African Traditional Religions (ATRs) were treated as subordinate religious groups (Henriot 1998:3). This situation therefore entrenched the view that only the State’s definition of what constituted ‘True Churches’ and which religion was classified as ‘a true religion’ were deemed to be valid. This goes against the perspectives of African scholars like Bolaji Idowu (1970:93-94) and Johnson Mbillah (2004:192), who have argued that “all religions lead to salvation”. Mbillah has specifically argued that religious pluralism has characterized the continent of Africa which has diverse cultures and pluralism which constitute the norm of life within the different African societies (2004:192).

But Chiluba ignored religious pluralism in Zambia as he politicised Christianity to such an extent that even when he was criticized, he responded by using Biblical quotations: “Judge not, and you shall not be judged” (Ihonybere, 1996: 199). The media became

¹⁹Peter Henriot (SJ), personal communication, September 1998.

very critical of Chiluba and his use of taxpayers' money to promote his religious agenda. They argued that Chiluba's commitment to born-again fanaticism was dangerous to good democratic governance of Zambia. They pleaded with Chiluba to concentrate on addressing the political and economic ills of the country and to root out corruption from his government (A *Post* editorial quoted in Gifford, 1998: 203). However, Chiluba's autocratic style of governance made him deaf to the criticism of the Church and the media.

3.7.1. Policy on Religious Liberty

This section examines the ways in which the government supported sections of the Church in Zambia, while non-Christian groups did not benefit from such government support. Chiluba's government introduced a number of 'Policy documents': Policy on Religious liberty; Policy on supporting Christianity and Policy where Tax Exemptions are accorded to religion (Njovu 2002: 58).

This policy came from the *Constitution of the Republic of Zambia* as amended in 1996. In Part VI (The Bill of Rights), number 54 section 6(e): "a person shall not be compelled [. . .] to do any other act that is contrary to that individual's religion or belief". This is the primary document that confirms religious liberty for all residents within the nation regardless of their religious affiliation (Dickey, 2006: 3). But when Chiluba adopted Christianity as a State religion, religious liberty was compromised, as one religion became more dominant than others in Zambia.

3.7.2. Policy on Supporting Christianity

The government demonstrated its preferential bias towards Christianity and selected Churches from the Evangelical/Charismatic traditions with the strategic appointment of specific Pastors to ministerial jobs such as Revs. (Drs.) Peter Lusaka Chintala and Danny Pule. Chintala, was also the former Chairman and Secretary General for the Zambia Baptist Association (Phiri 2008: 105). He became the first Deputy Minister for Christianity and Religious Affairs at State House (Phiri 2008: 105). This new portfolio

ensured that Christianity received preferential attention by government during Chiluba's tenure (Gifford, 1998:216).

3.7.3. Policy on Tax Exemptions Accorded to Religion

The tax exemption status accorded to religious organisations that are defined as 'Public Benefit Organizations' (PBO) stipulated that "There shall be exempt from tax the income of any public benefit organisation or of any body of persons or trust established for the promotion of religion" (The Income Tax Act of 2009, Cap 323, Part III, Section 6 (1) and (15)). The benefit to religious organisations illustrates that the State regarded the work of religious organisations as beneficial to the wholesome social development of the nation. However, although the claim is made that the tax exemption was for all religious organisations, in practice it benefited primarily the Christian groups preferred by the State (De Rover, 2002:4050). From the above examples, one can deduce that religious pluralism was put on the periphery as sects of the Christian Church became the adopted State religion which benefited immensely from government support.

3.8. Summary

This chapter looked at the two Constitutional Review Commissions that were set up by Frederick Chiluba in 1993 and Levy Mwanawasa in 2004. The declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation was enshrined within the Constitution. It was explained that in the Mungomba Constitutional Review Commission, the 'Christian nation' declaration was perceived as discriminatory and it was recommended that it be removed. The Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission's mandate was to evaluate the Christian nation declaration and it too recommended that the declaration should not be imposed on the nation. The study argued that Frederick Chiluba used State power through its financial resources and political policy formation to win over conservative sections of the Church and to encourage uncritical support for the government. In chapter four, I will discuss the theological implications of the Christian nation declaration.

Chapter 4

Theological Implications of the Christian Nation Declaration

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify the theological implications of Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section explores the use of the Bible in the Christian nation declaration because Chiluba used Scriptures especially from the Old Testament to justify the Christian nation declaration. In the second section, it will be argued that there are contradictions in the Christian nation declaration because it claimed that Christianity is the State religion whilst stating that other religions could function without being victimized. Therefore, I will employ the perspectives of African scholars such as Simon Muwowo and Johan Buitendag (2010); De Gruchy (1979); Katulwende (2013); and New Z (2005) to identify and discuss the implications of the Christian nation declaration because the political system of governance in Zambia has not explained how the State would relate to the Church in consultation with other religious groups found in the country.

4.2. The Use of the Bible in the Christian Nation Declaration

The Scriptures that Frederick Chiluba used to justify the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation depended heavily on the Old Testament covenantal vision between Israel and Yahweh (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010: 10). By using the nation of Israel to serve as an example of what Zambia should aspire to be, Chiluba created a national ideology that was grounded in an ill-informed theological understanding. Chiluba identified 2 Chronicles 7:14 which states that "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land" (Speech by the Pillars, 1991: 29th December, 1991). Chiluba's application of the Old Testament covenantal verses to support the Christian nation declaration was informed by the embedded theology disseminated by the conservative Pentecostal Churches of which he was a member. Chiluba took the literal meaning of the words that have been quoted above and applied them to his political career in order to advance his hidden agenda (Stone and Duke, 1996: 13), which has been identified as gaining easy access to

international funding at the expense of the country. He also knew that by appealing to Scriptures, he assumed that few would question his agenda to make Zambia a Christian nation, given that the majority of Zambians were Christians. Therefore, one can deduce that since Chiluba won the presidency on the Christian ticket, he manipulated the use of the Bible in order to situate himself more favourably with the majority Christians. This was done for the sole purpose of advancing his agenda 'as one chosen by God', using the Bible as a point of reference for making Zambia Christian.

Furthermore, Chiluba had no regard for other religions as he ignored the fact that Zambia had been a plural society even before independence. It is also important to point out that the abuse of the Bible by leaders who wish to advance their hidden agendas has been practiced by many politicians, Church leaders and many others. For instance, there are two cases that this study will highlight that have fundamentally used Biblical Scriptures to suit their particular needs. For instance, the Afrikaner government used the Bible to justify the apartheid system in South Africa (Muwowo *et al.* 2010: 7). They argued that "God was on [their] side, and therefore victory of any kind [was] assured" (De Gruchy, 1979: 201). Because of such misinterpretations of what the Bible was saying:

The Afrikaner nation became a very special people to God; it was a holy nation, a Church. The whole Afrikaner nation was the Church. The two [were] identical. One had been fused into the other. Therefore the policies of Afrikanerdom [were] divinely ordained and any opposition [was] perceived to be in opposition to God (De Gruchy 1979:201–202).

In this system one sees the Church and State relations fused together. The case was the same in Zambia where Chiluba's selective use of the Bible to legitimize his government as being "Christian" also called into question his vision of State and Church. The Churches in Zambia, especially those from the Pentecostal/Charismatic denominations, in their use of the Bible have also constructed their vision of the relationship between Church and State. However, it could be argued that the Bible does not offer any template of what constitute a Christian government. Therefore, the adoption of such an approach by the *Afrikaner nation* clearly indicates that the Church was conceived as not being that of Christ, but, rather, of the nation (Muwowo, *et al.*

2010:7). This was because they believed that God had sanctioned them to be the rulers over others. Such attitudes by the Afrikaner nation were influenced by the embedded theology that the Church preached and which the government used to oppress others. By uniting the Church and the State, it jeopardized pluralism, because one religion was preferred by the State and everything that came from it was considered to be authentic. This is very similar to Zambia, once the Christian nation declaration was made, the Church and State became intertwined and the plural society that had existed as far back as independence was ignored by Chiluba, with the result that other religious groups felt marginalized. Therefore, the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation goes against the theory of pluralism. This is because Christianity in both instances as mentioned above is believed to be “[...] the one right or true way” (Cobb, 1975: 18), but our theory advocates a plural society that equally respects all religions.

The second example is that of Northern Ireland which has much in common with the essential features of apartheid policies and the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. For the conservative Irish Protestant, for instance, there is a call to fight “for God and Ulster” (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010: 8), clearly fusing the preaching of the Protestant Church of Jesus Christ with that of the State of Ulster.²⁰ The individual loyalist commitment is that the “[...] Church was inseparable from his commitment to Ulster as a political entity” (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010:8). Such extremes go contrary to the adopted theoretical framework of pluralism. In such a context, it is expected that there would be a “neighbour-hood of people of various origins, cultures, religions, and value-systems” (N’diaye, 2008: 5). Moreover, “modern society is no longer isolated, but is infiltrated with many people from different ethnic backgrounds and religious orientations (N’diaye, 2008: 5). But where there is such extreme fundamentalism as was found in Northern Ireland and South Africa during the apartheid system as well as the Christian nation status in Zambia through the conservative Pentecostalism, societies lived in isolation and was restricted from mingling with other people from different religious background.

The implication is that such attitudes, as is the case in Zambia, lead to other religions being considered inferior and as religions that do not lead to any kind of salvation. This

²⁰ This information was also used in an assignment.

goes contrary to the position of Harvey Cox (1984:176,178) who argues that “the task of modern theology is really to project a non-partisan God who would never deal with people in dissimilar ways but rather uniformly, regardless of any religious orientation”.

Based on the arguments presented in the above sections, Zambia as a modern democratic State cannot therefore be compared to the theocratic model of governance in ancient Israel. The religio-cultural factors that undergirded its monarchical political system and government bear no resemblance to the modern Zambian context nor to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation and cannot be based on claims of the covenantal relationship of the Hebrew people with their God (Clowney, 1998: 109). It also cannot relate to the fundamentalism of Northern Ireland and the former South African apartheid government (Muwowo 2010: 7). It is therefore questionable whether the Zambian government as a secular institution of governance can with integrity declare the nation to be Christian. For any declaration to be legitimate there must be a process of consultation with the people which would result in a clear and unanimous mandate being given for Zambia to be declared a Christian nation. The Christian nation declaration and the use of Biblical covenantal verses from the Old Testament were therefore discriminatory in spirit and contradicted the very essence of an ideal law which spelt out the rights, privileges and obligations of all citizens regardless of their gender, colour, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and social standing (Katulwende, 2013: 2).

4.3. Implications of the Christian Nation Declaration

The discussion that has preceded this section demonstrated that the declaration of Zambia as Christian state was based on an ill-informed theology. In this section, my argument is that “there is no way that one religion could be favoured and at the same time claim to uphold the propagation and exercise of other religions in matters of faith opposed to the State-chosen religion”(New Z, September 2005). This is because the propagation of other religious beliefs can only occur if the society is plural, as outlined in the theoretical framework of pluralism. Therefore, though the Christian nation declaration upholds the right to practice other religions, it is a contradiction in the sense that Christianity is religiously and doctrinally different from other religions.

This argument goes against the theoretical framework according to Hick (1981:33), who has argued that “no single belief system can monopolize the truth because all religions are equal and all lead to the same purpose”. This position has been further advanced by Bolaji Idowu (1970:93-94) and Johnson Mbillah (2004:192), who support religious pluralism by stating that “[...] all religions lead to salvation”. However, the only weakness in their argument is that they do not state what they understand as salvation. The assumption however is that it may be based on the notion that “the continent of Africa is embodied with diverse cultures and pluralism that is the norm of living within the different societies (Idowu 1970: 94 & Mbillah 2004:192). This means that Zambia, as one of the countries in Africa, is expected to be both diverse and plural in religion, language, and politics, therefore it becomes theoretically unsound and in practice it will be impractical for the nation to function on a mono-religious system or even a monotheistic belief system.

Muwowo *et al.* argue that the reasons why the above scholars support pluralism is because, “when one religion is singled out, in this case, the Christian religion, the Christian nation declaration, in itself, implies a certain understanding of the core principles of the country” (2010: 8). This is because in a truly democratic country, every citizen, including visitors from other nations must enjoy their freedom of choice and freedom of conscience (2010: 8). Articles 11, 19 and 23 of the Constitution of Zambia all guarantee people in Zambia the right to enjoy fundamental human rights and freedom of thought and religion (*Constitution of Zambia, Act of 1991:18*). Talk of the Christian nation in this regard violates some of the tenets of democracy and the Constitution. This is in agreement with the theory of pluralism which argues that “modern society is no longer isolated, but is infiltrated with many people from different ethnic backgrounds and religious orientation [...]” (N’diaye, 2008: 5).

Further, the “Christian nation” declaration is not only in conflict with Zambia’s Constitutional *Bill of Rights*, but is inconsistent with the many different international human rights instruments, as mentioned also in chapter six, to which Zambia has

subscribed.²¹ Such international instruments all guarantee the right to freedom of religion (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010: 9). When a State singles out one religion, declaring it to be the religion of the nation, which, in effect, is what the 'Christian nation' clause did, the State concerned is in breach of international human rights norms. Such breaching of norms also has political implications, especially in the light of the political tensions that existed between Muslims and Christians in Zambia. The above instruments to which Zambia subscribes relate very well with the social teachings of the Catholic Church under the subheading *The Fundamental Right to Religious Liberty*, which argues that "all human beings have a right to religious liberty, a right with its foundation in the essential dignity of each person" (*Dignitatis Humanae*, 1965: 2).

Though the Zambian "Christian nation" declaration might be taken lightly by some, the implication is that it could be misused by Christian fundamentalists such as Pentecostals or Charismatic leaders. According to Anyangwe, "the [Christian nation] declaration does not merely have symbolic value" (2005:4), but following the example that was provided by the Afrikaner nation in our earlier discussion, in its formation of "the new Israel", which gave birth to the apartheid government in South Africa in 1948. The sentiment that has given rise to such a declaration has to be taken seriously, and one has to be mindful of its possible consequences (De Gruchy, 1979:239).

The implications of the Christian nation declaration can be compared to what may happen if a Christian fundamentalist were to accede to the high office of the President of the Republic of Zambia, the Christian nation declaration could be used to impose Christian fundamentalist tenets, theology and dogmas on all those living in Zambia (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010: 10). Such use would be unjust, for the practice of Christianity should not be imposed, but should be accepted willingly by those who are willing, on an individual basis, to profess their faith in Christ. This agrees with the social teachings of the Catholic Church that "all humans are free to seek the truth without any form of coercion. Divine law and truth are the highest norms of human life but can only be sought after in a free and proper manner, with the help of the teaching or instruction,

²¹These instruments include: the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, and the *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights*.

communication and dialogue, and it must be adhered to by personal free assent” (Dignitatis Humanae, 1965: 2).

The declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation clearly implies that the Zambian government also has to be Christian in every sphere. This is contrary to, and could have negative implications on our pluralist theory. Having a non-Christian government running the affairs of a Christian nation is also untenable. In terms of the “Christian nation” wording in the Constitution, all members of parliament, government ministers, judges and civil servants have to be committed Christians in order to be able to manage the affairs of the Christian nation (The Constitution of the Republic of Zambia, 1996: 3).

The other implication is that the laws of Zambia would have to be consistent with Christian doctrines, dogmas and practices, if the nation is to abide by such a principle (Muwowo, *et al.*: 2010 11). In effect, such consistency would mean that the Bible, Christian doctrines and dogmas, and not the Constitution as such, would be the supreme law of Zambia. According to Anyangwe, “[t]he Bible will become the linchpin of Zambia’s [political] system, even as the Holy Koran is in Islamic States” (2005:6).

In the light of the above findings, Christian leaders – namely, priests, ministers and pastors, whatever office they might hold in their respective Christian Churches – would, in effect, be the real leaders of the country, since they would have the authority, by virtue of having been called to holy orders, to interpret the Bible, just as the Mullahs and the Ayatollahs, as the effective political rulers, do in certain Islamic states (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010: 11). My argument is that even if there were to be a president or head of state, he would be a mere figurehead because he would not have the power to determine and dictate authoritatively the Christian direction of the nation, nor the necessary holy inspiration to see whether a proposed measure or piece of legislation is consistent with the Bible. He would then have to depend on the sacred office of the Church. This description could be linked to Chiluba’s hidden agenda, especially when we take into consideration the fact that he wanted to stand for the third term. His intention was to make Zambia become a uniquely Christian nation that is influenced by Christian tenets in every sphere of governance.

Such a scenario might seem bizarre to someone who takes only a fleeting glance at the “Christian nation” clause, but it is, nonetheless, a real possibility and poses potential conflicts, not only between Christians and other religious groups, but also among the various Christian denominations who might become embroiled in a “holy war” set on ensuring that their own brand of Christian teaching gains ascendancy in the State.

4.4. Summary

In this chapter I have examined the use of the Bible in the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. I began by criticizing the usage of Bible text from the Old Testament and I argued that it was grounded in an ill-informed theological understanding by Frederick Chiluba. I further argued that the covenantal relationship that undergirded Israel’s theocratic system of governance cannot be used as the model on which the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation was intended to be based. My conclusions were therefore that it is futile to seek for a Christian nationhood model in the Bible. The second section looked at the implications of the Christian nation declaration. In this section, it was more a question of establishing the contradictions that emerged after the declaration was enshrined in the Zambian Constitution. My argument was that there was no way one religion could be accorded superior status and at the same advocate that other religions to be free to practice their faith. For starters, the adoption of a religion by the State may both be doctrinally and practically different from other religions that are allowed to practice their faith in Zambia. Based on this observation, Chiluba and his government failed to provide a system of governance in relation to how the State was going to relate with the Church in consultation with other religious groups in Zambia. Hence, Chiluba had only one choice, either to declare Zambia a Christian nation totally or allow pluralism to exist, as it did from the time Zambia became an independent State in 1964. The next chapter will deal primarily with the responses from the Roman Catholic and other Churches to the Christian nation declaration in the light of the Catholic Social Teaching implemented by the CCJP.

Chapter 5

The Response of the Roman Catholic and other Churches to the Christian Nation Declaration

5.1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the responses of the Roman Catholic Church to the Christian nation declaration. The ministry and mission of the Roman Catholic Church in the context of its social teachings in Zambia will be discussed initially and then I will proceed to critique its response to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. Included in this section are some other responses that did not support Chiluba's Christian nation declaration. Some of these included the responses of some Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches, through the press statement on the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation, issued by the EFZ, CCZ and ECZ, which argued against the legality of the Christian nation declaration. They challenged the appropriation of the Biblical Scriptures (2 Chronicles 7:14) that Frederick Chiluba used as reasons for the Christian nation declaration. In order for this study not to be one sided in its criticism of the Christian nation declaration, I will also include the responses from the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches that vehemently supported Chiluba and his Christian nation declaration. This will be very important to the study, as both sides will be examined. The final section will deal with how Chiluba responded to the criticism of the Christian nation declaration.

5.2. The Ministry and Mission of the Roman Catholic Church in Zambia

The Roman Catholic Church was first established by the Catholic Missionaries in 1891 among the Bemba speaking people of Northern Province. Its main missional aim was based on Acts 1: 8 "You shall be my witnesses" (Komakoma, 2003: 239). The main objectives of these first Catholic Missionaries were to follow the steps of the apostles and answer the call of Christ (Luke 5: 1-11) in sharing the Good News. Furthermore, their generous response to this Good News sprang from their own strong traditional belief in the creative presence and action of God in their life (2003: 240). They began collaborating in the task of evangelization among the indigenous people to spread the Good News (Gifford, 1999: 183). The first Catholic Parish was established by the White

Fathers in Mambwe Mwela in 1891, followed by the coming of the Jesuits to Chikuni in 1905, and the later service of many other congregations of Priests, Sisters and Brothers (Komakoma, 2003: 241).

Therefore, the Roman Catholic Church of Zambia sees its ministry starting and reflecting on the meaning of witnessing to Christ in the context of Zambia. The Catholic Church has been very vocal on issues that are in opposition to its social teaching which encompasses the following seven themes: Life and Dignity of the Human Person; Call to Family, Community and Participation; Rights and Responsibilities; Option for the Poor and Vulnerable; The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers; Solidarity and Care for God's Creation. These are clearly articulated in the papal encyclical and other documents mentioned earlier (Komakoma, 2003: 1). In Zambia the response of the Church's ministry and mission regarding social issues is performed by the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ), which established the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace of Zambia (CCJPZ) in 1986. The aims of the CCJPZ are to:

Awaken God's people, through the process of conscientisation, to a fuller understanding of their call as Christians with regard to social justice, leading to a greater awareness of human rights and consequent duties (Komakoma, 2003: 1).

Furthermore, the CCJPZ has a duty to form in people "a critical conscience which empowers them to challenge, and to act, in order to overcome unjust situations" (2003: 1). Through the CCJPZ, the ECZ concerns are vociferously articulated and aim at making the Social Teaching of the Church (STC) relevant in the Zambian context drawing on the rich historical Catholic tradition. According to Komakoma, the STC holds that:

The essence of Christianity is a call to active involvement in the affairs of this world. Christians live a unitary life. Christians are the same people that face political, economic, and cultural realities of everyday life. They cannot afford then to be aloof to the realities that affect their daily life. This is why the Church recognises that it has a mission to be involved in promoting the welfare of the human person in all the spheres of life (2003: 2).

To clearly understand the mission and ministry of the Church it is paramount to examine the major pastoral letters issued by the Catholic Bishops through the ECZ found in the book edited by Joe Komakoma: *The Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops and their Christian Leaders in Zambia: Major Pastoral Letters and Statements 1953-2001*. These statements reflect the mission and ministry of the Roman Catholic Church and can be summarised in three themes encompassing socio-political, socio-economic and moral issues (Komakoma, 2003: 3).

Of interest to this study is the theme on socio-political issues. A popular statement attributed to conservative political and religious leaders is that the Church should leave politics to politicians. However, this is an untenable view for the Catholic Bishops of Zambia who contend that the Church has a role to play in politics by offering moral guidance and drawing attention to Gospel values regarding the promotion of the dignity of every human person (for instance, *dignitatis humanae*). Therefore, the Church should stand for “justice, true freedom, a just living wage, freedom from unjust laws and harassment; freedom of expression and association; freedom of the press and other mass media; and the provision of equitable social services, especially education and health services” (2003: 4).

Pope John XXIII's Encyclical *Pacem in Terris* outlined the Church's understanding of human rights. Pope John declared that lasting peace could only be achieved when people's rights were respected. The observances of these rights are at the individual level, at the level of public authorities, and national and international community levels. The Roman Catholic Church thus urges all Christians to observe human rights and duties as part and parcel of the evangelizing process (Komakoma, 2003: 5). The issue of human rights is very central to Catholic Social Teaching as can be seen from the Synod of Bishops in 1971 on the theme “Justice in the World”. The Bishops strongly advocated that, “action on behalf of Justice is a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel” (Flannery, 1984: 695-710). Since 1953, the Catholic Bishops of Zambia supported this concern when they spoke of the “Social rights of Africans” (*Pastoral Letter addressed to all Catholic Missionaries and members of the African Clergy in*

Northern Rhodesia, 1953). Hence, when Zambia entered the Third Republic, with the promise of democracy beckoning, the Bishops reiterated this theme in 1992 when they stated: “democracy rests upon human rights” (*The Future is Ours – 1992*). The Church’s concern for human rights does not just encompass political rights, but rights in all spheres of life. Religious and even economic rights as seen in the letter, “*Hear the Cry of the Poor*” (1993) in which “the Bishops spoke at great length on the need to have economic policies that go towards serving the human person as the central being in God’s creation, Political Rights” (Komakoma, 2003: 7). With regard to the hypothesis of this thesis that Chiluba had hidden intentions when he declared Zambia a Christian nation without wider consultation, the Roman Catholic Church advocated the right of people to participate in decision-making when it came to issues that affected them. The Bishops emphasized that lack of consultation diminishes the legitimacy of public policies and laws and that the people also have a right to participate in choosing leaders of their choice, and also presenting themselves as candidates and exercising their God-given right to vote (2003: 7). These matters were discussed in the following letters that dealt with elections: *Statement of the Catholic Bishops on the Coming Elections (1978)*; *Letter to All Christians Before the 31st October 1991 Elections (1991)*; *Year of Political Responsibility (1995)*; *Building for Peace (1996)*; and *Discipleship and Citizenship (2001)* (Komakoma, 2003: 7).

The Roman Catholic Church noted that the Church in Zambia “has begun the second century of Christianity with a growing maturity, blessed by its past and challenged by the future” (Komakoma, 2003: 251). Therefore, it viewed itself as an authentic Zambian Church (2003: 251) and not as a “foreign mission Church” interfering in local affairs. Based on this paradigm shift, the Roman Catholic Church saw itself as a model for society which could not call on others to be virtuous if it did not make effort to practice these virtues in its ecclesial life and work (2003:271).

Based on this ecclesial ethos, the Roman Catholic Church’s missional understanding and praxis is informed by its theological heritage that encourages it to be a public critic in the different spheres of national life. The Roman Catholic Church has been consistent

in examining any pronouncement made by the political leaders that could impact negatively on the wellbeing of national life such as the republican Constitution or the 1991 declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. The Roman Catholic Church has adopted the role of moral and spiritual 'watchdog' of standards that are being used to develop Zambia.

According to Komakoma (2003: 251) the Roman Catholic Church is committed to "exercise its prophetic ministry through Pastoral Statements, thereby establishing a dynamic and healthy Church-State relationship, and good ecumenical co-operation". This may be the reason why the Episcopal Conference of Zambia incorporated other Church bodies such as the Council of Churches in Zambia and Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia to forge an ecumenical response to the issue of the Christian nation declaration. It was also influenced by the mandate of *Dignatatis Humanae* to respond to threats to religious freedom within the country. The Roman Catholic Church's ministry viewed its missional identity as an instrument for peace-making within the nation and as a means of promoting dialogue between conflicting parties (Komakoma, 2003:265).

The Catholic Church was equipped with the necessary tools to face up to Chiluba's poor governance because of its Social Teachings and its strong emphasis on human rights. This point was stressed in the contribution of the Church to the Constitutional Review Commission²² that "the political and civil rights of the individuals should not be isolated from their social rights" (De Jong *et al.* 1991: 3). The Roman Catholic Church's human rights perspectives were also informed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of the United Nations and in the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (1991: 3). Both documents have been endorsed by the highest Church authority in the Roman Catholic Church and were also ratified by the Zambian Government (De Jong *et al.* 1991: 3). The Church had been in Zambia long before Chiluba had visions of political power and therefore used its many years of experience in dealing with the State to remind Chiluba of the people's rights to basic freedoms of expression, conscience,

²²The commission was the Mwanakatwe Constitutional Review Commission that was instituted in 1993 by Frederick Chiluba.

movement and assembly and that these rights should be protected, promoted and assured by his government (Komakoma, 2003: 251).

Stone and Duke describe theological reflection as a process where interaction, dialogue, and community consultation facilitate an ongoing conversation with others (1996: 2-3). Through networking with other Christian organizations, such as the Council of Churches in Zambia and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, the Roman Catholic Church, through the Episcopal Conference of Zambia used their embedded and deliberative theologies to challenge the government's unaccountable behaviour and to empower the people to reflect theologically on the Christian nation declaration. In spite of these efforts Chiluba failed to respect the voice of the Roman Catholic Church as expressed through ECZ and their argument that "a country cannot be declared Christian based on the presidential decree but through deeds" (Muwowo, *et al.* 2010: 10).

5.3. Responses to the Christian Nation Declaration

A large section of the Church in Zambia feared that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation would result in other religions and Churches being marginalized and victimized. Those that accepted the Christian nation declaration did so on condition that freedom of worship for all religions would be respected. However, eight years after the Christian nation declaration, Church leaders became apprehensive that the declaration had become increasingly 'hallow' in the face of Zambia's mounting social, political, and economic problems, including widespread corruption (*Christian Today*, March 2, 1998: 76).²³

The statement seems to imply that the Christian nation declaration should have resulted in the social, political and economic problems being substantially reduced in the country. However the Christian nation declaration did not produce such changes because corruption and mismanagement continued and increased within the system of governance under Chiluba's presidency. Such development questioned the ethos of a country being called a Christian nation because there was little distinction between

²³ This information was also used in an assignment.

Chiluba's government and other secular states (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1).

Two years after the declaration was made a national celebration was planned that attracted only 10,000 instead of the 500,000 people that were expected (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). According to Thomas Lumba, an Evangelical Fellowship National Director, the celebrations of the declaration had been fraught with controversy (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). The whole exercise had become meaningless to a large cross section of the Zambian nation because of the continuing corruption, crime and endemic poverty which were not alleviated by Chiluba's model of governance (Church and State, 2000: 15).

5.3.1. *The Responses of the Roman Catholic Church to the Christian Nation Declaration*

The Roman Catholic Church as a global body has millennia of experiences in shaping its perspectives on Church-State relations. There were times when the Church found itself on the wrong side of history in supporting governments that oppress their people but there were other times when the Church became the vanguard of the people in opposing State forces of oppression. In Zambia the Church's perspectives on the Christian nation declaration became the position of the CCJP through the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (ECZ) and were later supported by the other two ecumenical organisations: the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ). These ecclesial organisations took time to analyse the Christian nation declaration and concluded that the Zambian nation could not be Christian by declaration, but by deeds (Press Statement, 16th January 1992, Lusaka). The pastoral statement of the Roman Catholic Church and other ecclesial organisations confirmed that they were concerned about the need to preserve the unity of the country. Although Chiluba had acknowledged in a television interview that he affirmed the freedom of conscience, and the freedom of worship and expression in an environment of Christian love which excludes the persecution of minority groups (Chiluba, 1997: 2), his words were not trustworthy. The Roman Catholic Church wanted Chiluba and his

government to ensure that the provisions and guarantees of the Constitution of the Republic of Zambia would be adhered to at all times and that Church and State relations would continue to remain separate (2003: 265). Furthermore, the Roman Catholic Church through Episcopal Conference of Zambia with other Church leaders of the ecumenical organisations pledged to offer constructive criticism of the State where necessary as it is felt that Christian principles impacted on the healthy development of the nation (Press Statement on the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation, 16th January 1992, Lusaka). They demanded adequate guarantees that the declaration would not compromise the freedom of conscience and the freedom of worship (Press Statement, 16th January, 1992, Lusaka). The Church leaders were willing to cooperate with the government on the declaration. They stated through the ecumenical instruments of ECZ, CCZ and EFZ that if the rights of those practicing other religions were constitutionally respected, they would then endorse the President's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation (Press Statement, 16th January 1992, Lusaka).

It was not an easy compromise for the Episcopal Conference of Zambia to accept and endorse the declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation. It had consistently argued against the hasty manner in which it was introduced as it lacked adequate preparation and consultation. This was compounded by its concern for the kind of effects this declaration would have on the right to freedom of religion and Church-State relationships (Henriot 2000:4 in *The National Mirror of March 25 – 31, 2000*). Therefore, a month later, after the ecumenical organisations issued the press statement, the Episcopal Conference of Zambia (that represented the Roman Catholic Church) issued a Pastoral Letter in which it contended that a nation is not Christian by declaration but by deeds (De Jong 1992:2). Their Pastoral Letter further affirmed that Zambia could be a "Christian Nation" only if "Zambian Christians follow Jesus in a life of love and respect for one another, a life of dedication, honesty and hard work [...] justice and concern for the poor that [...] shows the Christian character of our Nation" (Episcopal Conference of Zambia, Pastoral letter, 16th February, 1992, Lusaka).

Komakoma and the then executive secretary of the Catholic Commission for Justice and Peace (CCJP) pointed out that those MMD leaders who had striven for Zambia to become a Christian State had amassed wealth in dubious ways and had neglected the wellbeing of ordinary people (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). Chiluba's government over the period under review was characterized by the lust for money, power, and social privileges enjoyed by ministers while the rest of the nation experienced worsening social indicators, high poverty levels, widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, endemic corruption, and a sharp rise in crime (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). The lifestyle exhibited by some ministers in the government ran counter to the declaration of Zambia as Christian (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). The position of the Roman Catholic Church of Zambia was that the Church had to endeavor to be seen as independent from Party political influence and to exercise its calling to morally challenge the nation. The separation of powers (Church and State) had to be seen in deeds and not only in words. (Komakoma, 1997:16). Those conservative Churches that supported the Christian nation declaration felt empowered politically and saw themselves as true Christians. Those Churches that were critical of the declaration were regarded as enemies of Chiluba's government.

5.3.2. Political Responses to the Christian Nation Declaration

Responses to the Christian nation declaration were not confined only to the Church and NGO's. Leaders of political opposition parties charged that Chiluba and his supporters had used the "Christian" label to cover up their misdeeds and distract people from the constant plundering of the nation's wealth (Church and State 2000:15). Christon Tembo, a former Vice President of Zambia, admitted that the Christian nation declaration had remained largely theoretical (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). Dean Mungomba, a vice-president of an Alliance of seven opposition parties, pointed out that the leaders of MMD were aware of the crimes they had committed against the citizens of Zambia (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). This perception of corruption within the governing MMD led the opposition political parties to accuse them of plundering the wealth of the country in the name of God (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). Such actions evidently disqualified the country from being

declared a Christian nation (*Ecumenical News International*, 1998: 1). The undeclared agenda became very evident through corruption, amassing of wealth and not respecting the religious plurality, which became the norm within the nation.

5.3.3. *The Responses from the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches*

The responses by the Roman Catholic Church cannot be complete without examining responses that came from the Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches. This is very important for this thesis to highlight the conservative Churches position on the Christian nation declaration. Chiluba was not a member of the Catholic Church therefore; he did not respect the Social Teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. For Chiluba to declare the nation Christian, he was influenced by the prosperity Gospel that was spread by the conservatives Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches mostly from America (Gifford, 1995: 7). Phiri argues that when the Christian nation declaration was made "... in the Pentecostal circles, especially the Northmead Assembly of God, were very happy about it because they saw the rule of God coming to Zambia through Chiluba" (2003: 107). As it has already been emphasized in this thesis: "those who supported the declaration saw themselves as the true Christians and those who did not were seen as the enemies of the Government and therefore pseudo-Christians" (Phiri, 2003: 108). Their argument was that the procedure of the declaration did not matter. What was important was putting God above everything. This position by most of the people who belonged to Pentecostal and Charismatic Churches goes against the pluralist theory that argues that all religions lead to salvation (Idowu, 1970:93-94 and Mbillah, 2004:192). Furthermore, Zambia has been a plural society since independence. With the Christian nation declaration, religious freedoms were threatened as those that went against the declaration such as the Roman Catholic Church and others were regarded as pseudo-Christians. The Pentecostal and Charismatic support of the Christian nation declaration forced Zambians not to debate the issue, because it was based on one person's religious convictions (Gifford, 1995: 8). Lack of debate on the Christian nation declaration denied the process of theological reflection that support and provides all actors the space to discuss and reflect on the issues within an environment that embodies appreciation of diversity, healthy debate and creative tension (Stone and Duke, 1996: 13). The next section looks at the responses from other religious groups.

5.3.4. The Responses of Other Religious Groups

There were also other religious groups that responded to the Christian nation declaration by Chiluba. For instance; other religious groups in the country such as Moslems had cause to be concerned about the Christian nation declaration because they were not sure whether they would be tolerated especially when defendants of the Christian nation declaration were saying that some countries declare themselves 'Islamic nations': why should Zambia not declare itself a Christian nation? they asked. The concern became a reality in October 1995 when a Muslim Mosque and a Hindu Temple were attacked during some riots in Livingstone (Njovu, 2002: 63).

Responses from the Hindus were strongly highlighted by a Hindu professor from the University of Zambia. He argued that, by virtue of Christianity being uniquely accorded Constitutional status, a feeling of religious superiority can develop among Christians that suggests: if it is Christian it must be good and if it is good it must be Christian or if it is not Christian, it cannot be good and if it is not good it is because it is not Christian. The correspondence between Christianity and goodness could lead to discriminatory practices — a tacit system of *apartheid* based on religion (Seshamani, 2000: 3). The greater danger would be if this feeling of religious superiority degenerates into bigotry that prompts one to look at all non-Christians as lost souls that need to be saved (Seshamani, 2000: 3). Moreover, the Constitutional status of Christianity also raises the issue of equality of opportunity to people of all religions to contest political offices, especially the Presidency. Could a non-Christian, if elected President, truly owe allegiance to the Constitution that declares Zambia a Christian Nation? But in the first place, would a Christian vote for a non-Christian as President when he knows that such a person, if elected, would have to take an oath to uphold the Constitution that accords this special status to Christianity? (Seshamani, 2000: 3). These are the kind of inconvenient questions that came up and the study may not have space to discuss and analyse them.

The voices from African Traditional Religions were not audible during the initial contestation against the Christian nation declaration, which was spear-headed by the Roman Catholic Church and others and continue to be silent. Statistically speaking,

ATR constitute only 1 percent (US Bureau for African Affairs, 2010: 10). So they tended to stick to their own different religious dogmas, beliefs and modes of organization, priorities and they remained apolitical. As the result they refused to be drawn in the discussion of the Christian nation declaration (Gifford, 1997: 181-245). Presently the Mutima Church and the Nazarene Church (formerly called the Lumpa Church) have refused to respond to the Christian nation declaration.

5.3.5. Chiluba's Responses to the Criticism of the Christian Nation Declaration

Before discussing how Chiluba responded to criticism it is essential to note that during Kaunda's era the education system embraced strong Christian ideology than Chiluba's era. Kaunda cut ties with Israel and strengthened relations with Islamic nations. This was one of the weak point of Kaunda that Chiluba took advantage of as people of Zambia were already skeptical of Kaunda's association with Eastern religion, therefore to have Chiluba come with strong Christian campaign strategies became advantage to his campaigns (Gewald *et al.* 2008:6). Consequently, as stated in chapter one, Chiluba's personal faith convictions influenced his public policies as President. The following are eight ways in which Chiluba responded to criticisms of the Christian nation declaration:

- 1) He re-established diplomatic links with Israel which was a supporter of the apartheid regime of South Africa to please his local and foreign conservative constituencies. The links were cut during Kaunda's era;
- 2) Chiluba cut ties with the states of Iran and Iraq because they had supported Kaunda and were Muslim countries that were hostile to Israel;
- 3) He appointed some ministers of religion from selective conservative Churches to his cabinet;
- 4) Relationships between the Muslim minority and the Christian majority soured because Zambians who were Muslims became insecure about their constitutional position within the new status of the country which had been declared a Christian nation (Johnstone, 2001: 686);
- 5) Chiluba allowed an influx of conservative American Christian Missionaries who were supporters of his political agenda into the country;
- 6) The President invited international Church leaders to come and hold crusades in Zambia and used the resources of the government to support such ventures. In April 2000, the Education Deputy Minister, Dan Pule, attended a crusade by Benny Hinn (an American faith gospel evangelist) in Durban as a representative of the Zambian government, and invited Ben Hinn on behalf of the president to hold a crusade in Zambia in 2001 (Phiri, 2003: 409);

- 7) The Department of Christian Affairs was opened in the President's office with its own minister from one of the conservative Churches;
- 8) The Churches that supported the president received presidential discretionary funding. For example, Chiluba gave ZK129 million to Pule for the construction of his Dunamis International Church, studio and offices (*The Post*, June 15, 2001).

The meeting that was held in 1995 between the Church and politicians exposed unresolved issues between the government and the wider Church. The Church leaders assumed that Chiluba would draw many of his leadership in government from the Church so that they could impact positively on the relationship between the Church and State (Phiri 2003: 409). Both the government and sections of the Church in Zambia nurtured immature State-Church relationships that compromised their distinctive identities and roles within the society.

The lack of an intensive pedagogical process to inform the citizens about the implications and responsibilities that are associated with Zambia being declared a Christian nation constituted a major failure in governance. Instead of the government leaders taking responsibility for their failure, they blamed the people of Zambia for failing to understand and support Frederick Chiluba's vision of a Christian nation (2003: 410).

By the 1996 presidential elections, there was so much frustration with Chiluba's politics of divide and rule that the major opposition parties decided to boycott the elections (Phiri 2003: 410). They embarked on a strategy of making Zambia ungovernable to ensure that national elections would be suspended (2003:410). In response to the political crisis the International donors suspended their aid to Zambia (Phiri, 2003: 410). Chiluba and his party were also accused of buying votes with public funds. Despite these measures, presidential elections were held and Chiluba got a majority vote of 70 percent from the 40 percent voter turnout (2003: 410). The 60 percent that did not vote confirmed the weak state of democracy within the society where the majority of the voters felt that nothing positive would emerge from the elections and so they failed to participate. The state of apathy that developed in the system of governance resulted in a planned coup mounted by Captain Solo to depose President Frederick Chiluba (Africa Confidential, 7 November 1997: 3). The coup was foiled by Chiluba and it resulted in

his security forces arresting major opposition leaders such as Kenneth Kaunda and Dean Mungomba (Phiri, 2003: 412).

5.4. Summary

This chapter examined responses from the Roman Catholic Church and other ecumenical organizations to the Christian nation declaration. They offered critical responses to the Christian nation declaration. The President's autocratic model of governance failed to take into account the divergent views of other voices within the society and therefore called into question his democratic credentials. The chapter also used the pluralistic theoretical framework to expose Chiluba's non-democratic model of governance. The thesis argued for pluralism to be central to the identity of the nation because it accommodated a community of people of various origins, religions, and value systems all living in mutual respect in the midst of diversity. The one preferential religious system advocated by Chiluba disrupted the pluralism which had existed in Zambia since it attained its independence. The Roman Catholic Church being influenced by the STC clearly saw through the bad governance of Chiluba and denounced it in partnership with other Churches. The next chapter is the conclusion and signpost for further research.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1. Introduction

This study sought to offer a *Theological Critique of the Declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation and the Response of the Roman Catholic Church from 1991 to 2001*. It was argued that the Christian nation declaration had less to do with religious motivation for Zambia to be affirmed as a Christian nation and was much more a political objective of Chiluba to garner the evangelical Christian votes by using Christian identity politics to maintain his government in political power. Chiluba's declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation was therefore a political agenda to move the country away from Kaunda's socialism and humanism and to align the country, to a greater extent, to the political and economic influence of the west.

The research has involved a qualitative study and hence has not made any use of quantitative data and its tools of analysis. The thesis used theoretical underpinnings of pluralism, theological reflection and the Social Teaching of the Roman Catholic Church, to argue that the nation of Zambia could not in practice become a Christian State because of the diversity of the Zambian society with its plurality in religion, ethnicity, and politics. The study sought to respond to the following objectives: **a)** identify and critique the religious and political factors within the Zambian society that influenced Chiluba's decision to declare Zambia a Christian nation; **b)** assess the constitutional implications of the Christian nation declaration **c)** identify the theological implications of the Christian nation declaration; **d)** outline the responses of the Church and in particular the Roman Catholic Church to the declaration, in line with its social teaching. Each of these objectives has been addressed in the different chapters.

In this chapter, a summary of the conclusions drawn from the research findings from chapters two through to five will be given. I will also suggest some practical recommendations for the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation and the responses of the Catholic Church.

6.2. Conclusions Drawn in the Study

In this study an attempt was made to examine how the Roman Catholic Church responded to the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation by Frederick Chiluba, the second Republican President of Zambia from 1991 to 2001.

In the introductory chapter, the background information to the study, the literature and location of the research, the research problem, research questions and objectives, theoretical framework, synopsis of the research design and methodology, limitations and structure of the study were outlined. This was followed by chapter two in which an examination of the religious and political factors within the Zambian society that influenced Chiluba to declare Zambia a Christian nation was carried out. Chiluba's conversion into the conservative Pentecostal Church in 1980s gave shape to his participation and later arrest in an attempted coup that was meant to upset the democratically elected government of Kenneth Kaunda (Olsen, 2002:38). This suggested that there were early signs that raised questions about Chiluba's democratic credentials. This proved the hypothesis of this study and gave credence to the idea that Chiluba had a hidden agenda which came to light when he failed to consult the nation before declaring Zambia a Christian nation (Olsen, 2002:38). Throughout Chiluba's presidency he had a deep self-belief that he was chosen and appointed by God to lead the nation therefore he wanted political domination through Christianity which preceded a common discourse and was accepted and taken for granted by most people in Zambia. With the political factors, it could be argued that the MMD that opposed a 'One-Party State' could be argued for and implemented a 'One Faith State' and saw no contradictions in their position (Njovu, 2002: 59). This proved the hypotheses that Chiluba had undeclared intentions by making Zambia a Christian country thereby going against the pluralistic ethos.

In chapter three, the constitutional implications of the Christian nation declaration was assessed and it was argued that it was through the inclusion of the Christian nation declaration into the Preamble of 1996 Constitution that resulted in Christianity being officially a chosen State religion (Sakala, 2001:145). This was done in spite of

opposition from the CCZ, EFZ and ECZ. Chiluba went ahead and ensured that the Christian nation declaration was adopted and enshrined in the 1996 Zambian Constitution. This was done by abusing his authority through coercion and the fact that MMD had a majority of MPs in the House of Parliament (Phiri, 2003: 407). Though various Constitutional Review Commissions such as the Mwanakatwe CRC and the Mungomba CRC were instituted to evaluate the Christian nation declaration, the results were ignored by both Chiluba and Mwanawasa (*National Catholic Reporter*, November 3, 2004: 4).

The other aspect that was central to the study was the element of the Church and State relations in Zambia. This research examined the role of one of the many civil society groups, the CCJPZ and the ECZ and its advocacy in Zambia. The research has used Bonhoeffer's Church and State model to analyse the stance of the CCJPZ through ECZ in Zambia. It was argued that in order for one religion to be favoured by Chiluba's government, he devised various policy documents with the intention of supporting the Church. These included: Policy on Religious Liberty; Policy on Supporting Christianity; and Policy on Tax Exemption accorded to the Church in Zambia (Njovu, 2002: 67). As the result of favouring one religion, the Church and State relationship became fused during the presidency of President Frederick Chiluba. Other religions were not privileged to enjoy what was provided to sections of the Christian Church by Chiluba's government.

The intention of chapter four was to discuss the theological implications of the Christian nation declaration. This chapter was divided into two sections. The first section dealt with the use of the Bible in the Christian nation declaration. It argued that the usage of the Old Testament covenantal verses in order to justify a national ideology of the Christian nation was based on an ill-informed theological understanding by Frederick Chiluba (Muwowo *et al.* 2010: 10). This was because he wanted to take advantage of the Christian vote to advance his political ambitions. The second section dealt with the implications of the Christian nation declaration. It was further argued that there was no way that one religion could be favoured and at the same time claim to uphold the

propagation and exercise of other religions in matters of faith opposed to the State's chosen religion. This is a contradiction, because Christianity is both religiously and doctrinally different from other religions (New Z, September 2005).

The central focus of chapter five was to examine the responses of the Roman Catholic Church to the Christian nation declaration. It argued that the Catholic Church in Zambia has been vocal on issues that have negatively affected its social teachings (Komakoma, 2003: 1). For example, the Christian nation declaration was perceived by the Catholic Church through the CCJP and ECZ to be discriminatory and further eroding the religious freedom of other religions in a Christian nation. The Catholic Church further argued that it was committed to exercising its prophetic ministry through Pastoral Statements. Based on this, the Catholic Church was seen to be challenging the Christian nation declaration by arguing that the legitimacy of any public pronouncement and policy depended on the quality of consultations done prior to the announcement. Furthermore, the Catholic Church argued that there was a need to spend time preparing the nation so that citizens could understand what they were getting into (2003: 1). Of importance was the need for adequate guarantees that the Christian nation declaration would not compromise the freedom of conscience and the freedom of worship. Moreover, there was a need for Chiluba's government to create an environment where the minority groups felt secure and included and this was to be promoted within the reality of the Christian nation declaration. The Catholic Church also wanted the separation of the Church and State, in the context of the Christian nation declaration, to remain intact. But Chiluba ignored all these demands from the Roman Catholic Church. This action by Chiluba proved our hypothesis that he had a hidden agenda for making the country Christian. Because of such criticism coming from the Catholic Church, Chiluba aligned himself with the conservative Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches throughout his presidency.

6.3. Signpost for Future Research

It looks clear from the findings that more study needs to be done in terms of the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, as there is a dearth of information in this field of study.

Furthermore, Zambia is a Christian nation both religiously and constitutionally. However, there have been some sectors of society such as the CCJP and ECZ, CCZ and EFZ that believe that there should have been a debate on the Christian nation declaration and that Chiluba should have consulted and prepared the nation to accept the declaration. But he never did. This revealed how shrewd Chiluba was and exposed his hidden agenda for making the country Christian.

The implication of the Christian nation declaration was that there were many Pentecostal/Charismatic Churches that mushroomed once Zambia became a Christian nation. Platforms have not been created to allow inputs from the general population on the topic of Zambia being a Christian Nation. Even though two Constitutional Review Commissions were set up in order to examine the reception of the declaration, Zambia has remained a Christian State for more than twenty five years.

For this reason, it is imperative that further study be conducted focusing mainly on issues of the declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation and on the responses of the Catholic Church. It is also imperative that a platform be formulated to enable public debate. This will create an opportunity to involve the public on the matter.

With regard to the findings of this study, it has been established that Chiluba manipulated the majority Christian voters to advance his political career at the same time establishing himself as chosen by God to lead the nation, the result was that many Western countries acknowledged this gesture as God sent and they too began to establish Churches in Zambia. The Christian nation declaration further compromised the liberty of other religions to practice and worship freely in a Christian nation. However, the implication has been that Zambia is the only African country that has openly declared itself to be a Christian nation. Chiluba also believed that by dedicating the

country to God, unprecedented of economic and social developments would be showered on the country. The issues raised in this study suggest that there is room for further empirical study on Zambia and its declaration as a Christian Nation.

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