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Review

Julius Nyerere's influence and legacy: From a proponent of familyhood to a candidate for sainthood

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By far, the greatest and startling religious news of this century from East Africa has been the unravelling of the complicated process towards canonization and possible papal declaration of Julius Nyerere, a Catholic saint. Both the political and religious worlds have joined ranks to make sure that the former president of Tanzania is beatified, an intriguing event surrounded by controversy. This paper reports in detail the core values and contribution to Tanzania's nation building efforts of this exceptional African statesman but questions his proposed candidacy for sainthood.

Key words: Canonization, catholic, church, Nyerere, religion, socialism, saint, values.

INTRODUCTION AND ARGUMENT

Julius Kambarage Nyerere was the president of the United Republic of Tanzania between April 1964 and October 1985, when he retired out of his own free will but continued to influence the Tanzania political scene until his death on October 14th 1999 in a London hospital of leukaemia. He was the architect of an exemplary mode of uniting two sovereign states in Africa (Kesller, 2006) in which, despite the existence of all the ingredients[1] of disunity, has endured for over four decades now. In 2006, eight years after his death at 77, the Roman Catholic Church in Tanzania started a campaign for the eventual declaration by Vatican of being a saint. As recent as October 2010, a leading theologian in Tanzania had the following to say about Nyerere's canonisation, "…former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere may not have always lived a saintly life, but some elements of sainthood did manifest in his life… this is why the Catholic Church in Tanzania has decided to forward his name to the Vatican for canonization" (Magesa, Speroforum October 19, 2010), and already he is said to have passed the first step towards that eventuality when he was declared "Servant of God" being among the 44 beatifications and canonisations in progress in the African continent (Synodus Spiscoporum-Bulletin II Ordinary Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops, 4 - 25 October, 2009). Cardinal Polycarp Pengo who announced the Vatican's approval that Julius Nyerere had become a "Servant of God" argued that, "we are presenting his cause based on his life as a Christian and how his faith influenced his entire political career" (http://clericalwhispers.com/2007/03/nyerere-for beatification-tanzania.html 5 March 2007).

In June 2009 when attending special mass led by Archbishop of Kampala, Kizito Lwanga, President Museveni of Uganda supported the ongoing cause to have former Tanzanian statesman become a saint by listing among his inviolable virtues as: i) extraordinary courage of sacrificing his life for the freedom of the people of Africa, ii) being very compassionate to people, iii) uniting his country and making it the most peaceful in Africa, iv) standing up against imperialists and racists in the continent and most of all ousting fascist Idi Amin of Uganda, and v) working tirelessly for the political federation of East Africa. Comparing Nyerere to the late 19th century *Uganda Martyrs*, Museveni concluded that the prospective saint, was not only a freedom fighter but also a religious person (New Vision 1 June, 2009).). In reporting the proceedings of the second assembly for

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Acronyms: CCM, Chama cha Mapinduzi; **RC,** Roman Catholic; **TANU,** Tanganyika African national Union; **TEC,** Tanzania Episcopal Conference

[1] high unemployment and poverty, a large youth population, highly heterogeneous ethnic and religious groups, and regional military insecurity (Kesller, 2006)

Africa of the synod of bishops, Jennings (2009) Nyerere's canonization is heartening, because Africa also needed saints from high political office ostensibly to galvanize men and women of good will to join hands against the common evils besetting African nations. The fact that both the political and religious worlds are seeking to canonise the former ruler is a clear sign that Nyerere affected these two worlds immensely (Kahura, 2006). However, the process, complicated as it is, involving time, money, testimonies, miracles and strict set of rules, has been shrouded in controversy such that calls have been made for the proponents of the process to be open and avail the dossier about Nyerere's process to sainthood, so that people may understand the extraordinary spiritual virtues that make him a probable saint (Williams, 2006), while a prominent social analyst, Jenerali Ulimwengu claims that politicians, by their very nature, cannot be saints (Ulimwengu, 2009). This paper is about Julius Nyerere's influence in the Tanzania social and political milieu especially on his policy of socialism (family-hood) and the controversial prospect of sainthood within the Roman Catholic Church. It explores the ideals and core values of Julius Nyerere, his stance on religion/ church and its place in Tanzania, his overall impact and legacy and the controversy about his elevation into a saint. The argument of this article is that Nyerere's high ratings as a political leader does not necessarily lead him to be canonised in the proper Roman Catholic strands. It is mainly based on review of the literature and citing his writings and pronouncements.

THE PERSON

Julius Nyerere was named *Kambarage* which in his Kizanaki vernacular means "the spirit which gives rain" because it was raining so hard on the day of his birth in March 1922. When he reached the age of twenty, he joined the Roman Catholic Church and took the baptismal name of Julius[2], "…only to realise that it did not stand for a particularly well known saint" (Smith, 1974: 40). When Julius Nyerere died on October 14th 1999, he was eulogised profusely. Thus, the World Bank president described him as, "…one of the few world leaders whose high ideals, moral integrity and personal modesty inspired people right around the globe…" (Wolfensohn, 1999). The World Council of Churches (15th October 1999) paid tribute to Nyerere as follows, "Julius Nyerere lived a simple life in harmony with his message and the values of truth and justice to which he referred. Incorruptible and fully accountable, his life and work set an example of integrity that challenged his country and people, the rest of Africa and the world. In many ways, Nyerere was the conscience of Africa" (http://www.wfn.org/1999/10/msg00170htm).

[2] Cynically someone writes, "Although he [Nyerere] was a practicing catholic, his sawed-off front teeth indicated his pagan tribal background" (http://www.nathanielturner.com/juliuskambaragenyerere.htm)

"Mwalimu" (teacher, as he was referred to) Nyerere is always cited as good example of a leader who governed and worked for the Tanzania people with the highest level of ethical standards and unquestionable integrity (Rwechungura, 2005). He disapproved hero worship and was openly disdainful of personal glorification and detested building personality cult around his name, life and work (Mwansasu, 2004: 1). His simplicity and ascetic lifestyle set a high moral standard. Another remarkable legacy of Nyerere was when he showed an example that, despite his being the Father of the Nation; he would not be a president for life like others of his era in Africa. For the well-being of individuals and the nation in general, Nyerere was committed to peace and unity initiatives in Tanzania, especially in the area of religious tolerance. The current president of the United Republic of Tanzania, Jakaya Kikwete, affirmed this in a speech he gave at Boston University (U.S.A.) on September 25, 2006 in which he said, "The political unity and religious tolerance that we pride ourselves in did not come by accident. It is a product of deliberate action and the vision of leaders of Tanzania from the founding president, the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere, to the present…thanks to the remarkable foresight of our founding president…specific actions were taken to engender tolerance in matters of faith and manage potential cracks to our country". To cap his credentials in October 2009, Nyerere was named posthumously, "World Hero of Social Justice" by the UN General Assembly (http://allafrica.com/stories/201006070697.html cited 11th December 2010).

Core values

Here, we enumerated the core values of Julius Nyerere and their inherent religious underpinnings.

Equality and human dignity

Julius Nyerere's central domestic preoccupations during the period of his presidency, were fourfold: (i) promoting the developing the Tanzanian economy, which he saw as a sine qua non for the accomplishment of most if not all other objectives; (ii) securing and retaining national control of the direction of Tanzania's economic development; (iii) creating political institutions that would be widely participatory and that would sustain the extraordinary sense of common purpose which in these early years united Tanzanians under his leadership and that of the Tanzanian African National Union (TANU); (iv) building a just society in Tanzania, free of severe income inequalities, in which all would share the benefits of development as it was accomplished (Pratt, 1999:3). In a policy booklet published in March 1967 on "Education for Self-Reliance", Nyerere spelt out the values and objectives of the society he envisioned as follows:

"… we want to create a socialist society which is based on three principles: equality and respect for human dignity; sharing of the resources which are produced by our efforts; work by everyone and exploitation by none"….

At the heart of Nyerere's core values was an affirmation of the fundamental equality[3] of all humankind and a commitment to the building of social, economic and political institutions, which would reflect and ensure this equality. He frequently presented his views on socialism as an expression of values, which he felt to be an essential ethical component of a departing African way of life. Nyerere recognized that the social values of traditional Tanzania were rapidly being undermined. Even before 1967, Nyerere argued that Tanzanians must find a way to progress economically and would not undermine the communal equality of their society. Nyerere realized from the earliest days of his leadership, that his society needed modern educated men and women to lead it forward but that the members of these elites were bound to be tempted to set their aspirations by reference to the levels of material welfare enjoyed by the elites of other much richer societies. He knew very well that the material ambitions of the emerging African bourgeoisie were powerful and hard to contain. His socialist doctrine was eloquently expounded in the famous Arusha Declaration, a doctrine he had formulated and had the blessings of the ruling party, TANU. The Arusha Declaration of 1967 was one of his most influential pieces of writing. The Declaration defined the meaning of socialism in the context of Tanzania.

Inherent in the declaration was the rejection of material wealth for its own sake. It was a commitment to the belief that there are more important things in life than the amassing of riches and that if the pursuit of wealth clashes with things like human dignity and social equality, then the latter will be given priority. His faith in socialism was an expression of values which he felt to be the distinctive ethical core of departing African traditional way of life. His blueprint was his vision of traditional African culture. In pre-colonial Africa, he argued that, the three aforementioned sectors were self-reliant, democratic and egalitarian, respectively. Nyerere's vision of traditional Africa was largely characterized by equality. He wrote about a person's right "to live in dignity and equality with others." According to Cranford Pratt, Nyerere strove to achieve material "equity", not necessarily equality, but less stratification in wealth (Pratt, 1999b). Ingrained in the Arusha Declaration was a clear-cut code of ethics for party leaders to abide with which excluded economic exploitation of the masses by those in positions of control in the top echelons of the government[4].

From a religious point of view, it amounted to a covenant between the party/government and the people as a woman missionary put it, "…Nyerere's ujamaa philosophy acknowledged the deeply human and indeed religious aspirations it signified. Ujamaa looked at the traditional extended family as a symbol. It signified the hope of turning the whole nation into relatives who would care for each other…it was utopian in the sense of providing a vision of alternative social relations, especially in contrast to the increasingly capitalist relations, that had come into the country through colonialism" (Giblin, 1992: 40). Neve (1976) refers to a paradoxical occasion in which Nyerere is said to have likened Tanzanian socialism to, "the religion of socialism and self reliance" without elaborating (Smith, 1971: 36). Before his death, Nyerere was asked about the continued validity of the Arusha Declaration to which he retorted, "I still travel with it. I read it over and over to see what I would change. Maybe I would improve on the Kiswahili that was used but the declaration is still valid, I would not change a thing" (New Internationalist Magazine issue 309, 1999). Earlier, when he stepped down in 1985, Nyerere had declared that, "although socialism has failed in Tanzania, I will remain a socialist because I believe socialism is the best policy for poor countries like Tanzania".

Socialism[5] and secularism

In the following extensive quotation, Nyerere reconciles his doctrine of socialism and belief in God. "…Nor is it any business of socialism if an individual is, or is not, inspired in his daily life by a belief in God, nor if he does, or does not, attend a place of religious worship-or pray elsewhere. Socialism is concerned with man's life in this society. ..Socialism's concern about the organization of life on earth does not involve any supposition about life elsewhere, or about man's soul, or the procedures of fulfilling the will of God or Gods. A man's relationship with his God is a personal matter for him and him alone; his beliefs about the hereafter are his own affair...but a religion which involves human sacrifice, or demanded the exploitation of human beings, could not be allowed to carry out these practices… Socialism is secular. It has nothing to say about whether there is a God….it assumes the equality of man but people can reach this conclusion by many routes…e.g. that all are created by Him, or due to scientific evidence or simply because they believe it is the only basis on which life in society can be organized without injustice…this means that socialism cannot require that its adherents be atheists. There is not the slightest necessity for people to study metaphysics and decide whether there is one God, many Gods, or no God, before they can be socialists. There is nothing incompatible between socialism and Christianity, Islam or

[3] Nyerere's belief in equality led him to assert that it is, "the basis of all great religions of the world" (see Neve, 1976, ibid)

[4] The leadership code enshrined din the Arusha Declaration was to be diluted by the Zanzibar resolution of 2001

[5] It is asserted (Njozi 2004 op cit) that in an interview with the Christian Century of March 1, 1972, Nyerere was quoted as saying that his efforts to build African socialism in Tanzania represented his determination to translate in practical terms the teachings contained in The Gospel (sic) of Jesus Christ.

any other religion which accepts the equality of man on earth.

The fact that socialism and religion are two different things does not mean that socialism is anti-religious… [in a socialist society] members would be free to be religious, follow what ever religion they wish; the society would try very hard not to make a decision which outrages the religions feelings of any of its members, however small in number…it is thus the essentially personal nature of religious belief which makes it necessary for socialism to leave religions questions alone as far as possible-which makes it necessary that socialism should be secular-and being secular involves trying to avoid upsetting deeply held religious beliefs however stupid they may appear to non-believers: wearing of long hair, pouring libations, ban on music or dancing…because they are important to believers…always socialism will try to enlarge freedom and religious freedom is an essential part of man's liberty…"(Nyerere, 1974). For him, under socialism, it was a public concern, only that one fulfilled ones responsibilities to society and that religion activity as with leisure pursuits belonged to the private domain. It is claimed that, for the sake of religious tolerance, Nyerere helped to formulate the religious articles in the constitution of the government of Tanzania. These articles, which are still used, mainly focus on the right to freedom of religion (Malambugi, 1999)

In development, "man (sic) is the purpose"

Nyerere extolled the virtues of human beings in pursuing development, "The purpose of development is man[6]. It is the creation of conditions both material and spiritual, which enables man the individual and man the species, to become his best". He continues that it is easy for Christians to understand because Christianity demands that every man should aspire towards union with god through Christ…representatives of the church frequently act as if man's development is a personal and 'internal' matter, which can be divorced from the society and the economy in which he lives and earns his daily bread. They preach resignation; very often they appear to accept as immutable the social, economic and political frame-work of the present day world. They seek to ameliorate conditions through acts of love and kindness where the beneficiary remains an 'object'. But when the victims of poverty and oppression begin to behave like men and try to change those conditions, the representatives of the Church stand aside…". He saw man as also the purpose of socialism but since religious beliefs were important to man he pleaded for religious tolerance and for the avoidance of deep offence even to small religious minorities. Despite Nyerere's appeal to traditionalism, indigenous religions were not used to legitimize ujamaa and it was more likely to be seen as un-progressive…e.g. colonial ban on witchcraft remained and was reasserted. Nyerere assured church leaders that ujamaa was in full accord with Christianity. Nyerere's Tanzania religious organizations were supported by the state on conditions that their teachings conformed to values which the state endorsed. Muslims, Christians and traditional believers all held some beliefs which could be hostile to national integration and to state ideology. Nyerere expected these to be toned down with priority given to aspects of the relevant religious tradition which could be presented as legitimizing state ideology (Forster, 1997)

On poverty and injustice

Nyerere argued that poverty was not a real problem of the modern world because there was plenty of knowledge and resources to enable the overcoming of poverty; the real problem- the thing that brought misery, wars and hatred among man, he pointed out was, " the division of mankind into…those who are satiated and those who are hungry, those with power and those without power, those who dominate and those who are dominated; those who exploit and those who are exploited; and it is the minority which is well fed and which has secured control over the world's wealth and over their fellow men…and that minority has distinguishing characteristic- their adoption of the Christian religion". He calls on Christians to refuse the situation and challenges the Church to rebel against social structures and economic organisations which condemn men to poverty, humiliation and degradation, "...the Church must obviously and openly fight the existence and maintenance of the physical and spiritual slums and must work with the people to build a future based on social justice…only by doing so can the church hope to reduce hatred and promote its doctrine of love to all men…love expressed in action against evil… the church acquiesces in established evils, it identifies itself and the Christian religion with injustice by its continuing presence" (Nyererre, 1974: 88)

Religion and society

According to a former Prime Minister, Julius Nyerere, "…was a passionately religious man who respected his superiors. As a political leader, he did not allow his religious beliefs to influence his political views and actions" (Warioba, 2004: 19). Nyerere was a committed and professing Christian and church member and, as a result, he felt it was his responsibility as a politician to challenge the church to remember its responsibility to (Tanzanian) society. Whenever he was invited to participate in church functions, he challenged churches to

[6] "The word 'man'…means all men-all human beings. Male and female; black, white, brown, yellow; long-nosed and short-nosed, educated and uneducated…all these and all other distinctions between human beings, are irrelevant to the fact that all members of the society-all the human beings who are its purpose-are equal" Nyerere (quoted in Neve, 1976, footnote 19).

strive to fulfil their calling. All human institutions including the church are established in order to serve man. He called on the church to recognize the need for a social revolution, and to play a leading role in it, "for it is the fact of history, that almost all successful social revolutions which have taken place in the world have been led by people who were themselves beneficiaries under the system they sought to replace". And it is the institution of the church, through its members which should be leading to attack on any organization, or any economic, social or political structure which oppresses men, and which denies them the right and power to live as the sons of a loving God. In a more scathing speech to the Maryknoll mission Headquarters in New York, Nyerere challenged the church to be in the forefront of rebelling against social structures that condemned men to poverty, humiliation and degradation, or else, "the church will become irrelevant to man and the Christian religion will degenerate into a set of superstitions accepted by the fearful…Unless the church, its members and organisations, express God's love for man by involvement and leadership in constructive protest against the present condition of man, then it will be identified with injustice and persecution. If this happens, it will die and, humanly speaking, it should die because it will then serve no purpose comprehensible to modern man…(…) for the present condition of men must be unacceptable to all who think that individual person is a unique creation of a living God. We say man was created in the image of God. I refuse to imagine a God who is poor, ignorant, superstitious, fearful, oppressed and wretched- which is the lot of the majority of those he created in His own image…under present conditions, we are creatures, not of God but of our fellow men...Surely there can be no dispute among Christians about that" (Nyerere, 1973: 216). Nyerere continued to challenge the church until his demise in 1999, stressing on the need for the church to serve the whole person mentally, spiritually and physically.

Furthermore, he wanted the church to serve people beyond the church. For instance, schools, hospitals and income generating projects would not only benefit churches and Christians but also non-believers (Nyerere, 1974: 98-99). He says, "…all human institutions including the church, are established in order to serve man and it is the institution of the church, through its members which should be leading to attack on any organization, or any economic, social or political structure which oppresses men, and which denies them the right and power to live as the sons of a loving God" (Nyerere, 1974: 98-99)

On the (Christian) church

As pointed earlier, Nyerere was a committed and professing Christian and church member and, as a result, he felt it was his responsibility as a politician to challenge the church to remember its responsibility to society and challenged churches to strive to fulfil their calling. He also wanted to reconcile his brand of socialism (ujamaa) by asking the church to define its social ministry in terms of support for the government's development policies. For him, to be a good Christian was to work with the government in developing the nation, arguing, "…never has the church found itself in a position more favourable for fulfilling its divine mission in a pluralistic society. Ujamaa seems to be in complete conformity with the principles of natural law as applied to society and …it is in complete conformity with the social teaching of the church"…p 106 quoting TEC Secretary General Fr. Robinson. In fact, the Roman Catholic Pastoral bishops in a 1968 statement on the Church and Development, endorsed ujamaa socialism as being consistent with Christian notions of justice and equality: "No one should doubt that in the Arusha Declaration, we can find restated in a way that is really practical for men and now in Tanzania, the true principles of human living and human society. We can see very well how closely it agrees with the true spirit of Christ and the church which is a spirit of brotherhood, of sharing, of service and of hard work…" The Tabora RC archdiocese emphasised the commonalities of Christian faith and ujamaa, "the church must help the Christians to understand the relationship between the political ideology of Tanzanian socialism and the practice of Christian religion. No doubt this was possible because Nyerere himself was an RC adherent, some even saw in the Declaration, a form of liberation theology. Both the church and state realised that the two were good partners in development such that by the mid-1960s, church authorities across all denominations had reoriented their social mission to fit in with the development policy and objectives of the state, resulting in a dramatic shift in the conceptualisation of the place of the church in society.

Mixed and complex legacies

To characterize Nyerere's legacy is neither easy nor straightforward. We have dwelt on the earlier mentioned core values of Julius Nyerere and endeavored to pinpoint the religious underpinnings of this rare breed of African politicians. In assessing Nyerere's political legacy, Mazrui (2005) writes, "Nyerere's policies of ujamaa amounted to a case of heroic failure. They were heroic because Tanzania was one of the few African countries which attempted to find its own route to development instead of borrowing the ideologies of the West. But it was a failure because the economic experiment did not deliver the goods of development. On the other hand, Nyerere's policies of nation-building amount to a case of unsung heroism. With wise and strong leadership, and with brilliant policies of cultural integration, he took one of the poorest countries in the world and made it a proud leader in African affairs and an active member of the global

community. A Nordic author has hailed Nyerere as, "a creative conceptualizer, a far-sighted pioneer, a selfless role model, an almost dangerously courageous champion of righteous campaigns in Africa and the Third World as a whole, a fearless confronter of nations and institutions that tried to interfere with Tanzania's self-determination, a unifier of a vast and diverse economy and people, and a man of the people" (Resnick, 1996). The Guardian, UK (15 October, 1999), in an obituary after Nyerere's death wrote, "A giant of the African independence struggle, he retained his worldwide moral authority even after his vision of rural socialism faltered". On the other hand, one of his Tanzanian admirers asserts, "there is a conspiratorial side to Julius Nyerere that makes some people wince when his name is mentioned in connection with sainthood, not only because politicians, by their very nature, cannot be saints. But there is a problem in trying to place a man who was favoured with a long life, multiple theatres of operation and the dexterity to play opposed roles[7] (almost) at the same time, always with an intellectual gravitas, denied his peers (Ulimwengu, 2009)

Canonisation: No fast tracking to sainthood

The path to sainthood is long and little known to the average person, even to the average Catholic. Canonization is the act by which the Catholic Church or another religious group declares a deceased person to be a saint and is included in the canon, or list of recognized saints. It is a four-stage process that transforms the candidate from servant of God, venerable, blessed and, finally to saint. The act of canonization is reserved to the Holy See and occurs at the conclusion of a long process requiring extensive proof that the person proposed for canonization lived and died in such an exemplary and holy way that he or she is worthy to be recognized as a saint. To canonize a saint, at least two miracles must have occurred after death. It normally takes a period of waiting of biblical proportions from the instance a person becomes a candidate for sainthood to the day that he is pronounced saint.

WHY NYERERE IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR SAINTHOOD: THE PROS AND CONS

Enthusiastic outsiders vs. apathetic Tanzanians

It is to be noted that the debate on the canonization of Julius Nyerere has been carried out mainly by outsiders rather than Tanzanians themselves. Thus, while, "the debate on whether Julius Nyerere deserves to be canonised by the Catholic Church, "sparked a storm in Kampala" (Mugagga, 2009), "it is strange that Tanzanians are not discussing the question of Nyerere's sainthood. Instead it is Ugandans who have been debating the pros and cons of his canonisation" (Mushi, 2006). Indeed, the current President of Tanzania, Jakaya Kiwkete was struck but acquiesced by this anomaly when he, "thanked Ugandans for owning the process of beatification of Mwalimu Nyerere…. a process that was essentially Tanzanian" (New Vision, 1 June, 2009; Tanzanian Affairs Issue 97 September 1, 2010.). Some observers have noted the lack of enthusiasm among ordinary Tanzanian Catholics concerning Nyerere`s process to sainthood. One of such critic wrote in 2006, "You can hardly hear ordinary people, expressing their satisfaction concerning Nyerere`s process to sainthood. This is so simply because they fail to associate his spiritual life and the process to sanctity. Ordinary people should be helped to understand why the church has begun this process. In other countries where such a process begins, people in their thousands start visiting the grave of the person, just to go and pray for spiritual favours. In our case, are there groups planning to visit Mwalimu`s graves for spiritual motives?" (http://www.ippmedia.com/ipp/guardian/2006/01/24/58455. html).

Supporters and critics

The prospect of having an African statesman being a saintly material has unleashed a heated debate involving politicians, political analysts, the clergy, news reporters and lay persons. While some hail the prospect which would be a rare honour for Africa, a continent that badly needs heroes to counter-balance its tarnished image, others are sceptical thinking it will be an uphill struggle and an arduous one at that because the candidate's perceived saintliness was undone by his political legacy.

As would have been expected, fellow politicians have campaigned for the "Nyerere project", as it has been labelled by some cynics. Among the advocates for his sainthood include his renowned admirer, President Museveni of Uganda as well as former and current presidents of Tanzania, Benjamin Mkapa and Jakaya Kikwete. Museveni, when addressing a special prayers' gathering at the Catholic Martyrs' Shrine at Namugongo in Uganda (New Vision January 1, 2010)[8] for the beatification of the late Mwalimu likened him to the Ugandan martyrs who stood for truth against sin; even at the expense of their lives. I join those who are praying for the canonisation of Mwalimu as a saint. He was not only a freedom fighter, he was also a man of God… I am a witness to Nyerere's devotion. The Bible is clear. It says we shall know them by their fruits not by their words. Tanzania is a country of Christians, Muslims and animists

[7] Some of Nyerere's blind spots were the recognition of Biafra in 1968 and the invasion of Uganda in 1979 to topple the regime of Idi Amin (the first time in African post-colonial history that one country had done so), an act which according to his daughter, Anna (see Nyerere A & F Nkwera, 2009:53) he had to pray all night, and attending *Holy Mass* before declaring.

[8] Another memorial mass was celebrated at the Holy Family Minor Basilica, Nairobi on October 16, 2010 where Rev. Dr. Laurent Magesa from Musoma Diocese- Nyerere's home place, preached and made a case for his canonisation

but Mwalimu (Nyerere) was able to unite them by demonstrating that they are all children of God," In the occasion, former Tanzanian resident Benjamin Mkapa, Tanzania's third President argued that though Nyerere was a human being like anybody else, the difference was that, he, "was consumed by love for God and neighbour; he always endeavoured to be and do good to God and his people". To cap it all, the current president of Tanzanian, Jakaya Kikwete applauded the beatification and possibility of Nyerere's sainthood which would elevate Tanzania in the annals of the Catholic Church and is something that he supports. On the opposing side is a staunch opponent of the Tanzanian regime and ruling party, CCM, Reverend Mtikila who sees the process as, "more political than spiritual", pointing out that if such beatification had been bestowed on the first Tanzanian roman Catholic cardinal, Laurien Ruganbwa, it would have made sense, but to him, Nyerere does not deserve such veneration because he was not "holy", arguing that his actions while in power were not driven by Christian virtues but political doctrines and exigencies…(The Citizen 8th February, 2006).

While a Tanzanian reporter (Williams, 2006) asserts it will be difficult to find evidence to show that Nyerere led a spiritual life to gain him entry into the communion of saints, Rev. Laurent Magesa is of the opinion that though Nyerere may not have always lived saintly life, some elements of sainthood did manifest in his life adding that even the negative things about Nyerere are equally welcome for the exercise ahead (Speroforum, 2010). The Tanzanian Roman Catholic Cardinal, Polycarp Pengo, views the beatification of Nyerere as a rare honour for Africa sending a message to other leaders of the continent who had fallen by the moral wayside, our aim is mainly to encourage politicians, statesmen and businessmen to live a life that is capable of leading them to sainthood" (http: //clericalwhispers. com/2007/03/nyerere-for-beatification-tanzania.html).

Why Tanzanian President Nyerere was not always saintly

Former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerre may not have always lived a saintly life, but some elements of sainthood did manifest in his life, says Tanzanian Catholic priest/scholar, Rev. Dr. Fr. Laurent Magesa (2010).

"This is why the Catholic Church in Tanzanian has decided to forward his name to the Vatican for possible consideration for canonization," said Dr. Magesa, a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Musoma, Tanzania.

Speaking at a special prayer service for the soul of the late President Nyerere, held at Nairobi's Holy Family Minor Basilica on October 16, Dr. Magesa urged Catholics to offer serious prayers for the soul of the late President Nyerere.

The Vatican has already declared the late President Nyerere a Servant of God.

"At this juncture, much is expected from us in terms of prayers and sharing whatever we know, witnessed and experienced on the life of the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere," he added as he addressed a huge congregation, mainly Tanzanian Catholics-priests, religious and laity, residing in Nairobi and its environs.

"And this does not have to be positive, exclusively. Even the negative things you might have come across on the late Nyerere are equally welcome for the exercise ahead of us," added the Tanzanian clergyman.

"The man we are talking about was not an angel. He was subject to the human weaknesses we all know about", he added.

"But having said that, it is well known that the late President Nyerere stood out on certain matters of principal and goodness in major areas such as family, leadership and religious commitment," emphasized the Tanzanian clergyman.

"This is what we shall be zeroing in on as we participate in the exercise ahead of us," he pointed out as he explained the community participation in the canonization process.

He said both Nyerere and Kenyan cardinal Maurice Otunga were at par on the canonization process as both of them have been declared as Servants of God by the Vatican.

"At this juncture, it is a question of offering serious prayers as well as making active participation in terms of offering information one may have on the two as part of effective facilitation of the process of canonization," he explained to the attentive congregation.

The Nairobi special prayer service was organized by Farijika Kenya for family ministries, a Catholic Church organization aimed at promoting family life, better Church and a better nation. It is coordinated by the Tanzanian Catholic priest, Fr. Baptiste Regina Mapunda (2010).

CONCLUSION

It is an unquestionable fact that we rightly deserve to venerate Mwalimu Nyerere, the father of the Tanzanian nation whose inestimable contributions in varied fields has left his country and the entire mankind incalculable legacy. Mwalimu as a person and a leader has outshined in almost all that he was able to do. He proved to be a serious politician, meticulous leader, a profound Christian, a writer and a Pan-Africanist who tirelessly

strived to address people's pressing problems. Internationally, he industriously attested to be an international figure, challenging and championing some of the most intricate issues. However, all of these noble qualities seem to be too little to justify his elevation to the sainthood status because his deeds were associated with effects that adversely impacted the masses and his rule was not entirely informed by Roman Catholicism. As one sceptic put it, "The fact that the seed of his canonisation project could take years to germinate, will definitely open wider the floodgate of criticism for historians and-of course-the media, to voice out their opinions. Whether the ensuing viewpoints will add or deduct anything from the Vatican's decision is a different thing altogether!"

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