

# Assessment of Knowledge, Attitude and Practices of Declaration of Zambia as a Christian Nation- A Case Study

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## ABSTRACT

Knowledge spirals a sequence of effects that influences reasoning and reinforces one's ability to handle the complexities of day-to-day occurrences, thus positively or negatively affecting attitudes. Consequently, practices are developed. In most cases, attitude characterises a conceptual status towards an external stimulus that emotionally impacts practices. The declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation established the hegemony of Christianity and reinforced ecclesiastical activities which included engaging the nation in prayers and proclamation of the Christocentric Gospel. This study aimed to assess how knowledge, attitudes and practices following the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. A cross-sectional dual research approach was applied to collect data. A total of 384 (189 females and 195 males) individuals and 15 FGD were interviewed. Our results showed that 53.39% (205/384) indicated that Church planting, prayers, and Christian rites of passage were prevalent. The study also showed that 12.50% (48/384) performed Christian rites which included criminals. While 30.21% (116/384) stated that the declaration did not affect them in any way, 3.91% (15/384) thought the declaration divided the Church into denominational lines. It was conclusively suggested that activities which ensued from the declaration enhanced the conception of biblical awareness. As a result, knowledge affected attitudes and practices among Zambians.

**Keywords:** Attitude, Christianity, Knowledge, Practices,

## BACKGROUND

A Christian state is a country that recognizes a form of Christianity as its official religion and often has a state Church, a Christian denomination that supports the government and is supported by the government. [1][2] Historically, the nations of Aksum, Armenia, Makuria and the Holy Roman Empire have declared themselves as Christian states, whilst today, several nations officially identify themselves as Christian states or have state churches. These countries include Argentina, England, Greece, the Vatican, and Zambia, [3] to mention a few. A Christian state stands in contrast to a secular state, an atheist state, or another religious state, such as a Jewish or an Islamic state. [4] Some scholars perceive the first Zambian president, the late Dr Kenneth Kaunda, the first to declare Zambia a Christian nation with an inescapable political vision, found expressions in the religious sphere to become a signatory to the formal document that sealed the union of several missionaries and founded Churches in 1965 to become one entity, the United Church of Zambia (UCZ), Christian ideals and African values played a significant role in the struggle for national building. [5] The late former Republican president Mr Chiluba declared Zambia to be a Christian nation in 1991 [6] and later established it in the introduction of the Zambian Constitution, allowing engagement in beliefs as they

pleased, hence wonder how Christianity became a State religion without much consultation with various religious bodies or non-governmental organizations (NGOs), such as opposition political parties and others. Amongst the Non-Christian organizations, the Islamic community is the largest in Zambia. Therefore, a balanced analysis of religion and its effects on Zambians necessitated an inquiry. The declaration of Christianity on 29th December 1991 was perceived to be a countermeasure to the growth of Islam. As such, it became a political argument as it was perceived to disadvantage non-Christian faiths and reinforced Christian knowledge in the justification of true belief. For instance, Christianity should be valid for a person to believe as such. Afterwards, Christian belief is justified.[7] Christian approaches to inculcating the biblical message in Zambians intensified following the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation. They included the consecration of the National Day of Prayer, sponsorship of Christian activities such as crusades by the state, and formulation of the Ministry of National Guidance and Religious Affairs which has now been realigned and brought under the Office of the Vice President. This heightened the rhythm and momentum of people's interaction with biblical knowledge. Possession of knowledge played a significant part in transforming individuals from being antagonistic to being friendly towards God.[8] The ecclesiastical activities were on a national scale and affected commitment and spirituality or beliefs and feelings about the supernatural compelling selecting one among several religions.[9] The majority in Zambia preferred Christianity, others multi-religious. The more an individual interacts with and hears the Gospel, the more attitude twists towards God. In the Epistle to Romans 10:17, the Apostle Paul wrote "*So then faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God.*"[10] Faith goes beyond fantasy or imagination of any kind. It is confessing in the affirmative.[11] It is the intonation of Ephesians 3:20 which says, "*Now unto him that can do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us.*"[12] The researchers thus hypothesized that people's faith was strengthened as evidenced by how prayers and fasting are conducted on 18<sup>th</sup> October each year on the National Day of Prayer and the prayer points are carefully selected. To crown it all, the proposal and the commencement to construct the National House of Prayer.

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

### Study Site

The study took place in the districts of Lusaka, Chongwe and Kafue in the Lusaka Province of Zambia. The area was selected because of its population density and there are many churches and other religions. The authors thought this area will give an overview of the knowledge, practices and attitude of citizens whether they were aware of the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation or Secularism or pluralism. The area has over 3 million people (Fig 1).

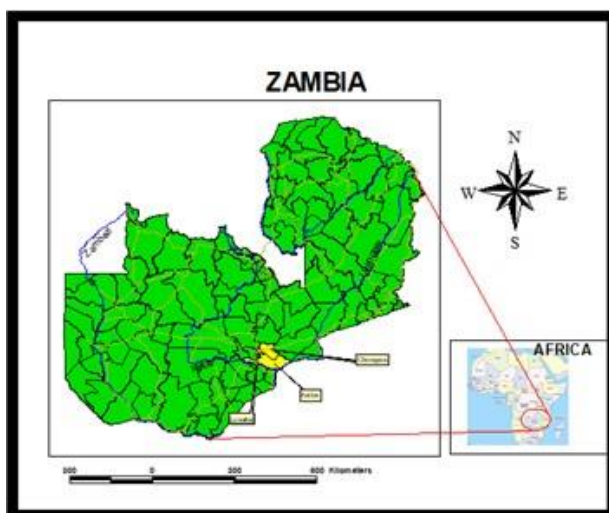


Figure 1: The study site (Yellow)

## Sample size

The sample size was generated from the formula described by Biswas and Charan in 2013. The use of that formula generated a sample size of 386 taking into consideration the previous prevalence of 50% at the 95% Confidence interval and the marginal error of 5%.

## Sampling frame

The sampling frame is the actual set of units from which a sample is drawn. Simple random sampling was used to collect data in this study. Lusaka Province is made up of six districts and the three districts; Lusaka, Kafue and Chongwe, were selected at random. Two townships were selected from each selected district. In Lusaka District; Matero and Woodlands townships were selected while in Kafue District; Shikoswe and Kafue estates were selected and in Chongwe District; Chongwe Central and Chongwe Ma plots were selected. In Lusaka, five (5) Focus group discussions, while five (5) each in Chongwe and Kafue were established.

Organizations from which the sample came were the Independent Churches of Zambia (ICoZ), Roman Catholic Church (RCC), Seventh Day Adventists (SDA), Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs) and the New Apostolic Church (NAC), Council of Churches in Zambia, Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia (EFZ) and Muslims religion.

## Study design and methodology

This study used a cross-sectional design. The sociological analysis of reality in everyday life and knowledge that; guides conduct among intellectuals and merchants of ideas were supplemented.[\[13\]](#) It employed the sociological research method invoked by the three concepts of Karl R. Popper, "problems-theories-critics." It examined the citizen's position and its construction of knowledge, society and daily activities through processes of social interaction to tackle study objectives. The method enabled the study to examine subjective meanings, experiences, and behaviours of participants about pronounced illicit activities.

The assessment of these perceptions employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. To allow for a detailed exploration of individuals and their social interaction in the community, it applied the probability, simple sampling method. This way, every case of the population had an equal chance of inclusion in the sample.[\[14\]](#) It hinged on the positivists' position for advancing knowledge that believes in "determining cause and effect."[\[15\]](#) Survey methodologies and prearranged instruments intended for gathering data for analysis were applied.

## Quantitative method

The key in this study tool was the questionnaire and 48 respondents were engaged per organization except for CCZ where 47 respondents were engaged. Qualitative studies were useful in human geography and phenomenological research. They bring out realities by capturing and communicating participants' views and perspectives. The goal of quantitative methods of data collection quantified and measured a phenomenon by questionnaires and statistical processing of the information collected.[\[16\]](#) It focused on worldviews by employing abstract concepts.[\[17\]](#)

## Qualitative method

This research employed semi-structured in-depth interviews and focus group discussions; selected to produce thorough replies about individuals' experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings and knowledge. Face-to-face interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) enabled the researcher to understand knowledge, attitude and practices.

## **Working group**

Two distinct groups made up a working group that was made of the principal researcher, and eighteen members. The researcher interviewed the inner circle and the leadership. The team members joined the researcher in interviewing individuals in selected districts using questionnaires and oral interviews. This research aimed at satisfying the transferability and dependability of the results.

## **Focus Group Discussion (FGD)**

A Focus Group is a small group of participants cautiously nominated for an open discussion during research. Group discussions enabled this research to gather qualitative data, which was both inductive and naturalistic. To ensure that participants were comfortable with each other, homogeneity in social grouping was applied. A group of 8 to 12 members made up a focus group and five (5) groups were created from each district.

## **.Eligibility criteria**

### **Inclusion criteria**

Only those aged 18 years and above, who were willing to participate in the research were included.

### **Exclusion criteria**

Individuals that were less than 18 years old and those unwilling to participate were excluded from the study.

## **Selection of Participants and sampling methods**

Sampling is the process through which the selection of individuals or sampling units from the sample frame is undertaken.[\[18\]](#) By so doing, the researcher was able to gather information based on the results from a subset without necessarily dealing with each individual. This reduced the number of individuals in the study and ultimately, the cost, and workload and eased up the acquisition of the required information. The sampling strategy in this study was random sampling in the selected districts where religious organizations were included. Within the Christian and Islam communities, random sampling took place among eligible participants.

## **Data collection plan and tools**

The collection of data covered a period of two months. The collection of information was manual and the key data collection tools were the structured interviews. The respondents provided closed or open responses. Data collectors underwent an orientation on how to collect and enter data or information. The respondents provided closed and open responses.

## **Data analysis**

This data was entered using Microsoft Excel software and analysed using EPI info version 6.0 a statistical software. The variables, which were calculated, included; mean, prevalence, Chi-square( $\chi^2$ ), confidence interval (CI), p-value and risk ratio (RR).

## **RESULTS**

A total of 384 individuals, where 189 and 195 were females and males respectively, and 15 focus group discussions were sampled from the six townships in the districts. The townships were Matero 128/384, Woodlands 127/384, Kafue Estate 32/384, Shikoswe 32/384, Chongwe Central 32/384 and Chongwe Ma

plot 33/384 individuals and Fifteen (15) FGDs were interviewed (Table 1).

The individuals interviewed were from the following organisations: ICoZ, EFZ, SDA, RCC, NAC and Islamic Supreme Council were 48/384 (12.5%) in each organisation while 47/384 (12.2%) and 49/384 (12.8%) were from CCZ and JW respectively (Table 2).

Table 1: Number of samples from each Compound/Township

	Residential area	No. Sampled	Gender		FGD	Sampling Units
			F	M		
1.	Matero	128 (33.3%)	68	60	3	132
2	Woodlands	127 (33.1%)	68	59	2	131
3	Kafue Estates	32 (8.3%)	12	20	2	35
4	Shikoswe	32 (8.3%)	11	21	3	35
5	Chongwe Central	32 (8.3%)	15	17	3	35
6	Chongwe ma plot	33 (8.6%)	15	18	2	36
	<b>Total</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>404</b>

Table 2: Individuals interviewed by religion or organisation

Residential area	ICoZ	EFZ	CCZ	SDA	RCC	NAC	JW	ISC	Total
Matero	16	16	16	16	17	15	16	16	128
Woodlands	16	16	14	16	16	17	16	16	127
Kafue Estates	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	32
Shikoswe	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	32
Chongwe Central	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	32
Chongwe Ma plot	4	4	4	4	4	4	5	4	33
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>384</b>

ICoZ= Independent Churches of Zambia, EFZ= Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia, CCZ= Christian Council of Zambia, SDA= Seventh Day Adventist, RCC =Roman Catholic Church, NAC= New Apostolic Church, JW= Jehovah’s Witness and ISC = Islamic Supreme Council

Our findings reveal that upon the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, 53.39% (205/384) individuals indicated that ecclesiastical activities such as prayers, ministration of Christian rites Church planting had characterized the spiritual aspect of the nation. 12.50% (48/384) individuals said that everyone including criminals or delinquents engaged in Christian rites such as prayers. 30.21% (116/384) individuals stated that they were not affected by the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation, whether it is abolished or maintained, nothing will change. 3.91% (15/384) individuals thought that the declaration divided Christendom into denominational lines. It favoured the Pentecostal Protestants more than the mainline churches. For a thorough understanding see (Table 3 and Figure 2).

Table 3: Knowledge and practices of citizens towards the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation

State	Total (%)	FGD (%)	Sex		Townships						Religious mother bodies							
			F	M	Cho	CMA	KE	Mate	Shikos	W/Land	CCZ	EEFZ	ICoZ	ISC	J/W	NAC	RCC	SDA
Christian Nation	230 (60)	13 (86.6)	127	103	16	16	17	83	21	77	40	41	38	5	0	41	43	23
Pluralistic State	50 (13)	1 (6.7)	20	30	4	8	5	12	6	15	3	5	6	24	0	4	2	7
Secular State	42 (10.9)	1 (6.7)	21	21	6	3	4	12	3	14	5	2	4	5	0	3	3	18
Kingdom of God	47 (12.2)	0	16	31	4	4	4	16	3	16	0	0	0	0	47	0	0	0
Not sure	15 (3.9)	0	5	10	2	1	2	5	0	5	0	0	0	15	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>48</b>

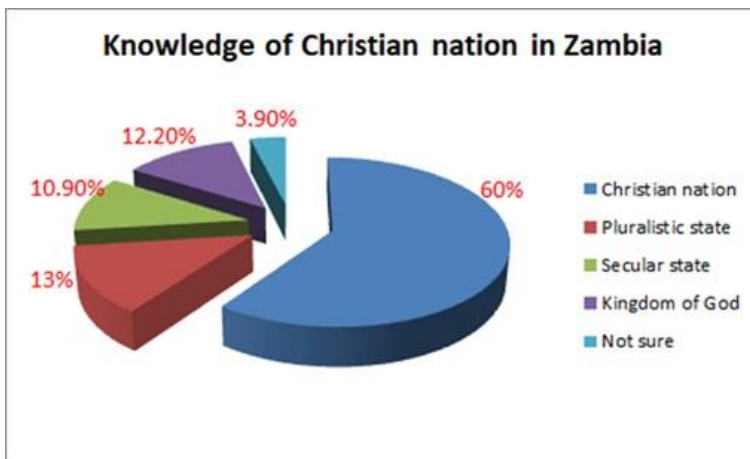


Figure 2: Perceptions of the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation

## DISCUSSION

Of the (384) individuals, 53.39% (205/384) indicated that the declaration of Zambia as a Christian nation had reinforced the Christocentric missions (Mat. 20:19). It became easy to employ all forms of evangelism such as direct or confrontational approach (Act. 2:14-41), intellectual approach (Act. 17:1-3), testimonial approach (John 9:1-41), revelation approach (Luke 5:27-29), invitational approach as stipulated in the Holy Bible, the method was for the most part characterized by appealing to people to attend Church programmes like conventional services, retreats, Bible studies and main other faith-based activities, and service approach was undertaken individually or in groups by engaging in charity works thus exhibit God’s love.[\[19\]](#) Furthermore, 12.50% (48/384) individuals said that everyone including criminals or delinquents engaged themselves in Christian rites such as prayers. This indicated that the declaration had embedded Christianity into Zambia’s identity. It exhibited the relationship between Christianity, politics and national identity. By way of the declaration, Christianity got amalgamated into the political and national pattern. Correspondingly, the Christians developed to become very influential and turned out to be inescapably tangled in the Zambian political sphere. To a point where prayer is offered during official meetings. 30.21% (116/384) individuals stated that they were not affected by the declaration. Whether it is abolished or maintained, they felt that nothing would change. It appears that non-religious individuals were let down as they felt disregarded, isolated and discriminated against in the face of the point that the Zambian

Constitution embraced everyone and permitted individuals to enjoy freedom of conscience or religion.<sup>[20]</sup>

3.91% (15/384) individuals thought that the declaration divided Christendom in the nation into denominational lines. It favoured the Pentecostal Protestants more than the mainline churches. The declaration brought about a change of attitude about interaction among Christian organizations. For instance, the ZCCB and CCZ rejected the declaration claiming it was done without consultation. Other religious organizations such as ISC, Hindus and mainline churches felt put aside by the Christians under EFZ and ICoZ who monopolized state functions of a religious nature. Since the declaration of Christianity in Zambia was concocted by Pentecostals, they began condemning organizations which oppose the declaration. They upheld a Christocentric monotheistic view of God and salvation. A posture hostile to globalization, pluralism and secularism aspects which are unavoidably accumulative in rhythm and momentum.

The clerics' knowledge and cognizance of various doctrines surrounding the relationship between the Church and the State in Zambia somehow exaggerated the benefits the proponents of the Christian nation enjoyed. The research indicated a low positive attitude among the clerics but high among the grassroots or followers exhibiting a lack of agreement and outcome expectancy as clerics opposed to it did not adequately educate their members to authenticate their position. The clerics from mother bodies or denominations opposed to the Declaration expressed low motivation by sentiments supporting pluralism or secularism. Their condemnation of the Declaration in high-profile religious for a indicated low political efficacy. For instance, the ISC, NAC, RCC and SDA opposed the Declaration, but the results were: ISC 5/49 (10%), NAC 41/48 (85%), SDA 23/48 (47.9%) and RCC 43/48 (85.5%) contrary to the acknowledged positions of the organizations they represented.

## FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION

Data gathered during FGDs pertains to practices and attitudes of Christians and non-Christians towards activities of the declaration proving whether they knew about its implications or not. Out of the fifteen (15) discussions conducted, 9/15 (60%) stated there is an increase in Church planting, prayers and Christian rites that included baptisms, anointing of the sick and any sacred performances. They indicated that Zambians were experiencing waves of God's grace which have energized them and the Church as a whole thus, brought about seasons of advancement. Individuals are reminded of their sins and turn from them to adopt new habits, stopping to engage in sinful behaviours and shifting their focus from trivial pastimes to devote more time to seeking God. 3/15 (20%) said the declaration divided the Church into denominational lines. Those who highlighted differences among Christians that make other denominations shun national programmes requiring the participation of the Church. 3/15 (20%) observed that everyone and delinquents perform Christian rites, giving examples of criminals who pray before embarking on a stealing spree, and those not affected were 0/15 (0%). Preference for Christianity was because it promoted love (Jn. 13:34), peace (Rom. 12:18; Heb. 12:14), and coexistence as a factor (Rom. 12:16). Besides, Christianity was not fundamentalist. Respondents observed that those in cultures where they uphold biblical ideals are better off than those in non-Christian ones and exhibit other good traits in economics, law, security, health, and education that may be indicators of personal happiness. Some people contest the historical and contemporary advantages of Christianity. A slim majority thought they were part of a Christian-based society and not a secular one. Respondents identified the benefits of living in a Christian culture. A moral and ethical foundation and love amongst individuals are benefits of Christianity. The benefits of a Christian society are acknowledging the biblically required function of government to uphold social order, preserving individual liberties, particularly freedom of religion and expression, and minimising corruption.

## CONCLUSION

The study highlighted approaches to amplify ethical behaviour among stakeholders in national governance,

revealed leadership gaps, knowledge, feeling and behaviour towards the Declaration to generate a theory, associate it with existing attitudes and factors to influence behavioural change and orthodoxy religion, become assimilated in them, and ultimately offered a base for the organization of a fresh theoretical system and induct its applicability for a better Zambia.

## AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

MO data collection and formulated the research; NSS data analysis and designed the manuscript. Both authors read the final copy of the manuscript.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

There was no conflict of interest in the research

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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## ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

The research was approved by the ethical committee of Chreso University and the National Research Authority

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