

**FOUND A MODERN NATION-STATE  
ON CHRISTIAN VALUES?:  
A THEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT  
OF ZAMBIAN HUMANISM**

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## **Abstract**

Zambian humanism, a socialist ideology, was developed by Kenneth Kaunda, independent Zambia's first president. It was made the national philosophy and ideology of Zambia in April 1967. The ideology was composed of a combination of many elements which did not always fit together into an organic whole. Among them include African traditions, socialism, radical Christianity, existential humanism and Kaunda's personal convictions.

Kaunda's motivation for proposing this ideology appears to have been the desire to break free from the colonial past and to create a national identity centered on values which he considered true to the African heritage and to his Christian background.

Zambian humanism, as an ideology applied to all spheres of public life during Kaunda's reign as president. Kaunda intended it to provide the moral basis for all human activity in the country, political, economic and social. In a sense the ideology was meant to be the social cement that held together and inspired the nation.

The ideology failed in economic terms. As a country, Zambia experienced several economic difficulties beginning from the mid-1970s which humanism failed to adequately address. By the mid-1980s the country was worse off economically than it had been at the time of independence. The causes of this economic down-turn are complex and debatable.

This dissertation critically examines Kaunda's ideology. It argues that while humanism might have failed at the level of implementation, especially in economic terms, the ideology as such played a significant role in the history of post-independence Zambia which should not be overlooked. To appreciate fully why Zambian humanism was introduced and adopted as the national ideology it is necessary to recall the social, economic and political background against which this was done. The experience of colonialism suffered by Kaunda and his contemporaries and the challenge of building a modern nation-state that had experienced the negative effects of colonialism are two key factors that should not be overlooked in understanding Zambian humanism. Zambian humanism, this thesis argues, is a postcolonial discourse whose aim was to break with the colonial past and to create an African identity. It was not a unique experiment as can be seen in fields such as philosophy and theology of the era. Nyerere's Ujamaa socialism is closely related, yet not identical with Zambian humanism.

What Kaunda and his contemporaries set out to do in proposing a different worldview from the dominant Western worldview must be interpreted theologically to see how and if it

accords with Classical Theology's understanding of the Christian God's interaction with human beings. Their intention was not only the deconstruction and rejection of the colonial and therefore dominant Western discourse, but also an attempt to construct an African discourse capable of giving meaning to African existence and society. Such an ambitious undertaking certainly calls for theological consideration. Two important areas emerge in the dissertation: the search for an authentic African identity and an alternative socio-economic organization of Zambian society. Christianity has been on the continent for more than a century now and most of Africa has been politically independent for about half a century. Have these facts made any real difference in the lives of Africans, both Christian and non-Christian?

The political situation in which the Church in Africa finds itself today affects the nature and method of Christian theology. In the political arena, theology in Africa has the urgent task of challenging systems and ideologies which attack liberty and human dignity. This theis argues that theology has a relevant role to play in public discourse even today. But to do so effectively it must understand the past. Hence, the study of Zambian humanism, which played a significant role in Zambia's history, is an important area of theological study.

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## Dedication

This one is especially dedicated  
to the  
“women in my life”:

*Ami Maria* - who has always been a mother: truly our sister  
and companion in the communion of saints;

*Amama* - the pillar in my life: I know you have always loved me  
and have never lost faith in me;

*Shuko* - the joy and strength of my days: with a sister like you  
what more can we ask for?

Thanks are not enough;  
accept this labour of my love  
dedicated to you.

Solo amore é credibile!  
Only love is credible!



## Declaration

I, **Raymond Mwangala Mwangala** (207515791), declare that this dissertation, *Found a modern nation-state on Christian values?: A theological assessment of Zambian humanism*, 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 references following the Harvard Style for Referencing and Bibliography.

Signed:.....

Date:.....

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Gratitude is a sign of blessing.

The completion of this work has been made possible by the help rendered by many, to whom I owe immense gratitude:

God has been the power gently guiding me - how can I repay the Lord for his kindness to me? (Ps 116);

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I take full responsibility for the content of this document and any opinions expressed herein, no matter how controversial they may be.

*Raymond Mwangala Mwangala*  
2009

# CHAPTER I

## General introduction

### 1.0 Introduction

Zambia gained independence from British colonial rule on October 24, 1964. Subsequently the new government led by Kenneth Kaunda set out to develop the country into a modern African nation-state along socialist lines. Their chosen ideology, *Zambian humanism*, was a form of African Socialism which combined traditional African values with Western socialist and Christian values. This ideology was eventually declared the national ideology and philosophy in 1967. The argument made by Kaunda and his followers was that Africa had always contained much indigenous socialism which the colonialists had tried to destroy, and so the experiment with *Zambian humanism* was an attempt to rescue pre-colonial values and traditions and to use these as the basis on which to build the modern state. Kaunda also argued that his humanism was unique. However, placed side by side with other African ideologies of the era, *Zambian humanism* does not appear so unique. Many other post-colonial leaders in Africa were attempting similar projects with their respective countries. For example, in Tanzania, Nyerere called it *Ujamaa* while Kwame Nkrumah in Ghana advocated Scientific Socialism with an African flavour. These attempts were part of the larger emerging post-colonial movement in philosophy, theology, politics, economics, and also discernable among religious movements. Common to all these was the desire by Africans to define themselves as Africans, after the negative experience of colonialism. A second unifying element among them was their socialist orientation.

This thesis, *Found a modern nation-state on Christian values?: A theological assessment of Zambian humanism*, examines Kaunda's experiment with *Zambian humanism* from a theological perspective. It explores the significance for theology of the two characteristic themes of post-colonial Africa, that is, the search for an authentic African self-identity and socialism. The thesis recognizes that 'Africans have endured not only political, economic and cultural imperialism, but also the domination of Western theology and church polity' (Stinton 2004:45). It, therefore, seeks to understand Kaunda's ideology from an African theological perspective. In other words, it asks how theology done in Africa and from an African perspective reads Kaunda's humanism.

Even though Kaunda's humanism is not an explicit theology, the ideology is an important object of theological study because of its use of theological concepts, arguments and also because of its impact on *Zambian society*.

Further, this thesis attempts to contribute to the construction of a systematic Contextual Theology that is not reactionary, that is, not developed as a reaction against colonialism or Western Classical Theology, but one that emerges from taking into account Zambia's contemporary situation. Two questions underlying the thesis are: does Christian theology have any relevance for the contemporary *Zambian situation*, and secondly, how is *Zambian humanism* to be interpreted theologically? In attempting to answer these questions the thesis takes the historical reality of Kaunda's humanism as the frame of reference. Postcolonial discourse is employed as the theoretical background against which Kaunda's ideology is read.

Using the published works of several theologians such as Bujo and Dube, and the social encyclical letters of Pope John Paul II, the thesis assesses some elements of Kaunda's attempt to develop an African identity and also a socio-economic system for Zambia. Among the theologians favoured are those writing on African Theology or from an African perspective. Reference is also made to some other theologians in so far as they deal with topics relevant to the subject.

### **1.1 Background and outline of research topic**

Kenneth Kaunda, the first president of independent Zambia, together with his UNIP government, declared humanism the national philosophy and ideology of Zambia in April 1967. This was barely three years after the country's independence from Britain. There is no doubt that the colonial experience played a significant role in this move, and that humanism would play a crucial role throughout Kaunda's 27 year rule as president. The core of humanism, as understood by Kaunda, was respect for all human persons created in the image and likeness of God and mutual cooperation and support in society. During the colonial era Africans, commonly referred to as natives, had experienced their humanity negated by the colonial masters and now that independence had been gained, it was recognized as time for them to regain the lost dignity and to define themselves. Throughout his reign as president (1964-1991), Kaunda would consistently

work at this project. Its eventual failure and abandonment has been the subject of several studies. These will be surveyed later.

This thesis also examines how *Zambian humanism*, as expounded by Kaunda contains elements and themes of interest to theological reflection, themes which are still valid and important for Zambia as a country and for theology as a discipline. It shows how this ideology, understood as postcolonial discourse, makes an important contribution to the ongoing search for an African Christian identity. It further investigates some of the implications of the ideology in current discourse of an emerging socio-economic system at global level.

The Final Communiqué of the 1977 Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians, held in Accra, Ghana, pointed out that:

The African situation requires a new theological methodology that is different from the approaches of the dominant theologies of the West... a theology born out of the experience of Africans and that is accountable to Africans (quoted in Stinton 2004:30).

This thesis attempts to make a contribution to this ‘new theological methodology,’ taking as its point of departure the interpretation of Kaunda’s *Zambian humanism*. It argues against a single approach to theology. An underlying assumption of this thesis is that every theology is and must by necessity be contextual, that is, it must take into account the specific conditions and questions of the local context. Therefore, the *Zambian context* in which Kaunda developed his ideology is a very important context for understanding and interpreting the phenomenon of his humanism and in doing theology in Zambia today. Using Robert J. Schreiter’s three models<sup>1</sup> to explain what is meant by local theology, the thesis argues that the

following of Christ never takes place in a vacuum; it is not something that happens in isolation from society or apart from a particular situation, so as to be spared the antagonisms and sufferings of the world and to be granted the ability to maintain its innocence by not being a participant (Metz 1978:43).

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<sup>1</sup> These models are identified as the Translation Models, Adaptation Models and Contextual models (Schreiter 1985: 16-21).

This means that, Zambian humanism, in a broad sense must be understood as part of the local context in which Kaunda and others have reflected on the Word of God.

## **1.2 The post-colonial context**

Many African countries, Zambia among them, gained political independence in the decade between 1956 and 1966. This decade marked a new beginning in African history - the end of the colonial era and the beginning of modern nation-states. However, it would take a few decades more for the yoke of colonialism to be completely broken on the continent.<sup>2</sup> ‘The honeymoon of African independence was brief but memorable’ (Meredith 2005:141); many challenges awaited the new nation-states, among them nation-building and development. Most African countries were created as political units by the colonisers, usually with unnatural boundaries. For example, the eastern border between Zambia and Malawi divides people who share the same language and culture; people who before the advent of colonialism had no notion of belonging to different countries. The leaders of the new states were faced with the difficult challenge of creating a national identity and also of generating wealth and distributing it. They chose varied ideologies to guide them in this and other development challenges. In their attempts to achieve their intended goals of economic development and social progress many of them settled on a variety of socialist ideologies. In Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah called it Scientific Socialism, while his contemporary in Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, advocated African Socialism. Further south, in Zambia, Kaunda settled on what he called Zambian humanism. Each ideology claimed to have something unique to offer. A lot has been written on why these leaders settled on their chosen paths and most analyses have come to a conclusion that the ideologies were in fact very similar. In a later section this thesis examines some of the motives and factors which influenced these experiments. This thesis places Kaunda’s humanism in its social, historical and political context, both locally and internationally, so as to better understand its relationship to the broader postcolonial discourse to which it belongs.

## **1.3 Economic development**

Many of the first generation of African leaders believed that national development and modernisation depended on strong government control and direction of the economy and other

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<sup>2</sup> It is argued by some authors such as Onyeani (2000) and Moyo (2009), that Africa has never really gained independence since it is still economically dependent of the West. Ayittey (1992:7) argues that ‘in most parts of Africa independence from oppressive colonial rule was in name only. All that changed was the color (sic) of the guards and the masters’.

spheres of life, a strategy inherited from the colonial era and encouraged by an influential school of Western development economists (Meredith 2005:143). In Zambia, the policies of nationalisation carried out in the period from 1968 to 1971 were given political legitimacy by President Kaunda with reference to his philosophy of humanism which, according to some analysts, referred to a Christian, non-capitalists view of the good society seeking to maintain African traditions and cooperation while promoting economic growth (Rakner 2003: 46). This thesis argues against the tendency which advocates the classical capitalism of the West as the best solution to Africa's economic woes and also attempts to show the weaknesses inherent in African Socialism as an economic ideology, especially in its failure to deal with the problem of wealth creation.

#### **1.4   Zambian humanism as an ideology and philosophy**

Zambian humanism was created by Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's first republican president and was formally endorsed as the official national philosophy and ideology of Zambia by the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the party in government, in 1967. It is a philosophy and political ideology rooted in traditional African religion and culture and, according to many accounts, corresponds to what is known as Christian humanism. It is a values-based ideology that focuses on the centrality of the individual human being (common man). It seeks to create a society that places the human person at the centre of all activity, social, economic and political. It is global and non-discriminatory in outlook and scope.

A precise definition of the phenomenon, however, is difficult to come-by. In the section dealing with the ideology a more detailed description of it will be given. Reflecting on it forty years after its introduction, Kenneth Kaunda says:

Zambian Humanism came from our own appreciation and understanding of our society. Zambian Humanism believes in God the Supreme Being. It believes that loving God with all our soul, all our heart, and with all our mind and strength, will make us appreciate the human being created in God's image. If we love our neighbour as we love ourselves, we will not exploit them but work together with them for the common good (2007a: iv).

The religious dimension is something which permeates the entire political philosophy through and through. It is a theistic philosophy which accepts the existence of a personal God. This belief in a personal God is central and fundamental to the understanding of the human person and of social morality according to Kaunda. This, more than anything else, distinguishes Kaunda's philosophy from Nkrumah's scientific socialism, which is essentially Marxist and therefore inherently atheistic.

### **1.5 Objectives and limits of the thesis**

As already indicated the primary aim of this dissertation is to investigate Kaunda's Zambian humanism from a theological perspective. The thesis seeks to respond to the following question: How can Kaunda's Zambian humanism contribute to the development of a local theology in Zambia? An adequate assessment of Kaunda's experiment requires a careful reading of the historical background, including the colonial and post-colonial experience of Kaunda and other African leaders. In attempting to answer the above stated question, the thesis briefly outlines the recent history of Zambia (1964-1991), focusing especially on the socio-economic and political developments which had both a direct and an indirect influence on the introduction and implementation of humanism. The year 1964 is deliberately chosen as the starting point because it is the year in which Zambia became a sovereign independent state with Kenneth Kaunda as head of state. The year 1991, on the other hand, is chosen because it is the year in which Kaunda was ousted from the presidency by Chiluba, thus losing the power to determine the country's future.

One of the major limitations faced by this thesis is that Kaunda's humanism is not presented in a consistent and systematic way. It is, therefore, not possible to describe the ideology as a unitary whole. Another linked limitation is the inconsistency with which Kaunda uses terms. Kaunda does not write as an academic nor does he intend to present an academic treatise of his ideology. His use of terms is very much determined by the context in which they are used. His published speeches are a good example of this.

Another limitation faced by the thesis is that Kaunda does not write from a theological perspective. In fact, Kaunda does not even consider himself a theologian in the formal sense. Therefore, while he uses religious terminology and words loaded with theological meanings, it is



not always in the technical sense in which theologians use them. The theological assessment of his ideology is therefore done with an awareness of these limitations. Attempts are made, within reason, to determine how he (Kaunda) uses theological terms before an interpretation is offered.

## **1.6 Preliminary literature survey**

Published material, both academic and popular, on Zambian humanism exists and is readily available. Kaunda, himself, has written several books in which he explains his understanding of humanism. His speeches before independence and as president contain many references to the ideology. Already in his autobiography, *Zambia shall be free*, published in 1962, Kaunda gives indications of his understanding of humanism. In *A humanist in Africa* (1966), he attempts to explain systematically his understanding of humanism. Unlike *Zambia shall be free*, which is biographical and historical, *A humanist in Africa* is more philosophical in nature, containing a more systematic treatment of humanism. The two published volumes, *Humanism in Zambia* (parts I and II), contain the official version of Kaunda's understanding of the ideology and the guidelines for its practical implementation, especially as these were adopted by the state. In investigating Kaunda's personal motivation for introducing the ideology, *Letter to my children* is probably the best available source. This work contains Kaunda's thoughts, presented in a systematic way, on a variety of subjects, including humanism. Here Kaunda is much more reflective and systematic. These documents, mainly by Kaunda himself, will be the primary sources of the study and analysis of the ideology. Kaunda's speeches, compiled and published by the United National Independence Party (UNIP) in a four-volume series are also an important source and background for understanding the reasoning process of Kaunda.

A brief survey of Kaunda's humanism's relationship to other forms of socialism will be considered. In doing this, the thesis focuses mainly on some reactions to the ideology, especially on the part of Christian writers. Secondary sources, both theological and non-theological, are utilized to interpret Kaunda's humanism. The most prominent among these are those dealing with post-colonial African thinkers and the social encyclicals of Pope John Paul II.

Although much has been written on ideologies, including on African Socialism, not much scholarly work has been done to uncover the theological themes and contributions of Zambian

humanism. Professor Clive Dillon-Malone (1989) highlights the ‘intrinsic religious dimension of Zambian Humanism as a philosophy and as an ideology’ (:4-5). Henry Meebelo, a historian and Minister of National Guidance in the Kaunda government, published in 1973 a serious academic study of some of the currents of Zambian Humanism.<sup>3</sup> His work, however, does not explore the subject from a theological perspective.

Secondary material, not dealing directly with Kaunda’s experiment, but with themes touched on by the thesis are used to explain the assessment of Kaunda’s humanism. Their selection is based on the relevance to the subject.

### **1.7 Research problems**

Engagement with the subject is done from a Christian theological perspective. An ecumenical approach is attempted even though there are more biases in favour of Roman Catholic authors. This is because of the researcher’s Roman Catholic background and commitment; a bias readily admitted. This, at times, has been a cause of tension in the reading of Kaunda’s works because, even though Kaunda is a professed Christian, his commitment is to the United Church of Zambia.

The assessment and interpretation of humanism is from the perspective of the theological discipline of Systematic Theology.<sup>4</sup> Although Zambian humanism admits to the existence of a personal God, it does not pretend to offer a complete theological treatise on God. In other words, it does not claim to be a theology nor a theological system.

One of the main difficulties inherent in such a study is that theology and ideology, although closely related, belong to distinct paradigms which are not necessarily mutual.<sup>5</sup> However, since both offer frameworks from which to understand and relate to reality, they provide common

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<sup>3</sup> See Meebelo, H S 1973. *Main Currents of Zambian Humanist Thought*. Lusaka: Oxford University Press.

<sup>4</sup> The designations “Systematic Theology” and “Dogmatic Theology” are more commonly used in the English language than “Fundamental” Theology. For example, both St. Joseph’s Theological Institute and the School of Religion and Theology at the University of KwaZulu-Natal do not have in their programs a listing of Fundamental Theology, but rather that of Systematic Theology and also Dogmatic Theology. Although my undergraduate studies in theology at Rome’s Pontifical Gregorian used the latter title, I am comfortable with the former and readily use it. It must, however, be noted that Fundamental Theology was initially part of dogmatic theology and is thus part of Systematic Theology.

<sup>5</sup> Leatt, Kneifel and Nürnbergger (1986) have attempted to distinguish between theology and ideology, pp 284-302.

ground from which to engage in mutual dialogue. Malone argues that ‘theology provides the answers to questions which transcend human reason while philosophy attempts to give clearer understanding to the meaning of religious truths’ (1989:11). The two are not necessarily contradictory, mutually exclusive, or opposed.

The core of the thesis is the attempt to highlight the theological sources and themes contained in Zambian humanism and the consequences arising from these.

The working hypothesis of this thesis is that Zambian humanism is an attempt by an individual to organize and shape a particular society based on authentic human as well as Christian values. The merit of the undertaking lies in showing how the local Zambian context was used by Kaunda to develop and implement the core of the Christian message.

### **1.8 Principal theories upon which the research project is constructed**

The thesis is based on a non-empirical study, consisting of qualitative literature review and conceptual analysis. As already stated, the study is undertaken within the paradigm of Systematic Theology as understood and practiced by contemporary theologians. As such, the thesis pays particular attention to the contemporary context in the development of theology. The sources for theology used include those identified by the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians: the Bible and Christian heritage, African anthropology and cosmology, African traditional religions, African Independent Churches (AICs), and other African realities. These latter include everything from the struggles against racism, sexism, and any other form of economic, political, social and cultural oppression (Stinton 2004:39). These latter themes become most evident in the section dealing with postcolonial discourse.

### **1.9 Research methodology and methods**

The steps undertaken in this dissertation include the following: a description of Zambia’s socio-political history between 1964 and 1991, a description of Zambian humanism as understood both by Kaunda and by others, a description of colonialism and the post-colonial context, with particular focus on the post-colonial attempt by African thinkers to articulate their understanding of what is unique about Africa and African identity. The core of the thesis is the interpretation of the two identified themes in postcolonial discourse, self identity and economic development,

from a theological perspective. In essence, the character of the thesis is dialogical, that is it is based on dialogue between the post-colonial and colonial, between Kaunda's ideology and theology, and finally, between the post-colonial and the post-modern.

## **1.10 Structure of the thesis**

The thesis is developed according to the following structure:

### **1.10.1 Chapter 1: General Introduction to research question and theoretical framework**

This first chapter introduces the subject, sets the framework from which the study is conducted, highlights anticipated difficulties and also explains the hypothesis that Zambian humanism, as an attempt by Kaunda to define what it means to be a modern nation-state, is an important element in the development of a local theology in Zambia.

### **1.10.2 Chapter 2: Socio-historical and political background**

Chapter two provides the socio-historical background from which to understand both Kaunda as president of Zambia and his humanism. The social, economic and political history of Zambia between 1964 and 1991 is outlined, focusing especially on the main factors that led Kaunda to make the policy pronouncements he did concerning the country.

### **1.10.3 Chapter 3: Zambian humanism**

Chapter three focuses on humanism as the official ideology and philosophy of Zambia as understood by Kaunda and by others. Its history, implementation, main themes and theological underpinnings are considered. Having outlined the main elements of humanism, an attempt is made in this chapter to show how it was implemented by the Party and its Government. An assessment of its reception by the masses concludes the chapter.

### **1.10.4 Chapter 4: Main themes of Zambian humanism**

This chapter highlights the main themes of Zambian humanism. It shows how these arise and how Kaunda's Christian background was influential in their formulation. Using Schreiter's three

models<sup>6</sup> to explain what is meant by local theology, Zambian humanism is assessed to ascertain whether or not it can be understood as a form of local theology.

#### **1.10.5 Chapter 5: Zambian humanism as postcolonial discourse**

Chapter five considers Zambian humanism as postcolonial discourse. It begins with a brief description of colonialism and its negative effect on Africans and how the post-colonial era witnessed the birth of a new discourse in philosophy, theology and politics. The chapter also describes how Kaunda's humanism relates to this postcolonial discourse. Of particular interest is Nyerere's experiment with African Socialism. Similarities and differences of the two approaches are described and the two main characteristics described.

#### **1.10.6 Chapter 6: General conclusions – Zambian humanism's contribution to the development of a local theology?**

The final chapter draws some conclusions from the study and also asks, based on the theological assessment done, whether Zambian humanism can contribute to the development of a relevant and credible local theology.

### **1.11 Summary**

The era of African discourse characterized by a reaction to the Western misrepresentations is past. The present challenge is to develop a systematic, relevant and credible discourse that takes serious account of Africa's situation. The summary looks at the challenges raised by the study and points to what still remains to be done.

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<sup>6</sup> These models are identified as the Translation Models, Adaptation Models and Contextual models (Schreier 1985: 16-21).

## CHAPTER II

### Social, economic and political background to Kaunda's humanism

#### 2.0 Introduction

Zambia's geographical and historical positions have had significant influence on the country's social, political and economic development. These factors also played a significant role in the introduction and implementation of humanism by Kaunda. As a landlocked country in central southern Africa, sharing borders with eight other countries whose social, economic and political histories have been checkered, Zambia could not escape being influenced by its neighbours. The country's political and economic history, especially between the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and independence in 1964, was closely interwoven with that of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, present-day Zimbabwe and Malawi respectively. During the first three decades following its independence from British rule Zambia had to struggle with internal as well as external challenges.<sup>7</sup> This chapter describes among other things the internal challenges of building the new nation-state. It describes the social, economic and political background against which Kaunda introduced the ideology of humanism. Socially, Kaunda and his government inherited from the colonial era a country created politically, with no natural borders. A sense of nationhood, therefore, had to be created. Economically, the principal legacy of British colonial rule was an economy geared overwhelmingly towards the export of copper with manufacturing and agriculture left severely underdeveloped. This capitalist orientation favoured the colonial masters at the expense of the locals; the benefits of the system were not equally distributed. Independence for Kaunda and the Zambian people meant not only the undoing of the evils inherited from the colonial system; positively, it meant setting a new agenda for national development. Socialism, in general, and humanism, in particular became the blueprint for action adopted by the Kaunda government. Politically, Zambia was a country with several political parties, each seeking the vote of the people. The political struggles characteristic of democratic states seemed to Kaunda and his supporters a danger to the urgent task of nation-building. The way to deal with this danger, it was argued, was to introduce the one-party system. This background helps to explain some of the factors that led Kaunda to settle on his form of

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<sup>7</sup> Among the external challenges faced by the newly independent state include the struggle for independence in Rhodesia, Mozambique and Angola, and the political instability in Congo. Internal challenges included among others the poor levels of formal education among many Zambians, tribal tensions and political rivalry.

humanism. It also gives the rationale behind the themes, development and eventual failure of the ideology. It therefore provides the framework in which the ideology can be properly understood and evaluated.

## **2.1 Zambia's socio-political history (1964-1991)**

For many years prior to the arrival of Europeans, the area known as Zambia was inhabited by hunter-gatherers and migrant tribes.<sup>8</sup> After sporadic visits by European explorers beginning in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the region was eventually occupied and claimed by the British as the colony of Northern Rhodesia. The establishment of British rule brought together the various indigenous peoples inhabiting the territory into one political unit previously unknown. It also introduced new factors which altered considerably the economic life of the indigenous inhabitants.<sup>9</sup> An uneasy relationship between the Europeans and the natives developed which sometimes led to violent clashes. As a result of the colonial experience the indigenous inhabitants joined forces in the establishment of an independent state. On October 24, 1964, after a relatively short struggle, the African peoples of the country gained political independence.<sup>10</sup> They gave their country a new name, Zambia, derived from the Zambezi river which flows through most of the country. Kenneth Kaunda, who had been one of the prominent leaders in the struggle for independence was elected the first president of the newly independent Zambia. He was to rule the country for twenty-seven years, until 1991.

At independence, despite its considerable mineral wealth, Zambia faced several major economic challenges. Domestically, there were few trained and educated Zambians capable of running the machinery of government inherited from the colonial past. The economy was largely dependent on foreign expertise and capital. Kaunda and his government of largely inexperienced men<sup>11</sup> had to find ways and means of dealing with the situation. Kaunda recognized the need for a national

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<sup>8</sup> Langworthy's 1972 study, *Zambia before 1890: Aspects of pre-colonial history*, gives a brief historical account of the peoples who inhabited the country prior to the arrival of Christian missionaries and the colonial lords.

<sup>9</sup> In an effort to make the Protectorate self-supporting the colonial administration imposed a tax to be paid by every adult male and female, except the first wife of a married man. In order to obtain the required money for the tax Africans were forced to seek wage-earning work. Another major change introduced which affected economic life was the attitude towards private ownership of land.

<sup>10</sup> The end of colonialism has been attributed to a number of factors: the rise of militant African nationalism, the organizing ability of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the perseverance of Africans and the political leadership offered by Kenneth Kaunda.

<sup>11</sup> The first cabinet of independent Zambia was comprised entirely of men.

ideology to guide development and nation-building. Humanism, introduced as the national ideology and philosophy by Kaunda at a meeting of the National Council of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), the governing party, in April 1967, was intended to be the 'guiding principle,' 'the driving force,' and 'the social cement' that held the country together.<sup>12</sup> It drew on a number of sources: radical Christianity, existential humanism, Fabian socialism and the *Ujamaa* socialism of Nyerere. Kaunda's strong belief in the oneness and equality of human beings was mainly responsible for his introduction of the philosophy. Even 20 years after the formal introduction of the ideology, Kaunda was able to argue that 'there can be nothing more important in God's creation on earth than MAN' (Kaunda 1988b:43). This conviction was to be central in Kaunda's future pronouncements and action. Kaunda believed that by placing the human person at the centre of all economic and political activity, Zambia would be able to resolve the imbalances created by capitalism and the colonial past. He, therefore, proposed humanism as a challenge to capitalism because he believed that 'capitalism aims at an economic organisation of society in which a few people exploit the masses, thereby dividing God's people in various groups' (1988b:47).

For Kaunda, the moral foundation of society lay in the traditions of the village: equality between members of society, mutual support, participation in collective work and decision-making, an absence of exploitation, and self-reliance. Humanism advocated the elimination of social classes and economic exploitation, equalization of the distribution of social rewards between elites and masses and between rural and urban sectors, the creation of an urban working class which was conscious of its responsibilities to the less-favored rural masses, the encouragement of collective and cooperative forms of production in agriculture, state ownership of a significant portion of the means of production, national social and economic planning, and the progressive elimination of the nation's dependence on foreign firms and foreign transport routes. All this must be seen against the backdrop of colonialism against which Kaunda was reacting.

The use of ideology as an instrument of political rule and the strategy for social and economic development was an important feature of Kaunda's 27 year rule as president. Although Kaunda's

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<sup>12</sup> Kaunda used these and other similar terms to speak of humanism (see Kaunda's collected speeches in *State of the nation*, vols I and II). A fuller description of what Kaunda meant by humanism will be given in a subsequent chapter.



humanism was eventually institutionalized as the official philosophy and ideology of the state, its constitutional standing in the country throughout Kaunda's reign was never clarified; it maintained an ambiguous position throughout its existence.<sup>13</sup> Since 1991 when Kaunda and the UNIP were voted out of office, nothing official has been said about the national philosophy.

## **2.2 Introduction of the one-party state**

Many newly independent African countries introduced a one-party system of government within the first ten years of independence. Its introduction in Zambia (1972) happened 'despite considerable opposition and in a situation where opposition parties were well entrenched' (Rakner 2003:51). Kaunda's rationale for introducing the system was motivated by his political philosophy of humanism. He argued that the establishment of the one-party system was not an end in itself, but was to be a means to an end: national unity based on equality of all human beings. At independence, in 1964, the dominant party in Zambian politics was the UNIP. However, in the first decade of the country's independence the party showed signs of fragmentation due to internal strife and divisions among its members. Several prominent members of the party left to form rival parties. In the 1968 election campaign the country experienced violent clashes between the supporters of UNIP and those of the rival party, the United Party (UP). As a result of the clashes the UNIP government banned the UP. Further measures to control the growing divisions along tribal lines visible in the various parties were to be taken by the government. These included the introduction of the one-party system of government.

On December 13, 1972, Kaunda announced the introduction of a one-party state, outlawing not only existing opposition parties, but banning all future initiatives to form opposition parties' (Rakner 2003:52).<sup>14</sup> With this move, Kaunda effectively became both president of the state and of the party, giving him extraordinary powers to implement his vision. The party eventually

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<sup>13</sup> Humanism was incorporated into the Preamble of the 1972 Constitution of Zambia with the aim of legalizing President Kaunda's thoughts and prescription for Zambia and institutionalizing the ideology as the official national ideology. What this meant for those who did not subscribe to it, however, always remained unclear.

<sup>14</sup> In the 1968 elections the ruling party's support was reduced by opposition parties. UNIP also experienced factional fighting among its members along tribal, racial and provincial lines. These threatened the unity of the party and also posed a potential threat of becoming a nationwide crisis. Therefore, Kaunda and his government reacted quickly and, according to some, harshly. The government arrested leaders of the newly formed opposition party of Simon Kapwepwe and introduced emergency powers. It was in this situation of insecurity that the one-party system was eventually introduced.

established itself supreme over government. The main task of the party became to solidify its control of the state. This is the situation that prevailed in the country until 1991 when Kaunda and his UNIP government were voted out of office.<sup>15</sup> So, for close to two decades Kaunda and his humanism would be dominant features of Zambian politics.

### **2.3 Zambia's political economy (1964-1991)**

Zambia has experienced a permanent state of economic decline from the mid-1970s.<sup>16</sup> In many ways, the living conditions of the majority of its population have worsened drastically since the early 70s. This state of affairs, however, cannot be understood in isolation from the pattern of economic development the country inherited from the colonial period and the economic decisions of the Kaunda government. 'The principal legacy of British colonial rule in Zambia was an economy geared overwhelmingly towards the export of copper with manufacturing and agriculture left severely underdeveloped' (Clark 1989:5). Although Zambia inherited from the colonial masters an economic structure that was basically unsound, it experienced significant growth in production and employment during the first decade of independence. 'At independence, Zambia was one of the most industrialized and urbanized countries of Africa with a Gross National Product (GNP) of about 2 US\$ billion' (Rakner 2003:44). In the mid-1970s, however, Zambia began to experience severe economic difficulties. The sharp decline in world copper prices which coincided with the 1973 Arab oil embargo dramatically increased Zambia's oil import bills (Cheru 1989:126-7). At this time copper sales accounted for about 90% of Zambia's exports while the country was highly dependent on imports. There are other reasons contributing to Zambia's economic decline during the 70s and 80s. Rakner, 'argues that the UNIP government's failure to adequately address the economic decline is closely related to the government's political project and the creation of a developmental state where the main economic element was nationalisation of the main industries (2003:44). Humanism was at the heart of government's response to the economic crisis. Kaunda consistently argued that the goal of his government was to ensure that the country's wealth was equitably distributed.

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<sup>15</sup> The eventual collapse of the one-party state and the reintroduction of multi-party politics in Zambia has been linked to events in the late 1980s in Eastern Europe that led to the collapse of Communism. However, even prior to the collapse of Communism there had been voices, especially in the Trade Unions, that who had been campaigning for multi-party politics.

<sup>16</sup> During Levy Mwanawasa's seven year rule as president (2001-2008) the country experienced some positive and stable economic developments. The current global economic crisis has negatively impacted the economy of Zambia with the mining sector, which is still the country's main source of income being the worst affected.

The ideological themes underlying humanism were a significant part of the government's proposed solution to the economic crisis. Kaunda also argued for national unity through the nationalization/Zambianization of what he considered key areas of the economy. This was the government's priority in the early years of independence. Bolton (1985:1) argues that the policy of nationalization has been frequently and widely used by many post-colonial governments to introduce government control of economic activities. The motives for using the policy have varied from the mere indigenization of foreign owned enterprises to the ideologically motivated reasons. Ideologically, nationalization is seen as 'a policy which helps determine the political direction of class and group conflicts within the post-colonial state' (1985:1).

One of the most significant features of Kaunda's humanism is its identification with economic development. Kaunda did not see his ideology as purely political, but tended to identify it with economic development. By doing this he made an important connection between economic development and the public sector's involvement in economic activities through the state. The accumulation of capital was seen as being primarily a responsibility of government. On the practical level, foreign investment was discouraged and various forms of local cooperatives were encouraged to setup business-like ventures. In reality, however, the Zambian economy always remained dependent on external capital.

The drive for independence and for economic development following independence created serious problems of control for leaders of the new state. The colonialists had been replaced and parts of the civil service may have been changed, but many elements and attitudes of colonialism still remained. The end of colonialism had not immediately brought the substantial betterment of life for the majority. Humanism played an extremely important role in organizing the population for economic development. It provided the unifying doctrine similar to the nationalism of the pre-independence period. To prevent the rise of social and economic classes humanism promoted cooperation and equality by making the state the major owner of the means of production. Apart from the practice of nationalizing private businesses, Kaunda introduced a leadership code and also strict monetary policies operated by government.

The political and economic instability experienced by many of Zambia's neighbours in the 1970s and 1980s impacted negatively on the state of Zambia's economy. The influx of refugees from

her neighbours took its toll on Zambia's economy, but in keeping with his professed Christian principles and the philosophy of humanism, Kaunda and the UNIP government preferred to put the few resources of the already struggling Zambia at the disposal of the refugees rather than invest in developing the economy. Calling himself a Christian and a humanist, Kaunda also refused to engage in any economic, social and political activities with the apartheid government of South Africa. This caused further strains on the economy because, as a landlocked country, the transport route through Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa would have been the most economical for Zambia. Kaunda chose to pay the high price for his principles.

Between 1975 and 1990, Zambia experienced a 30% decline in per capita growth (Rakner 2003:53). By 1977 the country had completely exhausted its foreign reserves. As the economic crisis worsened the government was forced to turn to International Financial Organizations (IFOs), borrowing heavily from them, especially from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). From 1973, Zambia started drawing heavily on IMF financial resources. The World Bank (WB) was initially slow to respond to Zambia's request for assistance, due to the country's high copper earnings. In 1978, however, the WB declared Zambia eligible for funding. Before long the country was saddled with an enormous debt that it could not repay. 'By 1984 it was paying out US\$610 million to service its debt' (Clark 1989:11); 60% of its foreign exchange earnings. In the 1970s neither the IMF nor the other bilateral donors took an active part in policy discussions concerning Zambia (Rakner 2003:54). This changed in the 80s. Some have interpreted Zambia's dealings with the World Bank and the IMF as a new form of colonialism.

In an attempt to rescue the situation, Zambia entered into several agreements with the donors on how to remedy the situation. In 1985, described by some as Zambia's worst year economically (Cheru 1989), 'Zambia accepted the IMF proposal to introduce a regular foreign exchange auction to determine a market price for the kwacha' (Clark 1989:17). Following the first auction the value of the local currency dropped drastically, forcing prices of consumer goods to rise sharply. Other measures suggested by the IMF/World Bank's Structural Adjustment Programme included the removal of subsidies on consumer goods, especially on maize, the staple food. The price of food shot up immediately. 'The price rise prompted thousands of the urban poor in Zambia to take to the streets and riot, and the food subsidy was restored after a few days' (Clark 1989:v).

The cost in human suffering caused by the economic crisis and the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) can never be adequately documented. Families were forced to go without food, others died prematurely, while the basics of life were denied to many. It was because of such effects that the adjustment programs proposed by donors were considered ‘ideologically distasteful’ by some sectors of Zambia’s population, including Kaunda (Rakner 2003: 55). On May 1, 1987, Kaunda declared that the IMF Structural Adjustment Programme had failed and announced that it was being abandoned (Clark 1989:18). The government of Zambia had decided to go on its own in its effort to halt the ever worsening state of the economy. ‘Zambia began implementing its own Economic Recovery Programme in May 1987, following suspension of talks with the IMF’ (Cheru 1989:138). This new initiative emphasized growth from local resources. Unfortunately, very little was achieved in terms of real results.

The worsening economic situation in the country was eventually the reason why Kaunda and the UNIP government lost the 1991 multi-party democratic elections to Chiluba and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). In the latter part of his rule Kaunda committed himself more to international affairs to the neglect of economic growth and the well-being of Zambia to such an extent that the country became one of the most indebted in the world (on a per capita basis) while his own popularity as the founding father of independent Zambia slumped (Arnold 2005:711).

#### **2.4 The impact of Kaunda’s humanism on Zambia’s economic development**

There is little doubt that this ideology played a significant role in the economic development of Zambia. Kaunda’s humanism, which was a form of socialism, was strongly opposed to capitalism as an economic system. It assessed negatively the profit motivation of capitalism. According to Kaunda’s humanism, capitalism encourages the exploitation of human beings. In an effort to counter the effects of capitalism, the UNIP government introduced strict control measures, both for Zambians and for foreigners, in the acquisition of the means of production. A number of private industries were nationalized, and the government became the main distributor of the wealth generated by the manufacturing industries. ‘The process of nationalization beginning with the Mulungushi reforms in 1968, resulted in 80 per cent of the Zambian economy being state-controlled by the conclusion of the programme in the mid-1970s’ (Rakner 203:46). These practices were given political legitimacy by Kaunda and his government with reference to

humanism. Often Kaunda made reference to his humanist and socialist principles as the reason for carrying out nationalization.

Another significant factor to consider is the human suffering caused by the economic situation. As a humanist, Kaunda argued that he could not bear to see his country's men and women suffering, and so he was willing to forego sound economic policies simply because they caused suffering. For example, in the mid 1980s Kaunda refused to follow the IMF Structural Adjustment Programme which advocated the removal of food subsidies because of the hardships this would have created for the poor. Again, Kaunda was not slow to appeal to humanist motivation. Whether or not the proposed policies would have worked is debatable.

## **2.5 Winds of change and democratic elections**

The 'winds of change' that began to blow across the African continent in the latter part of the 1980s have been attributed to many factors from the fall of the Berlin Wall, symbolically marking the death of Communism and the end of the Cold War to the realization that democracy and economic development are closely related. In Zambia, the changing ideological climate in major western countries coincided with the country's desperate need for foreign aid. Aid donors began more and more to demand democratic government in exchange for financial assistance. The worsening economic crisis in the country forced the Kaunda government to reconsider its policies. A growing opposition to Kaunda's rule used the opportunity to call for the return to multi-party politics. Eventually, in 1990, Kaunda announced a referendum on whether to reintroduce multi party politics in the country. However, the referendum campaign was overtaken by political events. The food riots of June 1990 began a series of political events which eventually led to the multi-party elections of October 1991.

Following the riots a military coup was attempted on the government. On December 4, 1990 Parliament removed article 4 from the Constitution which had introduced the one-party state. On August 24, the following year, the 1973 constitution was eventually replaced and the third republic introduced. On October 31, 1991, the first multi-party elections were convincingly won by Frederick Chiluba and the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). With the departure of Kaunda from national politics of Zambia humanism and socialism too became ideologies of the bygone era.

## **2.6 Chiluba's regime (1991-2001)**

For most of 1989 Zambia was characterized by discontent at the dire state of the economy and unrest among workers and students. For most of the preceding decade the country had witnessed a growing call for a return to multi-party politics. In early 1990, UNIP, the ruling party formally rejected the calls, but in May of the same year Kaunda announced a countrywide referendum for October to decide on the issue. However, the food riots of June 1990 forced the government to change its planned course. Under pressure from various sources the government announced a return to multi-party politics and announced October 31, 1991, as the date for elections.

Frederick Chiluba, longtime leader of the trade unions, won the elections under the Movement for Multiparty Democracy (MMD). He obtained 75.79 per cent of the votes cast, with Kaunda obtaining only 24.21 per cent.<sup>17</sup> 'The MMD was an elite movement of trade union leaders and business leaders that had built up a mass following' (Arnold 2005: 818). Chiluba and his government quickly realized the weaknesses of Kaunda's socialist policies and so set about organizing the country according to the liberal free-market system of capitalism. Whether this was the best solution, however, is yet to be seen. 'Mr Chiluba enjoyed some early successes. He brought inflation down from over 100 per cent to only 20 per cent in 1999' (Guest 2004:153).

In December of his first year as president, Chiluba declared Zambia a Christian Nation amid considerable criticism from various sectors of society, including from the hierarchy of the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations. His two terms in office as Head of State were characterized by what came to be known as the "new culture". In essence, what this meant was the undoing of everything Kaunda and UNIP had done; Zambia's economy was liberalized with many of the parastatals created by the former government sold to individual ownership; user fees for most services, from schooling to health, were introduced. In the ten years that Chiluba was at the helm of the country, he and his government attempted to eradicate all traces of UNIP and Kaunda from the collective consciousness of the country. Christianity, as understood by Chiluba, became the new principle for organizing life in society.

Change, however, is not to be equated with progress. By voting for Chiluba, the masses had hoped that the change would also bring about progress. But after ten years in office, it became

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<sup>17</sup> This was a clear sign of the rejection of Kaunda's ideology and policies.

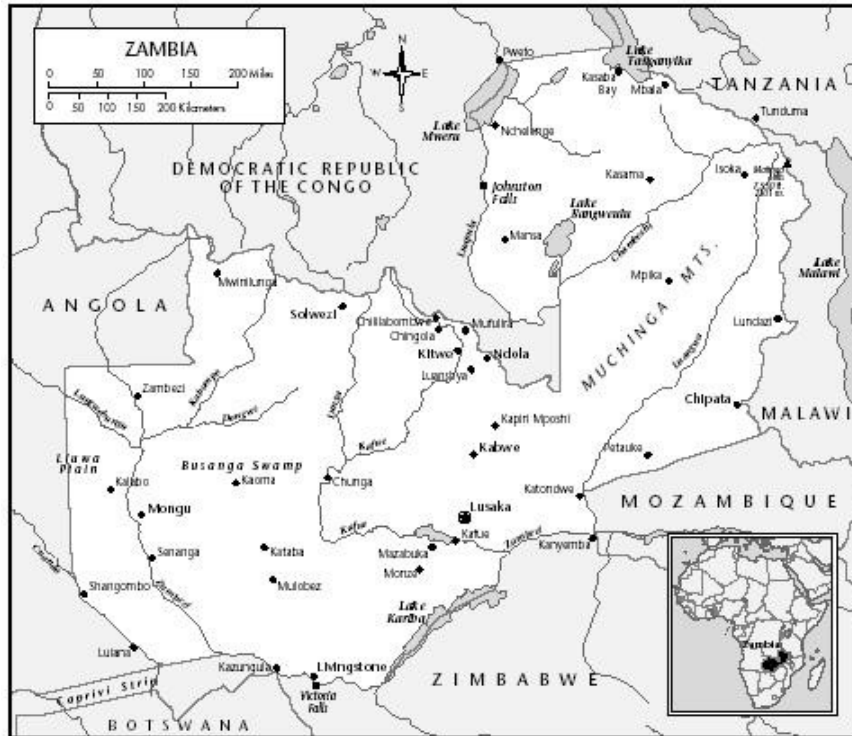
clear to many that Chiluba and his government had failed to bring about much of the progress they had promised. According to Robert Guest,

the reforms stalled as Mr Chiluba's venal cronies began to loot the country. Corruption under Mr Chiluba held Zambia back as surely as Mr Kaunda's socialism (2004:26).

## **2.7 Religion in Zambia**

When Chiluba sought to extend his mandate beyond the two terms allowed by the Constitution, he was bitterly opposed, forcing him to backtrack and not seek reelection for a third term. The churches, working together with other Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) and opposition political parties, organized public debates and rallies at which opposition to Chiluba's proposed move was clearly expressed. The influence of religion and specifically of Christianity in Zambia is evident. An estimated 72 per cent of the population consider themselves Christian, with Catholicism being the largest single form of organized religion in the country. The country's official religion has been Christianity since 1991 when President Chiluba officially declared it so. There are other religions present in Zambia, including a large Muslim population primarily in Eastern Province. This is the result of the immigration of Arabs from Tanzania, largely due to the slave trade. Hindus, Jews and other non-Christian religions combined comprise only about one per cent of the total population. Traditional African Religions of various kinds are also practiced by a large portion of the population even from among adherents of the various existing Christian denominations. These religions vary considerably, but most are based on beliefs in the power of ancestors and in nature. Missionaries of mainline churches have a long history in the country although for many years there have been Zambian priests, especially in cities and urban areas.





*Zambia and its neighbours*

## 2.8 Summary

The post independence history of Zambia has been a complex one. On the one hand, the country has experienced political stability, while on the other, its economy has performed badly. Socially, the country has had to deal with an ever changing set of social forces both internally and externally. Humanism, as described and implemented by Kaunda and his government, has played an important role throughout. According to many commentators, judged by its effects on the masses and not on the pronouncements of the elite, Kaunda’s experiment with humanism and socialism failed in many ways. Chiluba’s ‘new culture’ is also considered a failure. This chapter has described the colonial and postcolonial history of Zambia and has shown how and why humanism was introduced and became the dominant ideology in the first and second republics of the newly independent state of Zambia. It has also outlined the main areas in which the ideology played a significant role: social, economic and political. A detailed assessment of the ideology will be the core of the next chapter.

Without doubt, Kaunda’s humanism was a significant factor in the country’s immediate postcolonial history. As part of the implementation of the ideology, Kaunda nationalized a

number of companies. In doing this, he followed the common trend of socialism which advocates government involvement in economic activity. Against capitalism, Kaunda and other socialists such as Nyerere argue that private ownership of the means of production tends to create classes in society. To reverse the capitalist structure inherited at independence, Kaunda saw the nationalization of certain private businesses as the only way of furthering his humanist principles. Thus, without realizing it, Kaunda was engaging in what has come to be described as postcolonial discourse. He was involved in a process of deconstructing the inherited colonial worldview and at the same time proposing a new one. His context provided the background in which this was done.

## CHAPTER III

### **Kaunda's *Zambian humanism*: a description**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

Although literature on what is generally termed *Zambian humanism* exists in abundance,<sup>18</sup> it cannot be taken for granted that an actual phenomenon with specific content corresponding to the title actually exists. The meaning of both 'Zambian' and 'humanism' in the title are both controversial and debatable and must be explained and justified. J. A. van der Merwe (1993:86) further observes that '[t]he question can be raised whether *Zambian humanism* fulfils the requirements of an ideology and be described as such'. This chapter begins by providing justification for the chosen title used in this study: *Kaunda's *Zambian humanism**. It does not enter into the debate on whether or not the ideology is actually *Zambian* nor if it is really humanistic in the classical sense. The main reason for raising this matter is to point to the more important issue of the specificity of the ideology.<sup>19</sup> The core of the chapter attempts to describe the ideology as understood by Kaunda and other commentators. Kaunda has argued that 'Zambia can say with pride that its humanism is original' (Kaunda 1967:12), yet he is also able to admit that '[t]he philosophy of Humanism is not new to the life of Africa' (Kaunda 1988b:43). A critique of the ideology, as presented by Kaunda, concludes the chapter.

#### **3.1 *Zambian humanism* or *Kaunda's *Zambian humanism**?**

Literature with such titles as, '*Zambian humanism*,' '*Kaunda's humanism*,' '*Zambian socialism*' is abundant. An examination of published material reveals that none of the studies does an examining of the preferred name nor provides justification for the various names in use. Seldom are questions asked concerning the meaning of the term "*Zambian*" in the titles; do sufficient reasons exist for assuming that the majority of *Zambians* subscribed to the ideology? If not, should the ideology not be called *Kaunda's humanism* or at least *Kaunda's *Zambian humanism**? Tested data to this effect, to my knowledge, is unavailable. Therefore, in the absence of such data, in this study the longer title will be used, viz "*Kaunda's *Zambian humanism**" and its abbreviated form, "*Zambian humanism*". These will be used interchangeably to refer to the

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<sup>18</sup> A recent search on the search engine [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) showed 18,500 entries (accessed 17 March, 2009).

<sup>19</sup> Van der Merwe (1993:86) characterizes the ideology as being 'ideologically weak', lacking 'explicitness, systematisation and comprehensiveness', is 'sometimes even contradictory' and is also fundamentally ambivalent in its attitudes to the private sector'.

ideology created by Kenneth Kaunda and which he made the national philosophy and ideology of Zambia. The specific object of the study is, therefore, humanism as understood by Kenneth Kaunda and made the national ideology of Zambia.

### **3.2 Humanism in general**

The term humanism was obviously not coined by Kaunda. It had been used by others before him in a variety of contexts. According to Holmes and Bickers (1983:120): ‘The beginnings of humanism are normally associated with Petrarch (1307-74), one of the foremost poets associated with the [14<sup>th</sup>] century’. The term, however, carries many different connotations, which depend largely on what it is being contrasted with. Generally it refers to the tendency to emphasize the centrality, status, importance, authority and achievements of the human person (Honderich 1995:375). In Greek thought it can be traced back to the fifth century BC when philosophers such as the Sophists and Socrates began to focus their inquiry on social, political and moral issues rather than on the cosmos. During the Renaissance humanism denoted the move away from God to the human person as the center and measure of all things. Holmes & Bickers (1983:121) describe the classical humanist view as follows:

To the humanist the world was essentially good, a place to be admired for its beauty, the resources of which were to be enjoyed. Man (sic) himself was essentially or at least potentially good, separated from the rest of the world by his reason. This reason gave a person dignity, freeing him to develop all aspects of his life.

In the nineteenth century humanism acquired its modern association with atheism mainly due to the conflict between science and religion. Often called scientific humanism, it has since been associated with rationalism, not in its main philosophical sense, but rather in that of an appeal to reason in contrast to revelation or religious authority as the means to truth (Honderich 1995:376). According to John W. de Gruchy, the aim of Renaissance humanism was the transformation of a moribund Medieval scholastic culture and the renewal of culture, church and society through the retrieval of ancient textual resources and classical culture.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Professor de Gruchy taught at the University of Cape Town for more than thirty years while also serving as an associate minister of the Rondebosch United Church. During his career he has become internationally known for his contribution to the study of Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s theology, the history of the church and public theology in South Africa, and, more recently, theology and art.

Historically, humanism eventually came to stand for the affirmation of human dignity, equality, potential and freedom, and those associated values and virtues that provide a counter-force to the powers that denigrate humanity. Not everyone accepts such an understanding of humanism. For example, Christian humanism proposes a different understanding of humanism. Christian humanism was recovered during the mid-decades of the twentieth century within the Roman Catholic Church, notably in the writings of French moral philosophers such as Jacques Maritain and also in the work of the Jesuit priest and palaeontologist Teilhard de Chardin, whom Kaunda claims had an important influence in the development of his ideology. For Maritain, Christian humanism provided an alternative to the dehumanising totalitarian ideologies of his day while for de Chardin it expressed his conviction that the advances of evolutionary science and cosmology needed to be integrated into Christian faith. God, for both, is the source and origin of human dignity.

### **3.3 Kaunda's Zambian humanism**

What has been called Zambian humanism is generally understood to have been created by Kenneth Kaunda, Zambia's first republican president. Kaunda began his professional career as a teacher in British-controlled Northern Rhodesia. 'As an intellectual, he was particularly sensitive to the abuses which the Zambian people suffered under the colonial government' (Potholm 1979:99). His experience and anger at the petty, but universal racial discrimination is well documented in his autobiography, *Zambia shall be free*, published in 1962. It is, however, only in *A humanist in Africa*, first published in 1966, that Kaunda attempts to explain systematically his understanding of humanism. Kaunda explains, through a series of letters to his friend Colin Morris, what he considers to be the differences between African and western culture. His basic argument is that whereas the west is primarily occupied with industry and the development of sophisticated technologies, African culture's contribution lies in its emphasis on the importance of the human person (Potholm 1979:103).

Zambian humanism, as understood by Kaunda, is a combination of many elements which do not always fit together into an organic whole. This makes it difficult to provide a clear definition of

the ideology. The main ingredients of Kaunda's humanism are African Socialism,<sup>21</sup> radical Christianity, existential humanism and Kaunda's personal convictions.<sup>22</sup> He began, in 1967, 'to codify and promote as a national philosophy for Zambia his ideas of man's rights (sic) and duties in society' (Hall 1969:40). These were eventually published in two volumes under the title *Humanism in Zambia and a guide to its implementation*.

When Kaunda speaks about the human person he means the concrete human being. He argues that it is human beings who are and who should be the center of all activities. This is because human beings are the highest of all God's creatures. Further, he argues, 'African society has always been Man-centred' (Kaunda 1988b:45). In his speeches as president, Kaunda would constantly argue that humanism in Zambia accepts the universality of human beings and so rejects exploitation of any kind. Zambia, he urged, would fight against any forms of class distinctions among people and seek to create an egalitarian society in which individuals had equal rights, opportunities and dignity. This humanism would be the foundation of his socialism. Kaunda builds his anthropology around three qualities that he considers unique to human persons: the ability to suffer, the naming of human persons that makes them both unique and dependent on others and the fact that human beings should never be used as means to an end. The naming process is important in the thought of Kaunda because it is through naming that identity is conferred. These qualities will be explored in greater detail later.

The main motivation for proposing this ideology appears to have been the desire to create a national identity centered on the human person in the face of threats of neocolonialism and to promote unity in the newly independent country. These ideas were formally endorsed as the official national philosophy and ideology of Zambia by UNIP, the party in government, at its National Council<sup>23</sup> meeting on 26 April, 1967. The moral foundations of the ideology lay in the

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<sup>21</sup> African Socialism has been used to describe systems ranging from Marxism to liberalism. One common element that is present in the various forms of African Socialism is the desire to retain in the modern world the traditional African values (Hall 1969:40).

<sup>22</sup> According to Hall (1969:42), Kaunda's early years explain his religious intensity, which came down to him from Scottish missionaries. Kaunda claims that he often read the Bible. His intensity varied considerably during his reign as President.

<sup>23</sup> Theoretically, the highest organ of the governing party, UNIP, at national level was the General Conference which met once every five years and which elected the president of the party and 20 members of the Central Committee. Next in line in national importance was the National Council which met twice a year and was the policy-making body of the Party. It was this body that adopted the ideology.

roots of traditional African society. In a later work Kaunda gives the following as the background against which he developed the philosophy:

It was partly to throw off the moods of despair which from time to time threatened to destroy me that I prayed and thought my way through what has been somewhat grandly called the philosophy of Zambian Humanism. It is simply the goodness about man (sic) derived from my study of the Bible and other great writings, supplemented by my own experience (1980:164).

Kaunda's family background, which comprised both traditional African values and Christianity, explains why his philosophy was influenced by Christian principles even though it was meant to be a political ideology. Kaunda himself is not ashamed to profess the Christian basis of his philosophy as suggested by his assertion that he wanted to 'reassure you of the Christian basis of my humanism' (Kaunda 1966:66). He goes on to explain what he understands by Christian humanism.

By Christian humanism, I mean that we discover all that is worth knowing about God through our fellow men (sic) and unconditional service of our fellow men is the purest form of the service of God. I believe that Man must be the servant of a vision bigger than himself; that his path is illuminated by God's revelation and that when he shows love towards his fellow men, he is sharing the very life of God, who is Love. When Man learns, by bitter experience if in no other way, that the only hope for peace and happiness of the world is to give political and economic expression to love for others we shall have entered not the Kingdom of Man but the Kingdom of God (Kaunda 1966:39).

Kaunda asserts that Africans have no time for a religion that underscores the sinfulness and depravity of human beings. He, himself, subscribes to a Christianity that embraces hope in the human potential to overcome sin and weakness through the saving power of Jesus Christ (Kaunda 1966:39). Without this Christian virtue of hope the 'moods of despair' aroused by the inhuman treatment received by Africans at the hands of racist colonialists threatened to destroy Kaunda's faith in humanity's salvation.

In their 1977 study *Hope and Young* rightly conclude that 'Kaunda's political awakening was a gradual process, based on complex factors that he himself has found difficult to define' (:229). In

another place Kaunda himself states that humanism's 'basic tenets are nothing new. They can be found in many systems of thought, religious or non-religious throughout the recorded history of the world' (1987:2). He also points out that the same basic tenets of *Zambian humanism* are 'very much the core of the Christian Gospel' (1987:2).<sup>24</sup> It is such statements that beg the question whether there really is anything unique or specific to *Zambian humanism*. Kaunda does not offer a detailed explanation of his principles. He pays little attention to metaphysics and logic. His emphasis is on moral norms and moral exhortation, often phrased in biblical terms.

Kaunda's views have implications about the type of society most appropriate to postcolonial Zambia. *Zambian humanism*, Kaunda believed, provided the moral basis for all human activity in the country whether political, economic or social. Kaunda, therefore, makes the naïve connection between humanistic values and economic policy as if the former can automatically be translated into the latter, a theme that will be discussed in detail later. The philosophy was meant to be the social cement that held together and inspired the nation.

To appreciate fully why *Zambian humanism* was introduced and adopted as the national ideology it is necessary to recall again even briefly the social and political background against which this decision was made. To change the evil and unbearable situations brought about by colonialism,<sup>25</sup> the people of Zambia, known then as Northern Rhodesia, joined together and formed the Zambia African National Congress (ZANC)<sup>26</sup>, and later the United National Independence Party (UNIP), to spearhead the fight for freedom. It is significant that already during the struggle for independence, even while the battle against colonial oppression was at its most bitter point, UNIP consistently made it clear that the struggle was not racially or

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<sup>24</sup> A recurrent question is how Kaunda has reconciled his religiosity with his political actions. According to Hall (1969:51), '[i]t is sometimes contended that he operates on two levels, that he does not allow his right hand to know what he is doing with his left. Kaunda insists that there was no dichotomy'.

<sup>25</sup> From the late 1890s to 1924 present-day Zambia was governed by the British South Africa Company (BSAC). In 1924 the territory was handed over to the British Colonial Office and the area became known as the Protectorate of Northern Rhodesia. It was granted independence in 1964, taking the name Zambia.

<sup>26</sup> The Zambia African National Congress (ZANC) was formed on October 24, 1958 by former members of the African National Congress who left the latter due to their dissatisfaction with the leadership of its president, Harry Nkumbula. Sikalumbi (1977) has written detailed account of the challenges and struggles faced by the African nationalist organizations prior to the formation of UNIP.

On March 11, 1959, the ZANC was banned by the colonial administration and most of its leadership imprisoned. Upon their release from prison the leaders of the banned organization formed a new political party, the United National Independence Party (UNIP). It was this new party that was eventually formed the first government of independent Zambia in October 1964.



economically motivated, but by the desire for justice and human dignity. Kaunda and UNIP were concerned about the human person's condition. This was a rejection of the colonial worldview. As a result of this struggle, Northern Rhodesia became the independent Republic of Zambia on 24th October, 1964. Hinfelaar has concluded that

it was felt that the void created by the downfall of colonial ideology had to be filled quickly by a new and authentic system that would buttress the new nation-state and the United National Independence Party. This void began to be filled in 1967 with the launching of the Philosophy of Humanism by the national council of the Party (1994:151).

Zambian humanism was presented as an ideology of social, economic and political development arising from the unique circumstances of colonial oppression and the incorporation within it of the essential qualities of traditional African society. It favoured socialism against capitalism because it saw the basic assumption of capitalism – the private ownership of the principal means of production and free competition between owners for surplus – as evils that would destroy social relations in society.

According to Kaunda, Zambian humanism rests on the social values of traditional Zambian society as they were before these were distorted by the capitalist influences of western industrialisation and colonialism. These include the extended family, community, mutual aid and respect for persons. Both capitalism and colonialism as understood by him are founded on the exploitation of human beings by others. This is incompatible with Kaunda's vision of an egalitarian society.

Kaunda also discusses the benefits of industrialism and the use of modern technologies. The use of modern technology to develop and operate modern industrial society, he argues, is necessary, but warns that modern technology has potential risks for the human person. He is quick to point out that while technology usually requires skilled labour which implies higher wages, it can also lead to control of the wielder of technology, thus the tables being reversed with the human being becoming the slave of technology. However, unlike his counterpart, Nyerere, in Tanzania, Kaunda does not entirely oppose to the use of technology as long as this does not degrade the dignity of the human person.

### 3.4 Others' views on **Zambian humanism**

Kandeke identifies three schools on the historical origins of the ideology: one school holds 'that it is a formalisation and systematisation of value and social principles which were live realities in pre-colonial society'; a second school is that which sees humanism as 'a codification of the principles which the United National Independence Party adopted during the independence struggle'; and finally the third school is that which views humanism as 'the thoughts of President Kaunda' (Kandeke 1977:212).

Historian Hugo Hinfelaar says **Zambian humanism** 'was designed to be a political programme of liberal democracy based on Christian life found in the Acts of the Apostles, and on an idyllic pre-colonial tradition'(2004:219). He further sees that many 'tenets of **Zambian Humanism** were devised by missionaries, like the Methodist, the Reverend Colin Morris, who in turn were influenced by the optimistic vision of the French Jesuit, Teilhard de Chardin'<sup>27</sup> (2004:219).

Hall notes that 'Kaunda has been keenly influenced by Nyerere, but it would be wrong to suggest that his own brand of African Socialism – which he calls 'Humanism' – is merely derived from Ujamaa. There are marked differences between the intellectualism and grasp of the doctrine shown by Nyerere and the earnest highmindedness of Kaunda' (1969:41). The differences between the two will be described in detail in a later section.

Van der Merwe (1993) has identified six important characteristics of **Zambian humanism** as follows:

1. Idealization of traditional African society. Like other national philosophies of Africa **Zambian humanism** greatly values traditional African community which it claims was characterized by reciprocity, equality among members, mutual support, participation

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<sup>27</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) was born in France. At the age of eighteen he entered the Jesuit order in which he was later ordained a priest. As a paleoanthropologist he advocated a doctrine of cosmic evolution. His aim was to show that evolutionism does not entail a rejection of Christianity. The evolutionism he advocate is all-embracing and characterizes more than just living beings. He argued that long before human beings appeared on earth, the basic stuff of the cosmos was undergoing irreversible changes in the direction of greater complexity of organization. Human beings, he concluded, are also part of this process of evolution. The 'Point Omega', who is Christ is the end to which all is moving and in whom all will be fulfilled. ( Cf. Goudge 1967:374-376).

- in collective labour and decision-making, and the absence of exploitation of members by others;
2. It is an anthropocentric philosophy. The human person as person is placed at the centre of the philosophy;
  3. It is an African socialist ideology though socialism is seen as a means to achieving a humanist society. This differentiates it both from radical socialism and Western humanism;
  4. It is an eclectic philosophy which combines elements from modern political structures and from traditional African society, as well as combining capitalistic, socialist and populist strands;
  5. It is closely associated with Christian Protestantism though it also manifests a misinterpretation of Christian doctrine;
  6. It is an utopian philosophy which defines social development in moral and spiritual terms, failing however to clarify the economic relations necessary to create a 'good' society.

Another important source of Kaunda's humanism is the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi.<sup>28</sup> Of Gandhi's influence, Kaunda says: 'If I owe my faith to Jesus, Mahatma Gandhi supplied the hope' (1980:16). Kaunda further admits that 'Gandhi was my ideal. He brought to perfection all the qualities I was struggling to develop – self discipline, austerity, oneness with people – holiness that was not stuffy – sanctity with a sense of humour – and practical wisdom'(1980:16). And again, Kaunda admits that 'Gandhi's philosophy deepened and broadened my own thinking which had been based on a rather narrow but enthusiastic mission-station Christianity' (1980:16).<sup>29</sup> Prominent African historian, Ali Mazrui, sees Kaunda's concept of the state as being 'part Weberian, part Marxist, part Christian and Gandhian'(1976:157). This characteristic probably accounts for why Kaunda's humanism lacks a certain consistency and unity as a theory. It also confirms the already noted fact that the ideology is made up of a combination of various elements.

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<sup>28</sup> Kaunda has even been called 'The Gandhi of Africa'. See [www.geocities.com/kennethkaunda](http://www.geocities.com/kennethkaunda).

<sup>29</sup> 'Gandhi's philosophizing about the sacred nature of man is echoed in Kaunda's "Humanism", while his asceticism has also been matched: Kaunda has never drunk alcohol, coffee or tea, he does not smoke and refuses to eat red meat' (Hall 1969:46).

Kaunda was also influenced by Julius Nyerere though he claims to present his own form of African Socialism which differs from Nyerere's *Ujamaa*. Like Nyerere, however, Kaunda 'believes that African society must not lose sight of its traditional values, especially the extended family system' (Hall 1969:41).

Malone (1989) makes a distinction between *Zambian humanism* as a philosophy and *Zambian humanism* as an ideology as follows.

### **3.5 Kaunda's *Zambian humanism* as a philosophy**

As a philosophy, Malone says, *Zambian humanism* refers to ultimate and transcendent issues; the origin of the universe; the origin, nature and destiny of human beings, questions concerning truth, good, evil, suffering, life, death and after-life; and questions concerning the meaning of human existence and history. The starting point of humanism as a philosophy is the centrality of the human person. Kaunda states that 'we must remember that it is people above ideology; Man (sic) above institutions. We must continuously refuse to slavishly tie men to anything. Society is there because of Man' (1987a:4). In seeking to understand the meaning of the human person, *Zambian Humanism* emphasizes very strongly that the human being is not to be taken as a universal abstract like 'humanity' but rather as the 'common man' of unique worth and dignity (Malone 1989:7). Kaunda, himself, says, 'Man (sic) is not an abstraction, the subject of a theological sermon or a philosophical thesis. Man means my mother, my wife, my children, my friends, the citizens of my country' (1966:47).

*Zambian humanism* considers human nature to be basically good and refers to the destructive dimension in human beings as the 'animal', an inborn acquisitive instinct for wealth and for power. It is at this level that theological themes, to which we shall return, are most operative.<sup>30</sup>

### **3.6 Kaunda's *Zambian humanism* as an ideology**

Ideology has been defined as a 'set of ideas and beliefs which make clear what is valued and what is not, what must be maintained and what must be changed, and what shapes the attitudes of those who share it' (Jackson and Jackson 1997:151). In short, ideologies are blueprints for

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<sup>30</sup> 'Even when he does not refer to God specifically, his speeches are shot through with a fundamentalist attitude to good and evil' (Hall 1969:41).

action. However, there are many varying approaches to ideology, many of which are opposed to each other. Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger (1986: 281) identify four different levels at which the term can be understood. They are the epistemological level, the level of politics and economics, the level of sociology, and the level of religion. It is the second and the fourth levels that are of interest to this study. At the epistemological level, ideology is understood as an organic system of ideas that interprets reality from one specific perspective. On the level of politics and economics, ideologies are understood as world-views that have a specific political and economic outlook. The level of sociology represents the specifically Marxian understanding of ideology, which is more restricted and applies more to specific ideologies. The level of religion refers to those ideologies that acquire a totalitarian character, presenting an all-embracing answer to the human person's ultimate questions. Among this type would be included Hitler's nationalist socialism, fascism, and also some forms of Marxism-Leninism (1986: 284).

Jackson and Jackson identify several elements that are common to all ideologies:

- a. a negative perception of where society is headed;
- b. a reasoned view of what is wrong and why;
- c. a prescription to reform or overthrow the present system; and
- d. an attempt to form a movement which will follow the prescription to its natural conclusion (1997:151).

All ideologies promise perfection though they generally do not attain it. They are useful, however, for providing assumptions and values as common denominators from which political action is derived. As an ideology, therefore, Zambian humanism belongs to the general category of ideologies known as socialism. Since its birth in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, socialism has taken on various shades, some of which are opposed. The starting point of Zambian humanism as a political ideology is nationalism. Kaunda, however, emphasizes that whatever changes take place in society, people must be placed above ideology (1987a:4).

Zambian humanism refers more directly and specifically to a political philosophy – a branch of philosophy with a definite pragmatic aim, namely, to organize society for a specific purpose or goal. It has been identified as an ideology whose core is rooted in universal human values which,

although found in non-religious as well as religious systems of thought, are firmly rooted in a religious system of thought. *Zambian humanism* holds that human beings are basically and essentially good, that they are created in the image of God, and that they have inalienable rights. However, due to an acquisitive tendency within human beings for wealth and for power there is need for some form of legitimate authority to protect and promote the human rights of every individual.

Kaunda argues that his ideology is primarily humanist and not socialist; the central focus is the involvement of the individual person whose worth and active contribution to the development of a non-exploitative society are crucial. 'Zambian Humanism recognizes that there is only one kind of socialism and accepts its basic principles and laws of social development' (Kandeke 1977:24). Socialism focuses primarily on social structures and relationships. One can be a socialist without necessarily being a humanist, but one cannot be a humanist without being a socialist. Being committed to the human person necessarily requires developing proper interpersonal relationships. Humanism views human beings in a unitary and holistic way, refusing to compartmentalize them into artificial categories. The two greatest enemies of the humanist society are identified as capitalism as a socio-economic system and totalitarianism as a socio-political system. Against capitalism is used African socialism and against totalitarianism African participatory democracy. The general theoretical framework within which *Zambian humanism* locates its understanding of democratic socialism is a religious one in which belief in God is a basic tenet.

### **3.7 Main elements of *Zambian humanism***

Kaunda developed a political philosophy which is somewhat similar, but not identical to Nyerere's *Ujamaa*. As he describes it, *Zambian humanism* is based on traditional African values and is rooted in Christian principles. According to Malone (1989:8), Kaunda's humanism combines the 'normal meaning of socialism and the personal involvement of the individual in the act of goodness'. Further, Malone observes that humanism emphasizes the 'vital importance of the spiritual, moral and religious needs of human beings on one hand, and their physical and material needs on the other hand' (:9). Hall notes that only by 'constant reference to the way in which religion dominates him can Kaunda's actions be fully understood. Without his faith and the conviction that God has imposed a duty upon him he could not go on as a leader, claims

Kaunda (1969:41). There are three elements that are clearly identifiable in this ideology: (1) the centrality of the human person, (2) the crisis of economic development, and (3) the dilemmas of control and class formation.

#### *4. The centrality of the human person*

The human person is central in Kaunda's ideology, but it is not the human person as defined in the absolute sense of rationalist humanism. For Kaunda, the human person cannot be understood apart from God. In fact, for him, Jesus Christ is the 'Man against whom all men (sic) must measure themselves' (Kaunda 1966:39). What is immediately evident in the speeches of Kaunda is the fact that underling his ideology is the search for an African identity. His ideology, like that of Nyerere and other postcolonial thinkers, embodies a cluster of ideas through which he was searching for what it means to be African.

#### *5. The crisis of economic development*

One of the most significant features of African Socialism is its identification with economic development. Both Kaunda and Nyerere did not see their ideologies as purely political, but tended to identify them with economic development. By doing this they made an important connection between economic development and the public sector's involvement in economic activities through the state. The accumulation of capital was seen as being primarily a responsibility of government. Foreign investment was discouraged and various forms of local cooperatives were encouraged to setup business-like ventures.

#### *6. The dilemmas of control and class formation*

The drive for independence and for economic development following independence created serious problems of control for leaders of the new states. The colonialists had been replaced and parts of the civil service may have changed, but many elements and attitudes of colonialism still remained. The end of colonialism had not immediately brought the substantial betterment of life for the majority. Faced with unfulfilled promises ideology played an extremely useful role in organizing populations for economic development. It provided the unifying doctrine similar to the nationalism of the pre-independence period. To prevent the rise of social and economic classes the socialist ideologies promoted cooperation and equality.

The view of human nature underlying Kaunda's and Nyerere's ideologies rejects the individualistic philosophy dominant in the west. They hold a view of human nature which they believe rests on the fundamental characteristics of traditional society: classless, communal, and egalitarian. What is emphasized is that it is only inside a given society that an individual can find fulfillment. It is society that gives the individual shape, form and cohesion.

### **3.8 Kaunda's Zambian humanism and capitalism<sup>31</sup>**

Emphasis in Zambian humanism is placed on the equality of all human beings, regardless of colour or creed. It is therefore a socialist ideology. Kaunda's humanism, however, places the human person, the individual person, and not society at the centre of all activity and rejects any forms of human exploitation. Material advancement based upon the profit motive is not enough, it argues. In the Preamble to *Humanism in Zambia*, part I, Kaunda insists that although humanism is an ideology, it is human beings as concrete subjects who are the centre of all activities and the ideology; 'it is people above ideology; Man (sic) above institutions' (1987a:4). Thus, it is not only radically different from capitalism, but rather stands in opposition of this system which is seen as being based on exploitation of some human beings. Unlike communism which seeks to abolish the private ownership of property and to create a classless society, Zambian humanism allows for some private ownership of property. 'Zambian Humanism holds that all human beings, however acute their superficial differences might be, and in spite of their differences in cultural achievements, are in essence the same' and it too seeks to create a classless society (Kandeke 1977:33).<sup>32</sup>

### **3.9 Kaunda's Zambian humanism and Communism**

Zambian humanism also rejects and is opposed to Marxist-Leninist communism because of its atheism. The two are different ideologies with different philosophical beliefs about human persons. Although both believe in humanism, they do not understand it in the same way. Karl

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<sup>31</sup> For Kaunda and other first-generation African leaders,

colonialism was judged to be synonymous with Western civilization and Capitalism. Therefore, if colonialism was evil, so too must be capitalism. Consequently, the rejection of colonialism simultaneously meant the rejection of Western institutions as well, even those erroneously perceived as such (Ayittey 1992:10).

<sup>32</sup> Hall points out that Zambian Humanism is 'not an idea with much support from economic planners and development experts, who see the only reliable approach as exploiting self-interest' (1969:51).



Marx (1818-83), the radical social theorist and organizer of the working class, was a thoroughgoing atheistic humanist who devoted his life's work to the task of doing away with human exploitation and to bringing about a better world – a world in which all human beings might live in peace and in which human potential might be enabled to grow and develop in true freedom. However, unlike Zambian humanism, Marx saw belief in God and organized religion as an obstacle in bringing this about. 'Religion, according to Marx, gives expression to a mode of life which is really empty, unfulfilled, degraded, devoid of meaning' (Honderich 1995:525). Religious illusions have hold on us because they promote a false semblance of meaning and fulfillment. Religion is actually the 'opium of the people', Marx argued. Zambian humanism, as shown above is not only opposed to such a view, it is in fact very religious. In fact, Kaunda believes that God is 'all-embracing and cannot be limited by Christianity' (Hall 1969:50).

### **3.10 Principles of Kaunda's humanism**

Among the central principles of Zambian Humanism highlighted by Kaunda (2007a: IV) are the following:

- a. The human person at the center – the human person is not defined according to his color, nation, religion, creed, political leanings, material contribution or any matter.
- b. The dignity of the human person - Humanism teaches us to be considerate to our fellow human beings in all we say and do.
- c. Non-exploitation of Man by Man (sic) - Humanism abhors every form of exploitation of human beings
- d. Equal opportunities for all - Humanism seeks to create an egalitarian society--that is, a society in which there is equal opportunity for self-development for all.
- e. Hard work and Self-reliance - Humanism declares that a willingness to work hard is of prime importance; without it nothing can be done anywhere.
- f. Working together - The national productivity drive must involve a communal approach to all development programs. This calls for a community and team-spirit.

g. The extended family - under the extended family system no old person is thrown to the dogs or to the institutions like old people's homes.

h. Loyalty and patriotism - only in dedication and loyalty can unity subsist.

These principles are general. They, however, give in summary the main points of the ideology.

### **3.11 Implementation of Zambian humanism**

Kaunda, as president of Zambia, made the State the custodian of humanism. Its implementation, however, proved very difficult. Zambia is the only known country so far to have officially adopted humanism as the national ideology and philosophy and to have actively attempted to build the country on the foundations of such an ideology. This in itself is sufficient to have caused problems at the level of translation from theory to praxis, of implementation.

As part of the process of institutionalizing Zambian humanism, education authorities were instructed to teach the philosophy as a subject in schools and colleges (Mwanakatwe 1994:50). Civil servants were required to be conversant with the principles of humanism and to undergo various training sessions in the philosophy. According to some sources, promotions in the civil service depended on performance in examinations on Zambian humanism.

Other measures taken to implement the philosophy include the creation of a government ministry of 'National Guidance'<sup>33</sup> created specifically for the purpose of teaching the principles of humanism to members of the public through seminars, workshops and conferences (Mwanakatwe 1994:50). The President's Citizenship College (PCC) at Mulungushi offered seminars and short courses in humanism. At the University of Zambia an institute of African Studies was established and a chair of human relations created with the aim of furthering academic study of the ideology at tertiary level.

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<sup>33</sup> In April 1969, Kaunda, as President of Zambia, established a Ministry of National Guidance to advance the cause of promoting humanism, the national philosophy.

The media were also expected to play its role in promoting and popularizing the philosophy. The week before Independence Day (October 24) was celebrated each year as Humanism Week. During this time various activities would be organized both at national and local levels with the aim of engaging the masses in activities that promoted awareness of the ideology. In a very careful way, the UNIP government under Kaunda tried to translate the principles of humanism into social practice. The full impact of these efforts is difficult to assess. It is clear, however, that at the economic level the ideology failed. Zambia's poor economic performance during the reign of Kaunda and the ideology's immediate abandonment by the MMD government confirm its failure.

### **3.12 Humanism and Kaunda's economic reforms**

Although at independence in 1964 Zambia was among the most developed countries economically, it faced many challenges, some of which led Kaunda and his government to make radical decisions. For example, at independence, Zambia was one of the least developed countries in education on the African continent, with only about 100 university graduates, 1500 graduates with secondary school certificates and about 6000 with two years of secondary school education. Faced with such a situation Kaunda and his government set out to respond in the way they thought best.

Nearly four years after independence, in 1968, Kaunda introduced economic reforms. In a sense, these reforms were an extension of humanism. With the reforms of 1968 Kaunda set out to answer the question of the ownership of the means of production of wealth and of its distribution. 'Humanism restricted business ownership and the lobbying activity of the private sector' (Rakner 2003:47).

Zambian humanism meant changing an essentially capitalist-oriented society into an egalitarian one (Mwanakatwe 1994:60). In the economic sphere Zambian humanism attempted to maintain a balance between changes brought about by a money economy and the traditional African economy which was essentially a non money economy. It is beyond the scope of this study to assess the success or failure of this move. Suffice it to say that some, for example Frederick Chiluba, Zambia's second president, have linked the socio-economic difficulties experienced by the country to the UNIP government's policies. The UNIP government is accused of having had

good intentions, but that it lacked the ability and political astuteness to plan and implement a logical economic programme that would have enabled Zambia to utilize its strong human and natural resource potential for viable economic development.

### **3.13 The reception of Kaunda's humanism**

*A Concise Dictionary of Theology* defines reception as 'The process by which official teachings and decisions are accepted and interpreted by the whole Church' (O'Collins & Farrugia 1991:200). While this definition is given from a specifically theological perspective, it is very much applicable to other disciplines as well. The same authors also note that it takes time before the pronouncements of an ecumenical council, and indeed any new ideas, such as Kaunda's humanism was, can be fully known, understood and received by the majority of people these are intended for. And so, it might yet be still early to appreciate the full impact of humanism on Zambia as a nation and on its citizens.

One way to assess the reception of humanism is to revisit the stated aims of the ideology and then to evaluate whether or not these have been achieved. Open criticism of humanism during the years that Kaunda was president was rare. According to some observers, Kaunda's ideology was never strongly rooted in the Zambian community, even among government officials who paid mere lip-service, but without deep and genuine conviction that it was useful in the nation-building effort (Mwanakatwe 1994: 127). Academics and intellectuals were reluctant to accept and propagate humanism because they found it to be neither an academic philosophy nor an ideology; it lacked the theoretical base by which the world could be analyzed and from which action could be taken. According to Hall (1969:51), 'Among the younger and better educated Zambians there was also a sharp rise in cynicism'.

Its link with Christianity also made it controversial. For example, in 1979, the three mother bodies of the Christian churches in Zambia, the Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC), the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), published a letter in which they expressed support for Zambian humanism as expressed by Kaunda and UNIP, and opposed the introduction of Scientific Socialism. Hinfelaar, however, is critical of the churches' support of humanism. In his view, 'Humanism was devised by a group of European and African young men and the women were never fully integrated into its vision of the new

Nation-State' (1994:154). Whatever its merits, he writes, 'it was imposed on the people, in particular on the women, by a group of successful politicians, aided by the often mythical and possibly outdated Western presupposition of a *Le-bon-Savage dogma*' (1994:153). He concludes that the churches were too anxious to 'collaborate with the government in its development programme [...] seemed to turn a blind eye to the structural and ideological defects of the country' (1994:154).

To Hinfelaar's critique, Kaunda's response is:

The beauty of it is that we knew what we wanted to achieve and how to achieve it. It was not just the leadership imposing this. Our people were committed to the philosophy of *Zambian Humanism*' (Kaunda 2007a:IV).

#### **6.14 A different analysis of humanism's reception in Zambia**

Zambia achieved independence under circumstances which seemed unfavorable to socialist development. The educated population of the country was tiny and largely ignorant of socialist theory; the nationalist movement had concentrated almost entirely on liberation from colonial rule, with little thought about the regime which would follow liberation and the economy was largely dependent on the foreign-controlled mining industry. However, in spite of these unfavorable conditions, an ideology emerged in Zambia following independence which closely resembled the "African Socialism" of other African nations. Stephen Quick's study of Kaunda's humanism argues that the main reason why it failed at the level of implementation is that it was applied in one area only, the agriculture sector.

Quick notes that in a number of respects, Kaunda's ideology diverged from 'classical' socialism (1979:90). He notes that Kaunda tended to reflect an idealized traditional society. The class structure of Zambian society was not recognized; as a consequence there was a failure to anticipate the struggle which would be required to transform that society in the direction of socialism. 'Humanism', he says, 'defined the process of social development in moral and spiritual terms and was vague about the specific kinds of economic relationships required to create the good society. Finally, Humanism was primarily a utopia – a vision of abstract and amorphous quality (Quick 1979:90). While it provided an impetus for Zambian decision-makers

to think about socialist policies for development, when it came to practical policymaking, it became clear that conditions were not conducive to socialist development in most areas of Zambia, argues Quick.

Since independence the industrial sector of Zambia has been completely dominated by the foreign-owned copper industry. The industry has been essential to the economy. After independence it could not be nationalized because there were virtually no Zambians with the managerial or technical expertise to keep the mines in operation (Quick 1979:90). During the colonial era the copper mining companies had prevented Africans from being anything but laborers, and had reserved managerial and technical positions entirely for Europeans. In addition to making nationalization impossible, this policy established significant income differentials between European and African personnel.

In addition to the copper industry, the industrial sector of Zambia has had a small but active domestic entrepreneurial class. The political power of this class has been limited because many of the entrepreneurs were of Asian origin. The continued existence of this petit-bourgeois sector contributed to the formation of economically based social classes in post-independence Zambia, and it became a focal point of resistance to the creation of socialism.

Following independence the new state lacked the personnel and data for effective economic planning. At the time of independence, there were less than one hundred African university graduates in all of Zambia and only one thousand African secondary school graduates. The colonial policy of minimal educational development left Zambia heavily dependent on foreign resources to run the economy.

Another significant factor in the political economy of Zambia has been the close link between the country and the international capitalist system. This, in many ways, has limited the freedom of maneuver of the country, and has been conducive to the penetration of the state by capitalist ideas and values. Kaunda's government, however, made some major attempts to control the operations of international firms in the economy. Soon after independence, several parastatal companies were established to encourage and control future foreign investment, and in 1968 a series of reforms was announced which placed these companies firmly at the center of the

economic life of the country. Much of the activity of these institutions, however, involved cooperation with multinational firms in new investment, negotiating the takeover of existing enterprises with such firms, or seeking managerial and technical advice about the running of state economic organizations from these firms. This inevitably resulted in close integration between the parastatals and multinationals, which led to the development of a similarity in their outlook. This outlook tended to reflect the views of the companies more strongly than the views of the Zambian government (Quick 1979:92).

In the realm of ideology and organization, newly independent Zambia was extremely weak. Humanism was not fully articulated as the national ideology until 1968, and even then it was perceived by most Zambians as only a vague set of moral principles and not a meaningful guide to action. No attempt was made to systematize and publicize the ideology, and most Zambians had no idea how it might relate to their daily lives (Quick 1979:93). It also appears that most UNIP members did not understand or did not accept the basic premises of humanism. This was the cause of a great deal of ideological conflict at the elite level. Party discipline was largely ineffective, especially in controlling elitism, and as a result many national leaders used their offices to enrich themselves to such an extent that political office soon came to be associated with economic prosperity – a development which further weakened any interest in socialism.

There were relatively few obstacles to socialist development in the agriculture sector, and it rapidly became clear that this sector would be the primary target for Kaunda's transformational efforts. Zambian agriculture was essentially a three-tiered system, with a small number of large-scale European commercial farmers at the top, a substantial number of medium-scale African commercial farmers in the middle, and a very large number of small-scale and subsistence cultivators at the bottom. The European farmers were not as essential to the Zambian economy as were the European copper producers, and they were not particularly well-connected with the UNIP; as a result, major concessions would not have been made to them. A similar situation obtained with regard to the African commercial farmers. The African commercial farmers were thus not closely associated with the new government, but they were of substantial importance to the economy, and policymakers did not want to antagonize them to the point where they might have sabotaged production (Quick 1979:93-95).

One of the first policies Kaunda outlined for the new Zambian government was a massive program of collective agriculture through a network of farming cooperatives. Cooperatives rather than state farms or communes were chosen because they appeared to fit better with the traditional social unit of the village, and because they offered the hope of collectivization without the bureaucratic incompetence and the alienation of the masses which Kaunda saw as growing out of a state farm system.

Quick makes this very instructive observation:

While this “socialist approach” was shaping up in the agriculture sector, decisions were made not to pursue a socialist path of development in the other four sectors. In the industrial sector, multinationals were allowed to remain dominant, private ownership was accepted in the small-scale manufacturing and trading sector, and massive wage increases were granted African mineworkers; comprehensive economic planning was abandoned as an impossible goal; investments and advisors continued to be sought from capitalist firms and countries; and in the realm of ideology and politics, Humanism remained abstract and incomprehensible to most Zambians, the UNIP was allowed to collapse, and government officials were not constrained in their pursuit of personal enrichment. Agriculture was the only area in which Zambia was preparing to follow a socialist model (1979:95).

It is this decision, to apply the socialist model only to the agriculture sector, that was the major contributing factor to the failure of Zambian humanism, Quick argues.

Although the cooperative movement was central to President Kaunda’s vision of Zambian rural society, he had difficulty persuading the nation’s political elite to accept his view. On several occasions he tried to mobilize the UNIP to the task of cooperative development and each time he received rhetorical support, but no firm commitment to action. The reasons for the party’s refusal were complex (Quick 1979:96). Despite the party’s unwillingness to back his call for cooperatives, Kaunda remained convinced of their importance, and concluded that he would have to go around the party if he were to get anything done. Accordingly, in January 1965 Kaunda made a major speech in which he called on the people of Zambia to form cooperative societies. This was enthusiastically received by the rural masses who perceived it as the government’s answer to the problem of rural stagnation (1979:96). Kaunda was able to mobilize mass enthusiasm for his cooperative ideal through exhortation, but he was experienced enough to



recognize that enthusiasm was not enough to make a successful movement. The enthusiasm had to be tempered with organization, and since the UNIP had abdicated organizational responsibility, the President turned to the civil service for help in disciplining and supervising the drive for cooperatives. Kaunda himself did not want to push for a total commitment to collectivization. His orientation toward problem-solving was eclectic and pragmatic, and he saw nothing wrong with experimentation and competition between programs. He strongly rejected coercion, which led him to prefer voluntary to mandatory collectivization. As a result of all these factors, collectivization through cooperatives never became the regime's *only* rural development policy.

The decision to allow several different approaches to rural development at the same time was to create major problems and eventually significantly contributed to the failure of the experiment. Apart from the lack of suitably qualified personnel to implement the policies of government, there were also financial complications. Money, made available by government through loans to cooperative societies, either did not reach the intended recipients or was received as wages and never repaid, thus depleting government resources for the project. When the difficulties were communicated to Kaunda, whose vision anticipated no difficulties in implementation, he interpreted them as typical manifestations of bureaucratic fear of innovation and refused to change tactic.

Productivity and profitability are the principal evaluative criteria of capitalist economic organization, and while they are by no means irrelevant to economic calculation under socialism, they are not the only standards by which socialist economic activity is to be judged. In Zambia, the lack of a planning system which could take other standards into account, and the unwillingness to make difficult political choices, meant that productivity and profitability became the sole evaluative criteria, which was disastrous for the cooperative movement.

In the realm of ideology, humanism failed to provide an accurate analysis of Zambian society; as a consequence, there was a failure to anticipate the problems to which the cooperative-based rural development might lead. Kaunda failed to achieve the acceptance and internalization of humanist values by the elite. In the area of organization, the political superstructure was almost wholly unprepared to support a socialist rural development program.

A lack of measures to control elitism was another major weakness in the political structure. Not only were attempts to impose a leadership code effectively resisted, but national politicians became heavily invested in the ownership of private businesses and farms – which was against the socialist ideal. For Quick, the main cause of humanism’s failure in Zambia was because it was applied in one sector only – agriculture.

### **3.15 Summary**

This chapter has explored the meaning of Zambian humanism, as understood by its main proponent, Kenneth Kaunda and by others. As a philosophy and an ideology, humanism draws from and is rooted in traditional African values, African Socialism and Christianity. This makes it difficult to pinpoint what is unique to the ideology. Although it places the human person at the centre of all activity, unlike other secular humanistic philosophies, however, the human person in Zambian humanism is only conceivable in relation to God. As described in this chapter, the aim of Zambian humanism was to give meaning to political and economic activities of Zambia. It has been questioned by some observers whether it was necessary to marry the ideology to economic activity. This, they argue, was the greatest weakness of Kaunda’s experiment. Kaunda, however, saw the area of economic activity as holding the key to national development. This area will be investigated in greater detail later.

Kaunda’s ideology was as an attempt to assert the independence of African identity in relation to colonialist domination. Kaunda felt Zambia needed to cut the ideological as well as political ties with its colonial master. What Kaunda was expressing was the need for independence from colonialism. This was the essence of Zambian humanism. To translate this into economic policy proved disastrous. This raises the more fundamental question of morality and economic policy in general. Much has been written about Adam Smith’s idea of the Hidden Hand in capitalism and whether personal greed actually ultimately leads to a kind of distributive benevolence. Conversely socialism appears far more moral/sacrificial but because of its inherently demanding nature, that is, it appeals to the higher value of sharing which capitalists argue is not fundamental to human nature whereas greed is. This ultimately leads to forcing people to share which in turn leads to more centralized control. Stalin’s Russia is a classical case in point.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Nürnberg (1998) does a critical and analytical study of the two approaches from a Christian perspective. While acknowledging that both classical capitalism and radical socialism are flawed, he suggests that social democracy, as

The relative peace and stability which Zambia has enjoyed as a country since independence has been seen by many as one of the most significant fruits of Kaunda's humanism. Kandeke (1977:218) argues that whether 'new intellectuals in Zambia and elsewhere in(sic) the continent embrace Humanism or, in rejecting it, are pushed into creating new African world views – Zambian humanism remains a stepping stone on the long road to the indigenisation of African thought in the contemporary world'. This, in my view, is the most significant and enduring contribution of Kaunda's Zambia humanism both to the development of Zambia as a modern nation-state and to postcolonial discourse.

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practiced in Sweden is much more acceptable. Social democracy' is a capitalist system which has been modified in the direction of social concerns' (Nürnberg 1998:272).

## CHAPTER IV

### Main themes in Kaunda's Zambian humanism

#### 4.0. Introduction

The main reason why Kaunda rejected Scientific Socialism is that as a philosophy Scientific Socialism denies both the existence and the relevance of God. It has a negative perception of organized religion which it actively seeks to obliterate. For Scientific Socialism, at least as manifested through Communism, the human person and human relations have absolute priority and relevance. Kaunda's ideology also places the human person as the centre of reality, but it understands the human person as having meaning and dignity only because of the human person's relationship to God. In this view it is God<sup>35</sup> who is the foundation for all reality, including human reality. And so, Kaunda does not hesitate to call his humanism Christian. For example 1966 he wrote:

By Christian humanism, I mean that we discover all that is worth knowing about God through our fellow men (sic) and unconditional service of our fellow men is the purest form of service of God. I believe that Man must be the servant of a vision which is bigger than himself; that his path is illuminated by God's revelation and that when he shows love towards his fellow men, he is sharing the very life of God, who is Love (Kaunda 1966:39).

Kaunda's views on God and human beings form the basis of his theology. Theology here is understood as more than scholarship. It is the way belief in God and religion makes sense within a particular culture and context (Bevans 1994:7). Before attending to the issue of Zambian humanism and local theology, it is necessary to examine some of the themes and motifs identified thus far.

#### 4.1 Anthropology of Zambian humanism

The centrality of the human person is the fundamental presupposition of Zambian humanism. Kaunda first articulated his understanding of the human person<sup>36</sup> in *A humanist in Africa* (1966).

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<sup>35</sup> Later in his life Kaunda has preferred to refer to himself no longer as a Christian, but as a 'Godman'. 'He explains that God is all-embracing and cannot be limited by Christianity' (Hall 1969:50). Although Kaunda's religious enthusiasm has varied considerably, he has always maintained his religious fervour.

<sup>36</sup> Although Kaunda repeatedly uses what is now considered exclusive language, there is no hint in his usage of the term 'man' in an exclusive sense. For the sake of gender sensitivity, unless in direct quotations, more gender inclusive terms have been employed.

Having argued that people have the right to know their leaders' code of values and readily acknowledging the fact that he does not develop his philosophy in a systematic way, Kaunda goes on to explain his understanding of the human person. Kaunda calls himself a humanist because of his passionate belief in the dignity and possibilities of the human person. In *Letter to my children*, he says, 'My conversion to Humanism dates from the time when I realized that the things which unite men(sic) are more important and enduring than those which divide them' (1973:133). For him, the human person is both the concrete individual and all human beings.

Kaunda was influenced greatly in his thinking by Teilhard de Chardin's work, *The future of man*, most especially by de Chardin's idea of the human person's growing capacity to situate the self in space and time to the point of becoming conscious of the human person's place and responsibility in relation to the whole created order. Recognizing de Chardin's vision as being broader than his own, Kaunda interprets the former and appropriates that vision to suit his purpose. For Kaunda, to situate oneself in space and time is to discover one's identity, which for Africans colonialism had attempted to distort. Being conscious of the human person's place and responsibility in relation to the universe highlights the dignity and stature of human existence. The challenge as Kaunda sees it is for Zambians in the post colonial context to rediscover and reaffirm their identity as human beings and as Africans.

According to Kaunda, the nationalist struggle against colonialism was meant to restore confidence in the humanity of the colonized natives. He believes that political independence was eventually won because the non violent means used were morally superior and recognized the humanity of all, even of the oppressors. For him, it was the triumph of a human centered society over a power centered one. Understood from this perspective, the independence struggle is a struggle for the right to exist and to define oneself according to one's culture, beliefs and traditions.

In Zambian humanism the human person is further seen as part of nature created by the Supreme Being identified as God. For Kaunda, the basic struggle of humanity is to achieve true humanity, which is not a given but which must be achieved through proper relationships with nature and with other human beings. This view is not too different from what has been called the philosophy of 'ubuntu'. Zambian humanism shares de Chardin's evolutionary view of human beings. This is

understood as an evolution of consciousness rather than biological evolution. According to Kaunda, we can trace the evolution of human consciousness even through the legal structure of society. He states, for example, that human beings today no longer consider slavery, the subordination of women, child labour and racial discrimination as either inevitable or desirable. Kaunda believes that through the struggle against the animal instinct human beings are able to develop their conscience and so become more human.

Kaunda singles out three basic qualities that he considers unique to human beings in support of his basic presupposition (1966:44-46): the capacity to suffer, specific names given to human beings, and the human person as an end.

#### **4.2 Human beings and the capacity to suffer**

The first quality that Kaunda identifies as being a uniquely human quality is the human capacity to suffer. As an exponent of the philosophy of non-violence, Kaunda claims to have given much thought and reflection to the role and function of human suffering, and is convinced that only human beings of all creatures have the capacity to suffer as opposed to merely feeling pain. Suffering, he argues, is the ability to understand and use pain in a constructive way. Pain can bring out the highest and the lowest qualities in human beings. It can reduce human beings to the level of mere non rational animals or it can be transformed and even become salvific. For Kaunda, the key to the philosophy of non-violence is that it transforms pain into suffering; it welcomes the pain caused by others and uses the same to transform relationships. Kaunda's views on suffering and violence are well articulated in his 1980 book, *Kaunda on violence*. Here, one finds Kaunda struggling with the dilemma of violence and non violent struggle. Ghandi's philosophy is very evident in Kaunda's thinking.

For Kaunda, '[t]o be a Man(sic) implies a willingness to accept the responsibility and dignity of suffering; where this capacity is lost, Man once again takes his place in the animal world'(1966:44). This is very reminiscent of the idea of suffering which is linked to the kenosis, the self-emptying of God so as to save creation(see Philippians 2:6). This then becomes the basis of an ethic that is written into the very structure of the universe. Ellis and Murphy in their book *On the Moral Nature of the Universe* (1996) follow this idea.

### **4.3 Human beings as named beings**

The second quality of being human identified by Kaunda consists in human beings having names. According to his argument, in many traditional African societies, every person is given a special name to describe some particular experience or desirable attributes of the person or to record some significant event associated with the person. Naming among such cultures is ‘the product of their humanism’ (Kaunda 1966:45). The importance in having a name for the human being is that it speaks both of the person’s uniqueness and relationship to those around from whom the name is derived. The name of the individual person also points to the fact that every person is unrepeatable and yet is also a dependent being (1966:45). These two elements, uniqueness and relatedness, give the person the identity which links that person to history.

### **4.4 Human beings are always ends in themselves**

The third and most important element, according to Kaunda, is that the human person is intended to be an end in self and not as a means to some other end. Kaunda appeals to the Genesis account of the creation of human beings in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27-28) to support his argument. One of the implications of this identification is in the rejection of capitalism which is seen as being materialistic, using human beings as means to the end of profit-making.

Humanism’s belief in the dignity of every human person is both the starting point and the central core of the philosophy. As has already been pointed out, for Kaunda the human person is not some abstraction, the subject of a theological sermon, or even a philosophical thesis, but a ‘concrete’ human being. The human person is in the first place a mother, wife, child, friend, etc who deserves individual and personal recognition. This understanding of the human person is not different from that found in many traditional African societies.<sup>37</sup>

An assessment of the three qualities will be done later, in the section dedicated to the theological reading of *Zambian humanism*.

### **4.5 Is *Zambian humanism* a *Christian humanism*?**

Although there is evidence of a Christian presence in present-day *Zambia* through contact with Portuguese-speaking Dominican missionaries going as far back as 1730, it is only from the end

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<sup>37</sup> Many studies such as those done by Mbiti (1970) and Menkiti (1979) have come to similar conclusions.

of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that a well documented account of Christian missionary presence in the country has been preserved. The arrival of Christianity in Northern Rhodesia at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a profound and complex effect on the African world, partly disrupting and partly enlarging it. The Christian missionaries came with a Christianity wrapped in their western culture. Their arrival which coincided with the colonial conquest meant that Christianity in Zambia as in many other places has been closely identified with colonialism.

Colonialism fostered a feeling among those who were colonized that anything really good and worthwhile originated in the colonizing country, and that what was in the colony was sketchy, of poor quality, only an imitation of the real thing (Bevans 1994:6).

It is Christianity tainted with such a colonial mentality that Kaunda encountered. Kaunda testifies to this and confesses that he feels within himself the tension created by the encounter of the two world views which he has not been able to completely reconcile. Examining the relationship between religion and Zambian humanism, Kaunda points to the fact that historically in the West humanism has been an alternative to the supernatural interpretation of life, by rejecting theistic religion and putting the human person in the place of God as the ultimate measure of all things. Kaunda, however, argues that this is far removed from his understanding of the role and dignity of the human person that is central to him as an African. Humanism, Kaunda urges, does not seek to clothe the human person in divine attributes, rather the human person has dignity because of his/her relationship to God. As was seen earlier, Kaunda does not hesitate to call his humanism Christian with the explanation that,

By Christian humanism, I mean that we discover all that is worth knowing about God through our fellow men (sic) and unconditional service of our fellow men is the purest of the service of God (Kaunda 1996:39).

Kaunda further explains that he believes that the human person must be the servant of a vision which is bigger than humanity in order to attain true humanity. 'I do not make the mistake of forgetting that he [the human person] is God's creature with all that this means both in limitation and dignity'(1966:39). For him, Jesus Christ is the model and measure of true humanity, and so his philosophy can truly be called Christian humanism.



The three main theological concepts inherent in Kaunda's humanism are

- a. the concept of God as creator, including of the human person.
- b. the dignity of the human person.
- c. the equality of human beings, regardless of position in society.

These same concepts are present in many Christian theologies, including in the 'official theology' of the Roman Catholic Church, as contained in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. According to the *Catechism* the 'dignity of the human person is rooted in his (sic) creation in the image and likeness of God' (CCC #1700) while the equality of human beings is because the 'divine image is present in every man (sic)' (CCC #1702). There is no doubt that what Kaunda says about God is influenced by his African and Christian context. Based on this, *Zambian humanism* should qualify as a Christian humanism. This is not to say it deals explicitly with all Christian themes such as salvation, grace, eschatology etc, or that all Christians must accept every aspect of it. Rather, the affirmation simply acknowledges that, as understood and expressed by Kaunda, *Zambian humanism* is not opposed to the basic beliefs of Christianity. In fact, it is founded on them.

#### **4.6 Is *Zambian humanism* a local theology?**

An important clarification is important – in what sense is the term local theology understood and used? Robert J. Schreiter (1985), in what has become a classic text in theology, *Constructing local theologies*, has identified three types or models of what he calls local theologies: translation models, adaptation models and contextual models. Schreiter begins his discussion on the development of local theologies by noting that there has been an important shift in perspective in theology in recent history, with more attention now being paid to how local contexts shape Christians' response to the gospel (1985:1). This shift was evident particularly in the 1950s in parts of Asia and Africa. There was a growing sense in these areas that the theologies inherited from the older churches of the North Atlantic community did not fit well in the local contexts (1985:1). As new questions emerged the old theological answers seemed inadequate. Therefore, theologians began to look more to the local context to develop adequate and relevant theological responses. Schreiter describes the aim of local theologies as being that of making the Christian response to the gospel as concrete and lively as possible. In a sense, local theology may be defined as a critical and systematic reflection on the revelation of God handed down through

Christian tradition that takes serious account of the circumstances which shape the response to the gospel. Various terms have been suggested, such as indigenous theology, ethnotheology, inculturation theology and even contextual theology. Each has advantages and disadvantages as highlighted by Schreiter (1985:4-5). Schreiter chooses to use 'local theology', because of its advantages over the other terms. According to him, local theology places emphasis on the 'circumscribed context of the logical reflection' and has 'some ecclesial overtones through its association with "local church"' (1985:6). Others, for example Bevans (1992), prefer to use other terms finding them adequate.<sup>38</sup>

Bevans makes important observations concerning the shift in theology's perspective identified by Schreiter. First, he notes that every theology is *de facto* contextual even though not all theologies place sufficient attention on how context influences content in theology. He then argues that theology that is contextual 'realizes that culture, history, contemporary thought forms, and so forth are to be considered along with scripture and tradition, as valid sources of theological expression' (Bevans 1992:2). His definition of contextual theology deserves full citation because it is comprehensive.

Contextual theology can be defined as a way of doing theology in which one takes into account: the spirit and message of the gospel; the tradition of the Christian people; the culture in which one is theologizing; and social change in that culture, whether brought about by western technological process or the grass-roots' struggle for equality, justice and liberation (Bevans 1992:1).

Both Schreiter and Bevans agree that context influences how God is understood and the expression of faith. Schreiter lists five criteria for deciding genuineness of a particular theological expression: inner consistency, ability to be translated into worship, consistency between orthodoxy and orthopraxis, openness to dialogue and criticism, and ability to challenge other theologies (Schreiter 1985:117-121). A detailed analysis of these lies beyond the scope of this study and is not necessary. Schreiter further offers three models of local theology as follows:

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<sup>38</sup> Bevans, *Models of contextual theology* (1992), uses the term 'contextual' without offering any justification why this, and not other terms, is his chosen term.

translation models, adaptation models, and contextual models. These are important for the question about Kaunda's humanism and so will be explored in detail.<sup>39</sup>

### *Translation models*

According to Schreiter, these are by far the most common models. They see the task of local theology as that of freeing the Christian message as much as possible from its previous cultural accretions and then of translating that message into the new local context. 'The basic principle behind the translation model would begin with the church tradition and adapt it to a local cultural setting' (1985:7). The key principle in these models is to adapt the Christian message to a local cultural context.

Schreiter identifies two major weaknesses with these models: first is the positivist understanding of culture, which assumes that patterns in a culture can be easily decoded and understood by foreigners, thus making translation possible. But cultures are complex realities with various layers of meaning. Sometimes there are no parallels or equivalent concepts among various cultures. Unfortunately, these models rely too heavily on surface patterns of cultures.

Another weakness of these models is that they assume that the faith can and does exist as an essence, that is, apart from any cultural elements. Faith, however, is always mediated through culture. Even biblical revelation itself is conditioned by culture. Because of this it becomes very difficult to identify what is essential and what is accidental to the faith.

While remaining faithful to the received tradition of Christian faith, the translation models fail to engage in a real dialogue with culture. The faith thus remains alien to many cultures.

### *Adaptation models*

Unlike the previous models, here local cultures are taken more seriously and a more fundamental encounter between Christianity and culture is attempted. These models often appear as a second stage in the development of a local theology.

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<sup>39</sup> Bevans lists five models, some of which correspond both in title and content with Schreiter's, while others are different. The five are listed as translation model, anthropological model, praxis model, synthetic model, and transcendental model.

These models attempt to adapt the message of the faith using local symbols and by incorporating it into the worldview of the host culture. It is the philosophical system of the local context which is used as the vehicle for communicating the faith.

The chief weakness is that they generally try to force cultural data into foreign categories. Unfortunately, in most cases ideal situations in which these models can be used do not exist.

### *Contextual models*

These models are closely related to the adaptation models discussed above. However, unlike the former these models begin with and concentrate more directly on the local context in which Christianity takes root and receives expression. There is a more serious attempt to understand the local context into which the Christian faith is introduced unlike in the other two models where emphasis is placed on the received faith. They are more dialogical in character. Reflection on the questions, concerns and needs of the local context serve as the starting point for contextual approaches. Two examples of such models are ethnographical approaches and liberation approaches.

As with the other two models, these too are not without their shortcomings and weaknesses as will be seen when discussing Kaunda's attempt which fits well into this category. Beneath the question whether or not Zambian humanism is a local theology lies another question, perhaps more fundamental - the question of making the Christian faith part of the local context. It is the question of how the Christian faith should be lived and expressed in different contexts, for the 'faith must become culture, if it is to be fully received and lived' (Shorter 1988:xi). In other words, it is the question of inculturation, of making the faith a real part of people's daily lives.

In the article entitled 'Is there an indigenous theology in Africa?' Melvyn W. Matthews argues that African Socialism, particularly that of Senghor is a real form of indigenous theology, a local theology which seeks to make the Christian faith at home on the African continent. Could one not argue, using the same logic, that Zambian humanism is a real form of indigenous theology? In my opinion, it is justifiable to argue that Zambian humanism is indeed a form of local theology because, as Bevans notes, '[a]ny Christian who authentically tries to appropriate his or her faith is participating in the theologizing process and doing genuine contextual theology'

(1992:100). Of course the assumption is that it is not only professional or trained theologians who are capable of doing theology, and that theology must be seen more as activity and process rather than as a particular content.

Having pointed out the weaknesses in both the theology of the Independent Churches and the Black Theology of South Africa, Matthews proposes that 'the questings of African socialism are a radical theological alternative' (1975:112). He argues that

In the quest for a more truly indigenous theology and for a more meaningful definition of what theology really is in Africa today, one has to explore beyond the confines of the normal theological areas (:109).

From the above, therefore, it would seem that the question whether or not Kaunda's humanism is a local theology is not only valid, and calling for theological consideration, but must also be answered in the affirmative. For, to do theology is actually 'to attempt to give expression to one's faith within a particular religious tradition' (Rausch 1993:12). In his attempt Kaunda has succeeded in speaking about the Christian faith in symbols and language that are truly local to the Zambian context.

As a theology, Kaunda's humanism, however, is flawed in several ways and does not always make good use of Christian sources in the attempted wedding between African values and Christian doctrine. The real danger here is of using Christianity and theology for ideological purposes. Christianity and indeed theology have the potential, and at certain historical moments have been turned into ideologies or have been used to support certain ideological positions, some of which are contradictory to the basic teachings of Christianity. Theology and Christian faith have to 'confront all ideologies that do not respect the dignity of the human person, created in the image of God and destined to be an heir to God's kingdom, that is; empowered with intellect and free will, from which flow certain universal, inviolable and inalienable human rights' (Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger 1986:302). Theology must comment on 'current events in terms of the good news, denouncing sin and announcing the hope of salvation, protesting about what is wrong and supporting what is right' (Nolan 1988:209). This is the prophetic vocation of an authentic theology.

Christian theology, like Christian faith, shares with traditional African cultures an attachment to personal values and their concern for the preservation and promotion of life in all its aspects. This is what Kaunda tries to translate into a program for national development with his ideology of humanism, a project with many positive aspects even when seen from a Christian perspective. One of the criticisms of Kaunda's humanism is that it 'had been launched hard on the heels of Independence without much prior research into the people's beliefs and with little or no dialogue with the elders' (Hinfelaar 1994:152). As argued above, it was imposed on the people, in particular on the women, by a group of successful politicians. But political systems cannot succeed when they are imposed on the masses. Theology too must not be imposed on the people. Theology is not a preserve of the academics nor is it reserved to purely religious contexts. It has played and should continue to play a crucial role in matters of wider public concern. For instance, reflecting on his work with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu says, 'Theology helped us in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to recognize that we inhabit a moral universe, that good and evil are real and that they matter' (Tutu 1999:76).

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

Christianity and theology have always been important factors in Zambian politics. Christianity played a significant role in conferring legitimacy on the country's first government and also in the change from the second to the third republic. Under Kaunda, Christianity was acknowledged to be one of the pillars of the nation. However, theology can be and has been used to serve various negative ends in society. For instance, even under Kaunda's rule political rhetoric took on a Christian flavor which was not always in keeping with the basic Christian message; Christian motifs characterized public discourse and Kaunda himself was presented as divinely ordained leader. Even in expounding his humanism, Kaunda used Christian discourse. Unfortunately, theology when used as an instrument of the State to justify the status quo becomes ideological. Kaunda used, and in many instances misused, theological language and symbols to further his political ends. This, however, does not mean that theology should not play an important role in public life.

Kaunda's ideas do provide sufficient religious content to form the basis of a local theology. He showed some understanding of the theologies that he was borrowing from even though he did

not apply them in any consistent way. It is however significant that what Kaunda did to the country with the mixture of ideas that he called *Zambian humanism*, that is, shape it ideologically, Chiluba, his successor, did directly afterwards with his form of evangelical Christianity. This too was another extraordinarily naïve attempt to apply certain religious principles in the political arena with the minimum of understanding of history, which had already proven that this was not possible.

# CHAPTER V

## Kaunda's humanism as postcolonial discourse

### 5.0 Introduction

Kaunda's ideology cannot be sufficiently assessed and adequately understood apart from the context in which it was developed and practiced. As has been pointed out Kaunda began to formulate his vision of humanism during the colonial period. However, this vision was only made the national philosophy and ideology of Zambia in 1967, three years after the country's formal independence from Britain. The colonial and postcolonial periods, therefore, form an important background from which to understand what Kaunda did and why.

Secondly, Kaunda's attempt was not an isolated and unique approach. This chapter shows how Kaunda's ideology is actually part of a larger postcolonial discourse that emerged in various disciplines such as literary studies, philosophy and even theology. African philosophy and theology thus provide a second set of factors that help to understand Kaunda's humanism. They represent two tendencies developed in post independence Africa as reactions to the African experience of colonialism which tended to alienate and objectify Africans as the negative other (Masolo 1994:1).

Thirdly, the chapter reads Kaunda's ideology side by side with that of Julius Nyerere, independent Tanzania's first president who, like Kaunda, introduced a similar ideology to his country and attempted in much the same way to implement it. These two approaches are critically assessed.

The chapter concludes with a critique of the use of postcolonial discourse by Kaunda and Nyerere.

### 5.1 Colonial background

Philosopher Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze has urged that,

By 'colonialism' we should understand the indescribable crisis disproportionately suffered and endured by the African peoples in their tragic encounter with the European world, from the beginning of the fifteenth century through the end of the nineteenth into the first half of the twentieth. This is a period marked by the horror and violence of the



transatlantic slave trade, the imperial occupation of most parts of Africa and the forced administration of its peoples and the resilient and enduring ideologies and practices of European cultural superiority (ethnocentrism) and “racial” supremacy (racism) (1997:4).

Two important elements emerged from the above: the extension of colonialism and profundity of the suffering experienced by Africans. Such a long citation is necessary to explain the meaning of colonialism because it is not uncommon to find publications that limit colonialism in Africa to the period between the 1884 Berlin Conference<sup>40</sup> and the independence movements of the 1960s.<sup>41</sup> But, as Eze argues,

it is in vain to limit colonialism in Africa to the seventy years or so between the 1884 Berlin Conference, which partitioned and legitimized European occupation of Africa, and the 1960s, when most African countries attained constitutional decolonization because that would be a limited and inadequate understanding of the reality (1997:4).

Colonialism as existed in Africa is much broader and more complex than political domination of one nation by another.<sup>42</sup> In fact, it has been argued that colonialism in Africa did not end with the formal declaration of independence because colonialism ‘did not simply consist of geographical and political domination, but also included cultural and economic structures that persist to this day’ (Dube 2000:48). The colonial conquest was motivated by a number of factors, among them political, commercial, social, cultural and even religious.

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<sup>40</sup> An international conference was held in Berlin, Germany, from November 15, 1884 to January 30, 1885, under the chairmanship of Otto von Bismark, after which the Berlin Act which promulgated the ‘rules’ for partition was signed ( Ayithey 1992:7).

<sup>41</sup> For example, Guy Arnold (2005:23), quotes Lumumba making a speech, in 1960, at the celebrations to mark Congo’s independence from Belgium saying: ‘Such was our lot for 80 years under the colonialist regime’. Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger (1986:150) hold a similar view; that the ‘colonial period lasted 60-80 years’.

<sup>42</sup> Another common characterization of colonialism in Africa is that which extends all the way to the slave trade of earlier centuries. For example, George Ayithey (1992:3-4), writes:

The people of Africa have been brutally traumatized. European colonizers denigrated them for centuries as “subhumans” and denied then recognition of any meaningful intellectual, cultural, and historical accomplishments or experience. Called “savages,” millions of Africans were carted off in bondage as slaves to the Americas. Even when Charles Darwin speculated that it was Africa, not a Garden in Eden in the Near East, whence the evolution of the human race should be traced, intellectual prejudices precipitated a spirited rejection of the notion that something good or new could originate from Africa. Allegedly, it people had no history, no culture, no civilization, and nothing of value to contribute to the creation of the human being.

Zambia, like other African countries, was not spared the ravages of colonialism. Growing up in rural Northern Rhodesia and later as a man in urban areas of the country Kaunda experienced from the side of the colonized the negative effects of colonialism. These were to affect his vision and formulation of humanism.

The underling mentality of colonialism was its negative view of African personhood. It saw colonized peoples as subhuman and their ways of 'reasoning' as based on suspicion. This mentality found support in the works of such prominent Western thinkers as David Hume, who wrote in the famous footnote to his essay, 'On national character':

I am apt to suspect that the Negroes to be naturally inferior to the whites. There scarcely ever was a civilized nation of that complexion, nor even any individual eminent in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers amongst them, no arts, no sciences. On the other hand, the most rude and barbarous of the whites such as the ancient GERMANS, the present TARTARS, have still something eminent about them ... Such a uniform and constant difference could not happen ... if nature had not made original distinction betwixt these breeds of men... (quoted in Eze 1997:7).

Such a negative view of Africans pervaded colonialism in its many manifestations and sanctioned the exploitation of Africans. Hume is not the only one to have held such views; Immanuel Kant and even Hegel also held similar views. 'For Hegel, the imperial and the colonial expansion of Europe is the necessary and *logical* outlet for resolving the problem of poverty inherent in capitalism' (Eze 1997:8). Capitalist division of labour and trade also justified the subjugation of colonized peoples by creating a class of poor people in its attempt to satisfy the wants of the dominant group. Colonial conquest and capitalist expansions were the logical necessity for the realization of the obviously universal European ideal, which labeled the non-European territories and peoples as 'backward' in 'industry' and made them legitimate prey for colonialist activities. From the religious perspective, colonialism has been justified with the argument of the Christian mission to evangelize all nations. For many early Christian missionaries evangelization was synonymous with imposing Western Christianity and its supporting cultures. And since Africans were taken to be less than human ethical questions did not enter discussions on their treatment.

Kaunda and many of his contemporaries experienced the inhumanities of colonialism. Such painful experiences of their negated humanity motivated them to fight for self-rule.<sup>43</sup> However, once self-rule had been achieved the leaders discovered that they had not resolved the dilemma; a deeper problem still had to be solved: what does it mean to be African and to have an African government? The immediate postcolonial period, therefore, became a time of self-Re-discovery and self-Re-definition over and against the colonial definition of Africans. It is this context that gave birth to postcolonial discourse.

[i]n most cases independence was not a revolutionary change, it often only involved a change of rulers. The colonial masters left their machinery behind: the civil service, army, police force. Independent countries remained economically dependent on their colonizers (Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger 1986:150).

Although there is no doubt that even after gaining political independence African states remain closely tied to global capitalism, to speak of independence and post independence is still valid, if for no other reason than that the declaration of independence marked a new era for these countries.

## **5.2 Postcolonialism and postcolonial discourse**

The exact meaning of postcolonial and postcolonialism remains elusive. Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza (2008:33) notes that although much academic literature exists on the postcolonial and postcolonialism the exact meanings of the terms postcolonial and postcolonialism are hotly debated. Richard Werbner (1996:4) notes that the ‘post in postcolonial is a marker of dynamic complexity’. He further notes that ‘to speak of the postcolonial for Africa is to mark the end of an epoch by placing a break where none exists’ (1996:5). Terence Ranger (1996:271-281), however, is able to identify three ways in which postcoloniality has been used: 1) the coming of the Third World identities and spokesmen into the First World; 2) the privileging of particular methods and problematics so as to subvert the self-confident rationality of imperial science and; 3) in a descriptive way, meaning the contemporary state of ex-imperial societies in Africa and Asia. Unfortunately, it has become all too characteristic for some authors to use the terms

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<sup>43</sup> In a recent publication on Northern Rhodesia’s final years and Zambia’s nationhood, Andrew Sardanis (2003) provocatively entitles one chapter, ‘Northern Rhodesia, land of bwanas and ... “boys”’; bwana is the local term for boss while boy was the derogative term used of African males regardless of age.

without clarifying the sense in which it is used, thus adding more confusion to an already complex situation. Others, however, make an effort to clarify their use of the terms concerned. Two authors who have attempted definitions of the terms are Kwame Anthony Appiah and Musa Dube. According to Appiah,

Postcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia: of a relatively small, Western style, Western trained, group of writers and thinkers who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery. In the West they are known through the Africa they offer; their compatriots know them both through the West they present to Africa and through an Africa they have invented for the world, for each other, and for Africa (1992:149).

For Appiah (1992:149), the ‘post’ in postcolonial does not necessarily refer to that which comes after, but rather that which comes from. He explains that the *post* in postcolonial and in postmodernism generally refers the element of logical and historical consequence rather than sheer temporal posteriority, that is, simply coming after. The postcolonial is that which comes from the colonial and not simply after it.

He further notes that postcolonial intellectuals in Africa are almost entirely dependent for their support on two institutions: the African university – an institution whose intellectual life is overwhelmingly constituted as Western – and the Euro- American publisher and reader (Appiah 1992:149). These two elements have played such a dominant role in the discourse such that for many they have become obstacles to genuine postcolonial discourse.

In her book, *Postcolonial feminist interpretation of the Bible*, Musa Dube asks what the postcolonial condition is and who its subjects are (2000:15). In answer to the first part of the question, she says, ‘The word *postcolonial* has been coined to describe the modern history of imperialism, beginning with the process of colonialism, through the struggles for political independence, the attainment of independence, and to the contemporary neocolonialist realities’ (2000:15). She identifies the subjects of postcolonialism as both the former colonizers and the formerly colonized. This definition emphasizes the connection between the colonizer and the colonized, between the past and the present. She insists, however, that ‘postcolonial is not about dwelling on the crimes of the past and their continuation, but about seeking transformation for liberation’ (Dube 2000:16). Dube further argues that

Postcolonial does not denote that colonialism is over, since the latter did not simply consist of geographical and political domination, but also included cultural and economic structures that persist to this day (Dube 2000:48).

In this thesis the term postcolonial is used to refer both to the period following immediately after the attainment of political independence, hence after formal colonialism, and to what emerged from the colonial experience and characterized the period. It takes into account the fact that the discourse emerged primarily in Africa and Asia and that the centre of gravity has since shifted to the Diaspora. This latter fact has significantly affected the use of the discourse as a hermeneutical framework by African scholars who write primarily for an African audience.

A major and continuing dilemma for African thinkers in the postcolonial age has been the attempt to understand and articulate Africa's experience in light of the 'Age of Europe.' How, it is asked, could the same European modernity and Enlightenment that promoted 'precious ideals like the dignity of persons' and 'democracy' also be intimately and inextricably implicated in slavery and the colonial projects? (Eze 1997:12). Thinkers such as V. Y. Mudimbe and others have attempted to understand Africa and Africans from an African perspective. In *The Invention of Africa* (1988) and its sequel, *The Idea of Africa* (1994), Mudimbe details the intellectual struggle against the stereotype of the 'African savage' and also attempts to correct this distorted image of Africans inherited from the colonial past. *The Invention of Africa* critically examines the construction of the image of Africa, its motives, and its sources.

In order to differentiate themselves from their colonial past most leaders of the newly independent African states settled on some national ideology around which the development of a national identity was organized. African socialism emerged in this context. It wove together nationalism, Pan-Africanism and socialism to create an overall 'African ideology of modernization' (Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger 1986:150).

Postcolonial African thought is characteristically 'deconstructive' and 'constructive'. It is a double-faceted project. While deconstructing the Western model it also attempts to construct an African one. It raises questions about the ambiguous and enduring legacies of modern Europe to Africa: an economy that, within the scheme of transatlantic capitalism, caters to the needs and

interests of Europe rather than of Africa, the hegemony of western thought, and the racism that oppresses Africans in the Diaspora (Eze 1997:15). It further challenges the long-standing exclusion of Africa or, more accurately, its inclusion as the negative other of the Western world.

African experience has not been a monolith on the continent or abroad and so in the attempt to construct a postcolonial African worldview there have been various approaches. In both philosophy and theology one notes that most authors in these subjects, although of African descent, have either been trained in Europe or the United States and write for these audiences; a situation that should not be ignored in terms of its influence on the work of African thinkers themselves. Kaunda's humanism was an attempt not only to redefine the way of arranging society, but more fundamentally, the way of looking at reality itself. He was proposing, be it tentatively, a different worldview, an African worldview.

### **5.3 African philosophy**

Both the definition and the content of African philosophy have been hotly debated on the continent and beyond. Even the question of what it means to be African does not receive a universal answer. According to D.A. Masolo, 'The birth of the debate on African philosophy is historically associated with two related happenings: Western discourse on Africa, and the African response to it' (1994:1). He argues that at the center of the debate is the concept of reason, which is seen as the great divide between the civilized and the uncivilized, the logical and the mystical, with Africans normally placed in the latter (1994:1).

Although the existence of African philosophy is still challenged by some contemporary thinkers, at present there appears to be wide consensus about its existence as a specific field of study. 'As a field of study, African philosophy is situated at the intersection of philosophy and African studies' (Serequeberhan 1991:xviii). The debate, however, continues about its definition and content.

Placide Tempels<sup>44</sup> is recognized as the first to publish a book on ethnophilosophy<sup>45</sup> in Africa. Since its publication *Bantu Philosophy* (1945) has been subject to many critiques both positive

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<sup>44</sup> Placide F. Tempels, a Roman Catholic, Belgium missionary to the Belgium Congo from 1933 to 1962 lived for more than ten years among the Luba Katanga people, sharing their language and cultural background before

and negative. The debate around Tempels' work needs to be seen against the backdrop of the colonial project which has dominated a lot of what has come out of Africa in terms of literature, philosophy, and theology since the end of the nineteenth century. Africans have found it necessary to respond to the image of the primitive that has been constructed to describe them ever since the first encounters between north and south. African literature, theology and philosophy have all emerged within the long shadow of this colonial image, to say nothing of the emergence of the African persona. The strong emphasis in African theology on the issue of identity is indicative of this.

Critics of Tempels have generally disregarded his work on the basis that African philosophy should be described and expounded upon by Africans, by people who share deeply in the experience, beliefs, customs, cultures and languages of the African people.

#### **5.4 African Theology**

The experience of colonialism 'has had a profound effect upon the development of theology, that is to say upon the way the gospel has come to be understood and preached' (Nolan 1988:2). Following in the wake of the independence movements theologians began to reflect on what it means to be both African and Christian. As Stinton observes: 'For many African theologians, the problem of African Christian identity lies at the epicenter of African theology' (2004:54).

Parratt (1987) has identified five factors that led to the development of modern African theology in the 1950s and 60s. Firstly, he identifies the movements that led to political independence in many African countries during this time. After independence it seemed 'incongruous to African Christians that while African nations were becoming independent politically, the Church in Africa should remain essentially controlled by European missionaries' (Parratt 1987:2). Among those leaders of independent nations who questioned this status quo were Christians such as Julius Nyerere and Léopold Senghor, both practicing Catholics, and Kenneth Kaunda, the son of a Presbyterian catechist.

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publishing his experience in his now famous work *La Philosophie bantoue*. 'Inadvertently and in the service of colonialism, Tempels was forced to admit – against the grain of established "knowledge" – that Bantu/African is not a mere beast devoid of consciousness, but a human being whose conscious awareness of existence is grounded on certain foundational notions' (Serequeberhan 199:111).

<sup>45</sup> The term was coined by Paulin J Hountondji even though he himself does not belong to this trend of philosophy.

Secondly, a rediscovery of the value of traditional African cultures and religions led many African Christians to the ‘conviction that the African heritage and present situation could no longer simply be dismissed as pagan, but needed to be taken seriously and somehow related to the truths of the Christian faith’(Parratt 1987:2). The emergence of the Independent African Churches(AICs) is another factor identified by Parratt as contributing to the development of African theology. Other factors include contributions by non Africans, such as Tempels’ *Bantu Philosophy*.

There are several discernable tendencies in what has come to be known as African theology. The Congolese catholic priest Bénézet Bujo identifies two major approaches or tendencies in African theology (1992:15): a theology of inculturation and contextual theology. Parratt also identifies the two currents, however, he calls them political theology and cultural theology (Parratt 1987:6). In discussing the agenda of African theology Bujo makes the following important observation:

Christian theology in the African context entails not only the problem of culture as ethnology, but also the new problems that came to Africa with colonialism and with the new civilization – the technology and all that makes up the African context today. We have to understand the gospel in this context today, and not to be one-sided, considering only the old culture. We have to take into account this new culture in Africa, and build a new dynamism – maybe go out from the old culture, because there are some elements from the old culture still surviving today (1992:9).

This thesis follows closely this twofold division, noting however, that though the two are distinct, they are not necessarily contradictory or exclusive. The common thread underlying all the various forms of African theology, as with African Philosophy, is concern for the plight of Africa and Africans. African theologies recognize the shortcomings of classical theologies. For example, it has been observed that the form in which Christianity had been presented to Africans failed to penetrate the heart of African personality. There is also the awareness that Christianity had been introduced into Africa during the colonial era, and seemed to prosper largely because it was supported by the ruling European powers. Therefore, many Africans felt Christianity was a foreign religion and in a sense ‘shared in responsibility for the injustices carried out by colonialists’ (Parratt 1987:3).‘Recent reports upon the continent’s plight are extraordinarily



gloomy, describing Africa as a “human and environmental disaster area” (Hennelly 1995:161), and so, the challenge and task of theology has been how to speak the word of God in such a gloomy and desperate context.

Theology of inculturation: The first tendency of African theology identified by Bujo focuses almost exclusively on the cultural heritage of Africa. It seeks to get back to the moment of encounter between traditional African cultures and Christianity. The primary concern of theologians of this tendency has been to develop a Christianity that is truly Christian and also authentically African. The core of this tendency is to ensure the integrity of African Christian identity. Among the most prominent names belonging to the tendency are those of John Mbiti, Kwame Bediako and Charles Nyamiti.

Contextual theology: A second tendency identified by Bujo is that which begins with the contemporary African situation. It seeks to relate this to the message of salvation revealed through scripture and tradition. The category is further subdivided into two trends: liberation or political theology and Black Theology. Political theology or, as Bujo calls it, ‘post-colonial Liberation Theology’ (1992:15), is the form of liberation theology on the African continent that is basically concerned with liberating Africa and Africans from dictatorships and all forms of domination whether colonial or neocolonial. Black Theology, on the other hand, is the name given to liberation theology done by some Blacks in South Africa during the struggle against apartheid. Nolan says ‘Black Theology is an explicit, articulate and scholarly reflection upon the Christian significance of black suffering and oppression in South Africa’ (1988:3). This reflection, developed out of Christian student circles, made explicit what was already implicit in the preaching of Black Churches. This theology developed a close affiliation with the black theology of the United States. Its starting point is the context of racial discrimination and the need to establish a just society for all (Hennelly 1995:162).

The methodology of African theology is very similar to that of the Liberation Theology developed in Latin America. Both begin with and are concerned about the concrete life experience of the marginalized and the commitment of faith. Critical reflection is done on that which is lived by the majority; a majority that suffers in some way. Both African theology and the liberation theologies of Latin America are deconstructionist theologies. Secondly, African

theology like Latin American Liberation Theology focuses strongly on transformative praxis. It seeks salvation both in historical and eschatological terms. In this way it seeks to construct a new reality. The two tendencies are not mutually exclusive. In fact, most African theologians advocate an integrative approach. Outside the South African context, Jean-Marc Ela is probably the most eminent theologian on the continent to argue for such an approach.

While the tendency in most texts on African theology has been to react against colonialism, Bediako argues that

[t]he era of African theological literature as reaction to Western misrepresentation is past. What lies ahead is a critical theological construction which will relate more fully the widespread African confidence in the Christian faith to the actual and ongoing Christian responses to the life-giving experiences of Africans (1999:225).

Both Nyerere and Kaunda's attempts must therefore be seen not only as deconstructing the dominant Western worldview, but also as attempts at forging something new and unique.

### **5.5 Julius K. Nyerere's socialism<sup>46</sup>**

Julius Kambarage Nyerere was born in 1922. As leader of the Tanganyika Africa National Union (TANU), he led his country to political independence from Britain, in 1961. Following independence he became the country's first prime minister and when in 1962 the country became a republic Nyerere became the first president. In 1964 Tanganyika united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania with Nyerere as president of the new republic. He ruled as president from 1964 to 1985 when he stepped down as head of state. However, even after stepping down as state president he maintained the position of president of the ruling party until 1990. He died in 1999. Nyerere, by all accounts, has been among the most prominent contemporary thinkers on the continent. With Senghor, Nkrumah and Kaunda he belongs to the first generation of postcolonial African leaders who each proposed a different worldview to that handed on by the colonial masters and dominant in the west. Like Kaunda, he too set his country

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<sup>46</sup> Klaus Nürnberger (1998:141) has questioned whether Nyerere's socialism 'was really all that traditionally African, or whether it was not simply an inflexible leftist ideology disguised as African culture'. A element central to his doubt is the replacement of traditional chiefs with elected party leaders in Nyerere's Ujamaa

on a path of socialism, which he called *Ujamaa*.<sup>47</sup> There are some similarities as well as differences with Kaunda's humanism. These will be discussed later in the chapter.

### 5.5.1 Works

The main writings and speeches of Nyerere have been collected and published in three large volumes by Oxford University Press. They date from the colonial period and extend to 1973. Unlike Kaunda, Nyerere is much more systematic and consistent in his theory. The first volume, *Freedom and Unity*, includes his writings and speeches from 1952 to 1965, the period immediately prior to and immediately after Tanzania's independence. According to Schoolman,

The political theory contained in this work is general (perhaps deliberately so), calculated, first, to rouse the feelings and interest of a politically apathetic people against colonialism and subsequently, to harness the emotions and attention to the long and arduous task of social and economic development (1979:68).

The second volume, *Freedom and Socialism*, contains writings and speeches composed between 1965 and 1967. The content of these is much more developed and profound, compared with those of the earlier period. It is in these writings and speeches that Nyerere begins working out theoretically the transition to socialism. Here Nyerere is more deliberate and conscientious in describing his concept of socialist society. The third volume, *Freedom and Development*, does not introduce new issues and does not manifest a further development in thought, but rather is a continuation of the discussion of issues and problems examined in the second volume. In the latter two volumes Nyerere manifests his determination and commitment to building a modern African socialist society, based on a worldview different from the dominant one in the west.<sup>48</sup>

### 5.5.2 Nyerere on nationalism

For Nyerere, self government means more than the simple transfer of power from the colonial masters to an African government. He argues that it is 'intimately related to the need for political stability and an overall African character of socioeconomic development' (Schoolman 1979:69).

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<sup>47</sup> *Ujamaa* is a Swahili term which means familyhood in the literal sense, but not simply family based on blood ties. Rather, it involves and includes a community spirit in which all people are seen as brothers and sisters to be treated with equal dignity.

<sup>48</sup> Unlike Ghana's Kwame Nkrumah who also advocated socialism, but more along the lines of the West, Nyerere argued for an African form of socialism. At an OAU summit in Cairo, in July 1964, the two eminent African rulers had a bitter dispute which proved the diversity of thought among African rulers.

As an ardent supporter of nationalism, Nyerere sees the state as the guardian of the common destiny of the people. In his view, ‘the nation is to be viewed as a whole, with its needs superseding to the needs of its individual components; that is, its people’ (:69). He further argues that nationalism in Africa is not a mere demand for solidarity that would make the country strong, but that it is a natural outgrowth of African history and traditions. In *The Arusha Declaration: Socialism and Self-Reliance*, Nyerere makes an explicit statement declaring African socialism as the national ideology of Tanzania. According to Schoolman, with the 1967 declaration what had been a ‘vague philosophy based on African traditions, has become transformed ... into a well-defined set of political social, and economic goals’ (1979:77). The declaration is more remarkable for its public significance and not for the theoretical content. *The Arusha Declaration* contains the three basic guidelines for the practical implementation of socialism in Tanzania: nationalization of the major means of production and exchange, the adoption of a code of socialist conduct by national and local leaders, and the emphasis on agricultural development as a means to self-reliance.

Arguing in favour of the one-party-state, Nyerere contends that there is never a possibility of conflict between the interests of the individual and those of the community or nation, and so there is no need to have a political party system to represent divergent interests.<sup>49</sup> He argues that the best way to organize society is to have one national party which represents the unanimity of society. This does not mean that he is against democracy, understood as rule by the people. For him, democracy must be “one-party democracy”. For Nyerere, the fundamental characteristic of democracy is discussion.

Nyerere’s concept of nationalism is not restricted to the one-party nation-state. It applies equally to all nations in the entire African continent in the struggle against colonialism. He argues that the struggle for freedom from foreign domination is a patriotic one which necessarily leaves no room for differences and so must unite all elements in the country in a nationalist movement. It

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<sup>49</sup> ‘Nyerere came to be regarded as the intellectual defender of the African one-party state at its best and his arguments would be widely quoted for years’ (Arnold 2005:133).

seems this struggle against the dominant western worldview is the driving force behind the attempts of Nyerere and the other first-generation African leaders.<sup>50</sup>

### 5.5.3 On Socialism

‘Nyerere’s theory on African socialism is the most important dimension of his political thought’ (Schoolman 1979:73).<sup>51</sup> Its basic characteristics are contained in *Freedom and Unity*. The starting point of Nyerere’s socialism is the affirmation that the most fundamental form of property is land, which is a gift from God, and so must be used for the benefit of all. He maintains that all people have a right to land and to its produce. All those who use land, Nyerere argues, should occupy it as tenants, and their claims to it should be temporary and justifiable as long as the land is worked for the common good. While he is not absolutely against the private ownership of land, Nyerere argues that no one should own more land than they personally would be able to work themselves. By doing this, he thought he would avoid a situation where economic distinctions between employers and wage labourers would arise. He was determined to prevent the rise of a class hierarchy. His socialism does not exclude non-Africans who were part of Tanzanian society.

Another important view held by Nyerere is that African traditions should serve as the basis of all future development on the continent. Nyerere manifests a very skeptical stance on introducing western technology into African society. He argues that African self-determination should build on the values and technology that are of traditional African origin, resisting as much as possible western influence, including technology which he sees as having the potential of destroying human values which are sacred to traditional African society. Nyerere maintains a deep faith in the power of African traditions and values to temper and moderate the impact of western culture. This is possibly his most original and abiding contribution to contemporary African political theory. For, as Schoolman observes, ‘Nyerere’s philosophy appears to embrace a loyalty to the

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<sup>50</sup> Arnold has documented how in the early years of 1960s leaders of the newly independent states sought to bring about African unity. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963 was the result of these efforts (Arnold 2005:95-111)

<sup>51</sup> *The Arusha Declaration*, published on February 5, 1967, charted a new course for integral development in Tanzania. It contains two fundamental principles that were to be the distinguishing marks of Nyerere’s experiment: socialism, which is defined as the absence of exploitation, people’s ownership of means of production and exchange and the establishment of genuine political democracy.

weighty traditions of Africa and, as well, a broader humanism that transcends all racial and cultural boundaries' (1979:77).

*Ujamaa*, familyhood, is the foundation on which Nyerere's African Socialism is built. This familyhood is not taken in the literal sense, but rather involves a "community-spirit" in which all people are seen as belonging to each other. For Nyerere, *Ujamaa* has a real concrete history in traditional African families in which the welfare of each individual is the direct concern of the whole community. Wealth produced and acquired by individuals is the property of all. It is distributed in accordance with the specific needs of each; a situation reminiscent of the early Christian community described in Acts (2:44-45). It is this mentality of social equality that is a truly African attitude for Nyerere. Based on this conviction Nyerere attempted to organize society into *Ujamaa* villages. He was, however, aware of the difficulties and challenges to be faced in building a socialist society based on *Ujamaa*. In 1977 Nyerere reviewed the 10 years since the Arusha Declaration which had set the country on a socialist path. Although he acknowledged progress that had been made under socialism, he was highly critical of the situation and admitted failure. His criticism pointed to an 'inherent contradiction in his socialist experiment: the division between the peasants who were exhorted to be socialist in their *ujamaa* villages and the urban population, including the political elite, who had and wished at all costs to retain other prospects' (Arnold 2005:411).

The failure of Nyerere's experiment is evident from the fact that in 'the late 1980s and 1990s, once Nyerere had stepped out of the political scene, Tanzania's hierarchy did not take long to embrace a capitalist development path' (Arnold 2005:411).

#### **5.5.4 Nyerere's *ujamaa* and Kaunda's humanism: similarities and differences**

A careful reading of both Kaunda's and Nyerere's works reveals that notwithstanding the many similarities in their theories and practices the two also have some differences, many of which turn out to be superficial, but which serve to distinguish them. What links them together is that they have similar underlying assumptions. These assumptions in turn lead to similar methodologies, with some variations. For instance, while Kaunda insists that one ought to be a humanist before being a socialist, Nyerere seems to favour the opposite. Both, however, give equal priority to both the individual person and to the society. The difference is basically about

the point of entry in the discussion and not about the content. The western mentality would, on the other hand, insist on one or the other having absolute priority; either the individual person as defined by Descartes and humanistic philosophy or society as defined by Communism. Among the similarities of the two approaches are the following: background and motivation, themes, the place of the human person, the importance of society, attempt to make ideology national, and the translation of the ideology into a social, economic and political program. The differences include the place given to the individual in relation to society, that is, which has primacy, attitudes towards western technology and practical implementation.

### ***Background and motivation***

The fact that both Kaunda and Nyerere are first postcolonial presidents of their respective countries is an important factor in understanding their worldviews. The experience of colonialism with its dominant western worldview played a major role in determining the direction taken by these two postcolonial leaders. In a later work Kaunda says it ‘was partly to throw off the moods of despair which from time to time threatened to destroy me that I prayed and thought my way through what has been somewhat grandly called the philosophy of Zambian Humanism’ (1980:164). These ‘moods of despair’ arose as a result of the way Black Africans were treated by the colonialists. While he felt deep within himself that human beings are inherently good, Kaunda could not understand how some human beings could treat others as less than human. With political power in his hands he attempted to undo the evils brought about by the colonial mentality. Nyerere, too, was significantly affected by the colonial experience and mentality and set out to undo the negative consequences of the western mentality. However, he also believed that the ‘complete severing of all relations with western powers was impractical and not in the best interest of his people’ (Schoolman 1979:72).

Another significant factor in the experiments is Christianity. Both Kaunda and Nyerere were committed Christians. Kaunda, as a Methodist, and Nyerere, as a Roman Catholic, attempted to practice the Christian virtues of faith, hope and love, at national level. In a speech to the Maryknoll sisters working in Tanzania Nyerere urged:

... kindness is not enough; piety is not enough; and charity is not enough  
... the Church must work with the people in the positive tasks of building

a future based on social justice ... it is important that we should stress the working with, not the working for (quoted in Isichei 1995:326).

The deconstruction of the colonial structures and worldviews is what both Kaunda and Nyerere were attempting to do. In the process they turned back to what they considered traditional African society with its values and specific worldview. This approach is not unique to Kaunda and Nyerere. It is evident in such thinkers as Senghor, Kagame, Mbiti, and Bediako, amongst others. At the heart of these thinkers' argument is that Africans have a particular approach to reality that is informed by a specific worldview different from the western one. This argument shows that Africa and Africans must be allowed to discover for themselves what it means for Africans to be human beings in the world and to determine for themselves how to orient their lives. The trend in the past, they argue, had been to model Africa and Africans according to western standards and models.

### ***Themes***

Although complete homogeneity does not exist between Kaunda's and Nyerere's socialism, three main themes may be discerned in their writings: (1) the problem of African identity, (2) the crisis of economic development, and (3) the dilemmas of control and class formation.

#### *1. The problem of African identity*

What is immediately striking in the speeches of Kaunda and Nyerere and indeed those of many other African thinkers of the era is the fact that underlying their ideologies is the search for an African identity. Their ideologies embody a cluster of ideas through which they were searching for what it means to be African. Their ideologies thus became both a rejection of the dominant western views and a search for identity. With independence there was the need to find new ways of expressing what it means to be African. Part of the search for identity involved the discovery of ostensible roots of African socialism in indigenous society. The essential contention is that Africa has always contained much indigenous socialism. Among the various elements of traditional socialism cited are the communal ownership of land, the egalitarian character of society, and the extensive network of social obligations that led to considerable cooperation. It is argued that these elements do not only represent the roots of socialism, but that they also must facilitate the creation of modern economic institutions on a socialist basis. It is further argued



that capitalism is not an appropriate economic form for Africa because it is not natural to the continent.

### *2. The crisis of economic development*

One of the most significant features of African Socialism is its identification with economic development. Both Kaunda and Nyerere did not see their ideologies as purely political, but tended to identify them with economic development. By doing this they made an important connection between economic development and the public sector's involvement in economic activities through the state. The accumulation of capital was seen as being primarily a responsibility of government. Foreign investment was discouraged and various forms of local cooperatives were encouraged to setup business-like ventures.

A major dilemma faced by both Kaunda and Nyerere is that their countries' economies depended heavily on the exportation of primary products, copper for Zambia, and agriculture produce, especially sisal in the case of Tanzania. And so, as long as they remained dependent on earnings from the exports of primary produce they would have to be linked to the global economic system in which capitalism was the dominant system. Socialism ended up being only a convenient doctrine which helped explain, rationalize and justify government involvement in economic activity both in Zambia and Tanzania, but with no real effect.

### *3. The dilemmas of control and class formation*

The drive for independence and for economic development following independence created serious problems of control for leaders of the new states. The colonialist had been replaced and parts of the civil service may have changed, but many elements and attitudes of colonialism still remained. The end of colonialism had not immediately brought the substantial betterment of life for the majority. Faced with unfulfilled promises ideology played an extremely useful role in organizing populations for economic development. It provided the unifying doctrine similar to the nationalism of the pre-independence period. To prevent the rise of social and economic classes the socialist ideologies promoted cooperation and equality.

The view of human nature underlying Kaunda's and Nyerere's ideologies rejects the individualistic philosophy dominant in the west. They hold a view of human nature which they

believe rests on the fundamental characteristics of traditional society: classless, communal, and egalitarian. What is emphasized is that it is only inside a given society that an individual can find fulfillment. It is society that gives the individual shape, form and cohesion.

### ***The place of the human person***

The place assigned to the human person in the works of both Kaunda and Nyerere is highly significant. Both give a central position to the human person. Their ideologies are humanist ideologies. However, their positions are significantly different from the dominant Western understanding of human persons. While in the West the tendency is to define the human person in terms of some abstract quality such as rationality, both Kaunda and Nyerere define the person in relation to others.<sup>52</sup> For them, it is the concrete person as related to others - the divinity and fellow human beings - that is important, and not the person defined as a rational substance. Kaunda insists that even the ideology itself is not absolute; it is relative when placed in relation to human beings. In other words, both Kaunda and Nyerere insist with their ideologies that the human person has priority over things and systems.

### ***The importance of society***

Nyerere's concept of a socialist society is especially described in the second volume of his collected speeches and writings, *Freedom and Socialism*. Here Nyerere admits the challenges inherent in building a socialist society in postcolonial Tanzania. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 laid down the socialist principles that were to guide Tanzania. 'By the beginning of the 1970s there was broad acceptance that Tanzania was a socialist country, in intention if not always in practice, but an African socialist country that was creating its own socialist principles suitable to its particular needs and history'(Arnold 2005:406). Zambia too was set on a one-party socialist path by Kaunda. Both leaders emphasized the equality of members in community and their responsibility for the common welfare. They tended to emphasize the equal distribution of wealth in society.

### ***Attempts to make the ideology national***

*The Arusha Declaration* marks an important step in the translation of *Ujamaa* from a personal project to a national one. The declaration is an explicit statement of African socialism as the

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<sup>52</sup> For a detailed discussion on African and Western approaches to the human person, see Menkiti (1979).

national ideology of Tanzania. From being a vague philosophy based on African traditions the declaration transformed it into a well-defined set of political, social, and economic goals. Nyerere's approach maintained an open-ended character of socialist society. He recognized that socialist societies can be organized in a variety of ways. For him, the universality of socialism is defined by the great diversity of methods of social construction. Like Kaunda, Nyerere holds that the human person must be the highest value and goal of society and of socialism. Since the potential of human development is by nature limitless, people must be as free as possible from any political, social, or economic conditions that would constrain their freedom to develop fully their human faculties. In many ways this is similar to liberalism – the philosophy which believes in the freedom of individuals and groups from interference by the state.

The translation of the ideology into a social, economic and political program in both countries led to programs of nationalization. The private ownership of the major means of production encouraged by capitalism was seen as a danger to the equal status and regard of human persons in society. The state, therefore, became the custodian of the means of production and the distributor of wealth generated.

One of the major differences in the approaches of Kaunda and Nyerere is at the level of practical implementation. Nyerere developed a program that was meant to organize the country into *ujamaa* villages. Movement into these villages was initially meant to be voluntary, but gradually the government used various forms of force to get people into the villages. A divide was thus created in society between the inhabitants of the villages and the urban dwellers which tended to create tension. In Zambia, although there was no specific program to organize the country along the lines of the *ujamaa* villages in Tanzania, Kaunda and his government encouraged people to 'go back to the land'. In principle Kaunda's 'go back to the land' drive and the organization of cooperatives was not different from what Nyerere was doing.

Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger (1986:155), interpreting Potekhin's assessment of the implementation of socialism in Africa, identify two other factors that led to the failure of the implementation of socialism in Africa: the lack of a coherent revolutionary ideology and the lack of effective leadership at all levels. Another argument against socialism is that it was the

ideology itself that was the main problem. It is argued that '[s]ocialism kills initiative and does not take into account man's basically selfish nature' (Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger 1986:159). Others, however, argue that socialism is a valid means of development and that the failure of socialism in Tanzania and Africa in general is the result of restraints of the capitalist system which is the dominant system in the world.

## **5.6 Critique**

As has already been shown both Kaunda's and Nyerere's ideologies can only be fully understood as part of postcolonial discourse which is characterized by its deconstructive and constructive nature. A question which must be asked at this stage is, considering that these ideologies are sub-consciously constructed on the deconstruction of colonial discourse, do they have anything substantial in terms of content? As reactions against colonialism and the western paradigm they tend to manifest the need felt by these leaders to define themselves and to find their place in society and to relate their nations to other modern nation-states on an equal footing, but without much in terms of positive content.

At independence in 1964, Zambia was among the wealthy nations on the African continent. Kaunda's popularly elected government, with humanism in hand, was committed to helping the poor and offered a proposal for a better way of organizing society, not based on power, greed and profits, as had been done during the colonial era. A one-party socialist state was introduced in the early 1970s, companies were nationalized with the aim of achieving the desired national development. However, as things turned out running the country proved to be more complex than had been anticipated. It became evident that one could not manage a nation by appealing to idealistic values as humanism did. In Tanzania too the implementation of socialism proved difficult. Tanzania was a desperately poor country with no mineral base. Its economy was heavily dependent on agriculture, but the system failed to develop tools at appropriate levels of technology and to keep basic consumer goods at low prices.

Although the experiments of both Kaunda and Nyerere failed, there is much that can be learnt from their attempts. First, what they tried to do, engage in postcolonial dialogue, deconstruct the colonial mentality and reconstruct a postcolonial African world-view, when seen from the broader picture of world history is admirable. Like the other great postcolonial African thinkers

they were swimming against the tide of the dominant worldview, proposing what they considered to be a genuinely African contribution to world culture.

Turning humanism into an ideology was probably Kaunda's greatest mistake. The absolutist tendencies of ideologies present in Zambian humanism also led to its failure. These led to many abuses, especially at the level of practical implementation, while tending to ignore the development of the theoretical content. During his long political career Kaunda's popularity and reputation increasingly became suspect. This corresponded with the economic downturn experienced from the mid 1970s. Kaunda increasingly focused his energies on international matters while paying little attention to the worsening situation at home. At the end of his career his reputation rested far more upon his role in international affairs than for his policies at home. It was Zambia's misfortune that international matters so engaged Kaunda that he neglected the economic growth and well-being of Zambia to the extent that the country became one of the most indebted in the world (on a per capita basis) while his own popularity as the founding father of independent Zambia slumped (Arnold 2005:711).

On close scrutiny Kaunda's ideology can only be seen as idealistic and not well thought through. It was built on an over exaggerated positive assessment of the goodness of human beings. However, one of the incontrovertible "truths" of capitalism is that humankind is essentially greedy. Capitalism's success as an economic ideology is based on this fact. All shades of socialism, including both Kaunda's and Nyerere's, failed to see what Adam Smith and the architects of capitalism saw, that is, the essential greed of humankind. They remained too idealistic, too confident in the goodness of people, to put forward viable alternatives to capitalism. What is often ignored is the fact that even Marx<sup>53</sup> did not believe that socialism on its own could create wealth. He argued that there needed to be capitalism to create it before socialism could distribute it. Neither Nyerere nor Kaunda realized this. Besides the economies of their countries were far too small to begin to talk about economic independence at any serious levels. Neither African humanism nor *ujamaa* were capable of creating sufficient wealth to satisfy the basic needs of their populations. All attempts at communism and socialism (with the exception of Cuba) have had to come to terms with this and have changed to capitalist ideas.

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<sup>53</sup> See for example Marx's argument on surplus value in volume I of *Capital*, especially chapters 16-22.

This does not mean that Kaunda's humanism was not a brave attempt for which he must be given full credit. But it was an ill-informed attempt. If he could have separated it from the economy it might have worked in ways other than those that would hamstring the economy. For example, as a means to bring unity to the nation it might have succeeded better had it not been tied to the economy in the way that it was.

## 5.7 Summary

The chapter has shown how Kaunda's humanism must be understood as part of postcolonial discourse with its characteristics of being at the same time deconstructive and constructive. This is a discourse that must continue. Changed circumstances call for reassessment of positions and strategies. The postmodern reality too has to be engaged from an African situation. The dominant discourse on the world stage cannot be taken as sacrosanct. The current global economic crisis is proof that even capitalism is not immune to failure. Kaunda and others tried to make human values the basis of social and economic development in the world.

The problem with the discussion of the relevance or otherwise for Africa of capitalism is that it is a discussion that can only take place in theory. In practice Africa cannot get away from capitalism because it cannot get away from the world economy. Chiluba and his government realized this and so set about organizing the country according to a free-market system of capitalism. Whether this is the best solution is yet to be seen. 'Mr Chiluba enjoyed some early successes. He brought inflation down from over 100 per cent to only 20 per cent in 1999' (Guest 2004:153), but was soon implicated in large scale corruption. The real challenge is how to become part of a world economy in such a way that its benefits can be maximized and its exploitative tendencies minimized and to dispense with the notion of trying to do something different, as Kaunda and Nyerere tried to do.

Theology can play a critical role in striking the balance. Ideologies and theologies that focus on the goodness of human beings, such as Kaunda's, can attempt to act as an astringent to the destructive effects of capitalism. This does not mean that very profound critiques cannot and must not be made of capitalism. The church is constantly faced with the paradox of having to live with capitalism while at the same time critiquing it. One of the great critiques of capitalism is to be found in the document *Centesimus annus* put out by the Roman Catholic Church.

## CHAPTER VI

### Theological assessment

#### 6.0 Introduction

This study has had *Zambian humanism* as its object of analysis. The previous chapters have described the social, economic and political context in which the ideology was developed and implemented. The colonial and postcolonial experience has been shown to have played a significant role in its development. Further, the study, in chapter three, has described the ideology as understood by Kaunda and others. The main themes and underlying influences have been outlined. The search for an African identity, the crisis of economic development manifested in the choice of socialism against capitalism as the organizing system for economic activity and the dilemmas of control and class formations have been identified as the main underlying themes of the ideology. These, however, are neither new nor unique to Zambia and Kaunda's experiment. Chapter four has demonstrated how Kaunda's experiment belongs to the broader context of postcolonial discourse that has been present on the continent since Tempels', *Bantu philosophy*. By placing Kaunda's ideology side by side with Nyerere's, it has been shown that the two are actually very similar, with differences emerging at the level of implementation policies, programmes and projects. This chapter assesses some of the themes underlying the search for an African identity and the crisis of economic development manifested in the choice of socialism against capitalism as the organizing system for economic activity and the dilemmas of control and class formations. These are assessed from a theological perspective. The first is assessed in light of what Kwame Bediako calls 'post missionary era' theology in Africa, a theology that speaks with an African voice; the other are interpreted in light of some official Roman Catholic Church pronouncements on both socialism and capitalism, especially using Pope John Paul II's three social encyclicals.

Apart from theologically assessing these themes, the chapter describes how theology may play a critical role in the development and implementation of ideology. It concludes with a defense of the thesis, that every theology is a contextual theology. Thus, even though *Zambian humanism* does not qualify as a contextual theology in the strict sense, it can contribute significantly to the doing of theology in present-day Zambia. In other words, it belongs to the local historical context.

## **6.1 The search for an African identity**

In chapter five colonialism was described as the historical context which gave rise to postcolonial discourse. In this chapter it is described again, but for the purpose of demonstrating how it gave rise to the search for an African identity in philosophy as well as in theology. Quoting Basil Davidson, Serequeberhan (1991:4), argues that the colonial period introduced ‘a hiatus, an interlude when African history was stopped or was forced to become, for a brief period, a part of European history’. Among the effects of colonialism was the suppression of African historical existence. Africans were in the process forced to become the negative ‘underbelly of European history’ (1991:4). This was done under the delusion of spreading civilization; civilization understood as being human and sharing in human values, while being human meant being western. The underlying mentality in this is that reason, as defined by western philosophers and the Enlightenment tradition, is what distinguishes human beings from other non-human creatures. And so the question of the Enlightenment in modern European thought was a politically oriented struggle aimed at releasing human beings from darkness and ignorance through the employment of reason. The philosophies of Kant and Hegel were used to demonstrate and support such colonialist mentalities.

Such a mentality presupposes on the world level a single culture, a single religion and a single global conformism, that is, a singular globalized cultural totality (Serequeberhan 1991:5). The whole world was seen as ‘nothing more than a homogenate replica of Europe’ (1991:5). European colonialism, therefore, created the material and cultural conditions in which a self-aggrandizing and grounding metaphysical delusion was institutionally embodied and incarnated in the consciousness of the colonized (1991:7). On the practical level this meant the replication of European institutions and forms of life and the simultaneous depreciation and suppression of non-European institutions and cultures.

The history of Christian missionary activity on the continent is closely connected to the imperial conquest of the continent. Specialist on African church history, Elizabeth Isichei, makes the following observation: ‘The number of missionaries at work in Africa expanded dramatically between 1880 and 1900, the heyday of imperialism. Missionaries in the field often supported the imperial ambitions of their compatriots’ (1995:92). She further notes, that ‘[i]t has been suggested that both mission and imperialism rest on the same postulate: the superiority of one’s



own culture to that of the other' and that 'missionary enthusiasm for empire was based on the conviction that white cultures were superior, and that it was the duty of Europeans to be "trustees" or "guardians" of the supposedly less civilized' (1995:92). Western theology which supported the missionary enterprise has been accused of being the 'handmaid of western expansionism', with the link between Christian mission and western political, economic and cultural dominance eventually affecting Christianity on the continent negatively. In their encounter with Africans some missionaries hesitated to accept them as equals. For example, as Isichei notes, 'Religious orders were reluctant to admit African members... Africans were encouraged to become diocesan priests rather than join missionary congregations, and expatriate nuns tended to form separate orders for African sisters' (1995:87). In postcolonial Africa such negative experiences would continue to haunt the Church.

Isichei also acknowledges that not everything about the early missionaries was negative. For example, she notes that nineteenth-century missionaries, both Protestant and Catholic, were very often closer to African communities than their successors. She further observes that although they were often sweeping and extreme in their condemnation of African cultures, they were much more successful than most of their successors in learning African languages (1995:88). Many, however, experienced a dilemma which lay at the heart of their experience: to what extent should converts to Christianity adopt western values and culture? Responses to this varied as the history of Christianity in African has shown.

Isichei (1995:86-91) suggests that often missionaries were attracted to foreign missions by a romantic dream of martyrdom and that much mission work was justified by the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20). She concludes, however, that the 'history of most of these missions remains unwritten. There is a considerable body of pious biographies, but little academic research' (1995:89). The encounter between Christianity and African cultures is further complicated by the variety and differences among the African cultures themselves. It seems safer to conclude as Isichei does: 'Many things brought Europeans to Africa' (1995:96).

Following the demise of colonialism African postcolonial leaders faced the task of rediscovering African identity, institutions and cultures. These were people who had been forced to internalize a negative disposition towards their own indigeneity and had been estranged from their

traditional cultures. However, Serequeberhan argues that colonialism did not totally obliterate indigenous cultures. Postcolonial leaders found themselves encased between two contradictory and complimentary forms of estranged existence. This is a situation which continues even in the present. The discourse began by Kaunda and others is therefore relevant even today.

The formal end of colonialism did not only expel the physical presence of colonialism, but also put into question the assumptions and worldview of the west. Present-day African realities are constituted partly by the ossified remnants of European colonialism/neocolonialism and by the varied forms of struggle aimed at actualizing the possibility of an autonomous and free Africa in the context of the modern world (Serequeberhan 1991:9). This is what is meant by the search for an African identity. Theologically, the foregoing have many implications, for example, in the areas of evangelization and inculturation. Using Bediako's idea of the link between theology and identity an assessment needs to be made of Kaunda's search for an African identity. This assessment is not simply a speculative exercise; it is meant to lead to engagement with real life issues faced by contemporary Africans in general and Zambians in particular. Kaunda, however, is not clear about what this identity is.

## **6.2 African theology's contribution**

The issue of African Christian identity has been present in literature since the emergence of literature on African theology. In fact, according to some, African theology is all about rediscovering and articulating what it means to be both African and Christian. Due to the widely perceived collusion between Christianity and colonialism, post colonial African theologians found themselves not only critiquing Christianity as it had been handed down, but were also challenged to establish their credentials as 'truly African and Christian'.

Stinton (2004:20-21) observes that African theology was born 'amid crosswinds of social, cultural, and theological change'. On the socio-political scene it was the struggle against colonialism and the birth of new states which challenged African theologians to establish their identity. A cultural revolution also swept across Africa at the same time. Stinton observes that

To counter the disdain with which local cultures had generally been held during colonial times, Africans made intensive efforts to reaffirm their identity and integrity in many spheres of life, including names, dress,

music, dance forms, architecture, and other indigenous expressions affecting church life and practice (2004:20).

The search for identity was present even on the intellectual level as evidence shows in the numerous publications from the era dealing with the subject. In 1976, Africa hosted the Ecumenical Dialogue of Third World Theologians which resulted in the foundation of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT). In 1977, the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians (EAAT) was formed. During this time there was also a remarkable increase in African Initiated Churches (AICs). Following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65), and especially during the pontificates of Paul VI and John Paul II, there has been a lot written on what has come to be termed inculturation. Isichei makes an important observation concerning Vatican II and Africa:

Vatican II encouraged a contextualized theology, and a more positive approach to other faith traditions. Hinduism and Buddhism, but not African traditions, were specified in the relevant document (1995:327).

This seems characteristic of Roman documents and of Rome's approach to many questions. In fact, even the interpretation of the other documents of the Council has proved to be a complex task. Even today, more than forty years later, scholars are still 'divided about how to properly interpret the legacy of Vatican II and how to implement it' (Madges 2005:xi).<sup>54</sup> While Rome seems to encourage inculturation, for Catholics, 'the limits of possible inculturation are imposed by Rome' (Isichei 1995:328). Must Africa still look to the west to identify itself? It must also be added that not all, including some Africans, welcomed inculturation. Isichei reports that a missionary in Kenya said, 'Africans have no culture, so they must accept Christianity in its western form completely'; others were ambivalent while most were inarticulate (Isichei 1995:330).

These developments, pointing to the Africans' search for an identity, are at the heart of African theology. African theology, it may be argued, is nothing but the search for and an attempt to articulate the African Christian identity. Apart from what was happening in the other areas of

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<sup>54</sup> Many suggestions have been made on how to properly interpret and understand Vatican II. For example, Ormond Rush has written a book which offers some hermeneutical principles for understanding the Council; *Still interpreting Vatican II: Some hermeneutical principles*. New York/Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press (2004). Isichei is convinced that 'Rome is often torn between a theoretical appreciation of inculturation, and a fear of where it may lead to' (1995:330).

African life, there was also a specifically theological agenda and a developing theology in the immediate post colonial era which contributed to the rediscovery of the African identity.

The challenge before the “post missionary era” is still that of making the good news of Christianity truly African or at home in Africa. This means that serious dialogue between Christianity and the African context must take place. In the same way that Kaunda’s ideology is both deconstructive and reconstructive, theology in Africa must deconstruct the Christianity received in order to reconstruct a truly African Christian identity.

### **6.3 The crisis of economic development manifested in the choice of socialism against capitalism**

In their study of the contending ideologies present in Apartheid South Africa Leatt, Kneifel and Nürnberger (1986:viii) observe that ‘[c]onfusion abounds, not only concerning the contents of the differing and antagonistic ideologies themselves, but also concerning the concept of ideology itself’. This fact, together with others, such as the variety of theologies, makes the theological assessment of Kaunda’s Zambian humanism both difficult and complex. The best option in this regard is to assess the ideology in the form it was implemented and from a particular theological perspective.

Humanism in Zambia was implemented as a socialist and nationalist ideology. As practiced in Africa socialism has received various interpretations ranging from outright condemnation to high praise as the most appropriate and effective way towards development. Its success or failure has also been judged differently, usually depending on some specific ideological position. One thing that is clear, however, is that both socialism and capitalism are western concepts, whose historical origins are in the west. They also use western categories to express themselves. Even Marxist theory is a European cultural-historical product. This fact alone is enough to cause some to question the usefulness of speaking of an African socialism. However, it cannot be denied that postcolonial Africa embarked on some experiments which many linked with socialism and even deliberately called African socialism. What Kaunda and others realized was that it is only through an indigenization and appropriation of the elements of these ideologies and theories that they could positively be utilized in the African situation. Africa, they insisted, is not an extension

of Europe or the west. But were the conditions for socialist economic development present in Zambia?

Among the many negative criticisms leveled at Kaunda and other post independence African leaders for insisting on socialism against capitalism is that, as an ideology, socialism focuses on the equitable distribution of wealth in society without paying due attention to the creation of wealth. First, it is argued, there must be wealth before it can be distributed. By insisting on socialism before the wealth had been created in Zambia, Kaunda set the country on a sure path to economic disaster. The policy of nationalization which created parastatals whose main aim was to run business ventures on behalf of government only led to the situation in which many of these organizations were unprofitable with managers who received huge salaries and so became an elite group at the expense of the masses.

Secondly, Zambia's economic sector was too small to ensure its continued productive and profitable running along socialist lines without the incentive which capitalism provides in the business sector. If capitalism breeds competition and conflict in society, as socialists suggest, what they, in turn, do not seem sufficiently to consider is the inborn tendency in human beings towards greed and self preservation. These qualities, which seem negative for community building and social relations, are the very motivation for creativity and productivity in capitalism. Even Kaunda and socialism recognize the need to control the negative behavior of human beings and to reward such behavior for its contribution to the well-being of society.

Theology can contribute to the ongoing dialogue between wealth creation and its distribution by providing the necessary critique to both.<sup>55</sup> Theology can contribute towards a rethinking of the contemporary state of affairs in terms which are conducive and congenial to the emancipation and growth of Africa and its diverse peoples.

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<sup>55</sup> Nürnberger (1998) has done a critical analysis of both classical capitalism and radical socialism, reaching the conclusion that both are inadequate as economic systems, with capitalism failing to resolve the problem of mass poverty and socialism failing to adequately deal with wealth creation and the respect of human dignity. He proposes a system that makes use of the positive elements of each. At present social democracy rather than democratic socialism which is a modified Marxist system in the direction of a market economy and democratic institutions (1998: 262) appears best. Whether it would be suitable for less industrialized countries like Zambia is, however, debatable.

#### 6.4 John Paul II's social encyclicals

In 1891 Pope Leo XIII wrote an encyclical letter,<sup>56</sup> *Rerum Novarum*, which is considered the first papal social encyclical letter, on the new world order born out of the industrial revolution. In this letter the Pope provides the foundational principles for the Catholic Church's teaching on social issues. On the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* John Paul II wrote an encyclical letter in which he reflected on human work, *Laborem exercens*. Michael J Miller describes this encyclical letter as a 'very personal document... with solid roots in the Pope's own experience as a worker' (1996:151). Unlike his predecessor, John Paul II focuses on the human person's relationship to work, especially in the capitalist society in which making profit seems to be the primary motive for economic activity. The letter manifests the Pope's careful use of a 'phenomenological description of experience with philosophical-theological meditation' (:151). In chapter two of the letter, the Pope describes the theological and anthropological foundations of human work. It is the most theologically dense and intellectually challenging section. Chapter three argues that labour, that is, human beings involved in the process of production, should always have priority in relation to capital, the non-human means of production, in economic activity. This relationship of labour to capital has ramifications for how the ownership of property is understood. While reaffirming the traditional teaching of the Church about private ownership of property, the Pope adds that

Christian tradition has never upheld this right as absolute and untouchable. On the contrary, it has always understood this right within the broader context of the right common to all to use the goods of creation: *the right to property is subordinated to the right to common use* (#14). (emphasis in original)

This argument is in line with Kaunda's basic argument that everything in society must be done for the benefit of human beings. Central to the Pope's argument as with Kaunda's is the absolute primacy of the human person over things. For both the Pope and Kaunda, this dignity of the human person is based on the belief that human beings are created in the image and likeness of God.

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<sup>56</sup> An encyclical letter is an authoritative papal document, normally but not always, written for the universal church. There are three kinds: doctrinal encyclicals deal with particular points of Catholic teaching; the social encyclicals treat more directly economic, social and political issues and problems and; exhortatory encyclicals are aimed primarily at encouraging a particular attitude, devotional practice or course of action among Catholics (See Miller 1996:9-13).

The Pope also does not agree with the argument that denies the private ownership of property. In a section that critiques capitalism, he concludes:

... while the position of 'rigid' capitalism must undergo continual revision, in order to be reformed from the point of view of human rights, both rights in the widest sense and those linked with man's work, it must be stated that, from the same point of view, these many deeply desired reforms cannot be achieved by *a prior elimination of private ownership of the means of production*. For it must be noted that merely taking these means of production(capital) out of the hands of their private owners is not enough to ensure their satisfactory socialization. They cease to be the property of a certain social group, namely the private owners, and become the property of organized society, coming under the administration and direct control of another group of people, namely those who, though not owning them, from the fact of exercising power in society *manage* them on the level of the whole national or the local level (# 14). (emphasis in original)

John Paul II's second social encyclical letter, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*(1987), written on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Paul VI's *Populorum progressio* (1967) deals with social themes, especially the increasing injustices and poverty prevalent in the Third World. In this encyclical the Pope makes a clear connection between the Church's proclamation on social matters and its evangelizing mission. 'While *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* perceptively analyzes the economic, political and cultural dimensions of world development, its perspective is primarily ethical and theological' (Miller 1996:411). In his analysis of the state of development the Pope paints a negative picture based on the social and economic indicators of development that show a widening gap between the rich and the poor (#14). The Pope identifies three causes of the worsening situation: the lack of effective international solidarity, the rivalry between East and West, and the production and selling of arms (Miller 1996:414). The Pope criticizes both capitalism and communism for failing to bring about authentic human development (#22). Once again, the Pope is clear in his criticism of the dominant world ideologies. This is done from a religious and theological perspective.

*Centesimus annus* (1991), written to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Leo XIII's *Rerum novarum* (1891) is considered by some the best critique of both capitalism and socialism from a theological perspective. Written following the collapse of world communism, marked by the Fall

of the Berlin Wall in 1989, the letter is critical of both failed socialism and contemporary capitalism. The Pope's desire, however, is to articulate a Christian teaching on social issues whose foundation is an anthropology which has a '*correct view of the human person* and of his unique value' (#11). (emphasis in original) This letter relies least, among the three, on biblical citations, which is a significant change in papal encyclicals. It relies more of a critical reading of historical events. The Pope analyses the causes and consequence of the 1989 collapse of Marxism. In his view, the religious and moral message of Christianity was decisive in the nonviolent end of global Marxism. The Pope highlights the role of the Solidarity movement among workers in his native Poland in bringing about the end of oppressive regimes. In the view of the Pope, it was the values of justice and truth that ultimately led to the collapse of the regime (#23). The Pope further shows how the inability to produce sufficient goods or provide adequate services led to socialism's collapse. As a system socialism focuses on wealth distribution at the expense of wealth creation. Such a system is inherently flawed and eventually meant to fail.

In chapter four of the letter, the longest, most complex, and most commented on,<sup>57</sup> the Pope examines capitalism as an economic ideology that favours the free market system. He describes the positive aspects of capitalism without being blind to its negative ones. Among the dangers and weaknesses of the free market system of capitalism he lists the risk of an 'idolatry' of the market that ignores the existence of goods which by their nature are not and cannot be mere commodities (#40). He also criticizes capitalism for its excessive focus on profit. Further he questions whether the 'profitability of an enterprise should be viewed as the sole indicator of its success' (Miller 1996:577). The Pope points once again to the human person as an important consideration in economic activity. The letter is critical of the contemporary lifestyle that promotes having rather than being. This leads to widespread consumerism and to a new form of alienation, which are the root of the current global economic crisis. Other dangers inherent in present-day capitalistic societies include ecological damage and the destruction of the social fabric.

For many, including committed Christians, capitalism not only creates enormous wealth for a few, it also is founded on the exploitation of the masses. It is therefore immoral. For John Paul II,

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<sup>57</sup> For a commentary and bibliography on this, see Miller's introduction to the encyclical and the bibliography given in *The encyclicals of John Paul II*, (Miller 1996: 571-585).



capitalism fails to recognize the ‘value and grandeur of the human person’ (#41). What John Paul II does in the social encyclicals is to provide the theological foundation and principles for the assessment of political and economic ideologies and systems. What Kaunda and others do is to argue that socialism is the only morally acceptable alternative framework within which a just solution for all can be found. However, there is no consensus as to what concrete form it should take.

The choice of socialism has, besides economic motives, moral implications as well. African leaders react against the individualism, profit-seeking and ruthless competition of the free market as foreign to the basic values of African communalism (Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger 1986:151).

## **6.5 The dilemmas of control and class formations**

As has been earlier described, Kaunda’s ideology was developed as a reaction against the negative experience of colonialism. It was an ideology that not only sought to break with the colonial past, but which at the same time attempted to be a unifying factor in the new nation-state. However, it gradually took on the characteristics of being absolute. Kaunda and his government implemented the ideology in an authoritarian manner. Political opposition and dissent were banned by law in the name of nation interest and unity. But when ideology becomes absolute, when it pretends to offer the solutions to all society’s problems, it becomes a danger to human rights and dignity. The former communist countries of Eastern Europe are a good example of how this has happened historically.

The need for governments to control their populations is a genuine and legitimate duty of government. However, human rights and dignity must be protected by government and by its citizens. According to Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger (1986:285), in general, ‘theologians tend to underestimate the power which social structures and processes exercise over thought patterns and attitudes’. They argue that society is normally structured in such a way that the center is where power is concentrated economically, political and socially. Those on the periphery have less power to effect change. Within this arrangement ‘the social structure determines the objective character of relationship in terms of power’ (1986:285). Ideologies are what legitimate social structures and these in turn determine behavior. ‘People do not always act according to norms and values but also according to their vital interests’ (:286). Ideology plays a crucial role in legitimating action, even especially self interested action. The danger here is that even theology

can become ideology, when used to defend exclusive interests. Theology must engage with both social structures and with ideologies in the context of the structural realities of society. Two models of engagement have been historically present in the encounter between theology and social reality. The first model emphasizes the unique character of the Christian message. It recognizes that revelation is always mediated through culture, but tends to emphasize the fact that the message of the gospel transcends all cultures. Therefore, in the encounter between the gospel and culture the gospel has the primary role of evangelizing the culture. Inculturation is about incarnating the essence of the gospel in the host culture. The Word of God is recognized by this model as the sole, absolute and universal saviour of human beings, regardless of the social and cultural circumstances.

The second model, identified with Liberation Theology and its methodology begins with the socio-historical conditions in which human beings find themselves. Unlike the previous model, '[i]ts central justification is not the power of the Word of God, but the liberating power of a commitment to God's kingdom of the poor' (Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger 1986:294). In the encounter between faith and ideology it emphasizes commitment to changing unjust structures in society. Orthopraxis rather than orthodoxy is more important for this model. This is because it recognizes that an identification of the Word of God with the written words of the Bible has in the past been used for ideological purposes, thus making religion an opium of the people as Marx pointed out.

Leatt, Kneifel & Nürnberger conclude that seen from a theological perspective there are four levels at which the relationship between Christian faith and ideology may be considered:

- 1) that the word Christianity itself can be considered phenomenologically as an ideology since it looks at the totality of the world from the perspective of the revelation of God in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1986:301);
- 2) on the political and economic level, Christianity is not one among several ideologies nor does it identify with any specific political or economic ideology. 'In an absolute sense there are no Christian politics, or economics, or civilizations' (1986:301). This means that Christians have to confront all ideologies that do not respect the dignity of human persons. It also has to be critical of ideologies that exalt individual interests to

- the detriment of the common good, as of those that sacrifice the freedom of individuals to the demand of an egalitarian society (:302);
- 3) Theology must be critical of ideologies that use Christian symbols to legitimate certain ideological positions. Theology must perform the prophetic task of unmasking and demystifying those ideologies that conceal behind a moral and scientific façade a basic policy of domination and repression;
  - 4) When ideology becomes total or absolute it becomes an idol, a false god. It must be confronted by theology in the name of the God revealed by Jesus of Nazareth. Only the God of religion can be absolute and demand absolute obedience of human beings. Ideologies which promise human beings salvation must be critically assessed and shown to be wrong. For Christians, ‘only God and the kingdom of God are ultimate realities, all others are penultimate, and cannot be taken with ultimate seriousness’ (1986:302).

## **6.6 Conclusions and challenges still to be faced**

In agreement with Serequeberhan (1991), who argues that African philosophy must be done by Africans themselves, I add that theology in Africa must be done by Africans, but not necessarily in an exclusionist manner. Africans must be in the forefront precisely because Africans themselves need to formulate their differing religious experiences in confrontation and dialogue and in their own manner without foreign mediators/moderators or meddlers. Kaunda and his contemporaries set the example which must be followed. They tried, first by deconstructing the colonial identity of Africans, and then by constructing what they considered uniquely African to define themselves.

Theology in Africa, like its counterpart philosophy, must be ‘a historically engaged and politically committed explorative reflection [and articulation] on the African situation aimed at political empowerment of the African people’ (Serequeberhan 1991:xxi). It must play the twofold task of deconstructing and constructing; deconstructing all that is false and destructive of the African human experience and constructing a true and life-giving identity that will help Africans as part of the world community live fully the humanity given them and blessed by God. ‘Grim as this picture may be, it is important to remember that it constitutes the African people’s varied and differing struggles to define and establish their freedom’(:12). It is a manifestation of

the struggle to establish an African identity. Dispute exists about what this identity is and about how best it can be constructed. Postcolonial discourse faces challenges both as a process of deconstruction and as a process of construction. The deconstructive challenge of the discourse is directed at the Eurocentric residues inherited from colonialism. With independence colonial structures and institutions in education, politics and economics have been taken over by the independent states, but the basic parameters within which they function, the cultural codes and attitudes inscribed within, the principles that inform them, largely remain the same. The challenge is to unmask these residues, recognizing at the same time that not everything in the present can and must be attributed to the legacy of colonialism. The more difficult challenge is that of reconstruction. Africa must define itself using African concepts. This calls for a positive revitalization of the broken and suppressed indigenous African heritage.

Finally, it must be affirmed that what Kaunda attempted to do is a project much bigger than any one individual. It is one that must continue even in the present, for ‘beyond particular thinkers and their contributions, the political and philosophic output of the African anticolonial struggle as a whole has to be understood as the originative grounding that is – implicitly or explicitly – presupposed by contemporary African intellectual work *as such*’ (Serequeberhan 1991:20). In theological terms, Kaunda was simply contributing to making the kingdom of God a reality in his socio-historical context.

## **General conclusions and implications**

This research project began with the ambitious objective: to show how Kenneth Kaunda's Zambian humanism is a contextual theology, according to the models described by Robert Schreiter. The primary aim was to investigate the theological elements inherent in Kaunda's humanism that would enable it to be classified as a contextual theology. The stated aims did not include an evaluation of the viability of humanism as an ideology in socio-economic terms nor an analysis of the extent to which humanism may or may not have succeeded in attaining its intended goals. However, as the project progressed, a more immediate concern arose which needed to be clarified: how Kaunda's Zambian humanism is a postcolonial discourse and how it can contribute to the development of a local theology in present-day Zambia. Though the former thesis is still valid and worthy of further theological consideration, the latter has proved to be of more immediate relevance and value. It is this reason that accounts for the shift of focus in the study.

From the foregoing study, it should not be a surprise that an ideology is the object of theological study, for anything that is of human concern is and must be of interest to theology and to the theologian. As the systematic study and articulation of how God is present and interacts with human beings, theology seeks to understand how God is present and communicating the divine self through human ideologies. The number of studies and publications dealing with new perceptions of the pluralistic context in which theology is done also lends credibility to the present study. What Kaunda and his contemporaries set out to do in proposing a different worldview from the dominant western worldview needs to be interpreted theologically to see how and if it accords with our understanding of the Christian God's interaction with human beings. Their intention was not only the deconstruction and rejection of the colonial and therefore dominant western discourse, but also an attempt to construct an African discourse capable of giving meaning to African existence and society. Such an ambitious undertaking certainly calls for theological consideration. Two important areas emerge in the study: the search for an authentic African identity and an alternative socio-economic organization of Zambian society.

Christianity has been on the continent for more than a century now and most of Africa has been politically independent for about half a century. Have these facts made any real difference in the lives of Africans, both Christian and non Christian? As has become evident through the assessment of both Kaunda's and Nyerere's ideologies, the greatest weakness with both lies in linking their ideologies to economic activity. Their naïve assessment of human nature led to a negative and outright rejection of capitalism. Capitalism, whose essential fact, according to Joseph A. Schumpeter as cited by Thomas McCraw (2008:xxiii), is 'Constructive Destruction', that is, the endless process of replacing old products and services with new ones, has proved capable of producing enormous amounts of wealth, and also poverty. One, however, needs to ask whether the material benefits of capitalism, including among others greed, venality, despoliation of the environment, and the wild disparities in wealth and income is not too heavy a price to pay in social terms. Socialism's focus on wealth distribution without due attention being paid to wealth creation is a real challenge that must be faced boldly. Zambia still has not adequately resolved the question of wealth creation, more than forty years after the introduction of humanism. Before there is wealth to distribute it must be created. In attempting to understand Kaunda and his ideology the study focused on the history of Zambia (1964-1991), focusing especially on the socio-economic and political developments which had a direct impact on Kaunda's introduction and implementation of humanism. Zambia gained political independence in 1964 and humanism was introduced in 1967. These facts, seen in the broader picture of colonial history and postcolonial discourse have shown that Kaunda's experience was not unique. A question that requires further theological reflection is whether a capitalistic system can be successfully combined with socialist values that respect the human person and society. This has become an urgent and very important question in current economic discourse, especially as the world struggles to come out of a serious economic crisis not experienced since the 1930s.

At the heart of all Christian theology lies the question of who Christ is. The answer given to this question ultimately determines and is determined by the social, cultural and political context in which the reflection takes place. Jesus and his message must challenge everything in the context that is against human dignity. But, Jesus' message can only be relevant and credible when incarnated in the local context. How can Jesus be understood as liberator or saviour in a context of poverty and misery? As both Nyerere and Kaunda have attempted to show, each in his way, there is a very close relationship between faith and politics. The political situation in which the

Church finds itself in African countries has also affected the nature of Christian theology. A major task for theology today is to speak to the men and women of this age in a language that is relevant and credible. In short, it must respond to the urgent questions of the men and women of today.

From a theological perspective, it is the value placed on the individual, the principle of equality, and the central place of the community, that are among some of the ideals in these political systems which are seen to be in harmony with Christian principles. And so, as Africa seeks to be part of the global discourse on human development, theology must not hesitate to affirm what is good in political systems. At the same time, it must maintain its prophetic vocation, which requires it to speak the word of God boldly in season and out of season.

### **Challenges for theology**

Discussing the identity and mission of churches of Africa, Efoé-Julien Penoukou concludes that these churches face four main challenges in their mission: identity, politics, economics and culture (1991:43-45). In the area of identity he argues that as long as the churches in Africa remain financially dependent on external sources they cannot develop an African identity. Their projects and institutions will continue to mirror those of their donors. He asks:

If the church in Africa remains so very dependent on outside help, can we truly believe that the God of Jesus Christ has given what is needed to all peoples so that they might accept responsibly God's message of salvation? (Penoukou 1991:43-44).

The answer given by Kaunda and others is in the negative. Africa needs to depend on its own resources, both material and otherwise, to develop its identity and socio-economic and political system. Whatever system, and ideology underlying the system, it must be open to critique both from within and from other systems. Theology and theologians must ensure that human values are kept on the agenda on national projects and programs. The real challenge, however, is how to translate these human values into terms and figures that can be used by economists and others responsible for national planning and development.

In the political arena, theology in Africa has the urgent task of challenging systems which attack liberty and human dignity. Penoukou argues that politics is where the destiny of human beings is played out and so the mission of salvation proper to the church is to be found in this arena (1991:44). So, while being supportive of all that is in keeping with gospel values in political and economic ideologies, such as that presented by Kaunda, theology must engage in constructive criticism.

The economic situation of many African countries, Zambia included, has remained stagnant or deteriorated in the years following political independence. The causes of this are manifold, amongst them being the international economic system which keeps Africa marginal to world industrial development and global commerce, the colonial legacy, the burden of foreign debt, structural adjustment programmes prescribed by International Financial Institutions, especially the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, etc. African leaders and governments have no doubt also played a major role in the failed economic situations of their countries. Among the areas for which Africans must accept responsibility include rampant institutional corruption and ill-conceived development plans, many guided by socialist ideals, and the irrational interference by arbitrary political powers in the economic sphere. As shown through the social encyclicals of John Paul II, theology in Africa can serve as the voice of conscience that argues that development of social, economic and political systems based on universal human values is not only desirable, but possible; that human economic growth and human development are not necessarily opposed. Theology must contribute in the developing of practices of social development which favour the poor and marginalized, and thus contribute to the 'coming of justice – a sign of the Reign of God' (Penoukou 1991:45).

Finally, the question of culture in Africa belongs to the theological order. Boka di Mipasi Londi argues that culture and, therefore, inculturation is the 'bedrock of African theology' (1991:53). In order to engage in this challenge 'Africans must first of all exist as Africans', he argues (:54). As Kaunda did, theology in Africa and by Africans must fight against everything that denies Africans their identity as Africans. Further, it must challenge all in the various cultures that is against universal human values and dignity.



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