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Adriaan van Klinken, 'Zambia', in Encyclopedia of Christianity in the Global South, ed. by Mark A. Lamport, 873-876 (Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

ZAMBIA

This country in Southern/Central Africa was reached by Western missionaries relatively late but their work has been successful: Zambia is the only country on the African continent that, constitutionally, is a Christian nation. Often perceived as a country where Pentecostal Christianity is particularly influential, in fact the Catholic Church and some mainline Protestant churches have remained relatively strong.

Geographical location: landlocked country in Southern (or Central) Africa, neighboring the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the north, Tanzania to the north-east, Malawi to the east, Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia to the south, and Angola to the west.

Ethnic composition: Zambians have historically been divided in up to seventy-three Bantu-speaking ethnic groups, usually clustered in seven major regional language groups: Barotse, Bemba, Lunda-Luvale (or North-Western), Mambwe, Nyanja, Tonga and Tumbuka (2010 Census).

Languages spoken: Official language: English. Other recognized languages for official purposes: Bemba, Kaonde, Lozi, Lunda, Luvale, Nyanja and Tonga (of which Bemba, Nyanja and Tonga are most prevalent).

Religions:

- According to the 2010 Census: 75.5% Protestant, 20.2% Catholic, 0.5% Muslim, 2.0% other, and 1.8% none (estimated total population 13,092,666).
- According to the World Christian Database (2015 data): 85.5% Christian, 11.2% ethno-religionists, 1.8% Baha'i, 1.1% Muslim, and 0.4% other (estimated total population 16,211,848; Christian population 13,857,888).

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Form of government: presidential republic with multi-party democracy.

Christian denominations (according to World Christian Database 2015)

- Roman Catholic: 5,338,600 (33% of total population)
- Anglican and Protestant: 5,437,790 (33.5% of total population)
- Independent: 2,923,600 (18% of total population)
- Spread over these three main categories, according to the WCD 2015 there are 2,939,397 Evangelicals, 999,800 Pentecostals, 633,512 Charismatics, and 2,042,897 neo-Charismatics.

Timeline: History of the Spread of Christianity

1852-1856 – Scottish missionary-explorer David Livingstone travels through Southern and Central Africa, including the area now known as Zambia.

1880s – Establishment of the first permanent missionary settlements, by the Paris Evangelical Mission (PEM) in Loziland, south-west Zambia, and by the London Missionary Society near Lake Tanganyika, north-east Zambia.

1890s – Establishment of the first Catholic mission (by the White Fathers, or the Missionaries of Africa), in Bembaland, north-east Zambia.

1953 – Alice Lenshina Mulenga has a radical conversion experience, marking the start of the revivalist Lumpa Church movement that became the most famous Zambian independent church. The church was banned in 1964, after a violent conflict between church followers, members of the United National Independence Party (UNIP), and state security forces.

1965 – Formation of the United Church of Zambia, in which several mission churches from different traditions joined together to form the largest Protestant denomination in the

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country – 'a remarkable ecumenical venture that is almost unique in Africa' (Gifford 1998, 183).

1967 – American televangelist Billy Graham speaks at a 7-day crusade in Kitwe, attracting about 28.000 people and sowing 'the seed' of the Pentecostal-charismatic movement in Zambia (Cheyeka 2008, 149).

1973 – Emmanuel Milingo, the Catholic Archbishop of Lusaka, discovers his gift of healing and in subsequent years develops this into a public ministry attracting huge crowds but also causing great controversy.

1981 – Two-weeks crusade of the German (but South-African based) faith-healer and evangelist Reinhard Bonnke, whose organization Christ for All Nations nurtures a generation of born-again Christian leaders.

1991 – President Frederick Chiluba declares Zambia to be a Christian nation, which in 1996 is enshrined in the preamble to the Constitution.

Mini-biographies of major church leaders

- Alice Lenshina Mulenga (born 1920, died 1978). In 1953 Mulenga had an almost death experience in which she encountered Jesus. The Presbyterian Lubwa Mission in Chinsali (north-east Zambia), which she used to attend, did not recognize her calling. In 1955 Mulenga started her own church, called Lumpa (Bemba for 'better than all others'), with headquarters in Kasama (renamed as Zion), while adopting the name Lenshina (queen) herself. Stories about her vision and prophecies spread widely across Bemba land and attracted huge following. The church became known for its hymns, its anti-witchcraft stance and rejection of earthly authority. In 1964, the latter resulted in a violent clash between church adherents and Zambia's political

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liberation movement, the United National Independence Party (UNIP), climaxing into Prime Minister Kenneth Kaunda sending security forces to intervene. About 1,000 people died, the church was banned, and Lenshina was jailed. She died in 1978 while under house arrest.

- Emmanuel Milingo (born 1930). Catholic Archbishop of Lusaka from 1969 to 1983. He soon started introducing African elements in the liturgy. In 1973 he became aware of his gift of charismatic healing and exorcism, which he embraced out of a holistic understanding of the Christian faith that acknowledges the African worldview. His activities made him enormously popular in Zambia but met with resistance from his fellow bishops and the white missionary priests dominating the Zambian church. Subject of an official investigation, in 1982 Milingo is called to Rome where a year later he is forced to resign as Archbishop of Lusaka. Milingo is excommunicated in 2006, following his marriage and ordaining four married priests as bishops. Milingo's impact on the Catholic Church in Zambia can still be recognized, both in the Africanization of liturgy and the introduction of Catholic charismatic movements.
- Joshua H.K. Banda (b. 1962). Banda is one of the prominent Zambian Christian leaders that are products of the 1970s wave of Pentecostal-charismatic revival. Raised in the United Church of Zambia, he became born-again at the age of 14 through his involvement in Scripture Union. In the 1980s, he studied for a degree at the Pentecostal Northwest University (Kirkland, Washington, USA) and became principal of Trans-Africa Theological Bible College in Kitwe, Zambia. In 1995 he became the senior pastor of Northmead Assembly of God in Lusaka, seen as the

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'flagship branch' of the Pentecostal Assemblies of God Zambia (PAOG-Z). He holds this position to date, and in the meantime was promoted to bishop and held leading offices in the PAOG-Z and its continental networks. Banda has actively addressed issues of HIV and Aids, among other things establishing a clinic and a street children project, reflecting what he calls a 'holistic Gospel approach'. As chairman of the National Aids Council (2008-2013) he exemplifies the large role that faith leaders in Zambia have played in governmental Aids policy making. A strong defender of the Christian nation declaration, Banda in the media frequently speaks out on social and political issues.

Church-state relations

At a national level, church-state relationships in Zambia are mainly organized through the three so-called 'church-mother bodies': the Council of Churches in Zambia, the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, and the Zambia Episcopal Conference (Cheyeka 2008 mentions a fourth organization, the Independent Churches Organisation of Zambia, established in 2001). These bodies represent their member churches towards the government, and frequently they join their voices speaking out on national affairs. These bodies do, however, not represent some denominations that historically have had a relatively strong presence in Zambia, such as the Jehovah Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventist Church (which both tend to avoid direct political involvement).

The post-independence government of Kenneth Kaunda (son of a Presbyterian missionary) initially had strong ties with the churches, but relations deteriorated steadily when in the 1970s Kaunda introduced a system of one-party democracy as well as a socialist state philosophy of 'Zambian Humanism', and when in the 1980s Zambia witnessed further economic collapse and

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misuse of political power. The churches, through the above-mentioned mother bodies, pushed for a transition to multi-party democracy and in the first democratic elections, in 1991, they generally and successfully supported opposition candidate, Frederick Chiluba, who identified as a born-again Christian. Two months after his inauguration as President, Chiluba made an official declaration, proclaiming Zambia to be a Christian nation that will be governed 'by the righteous principles of the Word of God'. The notion of Zambia as a Christian nation was enshrined in the preamble to the country's 1996 Constitution. Evangelical and Pentecostal churches enthusiastically welcomed it, while the Catholic Church and the Council of Churches responded much more reservedly, if not critically. The declaration has been long debated and contested, with the Catholic Church unsuccessfully advocating for removal during the constitutional review process as recently as 2013. In contemporary Zambia, given the overwhelmingly Christian population, politicians tend to publicly profile their faith and use Christian rhetoric. After each of the recent democratic changes of government, churches – in spite of their political preferences – have tended to work with the government of the day.

Christian cultural and social influences

Since the colonial period, Christianity has steadily become a major factor of cultural and social influence in Zambia. Visible expressions on the streets are the colorful uniforms worn by the members of the numerous women's movements associated with different denominations. From the 1990s, Pentecostal forms of Christianity have become increasingly prominent in Zambia, presenting themselves publicly and influencing popular culture. Gospel music is now everywhere – from radio and television, to the minibuses used for public transport. These buses are also typically decorated with stickers carrying all kind of Christian slogans, and with a crucifix in the front window if the driver is Catholic. Thus, the Zambian public sphere is full of expressions of

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Christian identity and faith. In public debates on controversial issues, such as gay rights, Christian-inspired rhetoric abounds. More formally, the country has recognized Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Christmas Day as public holidays. Most recently, in 2015, another public holiday was introduced, National Prayer Day (October 18).

Educational Systems

During the colonial period, mission churches were highly active in the field of education. After independence the government took control over the primary schools (but offering to give schools back in the late 1990s), while the churches kept running secondary schools which often performed better than state schools. Churches are said to 'have a far greater control of their schools in Zambia than in most African countries' (Gifford 1998, 189). Especially the Catholic Church is highly active in education and in 2016 claimed to run 42 high schools, 40 basic schools, 8 special schools, 2 educational colleges, and 2 institutions for vocational training, in addition to numerous community schools and skill training centers.

With regard to higher education, for a long time the University of Zambia was the only academic institution in the country. Referring to the principle of separation of church and state, it never established a Department of Theology. With the privatization of higher education, from the 2000s several new universities have been established, many of them with an explicitly Christian character and/or with direct denominational links. Examples are the Zambia Catholic University (started in 2008), the evangelical-based Northrise University (founded in 2003), and Rusangu University operated by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (since 2003), which each offer degrees in a range of disciplines.

Evangelization

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Churches as well as para-church organizations have used different forms of evangelization, broadly understood. Traditionally, education and health care provision have been key instruments of mission and this continues up to date. With the emergence of the HIV epidemic in the 1990s, churches were at the forefront of developing home-based care programs as well as prevention activities. Basically all churches have large women's groups actively involved in evangelization through community work. Most churches have also adopted a structure of local sections (called 'small Christian communities' by Catholics, and 'cell groups' by many Evangelical and Pentecostal churches) where members meet for prayer, bible study and support. All this reflects a more or less holistic understanding of evangelization, addressing people's spiritual, as well as their social and material needs. Other forms of evangelization, such as massive rallies often featuring American preachers, became common in the 1970s and 80s with the rise of Pentecostalism. Nowadays, many neo-Pentecostal pastors seek to evangelize through their widely advertised healing ministries. Churches and organizations of various backgrounds have also made use of the media for evangelizing purposes. The Catholic Church publishes several magazines (both in English and Bemba), runs at least 9 radio stations in different dioceses, and is planning to launch a national Catholic TV station. Many Pentecostal churches have their own radio and/or TV programs (e.g. Northmead Assembly of God's The Liberating Truth), and make active use of social media to reach people with their message.

Institutions and Movements

African independent churches. The 1950s witnessed the emergence of independent churches, often breakaways from the western-dominated mission churches and demonstrating local Zambian agency in the appropriation of Christianity. Two well-known AICs in Zambia are the Lumpa Church of Alice Lenshina Mulenga (see above) and the Catholic Church of the

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Sacred Heart of Jesus, founded by Emilio Mulolani. This kind of indigenous, or prophet-healing churches, are no longer prominent in Zambian Christianity.

Churches Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ). Formed in 1970 by Catholic and Protestant church health institutions, CHAZ unites over 150 hospitals, health centers and community-based health organizations mainly active in the rural areas, and is the largest non-governmental healthcare provider in the country.

Council of Churches in Zambia (CCZ; formerly known as the Christian Council of Northern Rhodesia, founded in 1945, renamed as Christian Council of Zambia in 1964; current name adopted in 2003). Over 20 mainly Protestant denominations collaborate in CCZ, with a range of Christian organizations being affiliate members.

Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ). Established in 1964, this body currently brings together over 200 evangelical and Pentecostal churches and organizations.

Jesuit Centre for Theological Reflection (JCTR). A research, education and advocacy center in Lusaka that promotes study and action on social issues such as poverty and inequality in Zambia, linking Christian faith and social justice. JCTR is well-known for its monthly publication of the costs of the basic needs basket.

Scripture Union Zambia. Founded in 1963 and particularly active in primary and secondary schools to reach children and youth with an evangelical message of personal faith, Scripture Union has produced several Zambian Christian leaders (e.g. Joshua Banda, Nevers Mumba) and has laid the foundation for the emergence of Pentecostal-charismatic movements.

Pentecostal-charismatic movements. Pentecostal churches and ministries emerged from the late 1960s/early 1970s, not seldom as a result of North American classical Pentecostal mission

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activities (e.g. Pentecostal Assemblies of God), or the evangelizing crusades of televangelists such as Billy Graham and Reinhard Bonnke. Their popularity also stimulated the growth of charismatic movements in the Catholic Church and some of the Protestant churches such as the United Church of Zambia. In recent decades, there is a rise of neo-Pentecostal churches, putting great emphasis on prosperity and deliverance, such as the originally Nigerian Winners' Chapel, and the originally Brazilian Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, which both have big branches in Lusaka.

Zambia Episcopal Conference (ZEC). Established in 1965, this is the official body organizing the work of the Catholic Church in Zambia at a national level, under the leadership of the bishops of the 11 dioceses.

Future Prospects

During the twentieth century, Christianity has firmly rooted in Zambia and become the faith by far the majority of the population identifies with. Clearly, Christianity in the country is not just a matter of personal faith – it has deeply shaped society, culture, politics and national identity. Zambian Christianity is highly diverse and dynamic, with new churches being founded while the established churches are adjusting themselves. So far, the rise of (neo)Pentecostalism has only affected the Catholic and Protestant churches to a certain extent: to prevent losing too many members, and in order to keep their youth, they have tended to incorporate certain Pentecostal-charismatic influences (although the Milingo-affair showed the limits to which this is possible). Where the established churches, in particular the Catholic Church, historically have been strong in contributing to socio-economic development (through hospitals, schools, etcetera) and democracy, many of the newer churches are concerned with the manifestation of spiritual power (prophecy, healing, exorcism, prosperity). The future of Zambian Christianity might be in

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combining both trajectories into a holistic understanding of the Christian faith in the local context.

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