

## Zambian archbishop breaks with Rome

John L. Allen Jr. | Jul. 21, 2006 All Things Catholic

Last Friday, I traveled to Washington, D.C., to interview Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, the famed Zambian exorcist whose on-again, off-again, now on-again marriage to a Korean acupuncturist hand-picked by the Rev. Sun Myung Moon in 2001 created one of the most titillating Vatican soap operas of recent memory.

In the end, Milingo responded to a personal appeal of Pope John Paul II and returned to ecclesiastical discipline, apparently swayed in part by the argument that the turmoil surrounding him was worsening the late pope's health.

Now, however, Milingo has broken with Rome again, turning up last week in Washington in the company of Archbishop George Stallings, leader of the breakaway African American Catholic Congregation, and surrounded by key personnel in Moon's Family Federation for World Peace and Unification. Milingo says he wants to push the Catholic church to reconcile with the roughly 150,000 priests who have left active ministry to become married.

My news story can be found here: [Zambian archbishop breaks with Rome; Reaches out to married priests](#) [1]

One might be tempted to see Milingo's vicissitudes as a sort of side-show unworthy of serious news attention. Yet I covered the events of 2001 in Rome, and I can testify that the Vatican took them seriously indeed -- in part out of pastoral concern for a member of the episcopal college, but also out of fear that Milingo's high public profile backed by Moon's vast resources could represent a major headache for the Catholic church, above all in Africa.

The nightmare scenario was that Milingo would go back to Africa and found his own church, perhaps uniting the various breakaway Catholic factions that already exist, offering a married priesthood and greater acceptance of traditional African spirituality, especially healing and the casting out of demons. That such thinking is not entirely a flight of fancy is indicated, among other things, by recent news that a Kenyan priest, Fr. Godfrey Siundu, has recently married and led several of his brother priests into a schismatic faction known as the "Reformed Roman Catholic Church."

Because Milingo is a validly ordained Roman Catholic bishop, he could theoretically consecrate other bishops and create a genuine schism, an outcome the Vatican would move heaven and earth to try to avoid.

In our interview, Milingo denied he has any intention of challenging Rome on his home turf. Anyone who has followed the surprising ups and downs of the Milingo story over the years, however, can be forgiven a degree of doubt as to whether this is truly the last word on the subject.

\* \* \*

Excerpts from the Milingo interview:

**Last time you were in the public eye, the story ended with a surprise meeting with John Paul II at Castel Gandolfo. Do you intend to seek a meeting with Benedict XVI?**

So far, I see no reason for such a meeting at the time being. I want to move ahead with my mission to help married priests and so on. I have written to the Holy Father, I sent him two letters, explaining where I am and that after America I will return to Zambia.

Why did you make your break now?

I always asked myself, is this the right thing I have done? My doubts, difficulties, and questioning ? kept on for five years. It was worsened by the situation in which I was living at Zagarola. I found myself literally surrounded by spies, there by the authority of the Vatican. I might have been satisfied with that, but they continually attacked my mission, which is preaching the gospel and casting out devils.

**What was the difficulty?**

All my problems come from the lack of appreciation [by church authorities] for the spiritual gifts I have. It was too much for them to believe that in the modern world, I can simply say ?let this happen,? and it happens.

Let us not hide the facts, let us be very honest. [After I returned in 2001], I spent four years helping the sick. Why was I not accepted in the Catholic church? They never asked, ?How is it that Milingo has these powers?? This is what they?ve forgotten. The Lord has given gifts to the church, the first of which is preaching the gospel. ?It is not I, but Jesus who is in me,? as St. Paul said.

A woman from Modena once called me, and said that 20 days after the birth of her child, there is no milk in her breasts. I told her to get a glass of water, and that I would bless it from here. I did it over the phone, and told her to drink it. Immediately afterwards, she began making milk. They can?t accept that.

In Milan, I once saw a woman who seemed dead. I put a handkerchief in her mouth, and held her hand. I felt the blood begin to move, and she came back to life completely. She is alive today.

? It reached a state I could not tolerate. ? Some bishops couldn?t even stand my name. Some bishops jumped so high at the mention of my name, it was as if the church had springs. God almighty ? I asked the Lord, ?Why do you have such a structure that separates itself from humanity?? People come and seek help from me. When they know when Milingo is here, thousands come. How is it that [church authorities] don?t see, don?t appreciate, what I am doing?

**Do you plan to create a new church in Africa with Rev. Moon?s backing?**

No, Rev. Moon has only talked to me about what they are already doing in some places, with dialogue with the Buddhists, reconciliation between the Palestinians and Israelis, and so on. He told me that they cannot [make decisions] about my needs. ?You plan yourself what you?d like to do,? he told me. I?m just doing as Jesus did, and I can find my own way. I want to find a way to preach the gospel.

**So you are not going to create or attach yourself to a rival to the Catholic church?**

We have no ambition at all, in any way, to do anything of that kind.

I have been impressed with how delicate [Moon?s followers] are with the Catholic church. I went fishing three times with Rev. Moon, and I was very surprised by the simplicity I?ve seen in that man. He speaks of living for others, and I?ve seen what he has done. What John XXIII talked about in *Pacem in Terris*, working for peace, this is what the Family Federation [for World Peace and Unification, Moon?s organization] is doing. They send ambassadors of peace to different places and so on.

I'm also impressed with the priority they put on marriage. In our church, sometimes marriage is not valued. In Europe, they applaud homosexuality, and there are even nightclubs where people swap husbands and wives. The Synod on the Family produced a document, *Familiaris Consortio*, defending the family, and this is what Rev. Moon is saying.

? I feel very strongly that I can be an intermediary to reconcile the Catholic church with Rev. Moon.

*The e-mail address for John L. Allen Jr. is [href="mailto:jallen@natcath.org">jallen@ncronline.org](mailto:jallen@natcath.org)*

---

**Source URL (retrieved on 07/20/2017 - 20:18):** <https://www.ncronline.org/blogs/all-things-catholic/zambian-archbishop-breaks-rome>

**Links:**

[1] <http://www.nationalcatholicreporter.org/update/bn071406.htm>