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**“Mwendoni-ire Z K”:
Reconstructing the Memory of Z. K. Matthews in Southern Africa (1901-68)**

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Abstract

In this article, Professor ZK Mathews is not only seen as a responsible leader in his own right but more importantly, he is seen as a prominent educationist in the complex socio-political situation of apartheid South Africa. “Mwendoni-ire Z K” (beloved ZK) became the first African to obtain a Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA) at the University of South Africa, in 1924. His other public roles as ANC founder, Ambassador, an educationist, activist for social justice, a Pan-Africanist, and an ecumenist makes him one of a kind. As both a community and church leader, the article seeks to assess his display of social responsibility in the dark period of African history when separate development was the vogue. Did he act responsibly in addressing social issues during his heydays? What didn't he do during his lifetimes? Are there critical communal issues that he failed to do yet he had an opportunity which he did not exhaustively utilize? To this end, this article builds on the premise that the spread of Christianity in Africa, its shape and character, has been the by-product of responsible Leadership, both in the Mission Churches/mainline churches and in the African Instituted Churches, and even from within the emerging afro-Pentecostal churches. Without responsible leadership on the part of the Africans themselves, the spread of Christianity in Africa would have nose-dived. In categorising the three brands of Christianity in Africa, it is critical to acknowledge that, Mission Churches are those that evolved directly from the outreach of Western denominations; afro-Pentecostals are those who consciously or unconsciously allow a measure of dialogue between Pentecostalism and some elements of African culture in their discourses; while African initiated Churches are those Churches which were born in Africa, and were primarily begun by Africans themselves as they protested western intrusion and subjugation of their cultures as Africans. In view of this, ZK is viewed as a responsible leader who confronted social ecclesial matters with a reasonable degree of success.

Key words: Z. K. Matthews, responsible leadership, ecclesiastical leadership,
Social-ecclesial responsibility, church leadership in Southern Africa.

Introduction

A Kenyan artist, DK Kamau, in his 1968 music hit described ZK Matthews as “Mwendi-ire Z K,” meaning, the beloved one. The death of this “Mwendi-ire Z K” caused panic and loneliness across the huge globe, and affected a huge constituency of admirers. In a nutshell, Z K comes out as a unique leader who put social and ecclesiastical leaderships in one armpit and did it so well that he eventually became a pace-setter. His uniqueness is seen in the fact that he was the first African to obtain a Bachelor of Arts Degree (BA) in South Africa, at the University of Southern Africa, in 1924. He was also the first African to obtain a Bachelor of Laws Degree (LLB) in South Africa (UNISA, 1930). In addition, he became the first South African to be appointed specifically to teach Missiology (1952-53), as Henry Luce Professor of World Christianity at Union Theological Seminary in New York. Above all, his being the Chief architect that convened the People’s Congress that culminated in the adoption of the Freedom Charter in South Africa, in 1955, marks him clearly as a special case when addressing ourselves to the subject of social-ecclesial responsibility in Southern Africa. Did Archbishop Tutu and his compatriots learn from Matthews in their later anti-apartheid discourses?

His uniqueness is further seen in the fact that his life times encompassed in the formation of the Union of South Africa; the dissolution into the Republic of South Africa; the formation of African National Congress; the transition of ANC to an armed resistance movement; the hey-day of Mission Education in South Africa; and the initiation of the inhuman excess of Bantu Education of 1953, among others. In sampling his social-ecclesial discourses, we are able to understand the whole picture of apartheid South Africa plus the cold war Africa.

Wakening up to Responsibilities

In his speech entitled, “He Wakened to his Responsibilities,” at the Inaugural of ZK Matthews Memorial Lecture, University of Fort Hare, on 12th October 2001, the former South African President, Thabo Mbeki, explained that ZK helped in a decisive manner to define the contextual experiences of his time; and as one who helped “in part by opening the eyes of those who became his students inside and outside the process of formal education, to the liberating power of real education.”¹ Earlier, in his address to the University of Cape Town in 1961 at the Third TB Davie Memorial Lecture, entitled “African Awakening and the Universities,” ZK Matthews pointed out that:

The Africa with which we have to deal to-day is one which is full of new attitudes to old practices and new types of reaction to previously existing systems. The central factor in the African awakening is the emergence of new ideas, strange men and other ideas. It is in the minds of Africans that revolutions which are rocking the foundations of African societies are taking place.²

Thus, in his 1961 address, at the University of Cape Town, ZK Matthews explained that, the central factor in the African awakening is the emergence of new ideas. To ensure that the point he was making was understood, he went on to say that it is in the minds of Africans that revolutions, which are rocking the foundations of African societies, are taking place. In the same Memorial Lecture, ZK said:

The continent of Africa is a large slice of the world, and in terms of human and natural resources is an area, which can no longer be ignored whatever the position may have been in the past. The peace and security of the modern world demand that the problems of Africa emergent should be tackled with energy and determination and that all the skill, the ingenuity and the collective wisdom of all interested parties should be brought to bear on the situation.³

In Thabo Mbeki’s view,

Being an intellectual who had awakened to his responsibilities, he [ZK] called for a revolution in the minds not only of Africans but of all humanity, so that Africa could overcome the legacy of centuries of slavery and colonialism. Correctly, he said that the peace and security of the modern world demanded that we and everybody else should evolve new thinking about Africa. In making this call, he joined others among our African intellectuals who, before him and during his time, had also awakened to their responsibilities. Already in 1906, Pixley ka Isaka Seme, the African patriot, had spoken passionately about the regeneration of the continent. He said: ‘Yes, the regeneration of Africa belongs to this new and powerful period! By this term regeneration I wish to be

¹ <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/2001/tm1012.html> (accessed 3 April 2018).

² <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/2001/tm1012.html> (accessed 3 April 2018).

³ <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/2001/tm1012.html> (accessed 3 April 2018).

understood to mean the entrance into a new life, embracing the diverse phases of a higher, complex existence.⁴

Mbeki goes on to say,

Because of what Z.K. Matthews and others did, Africa has taken important steps towards the establishment of the African Union (AU), [and NEPAD] to [strive to] realise a dream that is a century old, of uniting the peoples of Africa. In addition, today Africa has a comprehensive and workable development strategy for the socio-economic regeneration of the continent in the form of the Millennium Partnership for the African Recovery Programme (MAP), also known as the New African Initiative. The intellectuals and professionals who work in this historic African centre of learning have a responsibility to occupy the space of the wakened intellectual that Z.K. Matthews helped to create and thus contribute meaningfully to the reconstruction both of our country and our continent.⁵

With this introduction, this now drives us to ask ourselves: Who is this man? Which nationality did he belong? What are his contributions as a responsible leader? What are his formative factors? And how relevant is his contributions to the Africa of the twenty-first century?

His Birth at Kimberley as a Formative Factor

Zachariah Keodirelang Matthews was born at Winter's Rush, near Kimberley on 20th October 1901. He spent his childhood in Location No.2, Kimberley in his maternal grandmother's home. In regard to his ethnic considerations, ZK Mathews (*Hereafter*, ZK) belonged to the Bamangwato people of the modern day Botswana. His forefathers were originally from Botswana; and although ZK's family lived in Kimberley, South Africa, their whole life revolved around their ancestral home, Serowe in Botswana.⁶ By then Botswana was called Bechuanaland Protectorate.

As stories goes, a Chieftainship quarrel caused his paternal grandfather, Keodirelang, to migrate to the area around Kimberley. But upon Keodirelang's conversion and baptism, he took the "Christian" name, as was customary at the time. ZK Matthews was the son of a Kimberley diamond digger (Peter Matthews, also called Rre-Dinku) who named him for an Old Testament prophet, Zachariah. He was brought up in Christian mission schools, proved a brilliant student, and won a chance to study at Yale and the London School of Economics. In 1935 he settled down to his career as professor of native law and anthropology at the African College, Fort Hare, in the Cape Province. Full of his Christian-mission teachings, he devoted himself to the gradual improvement of the lot of the black people. Interestingly, he spoke as a moderate. While others were making sweeping demands, he asked only for limited reforms. In particular, he urged that blacks with high educational qualifications to vote. He also warned the whites that a storm was brewing; and he was ignored. The South African government's African Representative Council, in which he took an active part, was never heeded.⁷

South African industrial revolution

In addition, the general South African context of the period of ZK's formative years fell within the period of the "South African industrial revolution."⁸ Indeed, this era was characterised by sweeping change in social and economic relationships. For black South Africans, the debate was dominated by the discussion on the after-effects of the Land Act of 1913. The residents were concerned by the inhumanity that had now visited the Nation as a result of this act that had traumatized life in general. They were concerned that the Law had become an indicative effort to reduce them into refugees in their own country. It had changed them into exiles in their own native land.⁹ Additionally, racists' separation in residential and other areas became an ever-more dominant factor of South African life. Coupled with this, insecurity of tenure in the "locations"

⁴ <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/2001/tm1012.html> (accessed 3 April 2018).

⁵ <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/mbeki/2001/tm1012.html> (accessed 3 April 2018).

⁶ See Z.K. Matthews, *Freedom for my People* (compiled and edited by M. Wilson) (Cape Town: David Philip, 1983)

⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Z._K._Matthews

⁸ GM Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1978), 21

⁹ See J. Starfield, "Not quite history": the autobiographies of H. Selby Msimang and RV Seloape Thema and the Writing of South African History,' *Social Dynamics* 14:2 (1988), 25

and 'compounds' became a permanent fixture for black South Africans.¹⁰ This insecurity on the part of blacks was experienced on a daily basis as a result of the various laws that regulated their freedoms of associations, movements, settlement and speech.

Indeed, the situation of the black South Africans in the urban areas is poignantly reminisced by ZK Matthews himself when he says:

But in the Kimberley Location where we grew up, the threat of *tikoloshe*¹¹ never seemed as real as the threat of Bird, the Location Superintendent. We *knew* Bird existed. The threat of a visit from him was a real threat; and he came from a world of perils, which we *knew* existed in the great city beyond Barkly Road, where the 'Location' boundaries ended. Many a time, long before we dared venture out of the house to look, we knew of the coming of Bird by the blowing of whistles and the sound of running feet in the street outside at dawn, and the low cries of '*thabeng! thabeng!* (to the Mountains! to the Mountains!). These sounds meant that a pass raid was on, and we could see from our window the men fleeing across the open space beyond the end of the street, running past the few scattered Mimosa trees, running from Bird and his Policemen.¹²

Similarly, ZK Matthews' wife, Frieda, describes Kimberley thus:

.... just one of those accidents in the history of African people, a town where men came to find work, to live for a time, to bring up their children under most difficult conditions, always hoping to return to their homes to settle and die.¹³

Kimberley had a big black African population some of whom were mission-educated men. These black men provided "a whole network of social, religious, sporting and political activities".¹⁴ There were a remarkable group of people occupying mainly the "petty bourgeois positions of clerks, messengers, teachers and the like which the Cape colonial society required."¹⁵ In general, their communal lifestyles were characterised by an "impressive degree of maturity, sophistication and vitality."¹⁶ For example, in 1884 a Black Literary Society was formed in Kimberley with the Rev. G. Tyamzashe as President. As Willem Saayman notes, this society was modelled on the Lovedale Literary Society, but differed from it in that it was started by Africans themselves, without white assistance.¹⁷ Accordingly, Tyamzashe saw the formation of such black-controlled associations as an indication "that the Natives here and in the old colony are now beginning to awake out of their slumber of so many years."¹⁸

With the colonial society in Kimberley being racist since its inception, ZK Mathews grew in an environment that forced him to be perceptive and curious. ZK could see the unfriendly atmosphere which the Cape Prime Minister, John X Merriman, in 1886, described as, "appalling crime and utter hollowness, and as more debased physically and morally than in the Southern State of the USA."¹⁹ In addition, the mortality rates in the Kimberley compounds were too much that "few could imagine that anyone would choose to live and work in such conditions."²⁰ In view of this, Kimberley also provided an impulse for organised black resistance in a form differing from the military resistance of the 18th and 19th centuries. It was into this self-assured African community that formed ZK as a socio-ecclesial leader was formed.

¹⁰ See Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a shadow: The Life and times of Professor ZK Mathews* (Pretoria: University of South Africa, 1996), 4

¹¹ *Tikoloshe* was a legendary creature, which was associated with harm and fear. It was used as a bogeyman to frighten wayward children.

¹² ZK Matthews, *Freedom for my People*, 1

¹³ ZK Mathews, *Freedom for My People*, 90

¹⁴ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 6

¹⁵ Willem a. Saayman, *A Man with a shadow*, 6

¹⁶ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 6

¹⁷ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 6

¹⁸ SM Brock, "James Stewart and Lovedale: A re-appraisal of Missionary attitudes and African response in the Eastern Cape, South Africa, 1870-1905" (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1974), 263

¹⁹ Quoted in S. Marks and R. Rathbone, *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa: African Class Formation, Culture and Consciousness 1870 – 1930* (New York: Longmans, 1982), 13

²⁰ S. Marks and R. Rathbone, *Industrialisation and Social Change in South Africa*: 13.

The Mission factor in Z K Mathews

One of the mission-related characteristics is that one cannot talk about the petty bourgeoisie without using the adjective 'mission-educated.' Indeed, most of the petty bourgeoisie had been educated in the mission schools of the Eastern Cape. And they, shared some common characteristics such as the firm belief in "the legitimacy of the imperial order, a Victorian work ethic," a confidence in the possibility of individual advancement "through the medium of education, a sense of optimism about 'progress' and general 'improvement.'"²¹ Their ideals are also characteristic of nineteenth century Christian missionary motivation. For missionaries operated with a strong sense of trusteeship over the colonial peoples, based on a sense of western cultural superiority.²²

Thus, for the petty bourgeoisie, a direct imperial control was for most of them, the guarantor of the socio-political conditions, which would enable them to attain their ideals. Why the willingness to support the British imperialism? This was explicitly inspired by the racist attitudes and practices of Boer rule in the adjoining territories. As such, the British rule appeared a better alternative in comparison to that of the Boers. Again, the aims of the imperial rule and Christian mission overlapped very conveniently in the ideals that characterised the early African petty bourgeoisie.

In his book, *The Church in the African City*, Alward Shorter provides a historical survey of the town in Christian history.²³ He points out that in the first centuries of its existence, the early Church was clearly an urban phenomenon; and by the fourth century, the Church was so firmly settled in the towns. This led into a situation where non-Christians came to be referred to as *Pagani*, Pagans or 'country bumpkins,'²⁴ in contradistinction to 'Christians' who were mainly *urbani*, smooth and urbane. But by the fourteenth century, however, widespread demoralisation about the towns had taken root.

Shorter discusses various contextual circumstances that contributed to this reversal of perception. First, he sees suspicion and despair about urban centres in Christian theology as some of the circumstances that contributed to this new phenomenon. He says,

It was remembered that Cain, the murderer of Abel, had been the builder of the first city (Genesis 4:17). Early Christians images of the Heavenly Jerusalem and the City of God gave way to the biblical theme of the evil town: the cities of the plain, Babylon, Nineveh and Pagan Rome.²⁵

In view of this, Shorter attempts to indicate the distinct anti-urban bias in Christianity. It is in this theological climate, says Saayman, that the early missionaries to South Africa were formed.²⁶ Indeed, when industrialisation and urbanisation set in South Africa, many Mission leaders tried to discourage their Christian adherents from moving to the cities or from getting attracted to "city affairs."²⁷

Z. K. Matthews as an Educator

Z.K. Matthews treated education as his first choice of a career. In his own words, he is quoted to have said:

I was determined upon a career in teaching. It was the way I knew I could fulfil my need to serve my own people and discharge my enormous obligation ... Teaching in a society like that of South Africa was not like teaching elsewhere. It was not merely a profession. It was more like a mission than a way of earning a living, a vacation, a call to help satisfy the great hunger for education that existed among the millions of our people, a hunger which so few had done so little up to now to appease.²⁸

²¹ B. Willan, "An African in Kimberley:"²⁴³

²² David J. Bosch, *Heil Vir die Wêreld* (Pretoria: NG Kerkboekhandel, 1979), 134-138; 154-155.

²³ Alward Shorter, *The Church in the African City* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1991), 58-71.

²⁴ Alward Shorter, *The Church in the African City*, 60.

²⁵ Alward Shorter, *The Church in the African City*, 62.

²⁶ See Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*: 20

²⁷ See Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*: 20

²⁸ ZK Matthews, *Freedom for My People*, 82.

His wife, Frieda Bokwe Matthews, also reflected this quotation when she was confirming ZK's public commitment. This she discovered after their marriage in 1928. She says, thus: "I would always have to share Zac with all of Africa and our people, the black man throughout the world."²⁹

In general, Frieda described her husband thus:

His was a complex personality a combination of humility and pride, of kindness and sternness, of one ever ready to accept and appreciate another's point of view but who nonetheless stood four square on his own view point, unshaken and unafraid. African to the core of his being, yet so completely Western in many aspects of his life. Living with him was stimulating and exciting as his encyclopaedic mind was ever reaching out, making daily discourse even with the most illiterate a joy to listen to. It could never be easy to portray a man of his calibre.³⁰

As an educator, ZK was appointed head of the high school at Adams College in Natal, in 1925, where Albert Luthuli, was also a teacher. With Luthuli he attended meetings of the Durban Joint Council and held office in the Natal Teacher's Association, of which he eventually became President. It was while he was in Natal that he met, and subsequently fell in love with, Frieda Bokwe, who was the daughter of John Knox Bokwe, in 1928. In 1930 after private study, he earned an LLB degree in South Africa, a degree he was awarded once again by the University of South Africa. He was admitted as an attorney and practiced for a short time in Alice.³¹ In 1933, he was invited to study at Yale University in the United States, and there in the following year he completed an MA. He then went on to spend a year at the London School of Economics where he studied anthropology under Bronislaw Malinowski. He subsequently returned to South Africa in 1935, and in 1936 was appointed Lecturer in Social Anthropology and Native Law and Administration at Fort Hare University. After D.D.T. Jabavu's retirement in 1944, Z.K. was promoted to Professor and became head of Fort Hare's Department of African Studies.³²

In general, ZK's concern for education as a means of empowerment compares with Stephen Bantu Biko. According to Simangaliso R. Kumalo, Steve Biko saw the ultimate goal of education for black consciousness as the "establishment of an egalitarian society, where all people were equal citizens."³³ And as a liberationist, thus, Biko approached education from the point of view that there was a need to de-educate and re-educate black people so as to curb the damage caused by the then Bantu Education that the apartheid government was offering.³⁴ He protested against the way the missionaries and the government education taught the black people to hate themselves and their history. He thus made his point when he said,

A long look should be taken at the educational system given to blacks... Children were taught, under the pretext of hygiene, good manners, etiquette and other such vague concepts, to despise their mode of upbringing at home and to question values and customs prevalent in their society. The result was the expected one, children and parents saw life differently and the former lost respect for the latter.... Yet how can one prevent the loss of respect between child and parent when the child is taught by his know-all white tutors to disregard his family teachings? How can one resist losing respect for his tradition when his school, his whole cultural background is summed up in one word – barbarism?³⁵

The quest for empowering education in apartheid South Africa was greatly energised by the formation of an all-black South African Student's Organization (SASO) in 1968 with the fiery Stephen Bantu Biko as the first president.³⁶ In the same year (1968), Steve Biko (as he was popularly called) formed the Black Peoples' Convention (BPC) – an umbrella body for groups

²⁹ ZK Matthews, *Freedom for My People*, 91.

³⁰ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*.54.

³¹ <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,816550,00.html>

³² <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,816550,00.html>

³³ Simangaliso R. Kumalo, "Southern African Sources for an Authentic Christian Education for Social Transformation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. No. 122, (July 2005): 69.

³⁴ This Bantu Education was the system of education that had been introduced by the racist apartheid regime after it passed the Bantu Education Act of 1953. And its sole aim was to offer an inferior education for black children. See Christie Pam, *The Right To Learn* (Cape Town: The Raven Press, 1987).

³⁵ M. Motlhabi, *Essays on Black Theology* (Johannesburg: University Christian Movement, 1972), 23.

³⁶ See Simanga R. Kumalo, "Southern African Sources for an Authentic Christian Education for Social Transformation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa*. No. 122, (July 2005): 69.

sharing the ideals of Black Consciousness (BC). And like other organizations that he formed, Biko and his BPC fought for the oppressed – which led him to suffer surveillance, detentions, arrests, banning and ultimately death at the hands of security forces on the 12th September 1977.³⁷

ZK recounts that he began his public career with his membership of the Durban and District branch of the Natal Bantu Teachers' Union. Interestingly, two co-members in the branch were Albert Luthuli and A H Zulu. Luthuli was later elected the leader of the African National Congress (ANC). He was also the first recipient of the Nobel Peace prize; while AH Zulu was later elected as an Anglican Bishop. Zulu also became a member of the joint council of Europeans and Africans in Durban.³⁸ All this happened after his graduation from Fort Hare University. In addition, his past in Fort Hare University, activities included joining the ranks of school Headmaster of the well-known Adams Mission High School near Amanzintoti in Natal.³⁹ As a result of Western education, an African elite "was in many ways alienated from traditional customs and norms."⁴⁰ Why? The African elite had gotten steeped in the liberal ideals of the missionary educational institutions where they had all been educated. These ideals led to gradual incorporation or assimilation into 'Western Civilisation' as the best assurance on matters to do with 'modern development'.⁴¹

This overview implies that ZK Mathews was no exception; consequently, he had also internalised the values of liberal English mission educators of his time. To this end, mission domination of education in the British colonies in Southern Africa was one of the most constitutive elements in ZK Mathews's social context. Thus the mission ideal of "mission-as-civilisation and civilisation-as-Christianisation," with capitalism as one important driving force of both, became in Freud's words, "part of the cultural baggage" of the African elite.⁴² Through this, it played the role of a good propagator of capitalist political economy in Southern Africa. Upon his completion of a Teacher's Diploma at Fort Hare in 1924, ZK became the first black headmaster of a Secondary School, Adams High School near Amanzintoti in Natal.⁴³ Like most of the early African elites of his time, ZK "strove to maintain the highest standards."⁴⁴ As an educator ZK saw the perennial problem of racism and racist oppression in South Africa, in his days, as "an educational problem."⁴⁵ This is partly the reason that made ZK to combine educational and political involvement. It is also the reason why he considered that the state should bear the eventual responsibility, especially monetary, for African education rather than shouldering the whole burden to the mission organisations.

ZK was of the view that the Universities had a role in improving race relations. In an article entitled, *South African outlook* in November 1950, he complained that even though universities such as Natal and Cape Town had given some attention to problems specifically related to Indians and coloureds, they on the whole had "no systematic attack upon our race relation problem [which] has been undertaken by our universities."⁴⁶ Z.K. Mathews noted thus:

The crux of the problem lies in the relations between [race] groups, and therefore it is not so much European or African or Coloured or Indian studies that we require, although we cannot dispense with them. What we need in our universities are institutes of Human Relations in which we can study scientifically from all points of view the problems that arise when human beings with different cultural backgrounds and varying historical antecedents live in close juxtaposition as members of one nation, bound together by common interests and common hopes and aspirations.⁴⁷

³⁷ See Simangaliso R. Kumalo, "Southern African Sources for an Authentic Christian Education for Social Transformation," 69.

³⁸ ZK Mathews, *Freedom for My People*, 86-87.

³⁹ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 56.

⁴⁰ GM Gerhart, *Black Power in South Africa: The Evolution of an Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 34.

⁴¹ TRH White, "ZK Mathews and the Politics of Education in South Africa" (Unpublished MPhil dissertation: University of New York, 1993), 205.

⁴² B. Freund, *The Making of Contemporary Africa: The Development of African Society Since 1800* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 156-7.

⁴³ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 60.

⁴⁴ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 60.

⁴⁵ Z.K. Mathews quoted in TRH White, "ZK Mathews and the Politics of Education in South Africa," 199.

⁴⁶ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 60.

⁴⁷ ZK Mathews quoted F. Wilson & D. Perrot (eds), *Outlook on a Century: South Africa 1870-1970* (Lovedale: Lovedale Press, 1973), 510f.

On the whole, ZK held that education should not be equated with Westernisation; and in order to establish proper human relations between people, he felt that African education should be “the reconstruction of our experience in the light of the past experience of our fathers, our neighbours, other races and of mankind everywhere.”⁴⁸

ZK Matthews' Resignation From Fort Hare

After struggling with the two options, resigning to protest against the introduction of Bantu [inferior] Education or ensure he receives his pension, ZK finally decided to call it quits. His resignation was meant to deny any credibility to the inferior education, which was being offered to the Blacks from 1953 onwards. His resignation was thus a sacrificial offering, which is the hallmark of any committed and/or responsible leadership.

As responsible leader, ZK found himself abandoning the privileges associated with being a University Don so as to go out to help his people who were overburdened by the new system of education. This compares well with Moses and his refusal to stay at the luxurious Pharaoh's palace. Hence the writer of Hebrews says thus:

By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a short time. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward. By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the King's anger; he persevered because he saw him who is invisible. By faith he kept the Passover and the sprinkling of blood, so that the destroyer of the firstborn would not touch the first born of Israel. By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned (Hebrews 11:24-29).

Thus, ZK's resignation was not just because of the transfer of Fort Hare to the Department of Bantu Education, even though it was one of the ethnic African Universities, but more importantly, he wanted to identify with his disenfranchised people. Indeed, if ZK remained in the University, he would have become the first African Principal of Fort Hare.⁴⁹ In any case, this anticipated appointment as a principal had been destroyed by the political under currents of the time. In particular, ZK had been permanently absent from Fort Hare since the beginning of 1957 as a result of his involvement as one of the accused in the then ongoing treason trial.⁵⁰

In a legal opinion that was sought by the University Council of Fort Hare, from their lawyer, guidance was sought “as to whether... the council has not acted *ultra vires* in granting Professor Matthews leave on full pay... while he is in Pretoria attending the treason trial.”⁵¹ The seeking of legal opinion was driven by fear that the revered ZK would be found guilty hence the big loss to the university. As it turned out, ZK was finally found innocent and all the treason charges were dropped. Nevertheless, it is critical to appreciate that the deadly poison of apartheid propaganda was penetrating social fabric of the South African society – as anyone who opposed apartheid was labelled “traitor” or “communist.” ZK was no exception. Likewise, the University Council was beginning to feel the heat. Thus, as an educator, it would have been fine if he was appointed the Principal of Fort Hare; but due to the political context of the time, it would have been meaningless as the system would not have given him a chance to carry out his assigned duties without State interference.

On the whole, ZK's former students acknowledged and appreciated his strong influence on their lives. In particular Alphaeus Zulu, who later became an Anglican Bishop, remembers that “students appreciated ZK's participation in politics which began with the notorious Native Representation Bill of 1936.”⁵² GM Pitje, another of his former students, remembers ZK's influence in his student days in 1942. He says, “There was a strike at Bida Hall that year: ZK offered to speak to the students but they turned down the suggestion on the grounds that once he had spoken the strike would collapse.”⁵³ This clearly gives a picture of a responsible leader whose values influence his or her subjects rather than coercing them.

⁴⁸ TRH White, “ZK Matthews and the Politics of Education in South Africa,” 199.

⁴⁹ ZK Matthews, “Letter to Adv Al Maisels,” 2 September 1958. C2-84, UDCAS.

⁵⁰ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 65.

⁵¹ J.D Cloete, “Legal Opinion For Fort Hare University Council,” C2-82, UDCAS

⁵² Alphaeus Zulu quoted in ZK Matthews, *Freedom for my people*, 116.

⁵³ Alphaeus Zulu quoted in ZK Matthews, *Freedom for my people*, 116.

ZK Matthews as a Political Leader

First and foremost, ZK was an educator. However, it is difficult to separate educational, political and religious issues in ZK Matthews's apartheid South Africa. In any case, the African concept of wholeness is also a factor in defining ZK. For as an African, he could not have kept religion out of politics, sport, education and other issues of social concern or vice versa. In particular, the South African racist system, which believed in separate development where some were more privileged than others in all sectors of life, called for a holistic approach to life in addressing matters concerning the society at large.

As noted earlier, by the time ZK got into public life, African National Congress was the dominant force, among African politicians. In turn, ANC was an inclusive political entity; and as a result, it was casually called "the parliament of the African people."⁵⁴ As Saayman notes, this people – centeredness of ANC is well reflected in an early slogan on the ANC letterhead: "*Umbuthu Wesizwe – Lekhotla la Sechaba*" – a Zulu and Sotho/Tswana expression, which can be roughly translated as "parliament of the people." ANC was partly formed as a response to the establishment of the Union of South Africa in 1910. For with the establishment of the Union, it was feared, rightly, that the White interests would be paramount in the Union parliament. In view of this, ANC was called into being as a vehicle of representation among the marginalized Africans, who ironically formed the majority. As GM Gerhart says of the founders of ANC:

It was their intention, the ANC founders said, to build a 'Nation.' we cannot know with certainty what each of them understood by this, but we do know that ethnic parochialism was rejected, and that Africans were urged to develop a solidarity based on their wider identity as a racial group subject to common conditions of discrimination.⁵⁵

In view of Gerhart's contention, the formation of ANC was largely motivated by the desire to give Africans adequate representation, that would emphasise their interests as paramount, in a country where they were the majority. And as Gerhart further notes, the African interests consisted of a mixture of Orthodox African nationalism on one hand and the mission-induced liberal political idealism, on the other hand.⁵⁶

Indeed, by 1920's, when ZK entered public amphitheatre, life was characterised by "grinding economic and social pressures"⁵⁷ in black dominated areas. As Saayman notes,

These pressures weighed as a heavily on the petty bourgeoisie and the educated elite as on other Africans. The provision of any degree of leadership by the black at that time must therefore be considered a considerable achievement.⁵⁸

And as AG Cobley further contends,

Indeed, the overriding sense derived from the study of South African's black petty bourgeoisie before 1950 is of a vibrant and resilient group characterised by dedication, ingenuity and achievement in the face of staggering odds.⁵⁹

As a matter of fact, ZK Matthews' political leadership traces itself from his formative years as a student, at Fort Hare, in the early 1920's. This was indeed a dominant trend in African politics in the Eastern Cape. It was well reflected at Fort Hare – a phenomenon that is variously described as "rural Africanism."⁶⁰ This concept of "rural Africanism" in Fort Hare University signifies "an amalgam of Garveyism, nationalism and independent Christianity."⁶¹ It implies a political stance according to which 'at least some of the wealthiest "school" families ' saw the possibility of gaining political and economic empowerment within the existing system.'⁶² By the 1940's when ZK was a lecturer at Fort Hare, the University proved as a foundational place for political developments of African Nationalism and liberation.

At this stage, it is critical to underline that Garveyism is a philosophy, which is associated with the reasoning of Marcus Moziah Garvey (1887-1940). Garvey is reputed as the greatest exponent of Africa's full political, economic and industrial

⁵⁴ Willem A. Saayman, *A man with a Shadow*, 67.

⁵⁵ GM Gerhart, *Black power in South Africa: The evolution of an ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), 12.

⁵⁶ GM Gerhart, *Black power in South Africa*: 12.

⁵⁷ AG. Cobley, *Class and Consciousness*, xi.

⁵⁸ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 68.

⁵⁹ AG. Cobley, *Class and Consciousness*, xi-xii.

⁶⁰ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 70.

⁶¹ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 70.

⁶² Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 70.

independence. Born as the eleventh child of Marcus and Sarah Garvey, he became the greatest exponent of political hospitality that inspired the entire African race. His success can be attributed to the fact that, as a direct son of an ex-slave, he knew the true history of the African people. He knew that his forefathers had once lived proudly as Kings with Kingdoms, Chiefs with Chiefdoms, Emperors with Empires; had governed themselves; cultivated their land; grown food crops such as bananas, fruits, potatoes, and therefore fed themselves; clothed themselves in their own mode of dressing; and had given birth to the earliest and greatest civilization on earth.⁶³

Garvey knew the history of slavery and slave trade plus the ruthless foreign rule by the 'invaders' to Africa. So, when he was old enough to talk and do things, this Jamaican son of Africa knew exactly what he was talking about. After travelling all over the world and experiencing the discrimination that the black people were accorded, he came up with the slogan:

*If Europe is for Europeans, Asia for Asiatics, then WHY IS AFRICA NOT FOR AFRICANS?*⁶⁴

This slogan became the basis for the fighters of independence such as Kenyatta, Nkrumah, Biko, Kaunda, King, Nkomo, Mugabe, Senghor, and Nyerere, among others. Even though the slogan, of "AFRICA FOR AFRICANS," was seen to smack of racism, it however conscientised the world that the African plight needed to be paid attention to.

Garvey desperately wanted to see African men and women no longer treated as serfs, dogs and slaves, but as men and women of affairs making an impression upon civilisation and causing a new light of dawn upon the human race. He began the Negro (read African) Improvement Association (N.I.A) in 1914 to fight for the rights of the Africans who were by then highly discriminated.⁶⁵

Through the Pan-African⁶⁶ meetings that Garvey organised with others such as Sylvester Williams, William E. B. DuBois, Edward Blyden, Henry Sylvester Williams, George Padmore and later, Jomo Kenyatta, Wilmot Blyden and Kwame Nkrumah, among others, Garvey helped in bringing the idea of the 'African Nationalism' that led to the independence of the African nations. Before he left for America in 1917 to establish a branch of N.I.A in Harlem, the lynching of African-Americans was on the increase and every year saw more and more defenceless men and women mowed down with no steps taken by the immediate governments to contain the situation. Now when he arrived in America, he fell like a thunderstorm. For everywhere he went, he was received by hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic supporters. His personality magnetised even the most indolent of the poor African-Americans. True to his second name Moziyah that means Moses, he was truly the black Moses out to deliver the sons and daughters of God from the lion's pangs.⁶⁷

As he moved around the United States, to promote the work of N.I.A (a welfare body for blacks) he said: "No longer must our race look to whites for guidance and leadership; who best can interpret the anguish and the needs of our people but an African?" In direct challenge to African-American men, he said:

Take down the pictures of white women from your walls. Elevate your own women to the place of honour. They are for the most part the burden-bearers of the race. Mothers! Give your children dolls that look like them to play with and cuddle. They will learn as they grow older to love and care for their own children and not neglect them. Men and women, God made us as his perfect creation. He made no mistake when he made us African with kinky hair. It was a divine purpose for us to live in our natural habitat - the tropical zones of the earth. Forget the Whiteman's banter that He (sic) made us in the night and forgot to paint us white. That we were brought here against our will is just a natural process of the strong enslaving the weak.... You are capable of all that is common to men

⁶³ Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality: Is There Hope for Africa?* (Mombasa: The Salt Productions, 2001), 108-111.

⁶⁴ See Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality*: 108.

⁶⁵ See Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality*: 108.

⁶⁶ Pan-Africanism is derived from the Greek Word *Pan* meaning *all*. Pan-African therefore means, "all-African." Interestingly, the first form of Pan-Africanism was concerned with the black communities of African ancestry, most of who lived in North America and the Caribbean (West Indies) (See B. Davidson, *Modern Africa: A social and political History* 3rd ed. (London: Longman, 1994), 32. The founders of Pan-Africanism had lost their languages and cultures as Africans during the time of African slavery, probably because they had originally come from different parts of Africa and that the environment under which they lived in Diaspora did not allow them to maintain their cultural heritage. The Pan-Africanist movement in turn inspired African Nationalism among Africans in their quest to reclaim their African identity.

⁶⁷ See Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality*: 108.

of other races. So let us start now to build big business, commerce, industry and eventually a nation of our own to protect us wherever we choose to live.”⁶⁸

Marcus Garvey went on to say,

A beggar-race can never be respected. Stop begging for jobs and create your own! Look around you and wherever you see the need for factories and business, supply it. Stop begging for a chance, make it yourself. Remember, God helps those who help themselves.⁶⁹

All in all, Garvey's N.I.A was mainly meant to champion African Nationhood; to make the African race conscious; to make the African world-conscious, and to inspire racial love and self-respect. Speaking at Garvey's shrine in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1965, the late Civil Rights Leader Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Junior (1929-1968) described Garvey as,

“... the first man in history on a mass scale and level to give millions of black people a sense of dignity and destiny and make the black people feel he (sic) was somebody ...”⁷⁰

Thus, Marcus Garvey was a great symbol of political inspiration in ZK Matthews' days at the University of Fort Hare. And as Nelson Mandela says, it was under the leadership of ZK Matthews and Godfrey Pitje that a branch of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL) began.⁷¹

Even though ZK was not interested in ANC leadership positions, he was however committed to African education – as he saw it as the sure way of empowering the blacks to conduct realistic politics. Accordingly, ZK regarded the ANC Youth League's Programme of Action as too radical and impractical. This made him to devote his primary attention and loyalty to Fort Hare University and the cause of the African education. He therefore did not compete for National leadership, even though he was retained at the National Executive level.⁷²

To this end, ZK was a prominent member of the ANC during its formative period. During the 1940's and 1950's he no doubt saw the rise of the Youth Leaguers Walter Sisulu, Nelson Mandela and Oliver Tambo, among others, teaming up with the progressive Indians, Coloureds and Whites, which culminated in the formation of the Congress of the People. And during, this time, he served as a bridge between the older, liberal and elitist ANC and the radical liberation movement of the 1960's.⁷³ This bridging task was very difficult for ZK as he was sometimes misunderstood and sometimes branded a “sell-out.” Despite this, he responsibly refused the pressure to resign. He managed to maintain his credibility and integrity during those difficult days.

In an interview with Willem Saayman, the South African freedom icon, Walter Sisulu, described ZK as a man who “kept his cool” in those “explosive” debates.⁷⁴ He always kept the debate going, and leaned heavily on his branch for support during those turbulent days. According to Sisulu, thus, ZK's strategy not to resign immediately following the misconceptions on him was later proved wise. Indeed, he deserves a compliment of the highest order for as a Christian leader, he behaved responsibly. It is no wonder that Nelson Mandela described his proposal(s) as that which “would reshape the liberation struggle.”⁷⁵

ZK Matthews' Treason Trial and its Aftermath

ZK's treason trial could have been sparked, as an immediate factor, by his proposal, while he was teaching at Union Theological Seminary, USA, in 1952-53, for a “Congress of the people” to express the political wishes of the marginalized South Africans. In his scheme, ZK had hoped that the Congress would provide a forum where a “Freedom Charter” would be drawn. And in this proposal, he invited all people of the country, irrespective of race, colour, to come and participate.⁷⁶ In this

⁶⁸See Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality*: 109.

⁶⁹ See Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality*: 109.

⁷⁰See Julius Gathogo, *The Truth About African Hospitality*: 109.

⁷¹ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 101.

⁷² See Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 106-107.

⁷³ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 73.

⁷⁴ Willem A. Saayman, *A Man with a Shadow*, 74.

⁷⁵ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 158.

⁷⁶ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 158.

ZK exploited the fact that he was by then the Cape leader of the ANC. He thus planned the meeting to take place on 15-16 August 1953 at Cradock, Cape Town.

According to TRH White, ZK released a draft memorandum, which hinted on the way the Congress was expected to deliberate. ZK thus stated:

From such a Congress ought to come a Declaration, which will inspire all the peoples of South Africa with fresh hope for the future, which will turn the minds of people away from the sterile and negative struggles of the past and the present to a positive programme of freedom in our lifetime.⁷⁷

From this draft memorandum, it is clear that ZK's interest was the unity of South Africa of the 1950's rather than the partisan politics of the individual parties. And by calling all people together, ZK was clearly in need of the wider audience than the ANC alone. It is no wonder that he revived the ideal of a "parliament of the people" in which the marginalized could find a forum where they would air their points of discontent.

As fate would have it, the Congress of the people eventually assembled at Kliptown on 25 to 26th June 1955. In this congress, a Freedom Charter was unveiled. And as Nelson Mandela describes it, "it captured the hopes and dreams of the people and acted as a blue print for the liberation struggle and the future of the nation."⁷⁸

And with the success of the Congress of the people, which was the brainchild of ZK, his high status in the South African society was clearly evident. Interestingly, around this period, the then Principal of Fort Hare, Professor CP Dent, resigned abruptly. Consequently, ZK was appointed the Acting Principal, in 1954. This forced him to withdraw from active ANC involvement so as to concentrate on his primary choice of education. This he however did with the blessings of the National Executive.⁷⁹

In a letter to Mr. P.A. Moore, dated 7th April 1960, ZK told him that he had not attended any ANC meeting since 1955.⁸⁰ However, two events forced him into active politics. One is his treason trial; while second is the transfer of Fort Hare University from the Ministry of Education to the ethnic Department of Bantu Education. In view of this, ZK Matthews was one of the 156 people who were arrested on charges of high treason, in December 1956. Consequently, the case dragged on until April 1959. Interestingly, the charges against him and 60 others were finally dismissed. With the resignation of Professor Dent as Principal of Fort Hare, at the end of 1955, ZK, who was appointed in acting capacity as Principal, occupied the position on, on-and-off basis until 1959. A controversy however arose as to why ZK was not appointed permanently.⁸¹ Could it have been a conspiracy to drag his treason trial so that the government could use it as an excuse in denying him a chance of serving as the confirmed Principal? Were they afraid of ZK? Or was he incompetent?

During the entire process of his treason trial (1956-1959), ZK was psychologically disturbed. He had to move constantly and at irregular intervals from Alice to Pretoria. This denied him ample time to conduct his academic discourses. Additionally, constant harassment by the security police, and the stresses that went with the temporal appointment to the post of Principal defined his troubled life times. Nevertheless, he demonstrated his being a responsible leader by remaining strong thereby displaying his Christian maturity. Perhaps Isaiah 41:10-13 spoke to him thus:

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God, I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish. Though you search for your enemies, you will not find them. Those who wage war against you will be as nothing at all. For I am the LORD, your GOD, who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.

As noted above, ZK's trumped up charges on high treason were finally quashed and the man of God was free at last. Isaiah's words in ZK's case turned real. This 'freedom' did not however mean that ZK was not spied on or did not encounter

⁷⁷ ZK Matthews quoted in TRH White, "ZK Matthews and the politics of education in South Africa," 133.

⁷⁸ Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, 162

⁷⁹ ZK Matthews, "Survey of activities in the ANC 1953-1956," B2-32, UDCAS.

⁸⁰ ZK Matthews, "Letter to PA Moore MP," 7 April 1960.

⁸¹ See ZK Matthews, *Freedom for My People*, 187-193.

various forms of harassments. But by the high treason case being quashed, it was a major milestone, as conviction would have amounted to a death penalty or a life sentence.

Even though he was avoiding active politics, from 1955, his resignation in 1959 from Fort Hare when his treason case was half way through heightened his political profile again. The idea of seeing Fort Hare being taken over by the Nationalists (the ruling party of minority Whites) stressed him further. Additionally, as an attempt to divide the ANC, the government had continued employing him under suspicious circumstances – where they paid him even when he was undergoing a treason trial. In addition, the State agents spread propaganda to the effect that he was resigning from the ANC and possibly rejoin the government. But as a good leader, ZK Matthews came out to openly deny the well-co-ordinated rumours. He also clarified that he would rather leave Fort Hare than resign from the ANC.⁸² In 1962, ZK left South Africa to work with the World Council of Churches in Geneva. This made him travel around the world and especially the whole of Africa, sometimes explaining the plight of the people of South Africans.⁸³ And in all these travels, he displayed the image of a true son of Africa – who had the African concerns at heart.

On the whole, ZK's departure from South Africa in 1962 so as to work with a world body, WCC was a clear sign of the bankruptcy of the ruling racist, Nationalist party. For it showed their failure to accommodate talented men and women such as ZK. The more the World listened to ZK, the more they hated apartheid and its inability to accommodate the people's resolve for a non-racial democratic South Africa. Even a mere resignation from Fort Hare and his departure from the political stage was a major blow to apartheid.

A Lonely World after ZK's Death in 1968?

Before his death in 1968, ZK had worked in various places that included university professorship, World Council of Churches, All Africa Conference of Churches, as a political leader, as ambassador among other areas. A brief citation will suffice. Apart from being an Ecumenist representing Africa in the World Council of Churches in 1962, as the Africa Secretary for Division of Inter-Church Aid, Refugee and World Service, Geneva, ZK Matthews was also active in the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) Consultations. Like in the former, he brought fresh insights in his contributions. This is clearly evident in both the First Assembly of All Africa Conference of Churches in Kampala in 1963; and the AACC Consultation at Enugu, Nigeria, in 1965.

Coupled with this, ZK Matthews undertook other Diplomatic Assignments. For instance, in 1966, he was appointed an Ambassador for the Republic of Botswana in Washington, USA. And while in Washington, he died in 1968. He was later buried in Gaborone, Botswana, in the same year; and this was followed by a Posthumous Doctor of Law (LLD), (*Honoris Causa*) award by Lincoln University, USA, for his distinguished service to humanity and God.

As ZK passed on, the whole world turned lonely, as his warmth of character was clearly missed. Consequently, memorial services were held in Washington, Geneva, Nairobi and Alice, among other places in the world. In one of these memorial services, Lord Caradon said thus,

He stood for the things that matter most. By the quality of his personality he enlivened and enlightened the causes he served. He was a man blessed with fine and rare personal qualities. He was sensitive, compassionate, [and] gentle, slow to anger, quick to respond to good humour and good will. At the same time, he was an indefatigable crusader against injustice and oppression.⁸⁴

Even though ZK was full of weaknesses like any other human being, Lord Caradon best describes the man whom the Christian community, all over the world was mourning. His words constitute a fine eulogy that any good Christian deserves. Again, Lord Caradon's views were confirmed by ZK's wife especially when she commented on his appointment as Botswana's ambassador to the USA and the UN. Frieda Matthews thus noted that people did not ask, "Who is Botswana's new ambassador?" rather they asked: "which country is Professor Matthews representing?"⁸⁵

⁸² ZK Matthews, "Letter to Duma Nokwe, Secretary General, ANC," 8 October 1959. C2-131 ZKM Collection, UDCAS.

⁸³ ZK Matthews, *Freedom for My People*, 205-215.

⁸⁴ ZK Matthews, *Freedom for My People*, 234.

⁸⁵ Frieda Matthews, "Incomplete Ms Biography of ZK Matthews, "ACC 101, UDCAS, 1971.

In Kenya, like most countries of Africa, ZK was mourned in diverse ways by both young and old as the media relayed his information. This was done by artists: novelists, play writers, poets, national media – the then Voice of Kenya, and secular music artists among other forums. In a nation that was still buoyed by the success of its attainment of political independence in 1963, the death of a moral-political icon in the South African region was received with deep regrets. In Kenya, a leading secular music artist then, Daniel Kamau popularly called DK appeared to build another personality and mourned him artistically in his composed song of late 1968. In his music album, he sang thus:

<p>CHORUS: Wooo ZK Were x3, Pole</p> <p>Gikuo gitiui mwana mwende ZK Kuigua ndari muoyo Muma andu mutana ZK Mwendwa na iri na iriri ZK x2, Pole Gutire utagakua kuigua niwe ZK, were mutigairi, ZK, were iwathiomo, ZK, were como witu x2,</p> <p>ZK were ari murata, Ndangiathire icera tutare nake, Ndangiari-ire kindu tutari nake, Ndangianyuire kindu tutari nake Ndangianyuire njohi tutare nake x2 Korwo nindiriritio ndangiakuire, ZK utugi wake ndwari andu aingi, ZK utugi wake worira thi.</p> <p>ZK akuire gukigia ihoru, Riu ndire mundu ingicera nake, ZK abicoma x2 pole Ndihumbaga nguo ta iria arekagira, Ndikagira miwani ta iria yake, Nigetha nyonage ta twi nake ZK nyonage ta ari muoyo.</p>	<p>CHORUS: Oh, I mourn you ZK indeed x3, Sad!</p> <p>Death doesn't know a beloved child, If ZK is dead, Peoples hospitable darling, Beloved by all x3, Sad! Then, there is no one who will never die, if ZK you are gone, ZK, our everything, ZK our close friend x2.</p> <p>ZK was a friend indeed, Couldn't have gone for visits without inviting me, Couldn't have eaten without inviting me, Couldn't have drunk anything without inviting me, Couldn't have taken wine without inviting me, x2. If I was asked, he couldn't have died, ZK's hospitality was unique, Sadly, ZK's hospitality was buried with him.</p> <p>ZK's death led to loneliness, Now, I have no one to entrust friendship with, ZK, words can't explain x2, I will be wearing clothes that resembles his, I will be wearing spectacles like his, This will be making me feel like ZK is with us, Imitating him will make me feel like he's still alive.</p>
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In this timely song, released some months after his death, and which was DK's first recorded song, and which put him into fame, he stylistically captures the situation as was presented in the media. Certainly, ZK was portrayed as a friend of the church, the general society, the poor, the students; all races, all nations, and indeed, to people of all walks of life. With Nelson Mandela's life sentence in Robben Islands from 1963 onwards, the death of the *de facto* ANC founder in 1968 sent a huge constituency sad, lonely, and helplessly desperate. Hence DK sang, "he was a friend indeed, he couldn't eat unless all could eat," which means that ZK was largely seen as one could suffer for the pain of masses. A case in point is when he resigned from the prestigious Fort Hare University in 1959 as a measure of registering his displeasure with the apartheid government for offering inferior education to the black masses (Bantu Education). Certainly, he was a true African who adhered to the old adage that "he who eats alone, eventually dies alone," without any communal impact. In view of this adage, ZK did not die alone; rather, many others 'died' with him as they sought to resurrect with his ideo-moral actions such as modest dressing, political ideologies, theo-ecclesial standpoints, and in virtues of honesty, hospitality, diplomacy, and justice, among other attributes.

In my interviews with Daniel Kamau (DK), the composer of ZK song, on 26 January 2019, he was not quick to admit that he was actually referring to the ZK Matthews of Botswana/South Africa, though he couldn't remember clearly remember what fully inspired the ZK song 50 years ago (1968-2019). Nevertheless, the entire interviews pointed out to the researcher that ZK was the actual figure that inspired his artistic song. With the Kenyan media focussing on South African countries that were not free from colonialism then, such as Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), Mozambique, South Africa, and Namibia,

DK's song was certainly influenced by the media's "breaking news" regarding ambassador ZK's death in 1968. DK went on to explain to the researcher that he began his public performance in 1963 at barely 18. At 23 however, he released ZK song as his first song, in late 1968, a song whose solemn tone touched masses of listeners in Central and Eastern Kenya. Subsequently, he became a celebrity who eventually ended up an elected leader in the local government in his Murang'a County home. Despite being younger than other secular music artists in central Kenya, DK was able to play in the same league with the legendary Joseph Kamaru Macharia (1939-2018) who had made his first breakthrough in 1967 after he released his music album, "Celina." Clearly, ZK's inspiration could not be ruled out in DK's song.

Conclusion

The article has attempted to survey one of the most illustrious sons of Africa who attempted to serve God and humanity in a very unique way despite the odds that worked against him. These odds include the poor political environment that welcomed him to the world when he was born, the racial injustices that obtained, the Bantu education act of 1953 that gave inferior education to blacks, the blind denominationalism of the time and so on. At one stage, he had to resign at Fort Hare University as a measure of protesting the injustices that obtained. He also had to endure mockeries, despite being the pioneer African graduate from UNISA. Nevertheless, he displayed social-ecclesial responsibility that 'shook' the world when he finally succumbed to death in 1968.

In conclusion, it should be recalled that despite being a great African giant, ZK Matthews is not known to have addressed the gender disparities in a systematic way. Or could he have addressed the status of women in African society through his overall 'freedom for all'? Or was the agenda, in those days, "to fight apartheid and colonialism," too overwhelming; hence the need to first seek the dismantling of apartheid as other things follow? As we surge on with the twenty-first century, the girl-child is still not free. The girl child needs education, better health, and equality before the law; and above all, liberation from poverty and other imbalances that, the patriarchal society in Africa has perfected from time immemorial.

In dangling in church leadership, ecumenism, diplomacy, academia and other forms of leadership in the community, several questions emerge: First, was ZK a jack of all trades and a master of none? Second, was ZK biting more than he could chew? Third, was ZK playing a typical African role of holistic living, a phenomenon that one addresses all sectors of life as need arises. Fourth, was he a situational leader or a transformative leader who sought to empower the society in all fronts? Fifth, was he practicalizing St. Paul's approach to mission; and who eventually says in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23 thus,

Though I am free and belong to no one, I have made myself a slave to everyone, to win as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews. To those under the law I became like one under the law (though I myself am not under the law), so as to win those under the law. To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some. I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings.

Clearly, the legacy of "Mwendi-ire Z K" is manifest, right into the 21st century. Africa in the third millennium will have to dress like him, wear same spectacles as he wore, be hospitable like him – and especially as she confronts terrorism, feel as if ZK were with her, and ironically appreciate that she must take responsibilities without him, eat and drink without him, and build a common humanity (*Ubuntu*) that will go beyond petty prejudices, xenophobia, negative ethnicity, racism, gender disparities and so on.

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