

# Bemba Dynasty: A Trilogy By Charles Mwewa: brief commentary by Munyonzwe Hamalengwa

**H**istory is one of the most fascinating subjects in the world.

One of the reasons it is fascinating is that it is a story of something. Everybody loves stories. Stories are told mostly in chronological order. Everything happening is a story. The story becomes more interesting depending on how it is told and who is telling the story. The scope of the story adds another dimension of human interest.

The history of the Bemba as they migrated from Angola and Congo eons ago is one of the most fascinating historical stories involving Zambia. It has been written several times and by different people. It continues to be told and taught orally as

well.

Nothing, however, compares in arousing deep human interest in reading about the history of the Bemba to the new historical narrative of the Bemba Dynasty that author Charles Mwewa has given it in his latest three volume book entitled: "Bemba Dynasty: A Trilogy". He writes true Bemba history in a novelised format, that is, it is true history written as if it was a fictionalised novel but it is actual history. This brings real life to an otherwise interesting lifeless history. Where we can only imagine what may have happened, Mwewa creates a conversation between individuals and characters who actually lived during the period to interrogate the events of the day, period and

epoch. Because these are actual people discoursing with and about actual events to create understanding and order we reading the novelised history come to grasp more dynamically the events of the day and the causes of the zigzags of Bemba history. History is unfolding before our very eyes in conversational format. When movies use this conversational format to explicate history and events, we are glued to the TV.

We have seen this genre of writing elsewhere. The great writer Stephen King employs this technique to fill in gaps in the Kennedy assassination in his book: "22/11/63: JFK Assassinated in Dallas, Johnson Sworn". The book chronicles the assassination of John F. Kennedy but

in novel form. While this technique takes liberties in storytelling to fill in gaps, it sticks to actual history as we read it in history books.

In the hands of Charles Mwewa, a very prolific writer who has penned so many books in different fields including history, law, poetry, novels, politics and so on, the novelisation of Bemba history in three volumes is successfully deployed to a whole new interesting dimension. It took me time to read the three volumes that are still in manuscript form which should be published soon. I wish I could do the same for Tonga history in novelised form but I would not be equal to the task. But those who have read my fictional stories in The Mast about Donald Trump,

Pamela Gondwe, The Trump-Obama Conversations, The Refugee Claim of Greg Chifire, The Refugee Claim of Esther Lungu, The Indictment of Edgar Chagwa Lungu After the Revocation of Immunity etcetera would realise how I cherish "true fiction" as a form of storytelling and imagining both the imaginable and the unimaginable. I regard fiction as one of the highest forms of intellectual property.

Back to Charles Mwewa, these volumes will attract new readership to Bemba history. Volume 1 is 234 pages, Volume 2 is 211 pages and volume 3 is 81 pages. For Bembas and non-Bembas these volumes are pure gold. Each volume starts with the introduction common to all the three volumes and details the beginnings of the Bemba Dynasty in Angola and Congo and how these people who came to be known as The Bemba, came to settle in present day Zambia. Do they have a cast of characters! Mwewa, with degrees in Education and Law, and the author of the acclaimed 1,100 page book "Zambia Struggles of My People" (now in its second edition), promises to do novelised history of the Lozi, Tonga, Ngoni, and



By Dr Munyonzwe Hamalengwa

others. Charles Mwewa with his impressive publications and especially this novelised Bemba Dynasty three-volume set, is certainly equal to the task. I look forward to the Bemba Dynasty novel, in published form, soon. Anybody who reads this set, if not already interested in history will immediately develop interest in history. Not only will they develop interest in history they will also develop interest in fictional writing, one of the highest forms of artistic expression.

**The author is Dean, School of Law, Zambian Open University.**

**P**resident Hakainde Hichilema says strong political leadership is essential for a functioning democracy and strong institutions are a cornerstone of a functioning democracy anywhere in the world. "Democracy with strong institutions will be able to produce the tenets of a fully democratic leadership through separation of powers. Separation of powers enables the system which promotes checks and balances.

Strong institutions ensure that the rule of law is maintained, not sometimes, but all the time. For instance, an independent electoral managing body will enable the citizenry to trust in the government and effectively participate in the political process. The more independent, the more transparent it is viewed by citizens, the more citizens will come forward to participate in the affairs of their country. Similarly, the rule of law thrives in a country with strong and independent institutions. Others may contend that there cannot be strong institutions without

strong leadership," said President Hichilema. "Allow us to set the context by asking the following questions; do we need strong leaders or is it strong institutions that we need for democracy to thrive? Or perhaps, we need the combination of the two?"

Hakainde has asked very

## Hakainde and strong political leadership

### Our View

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pertinent questions that in most cases are difficult to answer particularly for emerging democracies. Yet, we all know the correct answer. Strong institutions and good laws will make us better,

any day, Mr President. We can develop as a country if we relied on the whims and caprices of men in power. Strong leaders are those who serve from the basis of having good laws, and strong independent institutions of government.

Anything less makes our democracy a rhetoric and façade. And since Hakainde claims to be a democrat, we are encouraging him to free the Anti-Corruption Commission and Drug Enforcement Commission from his ambit. Let these oversight institutions breathe and provide the necessary checks and balances. It is only free and unpressured governance institutions that will make Hakainde a strong leader by injecting into his administration a sense of transparency and due accountability. Only when he does so will he start to be observing the tenets of democracy he was preaching about last week during the Summit for Democracy! Indeed, as William Borah puts it, "A democracy must remain at home in all matters which affect the nature of her institutions."



## 'I'm still alive' jokes Pope as he leaves hospital

Pope Francis has joked that he is "still alive" as he left hospital in Rome after a three-day stay.

He was admitted to Gemelli Hospital mid-week with breathing difficulties, and later diagnosed with bronchitis.

The Vatican had said he was responding to antibiotics and would be released on Saturday, depending on test results.

"I wasn't frightened, I'm still alive," the 86-year-old pontiff told reporters and tearful well wishers outside the hospital before being driven away.

He was seen smiling and waving from the car, before getting out to speak to a crowd. He then headed for the Vatican.

The Pope's admission to hospital came ahead of the busiest week in the Christian calendar to mark Easter.

Holy Week, as it is known, includes a busy schedule of events and services that can be physically demanding.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Brunetti said on Friday that the Pope was expected to take part in this weekend's service for Palm Sunday.

The Argentine pontiff, who marked 10 years as head of the Catholic Church earlier this month, has suffered a number of health issues throughout his life, including having part of one of his lungs removed at age 21.

He has also used a wheelchair in recent months because of problems related to his knee.

But the Pope has remained active, visiting the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan in February. The previous month, he led the funeral of his predecessor Pope Benedict XVI. - BBC