

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE IN AFRICA. A SYNONYM FOR “CULTURAL IMPERIALISM”?

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There are many studies and historical analyses of Christian missionary enterprise in Africa exploring the subtle interplay of missionary encounters with African peoples. Some recent accounts of Protestant missions and British or German imperialism are arguing that there was a very close connection between Christian missions and “cultural imperialism”. The complexity of the problem defies any generalization of the missionary impact on Africa and such portrayal of the missions’ activity is problematic and open to discussion. An analysis of the White Fathers’s attitudes and activities proves that African societies possessed considerable power to absorb Western influences selectively and their choices have shaped a process of cultural exchange.

Historiography of Christian missionary enterprise in Africa exploring the subtle interplay of missionary encounters with African peoples is very rich. Cultural contacts with the West were no doubt led by Christian missions and were defined above all by their intention to transform African societies. The debate on missionary activities in Africa is a complex one. Though there can be no generalized statement of the missionary impact on Africa, some accounts and historical analyses of missionary activities in Africa are arguing that there was a very close connection between Christian missions and “cultural imperialism”. Some recent accounts of Protestant missions and British imperialism are preoccupied throughout with the charge against missions as cultural imperialists, often using the terminology of black theology.<sup>1</sup>

According to some authors, missionaries were the prime agents of an intrusive “cultural imperialism”. In Africa conversion and education or training went hand in hand. The teaching of missionaries and their control of education opened the way to the broader pressures of western expansion, to direct colonial rule and to “cultural imperialism”. To explain the role and impact of Christian missionary enterprise in Africa and elsewhere, it has been argued by these

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Brian Stanley: *The Bible and the Flag. Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Leicester 1990.

authors, historians must turn to the concept of "cultural imperialism" or "the purposeful aggression by one culture against the ideas and values of another...accompanied by political, economic, or military pressure."<sup>2</sup>

In his *Education as Cultural Imperialism* Martin Carnoy claimed "that far from acting as a liberator, Western formal education came to most countries as part of imperialist domination. It was consistent with the goals of imperialism: the economic and political control of the people in one country by the dominant class in another... the imperial powers attempted, through schooling, to train the colonized for roles that suited the colonizer."<sup>3</sup>

There have been plenty of academic polemics regarding the very concept of "cultural imperialism".<sup>4</sup> Such portrayal of the missions' activity is, however, problematic and open to discussion. The missionary spectrum was widely varied and its impact on the intensely varied African scene has varied from one African people to another. The complexity of the problem thus defies any generalization. A critique of the Christian missionary enterprise in Africa reveals as much about the critic as it does about the mission or about the conceptual, spiritual, ideological and theological formation of what Werner Ustorf calls the "occidental missionary mindset" which is interpreted by him "as a tool for the analysis of a rather diverse and complex process".<sup>5</sup> The Christian mission carried out in this period is deemed to have been "through Christendom mission", the very term *Christendom*, in Latin *corpus christianum* referring here "to the identity of religion or church, culture, state and territory; in brief, to the expansion of the western Christian world", the mission itself being "an expression of modern western civilization".<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The quotation is taken from an article by Andrew Porter: "Cultural Imperialism" and Protestant Missionary Enterprise, 1780-1914, published in the *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. XXV, No. 3, September 1997, pp. 367-391, who quoted from Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.: *The Missionary Enterprise and Theories of Imperialism*. In: John K. Fairbank (Ed.): *The Missionary Enterprise in China and America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts 1974, p. 360.

<sup>3</sup> Carnoy, Martin: *Education as Cultural Imperialism*. New York 1974, p. 3. Quoted by Knoll, Arthur: *Education, Assimilation, and Racism in the German Colonial Empire*. In: Wagner, Wilfried (Hrsg.) *Rassendiskriminierung, Kolonialpolitik und ethnisch-nationale Identität*. Münster-Hamburg, LIT Verlag 1992, p. 440.

<sup>4</sup> A similar concept is "linguistic imperialism" widely used by African scholars to explain the continued dependence of most African governments on ex-colonial metropolitan languages who argue that "the continuous use of English or French or Portuguese as *lingua franca* impedes the development of African unity culturally, economically and politically". See e.g. Indakwa, John: *A lingua franca for Africa. A Study of the Need for a Common Language*. In *Kiswahili*, vol. 48, 1, 1978, pp. 57-73.

<sup>5</sup> Ustorf, Werner: *What If the Light in You is Darkness? An Inquiry into the Shadow Side of the Missionary Self*. In: Van der Heyden, Ulrich – Becher, Holger (Hrsg.): *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*. *Missionsgeschichtliches Archiv* 6. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag 2000, pp. 141-2.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 142.

The third or modern period of the expansion of the Christian Church in Africa only started at the end of the 18th century when newly founded Christian missionary societies started to send first teams of missionaries to Africa, but a few Protestant missionary efforts had been directed to Africa already early in the eighteenth century. In 1737 a lone representative of the Church of the United Brethren in Moravia named Georg Schmitt arrived at the Cape and started work among the Khoikhoi or "Hottentots" as they were rather scornfully called by Europeans.<sup>7</sup> However, his work at Genadendal soon aroused the suspicions of the Dutch Reformed Church ministers in the Cape and he was forced to leave the colony in 1744. As a result the mission work virtually disappeared from the Cape for some fifty years till 1799 when the London Missionary Society LMS entered the southern tip of the African continent.

Another missionary society, the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts founded in 1701 in England, in 1751 sent out its first missionary Thomas Thompson to West Africa. After a couple of years in 1754 he sent three local Fante boys to England to be educated there as missionaries. Only one of the three African students survived, Philip Quaque, who was ordained a deacon in London in 1765. The next year Quaque returned to Cape Coast, accompanied by his English wife, to proselytize and educate his people. He served as chaplain in the Cape Coast Castle, opened a school there to instruct mulatto offspring of African mothers and European fathers in religious knowledge, reading, writing and arithmetic. After the death of his first wife in 1767, Philip Quaque married an African wife and continued in his work for fifty years, witnessed the end of slaving within the castle and died in 1816.<sup>8</sup>

Before 1800 the chief contact of sub-Saharan Africa with Europe was through the traffic in slaves for the New World. Increasing Western commercial penetration since the end of the eighteenth century and ultimate political dominance in Africa coincided with a massive Christian missionary enterprise. The expansion of the missionary movement into Africa was part of the growing conception of Christian responsibility for the regeneration of African peoples. The anti-slavery issue and the humanitarian conscience also played a vital role in stimulating European interest in Africa and gave an impetus to mission work. The opening up of Africa to forces of change by the four Cs, i.e. by the introduction or the imposition of the so-called legitimate commerce and Christianity as a key to civilization and eventually colonization was seen by most abolitionists, humanitarians and philanthropists as the only remedy. The equation of civilization with commerce became a common characteristics of humanitarian and

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<sup>7</sup> See Hastings, Adrian: *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, op. cit., p. 197.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., pp. 178-179. Also Bernan, Edward H.: *African Reactions to Missionary Education*. New York - London, Teachers College Press 1975, p. 2. See also Lipschutz, Mark, R. Rasmussen, R. Kent: *Dictionary of African Historical Biography*, p. 196 for a short biography of Philip Quaque, 1741-1816. Philip Quaque died at the Cape Coast Castle and was buried there. His grave can be still seen in the courtyard.

missionary thought since it was widely believed in the abolitionist, humanitarian and missionary circles that in addition to the general civilizing impulse which commerce would give to African peoples, legitimate commerce would outset the slave trade from its hold on the West African coast and in the East and Central African interior. Traffic in tropical produce and other commodities should replace the trade in slaves to the benefit of both Europe and Africa. The task to lead Africans to the path of civilization by the expansion of moral and religious instruction and converting the pagans to the true religion fell on the newly established mission societies.

When William Carey in his famous treatise published in 1792 *Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens* called for the Christianization of those parts of the world which had hitherto been deprived of the message of the Gospel, he dealt with many questions of missionary apologetic, strategy and support.<sup>9</sup> In the Section IV of his pamphlet entitled *The Practicability of something being done, more than what is done, for the Conversion of the Heathen*, he discussed "the impediments in the way of carrying the gospel among the heathen ...their distance from us, their barbarous and savage manner of living, the danger of being killed by them, the difficulty of procuring the necessaries of life, or the unintelligibleness of their languages".<sup>10</sup>

The missionary enterprise became a part of the European involvement in Africa and shared the general Western negative image of Africans as inherently ignorant, savage and inferior to Europeans. However, missionaries and other humanitarians maintained and cultivated the paternalistic view of Africans "as material" for the "regeneration" or "remaking of basically vicious but redeemable people". In Carey's own words, "the uncivilized state of the heathen, instead of affording an objection *against* preaching the gospel to them, ought to furnish an argument *for* it. Can we as men, or as Christians, hear that a great part of our fellow creatures, whose souls are as immortal as ours, ...are enveloped in ignorance and barbarism? Can we hear that they are *without the gospel, without government, without laws, and without arts, and sciences*, and not exert ourselves to introduce amongst them the sentiments of men, and of Christians? *Would not the spread of the gospel be the most effectual means of their civilization? Would not that make them useful members of the society?*" (Italics are mine)<sup>11</sup>

Under the stimulus of Carrey's pamphlet, a number of missionary societies were formed within English-speaking Protestantism. The Baptist Missionary Society established on 2 October 1792, was followed in 1795 by the interdenominational London Missionary Society. The evangelical Church Missionary Society

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<sup>9</sup> Carey, William: *An Enquiry into the Obligations of Christians, to use means for the Conversion of the Heathens*. Didcot, Oxfordshire, The Baptist Missionary Society 1991. Based on the Original Edition Published in 1792, p. 19.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., pp. 95-96.

was created in 1799, then came the Religious Tract Society and in 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society was founded and entrusted with a special task of promoting the translation and printing of the Holy Bible. In the 1820s and 1830s similar Protestant missionary societies sprang up in the continental Europe, in Germany, Switzerland and France, in Scandinavia, Holland and the USA.<sup>12</sup> Roman Catholic missions, which came to play an essential role in the evangelization of Africa, revived its work a little later. Throughout the nineteenth century both Protestant and Roman Catholic societies continued to grow in importance until virtually the whole African continent became the area of missionary concern.

The Catholic mission movement got a new impetus and a sense of direction when new missionary congregations explicitly directed to Africa were founded in France. French missionary societies played a crucial role in the revival of the Roman Catholic presence in nineteenth-century Africa. Until 1885, apart from the Italian Verona Fathers in North-Eastern Africa along the Nile, all Roman Catholic missions in Western, Central and Southern Africa were French. François-Marie-Paul Libermann (1802-1852) or by his Jewish name Jacob Libermann, was a son of a Jewish rabbi, who converted to Christian faith in 1826. After he had been ordained priest in 1841, he founded a Congregation of the Sacred Heart of Mary. In 1848 his Congregation merged with the older Congregation of the Holy Spirit, originally founded in 1703 by Pullart des Places, to become the *Congrégation du Saint-Esprit*, or the Congregation of the Holy Ghost Fathers, the "Spiritans", CSSp, based in Paris.<sup>13</sup>

Two other French Catholic missions of immense importance for Africa came from Lyon and Marseilles respectively. The Lyon mission or The Society of African Missions (SMA) was formed in 1858 by Mgr. Melchior de Marion Brésillac, concentrating on "the Two Guineas" with the goal to attempt "a reprise of the sixteenth-century Catholic mission" in West Africa. Together with the Holy Ghost Fathers, the Lyon mission shared responsibility for the west and east coasts of Africa. The other mission, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, was formed in 1826 by Eugène de Mazenod, who in 1851 sent out missionaries to southern Africa, to Natal and later to Lesotho and in the early 1850s took an active part in the elaboration of the dogma on the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary which was in 1854 promulgated by the Pope Pius IX as an article of faith.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps under the stimulus of or as a reaction to Protestant missionary activities two other missionary societies were founded for Africa within the Catholic Church. In 1864 in St Peter's cathedral in Rome Daniel Comboni of the Verona Fathers had a vision of a Plan for the "Regeneration of Africa by Africans". He

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<sup>12</sup> The first German missionary society was founded in 1814 in Basel, then came Berlin, Paris, Leipzig and Bremen.

<sup>13</sup> Sundkler, Bengt – Steed, Christopher: *A History of Church in Africa*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2000, reprinted 2001, pp. 100-109. Also Hastings, Adrian: *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, op. cit., pp. 248-258.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., also Isichei Elizabeth: *A History of Christianity in Africa. From Antiquity to the Present*. London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1995, pp. 84-88.

attempted to revive the work of evangelization with his New Plan and between 1857 and 1881 led eight missionary expeditions towards the southern Sudan. The Upper Nile became the principal field of work of the Verona Fathers and Sisters who were to do significant work in Sudan, Egypt, Eritrea, northern Uganda, Kenya, Zaire and in Mozambique.<sup>15</sup>

The other mission society of immense importance for Africa was the Society of Missionaries of Africa, a Roman Catholic missionary institute of secular priests and lay brothers, bound by oath to serve the African mission until death. They have been better known by the nickname White Fathers derived from the Muslim dress which they still wear and from which their nickname White Fathers derives. It was a new missionary order founded in 1868 in North Africa by the Archbishop of Algiers and Carthage, Primate of Africa and Apostolic Delegate for the Sahara and the Sudan, Cardinal Lavigerie, to maintain a non-proselytising presence among the Muslims. The first novitiate of the Society of the Missionaries of Africa or White Fathers opened in 1868 in Algiers under Jesuit direction, and the first vows were taken in 1872. The activity of the first missionaries was almost entirely taken up by the caring for and educating of children orphaned by famine and epidemics in this part of Africa in the years 1867-1868 and self-supporting orphanages became the basis of operations. The Society of White Fathers started in Northern Algeria (1869), Algerian Sahara (1872) and Tunisia (1875) but its mission was soon enlarged to comprise the evangelization of the far interior of West and East Africa.<sup>16</sup>

The vast African continent was always present in Lavigerie's thoughts. From 1867 until his death in November 1892 the immense African interior remained the principal object of Cardinal Lavigerie's zeal and from the very beginning he planned an apostolate south of the Sahara. As Primate of Africa embracing the whole of continent he dreamed of "resurrecting" the early Church of Africa by the "Establishment of a Christian Kingdom" in the heart of Equatorial Africa. He renewed the primatial see of St. Cyprian at Carthage and had a magnificent basilica built there. From his episcopal residence in Algiers Lavigerie started to send his first teams of missionaries to the interiors of the African continent to convert the peoples by converting their kings. This became his strategy for winning the peoples living in the East African Interlacustrine area to the Christian faith.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Sundkler, Bengt – Steed, Christopher: *A History of Church in Africa*, op. cit., pp. 108-109. Also Hastings, Adrian: *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, op. cit., pp. 253-255.

<sup>16</sup> Lavigerie, Charles Martial (1825-1892) was appointed Archbishop of Algiers in January 1867 and Cardinal in 1882. For his life see: Lamey, René Xavier, M. Afr.: *Cardinal Lavigerie. Selection of Articles*. Rome 1990, also Mercui, J.M.: *Les origines de la Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique (Pères Blancs)*. Algiers, Maison Carrée 1929, and Sundkler, Bengt – Steed, Christopher: *A History of Church in Africa*, op. cit., pp. 104-106. One year later, in 1869 Lavigerie founded the White Sisters. See St. Marie-André du Sacré-Cœur: *Histoire des Origines de la Congrégation des Sœurs Missionnaires de Notre-Dame d'Afrique*. Kouba (Algiers) 1946.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Lavigerie's first idea in 1878 was that of a "Christian Kingdom", apparently Buganda, governed by an African Prince, namely Mutesa, of whom Stanley had spoken so well. See Lamey: *Lavigerie*, op. cit., p. 85 Cf. Stanley, H.M.: *Through the Dark Continent*. London 1878, II, pp. 193-195.

The activities of early Christian missionaries were attended by many hardships and trials, missionaries often failed to make any converts and many of them fell victim at a youthful age to the unhealthy tropical climate or were killed. William Carey did not forget to discuss this aspect of the missionary work. "In respect to the danger of being killed by them, it is true that whoever does go must put his life in his hand, and not consult with flesh and blood; but do not the goodness of the cause, the duties incumbent on us as creatures of God, and Christians, and the perishing state of our fellow men, loudly call upon us to venture all and use every warrantable exertion for their benefit?"<sup>18</sup>

The average life expectancy of missionaries in Africa was very low, many died in Africa after a very short time or had to be invalidated home. "To go absolutely as an Apostle, alone or with two companions," was the ideal of Mgr. Melchior de Marion Brésillac. All six members of the first team sent by the Lyon mission to Freetown were killed by a yellow fever epidemic within two months, and "during a period of forty years they lost 393 members through sickness, but they did not give up".<sup>19</sup> In 1876 the first caravan of Missionaries of Africa or White Fathers was massacred on their way to the Sudan, the second caravan of White Fathers was massacred on their way to Timbuktu on 21 December 1881. The first Verona Fathers on the Nile between 1847-1858 succumbed to the tropical climate.<sup>20</sup>

In the New Testament there are many metaphors dealing with the subject of life and death. In particular the parables of the dying and germinating seed, have been of great importance for the early missionary movement. According to John's gospel, 12:24, Jesus said: "Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit." Jesus's words were elaborated further by St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 15.36,37: "Fool! What you sow does not come to life unless it dies. And as for what you sow, you do not sow the body that is to be, but a bare seed, perhaps of wheat or of some other grain." Early missionaries used to apply the biblical parable of the grain of wheat which has to die in order to bear fruit to themselves, to the illness and death of the missionaries.<sup>21</sup>

Lavigerie asked his missionaries to extend their efforts as far as the zeal of Jesus Christ "factus obediens usque ad mortem...", who "humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death" (Paul, Phil. 2. 8). In his numerous writings Lavigerie quoted several lines from St. Paul (Paul, 1 Cor. 9, 22), namely "Omnibus omnia factus sum..." and these quotations, according to René Lamey, can be regarded as the keystone to his apostolic instructions: "To the weak

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<sup>18</sup> See Carey, W.: op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>19</sup> Sundkler, Bengt – Steed, Christopher: A History of Church in Africa, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., also Lamey, René Xavier, M. Afr.: Cardinal Lavigerie. Selection of Articles. Rome 1990, p. 220. After two unsuccessful attempts to penetrate into Western Sudan via Sahara, the White Fathers finally established themselves there in 1894.

<sup>21</sup> See Ustorf, Werner: What if the Light in You is Darkness? op. cit., pp. 142-143.

I became weak, so that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some." The missionary therefore should fear no effort, "impendam et superimpendar ipse pro animabus vestris", "I will most gladly spend and be spent for you" (2 Cor. 12, 15), and like St. Paul, he or she should find joy in his or her trials, "Superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione..." (2 Cor. 7, 4), "For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for eternal weight of glory beyond measure" (2 Cor. 4, 17).<sup>22</sup>

Despite their fervour and zeal Christian missionaries in the early pre-colonial period of their presence in Africa achieved only minimal results in converting Africans. This early period was marked by few significant missionary successes. In many parts of Africa Christian missions had to pass through a period during which their religious instruction met with complete indifference. The European impact was most evident in the trading posts along the West African coast. In the coastal enclaves of freed slaves, European trading communities and local Africans there was also a numerous mulatto population. One such settlement was Sierra Leone, established in 1787 by the British anti-slavery campaigners and humanitarians with the help of the Sierra Leone Company, as a colony for freed slaves. For similar reasons American anti-slavery societies chose a nearby territory as a home for freed slaves from the southern U.S.A. and between 1822 and 1892 the American Colonization Society, founded in 1816, helped some 16,500 freed slaves to settle along the coast of what is now Liberia. The process of the acculturation which had been going on for a long time in and around the European trading settlements and forts scattered along the West African coast got a new impetus when Christian missionaries began to arrive to Africa. It was in these coastal settlements that Christianity won most significant early successes. The CMS began to work in the freed slave villages in Sierra Leone in 1804 and the Methodists in 1811. The major early successes of the missionaries were in Freetown and surrounding villages in Sierra Leone, among Afro-Americans and freed slaves on the Liberian coast and in French trading posts at Grand Bassam, Assinie and Libreville in Gabon. Catholic religious orders had long attempted, though unsuccessfully, to establish Christianity in St. Louis and Gorée in Senegal. Activities by Catholic missions were revived there by the Holy Ghost Fathers from about 1846.

By 1870, there was a number of missionary outposts but religious penetration was confined to the coasts. The position of the early missionaries was also complicated by the fact that in many places where religious change was occurring, it manifested itself in the acceptance of a nominal Islam. In West Africa, the push inland from the coast coincided with the simultaneous southerly expansion of Islam posing a threat to Christian mission work. Islam, which had been present on the East African coast for nearly a thousand years, began to penetrate into the interior of East and Central Africa along the trade routes and spread slowly. In

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<sup>22</sup> Lamey: *Lavigerie*, op. cit., pp. 76-78. Also Holy Bible. The New Revised Standard Version With Apocrypha. Nashville, Thomas Nelson 1989.

many regions Islam preceded Christianity and in some places, namely the kingdom of Buganda, actually prepared the way for Christianity. In their struggle for the spiritual control of African societies, missionaries therefore had to diminish the prestige of Islam by proving the superiority of their own religion.

When towards the close of the eighteen-sixties anti-slavery campaigners and philanthropists switched their attention from the trans-Atlantic to the East African slave trade, Cardinal Lavigerie entered upon an anti-slavery campaign and secured a federation of the various European anti-slavery societies in *L'Œuvre antiesclavagiste*.<sup>23</sup> The anti-slavery issue and the humanitarian conscience played a vital role in stimulating European interest in East and Central Africa and gave an impetus to mission work. Many European travellers vividly described the cruelties and brutalities of the East African slave trade, especially David Livingstone. Lavigerie was familiar with his writings revealing to the nineteenth century Europe the atrocious situation in East and Central Africa. To wipe up the trade in slaves, it was argued "the interior must be penetrated along the waterways and lakes by missionaries".<sup>24</sup> Intrigued by the schemes of King Leopold of Belgium and his International African Association for the exploration and civilization of Central Africa, Lavigerie worked out his own detailed plans for a Central African mission.<sup>25</sup> In his Secret Memorandum on the evangelization of Equatorial Africa, dated 2 January 1878, he explained to Pope Pius IX his ideas on how to organize Catholic missions in Central Africa: by creating four new missions, transforming Africa by the Africans, training a plentiful number of auxiliaries, particularly of doctor-catechists and fighting against slavery and slave trade.<sup>26</sup> When on 24 February 1878, the decree of Propaganda

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<sup>23</sup> Documents sur la Fondation de l'Œuvre Antiesclavagiste. Saint-Cloud 1889; Renault, François Fr: *Lavigerie, l'esclavage africain et l'Europe*. Tome I: Afrique Centrale. Tome II: La campagne antiesclavagiste. Paris, De Boccard 1971; Lamey: *Lavigerie*, op. cit., Lavigerie. The Anti-Slavery Campaign, pp. 189-206. Cf. Groves, C.P.: *The Planting of Christianity in Africa*. 4 vols. London 1948-58.

<sup>24</sup> Oliver, R.A.: *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*. London, Longmans 1952, new impression 1967, pp. 9-15.

<sup>25</sup> L'Association Internationale Africaine (A.I.A.) was formed in September 1876 in Brussels with King Léopold of Belgium as its President. Lavigerie's Central African mission was conceived as a religious counterpart of the International African Association, working within the same geographical boundaries, from ten degrees north to twenty degrees south of the Equator. Its stations were supposed to be placed within easy reach of the outposts of the lay organizations, so that mutual assistance could be rendered. See Lavigerie In: *Missions Catholiques*, 81, 104.

<sup>26</sup> Pope Pius IX at the end of his long pontificate turned to the heads of the principal missions for Africa and asked their advice on how to carry out the apostolic mission of the Church in the heart of Africa. Lavigerie responded with a *Mémoire secret sur l'Association Internationale Africaine de Bruxelles et l'Évangélisation de l'Afrique Equatoriale adressé à son Eminence le Cardinal Franchi, Préfet de la S.C. de la Propaganda*, par Mgr l'archevêque d'Alger. Alger 1878. 56 pp., 1 map. In: *White Fathers Archives*, Rome, *Actes et Publications de Lavigerie*. The fifty-six pages are devoted to the description of the material advantages which L'Association Internationale Africaine could offer for Africa and the means adopted for the evangelization of Equatorial Africa.

entrusting the organization of missions in sub-Saharan Africa to Archbishop Lavigerie was ratified by the new Pope Leo XIII, Lavigerie promptly organized the first caravan of ten missionaries to Equatorial Africa.<sup>27</sup>

A variety of factors influenced the decision of mission societies, including the White Fathers mission, to establish stations deep in the interior of East Africa. At the East African Islamized coast missionary societies achieved only minimal results as they were not permitted to convert Muslims but only ex-slaves and non-Swahili immigrants.<sup>28</sup> An important consideration for missionary societies to venture deep into the East African hinterland was no doubt the renown of the Baganda and some other East African peoples created by the optimistic reports of all travellers who had visited Buganda. The highly centralized, well organized and densely populated monarchical state, with fertile soil, the elaborate court ceremonial and mostly literate aristocracy made a deep impression on European observers and led Henry Morton Stanley to eulogize the country and people of Buganda as a most hopeful field for missionary endeavour. All early European visitors were impressed by the behaviour and appearance of the Baganda, who, unlike some neighbouring ethnic groups, clothed themselves from head to foot in snowy-white long cotton gowns adopted from Arab and Swahili traders, their houses were large and roomy and privies were used in Buganda's capital at the time of Speke's visit in 1862.<sup>29</sup> In response to Stanley's passionate appeal for Christian teachers to go to the court of kabaka Mutesa of Buganda published in his famous letter to the Daily Telegraph of November 15, 1875, in a couple of years the first members of the Church Missionary Society and of the White Fathers Mission arrived in the kingdom of Buganda.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Lamey: Cardinal Lavigerie, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>28</sup> See Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera: Crescent or Cross? Islam and Christian Missions in Nineteenth-Century East and Central Africa. In: Van der Heyden, Ulrich – Becher, Jürgen (Hrsg.): Mission und Gewalt, op. cit., pp. 79-95.

<sup>29</sup> The prudery of the Baganda, their cleanliness, sense of order and general concern with their appearances were commented on favourably by many European visitors, the travellers Speke, Grant and Stanley or the early missionaries Ashe, Mackay, and many others. For the stereotype of the Baganda see also Fallers, L.A. (Ed.): *The King's Men*. London, Oxford University Press 1964, especially pp. 296-308.

<sup>30</sup> Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera: Crescent or Cross? Islam and Christian Missions in Nineteenth-Century East and Central Africa, op. cit., also Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera: White Fathers Archives as Sources for Reconstruction of Ugandan History. In: Van der Heyden, Ulrich – Liebau, Heike (Hrsg.): Missionsgeschichte, Kirchengeschichte, Weltgeschichte. Christliche Missionen im Kontext nationaler Entwicklungen in Afrika, Asien und Ozeanien. Missionsgeschichtliches Archiv 1. Stuttgart, Franz Steiner Verlag 1996, pp. 177-189, especially pp. 177-185. The first two Anglican missionaries arrived in 1877, but the work of evangelization only began after the arrival of the second party of the CMS missionaries in February 1879, followed only one week later by the first two White Fathers, the famous Father Lourdel and Brother Damas.

The White Fathers once again wanted to start with self-supporting orphanages for children ransomed from slavery and expected that the first group to receive a religious instruction would be children presented to them as their attendants or bought free by the Fathers and then gathered in the "orphanage". They hoped that the mission stations could be easily and quickly populated with ransomed children. But in Buganda it was difficult to gather the nucleus of their community from this source and to gain the first converts from among the lowest strata of traditional society or from among liberated slaves. Christian missionaries had to approach the society from the top and try to arouse a concern for their teachings in the minds of the ruler kabaka and the Baganda chiefly aristocracy. The history of the introduction of Christianity and Islam has been described in books and articles too numerous to be listed here. Christianity no doubt achieved in Buganda a great triumph. At the beginning Christian message aroused interest at Buganda's court and made some impact. The letters sent by the missionaries of both denominations to mission headquarters in Algiers or London sounded very optimistic. Initial missionary enthusiasm and optimism did not last long, as already by December 1879 the situation at the court changed to the worse. There is enough evidence in the archives of both mission societies to prove that the beginnings of the Christian missionary enterprise in the kingdom of Buganda were rather disappointing and the great expectations of both Anglican and Roman Catholic missionaries were not met during the first years of the missionary presence. Actually in their letters home and official despatches, the early missionaries of both denominations sounded rather pessimistic about the prospects of Christianity ever making headway in Buganda. "Comme tous les voyageurs qui ont visité l'Ouganda, nous avons été trompés par l'apparence de civilisation du roi et des grands du royaume, et surtout par le grand désir qu'ils assuraient avoir de connaître et d'embrasser notre religion... Nous avons été trompés par les récits de Stanley...", wrote Père Livinhac to Superior General on 20 January 1880.<sup>31</sup> Writing in December 1881 the C.M.S. missionary O'Flaherty commented, "Mutesa is as far from Christianity as ever...there is little chance of doing good here".<sup>32</sup>

Their formidable rival of Christian missionaries in the kingdom of Buganda was Islam, first introduced into the country by Arab and Swahili traders during the reign of kabaka Mutesa's father Suna (1824-1856) long before the arrival of first European visitors. Under kabaka Mutesa (1856-1884) who encouraged trade with Arabs and Zanzibaris especially after 1866, Islam became widespread in the country and gained many converts among the court élite. Many future Christian converts who were dignitaries or young pages at the royal court at this time became interested in the teachings of Islam, learnt both Arabic and Swahili and the Arabic script from

<sup>31</sup> See *Chronique de la Société des Missionnaires d'Afrique*, No. 84, I. de 1879-1885. It is difficult to give a meaningful selection of references, but for the first years of the missionary presence in Buganda, their evaluation of the situation in the country and attitude to Islam, and the disappointment of the Fathers there are many letters in W.F.A. C13. See also Livinhac à Lavigerie, C13-9, C13-15, C13-17, C13-22, C13-27 etc. covering the years 1879-1882.

<sup>32</sup> For the opinions of the Protestant Missionaries see respective entries in the C.M.S. Archives, G3/A6, e.g. O'Flaherty to Wigram, Dec. 1881, C.M.S. A., G3/A6/01.

Swahili and Arab traders present at the royal court and started to read the Qu'ran. Kabaka Mutesa himself also adopted Islam, learnt Arabic, adopted Arab dress and manners, continued to observe Ramadan for over ten years and maintained diplomatic relations with the Sultan of Zanzibar.<sup>33</sup> The court became islamized, mosques were built by chiefs all over the country and a number of chiefs and pages adopted Islam. The concept of reading, *okusoma*, became a synonym for the adoption of the new religion Islam, and later Christianity as well.<sup>34</sup>

The White Fathers and the C.M.S. missionaries alike had no illusions as to the threat which Islam and the presence of the Arab and Swahili traders at the Kabaka's court posed to their missionary prospects and both viewed this religion as their major antagonist for the spiritual control of Buganda and of East and Central Africa. Their chief aim was to eradicate Islam and replace it with Christianity. The first twenty years of missionary presence in the kingdom of Buganda were rather troubled, dramatic and insecure, full of shifts and turns, wars and atrocities. Dissentions, hostility and rivalry between adherents of Anglican and Roman Catholic missions and Islam, and the confrontation between Mutesa's son and successor kabaka Mwanga and his supporters on the one hand and the incoming British on the other led to serious political and armed conflicts. Buganda was won to Christianity amidst much turmoil and bitter struggle between the adherents of the two forms of Christianity and Islam for the dominant position in the country. All these events have been described in many books and studies. Buganda and the present-day Uganda certainly belong to the best documented African countries which historical research has covered in the greatest detail.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> See Zimbe, B.M. 1938. *Buganda ne Kabaka* (Buganda and Kabaka). Mengo, Gambuze Press, also Mukasa, Hamu. *Some Notes on the Reign of Mutesa*. In: Uganda Journal, Vol. 2, No. 1, 1934, pp. 60-70 (both in Luganda and English) and Mukasa, Hamu. *Simudda Nyuma* (Go Forward). 2 vols. London, Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge 1938, 1942, 1964. Kaggwa, Sir Apolo: *Ekitabo Kya Basekabaka be Buganda* (The Kings of Buganda). London and Kampala 1901. Miti, J.K.: *Ebyafayo bya Buganda...* (A Short History of Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga, Ankole and Toro). Unpublished typescript, both in Luganda and English 1938. Gray, Sir John M.: *Mutesa of Buganda*. In: Uganda Journal, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1934, pp. 22-49.

<sup>34</sup> Oded, Arye: *Islam in Uganda. Islamization through a Centralized State in Pre-Colonial Africa*. Jerusalem 1974. Part One, pp. 1-142. Kasozi, Abdu B.: *The Spread of Islam in Uganda. Nairobi-Khartoum 1986*; The Penetration of Islam into Buganda 1844 to 1875, pp. 13-32, see also Kasozi, A.B.: *The Spread of Islam in Uganda*. polyc. 1970, 45 pp., map. W.F.A., P 200/14. King, Noel – Kasozi, Abdu – Oded, Arye: *Islam and the Confluence of Religions in Uganda 1840-1966*. Tallahassee, Florida, American Academy of Religion 1973. Constantin, François: *L'islam en Ouganda*. In: Prunier, Gérard – Calas, Bernard (Eds.): *L'Ouganda contemporain*. Paris 1994, pp. 209-220.

<sup>35</sup> The literature is very rich, e.g. Taylor, John: *Growth of the Church in Buganda*. London, S.C.M. Press 1958, Philippe, A.: *Au cœur de l'Afrique. Ouganda, un demi-siècle d'apostolat au centre africain, 1878-1928*. Paris, Editions Dillen 1929. 191p., map. Médard, Henri: *Le succès du christianisme en Ouganda (1875-1962)*. In: Prunier, Gérard – Calas, Bernard (Eds.) 1994. *L'Ouganda contemporain*. Paris, Karthala – Nairobi, IFRA, pp. 221-240. Tuma, Tom A.D. – Mutibwa, Phares (Eds.): *A Century of Christianity in Uganda, 1877-1977. A Historical Appraisal of the Development of the Uganda Church over the last One Hundred Years*. Nairobi, Uzima Press 1978.

Despite the royal disfavour, the number of inquirers at both Christian missions continued to swell. Early conversions came through a desire to read, protection, medical care and sometimes presents. Conversion and education or training went hand in hand.<sup>36</sup> Teaching efforts of both missions met with an enthusiastic response among the Kabaka's young pages – *bagalagala* – who were in training there for high positions of *bakungu* chiefs, or among the ruling administrative hierarchy of *bakungu* client chiefs present at the Kabaka's court. Early missionaries in Uganda left vivid accounts of Baganda "readers" drifting from one mission station, one set of instruction to another, often frequenting both mission stations as well as the Zanzibari camp at Lungujja, and of Baganda lads sitting on the hay-covered floor in the royal palace reading or scribbling on boards or any scrap of paper they could pick up and, lacking paper, sometimes even practising with a stick or just their own fingers in the dust of the royal courtyard.<sup>37</sup> At the time of kabaka Mutesa's death in 1884 Christianity still did not enjoy a position comparable with that of Islam, Christian converts were estimated to number perhaps a hundred for each of the missions, and despite the continued presence of the C.M.S in Buganda and the temporal absence of the White Fathers, the Catholics were getting stronger.<sup>38</sup>

It was a fundamental rule of the White Fathers Society to start their mission with the establishment of a school and a dispensary. The educational system introduced by the White Fathers always connected the religious instruction with the education in basic literacy. The principle was preserved that education should be given in the vernacular and missionaries devoted much time to the study of African languages. At missions adherents learned to read and write their own languages, Luganda and Swahili.

The early mission schools grew out of the desire to spread the gospel, to win converts and to train African catechists. The Livingstonian principle that Africa

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See also Pirouet, M. Louise: *Historical Dictionary of Uganda*. African Historical Dictionaries, No. 64. Metuchen, N.J. & London, The Scarecrow Press 1995. For a detailed bibliography see also Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera: *History of Anti-Colonial Resistance and Protest in the Kingdoms of Buganda and Bunyoro, 1862-1899*. Prague, The Oriental Institute of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences 1988.

<sup>36</sup> Mullins, J.D.: *The Wonderful Story of Uganda*. London, C.M.S. 1904 includes early memoirs of a leading Protestant convert Hamu Mukasa. See also Mackay to Lang, 29 September 1885, C.M.S. Archives, G3A6/02. Also quoted in Rowe, J.A.: *Myth, Memoir and Moral Admonition: Luganda Historical Writing, 1893-1969*. In: *Uganda Journal*, 33, 1969, No. 1, pp. 17-40. See also Pawliková, Viera: *Sir Apolo Kaggwa and the Origins of Luganda Literature*. In: *Asian and African Studies*, XI, 1975, pp. 197-203.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> The White Fathers left the country in November 1882 and returned to Buganda in July 1885 after kabaka Mutesa's death and his son Mwanga's accession to the throne. Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera: *Crescent or Cross? Islam and Christian Missions in Nineteenth-Century East and Central Africa*. In: Van der Heyden, Ulrich – Becher, Holger (Hrsg.): *Mission und Gewalt. Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien in der Zeit von 1792 bis 1918/19*, op. cit., p. 79-95.

could only be converted by Africans was firmly established in the minds of the early missionaries. Missionary theory has reiterated this perspective, whether Protestant or Catholic. The schools for native catechists formed the core of every single missionary community. African catechists instructed in the word of God were expected by both Catholic and Protestant missionaries to spread out into the country and preach to the crowds whom the missionaries themselves could never hope to reach. "Transforming Africa by the Africans", was the formula advocated by Cardinal Lavigerie in his instructions to the White Fathers. "The missionaries must therefore be mainly initiators, but the lasting work must be accomplished by the Africans themselves, once they have become Christians and apostles. And it must be clearly noted here that we say: become Christians and not become French or Europeans."<sup>39</sup> Missionaries were therefore asked to adapt themselves to the Africans, to strip themselves, as much as possible, of the cultural elements peculiar to them, of their language in the first place. It was believed that without effective and active communication it was impossible to pursue the conversion of the Africans. Missionaries were requested to overcome language difficulties by devoting their spare time to the study of local African languages and by approaching the Africans in their own language minimize cultural misunderstandings and distinctions between themselves and their potential converts. To master the local African language, the White Fathers were actually forbidden to speak to each other in anything else after living six months in the country.<sup>40</sup> Many White Fathers, Livinhac, Le Veux, Gorju, became excellent linguists and outstanding Luganda scholars and by preparing grammars, dictionaries, catechisms, textbooks and New Testament translation in Luganda laid a solid foundation for all missionaries who came after. They became excellent teachers in the Luganda language, still it is doubtful if they adhered strictly to the command of their founder.<sup>41</sup> According to Lavigerie, the sharing of the exterior life of the natives as regards language, food and clothing was to be the distinguishing feature of the White Fathers who, as had been mentioned earlier, adopted an Arab attire in Algeria and kept it when they established in Central Africa.<sup>42</sup> The linguistic work and an intimate knowledge of the language were crucial, since through language it is possible to get to know and appreciate its cultural context and experience the relevant culture.

The idea behind Lavigerie's instructions was far from new. Theorists of the missionary cause usually advocated the same or similar attitude to Africans. "The

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<sup>39</sup> Lavigerie, Cardinal: *Ordonnance au sujet de la direction des Séminaires*, 1874. In : *Instructions aux missionnaires*. Namur 1950, p. 250.

<sup>40</sup> Lavigerie : *Chapitre de 1874*. In : *Archives des Pères Blancs*, B-18, 1; Lavigerie: *Instructions aux missionnaires*, pp. 70-71, 134-135, 145.

<sup>41</sup> Pawliková-Vilhanová, Viera: *White Fathers Archives as Sources for Reconstruction of Ugandan History*, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

<sup>42</sup> Bouniol, J. (Ed.): *The White Fathers and their Missions*. London, Sands 1929, pp. 31, 40, see also Lavigerie: *Chapitre de 1874*. In: *White Fathers Archives*, B-18, 1.

argument that the missionary should mingle with the Africans, became intimate with them as individuals, understand their modes of thoughts and customs, and minimize irrelevant external distinctions was a recurrent strain in missionary thought."<sup>43</sup> Mgr. Comboni of the Verona Fathers advocated it in 1864.

An analysis of the missionary thinking reveals that "from the very start of the modern missionary enterprise in 18th century there was – at least conceptually – a clear opportunity for mission to avoid falling victim to western ethnocentrism".<sup>44</sup> The foundation documents of many new missionary societies pointed towards an adaptive missiology and a pluralistic understanding of Christianity advocated by the present day African theology. The missionary theory suggested that the Christian Church in Africa would develop its own particular forms of expression. Francis Libermann in his missionary instructions written between 1840 and his death in 1852 stressed the need for local priests and insisted on the establishment of a viable Church "la forme stable d'une Église". Since the Universal Church consists of "particular Churches", such a Church should not be "a clerical extension of the one Church centred in Europe".<sup>45</sup> "Faites-vous nègres avec les nègres," Libermann asked his fellow missionaries in the letter to the community of Dakar and Gabon of November 1847. "Empty yourselves of Europe, of its manners and mentality; make yourselves blacks with the blacks, then you will understand them as they should be understood; make yourselves blacks with the blacks to form them as they should be, not in the way of Europe, but leaving them what is their own; behave towards them as servants would behave to their masters, adapting to the customs, attitudes and habits of their masters."<sup>46</sup> "Avoid Europeanization and discover the rights of the African as human being and discover the values of African culture" was the watchword of the Lyon mission.<sup>47</sup>

In the nineteenth century civilization meant different things to different people. Lavigerie almost never spoke of civilization and instead insisted in his Instructions: "From the material aspect we must leave Africans as they are, that is to say truly Africans. We must shut our eyes and hearts to a false pity...and resign ourselves to see young Negroes close to us maintain the customs of their land, their wattle huts instead of houses, their bare earth in place of beds, sorghum and manioc instead of bread, grass waist bands in place of shirt and trousers." <sup>48</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Cairns, H.A.C.: *Prelude to Imperialism. British Reactions to Central African Society 1840-1890*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1965, p. 52.

<sup>44</sup> Ustorf, Werner: *What if the light in you is darkness*, op. cit., p. 145. The term "western ethnocentrism" was used by Lamin Sanneh: *West African Christianity. The Religious Impact*. Maryknoll-New York, Orbis 1983, XVII; cf. also his *Translating the Message. The Missionary Impact on Culture*. Maryknoll-New York, Orbis 1989 and *Encountering the West. Christianity and the Global Cultural Process: The African Dimension*. Maryknoll-New York, Orbis 1993.

<sup>45</sup> Hastings, A.: *Church in Africa*, op. cit., p. 296.

<sup>46</sup> *Mémoire* of Aug. 1846. Quoted in Hastings, A.: *Church in Africa*, op. cit., pp. 295-6.

<sup>47</sup> Sundkler, B. – Steed, Ch.: *A History of the Church in Africa*, op. cit., p. 106.

<sup>48</sup> Lavigerie: *Instructions aux missionnaires*, p. 98.

Henry Venn, Secretary of the Church Missionary Society from 1841 to 1872, was opposed to "the civilization" model and viewed it as an obstacle to the establishment of a self-governing African Church, the realization of which required the adoption of African ways, not the imposition of European ones.<sup>49</sup> "Our desire is to distinguish very clearly between Christianising and Europeanising", wrote Bishop Smythies of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa (UMCA) in 1892.<sup>50</sup> There were many, Lavigerie, Venn, and others who "were guiding the central core of the missionary movement emphatically from preoccupation with civilization towards the acceptance of cultural diversity and non-European ways as crucial to a missionary's central purpose".<sup>51</sup>

The praxis of the missionary enterprise in general turned out to be different. Such teachings were not effectively implemented. Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries failed to realize the ideal and vision of the missionary founders. The civilization school and the adaptationist model were extreme forms. As Adrian Hastings put it, the latter "remained a minority position just as heavy civilizing remained a minority position. In between were the large majority. Europeanizing in some ways (and no book-learning could be done without a measure of Europeanizing), endeavouring to adapt to African ways in others".<sup>52</sup> The history of the White Fathers and other missions took a direction which was very different or almost contrary to that which their founders and other mission thinkers advocated and anticipated.

The primary goal of all mission societies in Africa was the winning of converts. From the very start the teaching of literacy was a particular concern of both the C.M.S. and White Fathers missions. They established schools because education was deemed indispensable to their aim, but always placed religion at the forefront of the school curriculum. Missionary education has generated a great deal of debate. Most missions provided only basic education to ensure the inculcation of proper Christian principles and enable Africans attending the mission schools to become good Christians. The White Fathers developed plantations and estates in order to support their catechumens whom they had to house, feed, clothe, nurse and educate. Mission stations established by the White Fathers were actively developed as self-supporting economic communities, where missionaries exercised a strong superintendence over the moral lives of their converts and where the virtues of hard work might be learnt alongside protection from the temptations, such as polygamy and many customs associated with traditional life and religion. The White Fathers hoped that in providing education they would also be able to form Christian character. Missionaries, who were themselves products of the Western Christian civilization, carried

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<sup>49</sup> Hastings, A.: *The Church in Africa 1459-1950*, op. cit., p. 290.

<sup>50</sup> Hastings, A.: *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*, op. cit., p. 291, see also pp. 286-293.

<sup>51</sup> Hastings, A.: *The Church in Africa*, op. cit., p. 290.

<sup>52</sup> Hastings, A.: *The Church in Africa*, op. cit., p. 291.

with them their cultural values and these determined the form of education provided. They took from their culture its conventional features, building churches and schools in the European style and imposing the habits and ethos of the Western Christian civilization on their converts. The forms of religious service they used, though translated into an African language, were reproductions of the liturgy of their home church, replete with hymns. The school system promoted Western values and desires, in mission schools, often boarding schools, catechumens and Christian converts were educated into the externals of European culture. Missionary schoolmasters provided a total culture pattern, including church attendance, Christian morality, table manners, etc.<sup>53</sup>

With Christianity went also Westernization, the adoption of Christianity also meant acculturation into the world of Western civilization, ideas and technology. Some regions of Africa and some African peoples had a better start than their neighbours.<sup>54</sup> It came to be very important for the future of Buganda that Christian missionaries had entered this region before the British empire-builders, mission teaching, both Islamic and later Christian, had been at work for a generation before the establishment of direct colonial rule, the Baganda themselves proved to be eminently responsive first to Islam and later to Christian teaching, and missionaries of both denominations, the Anglican C.N.S. and the Catholic White Fathers, acted as intermediaries between the Baganda and the British. The special British concern with Buganda evolved in the context of extensive missionary efforts in this Interlacustrine kingdom. The very success of the missionary work and the general admiration for the Baganda and their system of government in the European circles helped them to achieve the position of the nation most favoured by the British administrators.

In the kingdom of Buganda status was a matter of achievement already before the introduction of Christianity and the arrival of colonialism. In pre-colonial Buganda political system was highly mobile, office was a reward for loyal service to superiors and there were no hereditary claims except to the monarchy and three chieftainships. Education provided new prestige. Until proper schools were established in Uganda after the turn of the century,<sup>55</sup> instruction in literacy centred entirely in the church. The civil succession wars of 1888-1892 saw the triumph of the Christian converts. This generation of the Baganda Christian

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<sup>53</sup> Pontian Walakira described how White Fathers used to visit the household of his father, brought him gifts and thus lured him to adopt their faith and also his own schooling in missionary schools in Uganda. In the mid-twentieth century, the educational system was still religiously oriented, and White Fathers at the training institutions and secondary schools did not speak any local language since English was the medium of instruction. See Chapter 6 Part of the Establishment: Catholicism in Uganda. In: Bernan, Edward H.: *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, op.cit., pp.135-162.

<sup>54</sup> Mair, Lucy: *New Elites in East and West Africa*. In: *Colonialism in Africa*, pp. 170.

<sup>55</sup> Élite boarding schools for each denomination regarded as schools for the sons of the rich and chiefs were: St.Mary's College, Kisubi, for the White Fathers; St.Peter's School, Nsambya, for the Mill Hill Fathers; and King's College, Budo, for the Church Missionary Society.

converts had acquired literacy after enduring many hardships sometimes incurring physical risk in so doing.<sup>56</sup> The Baganda Christian converts possessed qualities that were in the highly mobile Kiganda political system indispensable for a good politician in the traditional sense. They were, in Professor Rowe's words, "highly adaptable, alert to the shifts of power and influence and, above all, concerned with the control and exercise of political power, using it to eliminate their rivals and maintain themselves in office".<sup>57</sup> They also "wished to come to terms with modernization, the missionary influence, the new commercial and technical opportunities".<sup>58</sup> The Protestant-Catholic coalition had gained sole control over the political hierarchy and those who were not in communion with them or with the recognized Muslim minority, had no other alternative but to join one of the religious parties.<sup>59</sup> Victorious Christians swept all the unsuccessful from their posts. Christianity and literacy, for these two things were inseparably connected, came to be viewed as the key to social and political advancement. Adherence to a monotheistic religion and culture associated with it became, in the words of L.A. Fallers "a new élite idiom".<sup>60</sup> The new élite in Buganda did not derive its prestige only from literacy but from the various statuses for which literacy and specialist training was a prerequisite. Members of the chiefly aristocracy were expected by 1900 to be either Christian or Muslim and literate.

Christianity or Islam, literacy and a somewhat Westernized style of household life were features which in 1900 made up the sub-culture of the Baganda élite and gradually became part of the common culture of at least a majority of Baganda.<sup>61</sup> The chiefly aristocracy of 1900 composed of the senior chiefs who had survived the shifts and troubles of the eighteenth eighties and nineties took the leadership in the formation of a new cultural synthesis – a modernized and Christianized Kiganda culture. They themselves pioneered the new élite style of life. Sir Apolo Kagwa and Stanislas Mugwanya, the pillars of the Baganda chiefly oligarchy, led the way. "There is no one more anxious for the advancement of Uganda in every art than the Katikiro", the Reverend John Roscoe

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<sup>56</sup> See Rowe, J.A.: The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court. In: *Journal of African History*, V, 1964, No.1s

<sup>57</sup> Rowe, J.A.: Baganda chiefs who survived Kabaka Mwanga's purge of 1886. A paper obtainable from Makerere Institute of Social Research, date unknown.

<sup>58</sup> See Ranger, T.O.: Connections between "Primary Resistance" Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism in East and Central Africa. A paper given to the University of East Africa Social Science Conference, December 1966.s

<sup>59</sup> See sLow, D.A.: Religion and Society in Buganda, 1875-1900. *East African Studies* No.8, Nairobi 1957, especially p.16 and his *Uganda and the British, 1862-1900*, an unpublished Ph.D. Thesis. Oxford, Exeter College 1957.

<sup>60</sup> Fallers, L.A.(Ed.): *The King's Men. Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence*. London, Oxford University Press 1964, p.144.

<sup>61</sup> Fallers, L.A.(Ed.): *The King's Men*, op.cit., pp.186-187).

wrote in 1902. "He built the first house with an upper storey, a wooden framed one covered with reeds. He next introduced sun-dried bricks and built a more durable house, of which he frequently laid the bricks, and also made doors, shutters and a staircase. He has introduced the telephone and electric bells; he uses a typewriter; he has a sewing-machine, which he can work; he possesses and can ride a bicycle, and in fact he encourages progress of all kinds. He keeps full accounts of the cases he tries in court, and of other State business transacted by him. It is a cause of surprise, even to Europeans, how he accomplishes so much."<sup>62</sup> In 1904 *The Uganda Notes* wrote: "The Katikiro's brick house has 20 rooms, big rooms too, a corrugated iron roof, board floors upstairs, and panelled doors and shutters; it is really excellent structure far and away the best in the country. The second regent has also got a large brick house, and most of the leading chiefs have built or are building similar places on a smaller scale; even peasants look upon grass as no longer desirable abodes, and prefer mud walls and a wooden hinged door... No longer are people content to sit in the dark from 6.30 daily, or have merely a flickering firelight. Paraffin lamps are largely used, and reading, letter writing and sewing are carried on extensively in the evenings."<sup>63</sup>

The missionaries, especially the Anglican C.M.S. missionaries, also played a crucial role in the introduction of Western pattern of household behaviour by entertaining Baganda chiefs in their homes.

The Baganda were a minority in the total population of Uganda but they had better access to education. Due to their greater achievements in literacy, economic development, preferential treatment by both missionaries and colonial administration and their traditions of superiority in the past, in relation to other peoples making up Uganda they saw themselves collectively as an élite. Their solidarity, sense of uniqueness of their country, enabled them throughout the colonial era to resist all attempts to diminish their pre-eminence. The expansion of Christianity in the present-day Uganda developed its own momentum of expansion due to the zeal of Baganda evangelists. By 1911, just over a generation after the first Christian missionaries arrived in Buganda and the first converts were still alive, more than one-third of the populace were Christians.<sup>64</sup>

The missionary movement represented the first and most important facet of western contact. Christianity provided access to a civilization and culture pattern which was bound to conquer African societies by sheer virtue of technological superiority. Despite the instructions of Lavigerie, Venn, Libermann and other missionary thinkers and theorists, Christian missionary enterprise was of prime importance in the westernisation of Africa. As the Buganda case proves,

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<sup>62</sup> Roscoe, Rev. J.: Apolo Kagga, Katikiro and Regent of Uganda. In: *Church Missionary Gleaner*, July 1, 1902.

<sup>63</sup> *Uganda Progress of Commerce*. In: *Uganda Notes*, June 1904, pp. 82-89.

<sup>64</sup> Pirouet, M. Louise: *Black Evangelists*. London, Rex Collings 1978.

Africans were not passive recipients. The process of westernisation and cultural exchange was shaped by African choices and needs. By deflecting or selectively absorbing Western influences, African societies were instrumental in the formation of a new cultural synthesis. For a very long time Christian missions have influenced and sometimes manipulated the direction Christianity would take across the African continent. The growth of African independent Churches or Afro-Christian syncretic Churches has been to a great extent a reaction of African Christians against missionary Europeanization of Christianity. African theologians have also attempted to secure the roots of Christianity in the African context.<sup>65</sup> A struggle continues in Africa for the de-colonization and de-Occidentalization of the Christian Church and an Africanization of Africa's Christian experience.

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<sup>65</sup> Bediako, Kwame: *Christianity in Africa. The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion*. Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press 1995.