

INTERNATIONAL COLLOQUIUM LEUVEN 8-10 NOVEMBER 2010



RELIGION, COLONIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION IN CONGO 1885-1960

◆ Religion in the Democratic Republic of Congo has many faces, from the overflowing seminaries and Marian shrines of the Catholic Church to Islamic brotherhoods, from the Jewish community of Lubumbashi to the “African” churches of the Congolese diaspora in Brussels or Paris, from the healers of Kimbanguism to the televangelism of the booming Pentecostalist churches in the great cities, from the Orthodox communities of Kasai to “invisible” Mai Mai warriors in the brousse of Kivu. During the colonial period, religion was no less central to people’s lives than today. More surprisingly, behind the seemingly smooth façade of missions tied closely to imperial power, it too was marked by diversity and dynamism, tying the Congo into broader African and global movements.

◆ On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Congolese independence and the 125th anniversary of the Congo Free State, KADOC, K.U.Leuven’s Centre for the Study of Religion, Culture and Society, will organize a major international conference in order to take a fresh look at religion, colonization and decolonization in the Congo between 1885 and 1960.

◆ To say that a lot of good work remains to be done on religion and colonization in the Congo is an understatement. The subject was long considered synonymous with ‘mission history’, and as such it attracted above all the attention of fellow missionaries who wanted to serve God rather than Clio. Anticlerical ‘debunking’, inevitably, followed in the 1980s. More recently, scholars like Jean-Luc Vellut and Ruth Kinet have produced more balanced and insightful studies. At the same time, a number of monographs produced in Congo, Belgium and elsewhere offered new perspectives on processes of evangelization among specific ethnic groups and on metropolitan missionary culture. In the past few years, Kevin Grant and Pagan Kennedy have added depth to our knowledge of missionaries’ roles in the ‘Red Rubber’ campaign of the early 20th century. Starting from these valuable studies, the conference aims to arrive at a more comprehensive panorama of the interaction between religion and colonization.

◆ While the historiography is far from being a wasteland, then, it has been marked by an overly strong, sometimes polemical focus on the Congo Free State. For the fifty-odd years of the Belgian colony after 1908, the only comprehensive account of religion and colonisation remains the study of Marvin Markowitz from...1973. With the notable exception of Jean-Luc Vellut and some of the monographs alluded to above, it is also fair to say that for both the periods before and after 1908, attention has been concentrated on relations between Christian missionaries and colonial officials, and less on African converts. Africans figured as protagonists mostly in the separate niche of the study of ‘prophetic movements’ and their role in resistance to colonisation. In the last fifteen years, the most innovative insights into the place of religion in Congolese colonial society have often come, obliquely, from work that was primarily concerned with language, gender, medicine, architecture and education, such as that of Johannes Fabian, Nancy Hunt, Bambi Ceuppens, Johan Lagae, or the group around Marc Depaepe.

◆ In the meantime, the subject of religion and colonization itself has become a ‘hot topic’ elsewhere, especially in the English-speaking world. The influence of anthropology and the establishment of African history as a respectable academic subject prompted a fresh look at the ‘trans-cultural space’ created by the interaction between world religions and indigenous creeds in the colonial period, one in which Africans moved centre

stage. The trail-blazing study by anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff on South Africa triggered a broader, ongoing debate on the entanglement of missions in the 'hegemonic' modernizing project of imperialism, and the degree of agency this left to Africans in accepting and appropriating the Christian message. At the same time, there is a growing awareness that, if missionaries were bent on exporting their model of religion, their overseas experiences played a critical role in reshaping metropolitan Churches. The rise of global and transnational history has added depth to perspectives on such surprising mechanics of cultural transfer in 'contact zones'.



The international conference planned by KADOC aims to bring the history of religion, colonization and decolonization in the Congo up to date. It intends to unite and complete the membra disiecta of our knowledge on the subject; it wants to renew our insight by connecting with the main trends of historiographical debate. Contributors are invited, in particular, to integrate the African perspective and to explicitly discuss the role of Africans (or lack thereof). While Christianity will inevitably be central to the conference, experts on other religions like prophetic cults, indigenous traditions, Islam and Judaism, are especially encouraged to apply.

The papers will address one of the following three themes, detailed below: religions and the colonial state, religions in colonial African society, religions and Independence. These will constitute the three parts of the conference, corresponding to major current debates in the broader historiography on religion and colonisation.

RELIGIONS AND THE COLONIAL STATE

The first part of the conference focuses on the institutional (including legal) political framework of the interface between religion and colonization. It is closest to traditional, long-standing concerns of the historiography. However, contributors are invited to reconsider the relationship between missions and the state as a triangle, drawing in African converts and catechists. Was there more conflict than the famous image of the 'colonial trinity' (state-business-mission) suggests, and if so, what does this tell us about the relationship between missionary and colonial projects? Were Africans merely the stakes of such power games, or could they also actively affect them? What was the role of 'outsiders' in the colonial order, whether Protestant missionaries, prophetic cults, Muslim communities or Western anticlericals and Freemasons? How did the imperial settlement relate to Church-State relations in the Belgian metropole?

RELIGIONS IN COLONIAL AFRICAN SOCIETY: CONFLICT, ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION

This part of the conference is centrally concerned with the complex interaction between 'imported' non-African and indigenous African religious beliefs and practices, as it played out in the broad field of colonial society and everyday life. Examples include (but are not limited to) gender and race relationships; rites of passage; architecture and sacred landscapes; clothing and views of 'modesty'; art and religious imagery; education; science, health care and medicine; sexuality; labour migration and urbanisation; ethnic identity and conflict. To what extent were different forms of Christianity, Islam and the Jewish diaspora harbingers of modernization, and if so, what kind of 'modernity' are we speaking about? How were world religions and indigenous belief systems affected by their interface? Did their encounter result in a genuine 'transcultural space', or were they lost in translation? What repercussions did the rise of an indigenous clergy have on religious institutions? How did indigenous religious specialists deal with the challenge represented by Christianity and Islam? In sum, this part of the conference is concerned both with the implication of religions in hegemonic or counter-hegemonic projects, and with the various ways in which their transgressive dynamics opened up spaces that escaped the logic of imperial boundaries.

RELIGIONS AND INDEPENDENCE

The last part of the conference will zoom in on the part religions played in the independence movement and on their reaction to independence itself. What is the relationship between prophetic cults, resistance to colonial rule and the (early) independence movement? Did the missions (Catholic and Protestant) anticipate on and prepare for independence in the 1950s, and if so, in what ways? What was the role of the emergent indigenous clergy, both in Congo and at seminaries or universities in the West? How did religious communities deal with the tumultuous sequence of events in 1959-1961? To what extent, if at all, did Islam contribute to separatism in the East?

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

Bram Cleys (ASRO/KADOC-K.U.Leuven), Jan De Maeyer (KADOC-K.U.Leuven), Michel Dumoulin (Université Catholique de Louvain), Jean-Luc Vellut (Université Catholique de Louvain), Vincent Viaene (University of Oxford / KADOC-K.U.Leuven), Luc Vints (KADOC-K.U.Leuven)

SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

William Clarence-Smith (School of Oriental and African Studies), Jan De Maeyer (KADOC-K.U.Leuven), Michel Dumoulin (Université Catholique de Louvain), Nancy Rose Hunt (University of Michigan), Isidore Ndaywel è Nziem (Université de Kinshasa), Guy Vanthemsche (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), Jean-Luc Vellut (Université Catholique de Louvain), Vincent Viaene (University of Oxford / KADOC-K.U.Leuven)

PROGRAMME

MONDAY, 8 NOVEMBER 2010

RELIGIONS AND THE COLONIAL STATE

9:00 WELCOME *Jan De Maeyer* [KADOC-K.U.Leuven, BE]
INTRODUCTION *Vincent Viaene* [Oxford University, GB & KADOC-K.U.Leuven, BE]

MISSIONS, INTERNATIONALISM AND IMPERIALISM

Chair: *Michel Dumoulin* [Université Catholique de Louvain, BE]

9:15 *Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo* [Universidade de Lisboa, PT]
Religion and Politics in the “Congo”: European inter-imperial and missionary competition c. 1865-1890

9:35 *Anne-Sophie Gijs* [Université Catholique de Louvain, BE]
Les droits des autochtones : un enjeu dans les relations Jésuites-État (fin 19e-20 siècle)

9:55 *Vincent Viaene* [Oxford University, GB & KADOC-K.U.Leuven, BE]
“Soft power” and hard realities: reflections on religious internationalism in Congo 1876-1914, followed by a commentary by *J.-L. Vellut* [Université Catholique de Louvain, BE]:
Raison d'éthique sociale et raison d'État : Églises chrétiennes et États coloniaux dans le bassin du Congo

10:30 DISCUSSION

11:00 BREAK

A.M.



SITES OF POWER

Chair: *Johan Lagae* [UGent, BE]

- 11:30 *Paul Serufuri* [Université de Kinshasa, DRC]
Les missions chrétiennes au Congo/RDC (1885-1960). De la géographie à la révolution des mentalités
- 11:50 *Bram Cleys* [K.U.Leuven, BE]
Catholic Missionaries and the Production of Kasai as a Colonial Landscape (1890-1960)
- 12:10 *Marie Dunkerley* [University of Exeter, GB]
Home is where the heart is? Debates between missionaries and colonial administrators over accommodation for Congolese students at the École Unique des Assistants Médicaux Indigènes, Léopoldville, 1929-1946
- 12:30 DISCUSSION
- 01:00 LUNCH

THE COLONIAL ESTABLISHMENT AND ITS MARGINS

Chair: *Paul Serufuri* [Université de Kinshasa, DRC] - t.b.c.

- P.M.** 02:30 *Francis Nolan* [Missionaries of Africa, Rome, IT]
Bishop Victor Roelens
- 02:50 *Léon Verbeek* [Missionnaire salésien, DRC]
Mgr René Vanheusden (1888-1958), vicaire apostolique de Sakania (RDC). Sa position vis-à-vis de la Colonie du Congo belge
- 03:10 DISCUSSION
- 03:30 BREAK
- 04:00 *Ashley Leinweber* [University of Florida, US]
Marginalization of the 'Other': Being Muslim in Colonial Congo
- 04:20 *Dominic Pistor* [Simon Fraser University, CA]
Kitawala in urban contexts and the evolution of State policy in the Belgian Congo
- 04:40 DISCUSSION (until 05:00 ca)

[OPTIONAL]

- 08:00 Visit to the KADOC exhibition 'Witnesses of a Mission', followed by reception

TUESDAY, 9 NOVEMBER 9 2010

RELIGIONS IN COLONIAL AFRICAN SOCIETY: CONFLICT, ADAPTATION AND TRANSFORMATION

A.M. 09:30 *Keynote address: Nancy Rose Hunt [University of Michigan, US]*
Rethinking Religious Practice in Colonial Congo: Healing, Dissent, Relegation

10:30 **BREAK**

ART IN THE COLONIAL 'CONTACT ZONE'

Chair: *E.Ngoma Binda [Université de Kinshasa, DRC]*

11:00 *Anne Cornet [Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Guerre et Sociétés contemporaines, Bruxelles, BE]*
Musique et champ missionnaire dans la région des Grands Lacs (Kivu, Rwanda, Burundi). Emprunts et transferts

11:20 *Isabelle de Rezende [University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, US]*
Considering the Visual Archive of a Catholic Mission in Central Congo. The photographic albums of the Penitent Sisters of Saint Francis (Opbraeckel) and the Passionist Fathers of the Tshumbe-Sainte Marie Diocese, 1930s to 1960s

11:40 *Sabine Cornelis [Africa Museum, Tervuren, BE]*
De la collection du Musée Royal d'Afrique Centrale au contexte pédagogique. L'École St Luc de Léopoldville et son environnement culturel

12:00 **DISCUSSION**

12:30 **LUNCH**

AFRICAN RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS

Chair: *David Maxwell [Keele University, GB]*

P.M. 01:30 *Elie Ngoma Binda [Université de Kinshasa DRC]*
Religion et décolonisation du Congo: le Discours politique de Simon Kimbangu

01:50 *Yolanda Covington-Ward [University of Pittsburgh, US]*
"Your Name is Written in the Sky": Unearthing the Stories of Female Prophets in Kongo Colonial History, 1921-1960

02:10 *Joseph Indeka Nkoso [Université Libre de Bruxelles, BE]*
Les rebellions anticoloniales dans une société sans Etat (Cas des Ndengese au Congo belge, 1890-1961)

02:30 *John Cinnamon [Miami University Ohio, US]*
Late Colonial and Postcolonial Spirit Movements and State Power in Equatorial Africa (Congo/Zaire/DRC, Republic of Congo, Gabon)

02:50 **DISCUSSION**

03:30 **BREAK**

INTERMEDIARIES

Chair: *Nancy Rose Hunt* [University of Michigan, US] - t.b.c.

- 04:00 *David Maxwell* [Keele University, GB]
The Luba Christian Movement
- 04:20 *Elisabeth Boyi* [Stanford University, US]
Vivre la mission: mémoire individuelle, histoire collective
- 04:40 *Emery Kalema Masua* [Université de Kinshasa, DRC]
Religion et médecine au Congo Belge : pratiques et savoirs des assistants médicaux indigènes et de leurs patients
- 05:00 DISCUSSION (until 05:30 ca)
- 07:30 CONFERENCE DINNER

WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2010

RELIGIONS AND INDEPENDENCE

THE CRISIS OF THE COLONIAL MISSIONS

Chair: *Guy Vanthemsche* [Vrije Universiteit Brussel, BE]

- A.M. 09:00 *Edouard Brion* [Fathers of the Sacred Hearts, BE]
Crise de la mission, crise de la colonisation entre 1950 et 1961?
- 09:20 *Leen Engelen* [K.U.Leuven & University College Limburg, BE]
L'impasse: A Cinematic Record of Decolonisation and the Fear of Dechristianization in Congo (1960-1961)
- 09:40 *Piet Clement* [Bank for International Settlements, CH]
Tempels revisited. The conversion of a missionary in the Belgian Congo, 1930s-1960s
- 10:00 DISCUSSION
- 10:30 BREAK

THE TRANSITION TO POST-COLONIAL RELIGIONS

Chair: *Guy Vanthemsche* [Vrije Universiteit Brussel, BE]

- 11:00 *Zana Etambala* [Africamuseum Tervuren, BE]
De la (sou-)mission à l'Eglise congolaise 1945-1960
- 11:20 *Kiangu Sindani* [Université de Kinshasa, DRC]
Le mouvement Muleliste comme théorie et pratique religieuses
- 11:40 *Reuben Loffman* [Keele University, GB]
The Catholic Church and Congolese nationalism: the Spiritan massacre in Kongolo, Kantanga, 1962
- 12:00 *Geert Castryck* [Universität Leipzig, DE]
Children of the Revolution: national, pan-African and religious strategies of Congolese Muslims in the Burundi decolonization process
- 12:20 DISCUSSION ON THIS THEME AND GENERAL DISCUSSION
- 01:00 *Jean-Luc Vellut* [Université Catholique de Louvain, BE] and *Vincent Viaene* [Oxford University, GB & KADOC-K.U.Leuven, BE]
Conclusions
- 01:30 CLOSING LUNCH

PRACTICAL INFORMATION

VENUE

University Hall K.U.Leuven - Naamsestraat 22, Leuven

LANGUAGES

Conference languages will be English and French. No simultaneous interpretation.

THE FEE

for participating is € 100

Reduced student fee: € 50 [please append a copy of your student ID card]

Fee per day: € 50

This fee includes participation in all lectures, the congress brochure, coffee and light refreshments and sandwich lunches at noon.

PAYMENT

Please deposit the fee [**before 15 October 2010**] to
KADOC-K.U.Leuven, Vlamingenstraat 39, BE-3000 Leuven

into account n°

IBAN: BE39 4320 0003 6119

BIC: KREDBEBB

(name and address of the bank:)

KBC - Bedrijvenkantoor Leuven

Brusselsesteenweg 100 - BE-3000 Leuven

mentioning “400/0004/66649 – [followed by name participant]”

ACCOMODATION

Please contact: Toerisme Leuven, Naamsestraat 1, BE-3000 Leuven

Tel. +32 16 20 30 20 / Fax +32 16 20 30 03

E-mail: tourism@leuven.be

www.leuven.be/en/tourism/staying-over/

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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<http://kadoc.kuleuven.be>

REGISTRATION FORM

Surname + First Name

University/Institute

HOME ADDRESS

Street + Number

City + Postal Code

Tel

Fax

WORK ADDRESS

Institution

Street + Number

City + Postal Code

Tel

Fax

E-mail

is registering for (please tick where appropriate):

- | | |
|---|----------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance as a non-student - 3 days | 100,00 € |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance as a student - 3 days [please append a copy of your student ID card] | 50,00 € |
| Or: | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance on Monday 8 November 2010 | 50,00 € |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance on Tuesday 9 November 2010 | 50,00 € |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance on Wednesday 10 November 2010 | 50,00 € |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at visit to KADOC (exhibition 'Witnesses of a Mission' & reception) on Monday night 8 November 2010 | Free |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at conference dinner on Tuesday night 9 November 2010 | 60,00 € |

AMOUNT

€

Date and signature:

Please return this registration form [at the very latest 15 October 2010] to:

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