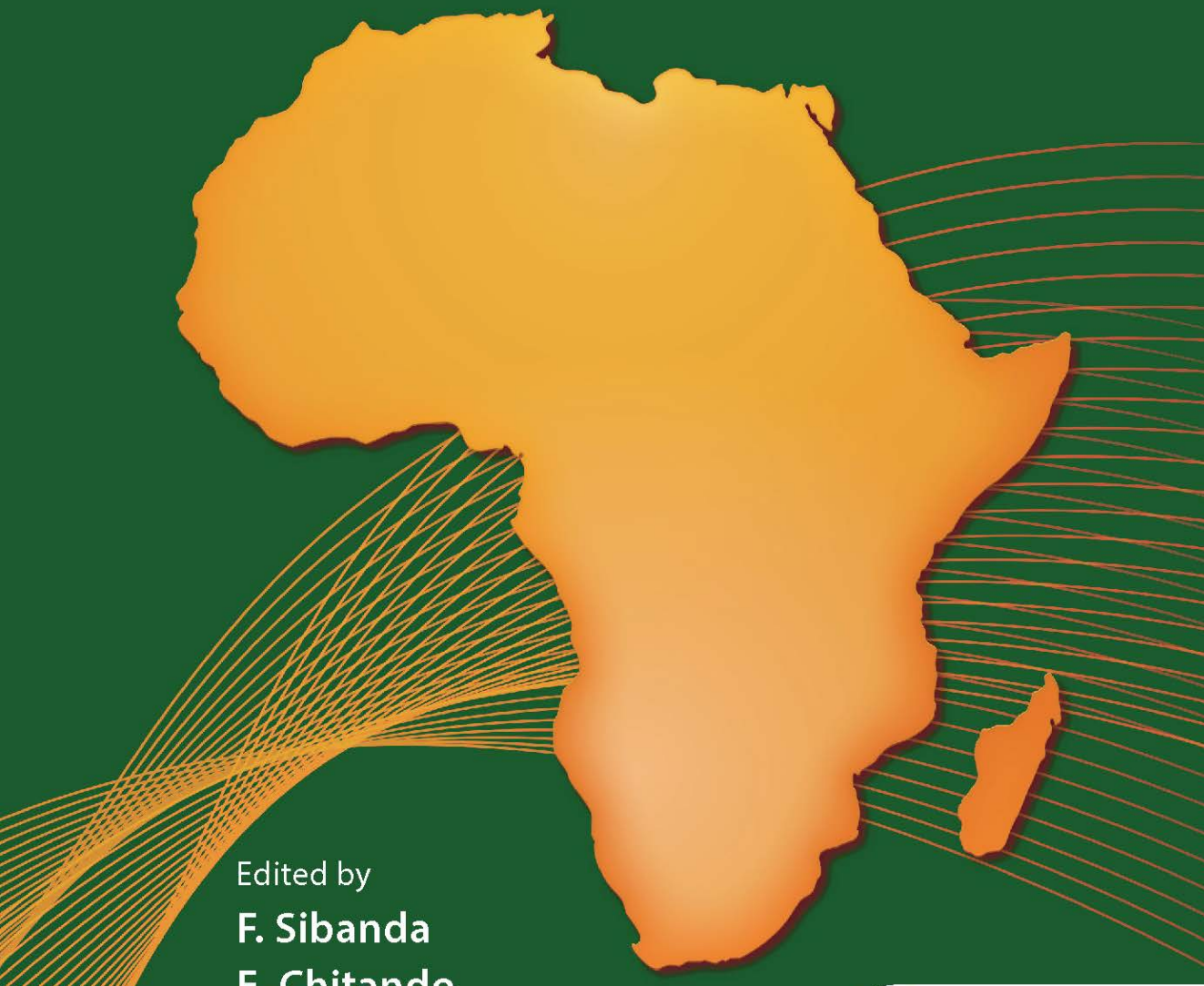
Law, Religion and Leadership in Africa
Published by AFRICAN SUN MeDIA

Law, Religion and Leadership in Africa



Edited by
F. Sibanda
E. Chitando
E.G. Konyana
B.P. Humbe

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

ACLARS
AFRICAN CONSORTIUM FOR LAW AND RELIGION STUDIES

3 "Stay in the pulpit": The legal, religious and political leadership conflicts in Zambia

Upendo Mwakasenga[1]

INTRODUCTION

Like many other African countries, Zambia's political leadership sometimes seems to conflict with the religious leadership. Zambia, being a democratic country, has allowed freedom of speech, which the religious leadership claims to use, but which also creates problems with political leaders. On the one hand, religious leaders in Zambia significantly influence their members by shaping their beliefs, moral conduct, Christian values and political opinions. Such influence may either positively impact or bring conflicting views within the political sphere. On the other hand, the political leadership is responsible for governing and making decisions for the people of Zambia and for following the country's laws. Through the legal electoral process, the people of Zambia mandate the political leadership to govern, rule and fulfill their campaign promises. When religious leaders try to speak against bad policies made by political leaders and injustices in the country, political leaders see the church as working against them. For example, journalist Mirriam Chabala has reported that "President Lungu urged the church to stay away from the political arena and concentrate on playing its God-given role of providing counsel to national leadership."[2] In this study, President Lungu's statement, "Stay away from the political arena" means "Stay in the pulpit". The politicians restricting the religious leaders from speaking on political matters has continued even under the current political leadership. According to another political reporter, "Government has urged the clergy to stop using the pulpit to criticise it but to win souls to Christ."[3]

"Staying in the pulpit means that church leaders should preach the gospel of Jesus and not speak on the social injustices perpetrated by political leaders. When religious leaders criticise the government, they are told to stay away from politics and concentrate on their preaching in the pulpit. The surprising thing is that political leaders are telling the religious leaders to stay away from the political arena while using the church pulpit to advance their own political agendas. Religious leaders have also started to warn politicians to "Stay out of the pulpit" for their political gain. In the face of statements from political leaders urging religious leaders not to

1 Ordained minister, United Church of Zambia; Doctoral student in systematic theology, University of Kwa-Zulu Natal.

2 Chabala M. 2020. "Stay Away from politics, Lungu tells church again", *News Diggers*, 16 March.

3 ZANIS. 2023. "Use Pulpits to Win Souls to Christ, not criticizing us, government tells the church", *News Diggers*, 25 December.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

speak on political issues, the questions that come to mind are: How can the church use the pulpit to liberate its people from injustices but at the same time not challenge the political leaders and not breaking the law of freedom of speech? The conflict comes at the intersection of freedom of speech and social justice, where political leaders seek to prevent churches from involving themselves in political issues and the church reacts by telling the politicians to stay away from the church pulpit. Such a relationship between the church and the state is not healthy for the country and needs to be addressed.

The question is not who is wrong and right, but how do we bridge a gap between political and religious leaders for the country's development? Zambian religion scholar Nelly Mwale has pointed out that "studies on religion and politics in Africa point to the idea that political power and religion are commonly considered to be closely intertwined, despite the formal separation of religion and politics".[4] Though churches, religious leaders and political leaders have freedom of worship, political leaders sometimes do not see them as partners in the country's development. Police have summoned religious leaders to explain messages preached in the pulpit which have been deemed as inciting people to rise against the government in a way that disturbs the peace. Although Zambia is a "Christian Nation",[5] politics are still considered dirty and evil by many people because they do not see many political leaders with good moral standards.

As an insider, a clergy member and a citizen of Zambia, I have seen how politicians and the police have treated the Church in Zambia. The church where I work as a minister, the United Church of Zambia, has been labeled as a church that supports politicians because the first and second presidents of the Republic of Zambia have been members. In addition, many of the church's members are in political leadership countrywide. The result has been that the church seems to have a meagre voice in criticising its members who are in political leadership in public. Since they are Christians, political leaders find it easy to use the church for their political ambition by giving them money for various church projects. As an outsider and a researcher, having worked under the conflict resolution chairperson in Mansa District for three years from 2012 to 2015, I saw how UCZ and other church mother bodies have participated in conflict resolution between political leaders. Still, it becomes difficult to resolve conflicts between political leaders and religious leaders.

This study examines the role of religious and political leaders in the country's political affairs. How can the church avoid preaching about politics, and how can politicians stay out of the pulpit in a Christian nation? This chapter also seeks to understand how religious and political leaders clash while serving the same people in the community. How can the church stay in the pulpit yet fulfill its mission of being the voice of the voiceless? Does it mean that the religious leaders have no freedom of speech, a human right for all Zambian citizens? Such questions and

4 Mwale N. 2016. "Religion and Politics in Zambia: Investigating the Religious Discourse in the 2016 Electoral Campaigns", *Zango: Zambian Journal of Contemporary Issues* 32:18.

5 Constitution of Zambia (Amendment) Act No. 2 of 2016, preamble.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

others help us to understand the meaning of the phrase "Stay in the pulpit". The study uses the theological doctrine of the two kingdoms as a lens for discussing the religious and political leadership conflict in order to establish the means to bridge the gap. By using two kingdoms theology and liberation theology, the study highlights why it is important for religious leaders to be involved in the political affairs of the country. The study helps us to see how religious leaders have been involved in national politics, and how political leaders have embraced Christianity for political ends.

THE CHURCH-STATE RELATIONSHIP AND ITS IMPLICATION FOR RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN ZAMBIA

Zambia is located in the central part of Southern Africa and liberated itself from colonial rule in 1964. It should be noted that all the seven republican presidents in Zambia have been Christians. The first republican president, the late Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, was seen as a liberator from colonial rule under his party, the United National Independent Party (UNIP). Kaunda, the son of a religious leader and a member of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ), teamed up with other leaders and helped the country transition to independence after being governed by the British. Isaac Phiri, a Zambian scholar of church-state relations, peace and development, observes, "David Kaunda and other nationalists used Christianity as an ideological base to confront political injustices. Christianity was a 'double-edged sword' for the nationalist as it helped position the nationalist as God-sent liberators rather than power-hungry individuals."[6] Of Kaunda's Christian supporters, Phiri has further observed, "The churches realised that the Kaunda they initially supported as the people's liberator was involved into a communist-style oppressor. The churches then ignored their doctrinal differences and formed a united front against Kaunda."[7] Kaunda's introduction of the one-party state and the economic struggles of the country made people lose hope in the political leadership of UNIP. The churches united to become the voice for the voiceless and fought the injustices to liberate the people by using the pulpit.

Then Dr. Frederick Titus Jacob Chiluba, leader of the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy (MMD) and a charismatic preacher from the United Church of Zambia (UCZ), challenged the sitting president Dr. Kaunda, to become the second republican president. Chiluba fought for multiparty democracy with the slogan: "The hour has come for change". The people of Zambia and the churches thought It was Chiluba who, with the introduction of multiparty democracy, would end the economic challenges in the country. Chiluba, declared Zambia a "Christian Nation". The declaration provided for religious freedom and affirmed the multi-religious composition of the nation. The church leadership and political leaders agreed to

6 Phiri I J. 1999. "Why African churches preach politics: The case of Zambia", *Journal of Church & State* 41(2):331.

7 Phiri, "Why African churches preach politics", 334.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

enshrine the statement in the preamble of the Constitution of Zambia.[8] According to the Pentecostal understanding of religion and politics, religion scholar Chammah Kaunda has noted, "The significant aspect of a Christian nation lies in the concept of declaration and the overall national priestly role of the president".[9] The declaration was to uphold Christian standards in the country's governance and allow religious freedom of worship. Elias Munshya, a Zambian political theologian, lawyer and diplomat, has observed that "the declaration divided the church denominations on how the declaration was going to be interpreted and what role the church was expected to play in the Zambian society after the declaration".[10] Many religious leaders sided with the President Chiluba's decision. Thus, the country witnessed the entanglement of church-state relationship in the multiparty state.

The third republican president, Levy Mwanawasa, restored the economic pride of the country, and he is remembered for financial discipline. Though his religious affiliation as a Jehovah's Witnesses does not allow its members to participate in politics, the President Mwanawasa joined the Baptist Church, where he was baptised. After Mwanawasa's death, a new president from the MMD party, Rupia Bwazani Banda was elected into power as the fourth republican president. Banda was not known for the church he belonged to though part of his education was sponsored by Dutch Reformed church missionaries. During the president tenure of office, the Christian nation declaration continued to be protected by the president. The fifth president, Michael Chilufya Sata, a Roman Catholic, was elected the slogan "More money in your pockets", thereby raising hopes for the people. After his death, the people of Zambia elected Dr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu as the sixth president. Unlike the case with other presidents, President Lungu's church membership was unknown. Still, he was seen going into different churches to worship during his tenure of office. Some claimed that Lungu was a member of the United Church of Zambia (UCZ) because he worshipped and attended functions there more than in other churches.

Notably, President Lungu, declared 18 October a National Day of Prayer, Fasting, Repentance, and Reconciliation, and he also created the Ministry of Religious Affairs and National Guidance, which was ratified by parliament in October 2016.[11] The declaration of National Day of Prayer brought many questions, as had the declaration of Zambia as a "Christian Nation". Civic education specialist Oliver Magasu and his fellow researchers, have noted, "On one hand, some church members said that declaring a day of national prayer and fasting and forcing people

8 Constitution of Zambia (Amendment), Act No. 2 of 2016, preamble.

9 Kaunda CJ. 2018. "The Alters are Holding the Nation in Captivity: Zambian Pentecostalism, Nationality, and African Religion-Political Heritage", *Religion* 9(145):12.

10 Munshya E. 2021. *Church and State Relations in Zambia: An Evangelical Perspective,* PhD Thesis, South African Theological Seminary, 4.

11 "President Lungu Declares October 18, a Public Day of Prayers", *Lusaka Times*, 18 October 2015; National Assembly of Zambia. 2017. Ministerial Statement by the Hon. Minister of Religious Affairs and National Guidance, Rev. Sumaili, on the Mushrooming of False Churches and Prophets, and Measures being put in place, 21 March.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

to observe it, was unconstitutional and should be discouraged. On the other hand, other church members felt that the declaration was a sign that the president was God-sent and needed support from all Christians."[12] This makes one wonder why politicians continue to make religious declarations about "Christian nations", national days of prayer, and yet seek to restrict religious leaders from speaking on the affairs of the country.

After President Lungu, the seventh president elected was Hakainde Hichilema from United Party for National Development (UPND) and a Seventh-day Adventist Church member. However, like other political parties, UPND came with a slogan: "Zambia Forward". Hichilema has continued to call religious leaders at the statehouse and engage them in national matters to the present day. Thus, Zambian presidents, from the first to the seventh, were all Christians, and all have associated themselves with the Church.

Such a church-state relationship weakens the church from speaking on behalf of the voiceless, because the church continues to dine with the state and sometimes forgets its mission. Emmanuel Anagwo, a Catholic priest and scholar, has urged political and religious leaders to understand that "the use of the pulpit to foster social responsibility is on the front burner in the media and among philosophers, liturgists, theologians, and ecclesiastical leaders. This is particularly true in the politically charged atmosphere in many African countries."[13] However, the conflicts between the church and political leaders remain questionable, with both speaking the language of "Stay in the pulpit" and "Stay out of the pulpit". Politicians wanting to be associated with particular churches is common in Zambia. The bond between politicians and the church seems inseparable when we look closely at the historical part of presidents in Zambia. Law scholar Kenneth Mwenda has noted, "In the case of the Catholic Church, the Bishops said, "It is clear that there is no one 'ideal' political system. No system has ever succeeded in fully protecting and promoting the rights of its people and in entirely realising the goal of a just and equitable society. Both one-party and multi-party systems have their strengths and weaknesses."[14] All these parties' campaigns have been centred on economic liberation for years, and people from poor communities such as the compounds in Lusaka are vulnerable to politicians during campaigns, as they promise them many things and give them money to win large followings. Still, they fail to fulfill their promises. All these parties use the church for their political ambition, but after elections, the churches are told to "Stay in the pulpit" and not involve themselves in politics.

---

12 Magasu O, Lubbungu J and Mazimba R. 2021. "The Unholy Matrimony of the Church and Politics in Zambia: The Dilemma of a Christian Nation", *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* (IJRISS) 5(1):308.

13 Anagwo EC. 2020. "Liturgical use of the Pulpit to foster Social Responsibility: An African Perspective", V*idyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 84:203.

14 Mwenda K. 2022. *The contribution of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia to political conflict resolution (1990-2016*), PhD Thesis, University of Zambia, 9.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

THE LEGAL, RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL LEADERSHIP CONFLICTS IN ZAMBIA: A RECENT LITERATURE REVIEW

In Zambia, religious leaders are respected both in religious spaces and the community. On one hand, religious leaders are given time to pray at political gatherings and give advice to political leaders. On the other hand, political leaders are also given respect by religious leaders and given special recognition when they go to worship. But one wonders why there are conflicts between religious and political leaders when all are Christian leading different kingdoms.

Much literature has been written on the conflicts between legal, religious and political leadership in Zambia. Isaac Phiri has noted, "It often comes as a surprise to some that church-state conflict in Zambia dates back to a colonial era."[15] Kenneth Mwenda has written on the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia's (EFZ) role in resolving conflicts among politicians, especially the Patriotic Front (PF) and the United Party for National Development (UPND). Mwenda also examined EFZ's role in analyzing electoral disputes during the campaign period.[16] Teddy Sakupapa, an ordained UCZ minister and scholar of ecumenical studies and social ethics, has explored from a historical theological perspective the interaction between religion and politics around the national day of prayers and the creation of a ministry of national guidance and religious affairs during the time of President Lungu.[17] As Mwale has noted, "Specific Zambian studies on religion and politics have concentrated on the church's role in politics in general and the Christian Nation discourse."[18] Nelly Mwale has written a key article interrogating religious discourses in politics about the 2016 election campaigns in Zambia.[19]

The role of religious leaders in the political affairs of the country should be understood by every Christian and by citizens in countries worldwide. The three churches and their "mother bodies" recognised by the Zambian government are, the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ), and the Zambian Conference of Catholic Bishops (ZCCB). As noted by Gabriel Nsofwa, a civic education scholar and promotor of social justice, "The three mother bodies of Zambia play the inter-mediation and facilitation roles to peacebuilding in Zambia."[20] Religious leaders are there not only to lead its members to Christ, but also to engage in holistic ministry involves the spiritual, physical and sociological

15 Phiri, 1999. "Why African churches preach Politics: A case of Zambia", 326.

16 Mwenda K. 2022. *The contribution of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia to political conflict resolution (1990-2016*), PhD Thesis, University of Zambia.

17 Sakupapa CT. 2019. "Ethno-Religionalism, Politics and the Role of Religion in Zambia. Changing Ecumenical Landscapes in a Christian Nation, 2015-2018", *Exchange: Journal of Contemporary Christianities in Context* 48:105-126.

18 Mwale, "Religion and Politics in Zambia", 21

19 Mwale N. 2016. "Religion and Politics in Zambia", 17.

20 Nsofwa BG. 2018. *An Analysis of the Effectiveness of the Role of Civil Society Organisations in Peace Building in Zambia: A Case of Church Mother Bodies in Zambia*, Master's Diss, University of Zambia, 77.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

life of a person. Sakupapa defines the Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ), as an "ecumenical umbrella organization of largely Protestant Christian churches that seeks to promote cooperation and fellowship between Christian churches organizations".[21] The mother bodies of churches in Zambia have played a critical role in the religious and political life of the country, showing a spiritual leadership that aims to reconcile people to one another and God. Mwenda, writing on the contribution of the EFZ to political conflict resolution from 1990 to 2016, focused on how church mother bodies are involved in conflict resolution among political players in Zambia and Zimbabwe.[22]

Laws set up by the government are supposed to be followed by religious leaders to show good leadership to their members, community and political leaders. Nevertheless, some churches continue to violate the law and find themselves at the mercy of the police. Abraham Mwansa, a Zambian lawyer and scholar of human rights and religion-state relations, has noted an incidence where the law was applied to religious leaders to protect the people of Zambia and protect the church from being demolished by the rioters. Mwanda writes, "In 2005, at the instigation of the masses, the government banned the Universal Church of the Kingdom God and deported its two Brazilian pastors on suspicion of practicing Satanism of Lusaka residents."[23] However, Mwansa has also indicated that "the church only remained operational by a virtual order of the higher court".[24] In 2017, another incident happened affecting a pastor of a Nigerian nationality residing in Zambia was reported to the police by concerned Lusaka residents. According to the *Lusaka Times* newspaper, "Andrew Ejimadu famously known as Seer 1 was deported in 2017… after authorities deemed his antics as a danger to society although he insists that he was not deported but that he reached a compromise with the Zambian government to leave the country on his terms."[25] Another pastor was accused of raping a married woman in Lusaka. The National Prosecution Authority (NPA) an independent statutory body in Zambia involved in ensuring justice and fairness in criminal cases, reported on its website that "Pastor John Nundwe, also known as John General, faces charges of raping a married woman, in Lusaka on November 22, 2023".[26] The above cases are just a few examples, and these incidents cause

21 Sakupapa CT. 2023. "Zambian Protestant Ecumenism and the Quest for Eco-Justice: A Case Study of Council of Churches in Zambia", *Scriptura Journals* 122(1):3.

22 Mwenda K. 2017. *The contribution of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia to political conflict resolution (1990-2016),* Master of Science Thesis in Peace Leadership Conflict Resolution, University of Zambia.

23 Mwansa A. 2008. "Law, Religion and Human Rights in Zambia: The Past, Present and the Practice" *African Human Rights Law Journal* 8(2):565.

24 Mwansa, "Law, Religion and Human Rights in Zambia", 565.

25 "Seer 1 insists he helped PF win 2016 elections, admits he uses 'supernatural powers'", *Times of Zambia,* 28 January 2020.

26 National Prosecution Authority, Zambia. "From Pulpit to Courtroom- Pastor John General Rape Trial Begins", 29 June 2024.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

the community to not trust religious leaders because they are not showing a good example of leadership to youth and other politicians.

As a clergy member in the UCZ, I remember that when there was a cholera epidemic in October 2017 to May 2018, schools and churches were closed.[27] Also, during the Covid-19 lockdowns in 2020, there was a clash between the political leaders of the church and law enforcement officers. The government through the Ministry of Health, closed the churches during cholera and Covid-19, which brought a lot of conflict and questions as to why marketplaces, public transport and bars were not closed for public health. As reported in the 2020 International Religious Freedom Report for Zambia published by the United States State Department, "According to human rights organizations, during a period of aggressive implementation of the restrictions, police assaulted a group of religious leaders at a church in Mkushi and sometimes used excessive force while conducting arrests of religious leaders and congregants violating COVID-19 regulations. Police at times used the regulations to harass opponents, including religious leaders critical of the government, according to religious sources."[28]

There also incidents in which the clergy have been charged with running afoul of the law and arrested by police. The *Catholic Herald News* reported that, "Police detained and questioned a Catholic priest, in Lundazi, Zambia, about the homily he delivered during Mass on July 29", and they accused himof "inciting people to rise against the government."[29] The *Lusaka Times* reported, "Police in Ndola have summoned a Catholic priest for questioning for preaching against load shedding and high cost of living when he delivered his Good Friday message."[30] That was after his sermon in which he bemoaned the high cost of living, unemployment rates and load shedding affecting the people in Zambia, went viral on social media. His sermon asking what good it was to celebrate Good Friday was received with mixed responses. However, Sunday Chanda, a member of parliament for Kanchibiya constituency, and Dr. Nevers Mumba, the Movement for Multi-Party Democracy president, condemned the police, and the matter was withdrawn.[31] Thabo Kawana released a statement from the Ministry of Information and Media concerning the summons of the priest stating, "The government wishes to state that no clergy has been or will be summoned by the police unless such a clergy commits an offense in his or her capacity. In such cases, the law will be applied accordingly. Kawana emphasised that the government does have established channels through which

27 Sinyange N, Brunkard JM, Kapata N, et al. 2018. "Cholera Epidemic — Lusaka, Zambia, October 2017–May 2018", *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reporter (MMWR)* 6(19):556–559.

28 United States, Department of State, Office of Internationational Religious Freedom. 2021. "Zambia", *International Religious Freedom Report, 2020.* Washington, DC: State Department.

29 "Police Reportedly detains Zambian Priest about Homely he Delivered", *Catholic Herald*, 2 August.

30 "Police in Ndola summon catholic Priest for Good Friday sermon on load shedding", *Lusaka Times*, 7 April 2024.

31 "Police in Ndola summon catholic Priest for Good Friday sermon on load shedding".

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

it engages the church whenever matters arise, primarily through dialogue.[32] Whenever the police summon religious leaders, especially from Roman Catholic, Anglican, Reformed or UCZ churches in Zambia, for speaking against the injustices, members of the public condemn such actions. However, when the church violates human rights, members of the public also call upon law enforcement to act urgently against such religious leaders.

There are also cases in which political leaders have abused their authority and were arrested. In 1997, during the time when Fredrick Chiluba was the president, Donald McNeil Jr., reporting in the *New York Times*, said that "there was a coup attempt which lasted three hours and was suppressed without bloodshed and a handful of military officers were arrested".[33] The first republican president Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, was arrested, accusing him of being involved in a failed coup. It was after international pressure on the Chiluba government that Kaunda was put under house arrest at the end of 1997.[34] The same happened to Chiluba after his two terms in office elapsed. Chiluba was accused of corrupt practices, theft of public funds and abuse of office during the leadership of President Mwanawasa in 2003.[35] Rupia Bwezani Banda was also arrested and charged with abuse of authority, and Edgar Chagwa Lungu's son, daughter-in-law, wife and daughter have been accused of having properties believed to be proceeds of crime.[36] The current Zambian president, Hakahinde Hichilema, was once arrested and charged with treason for obstructing the sitting president's motorcade when he was an opposition leader during Edgar Lungu's tenure of office.[37] Analyzing the above arrest pattern for politicians, it makes one wonder why political leaders try by all means to bring down their former leadership at the expense of developmental programs when they are in power. There is a need to liberate political leaders from the mentality of abusing power and forgetting their societal role. Such accusations have made Christians call politics a dirty game even in a "Christian Nation". Religious and political leaders should understand that they have been given the task of serving humanity and not for their selfish ambitions.

32 "Thabo Kawana says Call-Out was FAKE. Zambia Police say the Call-Out was totally genuine but has been withdrawn", *Zambian Observer*, 7 April 2024.

33 McNeil DG (Jr). Zambia Says a Coup Is Over In 3 Hours, Without Injury", *New York Times.* 29 October 1997.

34 "Zambia Shifts Ex-Leader to House Arrest. L A Times Achieves", *Los Angeles Times*, 1 January 1998.

35 "Chiluba Arrest: Mixed Feelings", *NEWS24*, 25 February 2003.

36 "Former President Rupiah Banda Arrested", *Times of Zambia*, 25 March 2013; "Police Arrest former Presidents Son and his Wife on Corruption Charges", *Zambian News*, 28 June 2023.

37 "UPND Leader Hakainde Hichilema Charged with Treason", *Aljazeera*, 12 April 2017.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

UNDERSTANDING THE CONCEPT OF TWO KINGDOMS THEOLOGY IN RESOLVING LEADERSHIP CONFLICTS IN ZAMBIA

The ongoing conflict between religious and political leaders on national development issues and injustices can be viewed through the lens of the theological doctrine of the two kingdoms. In particuliar, there is a need to examine the meaning of Martin Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms and their implications for religious and political leadership and conflicts. The two kingdoms theology began during the Protestant Reformation and is applied in this study to understand church-state relationships. The doctrine of the two kingdoms is a Protestant Christian doctrine that teaches that God is the ruler of the world, both the sacred and the secular. The doctrine of the two kingdoms is a concept that originated from Christian theology to describe the relationship between the church and the state. The doctrine of the two kingdoms is used in this study not to debate theological views of the two kingdoms doctrine itself, but as a lens to understand why the church should be involved in the country's political affairs. Religious and political leaders, the sacred and the secular worlds, influence the people and have common struggles as they do their work, hence the need to unite and resolve conflicts for the sake of the country's development. All leaders, whether sacred or secular, have the role to better the lives of the people they lead. But to begin with, we should understand what Luther's two kingdoms theology means. Two kingdom theology helps to understand how the sacred and the secular cannot be separated.

In explaining the meaning of the two kingdoms theology, Heinrich Bornkamm, a German Protestant church historian who was a highly respected biographer of Martin Luther, notes that Luther's two kingdoms teachings were woven into the whole of his thought on the relationship of the gospel to the world.[38] Specifically, the gospel to the world is good news on the topic of the spiritual and physical daily needs of the world's people. Bornkamm further notes, "Luther is describing not only the two realms of church and state, proclamation and lawmaking but also at the same time the two sets of relationships within which the Christian lives. On the one hand, there is his existence, his attitude toward his fellow men, and his witness for the gospel."[39] Two kingdoms doctrine stands for the separation of roles between the church and state, each having its sphere of influence and authority over the people they lead. According to Bornkamm, the concept of two kingdoms theology "created the impression of a Christian ecclesiastical domain from all secular affairs . . . implying a surrender of the world to its laws and a withdrawal of Christianity from the world".[40] However, interpretations of church and state as two separate kingdoms with each having no say or influence over the other are misleading. The church cannot live in isolation from the issues surrounding it, and politicians cannot lead people by isolating themselves from the Christian community in a

38 Bornkamm H. [1966] 2002. *Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms in the Context of His Theology.* Hertz KH (trans) Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 38.

39 Bornkamm, *Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms*, 5.

40 Bornkamm, *Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms*, 2.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

Christian nation like Zambia. If that were the case, political leaders would not be making Christian declarations and endorsing them in the Constitution, since these two kingdoms are inseparable. Zambian politicians want to separate them but at the same time involve themselves in religious matters.

William Wright, a Dominican priest and professor of New Testament studies, reexamines Martin Luther's two kingdoms theology and addresses a revised understanding of reformation and orthodoxy by giving a rich heritage of Protestantism and its traditions.[41] Wright notes that "the term two kingdoms doctrine has been a heavily politicized concept for a long time".[42] Many scholars have interpreted and applied it in different contexts concerning the church-state relationship. According to Wright, "The doctrine of the two kingdoms became a theme for discussion during the German church struggles against Nazism and the collaborating German Christian movement."[43] Wright further observes, "The rise of national socialism in Germany provided the context for the ultimate application of the concept of the double autonomy of the worldly spheres of life".[44] In the present study, two kingdoms theology is discussed in the context not of Nazi Germany, but of Zambia's religious and political leadership conflicts in a Christian nation. Martin Luther's two kingdoms theology sheds light on the struggles that people have in Zambia in accepting whether the church leaders should or should not speak about political issues in the country, particularly around the concepts of dual citzenship and the power of the pulpit.

Understanding the two kingdoms theology as dual citizenship

In Zambia, religious and political leaders are all Christians and all live in the same Christian nation. In Zambia, all seven presidents have come from the Christian community and attended church services with other Christians. That is why it is very difficult to tell religious leaders not to speak on political matters, when they are also citizens and have rights like any other citizen. Churches consist of community members who belong to different political parties. Many politicians in Zambia are members of churches. Hence, when a member of any church denomination ascends to any political leadership, they remain a member of that particular church. According to Lutheran pastor and theologian John R. Meyer, "Though the two kingdoms are distinct in their principles of life and mode of operation, they not only stand under one rule of God but are directly related in the life of the Christian who is a citizen of both kingdoms."[45] The importance of two kingdoms theology is that both the sacred and the secular try to save and serve humanity in totality.

41 Wright WJ. 2010. *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms: A Response to the Challenges of Skepticism*. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic.

42 Wright, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms,* 17.

43 Wright, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms,* 32.

44 Wright, *Martin Luther's Understanding of God's Two Kingdoms*, 31.

45 Meyer JR. 1974. "Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms", *Andrews University Seminary Studies (AUSS)* 12(1):8

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

Bornkamm explained two kingdoms theology noted that by noting, "A Christian lives in the secular kingdom in a twofold sense: as the old man, which he has never ceased to be, he is subject to secular law, as a Christian, he must protect the neighbor with the instruments of the secular order."[46] The leaders and people of Zambia should understand that all are subject to and governed by the laws of the country and expected to portray good morals as taught by Christians. As stated above, religious and political leaders who broke the law were visited by the law, setting a standard for leadership morals and showing an example to upcoming leaders. Leadership recommended to both religious and political leaders is leadership that responds not only to the spiritual needs of the people but also to the physical needs. The two kingdoms theology recommends religious and political leaders for selfless leadership, which fights injustices and restores people's dignity.

Felix Bwalya, a Zambian systematic theologian writing on the church-state relationship and the two kingdoms theology of Martin Luther, has concluded that, "Spiritual issues are under the jurisdiction of the state and this makes the church superior to secular authorities."[47] Similarly, Meyer obeserves "This doctrine is one of the consequences of Luther's concept of creation. God exercises His dominion over the human race in different ways: through the Word, sacraments, authorities, and secular order."[48] The present study does not look at who is superior to the other but rather posits the idea that religious and political leaders should be co-workers in the country's development. Religious and political leaders must see themselves as co-workers who are all answerable to one supreme being (God). Hence, religious and political leaders should aim to govern people as co-workers in these two kingdoms.

Understanding the pulpit as a reflection of two kingdoms theology

The pulpit is a high platform where religious leaders preach the word of God to the members in the pews. In the Reformed and Presbyterian churches, the preaching of the word in the pulpit is the climax of worship. The struggle of the Church today is to distinguish between a political and religious sermon. Two kingdoms theology helps to enlighten religious and political leaders how religion and politics are intertwined.

Now let's understand a bit more about the power of the pulpit and its influence on the two kingdoms. Gardiner Spring, a nineteenth-century American Presbyterian clergyman and writer, noted, "The history of the pulpit may be traced not in the martyrdom only may be traced not in the martyrdom only, but in the success and triumphs of its martyred preachers."[49] According to Spring, "The pulpit is a popular

46 Bornkamm, *Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms*,36.

47 Bwalya FM. 2019. *Church- State Relationship and Elections: Post 2016 election violence*. Master's Thesis, University of KwaZulu-Natal. Pietermaritzburg, 34.

48 Meyer, "Luther's Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms", 9.

49 Spring G. 1849. *The Power of the Pulpit: Thoughts Addressed to Christian Ministers and Those Who Hear Them*. New York: Baker and Scribner, 6. Online at: https://archive.org/details/

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

and democratic institution, fitted to protect the rights of all classes of men, and to defuse a universal spirit of industry, virtue, kindness and peace."[50] Therefore, the preacher in the pulpit acts as a mouthpiece for the people in speaking on what affects people in both kingdoms. But what causes preachers speak about political matters?

Zambia, despite being a Christian nation, has social and economic challenges, and it takes a leader who is courageous enough to confront such issues and find solutions. Miniva Chibuye, a scholar of poverty and the environment, acknowledges, "Zambia, like many other countries, still has an extreme poverty line based on the cost of food needs."[51] Urban development researcher Chileshe Mulenga has observed, "The policy challenges of ensuring food security in cities and towns characterized by the high rate of unemployment, overcrowding, deteriorating infrastructure, and environmental degradation."[52] Similarly, Lenard Chimfwembe a theologian and a clergy writing on pastoral care in the context of poverty, maintains, "The unacceptable question for a Christian church, more especially its preachers, is to deal with a problem of poverty. It is impossible to ignore people with low incomes in the country and merely preach about faith as a private spiritual faith. A positive approach to the Church's preaching and praxis is to face this problem squarely, preach it continually, and focus the church witness on it."[53] A theologian and a lecturer at United Church of Zambia University Rev. Dr. Musonda Bwalya urges "Zambian church and faith-based organizations to help disprove the myth that Africa is a perpetually poor continent".[54] One thing that should be noted is that poverty affects many people in Zambia, including the Church. According to the late scholar of systematic theology Felix Bwalya, "The Church in Africa, a continent faced with poverty, underdevelopment, and bad governance cannot stand aloof from the kingdoms of the world and leave everything in the hands of politicians."[55]

---

powerpulpit00sprigoog/page/n6/mode/2up

50 Spring, *The Power of the Pulpit*, 47.

51 Chibuye M. 2014. "Interrogating Urban Poverty Lines: The Case of Zambia", *International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED)* 26(1):236-256. See also Siame L. 2016. *Golden Jubilee Year. Luke 4:16-30 amidst Poverty in Zambia*, Master's Thesis. University of Pretoria, 71. Lordwell Siame, a clergyman and biblical scholar notes, "Poverty is one of the pervasive challenges being faced by many Zambians today. Poverty is a social crisis with which many Zambians have been denied access to a minimum decent livelihood."

52 Mulenga C. 2013. "The State of Food Security in Lusaka, Zambia". Urban Food Security Series No. 19. Cape Town: African Food Security Urban Network (AFSUN). University of Cape Town.1.

53 Chimfwembe L. 2023. *Pastoral Care in a Context of Poverty: A Search for a Zambian Contextual Response*, PhD Thesis, University of Pretoria, 15.

54 Bwalya M. 2022. "Towards a reconstructed society: Hope for a better today and tomorrow in a world of unstable economic systems and increasing poverty, with a focus on Zambia", *Verbum et Ecclesia* 43(1):7

55 Bwalya, F., 2019. *Church-State Relationship and Elections: Post-2016 Election Violence in Zambia*, Master's Diss, University of KwaZulu-Natal. South Africa. 35

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

That is why religious leaders cannot speak in the pulpit only about going to heaven and be silent on matters affecting the people now in their daily lives in the world.

Apart from systematic and endemic poverty, religious leaders handle issues of gender-based violence, counseling people who have lost their jobs, divorced, lost money to scammers and experienced other social issues affecting the people in the community. Education and management specialist Malesela Masenya points out, "Gender-based violence, human rights violations, and gender disparities are some of the social issues which communities face and which missional pastors should tackle and not ignore."[56] There is no way the church leadership can ignore such issues which affect their people daily and only talk about the future kingdom to come. Both the sacred and the secular kingdoms are important matters in the life of people in every community, hence religious and political leaders should strive to resolve their conflicts because people look up to them for spiritual and political leadership. When political leaders tell religious leaders to stick to preaching the gospel and not involve themselves in the political affairs of the country, it silences the church's ability to speak for the poor. In such circumstances, Gardiner Spring observed, "The pulpit may glory in having such enemies, for it shows its worth and importance."[57] Religious leadership that refrains from insisting on political checks and balances may lead people astray. There are religious leaders who incline themselves to certain political parties, which perhaps should not be encouraged. Nevertheless, people should understand that the pulpit is used by religious leaders to teach people how they should live as dual citizens. The preacher can not only preach on heavenly matters without bringing out issues people are facing in the community.

The power of the pulpit as a voice for the vulnerable

Understanding the two kingdoms theology as including both religious and political leaders will help us to understand that both depend on each other and are free to advise each other when things are not favourable to the majority in the country. Religious leaders are the voice for the voiceless, and they have ended up in conflict with political leaders in speaking on behalf of the voiceless. In an article on churches preaching politics in Zambia, Oliver Magasu and his fellow researchers have observed that "the Government in Zambia sees the role of the Church only as spiritual and praying for political leaders".[58] Therefore, when the church speaks against the injustices that they are doing, the Church is told to "Stay in the pulpit". However, political leaders in Zambia have been seen frequenting church worship services, which has raised many concerns from both the ruling and the opposition parties. In their study of Zambians in the Kabwe district, Zambian religion scholars Christabel Mwango and Joseph Hachintu note, "Politicians visit

56 Masenya MJ. 2021. "Caught between the sacred and the secular: The Pentecostal pastor as a leader in a world in constant flux", *Missionalia* 49:117.

57 Spring, *The Power of the Pulpit* 40-41.

58 Magasu et al, "The Unholy Matrimony of the Church and Politics in Zambia", 308.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

Churches and Mosques during the election period for campaign work to canvas for their votes and encourage citizens to turn out to vote for them."[59] At the same time, church members have made it a habit to call upon political leaders at their functions and give them the pulpit to speak to the people. According to Emmanuel Anagwo, "If we follow the principle of liturgical decency and decorum, politicians and others who have no liturgical function should not be allowed to use the pulpit as opportunities to make political speeches and campaigns."[60] Such behaviour have brought concerns among church members and political leaders in the ruling and opposition parties. When politicians tell religious leaders to "Stay in the pulpit", it means that they should not involve themselves in the country's political issues. Such comments are common from politicians, who maintain that "when the church comments against those in power, the church is always told to form a political party if it wants to be commenting on politics so that it can also be treated as a political party".[61] This, in turn, prompts the church to react and tell political leaders to "Stay out of the pulpit".

The pulpit is where people are taught how Christ liberated them and how they can liberate themselves from life challenges. Anagwo points out that, "The Word of God preached from the pulpit challenges Christians to explore their potential and helps them according to priority and appropriate values. Christians should be helped to know what life is all about."[62] Hence, the pulpit, where only promises of good heaven are preached, is detached from people's reality of life. At a special ordination service for the bishop and national overseer of Pentecostal Showers Bible Church in Lusaka Kamwala South, it was reported that, "Independent Churches of Zambia (ICOZ) president Masupa urged religious leaders to avoid dragging the church into politics. Bishop Masupa says the church is filled with members who have different political affiliations and that must be respected."[63]

Such statements prove that there is a conflict between the church and political leaders. Though religious leaders are urged not to drag the church into politics, the church cannot detach itself from politics, as it involves the day-to-day living of its people. Kenneth Mwenda acknowledges that "Christianity has been the backbone of Zambia's social, political, economic, and religious life since the colonial era. Most citizens have professed Christianity since the time the religion was introduced in the country. Historically, churches and government have worked hand in hand."[64] Mwenda notes, "A remarkable role in the life of Zambian history has been played

59 Mwango C and Hachintu JK. 2023. "The Use of Religion by Political Elite in Kabwe District", Zambia", *International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)* 5(5):4.

60 Anagwo EC. 2020. "Liturgical Use of the Pulpit to Foster Social Responsibility: An African Perspective", *Vidyajyoti Journal of Theological Reflection* 84:213.

61 Magasu et al, "The Unholy Matrimony of the Church and Politics in Zambia", 309.

62 Anagwo, "Liturgical Use of the Pulpit to Foster Social Responsibility, 211.

63 "Clergy urged to avoid dragging the Church into politocs-ICOZ", *Times of Zambia*, 2 July 2023.

64 Mwenda, *The contribution of the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia to political conflict resolution*,1.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

by religious figures. The connections between religion and politics were traced under President Kaunda's one-party state."[65]

Is it possible that the church can stay away from politics, and politicians stay away from the church in a Christian nation? Levy Sinyangwe, a Zambian biblical scholar, has pointed out, "It is the duty and responsibility of the church and government to be devoted to the essential needs of human development in Zambia."[66] Religious leaders use the pulpit to liberate people, both physically and spiritually. Sinyangwe further observes, "The Church is a representative of people, and is called upon to address government over the unequal distribution of the resources from the purported economic gain."[67] The pulpit is used as a platform to advocate for good moral behaviour and social justice and to promote ethical governance. Religious leaders view themselves as having moral authority given by the Supreme Being and feel obliged to speak against injustices on behalf of the voiceless in the community. However, such moves conflict with political leaders when political leaders involve themselves in corrupt practices and human rights abuses.

CONCLUSION

The study has shown that the church-state relationship, the involvement of the church in the affairs of the nation has been going on since Zambia's independence. The former presidents Fredrick Chiluba and Edgar Lunga made declarations on Zambia as a "Christian Nation" and on the National Day of Prayer, respectively, happened because of the relationship they had with the Church. The declarations sealed their dual citizenship and paved the way for religious leaders to speak freely on political matters and vice versa. Despite this close relationship between the church and the state in Zambia, conflicts over how religious leaders are leading the churches and how political leaders are leading the country have occurred. The study shows that when politicians tell the Church to "Stay in the pulpit", it's because political leaders are confronted and challenged to do the right thing. The result brings ethical dilemmas as leaders face difficult choices that challenge their values and beliefs, bringing conflicts and tension among themselves. To address these conflicts constructively, there is a need for dialogue among legal, religious and political leaders to find common ground and work towards a common goal to remove tension. All leaders must be held accountable for their actions and decisions to uphold the rule of law and promote transparency. It is essential to deal with long-term solutions to address the root cause of the problem. This requires dialogue from both parties, compromise and respect views, and collective efforts to promote peace and unity for the benefit of all.

---

65 Prokopenko LY. 2018. "The Principle 'One Zambia, One Nation': Fifty Years Later", *Social Evolution & History* 17(1):66.

66 Sinyangwe L. 2012. *The role and responsibilities of the Zambian Church to alleviate poverty in the community,* BA Hons. Thesis, North-West University in Corporation with Greenwich School of Theology, U.K., 32

67 Sinyangwe, *The role and responsibilities of the Zambian Church to alleviate poverty,* 32.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888

The people of Zambia have dual citizenship, as they belong to the spiritual and worldly kingdoms, and the pulpit is used by religious leaders to speak and encourage citizens in both realms. The pulpit has the power to build and destroy the nation, hence religious and political leaders are urged to know their boundaries as citizens of two kingdoms. Analysis of the "Stay in the pulpit" admonition in the light of two kingdoms theology makes it clear that religious leaders have always been involved in the political affairs of the nation. But religious and political leaders, amid misunderstandings, should be mindful to keep peace and unity of the country.

https://doi.org/10.52779/9781991260888