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UDY, BENJAMIN, JOSIAH, DAVID

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Benjamin J. D. Udy

Ecstatic Spirituality in Kigezi, Ruanda and Western Tanganyika c.1933 – 1940: Censorship, Control and the Ruanda Mission

ABSTRACT

This study concerns the occurrence and subsequent control of ecstatic phenomena in Ruanda and Kigezi during the beginnings of the East African Revival, with particular reference to 1935-1937, and in Tanganyika, 1939-1940. It investigates the spiritual and theological background of the Ruanda Mission (the Anglican Church Missionary Society organisation that operated in Ruanda and Kigezi from 1921) and how their predetermined theologies, inherited from the Keswick Movement and Cambridge University, defined what they expected to see in the spiritual experiences of the mission adherents on their stations. The misinterpretation of what 'revival' was led missionaries to ignore many aspects of African spirituality, choosing instead to see them as indicative of 'heathenism'. When unusual phenomena of an ecstatic nature took place during major Bible conventions (1933, 1935) their belief in the 'superiority' of missionary Christianity encouraged a 're-interpretation' of this behaviour through an evangelical belief system, rather than the acceptance of it for what it was. This 're-interpretation' allowed the continued missionary ambivalence towards ecstaticism for a further three years until a major outbreak of ecstatic behaviour in the summer of 1936. The absence of any Bible conventions at this time, the threat of division in the mission and a difficult relationship with the Bishop of Uganda and the colonial government, made worse by the remarkable similarities between this ecstaticism and the politically-charged 'Nyabingi' spirit cult, ensured that the decision was eventually taken to control and censor the behaviour. Although censorship was successful from c.1937 the phenomena re-emerged in 1939, this time in CMS stations in western Tanganyika. Pressure from the Bishops of Uganda and Tanganyika, combined with the protective attitude of Dr Church and his 'party' of Revivalists toward their message, ensured that external control was applied to bring the phenomena to an end, this time for the last time.

Ecstatic Spirituality in Kigezi, Ruanda
and Western Tanganyika c.1933 – 1940:
Censorship, Control and the Ruanda
Mission

Benjamin J. D. Udy

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Abbreviations used

AIM	Africa Inland Mission
BCMS	Bible Churchman's Missionary Society
CICCU	Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union
CIM	China Inland Mission
CMS	Church Missionary Society
FAM	Friends Africa Mission
IVF	Inter-Varsity Fellowship
PMU	Pentecostal Missionary Union
RGMM	Ruanda General Medical Mission
SCM	Student Christian Movement
UMCA	Universities' Mission to Central Africa

Abbreviations used in footnotes

IDPCM	The International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements
JEC	Joe Church Papers
JEC/RN	J. Church (ed.), collected volume of unpublished letters for <i>Ruanda Notes</i> , n.d. JEC 20/1-4.
JPP	John Pollock Papers
KW	The Keswick Week
MAM	Mid-Africa Ministry
RN	Ruanda Notes

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Introduction

After fifty years of interest in the subject of revivals and awakenings of New Testament Christianity, thirty years in academic research, I have come to the conclusion that the treatment of the subject by most church historians is at its best wholly inadequate and at worst a re-writing of history...I therefore feel compelled to call for the re-studying of [revival]...using common sense, pointing out absurdities, and challenging capricious concept-changers.¹

Thirty years ago J. Edwin Orr, one of the most prolific writers on revival and founder of the Oxford Association for Research in Revival (OARR) made this bold appeal for a complete reappraisal of revival history. While Orr decried the influence of humanism in distorting revival historiography others have echoed the same frustration but aimed it instead at the influence of religious belief. Bernard Weisberger wrote in a 1958 publication, 'I want to frankly emphasise that this is a book about religion, and not a religious book. In the past, most histories of revivalism looked no further for explanation than the sovereign pleasure of God...[and were] almost without exception, useless as history'.² The difficulty, suggested V. Harvey, was what theologians like to

¹ J. Edwin Orr, *The Re-study of Revival and Revivalism* (Oxford Association for Research in Revival, 1981), p. 1. The word 'revival', often used in particular association with Christian Church movements, refers to a time of particular growth or expansion.

² B. Weisberger, *They Gathered at the River: The Story of the Great Revivalists and Their Impact upon Religion in America* (New York, 1958), p. 275. Ian Murray claimed Weisberger started a whole new era in the writing of revival history. *Revival and Revivalism: the Making and Marring of American Evangelicalism 1750-1858* (Carlisle, 1994), p. xviii. W. G. McLoughlin also shared this frustration. *Modern Revivalism: Charles Grandison Finney to Billy Graham* (New York, 1959).

call ‘the problem of faith and history’. There had been a failure from the academic world in previous decades to grapple ‘in any rigour and clear fashion’ with the tension between religious belief and a critical-historical methodology.³

One of the major ways this problem has manifested is in the relationship between revivalism and spirituality.⁴ ‘Spirituality’, Wakefield defined, was not about intellectual discourse but experiential religion, the ‘attitudes, beliefs and practices which animate people’s lives and help them reach out towards supersensible realities’.⁵ Ecstasism, John Locke defined, was the ability of some to ‘persuade themselves that they are under the peculiar guidance of heaven in their actions and opinions’.⁶ At its essence it is the concept of ‘nearness’ to God or, in the case of non-theistic belief systems, the ‘spiritual realm’. For some this has not been a problematic concept. The idea of engaging with religion through experience, Anne Taves argued, has been ‘deeply embedded in the study of religion and religions’ in the modern West.⁷ The reality, however, has been that religious experience has remained one of the most deeply controversial aspects of religious history.⁸ There has been, Eddie Hyatt proposed, a ‘perennial conflict between the spontaneity of the Spirit and the rigid structure of the institution’ in the history of

³ V. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (London, 1967), p. xiii. For more recent discussion on the same issue see R. Wells, *History through the Eyes of Faith* (San Francisco, 1989) and S. Holtzman, ‘Science and Religion: The Categorical Conflict’, *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (Oct., 2003), pp. 77-99.

⁴ Whilst there is not agreement on the nature of the relationship, few deny that revivalism and ecstatic spirituality often appear together. See, for example, summaries of Christian revivals between 1700 and 2000 in G. Waugh, *Revival Fires: History’s Mighty Revivals* (Mechanicsburg, PA: 2009) and F. and S. Wright, *The World’s Greatest Revivals*; (Shippensburg, PA: 2007).

⁵ G. Wakefield, ‘Spirituality’, in A. Richardson and J. Bowden (eds.), *New Dictionary of Theology* (London, 1983), p. 539, cited in I. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918-1939* (Carlisle, 1999), p. 1.

⁶ Although he referred to it as ‘enthusiasm’. G. Mavrodes, ‘Enthusiasm’, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, Vol. 25, No. 3 (June, 1989), pp. 171-186.

⁷ A. Taves, *Religious Experience Reconsidered: A Building-Block Approach to the Study of Religion and Other Special Things* (Woodstock, 2009), p. 3.

⁸ A distinction is drawn between religious *experience* and the intellectualisms of ‘doctrine’ and ‘theology’.

Christianity.⁹

This study is concerned with precisely this phenomenon: the strength of the relationship between ‘revivalism’ and spirituality in its ecstatic form. More specifically, it is concerned with the inter-relation of African and European in the western interlacustrine region of East Africa, particularly around the Church Missionary Society (CMS) mission stations found in the Kigezi region of southern Uganda and the neighbouring region of northern Ruanda, and how that influenced the ecstatic phenomena found in the region during the 1920s and 1930s.¹⁰ The CMS activity in these areas was solely under the administration of the ‘Ruanda General Medical Mission’, who not only ran the Anglican mission work in Kigezi from 1921 but were the first Anglican missionaries to establish stations in Ruanda (1925) and Urundi (1935).

English Keswick Evangelicalism was a major part of Ruanda Mission life under the continual influence of founders Algernon Stanley-Smith and Leonard Sharp, whose firm pursuit of a life of ‘victory over sin’ set the tone for those they recruited. Difficult circumstances in English Anglicanism, combined with the unique theological background and personal convictions of the missionaries, ensured that from the outset the mission, a few individuals in particular, harboured a belief in the theological superiority of their endeavour. Divine assistance to the missionary work was expected and the ultimate expression of this was ‘revival’. It was, in their eyes, the ‘wind of God’ that brought an acceleration to, without alteration of, their existing work.

The first signs of ‘revival’ were reported by missionaries in the 1930s as *en masse*

⁹ E. Hyatt, *2000 Years of Charismatic Christianity* (Lake Mary, FL: 2002), p. xii.

¹⁰ Although at its inception it was titled the ‘Ruanda Medical Mission’ it was renamed with a few years to ‘Ruanda General Medical Mission’. The latter will be used to describe the Mission throughout this study.

conviction and confessions of sin and soon African teams were trained to begin to take the same teaching throughout the district, moving into Kenya, Tanganyika, Sudan, South Africa and even England within a few years. In its wider form it became known as the 'East African Revival', a movement of 'major religious and socio-political significance' according to Emmanuel Hooper. Kevin Ward called it 'an important movement within African Protestantism' which 'continues profoundly to influence the Churches of East Africa to this day'.¹¹ It was a view shared by Adrian Hastings.¹² Dr Church, one of the key missionaries in the movement, described it as 'walking along the Highway of Holiness with the Lord Jesus, repenting the moment the Holy Spirit points out sin'.¹³ Just as Weisberger found with the history of revivals in America, the East African Revival has had a large number of participant-authored accounts, helped by its exceptionally strong testimonial culture.¹⁴ Indeed, such was the absence of serious scholarship on the revival in the 1970s that Jocelyn Murray's bibliography for the East African Revival Movement in the *Journal of History in Africa* (1976) contained more participant-authored literature than it did scholarly books and journals.¹⁵ 'Remarkably little has found its way into print on this movement', she wrote,

brief references to the Revival will be found in many books and articles on the missions and churches of East Africa and especially in what was written concerning Christian resistance to 'Mau Mau' in Kenya during the 1950s. But one feels at the end that the published materials do not adequately reflect the importance of the movement for the Christian Church in East Africa.¹⁶

The participant literature of the Revival started in 1936 with biographical account of

¹¹ E. Hooper, 'The Theology of Trans-Atlantic Evangelicalism and Its Impact on The East African Revival', *Evangelical Review of Theology* (2007), 31:1, p. 79; Ward, 'Introduction', p. 3.

¹² A. Hastings, *A History of Christianity 1950-1975* (London, 1979), p. 52.

¹³ J. Church to J. Evans, 19 September 1979. JEC 9/2/29.

¹⁴ See D. Peterson, 'Wordy Women: Gender Trouble and the Oral Politics of the East African Revival in Northern Gikuyuland', *Journal of African History*, 42 (2001), pp. 496-489; Weisberger, op.cit.

¹⁵ J. Murray, 'A Bibliography on the East African Revival Movement' in *Journal of History in Africa*, Vol. 8 Fasc. 2 (1976), pp. 144-147.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 144.

one of the leaders of the revival by Joe Church (*Buganda Zukuka!*), a general history of the Ruanda Mission by another of the senior missionaries (Stanley Smith) and later accounts by Langford-Smith, Wiseman, Guillebaud, Church, St John, Wanyoike, Kaggia, Butler, Osborn, Smoker, Makower and more recently MacMaster and Jacobs.¹⁷ Without exception these accounts were supportive in their description of the Revival and intent on judging it using religious rather than academic criteria. H. H. Osborn wrote to other participants in the Revival concerning his research stating that ‘the object of this exercise is to high-light the ‘ordinariness’ of many other men and women...and the ‘extra-ordinariness’ of what God did in and through them’.¹⁸

St John (1971) claimed that ‘the same God who commanded light to shine out of darkness...sent the founders of the Ruanda Mission to our land’ and MacMaster and Jacobs (2006), described by Bruner (2011) as one of the major texts on the East African Revival, urged their readers to ‘also experience the stirring of the wind of God’.¹⁹ Participant literature went to every effort to illustrate the success and ‘unity’ of a ‘God-ordained’ movement but beneath the confident portrayal lay a more complex reality of

¹⁷ A. Stanley-Smith, *Road to Revival: The Story of the Ruanda Mission* (London, 1946); N. Langford-Smith, ‘Revival in East Africa’, *International Review of Mission*, Vol. 43, No. 1 (Jan., 1954), pp. 77-81; E. Wiseman, *Kikuyu Martyrs* (London, 1958); L. Guillebaud, *A Grain of Mustard Seed* (London, 1959); J. Church, *Awake Uganda!* (1937; 2 edn rev., Kampala, 1957), *Forgive them: The Story of an African Martyr* (London, 1966), *Jesus Satisfies* (n.p., 1969), *William Nagenda, A Great Lover of Jesus* (London, 1973), *Quest for the Highest: An Autobiographical Account of the East African Revival* (Exeter, 1981); P. St John, *Breath of Life: The Story of the Ruanda Mission* (London, 1971), *Man of Two Worlds, The Life of Ken Moynagh* (Worthing, 1976); E. Wanyoike, *An African Pastor: The Life and Work of the Rev. Wanyoike Kamawe 1888-1970* (Nairobi, 1974); B. Kaggia, *Roots of Freedom 1921-1963* (Nairobi, 1975) [The Kenyan politician relates his conversion in the 1930s]; B. Butler, *Hill Ablaze* (London, 1976); H. H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills: The Revival Which Spread from Ruanda* (n.p., 1991), *The Greatest Story Ever Told* (n.p., 1998), *Pioneers in the East African Revival* (Winchester, 2000); D. Smoker, *Ambushed by Love: God’s Triumph in Kenya’s Terror* (n.p., 1994); K. Makower, *The Coming of the Rain: The biography of a pioneering missionary in Rwanda* (Carlisle, 1999), *Not a Gap Year but a Lifetime* (Eastbourne, 2008).

¹⁸ H. H. Osborn to J. and D. Church, January 1988. JEC 9/2/38. For additional suggestions of an ulterior motive behind the creation of participant history see J. Church to J. Evans, 19 September 1979. JEC 9/2/29. ‘Anne’ to J. and D. Church, c.1970s, JEC 10/8/5.

¹⁹ F. Kivengere, ‘Introduction’ in P. St John, *Breath of Life: The Story of the Ruanda Mission* (London, 1971), pp. 9-10; J. Bruner, ‘Keswick and the East African Revival: A Historiographical Reappraisal’, *Religion Compass*, 5:9 (2011).

division, tension and turmoil.

When John Taylor was appointed by the Bishop of Uganda to make a contribution on the East African Revival for an International Missionary Council study in 1958 he described a movement that ‘renewed in ordinary Christians the impulse to offer themselves as evangelists’.²⁰ The only ‘miraculous element’ in the revival was ‘love’ and ‘loyalty’ to the established Church.²¹ Within the records of missionaries and the oral histories of the inhabitants of Kigezi and Ruanda, however, there emerges a very different picture. Internal division was threatening to pull apart the Mission, African revivalists were forming cliques that pursued such extreme notions of confession and fellowship that they were reported to the District Commissioner in Kigezi and held up in local courts.²² There were worries by some missionaries that the increasingly sectarian behaviour of many revivalists was even becoming a threat to national security.

In the midst of this turmoil revivalists were reporting ‘supernatural’ visitations from God and missionaries reported converts experiencing all manner of unusual and ecstatic phenomena - meetings were found to be continuing for hours without European supervision, often accompanied by loud weeping and spontaneous singing and unable to close because of Africans lying prostrate on the floor; trembling, trances, apocalyptic visions and experiences of an ecstatic nature were all reported. It is in the remarkable ability of the movement to transition from these forms of ecstaticism and division to the point where it could be perceived by Taylor in the 1950s to be united, rational and, in many ways, almost ‘European’ that this study is most interested. Existing literature on East Africa has done much to emphasise the political aspects of this movement and the

²⁰ J. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda: An Attempt at Understanding* (London, 1955), p. 64.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

²² Kigezi District Annual Report, 1939. KDA, cited in Robins, ‘Tukutendereza’, p. 242.

idea that it was part of a wider movement of independency but it is the aim of this study to highlight the centrality of ecstatic spiritual behaviour to Bakiga and Banyaruanda Christians in the 1920s and 1930s. It will be demonstrated that not only was ecstaticism an integral part of pre-Christian spirituality in the region but that in the interaction between the traditional spirituality of the western lacustrine Bantu and the strong evangelicalism of the European Ruanda Mission there was, in fact, an initial encouragement to the appearance of ecstaticism. It will be further demonstrated that this turmoil added to an already divided mission and encouraged radical measures to control and censor ecstatic spirituality and, above all, to preserve the particular identity of revival that was treasured by the evangelical and Keswick traditions of the mission.

Cultural Interaction in Mission History: The Nationalist Critique

Much attention in African religious history has necessarily been given to the relationship between African and European. Questions over the applicability of Christianity to Africa and the degree to which religion and culture can be separated have led both missionary and academic to debate the inculturation of people groups affected by the spread of Christianity. It was this precise issue that was so crucial to one of the most recent additions to Revival historiography – the research of Jason Bruner. He has argued that the emphasis on the ‘conservative British evangelicalism’ in East African Revival historiography has meant that ‘significant dimensions of the Revivals’ impact upon late colonial East Africa have been neglected’.²³ Specifically he highlighted the movement’s relationship to pre-Christian African religions, late colonial politics,

²³ J. Bruner, ‘Abstract’, in ‘Keswick and the East African Revival: An Historiographical Reappraisal’, *Religion Compass* 5/9 (2011), p. 1.

African-language literature and literacy and other contemporary movements of spiritual renewal. He drew the line at allowing ‘evangelical’ to be a descriptive of the revival. ‘The history of the revival’, he wrote,

is best understood not in its relation to English evangelicalism, but rather as a Christian movement that was shaped by African hands, infused with African life, and carried with an African beat. It is, after all, an African story.²⁴

It was the complete opposite of Stanley’s assertion from over twenty years before that ‘a true understanding of the Revival is impossible without adequate consideration of the European tradition from which it sprang’.²⁵ The difference between these two opinions is indicative of the tension that is seen to be in the Revival between the ‘European tradition’ and ‘African initiative’.²⁶ Kevin Ward claimed the Revival had a ‘distinctly African feel’ to it despite being shepherded by the Ruanda Mission which ‘stood firmly and decisively for a conservative evangelical theological position’.²⁷ It was the ‘paradox’ that stood at the heart of the Revival.²⁸

Various solutions to the problem of cultural interaction in colonial Africa have been offered, although the debate is one that excites the emotions of many theologians and historians. The 1975 Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi was told that missionaries came to Africa with ‘the bible in one hand and the gun in the other’.²⁹ N. Pityana in a study on ‘Black Theology’ wrote that

²⁴ Bruner, ‘Abstract’.

²⁵ Stanley, ‘The East African Revival: African Initiative within a European Tradition’, *Churchman*, 92:1 (1978), p. 10.

²⁶ Taken from the title of Stanley, ‘The East African Revival: African Initiative within a European Tradition’.

²⁷ Ward, ‘Introduction’, in *The East African Revival: History and Legacies* (2010)

²⁸ Stanley, ‘The East African Revival’, p. 9.

²⁹ D. M. Paton, *Breaking Barriers Nairobi 1975: The Official Report of the Fifth Assembly of the W.C.C.* (Exeter, 1979), pp. 127-130, cited in Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester, 1990), p. 11.

It has been alleged with truth that the trader and the settler followed the missionary, who was the agent of European Imperialism, working hand in hand with the colonial powers for the subjugation of the black people and the territorial extension of the imperialist power.³⁰

T. Balasurinya stated that it was not just missionaries but the whole of Western theology that was ‘a handmaiden of Western expansion; an ally, at least in the centennial exploitation of the peoples of other continents’.³¹

There have also, however, been more measured efforts to engage with the interaction between African and European in the history of African missions. The historiography of the 1960s and 1970s, suggested Derek Peterson and Jean Allman, was filled with ‘nationalists, liberal social-scientists, and functionalist anthropologists’, for whom mission Christianity and its implied soteriology were either about ‘cultural imperialism’ or about ‘modernization’, neither of which they claim took African religious initiatives seriously.³² Balandier, Lanternari and Ranger all endeavoured to explore this relationship, often arguing that colonialism played the major role in the development of African religious movements.³³ Lanternari, for example, argued that African independent churches, particularly those that focused on the ecstatic spirituality, came

³⁰ N. Pityana, ‘What is Black Consciousness?’ in B. Morre (ed.), *Black Theology: The South African Voice* (London, 1973), p. 59, cited in Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, p. 11.

³¹ T. Balasurinya, ‘Towards the Liberation of theology in Asia’, in V. Fabella (ed.), *Asia’s Struggle For Full Humanity* (New York, 1980), pp. 20-21, cited in Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, p. 11.

³² D. Peterson and J. Allman, ‘Introduction: New Directions in the History of Missions in Africa’, *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 23, No. 1, February 1999, pp. 1-7. Here, p. 2.

³³ See T. Ranger, ‘Religious Movements and Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa’, *African Studies review*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (Jun., 1986), p. 2; G. Balandier, *Sociologie Actuelle de l’Afrique Noire* (Paris, 1955), ‘Messianism and Nationalism in Black Africa’ in P. Van den Berghe (ed.), *Africa: Social Problems of Change and Conflict* (New York, 1965) and *Sens et Puissance: Les Dynamismes Sociales* (Paris, 1971); V. Lanternari, *The Religions of the Oppressed* (New York, 1963); T. Ranger, ‘Connexions Between Primary Resistance Movements and Modern Mass Nationalism’, *Journal of African History*, 9, 3/ 4 (1968).

in the context of colonial oppression.³⁴

The 1960s saw further key publications that continued to draw the attention of African scholarship to the theme of religious independency. Welbourn and Ogot both presented cases of revivalists gaining ecclesiastical independence - the Mengo Gospel Church and the Church of Christ in Africa.³⁵ Welbourn engaged with a number of other texts already in circulation, notably studies by Sundkler and Worsley, as he sought to present an overarching theory covering the idea of rebellion. Religion provided one outlet for a process of rebellion and independence, he suggests, that was already going on across East Africa.³⁶ Welbourn was one of the first to specifically bring Revival into this theme of independency and it was most clearly articulated by Barrett in 1968 who suggested that 'revival' was the latent form and 'separatism' the visible form of 'continent-wide rebellion'.³⁷ In this case 'latent' refers to the fact that 'revival' did not appear as outright rebellion; Barrett's contention was that it was rebellion masquerading as reform. A failure of the 'European' Church to meet the needs of their African congregation, he argued, was causing widespread latent revolt, of which Revival was a part.

The arrival of Parrinder's *Religion in Africa* a year later only confirmed that revival

³⁴ See Ranger, 'Religious Movements', p. 2; Laternari, 'Revolution and/or Integration in African Socio-Religious Movements' in B. Lincoln (ed.), *Religion, Rebellion, Revolution* (London, 1985).

³⁵ F. Welbourn and B. Ogot's *A Place to Feel at Home: A Study of Two Independent Churches in Western Kenya* (London, 1966)

³⁶ F. Welbourn, *East African Rebels* (London, 1961). B. Sundkler, *Bantu Prophets in South Africa* (London, 1961) and P. Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of Cargo Cults in Melanesia* (London, 1957). Worsley's study concentrated on pagan independency, Sundkler's on religious independency. Similar ideas concerning the interaction revival and societal change were occurring at the same time in the study of American revivalism see McLoughlin, *Modern Revivalism*; id., *Revivalism, Awakening and Reform* (London, 1978); C. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting, Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas, 1955); B. Weisberger, *They Gathered at the River*; T. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform: American Protestantism on the Eve of the Civil War* (London, 1957).

³⁷ D. Barrett, *Schism and Renewal in Africa: An Analysis of Six Thousand Contemporary Religious Movements* (London, 1968). 'Renewal' refers to an 'awakening of Christian faith within the mission churches, characterised by enthusiasm and a large following, but not issuing immediately in new movements of dissidence, protest or reform'. 'Revival' and 'renewal' were synonymous for Barrett, although 'revival' carries a more specific reference to the East African Revival. Ibid., p. 47.

historiography was very much based in and around this emphasis on religious independency.³⁸ Although he wrote mainly concerning what he called ‘African Traditional Religion’, he did very briefly comment on revival and chose to explain it, and indeed the majority of African expressions of Christianity, as part of the process of independence.³⁹ Parrinder’s work was leading the field in defining how African religion should be studied – Adrian Hastings considered him one of the paramount African scholars of his day, proposing that ‘a whole generation of teachers and students in Departments of Religious Studies up and down Africa depended on his pioneering work’.⁴⁰

Social turmoil, change and unrest were strong forces even in the early years of colonialism, as Lonsdale has shown more recently, but not all analysis has explained African Religious experience in political terms.⁴¹ Jean Comaroff (1985), in her study of the Tshidi interaction with colonialism in South Africa, kept religion central to her work without compromising an understanding of the role of the colonial ideological, political and economic system. Although the mission ‘was the essential medium of, and forerunner to, colonial articulation’, Christian evangelism styles that developed from the Methodist-Tshidi interaction actually brought Christianity ‘*within* the bounds of the indigenous polity itself’.⁴² Audrey Wipper likewise saw political and non-political aspects of African religion as interlocking and warned against creating a ‘false dichotomy which has serious consequences for research’.⁴³

³⁸ G. Parrinder, *Religion in Africa* (London, 1969).

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁴⁰ A. Hastings, ‘Review: Geoffrey Parrinder’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 31, Fasc. 3 (Aug., 2001), p. 355.

⁴¹ J. Lonsdale, ‘Kikuyu Christianities’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 29, Fasc. 2 (May, 1999).

⁴² J. Comaroff, *Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance: The Culture and History of a South African People* (Chicago, 1985), pp. 27, 30.

⁴³ A. Wipper, ‘Lofty Visions and Militant Actions: A Reply to Jan de Wolf’, *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (1983), p. 277.

Religion and culture, Ranger argued, were being unnecessarily overshadowed by other factors. ‘An oddity of much recent historiography of early Christianity’, he wrote, ‘is that it has greatly overplayed the manifest political and economic factors in its expansion and has greatly underplayed the cultural and religious’:⁴⁴

Even the formal church historians, writing from within the missionary societies, have emphasised institutional achievements, the build-up of schools and clinics and have hardly discussed the impact of missionaries and their African catechists on the cultural imagination of Africans.⁴⁵

Gordon Hewitt’s official two volume history of the Church Missionary Society, for example, did exactly this, describing the Ruanda Mission in practical, doctrinal and ecclesiastical terms.⁴⁶ By the 1980s, therefore, Ranger declared that he had ‘abandoned the attempt to demonstrate that African independent church movements...constituted a stage in the evolution of anti-colonial protest’, although others have attempted to be a little more subtle in their rejection of a singularly nationalistic account of African religious expression.⁴⁷ Nationalism and religious independency may have been simultaneous, argued Robert Buitjenhuijs (1976, 1985), but that did not mean they were also significantly connected.⁴⁸ A better understanding, he suggested, might be ‘counter-society’ rather than ‘counter-colonial’.⁴⁹

Many historians have agreed with Ranger that a major aspect of the progression from a

⁴⁴ Ranger, ‘Religious Movements’, p. 32.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Sections on Ruanda are headed, for example, ‘First Approaches to Ruanda’, ‘Constitutional Development’, ‘The Ruanda Mission at Work’ and ‘Co-operation and Translation’. G. Hewitt, *The Problem of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910-42, Volume I* (London, 1971), pp. 261-276.

⁴⁷ Ranger, ‘Religious Movements’, p. 2.

⁴⁸ R. Buitjenhuijs, ‘Messianisme et Nationalisme en Afrique Noire: Une Remise en question’, *African Perspectives*, Vol. 2, 1976, cited in Ranger, ‘Religious Movements’, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁹ Ranger, ‘Religious Movements’, p. 37.

nationalist/political reading of the interaction between African and European is the necessity of engaging with the ‘religious level’ of the encounter between the two cultures. Sanneh (1983) wrote in relation to West Africa that

To fuse the theme of the African religious response with the political theme and annex it as a sub-plot of the great nationalist cause is to overlook the explicit religious concerns of those concerned...This means interpreting the history of Christianity by reference to African religious models, with local African agency as an indispensable link in the historical chain of transmission...[let us] devote our time to the real business of investigating the process whereby Africa captured [Christianity] for herself.⁵⁰

Robert Strayer similarly wrote about the reception of Christianity in Kenya:

Nationalist historians have largely ignored the mission-African interaction at the level of religious encounter, in part at least in an effort to reaffirm the validity of traditional religious systems against the European presumptions of the superiority of Christianity...Yet we know that the expansion of Christianity in Africa had important religious dimensions as both individuals and societies found on occasion in the immigrant religion symbols, techniques and ideas which seemed appropriate to meeting old needs.⁵¹

The Opportunities for a Post-Nationalist Reading of Mission History

Where a nationalist reading of history might have left the East African Revival movement swallowed up in a broader thesis of political upheaval, a post-nationalist reading of history has encouraged the Revival to be studied independent of other movements. The opportunity for such study has created from the late 1970s onwards the most fruitful period for the historiography of the East African Revival. One of the first such academic studies of the Revival was by Brian Stanley, ‘whose primary objective

⁵⁰ L. Sannah, *West African Christianity: The Religious Impact* (London, 1983), pp. xi-xviii.

⁵¹ R. Strayer, *The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa* (London, 1978), p. 2.

was to provide an answer to the split that he saw in Revival historiography between those who described it from purely evangelical terms (as found in participant literature) and those who ‘interpret it almost exclusively in terms of categories drawn from African traditional religion and society’. He called for a recognition and acceptance of the ‘paradox’ that was the existence of both elements of the Revival.⁵²

Robins and Ward developed the themes of dissent that featured in earlier works by the likes of Barrett and Parrinder but from a sociological and ecclesiastical perspective and continued Kibira’s idea of Revivalists as a ‘new clan’, distinct from non-Revivalists.⁵³ Crucially, both Robins and Ward used the Luganda word *Balokole*, meaning ‘saved ones’, to describe the Revivalists, a practice which has since become widespread. The emphasis in both works was the theme of separation that emerged from the Revivalists’ concept of conversion. Robins’ work attempted to provide a sociological analysis of ‘sectarian withdrawal’ in two areas of the movement, in southern Uganda and Buganda, while Ward chose instead to focus on the ecclesiastical aspects of dissent, studying a crisis of ecclesiastical rebellion and the consequent withdrawal of *Balokole* from a Church Missionary Society training college in Mukono, Uganda.⁵⁴

Another major aspect of post-nationalist Revival historiography has been the study of ‘confession’ ritual in the Revival and, most importantly, the extent to which it lies on the ‘African’ or ‘European’ side of Stanley’s ‘paradox’. Efforts by Stanley, Robins and

⁵² A specific, non-academic study of the Revival had been commissioned by CMS in 1954 [M. Warren, *Revival: An Enquiry* (London, 1954)]. Stanley, ‘The East African Revival’, p. 9.

⁵³ C.E. Robins, ‘Tukutendereza: A Study of Social Change and Sectarian Withdrawal in the Balokole Revival’. PhD dissertation of Columbia University, 1975; K. Ward, “‘Obedient Rebels’: The Relationship between the Early “Balokole” and the Church of Uganda: The Mukono Crisis of 1941’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 19, Fasc. 3 (Oct., 1989), pp. 194-227. J. M. Kibira, *Church, Clan and the World* (Uppsala, 1974), pp. 10-52.

⁵⁴ The ‘Mukono Crisis’ has also been studied more recently by Ken Farrimond. ‘Personal Loyalties: Revival, Church and Mission in the Lives of Early Revival Leaders in Busoga’ in K. Ward and E. Wild-Wood, *The East African Revival* (Kampala, 2010), pp. 138-161.

Anker-Peterson did little to provide significant impetus to the previously isolated study by Stenning, whose study of the importance of confession rites in pre-Christian cults in Ankole, a Ugandan district just east of Kigezi, has been relied on heavily in the continued association of pre-Christian spirituality and confession ritual in the Revival.⁵⁵

Attention was nevertheless drawn to public confession in the Revival and it has continued with multiple works by Peterson, who has aimed to engage directly with the cultural dialogue between Evangelical theologies and the praxis of African revivalists. Peterson's use of confession, however, has not been in an attempt to link pre-Christian and Christian practices but to expose the formulaic aspects of revivalists' 'testimonies' and their role in forming personal identity. 'The Revival', wrote Peterson, was 'an arena of discourse where East Africans practised testimonies, composed autobiographies, and bore witness.'⁵⁶ 'Conversion', he argued, 'is always an autobiographical act... In the descriptions they gave of the sins they had once committed, converts distanced themselves from their old lives and created themselves as a novel persona'.⁵⁷ Contributing to a field already established by the likes of White and Nelson, he suggested that such habits were instrumental in the growing tension over gender role and the position of the woman in mid-twentieth century Kenya.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ R. Anker-Peterson, 'A Study of the Spiritual Roots of the East African Revival with Special Reference to its Use of Confession of Sin in Public', MTh thesis, Aberdeen University, 1988; D. Stenning, 'Salvation in Ankole' in M. Fortes and G. Dierlerlen (eds.), *African Systems of Thought* (London, 1965), pp. 258-275. For the continued reliance on Stenning, see G. P'Karamura, 'Revival and Repentance', MPhil thesis, Cambridge University, 1995. For debate surrounding Stenning's argument see Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 175 and Stanley, 'The East African Revival', p. 14.

⁵⁶ D. Peterson, 'African neo-Pentecostal church growth in Britain: Evidence and the Historian in East Africa' in *CHF Bulletin*, Number 5, Spring 2009, p. 23. See also D. Peterson, 'Revivalism and Dissent in Colonial East Africa' in Ward and Wild-Wood, *The East African Revival* (2010), pp. 162-182.

⁵⁷ D. Peterson, 'Revivalism and Dissent in Colonial East Africa' in Ward and Wild-Wood, *The East African Revival* (2010), pp. 162-182.

⁵⁸ N. Nelson, 'Female Centred Families', *African Urban Studies* 3 (Winter, 1978-9), pp. 85-103; ead., "'Selling her Kiosk": Kikuyu Notions of Sexuality and Sex for Sale in Mathare Valley, Kenya', in P. Caplan (ed.), *The Cultural Construction of Sexuality* (London, 1987), pp. 217-239. L. White, *The Comforts of Home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi* (London, 1990).

Bruner's criticism of some authors, that they 'neglect potential continuities between revivalists' practices and beliefs with traditional African cultures' (Coomes (1971), Gehman (1986), (MacMaster and Jacobs (2006), Noll (2009), Rostedt (1982) and Stanley (1978)) needs to be heard but the issue is more complex than he makes out. Localised studies, particularly those of Ward, Robins and the studies on confession ritual in Ankole (Stenning), Kikuyuland (Peterson) and among the Haya (Larsson), have begun to illustrate the existence of somewhat different strands of the Revival, particular to the socio-political background of each locality.⁵⁹ Taylor, Robins, Whisson and Winter have, despite their disagreements, highlighted the importance of socio-economic background in the Revival, such as wealth, education and literacy, and even here historians have begun to postulate different strands of Revival.⁶⁰ Kevin Ward's most recent publication on the Revival (2010), for example, noted that

there is a dawning realisation, however, that there are, in a sense, a number of *Balokole* movements, sometimes only loosely connected. There is the dominant tradition, inscribed in English, represented by Joe Church, William Nagenda and Bishop Festo Kivengere. But, from the beginning, there was a revival apart from its educated leadership.⁶¹

The realisation of the existence of a number of movements that were connected, with varying degrees of strength, to a dominant tradition is one of the most important developments of recent historiography as it allows for the study of aspects of the Revival that, at least superficially, appear not to reflect the 'official' tradition inscribed

⁵⁹ For the role of the Revival among Haya women see B. Larsson, 'Haya Women's Response to the East African Revival Movement' in Ward and Wild-Wood, *The East African Revival* (2010), pp. 183-196. In addition see C. Robins, 'Conversion, Life Crisis and Stability among Women in the East African Revival' in B. Jules-Rosette (ed.), *The New Religions of Africa* (Norwood, N. J.; 1979), pp. 185-202.

⁶⁰ J. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* (London, 1958); M. Whisson, 'The will of God and the Wives of Men', East African Institute of Social Research, Unpublished Conference paper, Limuru, 1962; Robins, 'Tukutendereza'; M. Winter, 'The Balokole and the Protestant Ethic – A Critique', *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. XIV, No. 1 (1983), pp. 58-73.

⁶¹ Ward, 'Introduction', p. 9.

by the dominant, educated Revival ‘party’.

Neo-Pentecostalism and the Correlation of Ideas between Christian and African Spirituality

None of the above publications have made sufficient effort to engage with the interaction between African and European at the level of the ‘religious encounter’. One of the major areas of study for the East African Revival that is opened up by the call to engage with mission-African interaction ‘by reference to African religious models’ and ‘at the level of the religious encounter’ is African ecstatic spirituality. Ecstatic behaviour, especially spirit possession, was, according to I. M. Lewis, an important part of any religious practice. The ‘seizure of man by divinity’, he maintained, was the ‘most decisive and profound of all religious dogmas’.⁶² ‘It is difficult’, he continued,

to find a religion which has not, at some stage in its history, inspired...mystical exultation in which a man’s whole being seems to fuse in a glorious communion with the divinity.⁶³

It was no less an aspect of religious experience and expression among the adherents of the Ruanda Mission. Peterson (2006) has already addressed the East African Revival under the umbrella of ‘neo-Pentecostalism’, a term which has been defined as ‘Pentecostal-like experiences that have no traditional Pentecostal or Charismatic denominational connections’.⁶⁴ There has, however, been little written about this aspect of the East African Revival outside of Robins (1975), Anderson (1977) and Hoehler-

⁶² I. M. Lewis, *Ecstatic Religion: A Study of Shamanism and Spirit Possession* (3rd edition, 2003), p. 15.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ S. M. Burgess, ‘Neo-Pentecostal/Charismatic’ in S. M. Burgess (ed.), *New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* (Grand Rapids, MI.; 2002), p. 928.

Fatton (1996, 2010).

Robins devoted a chapter in her thesis to ecstatic manifestations in the Revival and was one of the first to acknowledge their appearance. Her primary study with regard to ecstatic spirituality was of Kigezi district alone and concerned the months before and after the first Ruanda Mission 'Bible convention' in Kabale, Kigezi (1935). Wild-Wood has likewise noted the ecstatic nature of Revival expression among the Lugbara in North-West Uganda.⁶⁵

Anderson (1977) noted the further appearance of ecstatic phenomena in Tanganyika in 1939-1940, something that is also confirmed by a few participant accounts that mention ecstaticism (often described as 'excesses'). Mention of these two episodes of ecstatic behaviour (Kigezi and Ruanda-Urundi in the 1930s and Tanganyika in 1939-1940) by either Anderson or any of the participant accounts is markedly scant - it was described by St John as simply 'excessive emotion'.⁶⁶ Reference to the occurrence of such behaviour outside of these episodes is almost non-existent despite the fact that the Revivalists travelled all over Africa and the world carrying their message.⁶⁷

Hoehler-Fatton argued that such neo-Pentecostal behaviour was being exhibited throughout East Africa in connection with Evangelical and Anglican Christianity:

⁶⁵ E. Wild-Wood, 'Why Strive for the Gospel? The Culture of the Chosen Evangelical Revival on the Northern Congo-Uganda Border' in E. Wild-Wood and K. Ward, *The East African Revival* (Kampala, 2010), pp. 196-214.

⁶⁶ St John, *Breath of Life*, p. 136. For the participant literature see H. H. Osborn (2000) and Church (1981). There was remarkably little written about these aspects of Revival predominantly because they became controversial. See Chapter V of this thesis.

⁶⁷ Revivalists from the Ruanda Mission were invited to hold conventions and teaching missions in Kenya, Uganda, the Sudan and Tanganyika in the 1930s and later travelled as far as England, South Africa, Switzerland (1947), France and Germany (1949), Nyasaland (1951), Angola and India (1952), U.S.A. (1953), Israel and Ethiopia (1954) and even South America (1955).

Whether historians and chroniclers trace the impetus for the East African Revival to the inspiration of Joe Church [a leading Ruanda Missionary] and his colleagues from Rwanda, or emphasise the activity of teams of young Ganda converts...most scholars acknowledge that there were earlier outpourings of collective charismatic fervour in Western Kenya, and in Uganda as well.⁶⁸

The connection between pre-Christian spirituality and ecstaticism in African Christianity has been noted by Bediako and the argument has been made that the 'God found in the Bible' and the 'experience of God found in Africans' primal religions' were similar enough to encourage neo-Pentecostal ecstaticism to manifest in African Christianity.⁶⁹ 'Africans', Ogbu Kalu argued,

were able to understand the Bible indeed dealt with such revelatory phenomena as dreams, visions, prophetic utterances and the like. Through Biblical translation, Africans discovered possibilities for experiencing Christian faith and life that resonated with their own experiences.⁷⁰

Anderson (1977) highlighted the pneumatological nature of the early Revival period in East Africa and felt that revival could better be explained within a 'family' of pneumatological movements drawn together by a similar message of 'holiness', 'salvation' and the 'need for sanctification' or, in fact, that which was considered the 'Evangelical' message of its day.⁷¹ It is a point that has also been made by Lang'at, who saw the East African Revival not as a distinct movement but as part of a broader 'Holiness Movement' in Africa that was incorporated into local African communities, transcended missional and denominational lines and originated in Keswick

⁶⁸ C. Hoehler-Fatton, 'Possessing Spirits, Powerful Water and Possible Continuities: Examples of Christian and Islamic fervour in Western Kenya Prior to the East African Revival' in Ward and Wild-Wood (eds.), *The East African Revival* (2010), pp. 113-114. See also Hoehler-Fatton, *Women of Fire and Spirit: History, Faith and Gender in Roho Religion in Western Kenya* (Oxford, 1996).

⁶⁹ K. Bediako, *Christianity in Africa: The Renewal of a Non-Western Religion* (New York, 1996), p. 76. L. Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (2nd rev. edn; New York, 2009).

⁷⁰ O. Kalu, 'Preserving a Worldview: Pentecostalism in the African Maps of the Universe', *Pneuma*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall, 2002), p. 115.

⁷¹ W. Anderson's *The Church in East Africa: 1840-1974* (Dodoma, 1977), pp. 118-119.

Evangelicalism.⁷²

In Hoehler-Fatton's discussion of a Christian revival among the Luhia members of the Friends Church in Kaimosi, Kenya, overseen by the evangelical American Quaker Arthur Chilson (1924-1927) and the *Joroho* (people of the Spirit) movement that began among the Luo in Kavirondo in the early 1930s she suggested there was an indication of

a broader, pre-existing religious opinion in East Africa that was characterised by certain distinguishing features including the concept of fluid or mobile spirits that could possess people and inspire ecstatic fervour...and likely had repercussions for the East African Revival.⁷³

In Kaimosi Chilson had urged open repentance to the extent that separate meetings were required for men and women and encouraged ecstatic signs such as trembling, tears and *glossolalia*.⁷⁴ The behaviour, however, was frowned upon by the Friends mission board and Chilson was later re-stationed to Urundi where he became acquainted with the missionaries of RGMM.⁷⁵ Hoehler-Fatton also highlighted two other incidents when Anglican CMS converts experienced forms of spirit possession and practiced forms of ecstatic spirituality, one in Rungwe, Kenya in 1916 and another incident in Ruwe 1912.

She stops short of tracing a direct historical connection between these events and the

⁷² R. Lang'at, 'The Holiness Movement in Africa: A Historiographical Study of the Quest for Sanctification as a Theological Framework for understanding the Emergence of Christianity in Africa', DPhil thesis, Drew University, 2003.

⁷³ Hoehler-Fatton, 'Possessing Spirits', p.114.

⁷⁴ *Glossolalia* is sometimes referred to as 'speaking in tongues' and is generally taken to indicate the ability to speak in a previously unknown language by supernatural means based on the books of Mark, Acts and 1 Corinthians in the New Testament. See R. P. Spittler, 'Glossolalia' in Burgess (ed.), *NIDPCM*, pp. 670-676. E. Chilson, *Arthur B. Chilson: Ambassador of the King* (n.p., 1943; repr. 2009), pp. 166-167 (for repentance), A. Rasmussen, *A History of the Quaker Movement in Africa* (London, 1995), p. 58ff (for ecstatic signs and *glossolalia*).

⁷⁵ Chilson worked in Kivimba, Urundi from 1934 and attended the Conference for Protestant Missionaries of Ruanda-Urundi at Musema in 1935 along with representatives of the Ruanda Mission and was later invited to speak at both a native conference (Matana, 1938) and a missionaries conference (Kisenyi, 1938) hosted by the Ruanda Mission. E. Chilson, *Arthur B. Chilson*, pp. 192, 211 and 224.

East African Revival but citing Atieno-Odhiambo (1975), Berger (1976), Beattie (1961), Shadle (2002), Wipper (1977), Gwassa (1972) and Middleton (1963) she concludes that

studies of an array of ethnic groups such as the Luo, AbaLuhia, Gusii, Acholi, Nyoro, Lugbara, Nyamwezi and others suggest that in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century there existed throughout much of East Africa a 'religious option' whose features included a belief in mobile spirits that could 'knock down', or take possession, of people.⁷⁶

Peterson has already classified the East African Revival under the umbrella of 'neo-Pentecostalism', identifying it with ecstatic spiritual behaviour, even though comparatively little research has actually been done into the appearance of such behaviour in the Revival. Accounts suggest that such behaviour was limited to Ruanda-Urundi and Kigezi in the 1930s and Western Tanganyika in 1939-1940 but, aside from briefly mentioning such phenomena, little is mentioned of such behaviour in participant accounts and scholarly study has been limited to Kigezi in the year 1935. There has been significant and important work from Anderson and especially Hoehler-Fatton that points to the existence of a trend of ecstatic, neo-Pentecostal spirituality that was resident in inter-lacustrine Christianity and pre-Christianity but the extent to which this relates to the movement of Revival as it appeared in the Ruanda Mission has yet to be fully investigated. Indeed, it is remarkable given the strength of evidence put forward by Hoehler-Fatton and Robins as to the existence of ecstaticism in East Africa (and specifically Kigezi and Western Tanganyika) that there is such a lack of adequate coverage in existing historiography. It is in the attempt to continue this vein of study on African ecstatic spirituality in the Ruanda Mission and the East African Revival that this

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 136.

thesis will focus.

There are three main periods of ecstaticism that this thesis will look at: ecstaticism before 1936, the major outbreak of 1936-1937 (both in Kigezi and Ruanda) and the only other major recorded outbreak, that of 1939-1940 (Tanganyika). Specifically, in the first part of this thesis the background to the ecstatic phenomena will be established, with particular reference to the relationship between the English Evangelicalism of Cambridge and Keswick and the Ruanda Mission (Chapter I), the background of political unrest and ecstatic spirituality before the arrival of the Ruanda Mission in East Africa (Chapter II) and the development of the missionary understanding and practice of Revival, often described by missionaries as 'Victorious Living' (Chapter III). The second part of this thesis deals with the occurrence of ecstatic phenomena in Kigezi and Ruanda (Chapter IV) and the difficulties that ensured this became a significant problem for the Mission. It also discusses the missionary reaction to ecstaticism with particular reference to how the control and censorship of African spirituality emerged out of a combined 'party' of African and European leaders who caused dissent and resentment in both the European and African sides of the mission because of their acts of censorship (Chapter V). The final part of this thesis addresses the spread of ecstaticism to Tanganyika in 1939-1940 to not only demonstrate the significance of such behaviour to this expression of the Revival but to illustrate the extent and effectiveness of the methods of censorship and control that were employed to bring such behaviour to an end (Chapters VI and VII).

Sources

The major source base for this study has come from the Joe Church Papers, the private records of the missionary doctor who was placed in charge of the Revival, and *Ruanda Notes*, the mission journal. The issues involved with the use of these sources are discussed more fully in Chapter III but, broadly speaking, the Church Papers are relatively void of material before 1937 and provide little contribution to the major outbreak of ecstaticism in 1936-1937 or the less extreme pre-1936 phenomena. For these we rely primarily on *Ruanda Notes* which provides a consistently 'evangelical account' (see Chapter III) and the field research of Catherine Robins. The Church Papers offer more scope following 1937, but, again, they remain 'Joe Church'-orientated and have to be read with care as they remain the primary source for the late-1930s. The willingness of many missionaries in Tanganyika to be more open to ecstaticism has meant that our sources from the region in 1939-1940 do not, thankfully, hold back on detail and are equally less intent on maintaining a particular theological slant.

Dr Church published his revised diaries under the title *Quest For the Highest* (1981). Although it too provides a singular account, all the more so because of its retrospective position, there are key details in there that remain useful to the study of the period, particularly the areas that the Church Papers are silent on. The Mid-Africa Ministry (the later name of the Ruanda Mission) Archive provides the last major source of information for this period. It too is relatively quiet before the late 1930s but there are a number of key documents in it that can be made use of retrospectively. In particular the

letters from Esther Sharp which provide a crucial ‘alternative’ view of the Revival from that presented by Dr Church, particularly concerning internal division in the Mission.

Chapter One

‘A Decade of Controversy’: Division and the Emergence of a Hierarchy of Theology in English and Anglican Evangelicalism.

One of the most frequently mentioned aspects of the East African Revival is the theological foundation of the missionaries in the Ruanda Mission. The theological background they came from was set out in two parts, both inextricably linked to each other. The first was found in the University of Cambridge, England and the second in the Keswick Movement. Hooper argued that these were ‘significant contributions’ to Revival theology as did Stanley who stressed the similarities of the Keswick emphasis on sin and repentance and the habits of confession that appeared in the East African

Revival.¹ The most important aspect of this influence, however, was not the extent to which it determined the ‘Revivalist theology’. The debate surrounding this, articulated most recently through Bruner, has already been outlined. Instead, the centrality of this theological background to the discussion of ecstatic phenomena is found in its role in establishing the foundations of division and tension within the Europeans of the Mission, in creating a determination in the Mission to see things through the lens of a particular theological paradigm and, most importantly of all, in creating the foundations of an anti-ecstatic sentiment and a Christo-centric, hierarchical theology that allowed doctrinal justification to future censorship of non-Christological aspects of Revivalist behaviour.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw a period of great internal division in Anglicanism. ‘It seemed to many’, wrote Gordon Hewitt of the Church of England in the first few decades of the century, ‘that an enemy within the gates was joining forces with the enemy without to undermine the foundations of Christian faith’.² That ‘enemy’ was the growth of what could be called ‘radical’ biblical scholarship. Known as ‘liberalism’ or ‘modernism’, it stood against the more conservative ‘evangelicalism’ and was described by a contemporary as a movement that

believes that religion needs to be interpreted afresh [and] can no longer appeal to the authority of the Bible, creeds or church as something fixed and decisive.³

It is acknowledged that ‘evangelicalism’ is hard to define.⁴ Mark Noll, for example,

¹ E. Hooper, ‘The Theology of Trans-Atlantic Evangelicalism and its Impact on The East African Revival’, *Evangelical Review of Theology* (2007), Vol. 31, No. 1, p. 89 ; B. Stanley, ‘The East African Revival: African Initiative Within a European tradition’, *Churchman*, Vol. 98, No. 1 (1978), pp. 6-22.,

² G. Hewitt, *The Problems of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910-42* (London, 1971), p. 409.

³ C. W. Emmet, ‘The Modernists Movement in the Church of England’, *The Journal of Religion*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (Nov., 1922), pp. 561-576. Here pp. 562-563.

⁴ Oral Interview: J. Wolffe, 14 April 2011.

described it as a ‘a complex reality’.⁵ Amongst those who identified themselves as such at the turn of the century, however, many felt that its essence was very clear. David Bebbington has provided one of the most accepted summations of what it entailed. He expressed it as a ‘quadrilateral’ of beliefs: ‘*conversionism*, the belief that lives needed to be changed; *activism*, the expression of the gospel in effort; *biblicism*, a particular regard for the Bible; and *crucicentrism*, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross’.⁶

Cambridge University was at the centre of this turmoil. There were a number of groups for Christians at the university and Algernon Stanley-Smith and Leonard Sharp, the two founders of the Ruanda General Medical Mission (RGMM), were members of the conservative, evangelical Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union (CICCU). At that time it had formal affiliation to the Student Christian Movement (SCM) but whilst CICCU was traditionally linked to the more conservative evangelical position, the umbrella organisation of the SCM was pursuing liberal theology.⁷ In November 1906 it resolved to adopt a ‘modern view of the Bible’.⁸ Many members of CICCU, the President included, were tempted to follow suit. By October, 1909, writes Pollock, ‘most members of the Union, [were] becoming increasingly indefinite in their beliefs’.⁹ A body of students, led by Algernon Stanley-Smith, son of Stanley Smith, and Lionel Studd, nephew of C. T. Studd (both of the ‘Cambridge Seven’), ‘believed the trouble lay in divergence from the original path of the Christian Union’.¹⁰ CICCU had, at one

⁵ M. Noll, *The Rise of Evangelicalism* (Leicester, 2004), p. 13.

⁶ D. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), p. 3.

⁷ J. C. Pollock, *A Cambridge Movement* (London, 1953), p. 159.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Pollock, *Cambridge Movement*, p. 170. The ‘Cambridge Seven’ was a group of six graduates from Cambridge (plus one non-Cambridge member) who became figures of note in the late-nineteenth century for their role in mission work in China. Their aristocratic and intellectual credentials ensured that their departure for China under the China Inland Mission (CIM) in 1885 was well publicised. They became

point, been the place where a man could learn ‘something of a passionate and even reckless enthusiasm for the Kingdom of God’.¹¹ As Pollock comments, ‘it was hard to see the Inter-Collegiate Union of 1909 breeding a latter-day Cambridge Seven’.¹²

The tension came to a head when the President of CICCUC put the issue to his committee in Lent, 1910: ‘Either we enlarge our views and adequately represent the SCM or we resign our affiliation’.¹³ The vote was close, but the evangelical party held sway. Soon afterwards the Student Christian Movement received a formal note stating that ‘the CICCUC decides to break affiliation with the SCM’.¹⁴ The CICCUC, surmised its defeated President, ‘reverted to being just – as I viewed it – a spiritual club for men already holding evangelical views’.¹⁵

Conservative evangelicalism remained strong in CICCUC from this moment as did their suspicion of the liberal SCM. When SCM offered help after the First World War (due to CICCUC’s diminishing membership) CICCUC declined, ‘insisting on “the atoning blood of Jesus Christ as the central point of their message”’. After the Second World War CICCUC ‘withdrew from another scheme giving Cambridge religion a common front insisting that “Unity in doctrine is essential for evangelisation”’.¹⁶ On every front they stood in opposition to the values and theology of SCM. In recollecting the 1920s and 1930s one influential CICCUC member, B. G. Buxton, was adamant that the Inter-Varsity Fellowship (founded on evangelical lines by CICCUC members) should never be remembered as being in fellowship with SCM: ‘We do not want later men to feel IVF,

very important in the development of CICCUC missionary identity. See Pollock, *The Cambridge Seven* (2nd edn, London, 1985).

¹¹ Ibid., p. 172.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Bellerby, Recollections of the CICCUC/SCM split. JPP.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ *Varsity*, 1 March 1958, p. 9. JPP.

like CICCUC, were one with SCM ever'.¹⁷

It was not just the founders of the Ruanda Mission who were involved in the Cambridge evangelical scene. A photograph of the General Committee of the Union in 1911, just after their split, shows W. A. Pitt-Pitts, who became Archdeacon of the Ruanda Mission stations and H. D. Hooper, who sat on the council for the Ruanda Mission.¹⁸ Dr 'Joe' Church and Lawrence Barham who would later be so crucial to the East African Revival whilst working for the Ruanda Mission were 'official' representatives of CICCUC at Emmanuel and Gonville and Caius Colleges in the 1920s as was P. Brazier (later an Archdeacon of Ruanda), Martin Capon (also Secretary for CICCUC in 1929/30), Howard Church (Joe's brother) and H. Earnshaw-Smith (also Vice-President of CICCUC in 1927/1928).¹⁹ In fact, out of the ten full-time male members in the field in January, 1933, the Ruanda Mission could boast that only one came from Oxford, one from the military and the remaining eight were Cambridge and CICCUC men.²⁰ Without a shadow of a doubt the evangelical Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union and its evangelicalism was a breeding ground for the Ruanda Mission.

Affiliation to CICCUC and its evangelical position did not diminish after graduation for RGMM missionaries and it became the 'spiritual club' its President had feared it would. From 1919-1940 eight members of the Ruanda Mission returned after graduation to address the Union on a total of twenty five separate occasions.²¹ One alumnus serving in Kenya, Arthur Pitt-Pitts, even found it a reason for transferring out of the CMS Kenya

¹⁷ B G. Buxton to J. Pollock, 18 August 1953. JPP.

¹⁸ Pollock, *Cambridge Movement*, p. 182.

¹⁹ CICCUC Term Cards, 1921-1930. JPP. P. Brazier would later be known better as 'Jim' Brazier, often being referred to as 'J. Brazier'.

²⁰ *RN*, No. 43 (January, 1933). p. 3. MAM E/1/1.

²¹ CICCUC Term Cards, 1919-1940. JPP.

Mission and into the Ruanda Mission, where he became Archdeacon in 1931. Despite being Mission secretary he still found it within him to write:

I really dread the moment when Bishop Heywood [of Kenya] resigns...I have heard names mentioned [as replacements] with whom I should find it impossible to work...a good many men would not stick me, I am so CICCUC hence I have a fear of being turned out of Kenya. And Ruanda seemed a safe place.²²

Fear of the encroachment of anti-evangelical/anti-CICCUC theology was a powerful motivation for evangelical Anglicans in the 1920s.²³ Pitt-Pitts' views about the acceptance of his theological position in Ruanda had already been proved correct.

Stanley-Smith had written to him a few months before to ask him to take up a position as archdeacon with complete confidence, referencing a personal affinity with Pitt-Pitts' theological standpoint. Stanley-Smith expressed it thus:

I will put my own views as to you being the leader of our mission.

1. As regards personal relationships Len [Sharp] and I both love you like a brother.
2. We would have the fullest confidence in your spiritual leadership – knowing that you seek to be led by the Spirit, and are moved by all the essential principles we hold dear...God has given you powers of spiritual leadership and we want the Ruanda Mission to be utterly spiritual through and through (not merely sound). I dread soundness without sanctification.²⁴

'Joe' Church was invited to join the mission a few years earlier than Pitt-Pitts but with equal enthusiasm. Church had only recently left Cambridge and was Stanley-Smith's junior by over ten years. His CICCUC credentials, however, went before him. 'I have no hesitation in asking you to consider it carefully', Stanley-Smith wrote to him,

²² A. Pitt-Pitts to 'Bulgy', 8 August 1931, p. 2. MAM Y/1/4.

²³ For more detail supporting this see A. Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920-1990* (London, 1991), p. 200.

²⁴ A. Stanley-Smith to A. Pitt-Pitts, n.d., in reply to A. Pitt-Pitts to A. Stanley-Smith, 23 May 1931. MAM Y/1/4.

All the more do I do this, because God has in His mercy kept us from modernism on the one hand and sacerdotalism on the other, and we want intensely to keep the mission entirely along those lines. Therefore anyone offering like you inspires us with great hope.²⁵

The letters between Stanley-Smith and Church are littered with references to mutual contacts at the university, all of whom were CICCUC and many the subject of Stanley-Smith's encouragement to Church to begin recruiting.²⁶ Cambridge was a connection that was not just useful, but highly valued. Church was officially 'adopted' by CICCUC on 7 June 1927 and was soon referred to as 'CICCUC's own missionary'.²⁷ In February, 1931, Stanley-Smith wrote while on furlough reporting a 'happy time' at Cambridge.

There is the beginnings I think of a strong move among the don's wives ...for Ruanda. I hope they will form a Ruanda Association and so be linked to you [Joe Church] like the CICCUC is. It is very important at all costs for you to write letters to them regularly. The CICCUC are doing their very best, I think, and I believe your connection there is assured.²⁸

Theological exclusivity and a disregard for ecclesiastical hierarchy (sacerdotalism) were an ingrained part of the evangelical heritage that came from CICCUC and instrumental to the course taken by the Ruanda Mission. It was a position that was unique to them as a mission within all of CMS.²⁹

²⁵ A. Stanley-Smith to J. Church, 3 January 1926. JEC 9/3/2.

²⁶ A. Stanley-Smith to J. Church, February 1926. JEC 9/3/3. A. Stanley-Smith to J. Church, 10 April 1926. JEC 9/3/5.

²⁷ CICCUC Missionary Minutes, 1927. 'June 7 – Dr Joe Church adopted (just going out to Ruanda as Med. Miss.)'. JPP.

²⁸ A. Stanley-Smith to J. Church, 26 February 1931. JEC 9/3/7.

²⁹ Other missionaries of the same evangelical persuasion were known to leave CMS to enter more evangelical mission bodies. See the CMS/BCMS controversy outlined below.

One of the most important influences on CICCU at this time was Keswick holiness spirituality. The mainstay of this movement was the annual Keswick Convention, a week-long evangelical teaching week in the Lake District, and CICCU, David Goodhew argued, 'was rooted in the Keswick Convention'.³⁰ The links between Keswick, CICCU and the Ruanda Mission were clear. Not only did members of the Mission make frequent reference to the influence of Keswick in their development but the Chairman of the Ruanda Mission Council, Rev. E. L. Langston, also held the same role at Keswick (1942-1943, 1945).³¹ He spoke seven times at CICCU between 1920 and 1937, including one 'Freshmen's Address' and one 'Missionary Breakfast'.³²

By the inter-war years, Bebbington has argued, Keswick had become highly respectable, 'the epitome of biblically-grounded experience' for evangelicals.³³ Its theology was 'certainly evangelical' and whilst the 'theological fulcrum' was the cross, activism was well noted and many adherents were sent out into societies like CMS.³⁴ There were unique features of the Keswick movement, however, that kept it distinctive from broader evangelicalism.³⁵ Bebbington suggests they were primarily its emphasis on a moment of spiritual crisis, its eschatology, its emphasis on faith and the repression of sin and consequent 'victory'.³⁶ Of these one of the most significant, particularly to

³⁰ D. Goodhew, 'The Rise of the Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union, 1910-1971', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (Jan., 2003), p. 64.

³¹ Although this was expressed both directly and indirectly in missionary records. Often Keswick influence was expressed through the use of the phrase 'victorious life'. See J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 2. JEC 9/2/25.

³² CICCU Term Cards, 1920-1937. JPP.

³³ Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 151. I. Randall, *Evangelical Experiences: A Study in the Spirituality of English Evangelicalism 1918-1939* (Carlisle, 1999), p. 14.

³⁴ Bebbington, *Holiness in Nineteenth-Century England* (Carlisle, 2000), p. 77.

³⁵ Although not from CICCU, which was heavily associated with Keswick.

³⁶ Bebbington, *Holiness*, p. 45

the development of the Ruanda Mission's own conventions, was the element of 'crisis' teaching.³⁷ At one of the conferences, for example, Pearsall Smith, a senior Keswick figure, said, 'It is to bring you to a *crisis* of faith that we have come together'.³⁸ It was a crisis, however, that required an individual's response and it was this response that RGMM missionaries aimed to get from their own adherents. The response, another speaker articulated, was to make 'an immediate and complete surrender of self-will and unbelief'.³⁹

Keswick's understanding of hamartiology and sanctification was also of great importance to the Ruanda Mission, particularly in the tension that would arise from the more enthusiastic missionaries' frequent demands for honest and radical confession. Keswick taught not of the *eradication* of sin but of *repression*. It was markedly different from popular nineteenth-century Wesleyan suppositions that Christians could achieve entire sanctification: Victory, in Keswick, could be achieved over sin but only through it being 'perpetually counteracted'.⁴⁰ Practically speaking this meant that sin remained in the individual throughout this life and a person was defined by the constant need for freedom from this sin. The positivist interpretation of ecstaticism found in the Runwe episode of 1916, where 'nearness' to God opened the door to a whole array of pleasurable, powerful and miraculous experiences, was overshadowed by the weight of sin. Ecstaticism, when it would occur, would be seen only as a sign of conviction, the internal struggle with sin. Relationship between Keswickers was necessarily one of continual accountability and confession.

³⁷ Babington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 151.

³⁸ Bebbington, *Holiness*, p. 81.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ J. Holden (ed.), *The Keswick Jubilee Souvenir* (London, 1925), p. 10, cited in Randall, loc. cit.

The influence of the Keswick Convention in CICCUC and the Ruanda Mission was most important, however, in its relationship to ecstatic spirituality. Randall has suggested that the post-war environment in Keswick and evangelical circles was one of great spiritual expectancy; after the devastation of the War-years many thought that God would be sending a great spiritual revival to England. One episode in particular epitomised this: In July 1921 two clergymen from Lowestoft made an ‘unscheduled and dramatic report at Keswick on revival in East Anglia’.⁴¹ The convention delegates were informed that revival enthusiasm had begun at a Keswick meeting in 1919 and had accelerated so quickly that in March and April 1921 Douglas Brown, a visiting speaker to Lowestoft, had preached to several hundred people each evening and, on occasions, over a thousand.⁴² He spoke of a ‘baptism in the Holy Ghost’ that was the source of his power and soon, Randall maintains, ‘Keswick networks were absorbed’ with these signs of revival. When Brown was scheduled for a main address in the Convention of June 1922 people ‘flocked’ to hear him, feeling that ‘something’ was going to happen.⁴³ Emotions ‘soared’ as he preached: ‘Oh Holy Dove, you understand... brood over these people! You moved 3,000 people on the Day of Pentecost, move this 2,500’.⁴⁴ Those who wished to make a response after the address were invited to a nearby hall but there were too many to fit – only 200-300 could be accommodated at once and ‘consecration meetings’ had to be held for the audience almost in its entirety.⁴⁵ ‘Pentecostal fire’, reported one observer, ‘had fallen on Keswick’.⁴⁶

It is at this point that Keswick began to determine the direction taken by post-1920s

⁴¹ Randall, op.cit., p. 23. Elsewhere this has been known as the ‘Fisherman’s Revival’. For more on this see S. Griffin, *A Forgotten Revival* (Bromley, 1992) and M. Marcel, *Prepare for Revival* (n.p., 2012).

⁴² Randall, op.cit., p. 24.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 25.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

evangelicalism in relation to ecstatic revivalism. Keswick was on the brink of moving into an emotional theology typical of the Apostolic Faith Movement twenty years before.⁴⁷ Two key figures played an important role in altering this direction and providing the foundation for the theology adopted by the Ruanda Mission during their experiences with revival and ecstaticism in East Africa. Dr G. Scroggie took the address immediately after Brown and was imperiously corrective: 'Faith is not credulity; faith is not ignorance; faith is intelligent; faith is open-eyes; faith has reason as well as emotion, and the man is in grave peril who is resting on emotion rather than upon intelligent understanding'.⁴⁸ 'Revival fires', Randall surmised, 'had been dampened'.⁴⁹

The second figure of note was W. H. Aldis, Chairman of Keswick (1936-1939, 1946-1947) and a keynote speaker at CICCUC throughout the 1930s.⁵⁰ Like Scroggie, Aldis did not approve of the emotionalism of Brown's delivery and, under their influence, the Keswick Convention of the 1920s became less intense. The purpose of attending a teaching week at Keswick, Aldis informed listeners in 1926, was not to 'feel good'.⁵¹ Those coming for power to perform miracles would be dissatisfied for there was no short cut to 'abandonment to the Lordship of Christ'.⁵² Enthusiastic desire for 'being filled' with the Holy Spirit of God was only meant for one thing, Aldis would maintain, and it was not for ecstatic experiences. Instead it was 'to make the believer like Christ, to bring victory over sin and to enable effective witness'.⁵³ Alongside their corrective theological measures Aldis and Scroggie brought the role of rationality to the fore of

⁴⁷ This was the term adopted by early Pentecostals at Azusa Street, 1906. See G. Espinosa, 'Ordinary Prophet: William J. Seymour and the Azusa Street Revival', in H. Hunter and C. Robeck, *The Azusa Street Revival and its Legacy* (Eugene, OR: 2006), pp. 29-60.

⁴⁸ *KW*, 1922, p. 107, cited in Randall, op.cit., p. 25.

⁴⁹ Randall, op.cit., p. 26.

⁵⁰ CICCUC Term Cards, 1925-1939. JPP.

⁵¹ *KW*, 1926, p. 103, cited in Randall, op.cit., p. 28.

⁵² Randall, op.cit., p. 28.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Keswick teaching in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1922, for example, Scroggie urged that convention delegates ‘must think clearly if we are to act soundly’, for consecration was meant to be undertaken ‘intelligently, deliberately, definitely, thoughtfully, joyfully, immediately’.⁵⁴ By the 1930s, Randall argued, Keswick teaching had undergone a hierarchical shift from the pneumatological emphasis of the early 1920s to a Christological one and by 1938 the Keswick hymnbook was revised to get rid of overtly ecstatic language.⁵⁵ Keswick did not abandon the role of the Holy Spirit, but it was subservient to its crucicentric values. ‘Thus’ he claimed, ‘Keswick resisted the calls by liberal evangelicals for a broad path and also distanced itself from any teaching about Spirit Baptism which savoured of the extremes, as Keswick saw it, of Wesleyanism or Pentecostalism’.⁵⁶ While the RGMM had their own unique set of tensions to work through, it was a path they would come to mirror.

Modernism within the Church Missionary Society

There was another major event in the liberal/modernist debate that affected the formation of the Ruanda Mission.⁵⁷ This time, however, the split was in the heart of the mission movement – the Anglican ‘Church Missionary Society’. The situation came to a head in 1922 and was summarised a few years afterwards by a past Vice-President of

⁵⁴ *KW*, 1922, p. 107, cited in Randall, op.cit., p. 28.

⁵⁵ Randall, op.cit., pp. 33, 29.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 33.

⁵⁷ The formation date for the Ruanda Mission was 1921.

CMS, S. H. Gladstone, in a published letter.⁵⁸ ‘The causes of the alienation were very simple’, he recalled,

On July 1922, after four months’ calm consideration, the CMS Committee (fully represented and numbering probably a thousand) refused to adopt a resolution proposed by us which would have caused CMS to require from her future agents belief (1) in the trustworthiness of the historical records of Scripture, (2) in the truth of all Christ’s utterances.⁵⁹

A statement of belief was drawn up by the CMS in November, 1922 in an attempt to resolve future doubts about the theological legitimacy of its missionaries for, as Gladstone recalled,

we know that in the past, CMS did send to the field those who would not accept the two truths mentioned above, and that your [CMS] Hon. Secretary was right when he stated that some such were in the field in 1922.⁶⁰

It was not enough, however, and on 22 November 1922 the leading evangelicals failed to safeguard their beliefs by 210 votes to 130 and soon afterwards the exodus of evangelicals took place.⁶¹ Three vice-presidents of the CMS and four honorary life-long governors resigned, and a ‘considerable’ departure of supporters and subscribers began.⁶² By March 1923 thirty-five Missionary Service League branches had disaffiliated from CMS, seventy-eight clergy resigned their membership (and thirty more were considering it), thirty-eight honorary lay officers of associations and the whole executive committee of the Bolton CMS association.⁶³

⁵⁸ Hewitt, *The Problems of Success*, pp. 461-473 (for the CMS position); W. S. Hooton and J. Stafford Wright, *The First Twenty-Five Years of the Bible Churchman’s Missionary Society* (London, 1947), pp. 1-17 (for the BCMS position).

⁵⁹ S. H. Gladstone and D. Bartlett to ‘The Committee of the CMS’, 11 November, 1929. Published alongside other letters in ‘The Rectification of an Error’, a pamphlet by BCMS (n.d.).

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid, p. 13.

⁶² Hewitt, *The Problems of Success*, p. 471.

⁶³ Ibid.

Gladstone became the first President of the new society, ‘The Bible Churchman’s Missionary Society’ (BCMS). It was a society ‘founded fully upon the Word of God...In its Colleges, for men and women, “the Bible, no more, no less, none else” is the basis of its scheme of training’.⁶⁴ On a pamphlet that was designed by the BCMS to present the official position of the society the cover-page simply read ‘Why support the BCMS? “For the Word of God and for the Testimony of Jesus Christ”’.⁶⁵ The two were synonymous – a Christo-centric theology and the rigid acceptance of scripture.

The Ruanda Mission gave specific mention to the events in the first few issues of their quarterly mission journal, *Ruanda Notes*, for by this time they were at work in Ruanda. Every effort was made to distance itself theologically. Algernon Stanley-Smith wrote in February 1923 that

letters to the press testify to the distress which the controversy in the CMS has brought to many missionaries in the field...we are determined as far as it is in our power to ensure it that an unmutated Bible and an infallible Christ shall be preached in the Ruanda Medical Mission.⁶⁶

Particularly with the difficult financial situation that was being faced by CMS in the early 1920s, the theological tension that arose from the split created extra difficulties for both CMS and the Ruanda Mission, particularly as the agreement for the RGMM foundation was that it would be financially independent of CMS for its first four years. As financial supporters of CMS waned in their loyalty, RGMM came under increased pressure to ensure it was not seen to be taking valuable CMS support. Stanley-Smith wrote home in 1922 saying,

⁶⁴ ‘Why Support the BCMS?’, a pamphlet by BCMS (n.d.), c. 1945.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 6 (February, 1923), p. 49.

The prevailing impression is...that these serious deficits year by year have been due to a growing distrust by its supporters and the [CMS] Society's attitude towards the Bible...It is our firm conviction that the work of the Society will always fail...until it takes its stand unequivocally on this vital issue.⁶⁷

It was partly for this reason that in 1924 the work of the Ruanda Mission came under the direction and control of the Ruanda Sub-conference, a subsidiary of the CMS Parent Committee. Although all minutes were still sent through the CMS Parent Committee, it allowed the separate administration of the Ruanda Mission and the separate raising of funds.⁶⁸

The procedures for candidate selection, in particular, were disputed with accusations made against the Ruanda Mission that they were putting CMS candidates' selection procedures into disrepute.⁶⁹ One case in 1935 was cited concerning a 'Miss Carpenter'. She was apparently unaware that the Ruanda Mission was a subsidiary unit of CMS. A complaint was made to the chairman of the Ruanda Council that she believed that 'the main CMS had gone off the lines' and 'while she might display true loyalty to the mission in Ruanda her letters show a curious lack of any sense of loyalty to the Society under which she would be working'. 'The CMS training is a safeguard against this sort of misconception', the letter continued, '...[and] the CMS is therefore unable to consider the acceptance of Miss Carpenter for training or service'.⁷⁰

It was in April 1926 that the 'Ruanda Council' was formed in order to make clear 'their position within CMS...should be safeguarded and defined, so that the witness of the

⁶⁷ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 4. (June, 1922), p. 33.

⁶⁸ 'Statement of the Organisation and Financing of the Work', L. Sharp and A. Stanley-Smith to E. Langston, 23 March 1928. MAM 11/4.

⁶⁹ See 'Ruanda Council Procedure'. MAM 11/5.

⁷⁰ Unknown to Chairman of Ruanda Council, (1935?). MAM 11/5.

Mission might be united and unchanging'.⁷¹ When *Ruanda Notes* made its way onto the doormats of all the financial supporters of the mission every single issue from 1926 began in exactly the same way:

1. The Ruanda Council and the missionaries of the RGMM stand for the complete inspiration of the whole Bible as being, and not merely containing, the word of God.
2. Their determination is to proclaim full and free salvation through simple faith in Christ's atoning death on the Cross.
3. They are satisfied they have received from CMS full guarantees to safeguard the future of the RGMM on Bible, Protestant and Keswick lines.

The division within Anglicanism between 1909 and 1922 went right to the heart of the Ruanda Mission as it entered its formation. The role of such tension was crucial, not because it drew Keswick/CICCU theology into the East African Revival (for, as will be seen in the next chapter, there were strong influences already resident in Kigezi and Ruanda that would play a far more influential role) but because it shaped the behaviour of the missionaries themselves. It did place the missionaries in the middle of a debate that encouraged intense division and, as a mission in Ruanda surrounded by a more liberal CMS and Uganda Church, therefore isolation. More importantly, however, it established in them a value for a hierarchy of theology that placed Christology above pneumatology. In the face of a plethora of mounting tensions it would set the foundations for the theological justification to censor and control behaviour that was not deemed to serve the 'Lordship of Christ'.

⁷¹ L. Guillebaud, *A Grain of Mustard Seed: The Growth of the Ruanda Mission of CMS* (London), p. 30.

Chapter Two

The Background to Revival: Colonial Disillusionment, Traditional Spirituality and Political Unrest in Kigezi and Northern Ruanda

British influence was first established in East Africa in the late nineteenth century. The 1884-1885 Berlin Conference set out German and British 'spheres of influence' along the modern day border between Kenya and Tanzania. While German East Africa was put in place to the south, British administration pushed westwards. Defeat during the Great War and subsequent negotiations allocated the mandate for German East Africa to Britain, with the exception of Ruanda-Urundi which came under Belgian rule. When British administration began, Uganda was made up primarily of four main Bantu 'kingdoms': Buganda, on the north-west shores of Lake Victoria, Bunyoro to the north-west of that, Toro to the west and Ankole to the south-west. Of these, Buganda had, from the outset, a degree of leverage over the others through British colonial favour.

Hansen has highlighted the use of Baganda agents through Uganda in colonial administration and the deliberate policy among CMS missions to adopt Luganda as the *lingua franca* from 1912, ‘based on the missions’ great affection for the Baganda and their assumed importance for the spread of the Gospel’. So widespread was the European bias that Hansen called it the ‘Buganda Syndrome’.¹ The Western kingdoms of Toro and Bunyoro held a ‘near rebellion’ in 1907, driving out the government-placed Baganda chiefs and demanding the use of local vernacular instead of Luganda. It is into this setting that Kigezi falls. With the encroaching pastoralist communities of Batutsi to the south and Banyankole to the east, Bakiga cultivators developed a cohesive identity as reactionaries. The use of Baganda agents in the district was strongly resisted and local beliefs in spirit possession cults (*emandwa*), and in particular the Nyabingi cult, became, Hansen argued, the ‘ideology of protest’ against the outsider.² By the 1920s it had become a movement of some renown, presenting the single greatest risk to British hegemony in the entirety of Uganda. It was this Nyabingi spirit cult that Kevin Ward has claimed was ‘of particular importance to the ecstatic phenomena that [later] appeared in the East African Revival’.³ Although Ruanda-Urundi was a Catholic Belgian mandate and initial permission for entry was refused to RGMM, by 1925 a site was approved at Gahini, north-west Ruanda and permission given for Protestant missionary work to begin.⁴

¹ H. Hansen, *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda 1890-1925* (London, 1984), pp. 402, 396.

² Hansen, *Mission, Church.*, p. 146. See also J. Freedman, *Nyabingi: The Social History of an African Divinity* (Tervuren, 1984). p. 80ff.

³ K. Ward, ‘Introduction’ in K. Ward and E. Wild-Wood (eds.), *The East African Revival: History and Legacies* (Kampala, 2010), pp. 9-10. This view is also shared by I. Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester, 1977), p. 203.

⁴ G. Hewitt, *The Problem of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910-42, Volume I* (London, 1971), p. 267.

The setting of Ruanda was, superficially, somewhat unique. A collection of ‘Genesis traditions’ that sought to categorise the ethnic make-up of Ruanda according to the ‘Hamitic hypothesis’ that ‘Hamites’ (Batutsi) had not only arrived from the north as descendants of Ham and Noah but were ‘superior’ to the resident Bahutu.⁵ Such a view attempted to present Ruanda as a Kingdom united and justified through Batutsi rulership. David Newbury has demonstrated, however, the discrepancies with such a myth.⁶ It was the ‘subservience of history to political ends’.⁷ Centralised though it may have been, the kingdom was far from united outside of the immediate influence of the Royal Court. Peripheral regions such as the borders with Kigezi and the north/north-west of Ruanda were resistant and resentful of the hegemonic efforts of the Batutsi Court and the Bakiga and northern Banyaruanda found a curious affinity through shared *emandwa* traditions and the increasingly politicised Nyabingi cult.⁸

Among the Bakiga, Taylor argued there were three forms of spirit interaction that operated underneath the remote oversight of a ‘high god’: the spirits of departed ancestors (*bazimu*), famous spirits of departed figures (*emandwa*) and ‘Nyabingi spirits’ (‘the most important of all’).⁹ Similar observations have been made for spiritual belief systems among the Bahaya, Banyaruanda, Bahaya and in Ankole.¹⁰

⁵ See E. Sanders, ‘The Hamitic hypothesis: Its Origins and Functions in Time Perspective’, *Journal of African History*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (1969), pp. 521-532.

⁶ C. Newbury, ‘Ethnicity and the Politics of History in Rwanda’, *Africa Today*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (January-March, 1998), pp. 7-24.

⁷ I. Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester, 1977), p. 1.

⁸ There was also a significant correlation through *emandwa* practices with other people groups such as the Bahaya of north-western Tanganyika and the Banyankole. On the difference between the perceived and actual authority of the Royal dynasty see D. Newbury, ‘Writing Royal History: Is Dynastic History the Equivocal to the History of a Kingdom?’, *African Studies Review*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (April, 2002), pp. 140-149 and ‘Precolonial Rwanda and Burundi: Local Loyalties, Regional Royalities’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2001), pp. 225-314.

⁹ B. Taylor, *The Western Lacustrine Bantu* (London, 1962), p. 127.

¹⁰ M. Edel, *The Chiga of Western Uganda* (New York, 1957), p. 146, Taylor, op.cit., p. 14, 142. Stenning, op. cit., p. 262.

Closed communities, or ‘possession cults’, grew up around *emandwa* who were believed to be the spirits of influential figures of the past. Initiation was required for entry. Specific geographical features, particularly raised areas of ground, were employed to communicate with the spirits in these highly secretive, night-time occasions where the initiate was taken through shameful acts and confession rites to create the idea that they ‘had been butchered and come back to life’.¹¹

The practice of such traditions was ecstatic in nature. Possession cases were, Edel recounted, often ‘painful physical experiences’.¹² Speaking ‘in a strange tongue’, Edel also argued, was ‘characteristic’ of the séance ceremonies that formed part of the cults.¹³ In some instances the possessed became a ritual specialist, a ‘form of consulting sorcerer’ (*omufumu*) for the community. The *emandwa* spirits were thought to ‘sit on the head’ of the individual and ‘whisper’ guidance in the preparation of charms and herbs to cure.¹⁴ It worked the other way as well, however. The ‘most notable’ power of the *omufumu*, Edel observed, was in the ‘sending out of his spirits to bewitch an evildoer so that he would make restitution in some way’ (*sisya*).¹⁵ These ceremonies were ‘socially approved’ and performed in the dead of night with a ‘considerable audience’ during which the *omufumu* engaged with the spirits through an animal horn. It was believed such spirits resided in such a horn and that out of it they would speak with the voice of the person who was to be afflicted before being sent to do their work.

There has been some debate as to whether colonial officials and mission workers were able to distinguish the difference between *emandwa* and Nyabingi. Hansen went to

¹¹ Edel, *Chiga*, p. 146.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 140.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

some effort to demonstrate that it was.¹⁶ Denoon and Brazier both argued, however, that colonial officials could not make the distinction, indiscriminately suppressing all forms of indigenous spiritual expression.¹⁷ Hopkins agreed, arguing that the ‘simple rubrics in dealing with traditional supernatural categories [meant] the British officials may well have failed to appreciate the cult’s position within the indigenous religious structure’.¹⁸

In many respects, Edel argued, the *emandwa* and Nyabingi concepts could seem ‘very familiar’ yet there was, she maintained, a distinction.¹⁹ Part of that distinction was hierarchical. ‘All things here below are given by Nyabingi’, offered one Mukiga, ‘All *emandwa* are sent by Nyabingi’.²⁰ Hopkins noted that unlike *emandwa* traditions there were no initiation rites – Nyabingi priests (*bagirwa*) were ‘specialists, each of whom claimed to have been selected by Nyabingi as her medium and therefore to have the exclusive power to invoke her presence and to interpret her will’.²¹ It is for this reason that ecstatic spiritual behaviour, when it appeared in the Ruanda Mission, created such fear for officials. With no cult communities organising initiation rites it was almost impossible to discern in whom and where it might appear. ‘Nyabingi is the wind, she is a spirit, she circulates everywhere going from place to place’, another Mukiga said, ‘She came just like that, out of thin air’.²²

¹⁶ Hansen, ‘The Colonial Control of Spirit Cults in Uganda’, in D. Anderson and D. Johnson (eds.), *Revealing Prophets: Prophecy in Eastern African History* (London, 1995), p. 152, quoting J. E. T. Philipps, ‘The Nabingi. An anti-European secret society in Africa, in ‘British Ruanda, Ndorwa and the Congo (Kivu)’, *Congo*, Vol. 1 (Bruxelles, January 1928).

¹⁷ D. J. W. Denoon, ‘Agents of Colonial Rule, Kigezi 1908-1930’, East African Institute of Social Research conference (Kampala, January 1968), p. 17; F. S. Brazier, ‘The Nyabingi Cult: religion and political scale in Kigezi 1900-1930’, East African Institute of Social Research conference (Kampala, January 1968), p. 11.

¹⁸ Hopkins, ‘The Nyabingi cult’, p. 297.

¹⁹ Edel, *Chiga*, p. 149.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 259.

²² Freedman, *Nyabingi*, p. 48.

The first signs of possession were often heralded by a dream and a physical change to the body such as weakness or illness. ‘Diviners’ would recognise these symptoms and suggest the individual to build a ‘spirit hut’ for Nyabingi to reside. The huts frequently had an inner section in which only the *mugirwa* could enter and a great deal of time was spent there, eating and even sleeping. Visitors would remain outside, making requests of the spirit and it was not unusual for a sizable retinue to develop.

By the early twentieth century the cult was found in various strengths across Congo, southern Uganda and northern Ruanda, particularly in Kigezi and across the Kigezi/Ruanda border, the area inhabited by the Ruanda Mission.²³ It often appeared through a woman who established herself as a medium (*mugirwa*, pl. *bagirwa*) for the spirit and often as a figure of power.²⁴ Emin Pasha’s journey reported in 1891 of ‘The Queen of Mpororo...said to be named Najivingi’ who was never seen by her subjects and was only heard as ‘a voice behind a curtain of bark cloth’.²⁵ ‘Such theatrical practices’, Pasha found, ‘have gained for her, throughout Karagwe, Nkole etc., the reputation of a great sorceress, capable of bewitching people and also of benefiting them’.²⁶ Elizabeth Hopkins suggested that the ‘presence of the spirit’ of Nyabingi was ‘marked’, normally by ‘the assumption of a stylized trembling movement, ventriloquism, and the ability to hold a ‘dialogue’ with the spirit in an esoteric language

²³ Hansen, ‘Colonial Control’, pp. 146-9; Hopkins, Nyabingi, p. 295; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, p. 19.; Freedman, *Nyabingi*, pp. 52ff.; Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 1 (May 1921), in JEC/RN, p. 7.

²⁴ Iris Berger noted the difficulty of adequately translating *mugirwa* (pl. *bagirwa*), suggesting priestess/priest or, ‘more problematically’, prophet. See Berger, ‘Fertility as Power: Spirit Mediums, Priestesses and the Pre-colonial State in Interlacustrine East Africa’, in Anderson and Mazrui (eds.), *Revealing Prophets*, pp. 65-82. Here, p. 78. Freedman, (*Nyabingi*, p. 87) and Hopkins (‘Nyabingi’, p. 259) translated it as ‘medium’.

²⁵ Mpororo later became part of Kigezi; G. Swchwitzer, *Emin Pasha, His Life and Work* (Westminster, 1898), Vol. II, pp. 173, 177, cited in Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 265.

²⁶ Swchwitzer, *Emin Pasha*, loc. cit.; The Kiga were ‘territorially contiguous to Mpororo’. Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 264.

and in falsetto'.²⁷ Nyabingi was said to perform miracles, have the ability to change for and affect weather, crops and natural events.²⁸

An integral part of the politicisation of Nyabingi in the generation before the Ruanda Mission was established was the famous *mugirwa* Muhumusa, widow of the late *mwami* (king) of Ruanda, Rwabugiri. Having unsuccessfully challenged the succession of the *mwami*, she fled to Ndorwa, southern Kigezi, attempting to rally the Bakiga around her.²⁹ In September 1911 the government took military action against Muhumusa, killing forty of her soldiers and taking her into exile in Kampala but her actions began two decades of fervent activity from her followers and from others associated with the Nyabingi cult.³⁰ E. H. Reid, a Political Officer, noted the 'particular legend...that the bullets of the Wazungu [Europeans] would turn to water against her [Muhumusa]'.³¹ It was a dangerous echo of Maji Maji, a recent anti-colonial uprising in Tanganyika where similar claims were also made.³²

By 1916 Murindwa Rutanga claimed 'the colonial state was highly paralysed' by another *mugirwa* by the name of Ndochibiri.³³ Early that year he led an attack on an Anglo-Belgian border post.³⁴ With over two thousand 'fanatics' and the cult sacred animals (white sheep) Ndochibiri besieged the post for five hours, resulting in little loss

²⁷ Hopkins, 'The Nyabingi', p. 259.

²⁸ See, for example, the songs and oral histories recorded by Freedman, *Nyabingi*.

²⁹ Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 269.; The date of Muhumusa's exodus into Kiga is disputed, given as 1905 by Berger (p. 78) and as post-1909 by Hansen, 'Colonial Control', p. 147.

³⁰ Hansen, 'Colonial Control', p. 147.; Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 271ff.; Denoon, 'Agents', p. 4ff.; Bessell, 'Nyabingi', p. 79ff.

³¹ E. H. Reid to Chief Secretary, 30 November 1911, Entebbe, cited in Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 273.

³² M. Wright, 'Maji Maji: Prophecy and Historiography' in Anderson and Johnson (eds.), *Revealing Prophets*, p. 132. The comparison between the Nyabingi and Maji Maji was also made by K. Asare Opoku, 'Religion in Africa during the Colonial Era' in A. Boahen (ed.), *UNESCO General History of Africa*, Volume VII (London, 1985), p. 516, W. Rodney, 'The Colonial Economy', in Boahen (ed.), *UNESCO General History*, Volume VII, p. 332 and Hansen, 'Colonial Control', p. 143.

³³ M. Rutanga, 'Nyabingi Movement: People's Anti-Colonial Struggles in Kigezi 1910-1930', Centre for Basic Research Working Paper No. 18, Makerere University (1991), p. 64.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 65ff.

to the defenders but solidifying fears in the minds of the district.³⁵ In 1917 the headquarters of a Baganda employed as a colonial agent in Kigezi was attacked by a force of 1,400 men. It was demonstrative of not only anti-Ganda feeling throughout the district but a hatred of ‘all symbols of foreign influence’. A courthouse, Anglican Church and mosque were all destroyed.³⁶ The attack was ‘unprecedented in its savagery’; death and mutilation were dealt indiscriminately to sixty-three men, women and children.³⁷ Nyabingi unrest continued to grow and two years before the RGMM arrived an unidentified ‘Ruanda Nabingi’, accompanied by three hundred followers, attacked a government work party near the border.³⁸ The raid was unsuccessful but two months later Ndochibiri was reported to have obtained rifles and convened across the border in the Congo with four other *bagirwa*. The insurrection was put down by British troops in June 1919.³⁹

Neither the British authorities in Kigezi nor the Belgian in Ruanda were in any doubts about how serious a threat Ndochibiri’s following had been.⁴⁰ Their fear was equally of the political and spiritual behaviour of the *bagirwa*’s followers; The District Commissioner observed the ‘double danger of the movements...[being] essentially anti-European and supported by the fanaticism inculcated by Nabingi worship’.⁴¹ ‘I am of the honest conviction’, he wrote, ‘that a very serious general rising...had been most

³⁵ Monthly Report of the Provincial Commissioner, Western Province, January 1916, Entebbe, cited in Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 287. British authorities even feared famine at one point because the frequent movement of armed men through Ruanda was preventing the planting of adequate crops. Rutanga, ‘Nyabingi Movement’ p. 70.

³⁶ F. S. Brazier, ‘The Incident at Nyakishneyi, 1917’, *Uganda Journal*, Vol. XXXII, No. 1 (1968).

³⁷ Annual Report, Kigezi District, 1917-1918; District Commissioner to Chief Justice, 8 September, 1917. Both cited in Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 291.

³⁸ Monthly Report of the District Commissioner, April 1919, cited in Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 302.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Cited in Rutanga, ‘Nyabingi Movement’, p. 73.

⁴¹ District Commissioner to M. le Commissaire de District, Ruzizi-Kivu, 7 June 1919, cited in Rutanga, ‘Nyabingi Movement’, p. 70.

narrowly averted'.⁴² Such was the fear of future unrest that the authorities elected to display the bodies of the dead *bagirwa* at Kabale station, publicly burn the sacred white sheep in front of a gathering of 'leading chiefs' and deliver an anti-Nyabingi lecture to the same gathering before sending the head of Ndochibiri to be displayed at the British Museum in London.⁴³

Confession Ritual

Frequent episodes of open confession in the East African Revival have led a number of historians to look to pre-Christian traditions for evidence of such behaviour.

P'Karamura has argued that there was 'considerable evidence both in Uganda and elsewhere' that traditional concepts of confession and repentance pre-dated the arrival of Christianity.⁴⁴ His argument revolved principally around Stenning's study into the Ankole region of south Western Uganda.⁴⁵ Ankole consisted primarily of two main ethnic groups, the Bairu and the Bahima. Although the Bahima were outnumbered they traditionally provided the Ankole Kingdom with its warriors and chiefs and were believed to be the main adherents of the Revival message.⁴⁶ Stenning argued Bahima traditional religion was made up of three core areas – ancestral spirits, tutelary spirits

⁴² District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 25 June 191, Entebbe.; Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 5 July 191, Fort Portal. Both cited in Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 307.

⁴³ Bessell, 'Nyabingi', p. 83. Celebrations were held in Kampala, Entebbe (the government seat for Uganda), Kigali (administrative centre for Belgian Ruanda), Rutchuru (centre for the Kivu District, Belgian Congo) and England. Rutanga, 'Nyabingi Movement', p. 74 n. 125.

⁴⁴ G. P'Karamura, 'Revival and Repentance', MPhil thesis, University of Cambridge, 1995.

⁴⁵ D. Stenning, 'Salvation in Ankole' in M. Fortes and G. Dierterlen, *African Systems of Thought* (London, 1965), pp. 258-275.

⁴⁶ The 1959 census records a total population of the district at 520,000, of whom 468,000 were Bairu and 52,000 were Bahima. In 1960 the revival adherents in Ankole were believed to number 10,000 out of the 60,000 Protestant members of the population. Stenning, 'Salvation in Ankole', pp. 258, 261.

(*chwezi*) and the royal drum.⁴⁷ Banyankole tutelary spirits were the spirits of the departed kings and remained to help society according to the rituals of the king and local cult groups, to which entry was possible only on a ritual of confession of often grievous sexual activity. The initiate then was symbolically killed before being brought back to life and welcomed into the group.⁴⁸ The importance of these rituals in affecting behaviour in the Revival has, however, been disputed.⁴⁹ ‘The parallelism...is certainly interesting’, Brian Stanley felt, ‘but it is far from proven’.⁵⁰ One of the major reasons for this is that whilst such confession took an important role in Ankole *chwezi* initiation, it is less clear that it was as prevalent in *emandwa* traditions across the rest of western interlacustrine Africa.

What can be observed in Kigezi and Ruanda, however, is the existence of the concept of retaliation when ‘offence’ had been given to the spiritual realm, as well as the understanding that ‘appeasement of the spirits’ was necessary to avoid the consequences. Ancestral spirits among both people groups, for example, interacted with humanity on a negative level, often being seen as the cause of disease or sickness or affliction against family members. Crucially, however, there was an important role, facilitated by ‘diviners’, in recognising the cause of a spirit’s anger and the reason for its need for retribution. The solution offered was normally in terms of restorative action such as gift offerings or the repairing of familial bonds. In both cases the spirits were considered ‘appeased’ and the affliction lifted. Such beliefs had the capacity to induce confessional behaviour when matched with missionary teaching of need for

⁴⁷ Stenning, op. cit., p. 262.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 263.

⁴⁹ It has been contested by C. Robins. ‘Tukutendereza: A Study of Social Change and Sectarian Withdrawal in the *Balokole* Revival’, DPhil dissertation, Columbia University, 1975, p. 175.

⁵⁰ B. Stanley, ‘The East African Revival: African Initiative within a European Tradition’, *Churchman*, 92.1 (1978), p. 14.

‘confession’ to appease God after offence (‘sin’).

It is important to recognise the stronghold of fear that such Ancestral spirits had over family members and therefore the strength and urgency of the Bakiga/Banyaruanda desire to make appeasement when they had wronged a spirit, an important factor in later, emotional Revival confessions. Direct possession through ancestral spirits was unusual but it was highly feared, for the simple reason that they were thought to have the power to kill.⁵¹ The fear of spiritual retaliation for misdemeanours was found among the spirit possession cults as well. Tales were told throughout Kigezi of individuals who had not fulfilled their obligations to Nyabingi. One man, recalled Edel, reputedly became a hunchback after being remiss in an offering; another ‘died of drowning’ because he was a day late with his offering. Nyabingi spirits were ‘very imperious in their demands and very severe on any defaulter’.⁵² The belief in spiritual retaliation for incorrect action did not relent with the Christianisation of a community. Gorju wrote that,

The immutable substance, common to all and assuredly the most obvious feature, of the religion of our Africans is their belief in the ghosts of the departed. No belief is so deeply rooted, or has so much effect on their practical life.⁵³

⁵¹ Edel, *Chiga*, p. 139.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 151.

⁵³ J. Gorju, *Entre le Victoria, Albert et l’Edouard* (1920), chapter IV, cited in Welbourn, ‘Some Aspects of Kiganda Religion’, p. 176.

The Arrival of the Ruanda Mission: 'Civilisation' and the Missionary Solution.

Whilst on their way to East Africa in 1921 Stanley-Smith and Sharp were informed that they were denied access to Ruanda-Urundi by the Belgian Foreign Office.⁵⁴ It was for this reason that the 'Ruanda Mission' spent the first four years of its existence operating entirely out of Kigezi. Bishop Willis of Uganda suggested that the mission begin in Kigezi, southern Uganda. It turned out the bishop had already been approached by the colonial authorities about sending missionaries to Kigezi.⁵⁵ As British strategy towards Nyabingi was being revised from its previous military emphasis to involve the 'increasing absorption of the cult into the local political matrix' and had begun to seek the intentional 'civilisation of the district' as a 'remedy and safeguard against future trouble', the Cambridge doctors were a perfect match.⁵⁶ Stanley-Smith wrote in a newsletter home:

Until quite recently they [Bakiga] had proved a difficult tribe to control, for they were under the sway of a witch doctor, who stirred them up to rebellion...In view of this fact the Provincial Commissioner made a special appeal to the Uganda Mission to send a medical missionary to the country as in his opinion that was the best agency for quieting the fears of the people and bringing peace.⁵⁷

The mission's allocated region consisted of four areas: Rukiga and British Ruanda to the south and Ruzumbura and Kinkiezi to the north and Stanley-Smith, shortly followed by Sharp, arrived on 24 February 1921.⁵⁸ The District Commissioner wanted a greater

⁵⁴ Stanley-Smith and Sharp, 'Adventure in Faith', p. 2. JEC 9/2/42.

⁵⁵ Stanley-Smith and Sharp, *Ruanda's Redemption*, (Ruanda Medical Mission, 1924), pp. 10-11.

⁵⁶ Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 300.; Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 13 November 1920, cited in 'Nyabingi', pp. 309-310.

⁵⁷ A. Stanley-Smith, (pre-RN), February 1921, in JEC/RN, pp. 2-3. This newsletter was of the same format as *Ruanda Notes* but it only took the name 'Ruanda Notes' in May 1921.

⁵⁸ Hewitt, *The Problems of Success*, p. 264. Letter from A. Stanley-Smith, Kabale, Kigezi, May 7 1921. G3/A/7/O: Original Papers 1921, Reel 448. CMS Archives, Birmingham.; Stanley-Smith and Sharp, *Ruanda's Redemption*, p. 11.

facility for European education to ‘combat “the influence of the witchdoctors”’ and believed the presence of RGMM would ‘quieten’ his district.⁵⁹

Initially everything went as planned. RGMM began to establish just the things hoped for by the British administration and appeared to quieten fears, avoid an emotional ‘stirring’ and bring peace. Financial assistance was offered by the authorities to assist with projects and the mission could report that ‘by the kindly assistance of the Provincial and District Commissioners a great many difficulties have been and will be cleared out of the way’.⁶⁰ The RGMM responded immediately, beginning the building for a school at Kabale ‘for the better class of Bachiga’.⁶¹ Kabale High School was formally opened in July 1922 with twenty-five boys, including sons of ‘most of the big chiefs’ (the girls’ school began construction a year later).⁶² Sharp was able to report an ‘amazing change in the outward appearance at least from dirty little urchins, clad in skins and dirt, to the smart little fellows in their red fezes, white sashes and khaki uniforms’ who were now capable of basic recitation of scripture and an ‘almost pleasing’ rendition of ‘God Save the King’.⁶³

Medical work was another feature of the RGMM’s efforts and this also began immediately with ‘two small buildings on Government Hill’ near Kabale where they inherited the government medical work in the form of a little dispensary and a ‘dilapidated ward’.⁶⁴ A European nurse, Miss Watney, arrived in May 1921 and by 1924 they had eight ‘local boys’, two Bakiga ‘girls’ and three ‘native nurses’ (sent from

⁵⁹ Annual Report, Kigezi District, 1917-1918, cited in Rutanga, ‘Nyabingi Movement’, p. 126.

⁶⁰ *RN*, No. 1, May 1921, JEC/RN, p. 11.

⁶¹ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 2 (15 September 1921), in JEC/RN, p. 14.

⁶² L. Sharp, *RN*, No. 5 (14 September 1922), in JEC/RN, p. 39.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 3 (7 February 1922), in JEC/RN, p. 26; Stanley-Smith and Sharp, *Ruanda’s Redemption*, p. 15.

Toro hospital) assisting with the work.⁶⁵ The twelve beds were overflowing from the start and plans were made to build three large buildings, each eighty-five by twenty-five feet.⁶⁶ It was no small task, comprising somewhere near a quarter of a million bricks in total and a total cost of £1500.⁶⁷ Again, every effort was spent getting it operational in the quickest time possible. Building began in August 1921 and by February 1922 a ward, consulting room, pathological laboratory and operating ward were completed. In June 1923 an average of a hundred in-patients were resident and by November a full hundred and twenty beds had been put in place.⁶⁸ Patients came from as far as two hundred miles to the north east in Uganda and one hundred and eighty miles to the south in Urundi.⁶⁹ That year they had seven hundred and five in-patients, concluded one thousand and eighty-one operations and dealt with ‘something like 30,000 attendances’ at the dispensary.⁷⁰ The Principal Medical Officer for the district could only write favourably of the hospital in his 1923 report:

the arrangements are excellent, and the work done highly efficient. The hospital is of great value to the Government both for native and European medical work.⁷¹

‘Hand-in-hand’ would have been an apt observation of the relationship between the colonial government and the Ruanda Mission.⁷² After a tour along the Ruanda-Kigezi border in 1921 Stanley-Smith proudly reported back to England of the British administration’s endeavours. The Batwa Pygmy tribe used to raid across the Ruanda border into eastern Rukiga, he wrote, but these raids had now ceased. ‘Under British

⁶⁵ Stanley-Smith and Sharp, *Ruanda’s Redemption*, p. 16.

⁶⁶ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 3 (7 February 1922) in JEC/RN, p. 26.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*; Stanley-Smith and Sharp, *Ruanda’s Redemption*, p. 15.

⁶⁸ L. Sharp, *RN*, No. 7 (1 June 1923), in JEC/RN, p. 54. JEC 20/1-4; *RN*, No. 8 (2 November 1923), in JEC/RN, p. 59.

⁶⁹ Stanley-Smith and Sharp, *Ruanda’s Redemption*, p. 16.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁷² B. Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag* (Leicester, 1990), p. 11 ff.

protection they fear no foe now. How easy to draw the parallel of the great Deliverer who has come to rescue them from the power of the devil'.⁷³

It was a mutual attraction for obvious reasons. The Kigezi District annual report for 1922 seemed to suggest a year of relative peace, the few detected Nyabingi activities lacking the 'fanaticism' of previous years and being dismissed as 'of the witchcraft variety and without any political significance'.⁷⁴ The next report for 1923 was similarly tranquil and seen as 'encouraging proof of the advancement of the District' by the District Commissioner.⁷⁵ Word of the mission's activities even reached the vice-Resident of Belgian Ruanda. When Stanley-Smith visited Belgian authorities in Kigali to discuss the mission starting work across the border in Belgian Ruanda he found out that 'our work in [British] eastern Ruanda was recognised and respected...there was nothing hindering us spreading through Ruanda and Urundi as well'.⁷⁶ Expansion rapidly followed with the arrival of further missionaries, both medical and non-medical, in Miss C. Hornby (1923), Rev. J. Warren (1924), who came for the boys' school, Captain Geoffrey Holmes (1924), Miss Davis (1924), Rev. H. E. Guillebaud (1925), a language expert who later became the second archdeacon of Ruanda-Urundi (1940), Rev. H. S. Jackson (1926), Miss M. Saddler (1926), Dr J. E. Church (1927), Rev. L. Barham (1928) and Rev. C. Verity (1928).⁷⁷

⁷³ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 2 (15 September 1921), in JEC/RN, p. 18.

⁷⁴ Annual Report, Kigezi District, 1922, cited in Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 312.

⁷⁵ Annual Report, Kigezi District, 1923, cited in Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 312.

⁷⁶ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 8 (2 November 1923), in JEC/RN, p. 66.

⁷⁷ L. Guillebaud, *A Grain of Mustard Seed: The Growth of the Ruanda Mission of CMS* (Ruanda Mission, CMS, 1959), p. 129.

Disillusionment with the Missionary Solution

The expansion of the Ruanda Mission continued with the permission to continue into Belgian Ruanda-Urundi. Further stations were opened at Kigeme, southern Ruanda (1932), Shyira, south west Ruanda (1933) and in Urundi at Buhiga in the east (1935), Matana in the south (1935) and Ibuye in the north (1937).⁷⁸ By the late 1920s, and certainly by the mid-1930s, however, the RGMM missionaries were beginning to tread on thin ground and the amicable missionary-government partnership was increasingly under strain. British authorities could no longer look to peaceful reports to justify such partnership. By the time Captain Geoffrey Holmes and Kosiya Shalita, an African convert, established the mission's second station (and first in Ruanda) at Gahini in July 1925 a 'significant deterioration' had been seen in Kigezi district.⁷⁹ In Ruzumbura, northern Kigezi, well over 3,000 tax defaulters were reported in October and soldiers had to be stationed in some areas of the district to aid collection.⁸⁰ 'Minor' cases of Nyabingi were being observed with increasing frequency and, although it was assumed that Nyabingi would 'doubtless disappear with the spread of education', a 'large amount of witchcraft' was still being observed in the district.⁸¹ In 1927 eighteen cases of possession of witchcraft articles were tried in the District Court and 100 police were deployed in Belgian Ruanda, subduing almost 2,000 agitators.⁸² By 1928 an open rebellion broke out. Nyabingi had fully resurfaced.

Pre-emptive action from British forces ended what had been a planned attack on the

⁷⁸ Hewitt, *Problems of Success*, p. 273.

⁷⁹ Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 313.

⁸⁰ District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 5 July 1924 and 7 October 1924, cited in Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 313.

⁸¹ District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 7 April 1924, cited in Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 313; Annual Report of Provincial Commissioner, 1927, Entebbe, cited in Rutanga, 'Nyabingi Movement', p. 113.

⁸² Hopkins, 'Nyabingi', p. 314; Rutanga, 'Nyabingi Movement', p. 116.

British station and the RGMM mission headquarters at Kabale. With true flamboyance the Nyabingi war-anthem, ‘the Queen has come to her country’ had been ‘continually sung by a man from the top of the hill facing the station’ in preceding days to the planned attack and the *bagirwa* of the cult had been gathering hundreds of followers for an ‘armed witchcraft dance’ on hills in the same area.⁸³ Not only had the missionaries failed to prevent further uprisings, they had become the focus of Nyabingi rebellion. It was the end of a seven year honeymoon with the British authorities.

Even before any emergence of ecstatic phenomena in the mission stations the missionaries were finding themselves moving out of the position of favour they had initially held with the colonial authorities. A feature of the build-up to the 1928 rebellion had been a series of decrees made by a *mugirwa* who was operating out of Rukiga, the most curious of which was ‘that no work (i.e. in shambas [gardens]) may be done on a Monday or Tuesday’ as these days were ‘being set apart for ‘Nyabingi’’.⁸⁴ It was a decree that was widely followed – the District Commissioner commented that ‘it is amazing how very generally this is observed by the Rukiga natives’.⁸⁵ Unfortunately it was thought by the Provincial Commissioner to be ‘a reprisal’ against ‘certain CMS evangelists who some years ago tried to prohibit the pagan Bakiga from working their gardens ‘on the Lord’s Day’’.⁸⁶

CMS activity also gave cause for concern in other areas. When a Kigezi church was struck by lightning they demanded its replacement by unpaid, forced labour, falsely

⁸³ Ibid., p. 316.; Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 29 April 1928, Entebbe, cited in Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 316.

⁸⁴ District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, 1 Feb. 1928, cited in Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 315.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Provincial Commissioner to Chief Secretary, 29 Apr. 1928, cited in Hopkins, ‘Nyabingi’, p. 315.

claiming that it was ‘burnt by incendiarism’.⁸⁷ Dr Stanley-Smith later wrote to the District Commissioner to inform him that he had made a mistake and had appealed for help ‘under false pretences. Apparently it was not destroyed by incendiarism after all’.⁸⁸ The Commissioner was not impressed, particularly as Stanley-Smith’s confession conveniently came after all the work had been completed.⁸⁹ Tension was also found in the use of native labour in CMS hunting expeditions. Hunting for ivory was being pursued in areas known for harbouring Sleeping Sickness, a practice that had already been outlawed. Fifty native porters were used on average for each trip, often lasting as long as twelve days at a time. The Commissioner accused CMS of dangerously exposing natives to illness, failure to pay sufficient wages, forcing unpaid contributions to food from the natives, forcing men to carry them over great distances and the ‘inhuman exploitation of not feeding these porters’.⁹⁰

Interventions were required by the authorities over the milk contributions, known as *ezekibeere*, that natives were forced to make to CMS missionaries at Kabale station. Thirty individuals at a time had to take one cow up to three days walk to Kabale and remain there for the month in order to supply the fourteen missionaries with milk. Not only were they expected to provide their own food during their residency, they were reimbursed only two shillings per cow per month despite the standard price being closer to nine shillings.⁹¹ It was noted by the Commissioner that larger, more respectable cattle owners were not asked to provide the service – generally only those with a couple of cattle each. The differing conditions at Kabale to surrounding regions gave frequent

⁸⁷ A. Stanley-Smith to District Commissioner, 23 September 1927, cited in Rutanga, p. 129.

⁸⁸ A. Stanley-Smith to District Commissioner, 3 November 1927, cited in Rutanga, loc. cit.

⁸⁹ Rutanga, loc. cit.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 131.

⁹¹ The price of milk per bottle was twenty cents and each cow was expected to produce three bottles per day. District Commissioner to Provincial Commissioner, Western Province 28 September 1928, cited in Rutanga, ‘Nyabingi Movement’, p. 131

cause for concern that cattle were unnecessarily dying enroute at vast personal cost to these small-scale farmers. ‘This is a source of grievance among the peasantry’, warned the Commissioner, ‘no compensation is paid by the CMS in case of deaths...to gain a sense of perspective, one might reasonably say that the loss of a cow to a Mukiga...represents the savings of a life time’.⁹² Difficulties also arose from the belligerent anti-Catholic policies pursued by the Mission as well as the tension it created with local traditions. They were, complained the District Commissioner, ‘ignorant of the nature of the religions of cults which they are endeavouring to destroy and replace’.⁹³

The area chosen by the founding doctors of RGMM defined in a major way the direction taken by their mission. Both Kigezi and northern Ruanda had a history of ecstatic expressions of spirituality, expressed especially through the concept of spirit possession. As a resident system of spirituality it would have a profound effect on the expression of Christianity adopted by missionary converts. The assimilation of political unrest and ecstaticism through Nyabingi, however, created an inbuilt fear of ecstatic phenomena in the mission and, most importantly, the colonial administration, who held the keys to mission activity. Misappropriation of resources, especially labour, combined in the late 1920s with the renewed appearance of Nyabingi to mean that even before the controversial elements of ecstaticism appeared overtly in the Mission they were struggling for peace. The danger with RGMM, Hansen suggested, was that the methods used were aggressive, anti-traditional religion and intentionally expansive.⁹⁴ The colonial authorities had wanted missionaries who would ‘civilise’ their district but they

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Hansen, ‘Colonial Control’, p. 156; Philipps to Chief Secretary, 15 October 1930, cited in ‘Colonial Control’, p. 157.

⁹⁴ Hansen, ‘Colonial Control’, p. 156.

had instead got a mission that would appear to have incited their district.

Chapter Three

Bible Conventions and the Repression of Sin: The Missionaries' Misinterpretation of Revival?

The arrival of Dr J. E. Church in November 1927, a little before the 1928 rebellion, is often thought to have been of particular importance to the Ruanda Mission. After an initial five month spell at Kabale station Church was assigned to Gahini station which was to become the centre of a new movement within the Ruanda Mission based around the Keswick teaching of the 'Victorious Life'. The centrality given to Dr Church's role and the role of Gahini station in this movement, which became known as the 'East African Revival', is evident in any study of the historiography of the Revival or the Ruanda Mission.¹ Gordon Hewitt's official history of the Church Missionary Society, for example, calls Gahini the 'birthplace' of the Revival, whilst Church himself takes

¹ For the sake of clarity, a distinction is made between 'Revival' and 'revival'. 'Revival' refers to specific spiritual movement under discussion that took place in East Africa; 'revival' is used as a non-specific term to refer to the broader concept.

the central role in an overwhelming number of European accounts of the Revival.²

Much of this is due to the reliance of historians on missionary literature and Dr

Church's private papers which place Church and his associates, such as the Rev.

Lawrence Barham, at the heart of the Revival movement which developed. It was

believed by the Ruanda Mission themselves that Church was essential. The Archdeacon

of Ruanda, Arthur Pitt-Pitts, for example, wrote to the Home Council in 1936 stating,

it is necessary to pause and explain...about a spiritual movement which has its origin at this station [Gahini]...a Doctor and not a Parson was the man of God's choice and from Gahini it has spread.³

So important was Dr Church's role perceived to be that at the instigation of the

Archdeacon he was officially set aside from medical practice in 1937 to concentrate on

co-ordinating, teaching and leading the movement, a job he had been fulfilling

informally until then.⁴ In fact, such was his 'complete absorption in connection with

the...Revival' that staffing difficulties in the medical side of the mission were noted in

the minutes of the Ruanda Council and resulted in the curtailment of another

² G. Hewitt, *The Problems of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society, 1910-1942* (London, 1971), p. 271. See, for example, P. St John, *Breath of Life: The Story of the Ruanda Mission* (London, 1971), B. Stanley, 'The East African Revival: African initiative with a European tradition', *Churchman*, Vol. 92, No. 1 (1978), p. 6-22, J. Church, *Quest for the Highest: An autobiographical account of the East African Revival* (Exeter, 1981), H. H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills* (Crowborough, 1991) and K. Makower, *The Coming of the Rain: The Biography of a Pioneering Missionary in Rwanda* (Glasgow, 1999). Many non-European accounts also maintain the importance of Dr Church to the Revival although few relegate him to a mere subsidiary role as firmly as Apolo Nsibambi, son of Simeoni Nsibambi, who claimed in a somewhat hagiographical account that the Revival was 'started and articulated' by his father. A. Nsibambi, 'The Importance of the East African Revival (Obulokole)' in M. Muranga (ed.), *The East African Revival Through Seventy Years (1935-2000): Testimonies and Reflections* (Kabale, 2005), pp. 43-48. Here, p. 43. For non-European published accounts that see Dr J. E. Church in an important or central role see, for example, Z. Kabaza, 'My Life Through Seventy Years of the East African Revival: Some Highlights' in M. Muranga (ed.), *The East African Revival Through Seventy Years (1935-2000): Testimonies and Reflections* (Kabale, 2005), pp. 21-33 and M. Muranga, 'Theophoric Names: The Christian Element with Special Reference to South Western Uganda', *The African Mind. A Journal of Religion and Philosophy in Africa*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1989, pp. 91-99.

³ A. Pitt-Pitts, 'Gahini: A History of the Mission', January 1936. JEC 4/10/5.

⁴ St John, *Breath of Life*, p. 127. See also L. Sharp and A. Stanley-Smith, 'Adventures in Faith': Reminiscences of the Early Days of the Ruanda Mission', JEC 9/2/42. p. 8.

missionary doctor's furlough by three months 'in view of this urgent [medical] need'.⁵

The Keswick concept of 'Victorious Living' was not a new thing with either the arrival of Dr Church in 1927 or Rev. Barham in 1929. It is important to highlight this given the centrality they have both been given in Revival literature. 'Victorious Living' was present right from the outset of the mission, as was the enthusiasm for organising teaching based around its values. 'A book which has greatly helped us', wrote Stanley-Smith from Kigezi in 1922,

has been 'How to Live the Victorious Life' by an unknown Christian. There most simply and clearly portrayed is the life of Victory and Holiness... We took the opportunity...of having a series of meetings in which we tried to pass on the thoughts and experiences which were blessing us.⁶

Even the desire for 'revival' was present from the outset. One of Stanley-Smith's first observations of Kigezi was that 'a safari round the village churches always sends one to one's knees in prayer for a revival of spiritual religion'.⁷ The existence of either concept in the mission before 1927 is not easily acknowledged by Revivalist literature or scholarly works which have been eager to place importance on the role of Dr Church, the influence of Baganda leaders in the Revival, the centrality of African and European relationships in the Revival or even just the supernatural aspect of the Revival. In each case they start their commentary with a meeting held in 1929 between Dr Church and the influential Muganda Simeon Nsibambi in which they followed the thematic study for 'Holy Spirit' in a 'Schofield' Reference Bible. As a consequence of the study

⁵ Ruanda Council minutes, 14 September 1936. G3 A11/2.

⁶ A. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 4. (5 June 1922), in *JEC/RN*, p. 32.

⁷ *Ibid.*

Church claimed he was filled with the Spirit of God.⁸ The early history of the Ruanda Mission is also forgotten in Dr Church's own accounts of the Revival in which his value for Biblical teaching encouraged him to place the start of the Revival in 1933 when he first trained Bible teams to travel around Gahini district.⁹

The importance of Church, Barham and the African leaders they surrounded themselves with was in the creation of a mainstream consensus of what 'Revival' was meant to look like. Kevin Ward has argued for the existence of this 'dominant tradition' of Revival represented by Dr Church, the Muganda William Nagenda and others – its 'educated leadership'.¹⁰ Esther Sharp, wife of Leonard Sharp, described Dr Church as the central figure to this dominant party of Revival leaders.¹¹ Kevin Ward described his relationship with the Revival Movement:

He was not its originator, nor in any formal sense its director, but his organisational skills, his genius for friendship and his commitment to the distinctive form of the gospel which he had learnt in Africa, had a profound effect on the development of the revival as it spread far and wide throughout East Africa.¹²

Algernon Stanley-Smith, Decie Church (wife of Dr Church), Lawrence and Julia Barham (who were based at Kabale in the mid-1930s), Yosiya Kinuka (Church's

⁸ Church, *Quest for the Highest*, p. 67. For accounts that highlight this event see H. H. Osborn, *Pioneers in the East African Revival* (Winchester, 2000), p. 11., R. MacMaster and D. Jacobs, *Gentle Wind of God: The Influence of the East African Revival* (Scottsdale, PA; 2006), pp. 20, 25ff. Descriptions of this meeting also occur in Osborn, *Fire in the Hills*, pp. 64-65, Makower, *The Coming of the Rain*, p. 88 and K. Ward, "Tukutendereza Yesu" The Balokole Revival in Uganda' in Z. Nthamburi (ed.), *From Mission to Church: A Handbook of Christianity in East Africa* (Nairobi, 1991), p. 115.

⁹ J. Church, *Victorious Praying: A Plea for a Revival Prayer Fellowship for Africa* (CMS, 1936), p. 1. Archdeacon Pitt-Pitts agreed with this view to, stating that the Revival owed its existence to 'regular Bible Study from Dr Joe Church'. A. Pitt-Pitts, 'Gahini: The History of the Mission', January 1936. JEC 4/10/5.

¹⁰ K. Ward, 'Revival, Mission and Church in Kigezi, Rwanda and Burundi: a Complex Relationship', in K. Ward and E. Wild-Wood, *The East African Revival* (Kampala, 2010), p. 24.

¹¹ Although written in 1946 Esther Sharp was writing about events that had taken place over a period of 'at least ten years' and so her reflections remain important for the situation following the height of ecstaticism in the Ruanda Mission in 1936.

¹² Ward, 'Revival, Mission and Church', in Ward and Wild-Wood (eds.), *The East African Revival*, p. 12.

assistant at Gahini), Ezekieri Balaba (Barham's assistant at Kabale), Dorothy Skipper (also based at Gahini), William Nagenda and the 'Namatambe Africans' were also mentioned as being crucial to the party.¹³

The Notion of Revival

The major difficulty confronted by the historian in approaching the East African Revival is the notion of 'revival' itself. The task of evangelisation in Ruanda and Kigezi was culturally and spiritually daunting. 'The 200,000 inhabitants of Kigezi are heathen almost to a man', wrote Stanley-Smith, 'they are a wild and lawless tribe'.¹⁴ H. E. Guillebaud, another CICCU man who headed up the translation work for the mission, wrote of the language difficulties confronted by the mission as it expanded in to different areas.¹⁵ Ignorance, false ideas about salvation and grace and 'constant backsliding' (rejecting Christianity) were all, he maintained, a problem in Kigezi because of inadequate vernacular translations of scripture.¹⁶ When inhabitants near the mission were eventually encouraged to attend the mission church and enrol in the school the cultural traditions of the region ensured that the Christianity professed by many of the early converts was syncretistic at best. Patterns of behaviour changed, even new naming traditions developed but it left missionaries confused instead of satisfied.¹⁷ 'One always longs to be able to report definite numbers of conversions', Church wrote,

¹³ E. Sharp to R. Webster, 19 March 1946. G3 A11/8 and E. Sharp to 'Marion', 18 April 1946, G3 A11/8. Namutambe was a tea plantation owned by the Lea-Wilson family. 'for many years...a centre of Revival'. Unnamed document. JEC 9/4/10. William Nagenda had a house on the plantation and held Revival meetings there for many years. Oral Interview: Malcom Lea-Wilson, Surrey, England, 13 October 2012.

¹⁴ A. Stanley Smith, *RN*, No. 1. (May, 1921), p. 7 in JEC Book.

¹⁵ H. Guillebaud to 'Fellow Missionaries', 6 November 1936. JEC 4/10/6.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ See M. Muranga, 'The Revival's Impact on the Naming Traditions of the Peoples of East Africa, with Special Reference to Kigezi and Ankole', in M. Muranga, *The East African Revival Through Seventy Years 1935-2005* (Kampala, 2005), pp. 65-80.

‘[but] the more one sees of the African the more guarded one becomes’.¹⁸

The conflict in the minds of the European Ruanda Mission workers was that their entire theological upbringing through Keswick and through CICCUC had trained them to believe that they had the ‘higher’ form of Christianity. Stanley-Smith and Sharp believed God had ordained their work. The mission was not, however, seeing success like it had hoped. As undergraduates they had bemoaned fellow Christians for not living zealously enough for God but, as professional missionaries, they were struggling to communicate with their adherents. What needed changing was not, they believed, the nature of their work, their ideas or their theology. Instead, it was the dissemination of their already-formed ideas and theologies that needed help. ‘Revival’ was the concept of a ‘divine answer’ to their problems. Underlined in Dr Church’s copy of Charles Finney’s *Revivals of Religion* was the phrase:

It is altogether improbable that religion will ever make progress among the *heathen* nations except through the influence of revivals.¹⁹

The necessity of ‘revival’ was an indication of the enormity of the task, not the fallibility of the evangelical message. ‘Revival’ should be, to use Dr Church’s phrase, ‘normal living’, ‘walking along the Highway of Holiness with the Lord Jesus, repenting the moment the Holy Spirit points out sin’.²⁰ It was the same theology they valued in Cambridge: ‘the great power to convict of sin...deep repentance, the power of the Blood of Jesus to cleanse us of sins repented of, and to know His indwelling to give us

¹⁸ J. Church, *Man’s Extremity - God’s Opportunity: A Story of CMS Pioneer Work in Ruanda* (Ruanda General and Medical Mission, 1933). JEC 25/1, p. 7.

¹⁹ J. Church, handwritten notes in C. Finney, *Revivals of Religion* (1885), p. 3. JEC BOOKS

²⁰ J. Church to J. Evans, 19 September 1979. JEC 9/2/29.

victory ever day'.²¹

The Missionary account of Revival

The Missionary accounts of the Revival have been heavily shaped by their pursuit of the Keswick 'victorious life'. Even as events unfolded there was a great tendency to 'normalise' behaviour through the safety of the English evangelical/Keswick lexicon. In the study of this it is important to analyse the 'distinctive form of the gospel' that Dr Church believed he carried.

Dr Church's account of his time in Ruanda began with the famine that hit almost immediately after his arrival. *The Times* reported that, 'From August 1928 onwards thousands of Banyaruanda in Eastern Ruanda have been in a desperate plight'.²² For almost two years he ran Gahini station with Rev. B. Jackson dealing with local African adherents who were starving, desperate and seemingly un-responsive to Christian teaching. The experience drove him 'back to the Bible more than ever'.²³ It was at this point he met with Simeon Nsibambi and claimed to have found, through the study of the Holy Spirit in the Scofield Reference Bible, 'a vision of Jesus' and be 'filled' with the Spirit of God.²⁴ He was convinced that the answer for the Africans at his station was, as he had found for himself, rigorous, thematic Bible study along the Keswick line.

²¹ L. Sharp and A. Stanley-Smith, "'Adventures in Faith": Reminiscences of the Early Days of the Ruanda Mission', n.d., p. 8. JEC 9/2/42.

²² "A Stricken Land." *Times* [London, England] 16 Apr. 1929: 17+. *The Times Digital Archive*. Web. 17 Nov. 2012.

²³ Church, *Mans Extremity*,

²⁴ J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 3. JEC 9/2/25

It is clear from his accounts that he felt the famine had ‘brought [him] to the end of [him]self’ and he thought this suffering equipped him even more to serve God.²⁵ It was a revelation that would become central to his theology of Christian living, both for him and for the Africans’ on his station. ‘My own testimony’, recalled Dr Church, ‘was summed up in the words “Man’s extremity is God’s opportunity’.²⁶ He later wrote a hymn that had the words

Keep me Broken, keep me watching
at the Cross where Thou didst die
Where each sin that hinders blessing
Must be cleansed for Victory.²⁷

‘Brokenness’ (removing pride) and cleansing of sin were synonymous for Church in what was a hard-line theology that encouraged raw, open and honest confession through radical attempts to ‘be broken’. Church’s ‘genius for friendship’ ensured his ideas were quickly spread around like-minded Europeans in the mission.²⁸ ‘I’m torpedoed at last’, wrote one such friend to Dr Church in an attempt to practice this radical honesty, ‘and its impurity. Self-abuse got me unarmed and has been with me on and off ever since’.²⁹ The habit of open confession was not restricted to missionary-to-missionary relationships but employed towards Africans as well and was instrumental in growing bonds between the European and African leading figures of the Revival. Church’s sister-in-law wrote from Nairobi after putting his confession teaching in place.

Howard [Church’s brother]... showed them himself – his own temptations and

²⁵ Church, *Quest*, p. 68.

²⁶ Church to Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 2. JEC 9/2/25.

²⁷ ‘The Highest’, music by E. Faber, last three verses by E. Faber and J. Church in “‘The Highest’ and “Not I, But Christ”: Revival Hymn and Chorus with Music (Ruanda General and Medical Mission). JEC 32.

²⁸ Ward, ‘Revival, Mission and Church’ in Ward and Wild-Wood (eds.), *The East African Revival*, p. 12.

²⁹ L. Barham to J. Church, c.1939. JEC 9/3/21.

failings...[his African assistant] said the Africans here will never believe Christianity is not just a white man's idea to keep them calm until we Europeans show we are sinners to!³⁰

It was a practice, however, that was not uniformly approved of outside the Revival party.³¹

When Church returned from his meetings with Nsibambi he embarked on intentional Bible teaching to teach the 'Victorious Life' and it was these that his accounts would have the reader believe were the crucial aspect of the transforming Gahini station. There were twenty-five village churches in the area by this time and at the main station, every afternoon during the week, Church recalled that the entire mission community of two hundred stopped work and assembled in the school. 'We began to follow the great themes of Scripture', he wrote, 'as traced out in the Schofield Bible, starting with SIN'.³² It became known as the *isaa munani*, or the '2 p.m. teaching time'.³³

'We began to see people returning stolen property and repenting openly of sin', recalled Church, 'I remember Blasio [Kigozi] himself returning money and a hoe he had taken'.³⁴ The episodes were, however, few and far between. At Gahini success was measured by Dr Church along the lines of his own experiences. 'Suffering' was praised among mission adherents in one episode in 1932. 'We have seen teachers who at one time were always weak and grouching, now suffering persecution and hardship gladly for Christ', reported Dr Church.³⁵ Confession in response to Bible teaching, the most familiar method to a Cambridge-trained evangelical, defined what being 'truly saved'

³⁰ L. Church to J. and D. Church, 26 April 1937. JEC 1/2/3.

³¹ See comments on tension within the Ruanda Mission in chapter IV of this thesis.

³² Church, *Quest*, p. 61. Original emphasis.

³³ *Isaa* meant 'the hour' and *munani* 'eight'. 2pm was the eighth hour of the day all year round.

³⁴ Church to Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 4. JEC 9/2/25.

³⁵ *RN*, No. 40 (February, 1932), pp. 18-19. MAM E/1/1.

meant in missionary reports. Church noted in early 1932 that,

We have seen many cases of senior Christians...coming up voluntarily to confess and restore things...Above all I can say without the slightest shadow of a doubt, that I have seen Africans truly saved.³⁶

The reality, however, was that there was conflict between Dr Church's efforts and the Bakiga who had been brought down from Kabale to work at Gahini station. Yosiya Kinuka, the head hospital assistant (who, unusually, was from Ankole), recalled that,

Dr Church taught us a lot in those days about the question of being truly born again. I did not understand. He was always trying to make us work like the church teachers, but we thought it was not 'done' to work like the poorly paid evangelists.³⁷

Things got so bad in 1931 that the workers came 'as one body to resign, and leave the hospital full of patients unattended'.³⁸ In an attempt to bring Kinuka into submission Dr Church sent him to see Simeoni Nsibambi in Kampala, at which point one of the most interesting discourses in the Revival took place. 'I had never seen such a fervent Christian before', Yosiya commented, 'We kept talking about being born again'.³⁹

Simeoni had heard that the spirit of the hospital was bad and he asked me the reason. When I began to tell him he turned on me and said that it was because of sin in my heart, and that was the reason the other boys were bad. I agreed with him that I was not right, and he taught me many more things...In the motor lorry on the road back to Gahini I kept pondering these things...My sins became a burden upon me and I yielded to Christ.⁴⁰

The language of 'conviction' and 'yielding to Christ' reflected the influence of the

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Y. Kinuka, *RN*, No. 51 (January, 1934).

³⁸ Stanley-Smith and Sharp, *Ruanda's Redemption*, (Ruanda Medical Mission, 1924), p. 6.

³⁹ Cited in Osborn, *Pioneers*, p. 195. Blasio Kigozi was also headmaster of the Gahini Boys' School.

⁴⁰ *Ruanda's Redemption*, p. 6.

Keswick Evangelicalism taught in the Ruanda Mission but the theology was distinctly un-Keswickian. Nsibambi's declaration that Kinuka's personal sin could bring a spiritual curse upon the hospital shifted the effect of 'sin' away from the individual and onto the wider community. Keswick hamartiology centred around an individual's personal journey with Christ - it was evident in some of the earliest Keswick hymns translated into Lunyaruanda such as *I Want To Be Like Jesus, Jesus Died To Set Me Free* and *Jesus Has Loved Me*.⁴¹ Baganda belief systems, however, like those in Kigezi, Ruanda and Ankole, embraced a 'cause and effect' spirituality at a community level.⁴²

Nsibambi was able to communicate with Kinuka in a way Church had never been able to and the effect in Kinuka was instantaneous. 'I began at once to witness to others and to show them that they were on the road to destruction', related Kinuka.⁴³ 'I parted from their company. I repented openly and began to make restitution for my past failure'.⁴⁴ It was this that transformed Church's Bible instruction. From this point Yosiya would help Church during the *isaa munani*. After each reading from Dr Church Yosiya would explain it from the front through an African typology, while Church listened carefully to how he did so. To these readings they added carefully constructed simple visual aids on the blackboard. It 'grew out of [my] inability to speak the language', Church wrote.⁴⁵ These would become so effective that they were frequently highlighted as the most effective aspect of the teaching missions that Church and Kinuka ran and it was soon used by William Nagenda and others as they began to take on teaching roles in the

⁴¹ First edition of the Lunyaruanda Hymn Book. MAM E/4/2.

⁴² F. Kyewalyanga, *Traditional Religion, Custom, and Christianity in Uganda* (Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany; 1976), pp. 102, 107 and 111. See also M. Fallers, *The Eastern Lacustrine Bantu* (London, 1960), p. 69 and F. B. Welbourn, 'Some Aspects of Kiganda Religion', *The Uganda Journal*, Vol. 26, No. 2, September 1962. p. 176.

⁴³ *Ruanda's Redemption*, p. 7.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Church, *Quest*, p. 58.

movement.⁴⁶ To illustrate ‘The Blood of Jesus’, for example, Church would draw an Old Testament altar with red chalk for blood, ‘dripping’ off it and, next to it, the Cross of Christ, also with accompanying red chalk, to illustrate similarity between a sacrificial offering and Christ. ‘In each case it was faith in the blood that was shed’, a delegate recalled from a later teaching conference. The imagery was so powerful it drew a ‘deep hush’ from the African delegates. It was ‘the turning point’ of one mission.⁴⁷

Another example was the illustration use for Psalm 40:2, ‘He brought me up out of a horrible pit’. Church would draw a long deep pit with a ‘pin man’ at the bottom, shaking his fist at God. Church would then rub him out and draw him praying, crying to God for help. ‘I knew the Africans understood it’, he recalled, ‘because I used to watch a little group round the blackboard afterwards explaining it to each other’. At one convention Church reported that a teacher who had just been ‘saved’ pushed his way to the front and said, ‘Please Doctor, I have just been saved. Could you draw the man at the top, because I hate to see him left at the bottom any longer?’⁴⁸

The difference between Church’s perception of African spirituality and the reality was also seen in his meeting with Nsibambi in 1929. Church was convinced that he and Nsibambi had seen things from the same perspective. According to Dr Church’s recollection Nsibambi was ‘the man I had been seeking...a kindred spirit’ and they had been ‘brought together by the Spirit of God’.⁴⁹ Yet when Church shared with Nsibambi what he had been learning in the ‘hard school at Gahini’ (referring to the famine) Nsibambi reacted so differently that he caused Church to question his own faith. Church

⁴⁶ For African appropriation of these techniques see ‘Circular Letters’ from the 1938 Kenya Mission. JEC 1/2/33-35. For Dr Church’s continued use of them see J. Church, *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936), p. 10.

⁴⁷ L. Bakewell to Bishop Chambers, 7 June 1939. JEC 1/3/10.

⁴⁸ Church, *Quest*, p. 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

noted that

God really spoke deeply, and I think especially deeply, to Nsibambi. To him it seemed dramatic; perhaps I was not sensitive enough to the Holy Spirit.⁵⁰

This teaching of the concept of the Spirit of God becoming resident inside a Christian appeared to cause dramatic changes in Nsibambi. After he returned to Kampala, his behaviour was reported to be ‘unbalanced’.⁵¹ ‘People thought he was mad’, recalled Dr Church.⁵² Two missionaries at Gahini even told him there was a ‘very dangerous outbreak of Pentecostalism and that it was the result of this business with Nsibambi’.⁵³

The First Bible Conventions

Bible conventions, or gatherings, became an important part of Church’s teaching and (as it became) the Revival. Although efforts are made to demonstrate the Revival had ‘started’ beforehand, the conventions are universally acknowledged to have been an important part of the growing fame of the Gahini movement. The first convention was organised at Dr Church’s instigated at Gahini for Christmas 1933. It was the time of year that the station attracted the most visitors and over 2,000 gathered for it. Dr Church and Yosiya Kinuka continued the method of Bible study they had been practicing.

Church noted it was

arranged as to form a sequence to last over the five days, as follows:- Sin, The Holiness of God, The Second Birth, Repentance, Faith, Prayer, The Holy Spirit

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Church to Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 5. JEC 9/2/25.

(three addresses), Sanctification, The Christian Walk (two addresses), and The Second Coming.⁵⁴

It aimed to replicate Church's experience with Nsibambi in each listener except, instead of a famine being necessary to take people to a place of 'brokenness', teaching on sin was used and a 'real movement of conviction' was hoped for.⁵⁵ Such was the intent of Church and Geoff Holmes, the second missionary at Gahini, to see a sign of conviction from the delegates that when it did not materialise they asked the entire convention to remain an extra day and spend it in 'prayer' asking for something from God so that they would 'not go away empty'.⁵⁶

It was at this point, when the teaching had ended and the delegates were in prayer that 'a remarkable thing then happened'. Church reported that

a native Christian got up and began confessing some sin he had committed...and it seemed as though a barrier of reserve had been rolled away...and for 2 ½ hours it continued, sometimes as many as three on their feet at once trying to speak. You must get the African setting to this. The African is not afraid to stand up and speak in front of others...but what he hates and does all in his power to get round is to repent of sin before his fellows. He will avoid it as he will flee from a leopard, by instinct.⁵⁷

Church called the response a 'wave of conviction'. Two things are noteworthy from this episode. The first is that 'confession' and 'conviction' were terms inherently associated with the English evangelical tradition yet were used in this report to describe an African response – there was a deliberate intent by missionaries to identify a response that resembled these. The second is that the response did not occur during the teaching but during the day that was set aside for communion with God. The desire of an African to

⁵⁴ J. Church, *RN* No. 48 (April, 1934), p. 19. MAM E/1/1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ J. Church, *RN* No. 48 (April, 1934), p. 19. MAM E/1/1.

‘flee’ from such behaviour as if ‘from a leopard’ suggests the behaviour of the African delegates was not a cerebral response to Church’s teaching, but a much deeper response along the lines of traditional spiritual understanding.

Kibira made the argument that Revivalist theology was not the adoption of Euro-centric notions but the ‘re-interpretation’ of old taboos.⁵⁸ Edel has made the case for a strong presence of ‘fear’ as a motivation for ‘righting wrongs’ in the Banyaruanda and Bakiga concepts of spirituality.⁵⁹ The addresses on ‘The Holy Spirit’ and the nature of ‘sin’ allowed for a perfect transference of traditional concepts of spirituality to the evangelical metaphors. In the space provided by the extra day of ‘prayer’, the African delegates were able to process the Christian argument of images through their own imaginations, responding not from ‘conviction’ but from a powerful, indigenous fear-motivation to ‘make right’ the ‘spiritual wrongs’ they were being informed they had committed.

Thematic Bible teaching that covered the basic tenets of the ‘victorious life’ remained immensely important to Dr Church after the convention, convinced as he was that it was his teaching that induced such a successful response at the convention. The entirety of 1934 was described in Church’s diary as largely taken up by training evangelistic teams in the ‘victorious life’ theology and engaging on monthly Bible teaching safaris, each one an entire week of teaching at a different location.⁶⁰

⁵⁸ J. Kibira, *Church, Clan and the World*(Uppsala, 1974), p. 47ff.

⁵⁹ Edel, *Chiga*, p. 151.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

Two more conventions were organised at the end of 1935, this time at both Gahini and Kabale, where Lawrence Barham and Rev. Ezekieri Balaba had already begun a scheme to replicate ‘Gahini teaching’.⁶¹ Church and Yosiya led a team to Kabale to lead the teaching and ‘followed [the] scheme we had done at Gahini of taking applied Bible Study claiming that the Holy Spirit would convict of sin’.⁶² This time, as before, ‘confession of sin, restitution, apologies followed, one man, for example, handing over 1 ¼ months’ pay in restitution for money misappropriated ten years before’.⁶³

The problem with the accounts of the 1920s and 1930s given by *Ruanda Notes* and by Dr Church’s diary and private papers is that they attempted to place certain habits and behaviours at the centre of their commentary that were acceptable to a European, Keswick and evangelical mind. *Ruanda Notes*, the dominant source for this period, was read by spiritual and financial supporters who held strong evangelical views and written by those with equally strong evangelical views. What was being taught *was* perceived by Africans in Kigezi to be different from what they knew to be the traditional CMS Christianity of the Uganda Church but the rational Bible teaching was not the crucial aspect of the Kigezi and Ruanda Anglican Church in the 1930s.⁶⁴ The strength of the message at Gahini was found in Kinuka’s ability to translate the Keswick theology of sanctification into an African typology and in Church’s ability to pictorially illustrate the concepts in emotionally expressive ways that jumped the linguistic barrier and touched the imaginations of a spiritually sensitive audience.

⁶¹ L. Barham, *RN*, No. 56 (April 1936), p. 12. MAM E/1/1.

⁶² J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 5. JEC 9/2/25.

⁶³ L. Barham, *RN*, No. 56 (April, 1936), pp. 12-14. MAM E/1/1. See also A. W. Tribe, *RN*, No. 55 (January, 1936), p. 32 ff. MAM E/1/1.

⁶⁴ On one occasion, for example, members of the Kigezi Church sent to the Bishop of Uganda asking for what in the native language would be the state religion, instead of this new religion of ‘being saved’. They wanted the ‘idini ya Governmenti’. J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 4. JEC 9/2/25.

Reports of spontaneous confession were still uncommon until 1933/1934, almost seven years after Church's arrival and almost five years after his intensive Bible instruction began. Despite the emphasis that official accounts place on the role of Biblical instruction it is a fact, admitted by Church himself, that missionary efforts to produce Bible teaching at Gahini did not initially produce results.⁶⁵

Thematically and methodologically many in the Ruanda Mission believed the African's progress to spiritual development and 'victorious living' to be identical to the European, namely the need to encourage the same conviction of sin, the need for the same pursuit of suffering in persecution, the need for the same openness in confession of sin and, most importantly, the same centrality placed on the Bible and on intellectual teaching as the root of all Spiritual progress. In a magnanimous attempt to undo the lexicon of patriarchal condescension that was so common amongst Europeans in the field, Dr Church inadvertently did the opposite. 'I have learnt that at heart the African', wrote Dr Church, 'he is by no means such a child as he is made out to be, and that his sense of sin, his need, and his spiritual experiences are the same as our own'.⁶⁶ Ultimately, however, the major discrepancy in missionary accounts is the refusal to engage in any way with the African conceptions of spiritual possession and ecstasism that were so evident in the pre-Christian spirituality of the region. While missionaries were happy to observe such phenomena as examples of 'heathenism', there was little effort to address the role such spirituality played in the Christianity practised by adherents to the Ruanda Mission.

⁶⁵ J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 4. JEC 9/2/25.

⁶⁶ *RN*, No. 40 (February, 1932), pp. 18-19. MAM E/1/1.

Chapter Four

Re-interpretation of Revival: Ecstatic Manifestations in Kigezi and Northern Ruanda

The hamartiological focus of *Ruanda Notes* and the private correspondence of the Ruanda Mission workers betrayed an unhealthy attachment to Western interpretations of Biblical theology and has buried one of the most important aspects of African spirituality in the Christian Church of inter-lacustrine Africa. Missionaries and historians have been eager to place importance on the role of Baganda leadership in the Revival and on the centrality of the Biblical teaching developed at Gahini and, consequently, have been led to use 1929 or, as Church himself did, 1933 as starting points for the Revival. While to some these were only dates, the selection of them was a powerful tool in the mis-aligned re-interpretation of the nature Revival.

The difficulty with both start dates is that they provide more indication of a European and missionary appropriation of the Revival than they do of a legitimate reading of the

events. There are reasons for a pro-Ganda bias in Revival historiography, the first of which is the attention given to educated Baganda hospital workers sent to Gahini for work. Kevin Ward has suggested that it was ‘from within this group of workers’ that Revival first emerged and as the Revival moved in the wider Uganda Church in the 1940s there is scope for arguing that the majority expression of Revival was a Ganda one.¹ Until then, however, while Revival was still centred in Kigezi and Ruanda, such a view reflects an over-reliance on CMS sources.

Following the CMS example of the 1940s and 1950s, for example, the description used by most historians for the Revival is the Luganda term for ‘saved ones’ (*balokole*). Van Rheenen suggested, however, that this Luganda description was, in fact, only in use after 1939.² Ward himself has acknowledged the ‘dawning realisation’ that a Ganda-centric interpretation of Revival reflects an over-reliance on Dr Church’s personal recollections.³ Kigezi, for example, was known for significant anti-Ganda sentiment in the early twentieth century, as was demonstrated in the targeting of Baganda colonial agents during Nyabingi unrest of 1917. Far from breaking that tradition, the Bakiga Revivalists entirely followed suit. Dr Church wrote to the Bishop of Uganda in 1940 to express frustration that they ‘do not care for Baganda and outside people’ and were refusing to allow Baganda speakers in Revival meetings ‘on the grounds that they want one of their own people’.⁴

For the Bakiga and Banyaruanda, there was a very different understanding of the

¹ K. Ward, ‘Introduction’, in K. Ward, K. and E. Wild-Wood (eds.), *The East African Revival: History and Legacies* (Kampala, 2010), p. 8.

² G. Van Rheenen, *Church Planting in Uganda: A Comparative Study* (South Pasadena, CA: 1976), p. 65.

³ Ward, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴ J. Church to Bishop of Uganda, 30 March 1940. JEC 3/4/25.

Revival to all of the above. One senior missionary made the interesting observation that the ‘Africans’ around the mission did not make any reference to 1929 as the start point for the Revivalist expression of Christianity. Instead, they referred amongst themselves to the ‘religion of 1935’.⁵ This was the year that ecstatic manifestations were being observed with great frequency among mission adherents around the district of Kigezi. It was also the year that these manifestations first began to appear *en-masse* in mission-sanctioned meetings.⁶ The missionary Howard Guinness, a Cambridge friend of Dr Church, wrote a pamphlet in the 1940s on ‘The Secret of Effective Witness’ in which he advocated Bible study, fellowship and confession. He attempted to prove his point by triumphantly concluding ‘Revival came to the Church in Ruanda this way’.⁷ It did not. When the Revival movement gained momentum in Ruanda it came with ecstatic, ‘volatile’, open and often violent spiritual expressions.⁸

The first significant mention of *en masse* ecstatic phenomena in missionary accounts was at the Bible conventions of 1933 and 1935. The appearance of ecstatic spiritual behaviour at the former was more subdued than the latter and did not comparatively (at least in missionary accounts) have such lasting or significant influence in the behaviour of the Banyaruanda and Bakiga adherents at Gahini.⁹ Although the open confession witnessed in 1933 might have been attributed by missionaries to God, it was not an ecstatic experience. In later episodes it was not unknown for ecstatic behaviour, such as

⁵ As opposed to the ‘religion of 1921’ (the year the mission started work). E. Sharp to ‘Marion’, 18 April 1946, p. 5. G3 A11/8.

⁶ The 1935 Kabale and Gahini Conventions.

⁷ H. Guinness, ‘The Secret of Effective Witness (n.d.: c.1940s), JEC 10/1/6.

⁸ C. Robins, ‘Tukutendereza’, p. 224.

⁹ Many of the specialist workers in Gahini were Bakiga and trained in Kabale, the mission headquarters.

weeping, trembling and falling into trances, to accompany moments of confession but the predominant ecstatic manifestations of note at the 1933 convention were ‘dreams’. Dr Church reported that ‘Three at least were born again through dreams’:

One dreamt that he saw Mr Verity coming to his kraal on a motorcycle and he was afraid because he knew he was coming to ask him why he wasn’t working for God. Another dreamt that he had developed gangrene of the tongue from smoking too much, so his pipe was thrown away and he stepped out for God.¹⁰

Rev. Tribe noted similar dreams occurring after the 1935 Kabale convention. ‘It seems extraordinary’, he wrote,

how God seems to have been using dreams to convict people. There have been...instances of men being so convicted of drinking [in their dreams] that they have given it up then and there, and in some cases have completely lost the desire for it.¹¹

The language to describe these post-Convention dreams was approvingly evangelical; Africans were being ‘born-again’ and ‘convicted’. Some dreams were proudly reported to have given ‘strong impressions to read certain verses [from the Bible]’.¹² Reports were even proudly made of the missionary hymnology appearing in adherents’ dreams; one jailer from a local prison reported a dream in which he was told to sing a certain hymn. It was *I lay my sins on Jesus, the spotless Lamb of God*, a missionary song. After singing it through he was reported to have ‘found the Saviour of whom he had been singing’.¹³

It is important to note that missionaries were initially ambivalent about many of these

¹⁰ RN, No. 48 (April, 1934). MAM E/1/1.

¹¹ A. W. Tribe, RN, No. 55 (January, 1936), p. 32 ff. MAM E/1/1.

¹² L. Barham, RN, No. 56 (April, 1936), p. 12. MAM E/1/1.

¹³ Ibid.

ecstatic experiences. In the post-convention euphoria when missionaries were assured that adherents had safely been ‘taught’ and ‘educated’ in evangelical spirituality, ecstatic manifestations of spirituality was proudly exhibited as evidence of both the successful education and Christianisation of Africans under missionary care and it was, in every case, attributed to Bible teaching. ‘You can imagine our joy when we came back to see the difference that the Convention has made here’, wrote Dr Symonds, a Kabale-based RGMM doctor. ‘There have been real changes in many lives and there is a much keener spirit...a desire to pass on the message of Christ’.¹⁴

Missionaries were looking for ‘conviction’ and ‘confession’ of sin and where any such behaviour was exhibited, even if it was motivated by indigenous concepts of spirituality, it was celebrated as ‘Revival’ and evidence of a successful convention. In early 1936 Lawrence Barham reported to English supporters,

You have heard from others something of the spiritual revival... This year has ended up as one of the most blessed in the history of Kigezi. Largely as a result of the convention led by Dr J. Church and a band of men and women from Gahini.¹⁵

Conceptualising ecstatic behaviour through an evangelical conversion paradigm and associating many of the ecstatic phenomena with Bible conventions enabled missionaries to accept it, even when it was confusing and unusual. Robins expressed it by saying that

fundamental ambivalence...[was] born out of an underlying conviction that the results – open repentance, confession and full conversion – ultimately justified

¹⁴ J. Symonds, *RN*, No. 55 (January, 1936), p. 37. MAM E/1/1. See also Miss Lloyd’s summary of the convention: *RN*, Jan. 1936, p. 38. MAM E/1/1.

¹⁵ L. Barham, *RN*, No. 56 (April, 1936), p. 12. MAM E/1/1; Quoted by R. Webster, *RN*, Apr. 1936, p. 6. MAM E/1/1

modes of behaviour which they found strange and repugnant.¹⁶

Those spiritual experiences that were approved of by the missionaries were described and retold by them in letters, reports and in public teaching. At the Kabale convention, for example, teaching was conducted through the sharing of ‘testimony’ of various individuals’ experiences.¹⁷ Derek Peterson’s recent study of the practice of confession and testimony-giving in the East African Revival highlighted the emergence of an established pattern, or template, within which all testimonies were expected to fit.¹⁸ The retelling of spiritual ‘experiences’ was specifically intended to celebrate and encourage only those experiences that matched the orthodox understanding of a genuine revival experience. Miss Butlin, an RGMM hospital worker, related some stories from Kabale Hospital in this manner in the July 1936 *Ruanda Notes*:

As I was sitting at the centre table [of the ward]...I heard one patient (who had recently been baptised) telling another next door to her all about it, then she opened her Bible and read a passage, afterwards explaining it all, and making a personal application. That evening I saw another patient... slip out and take another with her. They sat on the veranda and when I went out bring them into bed I found them talking earnestly about the Lord Jesus.¹⁹

It was an exemplary story - Christo-centric, Biblically founded and intensely personal. Its selection for publication in the mission journal demonstrates the aspects of a spiritual experience that were valued by the orthodox, missionary-led expression of revival. With such doctrinal excellence even the more ecstatic spiritual experiences, which were becoming increasingly common in 1936, became briefly permissible. Robins has even

¹⁶ C. Robins. ‘Tukutendereza: A Study of Social Change and Sectarian Withdrawal in the Balokole Revival’, PhD, Columbia University, 1975, p. 222.

¹⁷ L. Barham, *RN, April*, 1936, p. 12.

¹⁸ D. Peterson, ‘Wordy Women’: Gender Trouble and the Oral Politics of the East African Revival in Northern Gikuyuland’, *Journal of African History*, No. 42 (2001), pp. 469-489 and ‘Evidence and the Christian Historian in East Africa’, *Christianity and History Bulletin*, No. 5 (Spring, 2009), pp. 18-29.

¹⁹ Miss Butlin, *RN*, No. 57 (July, 1936), pp. 13-14.

argued that aspects of evangelical doctrine were even the *reason* for such experiences in many cases.²⁰ The personal Christology of evangelicalism (a belief that Christ was interested in interacting on a personal level with individuals) created desire within the mind of the participants for such ecstatic experiences. Miss Butlin continued in her story:

I enquired of one of the nurses about them, and she said “That one with the bad eyes says she has seen the Lord Jesus and spoken with Him, and He has given her a message that she is to tell everyone”. I thought it very interesting that one with bad eyes should see a vision of Christ! There is a special hymn that those who have had visions or special dreams sing. They have their own tune for it, and it is really catching, the words too, being all their own...and this, too, she is teaching the others.

The difficulty for many missionaries was that they perceived doctrinal correctness to determine what constituted genuine spiritual experiences, yet many African participants in the Revival believed the opposite was true, that spiritual experiences determined what constituted doctrinal correctness. A nurse in the Kabale Hospital, for example, told of a man for whom such an experience had proved a powerful catalyst to influence with his peers. ‘He is a very strong believer of the Lord Jesus’, she related, ‘and teaches the other patients whenever he gets a chance’.²¹ Miss Butlin, however, found that he was illiterate (and therefore could not be teaching from the Bible), was not baptised but ‘teaches the others out of his own experience of his Lord, and his words consequently carry weight’.²²

The conceptualisation of African ecstaticism through an evangelical paradigm allowed missionaries a self-assurance that this behaviour was not just ‘heathenism’ but part of

²⁰ Robins, ‘Tukutendereza’, p. 216.

²¹ Miss Butlin, *RN*, No. 57 (July, 1936), p. 14.

²² *Ibid.*

the journey to Christendom. It was an ‘artefact of alterity’ that attempted to provide a clear demarcation between patterns of ecstatic behaviour that occurred before the conventions and those that occurred after them.²³

The association between the Bible conventions and Revival phenomena that was made by missionaries has been followed by historians. ‘Until [the convention of] December 1933’, wrote Brian Stanley, ‘the movement of new spiritual life at Gahini had proceeded relatively quietly’.²⁴ Catherine Robins that, ‘The start of the Revival in Kigezi is usually traced to a mission team led by Nsibambi, Kigozi, Church and others at the evangelists training school in Kabale in [the convention of] October 1935’.²⁵

The ecstatic behaviour reported after and during the convention of 1935 cannot, however, be ‘traced to a mission team’. Catherine Robins’ research into Bakiga oral history has demonstrated a significant outbreak of ecstatic behaviour was taking place around Kigezi before the convention took place in October. She observed that

there is evidence of widespread religious ferment in the months preceding this [convention]. Spontaneous conversions, involving signs such as dreams, visions, voices and uncontrolled motor behaviour were reported among both baptised and confirmed church members and those whose contacts with the institutional church had only been marginal.²⁶

²³ ‘The seeming fixity of the religious realm is an artefact of alterity...[religion] was automatically analogous to what Westerners already knew...[it meant that] fundamental questions about the nature of the self, of God, of death, of morality and of life’s purpose are pushed outside the bounds of proper enquiry; and African intellectual history is obscured’. P. Landau, ‘“Religion” and Christian Conversion in African History: A New Model’, *The Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (February, 1999), p. 21.

²⁴ Stanley, ‘The East African Revival’, p. 8.

²⁵ C.E. Robins, ‘Tukutendereza: A Study of Social Change and Sectarian Withdrawal in the Balokole Revival’, PhD, Columbia University, 1975, p. 217.

²⁶ Ibid.

While missionary reports made every effort to see such experiences within the confines of individual soteriology the tendency of Bakiga followers appeared to be to place such experiences within a broader cosmological paradigm. Experiences were seen in eschatological and apocalyptic terms, relevant not just to the salvation of an individual but the salvation of a community.

Bakiga church leaders, Robins suggested, were preaching about apocalyptic dreams they had experienced, inducing substantial fear in their followers. ‘Visions, dreams and extreme fear [of damnation] soon spread in the area’, she concluded, ‘giving rise to a condition of religiously inspired shaking or trembling known locally as *okucugusibwa*’.²⁷ It was observed once by Lawrence Barham who attributed it to ‘conviction of sin’ but in reality these experiences were legitimised by Bakiga leaders in very different terms.²⁸ Specifically, a passage from the Book of Joel was used that linked this behaviour not to conviction of sin but to possession by God’s spirit:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh...your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions...And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the LORD come.²⁹

One convert recalled that ‘they would compare their dreams with these verses and we would realise that what they were telling us was nothing but truth itself’.³⁰ ‘In a society that was recently literate’, wrote Robins, ‘the parallel had great force’.³¹ She claimed that the visions were often induced by reading the Book of Revelation and it was these

²⁷ Robins, ‘Tukutendereza’, p. 222.

²⁸ L. Barham, *RN*, No. 56 (April, 1936), p. 12. MAM E/1/1. He responded by immediately sending off ‘[with] haste to Dr Church to come with a band of workers to bring the Word of the Lord’.

²⁹ Joel 2:28-31. KJV.

³⁰ Cited in Robins, ‘Tukutendereza’, p. 220.

³¹ *Ibid.*

community-orientated apocalyptic fears rather than an individualistic and guilt-induced introspection that led to worry about judgement. Some of Robins' informants highlighted two periods in the journey towards conversion: *okworekwa* ('the time of visions') and *okucugusibwa* ('the time of trembling') that grew out of fear of judgement and was 'just preceding salvation'.³² In 1935-6 three village churches near Kabale stopped working on their fields almost entirely to await the end of the world. A teacher was sent to help such a church to find that 'they only wanted to sing and pray while waiting for Jesus to come and take them to heaven'.³³ It was not centrally managed, she concluded, but a 'decentralised mass movement, spreading into areas where no evangelistic team had preceded'.³⁴

Ecstatic expressions in the Revival were not just independent of a post-convention and post-Bible teaching environment, they were also experienced by those who had not *at any point* before the experience come under the spiritual authority of the mission and thus had not received mission-sponsored teaching. These were episodes that did not fit neatly into the missionary paradigm of 'conversion following Biblical instruction'. In 1928 a lady of Kigezi district claimed to have had a supernatural visitation which induced her to attend her nearby mission Church. It was reported in *Ruanda Notes*:

There is a little village far off the beaten track...and there lived there a women fairly young in years who had already sold herself to the practice of the occult arts, and she was frequented by the local inhabitants as a witch doctress of some power...She woke up at midnight and said to her husband, 'let us go and worship God'...In the morning she went off with her husband to the local chief, where she again said apparently almost in the language of the possessed that she was going to follow Jesus; and she exhorted all the people to do the same. They said

³² Oral Interview: James Bageruka, 27 February 1972. Conducted and cited by Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 220.

³³ Oral Interview: 'Ernesti Rutagarukayo, 6 October 1971. Conducted and cited by Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 228.

³⁴ Ibid.

to her, ‘What do you know about Jesus?’ And she replied, ‘Was it not He that came to me at midnight?’³⁵

It is worth noting the remarkable similarity to many post-convention ‘conversion’ dreams reported in *Ruanda Notes* yet, unlike in these later episodes, there was no automatic association with Christian ‘Revival’ made by the missionaries. The matter was simply reported with bemused appreciation.

Another crucial aspect of the Bakiga/Banyaruanda systems of belief was the association of healing with the spirit realm. ‘The whole pattern of disease curing’, wrote Edel, ‘is essentially magical’.³⁶ Just as the healing expertise of an *omufumu* was attributed to the *esiriba* (a form of *emandwa*) spirits so was the success of the RGMM medical outposts attributed to supernatural means. Leonard Sharp told the story of one inpatient in 1923, a ‘Mohammedan’ who saw the scientific medical practice of the doctors as supernatural and left the hospital ‘an avowed believer in Jesus’.³⁷

When asked what had led him to change, he said ‘When I fell sick, and had no power to help myself, my friends the Mohammedan came round me – they sacrificed all my goats and when that availed nothing, they left me alone to die. Then the Roman Catholics came and they said ‘Let us baptise you that you may die in peace’. But this one (Jesus) took me in and healed me. How can I serve another?’³⁸

It was indicative of the spiritual priorities of the RGMM mission adherents that while missionaries were reporting ‘movements of conviction’ there were many who were, in fact, drawn to the mission by other factors.

³⁵ *RN*, No. 25, July 1928, p. 5. MAM E/1/1.

³⁶ M. Edel, *The Chiga of Western Uganda* (New York, 1957), p. 169.

³⁷ L. Sharp, *RN* No. 6, 16 February 1923, JEC/RN, pp. 48-49.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

The Bible conventions organised by Dr Church and Yosiya Kinuka did appear to have an encouraging effect on ecstatic manifestations of spirituality despite the manifestations' initial occurrence before these events. The appearance of such phenomena in a *missionary-sanctioned* group setting was not, however, apparent before these conventions. The decision to normalise such behaviour when it occurred through deliberate association with Bible teaching and Bible conventions enabled the more controversial aspects of ecstaticism to be ignored by missionaries until the middle of 1936, six months after the 1935 conventions. Spurred on by the apparent affirmation given to such phenomena during the aftermath of the conventions, there was the most significant outburst of ecstatic phenomena witnessed on Ruanda Mission property.

There were major problems in the mission during the 1920s and 1930s that ensured the Ruanda Mission was unable to handle the extravagancies of ecstatic spiritual expressions. Pressure was being applied from Roman Catholic missionaries who accused the missionaries of 'devil worship' and local Africans accused them of bewitching their adherents.³⁹ The position of theological unity presented at the beginning of each issue of the mission's quarterly journal hid the reality of internal division: division between the mission and their Bishop, division between the missionaries over the Revival theology and the behaviour of Revivalists and fear that the 'superior' attitudes of Revivalists were becoming dangerously and politically subversive.

³⁹ Church, *Quest*, p. 133.

The most pressing strain was with the Bishop Stuart of Uganda, the head of the Ugandan Church under which the Ruanda Mission came. The traditional elevation of the priesthood, or ‘sacerdotalism’, was controversial in the evangelical mission from its arrival in Africa and a feature of Dr Church and Stanley-Smith’s communication in the build-up to Church’s appointment to Ruanda.⁴⁰ When Church arrived in Africa he immediately and publicly expressed his disdain for the theology and lifestyle of the Bishop’s wife and within months was officially reported to the Bishop for preaching against the routine baptism of children and flouting the Anglican ruling against laymen overseeing the ‘absolution of sin’, something he was well aware of as the son of a clergyman.⁴¹ ‘I have heard Joe [Church] speak in such a way of the Bishop to a whole roomful of Africans that they sniggered’, complained Sharp.⁴²

Courting controversy was not a problem for Church who had inscribed in his Bible the quote ‘It is a poor sermon that gives no offence’ and again in 1936 he came into conflict with the Bishop over the position of Holy Communion in Revival missions.⁴³ It was a conflict that would come to a head in the early 1940s when Church had his licence to preach removed by the Bishop for suspected insubordination and theological disputes in Mukono College, Uganda became so divisive that Bishop Stuart was reduced to producing a ‘Bishop’s Charge’ for all Revivalists in which he set out a ‘New Way’ of conducting their relationship with him and the rest of the Uganda Church.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ A. Stanley-Smith to J. Church, 2 January 1926. JEC 9/3/2.

⁴¹ See J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 2. JEC 9/2/25 and the untitled testimony of J. Church, 1976, p. 2. JEC 10/2/12. For the measures he and Rev. Jackson brought in in response to their perception of the failings of the Bishop’s wife see J. Church, ‘Co-operation – A Report of Work at Gahini’, *Uganda Church Review* (1931), pp. 73-78. JEC 9/2/1.

⁴² E. Sharp to R. Webster, 19 March 1946, p. 2.

⁴³ Handwritten notes in J. Church’s personal Bible. JEC 20; Church, *Quest*, p. 125.

⁴⁴ K. Ward, “‘Obedient Rebels’ - The Relationship Between the Early ‘Balokole’ and the Church of Uganda: The Mukono Crisis of 1941’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 19, Fasc. 3 (Oct., 1989), pp. 194-227.

Church was not isolated in his sentiments; for all his diplomatic negotiations between the different elements of the mission, Stanley-Smith was in sympathy with attempts to tap into the ‘immense reserves of spiritual power latent in the laity’.⁴⁵ There was a need, however, for support from their Bishop in negotiations and dealings with colonial governments and with other denominations, particularly with the mission work in Catholic Belgian Ruanda. For this reason, despite the anti-sacerdotalist sentiment of many in the mission, approval of Church’s forthright style was not universal.⁴⁶ In fact, Church himself was acutely aware of the need for his Bishop’s approval for permission for him to lead Revival missions to other parts of East Africa.

Church’s behaviour was the tip of the iceberg. It was feared by many in the mission that there was an evolving Afro-European group that saw itself as superior to both non-Revivalist Africans and non-Revivalist Europeans. Nsibambi wrote to Dr Church demonstrating such a belief, asking for prayer for other Europeans who were not coming round to Nsibambi’s way of thinking. The inference was clear – Dr Church’s loyalty was assumed to be first to the Revival message, not to other European missionaries.⁴⁷

Sectarianism was rife among many of the African revivalists and Revivalists were soon being reported refusing fellowship with unrevived Christians. As early as 1933 Church had noticed the tension between the ‘saved’ and the ‘unsaved’.⁴⁸ In Ruanda they were known as the ‘abaka’ (‘the burning ones’), in Bunyoro as the ‘Katebe’ (‘the set’) and in

⁴⁵ A. Stanley-Smith, *Road to Revival*, p. 53.

⁴⁶ Church, *Quest*, p. 96.

⁴⁷ W. Nagenda to J. Church, 8 March 1939. JEC 4/10/15.

⁴⁸ J. Church to the Bishop of Uganda, 30 March 1940. JEC 3/4/25.

Uganda as the ‘Balokole’ (‘the saved ones’).⁴⁹ ‘We have spent an enormous amount of time labelling one another’, complained Church in his correspondence.⁵⁰ The situation was so dire that news of it eventually reached the ears of the Home Secretary of RGMM in England, Reginald Webster. He wrote with some concern in March 1939 that even from England he had ‘heard a little about the tendency among Abaka to form a kind of separate sect’.⁵¹ The problem with such enthusiasm, Webster commented, was that it was ‘it will not achieve the great purpose of revival, i.e. “Winning the heathen”’.⁵²

William Nagenda wrote to Dr Church in May, 1938 to discuss one of the effects of the exclusivity of certain revivalists. It centred on the impression of many that revivalists believed they were in some way special or higher than others. ‘Gahini has got a very bad name on every station in Ruanda...Many think that we think that it is we who brought the Revival’.⁵³ ‘But it is up to you’, implored Nagenda, ‘who know Gahini well enough to tell those you hear saying so the whole truth – We cannot make up a revival, it is impossible’.⁵⁴

The solution was seen in doctrinal conformity. ‘As many of you know’, began Church’s report of the Uganda African Convention in 1940,

there are all over Uganda little bands of Africans who have arisen as a result of missions that have been held in the past few years...Archdeacon Herbert had suggested that there should be a meeting...of certain leaders of the African clergy and representatives of these groups, to discuss differences that had

⁴⁹ J. Church, ‘Report of Convention at Mengo Girls School’, 24 August 1940, p. 1. JEC 3/ 4/42.

⁵⁰ J. Church to Bishop Stuart, 30 March 1940. JEC 3/ 4/27. He refused to use such labels, a sentiment shared by Bishop Stuart: J. Church to Bishop Stuart, 25 May 1940. JEC 3/ 4/31 and Bishop Stuart to J. Church, 29 April 1940. JEC 3/ 4/30.

⁵¹ R. Webster to J. Church, 29 March 1939. JEC 3/ 4/14.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ W. Nagenda to J. Church, 26 May, 1938. JEC 3/4/9.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

arisen.⁵⁵

An important encouragement to this sectarianism was ironically found in the theology that was inherited from the theological tensions of the CICCUC/SCM divide. A CICCUC member in 1919/1920 recalled how plans for a united mission at Cambridge University between evangelical and non-evangelical students was hampered by the decision that ‘the CICCUC must remain absolutely separate, in order to give clear witness in the University to God’s way of salvation through Christ’.⁵⁶ It was an important part of Dr Church’s teaching.⁵⁷

Just as Banyankole traditional spirit cults admitted entry on the basis of public confession, so did the Revivalists.⁵⁸ It was the creation of what was almost a sub-culture and what David Shenk called ‘a new people group’.⁵⁹ Joseph Kibira described how for some Revivalists it was a ‘new clan’ and instead of traditional patrilineal bonds they were encouraged to ‘look to Jesus alone’ as the head of their clan.⁶⁰ In the rural areas of Ankole the revivalists called themselves *abaishemwe*, meaning ‘people of one father’ and colloquially as *ishemwe* or ‘brother’. They were rather tellingly called *abatarukukwatanisa*, by non-Revivalist Banyankole, meaning ‘those who do not cooperate’.⁶¹

There were also significant internal debates within RGMM over the prominent role

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 1.

⁵⁶ N. Grubb, quoted in J. Pollock, *A Cambridge Movement* (London, 1953), p. 198. See also previous chapters.

⁵⁷ See pictorial illustrations of this in J. Church, *Out of the Pit: An allegory in picture form of Man’s redemption from the pit of Sin* (London, 1958). MAM E/2.

⁵⁸ Peterson, ‘Wordy Women’.

⁵⁹ D. Shenk, *Peace and Reconciliation in Africa* (Nairobi, 1983), pp. 129-130. For similar views see J. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda* (London, 1958), p. 102 and A. Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford, 1994).

⁶⁰ J. Kibira, *Church, Clan and the World* (Uppsala, 1974), pp. 47-48.

⁶¹ Stenning, op. cit., p. 267.

given to certain Africans in the Revival. ‘It will be very difficult...to believe in any reconciliation or “new way”’, a missionary suggested, ‘as everything must be vetted by those African leaders’.⁶² It was not an uninformed accusation - the influence of these leaders as decision makers can be seen throughout correspondence between Dr Church and his colleagues.⁶³ Dr Church and his circle were accused over a number of years of undermining the authority of the European missionaries who were not in his pro-Revivalist circle by ‘speaking to Africans of missionaries behind their back’ and of trying ‘to gain influence with the Africans by belittling other missionaries’.⁶⁴ Complaints were even made that Revival party members had engineered one of their number, Yosiya Kinuka, to be admitted to the Executive Committee (the governing body of the mission in the field) so that he could leak information on controversial decisions to the African supporters within the Revival.⁶⁵ Crucially, it played into the fears of insurrection that were resident in Kigezi district. It was ‘most dangerous talk’ and ‘anti-white propaganda’, according to Sharp. ‘As there is great national feeling in Uganda’, she concluded, ‘to foster it is most dangerous’.⁶⁶

There was even a fear that the views of this group of pro-Revivalist European and African leaders were taking over the mission. ‘Joe [Church] has made it so clear Len [Sharp] is not wanted for the Church work’, complained Esther Sharp, ‘and has so arranged and wangled things that it will be very difficult for Len to run it now. Really Ezekieri Balaba does it, with the aid of the small clique of the fellowship there’.⁶⁷ The pro-Revivalists wanted ‘all of us who are of the old conservative point of view and

⁶² E. Sharp to ‘Marion’, 18 April 1946, p. 4. These are the African leaders mentioned above.

⁶³ See, for example, the relationship between African leaders and Dr Church in organising ‘A conference for Abalokole in Uganda’, J. Church to B. Church, 10 March 1940. JEC 3/4/25 and detailed descriptions of key African leaders in J. Church to M. Capon, 30 June 1933.

⁶⁴ E. Sharp to R. Webster, 19 March 1946, p. 2.

⁶⁵ E. Sharp to ‘Marion’, 18 April 1946, p. 4.

⁶⁶ E. Sharp to R. Webster, 19 March 1946, p. 2.

⁶⁷ Sharp to ‘Marion’, 18 April 1946, p. 3.

stand by C of E [sic], CMS and Keswick teaching’, she continued, ‘to resign’.⁶⁸

The content of the message preached by the Revival party was also a point of internal conflict. ‘It’s the superior and I believe false “holiness”...[that] I just can’t cope with’, wrote Sharp.⁶⁹

You must be willing to ‘be broken’ which is said to be to live the crucified life or to be humble, but doesn’t actually work out that way...[they] take it to be transparency of life towards one another, but NOT towards those they choose to exclude...Instead of transparency of life which they claim is the secret of fellowship...we find schemes and wangles, resentments and even untruths.⁷⁰

‘The fact is’, she concluded, ‘these things simply don’t work out in real life both ways’, ‘there is one rule for him [Dr Church] and his party, but something very different for others not of this exclusive sect’.⁷¹ The nature of primary material for the period being almost entirely made up of Church’s private papers has meant that Esther Sharp’s letters, preserved only because they were forwarded to the Home Council (England), are vitally important to shedding understanding on this aspect of internal division. A letter from Rev. Gordon Bulman provides one of the few other voices on the matter but it is equally damaging. He had been refused permission by Church to run services, organise speakers or lead Holy Communion. He wrote to Church after only one year with the Mission to say that he had had to give him a two-way ultimatum,

One is that you work with me in Church affairs – the other that you [dominate] the fellowship with your own views and “oust” me from the work...If you do not agree to let me run [these things] then I must, if I do not have protection from the Committee, leave you...I hope I can [stay] but if you push your ideas

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 1. It was claimed that this treatment had been or was currently been applied to six other missionaries.

⁶⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p.7.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 3.

too much – something will bust.⁷²

Bishop Stuart summarised the problem in his ‘Uganda Church Review’ for 1939.⁷³ He wrote, ‘there is fellowship between those who think exactly alike, but a terrible lack of fellowship with those who are a little bit “outside” who are often lonely’.⁷⁴ The Bishop had already alerted Church to the dangers that sectarianism among the missionaries presented to his on-going support of revival. In an earlier letter in October 1937 he had warned that Church was being accused of ‘splitting’ the mission in his support for Revival.⁷⁵ The dividing line, he felt, lay in the ecstatic manifestations that were appearing in the Revival. On one side there were ‘those [missionaries] who believe in definite and often violent conversion’ and the other those ‘who honestly are trying to build up their districts without emotion’. He could not, he threatened, face ‘much more schism’.⁷⁶

Pentecostalism

It is also important to note the further difficulties that were caused when ecstatic phenomena gained momentum because of the reputation of Pentecostalism in the Ruanda Mission. Studying official missionary literature, reports and letters on the Revival would suggest there was very little association between the Revival and Pentecostalism. In fact, there is no mention of the word ‘Pentecostalism’ in almost the entire collection of missionary and participant authored literature, including *Ruanda*

⁷² ‘Gordon’ to J. Church, 1938, JEC 9/3/20. Original emphasis.

⁷³ Bishop Stuart, ‘Uganda Church Review’, April, 1939. JEC 3/ 4/16.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

⁷⁵ Bishop Stuart to J. Church, October 1937, cited in Church, *Quest*, p. 149.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Notes, and very few in Dr Church's private papers.⁷⁷ This silence in missionary sources has been reflected in the historiography of the Revival but the silence is deceptive. Great care was taken by Dr Church and his colleagues to write about Revival not according to what happened but according to how they wanted it to be remembered. It was 'a very important point' according to Church. 'Writing about Revival in an unguided way...will kill it...writing about these times of Revival is a very sacred thing'.⁷⁸ When war broke out in 1939, for example, the mission secretary advised members to 'give the news well saturated with the grand conception that "God is still on the throne", and that Jesus is coming again'.⁷⁹ The Ruanda Mission had a habit of adjusting their statements according to how they wanted their God to be perceived and for Pentecostalism it was no different. Pentecostalism was well known to the Anglican missionaries in Ruanda and its similarities with some of the ecstaticism they were witnessing weighed heavily on their minds.

Pentecostalism and the Keswick-influenced mission field were already well acquainted by the time of the foundation of the Ruanda Mission in 1921. The holiness movement to which Keswick theology belonged, and therefore the theological roots of many in the Ruanda Mission, had strong connections with Pentecostalism, a point that has been made by Vinson Synan amongst others.⁸⁰ The founder of the Pentecostal Missionary Union (PMU) of Great Britain was no other than Cecil Polhill, CICCU alumnus,

⁷⁷ A differentiation is made here between 'Pentecostalism', referring to the theological tradition that emerged in the early twentieth century, and 'Pentecost', referring to the event in Christian scripture. The latter was discussed in missionary reports from Ruanda but it intentionally carried a different meaning to the one used by the Pentecostal tradition. Instead, the celebrated values of 'Pentecost' were community and fellowship.

⁷⁸ J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 1. JEC 9/2/25.

⁷⁹ A. Stanley-Smith, 'For all at Kabale', 9 June 1940. JEC 4/10/28.

⁸⁰ V. Synan, *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1971), P. D. Hocken, 'Europe, Western (Survey)', pp.96-98 (here p. 96) in S. Burgess (ed.), *IDPCM* (Grand Rapids, MI, 2003), pp.96-98, D. Dayton, *Theological Roots of Pentecostalism* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1987) and R. J. Stevens, *The Fire Spreads: Holiness and Pentecostalism in the American South* (Cambridge, Mass., 2008).

celebrated member of the ‘Cambridge Seven’ and colleague of Algernon Stanley-Smith’s father. Polhill was hailed as ‘the first major promoter of Pentecostal missions’.⁸¹ The ‘Cambridge Seven’ had continued to have a strong association with CICCUC through the early twentieth century, addressing the union multiple times. In 1935 CICCUC held an entire weekend’s activities to celebrate the jubilee of the Cambridge Seven (March 1935).⁸² Cecil Polhill’s influence among these pioneering missionaries was significant – he was invited to join the CIM council when he returned to England.

Such was the admiration in Cambridge and Keswick circles for the ‘Seven’ that Dr Church attempted to replicate them in East Africa, almost fifty years afterwards. *The CICCUC Supplement* of Lent term, 1938, carried an article entitled ‘An Appeal for a ‘Uganda Seven’. It contained the following:

Some years ago there was an urgent need for men to go to China, and at once there was a response. The ‘Cambridge Seven’ heard the call and one of the greatest pages in the history of missions was written.⁸³

There was, it seemed then, great admiration for men such as Polhill, with their CIM, aristocratic and Cambridge credentials. Polhill’s Pentecostalism was still rather new however, and many Anglicans, those in Ruanda included, saw Pentecostalism as an unwanted theological tradition, rather than a welcomed cousin.⁸⁴

⁸¹ P. Hocken, ‘Polhill, Cecil H.’ in Burgess (ed.), *IDPCM*, pp. 991-992.

⁸² CICCUC Term Cards, 1922, 1925 and 1935. JPP.

⁸³ J. Church, ‘An Appeal for a ‘Uganda Seven’, *The CICCUC Supplement*, Lent Term, 1938, p. 4. JEC PAPERS, JEC 3/2/5.

⁸⁴ For the argument against a clear link between the Holiness movement and Pentecostalism see, for example: R. Anderson, who instead suggested a link with socio-economic hardship, *Vision of the Disinherited: The Making of American Pentecostalism* (New York, 1979).

One of those reasons was found in Alexander Boddy, an Anglican minister who helped co-found the PMU.⁸⁵ Maxwell wrote that he ‘actively proselytized’ CMS. At one meeting in Sunderland in 1910, for example, he chided a gathering of CMS clergy for their lack of faith in the miraculous, reminding them that

The Lord’s healings were not through medicines. Paul used no medicine in healing dysentery. Peter and John did not use a galvanic battery to make the lame man leap at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. They simply used the mighty name of the Lord Jesus himself.⁸⁶

It was a view that can be contrasted with the entire *raison d’etre* of the Ruanda Mission, whose efforts to evangelise Kigezi, Ruanda and Urundi were spearheaded by their medical work and who had, by 1938, fifty-five European workers managing seven stations, seven hospitals, a leprosy settlement that centred not on faith healing but sound medical practice, 6,000 baptised Christians, over 450 village churches and an income of £9000 a year to help fund it.⁸⁷

Much of the reasoning in the appeal for a ‘Uganda Seven’, written by Dr Church, seemed, in fact, to be to help ‘handle’ the enthusiasm of revival rather than to encourage it in a more Pentecostal fashion. ‘Experience has shown us in Ruanda’, continues the article,

that when revival comes on a station, there arises with it urgent spiritual questions, and sometimes problems that requires great sympathy and wisdom in their handling...Can we...lead this great people on into a movement safeguarded

⁸⁵ Boddy and Polhill collaborated in the publication of the periodical *Fragments of Flame*, a journal that aimed to spread their ideas and thoughts. Hocken, ‘Polhill’, p. 991. In 1911 it was renamed *Flames of Fire*.

⁸⁶ D. Maxwell, “‘Networks and Niches’: The Worldwide Transmission of the Azusa Street Revival’, in H. Hunter and C. Robeck (eds), *The Azusa Street Revival and Its Legacy* (2006), p. 134. Polhill’s quote is from *Confidence*, March 1910.

⁸⁷ Rev. H. D. Hooper, 10 October 1938. 617/10. G3 A11/2. CMS Africa 1935-

from the snares that we know have killed revivals of the past? It is with this longing that the scheme has been planned of the sending out a 'Uganda Seven'.⁸⁸

There were tensions between Pentecostalism and the Ruanda Mission that went deeper than ecstatic spirituality. The focus of Pentecostal mission work was made clear by Polhill in his *Practical Points Concerning Missionary Work* (1916). It was radically different from the 'classic missions' and different even from Polhill's Anglican roots.⁸⁹ It was 'to consider yourself an evangelist throughout your term of service...avoid the incubus to the evangelist of day schools, orphanages, and the 101 things which may be accumulated in station life'.⁹⁰ Although the emphasis on evangelism was found in Ruanda, the building and orchestrating of the schools at Gahini and Kabale, it can be assumed, did not fit into Polhill's idea of the role of a mission worker.

Pressure was placed upon the 'Revival Party' both internally and externally. Division amongst the missionaries themselves threatened to pull apart the mission just when the spread of the message of the 'Victorious Life' appeared to be taking root in Christians around Ruanda, Urundi and Kigezi. The onset of sectarian tendencies among the African revivalists did little to help the situation, ensuring continued pressure from dissenting missionaries as well as the threat of episcopal intervention from the Bishop of Uganda and possible restrictions being put in place on the Revival by the Home Council. With a major Nyabingi uprising as late as 1928 and threats of another right through the 1930s there was little room for manoeuvre either in the minds of the

⁸⁸ J. Church, 'An Appeal for a 'Uganda Seven'', *The CICCUC Supplement*, Lent Term, 1938, p. 5. JEC PAPERS, JEC 3/2/5.

⁸⁹ Fiedler defines 'classic missions' as those nineteenth century missions post-dating William Carey's Baptist Missionary Society in 1792, particularly denominational, interdenominational and specialised missions such as the Church Missionary Society (1799), Methodist Missionary Society (1813), London Missionary Society (1795) and Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society (1841). K. Fiedler, *The Story of Faith Missions* (Oxford, 1994), pp. 20-21.

⁹⁰ C. Polhill, *Practical Points Concerning Missionary Work* (1916).

missionaries who aimed to take the Revival message further afield or the minds of the Bishops, whose sanction was necessary to allow it. The solution, for these reasons and more, had to lie in the re-classification of many Revival experiences as 'excessive' and the censorship and control of ecstaticism.

Chapter Five

Controlling Ecstasism in Kigezi and Northern Ruanda

The definition of what was and what was not an acceptable spiritual experience in the Revival was to become especially important in the summer of 1936. The appearance of such 'ecstatic signs' was serious, not least because of the political pressure being applied by the government. Gahini was rapidly becoming recognised as the centre of spiritual Revival in the RGMM and the model of Revival teaching practised there was rapidly being copied elsewhere. Vast numbers were arriving at Gahini every day for medical treatment and any unwanted excesses in spiritual fervour were unlikely to be hidden for long. Twenty thousand outpatients visited Gahini hospital in the first three months of 1936 alone, an average of three hundred per day.¹

¹ J. Church, *RN*, (July, 1936). p. 21.

Significantly, when there was a rapid increase in recorded episodes of ecstatic manifestations in mid-1936 there were no major Bible conventions to attribute it to. It became harder and harder to simply pass the phenomena off as part of an evangelical, Bible-orientated conversion narrative and things looked like they were getting increasingly out of hand. ‘There has followed such a flood of confession and restitution that it is difficult to control, if indeed it should be controlled’, wrote Rev. Brazier, ‘It has been a shock to us all’.²

On 26 June 1936 an outbreak of ecstatic behaviour took place on the hill at Gahini that would change the RGMM attitude to such experiences for good. It began at 9:30pm in the Gahini Girls’ School. ‘We heard a noise in the school which, at a distance, sounded exactly like a Bank Holiday crowd on Hampstead Heath’, wrote Joy Gearson, a new nurse on staff at the hospital. The two staff at the school, Dora Skipper and Mildred Forder, accompanied Gearson to investigate. They found pandemonium; girls were breaking up furniture, foaming at the mouth and making loud noises.

The girls seemed to have gone mad, some were on the floor, they were all throwing themselves about, they were absolutely uncontrolled, some were laughing, some weeping, most were shaking very much and they seemed to have supernatural strength.³

It went on for three days in the Girls’ School and all over the mission Church reported things ‘we’ve never seen before’; ‘Twos, threes or more, continually during these days, going through experiences of dreams, visions, falling down in trances’.⁴ ‘The

² J. Brazier, *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936), p. 15.

³ J. Gearson, cited in H. H. Osborn, *Fire in the Hills* (Crowborough, 1991), p. 16. See also Dr Church’s reflections and reports in *RN*. J. Church, *Quest*, p. 130 and *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936).

⁴ *Ibid*.

happenings cannot easily be put into words', Dr Church reported to *Ruanda Notes*.⁵

Robins has insisted that missionaries were 'careful not to brand states of possession or other uncontrolled behaviour as the work of the devil, nor even as signs of hidden wickedness', but this was not the case.⁶ Gearson reported that, 'The powers of darkness seemed to be right on us. It felt like hell, as though Satan had loosed his armies'.⁷

The Fear of a Nyabingi Resurgence

There was a major and pressing concern with this new outbreak of ecstaticism. The fear of political unrest from an outbreak of Nyabingi weighed heavily in the minds of the British and Belgian administrations throughout the 1930s. Fears of a repeat of 1928 when a large rebellion suddenly arose after a number of years of apparent quiet were quite legitimate. Despite the defeat of Nyabingi forces in Kigezi in 1928 there had been continued reports of activity of the cult across the border in Ruanda.⁸

There were particular reasons why the happenings at Gahini hill could have been associated with traditional spirit possession practices. As a raised area of land it was the same geography as favoured by *emandwa* initiates and the concentration of activity to the Girls' School bore resemblance to the tendency of Nyabingi possession to be found in women. There were also remarkable correlations between the prayer habits of senior

⁵ J. Church, *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936), p. 10.

⁶ Robins, 'Tukutendereza', pp. 226-227.

⁷ Gearson, cited in Osborn, *Fire*, p. 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 149.

African leaders and those of *bagirwa*. ‘The houses of the leading Christians had little prayer huts in the compound, or in the trees on the edge of the concession’, Church recalled, ‘I remember spending long times with Blasio and Yosiya in these little ‘kuzus’.⁹ It was an identical practice to the Nyabingi *bagirwa* who were noted for also building huts near their houses or by nearby woods in which they would spend substantial amounts of time. For the *bagirwa* it was the Nyabingi spirit that was believed to reside there; for the *Balokole* it was the Holy Spirit.

The behaviour in itself - loss of bodily control, apparent loss of rational faculties and altered vocal displays - was also similar to both Nyabingi and *emandwa*, but the exact connection between the two was less important than the fear that such behaviour created. The confusion in the mission between them merely ensured *any* dramatic ecstatic behaviour was liable to attributed to Nyabingi.¹⁰ The particular concern of the RGMM was that it soon appeared to be no longer isolated to Gahini. In Kigeme in late 1936 ‘one of two began to have trances in which they seemed to become possessed and spoke with another voice’.¹¹ Roman Catholic priests near the Ruanda Mission complained that the Revival was dangerously similar to Nyabingi traditions. They complained that Revivalist

leaders became Christian witch-callers, *abahamagazi*, who felt chosen to root out the evil about which missionaries preached incessantly and who also legitimized their right to do so by reference to the Paraclete [Holy Spirit] rather than to the Nyabingi Spirit.¹²

⁹ J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 5. JEC 9/2/25.

¹⁰ For confusion over the difference between Nyabingi, *emandwa* and non-possession based spirituality see A. Stanley-Smith, RN, No. 2., 15 September 1921, in JEC/RN, p. 19.

¹¹ RN, No. 59, Jan. 1937, p. 50.

¹² Linden, p. 204-205. See also RN, 72 (May 1940), 11; RN, 57 (July 1936), 3; RN, 67 (February 1939), 38. (Check these references!).

Ian Linden has made the argument that this is what was actually being seen - ‘a translation of the CMS teaching on the radical sinfulness of men and of pagan society in particular, together with their emphasis on the Holy Spirit, into the medium of witch-calling and Nyabingi shamanism’.¹³ Early 1935 had brought rumours from the Rukiga and Ndorwa sub-districts of Kigezi that Nyabingi activity was once again being detected along the district’s eastern border at just the time that Robins’ research suggests Bakiga associated with the Ruanda Mission were stirring up their followers through apocalyptic preaching and ecstatic manifestations.¹⁴ Linden emphasised the ‘Snow Prayer’, distributed by Dr Church in 1928 to 3,000 Bakiga and Banyarwanda as a major encouragement to Nyabingi behaviour:

O God, Our Father, wash me from all sin in the Saviour’s blood, and I shall be whiter than Snow. Fill me daily with the Holy Spirit, to serve thee for Jesus Christ’s sake, our Lord, Amen.¹⁵

‘Hymns’ and ‘songs’ were also an important aspect of this. Emma Wild-Wood and Peter Wood have highlighted the role of ‘hymns’ in their study of the Anglican Church in north-east Congo. In *Christian Churches in Africa*, they maintained, music was ‘the major expression of worship and of revelation on and articulation of faith’.¹⁶

It is significant, therefore, that *Spirit of The Living God* was newly translated for use during the 1935 Kabale Convention and was so popular that it was reported being sung by Gahini Christians in times of African-initiated prayer meetings throughout 1936 and

¹³ I. Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester, 1977), p. 204.

¹⁴ E. Hopkins, ‘The Nyabingi Cult of South-Western Uganda’, in R. Rotberg and A. Mazrui (eds.), *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York, 1970), p. 322.

¹⁵ *RN*, No. 25, July, 1928, p. 4.

¹⁶ P. Wood and E. Wild-Wood, “‘One Day We Will Sing in God’s Home’: Hymns and Songs Sung in the Anglican Church in North-East Congo (DRC)”, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, Vol. 34, Fasc. 1/2 (Feb-May, 2004), pp. 145-180., p. 145.

translated into Luganda (*Omwoyo wa Katonda*), Lunyaruanda (*Umwuka wera w'Imana*), Lukiga (*Mutima wa Ruhanga*), Lunyoro (*Omwoyo gwa Ruhanga*) and Swahili.¹⁷ It was short and sung in a circular fashion, with many repetitions. Its English version went as follows:

Spirit of the Living God, Fall Afresh on Me (repeat)
Break Me, Melt Me, Mould Me, Fill Me.
(repeat first line...)¹⁸

It was this song that Dr Church observed being continuously sung in Gahini in June 1936 during the major outbreak of ecstatic manifestations and it was an indication of the natural inclination to spirit possession practices in the region.¹⁹

This was the first time such phenomena had appeared on mission station property in this was and it was not received well by the European staff. Miss Skipper, who worked in the Girls' School, refused to allow Blasio Kigozi, Nsibambi's younger brother and a worker at Gahini, or Yosiya Kinuka to take further prayers in the school because 'she feared emotionalism'.²⁰ When all the evangelists, teachers and readers were called in for 'a special week of teaching and guidance' to deal with the behaviour a special service was held. Over 1,000 people attended but spontaneously some 'cried out and fell on the floor weeping'.²¹ The service had to be closed and 150 refused to leave and remained

¹⁷ Church, *Quest*, p. 116; Also see references to it being a 'favourite' in missions held in 1936 and 1938. J. Church, *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936), p. 10. J. Church, 2 Circular Letter re: Kenya Missions, 18 September 1938. JEC 1/2/34. For correspondence concerning translation see G. Rhoad to J. Church, 28 September 1938. JEC 1/2/39.

¹⁸J. E. Church personal copy of 'The Invader Music Book', 1940. JEC 32. It is important to note that this is not the song so frequently described as the 'theme song of Revivalists throughout East Africa'. This was *Tukutendereza Yesu* which rose to prominence in the 1940s (after the demise of ecstatic manifestations). K. Ward, "'Tukutendereza Yesu' The Balokole Revival in Uganda", in Z. Nthamburi, *From Mission to Church* (Nairobi, 1991), p. 113.

¹⁹ J. Church, *RN*, June, 1936. p. 22.

²⁰ Church, *Quest*, p. 131.

²¹ J. Church, *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936), p. 11.

behind for three hours to continue in prayer. One senior Gahini Christian told Dr Church that it was ‘the most wonderful day we’ve ever had at Gahini’.²²

The inability of officials and missionaries to distinguish between Nyabingi and other elements of traditional spirituality that encouraged spirit possession meant that any sign of ecstatic or enthusiastic behaviour was treated with suspicion.²³ It was no longer easy to attribute such behaviour to conviction or conversion, although attempts were made.²⁴ Division in the mission around attitudes to CMS and the exclusivity of African and European ‘Revivalists’, particularly how they related to other Europeans in the mission and to the Bishop, ensured that it was not only external, government pressure that urged an end to the ecstatic behaviour of Revivalists. The mission was on its way to facing its own schism and, whilst this might have been acceptable to senior Revivalists under normal circumstances, in the case that it threatened the continuation of the Revival work further controversy had to be avoided. The movement, reported Dr W. Church to the Ruanda Council in June of that year, now ‘needed guidance with wise sympathy’.²⁵

As many of these incidents were at their most extreme and occurred first in Gahini district it was here that we see the fashioning of the ‘official’ response to such behaviour. Irrespective of external pressure and internal division the historic attachment

²² J. Church, *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936), p. 11.

²³ It is interesting to note similar observations have been made by Wild-Wood in relation to the Yakan Water Cult in North-West Uganda. Lugbara revivalists who shouted and danced enthusiastically were thought by some to in fact be practicing the Yakan Cult, which was known for the practice of spirit possession. E. Wild-Wood, ‘Why Strive for the Gospel? The Culture of the Chosen Evangelical Revival on the Northern Congo-Uganda Border’ in E. Wild-Wood and K. Ward, *The East African Revival* (Kamapala, 2010), pp. 196-214.

²⁴ See D. Skipper’s account in *RN*, No. 58 (October, 1936).

²⁵ Minutes of Ruanda Council, 29 June 1936. G3 A11/2. CMS Africa 1935-

between RGMM and the CICCUC/Keswick doctrine ensured behavioural censorship could not take place without theological justification, particularly as many Africans believed what they were experiencing was God.²⁶ In the July 1936 a further outbreak of ecstatic manifestations occurred at Gahini that would be crucial to this. Blasio Bamonyo, one of the hospital staff, began to weep whilst leading the weekly prayer meeting on the station. Church recalled ‘weeping began all over the school hall, with many trembling and shaking as some were doing at the night singing’.²⁷

I watched one man especially ... He was sitting on the end of a form and as he wept his whole body began to shake from head to foot so violently that he rolled off the form onto the floor and remained there. I noticed girls passing their fingers through their hair so violently that I thought it must be painful. But at other times, when it was all over there was left a calm and contentment.²⁸

Church was always interested in engaging with African leaders of the revival in his decision-making and in this case it was no different. In his diary he lamented the loss of Blasio Kigozi who had recently died and the temporary absence of Yosia Kinuka. Instead, however, we are offered an insight into his own thoughts on the theology behind the manifestations. The issue centred on the hierarchy of theology that was practised in evangelicalism – many experiences and ideas were practised in the Church and found in the Bible but all of them had to come underneath the established Christ-centred message. ‘It is our privilege’, wrote the Organising Secretary, ‘and our responsibility to make this fact known to the people of Ruanda-Urundi’.²⁹

It is important to see the role of the previous decades of tension faced by evangelicalism in England in the formation of this ‘hierarchy of theology’. The CICCUC/SCM and

²⁶ H. H. Osborn, *Fire*, p. 16.

²⁷ Church, *Quest*, p. 132.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ R. Webster, *RN*, Apr. 1936, p. 6.

CMS/BCMS divisions established in evangelicalism the perception that certain aspects of doctrine should be given greater centrality than others. In the case of open manifestations, the confusion was the place they took in relation to a message that emphasised the authority of Christ, the power of his ‘blood’ and the single requirement of a ‘decision for Christ’ to enter salvation (‘salvation by faith’).

Later on that evening I hear voices getting nearer on the road to my house, with Blasio’s [Bamonyo] rising above the others... “Doctor we are having a big discussion”, one said. “Blasio is saying that weeping and shaking is a sign of the Holy Spirit and therefore if you don’t do it you are not really filled with the Spirit. What do you think?”³⁰

This was one of the most important conversations Dr Church would have in his dealings with open manifestations, for it raised the issue that went right to the core of the evangelical message he was preaching: What was a ‘sign’ of salvation? ‘I saw how Satan could so easily be lurking in all this’, he noted in his diary.

Fear of deviation from a message of ‘salvation by faith’ if manifestations were allowed to be seen as ‘signs’ of salvation was paramount in the mind of the missionary leaders of the Revival. Theologically speaking an attachment to the Protestant heritage of Martin Luther’s concept of *sola fide* (salvation by ‘faith alone’) ensured that the Ruanda Mission avoided at all costs the Pentecostal position that regarded ecstatic phenomena as an essential sign of Spirit baptism or sanctification.³¹ From the outset this had made Pentecostalism controversial in many evangelical circles where it was seen as an immature appropriation of genuine Christianity. When Simeoni Nsibambi and Dr Church met to pray about the Holy Spirit in 1929 and reported an ecstatic ‘spirit baptism’ experience, Church was reprimanded by fellow missionaries who, having seen

³⁰ ‘24 July 1936’, in Church, *Quest*, p. 132.

³¹ C. Robins, p. 226.

Nsibambi's behaviour after the meeting, remarked that Nsibambi was 'mad' and that 'Africans were not ready for the teaching of the Holy Spirit: It would only lead to Pentecostalism'.³² Dr Church was anxious to avoid any further 'label' that might bring further division and it was on these grounds that he strongly advised the Bishop of Uganda to avoid calling ecstatic phenomena 'Pentecostalism'.³³

Dr Church could not hide his anxiety surrounding these experiences as he attempted to theologially justify his wariness of open manifestations to the African Christians who professed the 'spirit baptism' experience:

I answered something like this... "We have prayed for new life. We have claimed the fullness of the Spirit that God promised, so we must believe that he has graciously done what he said he would do. We can be moved in various ways – in song, testimony, weeping and so on. But in the book of Acts we find that the devil does get angry and his way of attacking is to copy or counterfeit true emotional signs. Paul told us to be very careful about these outward signs."³⁴

It is evident that fear of spiritual attack from Satan in the form of over-emotionalism was significant and wariness of these experiences would soon turn to active discouragement. The following night he discussed the issue with Archdeacon Pitt-Pitts and called the African teachers and senior Christians to tell them what the official position was. 'All day was spent on Monday', Joe wrote, 'going through Bible teaching with Archdeacon Pitt-Pitts to advise, encourage and help'.³⁵ Senior African leaders who shared their missionaries value for theology and scripture might have found such

³² J. Church to M. Warren, 25 April 1953, p. 4. JEC 9/2/25.

³³ J. Church to Bishop of Uganda, 30 March 1940. JEC 3/4/27.

³⁴ Ibid..

³⁵ Quest., p. 133.

reasoning familiar but amongst the rest it was not popular.³⁶ Cecil Verity found ‘several’ of the Gahini teachers ‘reprimanded him’ when he warned them against emotionalism. Instead they began to pray and were soon so broken down in weeping that he had to leave the schoolroom and continue his meeting elsewhere.³⁷

Consensus of opinion was still being sought on what constituted ‘over-emotionalism’ and what did not. Lawrence Barham wrote in late 1936, of a gardener, for example, who came to return money he had stolen, heavily perspiring with the ‘agonies of shame and distress of mind’. ‘This is not emotionalism’, Barham wrote, ‘it’s stern conviction of the Holy Spirit and it fills us with awe’.³⁸ A theology of manifestations that centred on conviction of sin allowed the missionaries to resolve the tension between what they knew to be a feature of previous revivals and their fear of what many suspected to be incorrect theology and African cultural exuberance.³⁹

On the 26 July, soon after his conversation with Blasio Bamonyo, Church closed an entire meeting at 2:30 p.m. in order to prevent an escalation of the behaviour, ordering the two hundred or so Africans who felt such symptoms to remain so that he could guide them out of the experience, although many rebelled and ‘prayed’ and ‘wept’ until 6:30 p.m.⁴⁰ So crucial was the role taken by the Revival leadership in censoring and

³⁶ Nsibambi maintained that it was ‘a whole year I have myself to the study of scriptural materials’ that led to ‘complete commitment’ in God. Cited in Osborn, *Pioneers in the East African Revival* (Winchester, 2000), p. 17. William Nagenda, Blasio Kigozi, Erica Sabiti (a later influential leader in the Revival) and Simeon Nsibambi, for example, all received a privileged education at King’s College, Budo, a ‘public school in the English style’. C. Summers, ‘Radical Rudeness: Ugandan Social Critiques in the 1940s’, *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Spring, 2006), p. 745. For more on the influence of education in the construction of Buganda identity see N. Musisi, ‘Morality as Identity: the Missionary Moral Agenda in Buganda, 1877-1945’, *Journal of Religious History*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (February, 1999), p. 51-74.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ L. Barham, *RN*, (January, 1937), p. 17.

³⁹ ‘After reading up old records of revival, we have found that what we were puzzled by what had occurred in times gone by’, J. Church, *RN*, (January 1937), p. 30.

⁴⁰ See 26 June 1936, diary entry, Quest, p. 130 and J. Church, *RN*, (October, 1936), pp. 10-11.

preventing such outbreaks from escalating that Robins argued the primary reason for the explosion of ecstatic phenomena in Kigezi a month early in June was the absence of Dr Church, Rev. Barham and their teams, all of whom had departed Kigezi for Kampala and the 'Namirembe mission for Uganda Clergy'.⁴¹

When difficulties emerged in Buhiga in late 1936, particularly in the extremity of revival signs that emerged, control was again applied to the behaviour. One or two 'began to have trances in which they seemed to become possessed and spoke with another voice'.⁴² After 'quiet dealing with and instruction' it passed but it was, Brazier noted, 'disturbing'.⁴³ The solution was to subdue everything that detracted from the centrality of Christ in the Bible. Brazier summarised it, saying, 'By bringing everything to the scriptural test of "the Spirit of Jesus" I think we have dealt with the problem'.⁴⁴ The all-night meetings were another cause of trouble, a 'source of danger' according to Brazier and his colleagues. A gathering of the African evangelists met to discuss it, deciding that it should be ended. All-day meetings ensued instead and, at the time of writing, Brazier commented that the activity on the station had all but stopped for the day due to a 'gathering on the hillside nearby, run by themselves'.⁴⁵

African leaders of the Revival took equal ownership of the task to rein in public emotional displays. 'You may have heard that there was a small set of Abolokole of Toro and Kampala', wrote Church to Barham in December 1939, 'who adopted rather desperately I think, some advanced walking in the light theories of Holiness'.⁴⁶ Groups

⁴¹ Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 221.

⁴² J. Brazier, *RN*, No. 59 (January, 1937), p. 50. MAM E/1/1

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ J. Church to L. Barham, December 11, 1939. JEC 3/ 4/25.

were reported talking very openly about sex and caused great disturbance to many observers. One such case was seen at Buloba in late 1939. 'It appears', wrote a witness,

that a number of them got the idea that evil thoughts originated in the genital organs, and that the way to deal with them was to expose the latter both among themselves and in public, speaking quite freely about them and proclaiming their independence of these organs.⁴⁷

Simeon Nsibambi was noted to have visited and helped them 'to a place of repentance' for their actions, identifying key leaders in their community who could be swayed to a more orthodox view and therefore influence the rest of their followers. In another church a young African teacher was dispatched to handle an 'epidemic' of 'falling', which had been adopted as a sign of possession by the Spirit of God. The teacher told the congregation they were 'going astray' (*okuhaba*) and to pray for power to stop this behaviour and ask God instead for humility.⁴⁸

When African church teachers from around the Kigezi district came into the mission headquarters once a month to withdraw their pay, the opportunity was taken to give them instruction and direction on how to control unwanted behaviour. It provided a chance for the Kabale-based leaders to gain information on the outlying areas and, if needed, send teams to exert more effective measures of control.⁴⁹ Many of the Bakiga were highly malleable to such instruction. 'These things about *okucugusibwa* [time of trembling] remained a mystery to us', recalled one convert, 'we could not understand them properly until we received preachers from places like Buganda and Rwanda

⁴⁷ 'Charles' to J. Church, 29 October 1939. JEC 11/1/4.

⁴⁸ Interview, Rev. S. Ndimbirwe, 16 December 1971. Conducted and cited by Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 226.

⁴⁹ Interview, Rev. S. Ndimbirwe, 16 December, 1971. Conducted and cited by Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 231.

[sic].⁵⁰

The enforcement of official interpretations of doctrine was a central part of the role of the 'Revival Party'. Church, Barham, Kinuka and Balaba were all emphatic on the importance of Biblical instruction for this reason – it was the *raison d'être* of the conventions, the protection of the sacred evangelical theology. Guidance was thought to be needed almost constantly on all matters of doctrine in the bush churches. Dr Symonds, for example, commented that after a short tour of Kigezi he found 'the [local] teachers in charge with so little chance to know all we know, do need our prayers'.⁵¹ The travelling and preaching around the districts of the 'Bible teams' (who would teach the correct doctrine and ensure control of unwanted interpretations of the Revival message) had been in operation since 1934 and it was this method that was used to bring ecstaticism under control. It was a method that Robins argued was 'enormously' effective.⁵² Barham reported such behaviour from Kigezi:

Ezekieri and I with a car-load of helpers have therefore been going out for the last few Sundays to various centres of revival...In between services, we collected a little band of keenites, and after hearing their experiences, were able to point out to them from the Bible, dangers to avoid, as well as encouragements to their faith.⁵³

Active intervention such as this was not always popular with Africans but it was driven by the Europeans in the mission. The breakdown of relationship between the mission and the colonial authorities had been on-going since the late-1920s. At the heart of it

⁵⁰ Interview, James Bageruka, 27 February 1972. Conducted and cited by Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 220.

⁵¹ J. Symonds, *RN*, (Apr. 1936), p. 15.

⁵² Robins, p. 223. See previous chapter on the establishment of Bible teams in the early 1930s.

⁵³ L. Barham, *RN*, No. 56 (April 1936), pp. 12-13. Ezekieri Balaba held enormous influence in the district. Robins' collection of oral testimonies from converts in a valley near Kabale where *okucugusibwa* was widespread indicated that he was central to much of the censorship of ecstatic behaviour that occurred. Informant reported that he was accorded 'the highest praise possible' by being described by residents of Kigezi as a 'true Mukiga'. Robins, 'Tukutendereza', p. 226, footnote 22.

was the divergence of interests between a colonial government that desired stability and a mission that appeared to be inciting fanaticism and unrest. Nyabingi had been ‘the most serious and sustained challenge to the authority of European colonial power in the territories of Uganda’ and both the ecstatic and unruly behaviour of Revivalists drew unwanted attention.⁵⁴ With enough strain already on the government-mission relationship it fell to the Europeans in the mission to press for behavioural control. Barham recalled a conversation with Ezekieri along these lines.

Balaba came to be and...he said, “things are going rather funnily and we’d better keep out of it.” I said, “No, we hadn’t. We’d better go in it because if these things go wrong the government will clamp down and put these people in prison. We must go around and try to sort it out”.⁵⁵

The difficulty for the early leaders of the revival was that at the same time as facing a crisis of sectarianism they preached a message that placed a high value on unity - ‘Fellowship’ was the technical term that emerged in the revival movement. Martin Capon, a CICCUC man and one of the key missionary leaders of revival when it spread to Kenya, wrote eight pages in *Principles of Fellowship* (1938) of the importance of establishing fellowship with others.⁵⁶ It was a theme so central to the growth of the Revival Movement that discussion ensued in late 1939 as to whether the constitution of

⁵⁴ H. Hansen, ‘The Colonial Control of Spirit Cults in Uganda’, in D. Anderson and D. Johnson (eds.), *Revealing Prophets* (London, 1995), p. 143. Interviews, Rev. P. J. Brazier, 19 May 1972, Peasemore, England; Interview, James Bageruka, 27 February 1972. Conducted and cited by Robins, ‘Tukutendereza’, p. 229.

⁵⁵ Oral Interview, L. Barham. 26 May 1972, Bexhill, England, cited and conducted by C. Robins, op. cit., p. 224.

⁵⁶ M. Capon, *Principles of Fellowship* (October, 1938), JEC 11/1/2.

the Ruanda Mission should be altered to include it.⁵⁷ Church explained it in

Memorandum on Fellowship thus:

The Ruanda Mission is founded on and committed to Bible, Protestant and Keswick principles...Each of these words has its special implications. "Keswick" stands for the life of holiness by entire surrender to the Holy Spirit and its motto is -

"All ONE in Christ Jesus".

This motto proclaims fellowship which rises above all distinctions of social status, denomination and profession.⁵⁸

In fact, although confession was a major feature of the Revival in East Africa, forming part of every fellowship meeting and considered necessary by many in order to enter the movement, it does not fit into Revival theology as neatly as many would have it.⁵⁹

Stanley-Smith summed up the Message of Revival as 'the need of the New Birth', 'The efficacy of the Cross of Christ believed in to give pardon and constant cleansing' and 'Fellowship'.⁶⁰ Nowhere in Stanley-Smith's summary of the message of revival does he explicitly mention 'confession'. Instead, it is hidden within something believed to be superior that transcends the simplicity of a singular confession ritual – 'Fellowship'. It was the subject of many articles and memorandums over the years but to Stanley-Smith 'Fellowship' was 'getting right with the Lord and with one another'.⁶¹ Confession was placed within the complexity of the belief in a real and present relationship with God

⁵⁷ J. Church, 'Suggested Constitution of Present Council of Ruanda and Urundi: An effort to try to find a place for fellowship and fellowship meetings in Ruanda Constitution', November 1939. JEC 11/1/5.

⁵⁸ J. Church, *A Memorandum on Fellowship* (n. d.), p. 2. JEC 11/1/11. It is important to note that it is not the Pentecostal denomination that Church refers to here, but to simply the appearance of the Spirit of God in Christians.

⁵⁹ Bill Church, brother of Joe, was, for example, the object of accusations from revival brethren because of his refusal to publicly confess in front of the African Christians

⁶⁰ A. Stanley-Smith, 'A Summary of Answers to Questions at the Council Meeting, Jan. 15, 1945', p. 4. JEC 4/10/53.

⁶¹ Ibid. See also J. Church, 'Oneness' (n.d.). JEC 11/1/9; 'A Memorandum on Fellowship'. JEC 11/1/11; 'A Call to the Life of Fellowship' (n.d.), JEC 11/1/16; 'Aims for Walking in the Light and Fellowship'. JEC 11/1/22 and M. Capon, 'Principles of Fellowship', October 1938. JEC 11/1/2.

and each other, a mutual adjustment first with Him [God] and then with one's fellow which is a constant need in any "community living". It means living in transparent sincerity and a willingness to share with one another the experiences of daily life.⁶²

'The working of the Holy Spirit among us has made us face His demand for the "Unity of the Spirit" in both Mission and Native Church', wrote Jim Brazier in late 1936.⁶³

'Unity' was, however, restricted only to those who agreed with the Revival 'party'.

While great celebration was made of the united meeting of Protestant Missions at Musema in November 1935 little effort was made to engage in such measures with Roman Catholic mission stations, who were considered the 'worst enemies' of the Ruanda Mission. CMS were told they 'must take second place' to 'the Lord's work' despite being the parent organisation for RGMM and when Dr and Mrs Sharp, co-founders of the mission, questioned some of the theology professed by Dr Church and the 'party' they were told "if you do not agree with the way things are going in the Mission now then YOU ARE FIGHTING AGAINST GOD".⁶⁴

By 1937 Robins argued that the efforts of the 'Revival Party' had been successful and the tide of ecstaticism had been contained.⁶⁵ Almost a year after the escalation of ecstatic behaviour in June and July 1936 Dr Church wrote to his wife to encourage her that the situation was changing. He wrote of a recent meeting in which William

⁶² A. Stanley-Smith, 'A Summary of Answers to Questions at the Council Meeting, Jan. 15, 1945', p. 4. JEC 4/10/53..

⁶³ J. Brazier, *RN*, No. 59 (January, 1937), pp. 50-51. MAM E/1/1.

⁶⁴ Stanley-Smith, *RN*, (Jan. 1936), p. 16. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 9 (Jan. 1924), in JEC/RN, p. 72. Stanley-Smith, *RN*, No. 6 (16 February 1923), in JEC/RN, p. 49. E. Sharp to R. Webster, 19 March 1946. p. 5 (original emphasis). G3 A11/8.

⁶⁵ Although she does not use this term.

Nagenda gave a 'powerful address' on sin, supported by Yosiya Kinuka and Blasio.⁶⁶

The ecstatic hysteria of the previous year was absent. When Africans began to stand to pray he emphasised that it was 'not shouting', just 'deep convicted hearts'. Finally, it seemed, his Africans were coming into the same experience of repentance and the 'Victorious Life' that he remembered from his Cambridge days, 'a real victory over sin in the heart through the blood of Christ'.

This week was one of victory...The power of God was different this time to that in June. In June we felt there was a great fight between the devil and God...an electricity and fear and excitement everywhere which was frightening but this time...calm. Fully of power...No shout; no hysteria.⁶⁷

'Each one in the Church', he continued, 'saw his sin and saw the Saviour; it was too wonderful to describe'. William Nagenda and Yosiya Kinuka refused to allow anyone to stand and confess while they were preaching and Nagenda created a list, writing down only those amidst the 'hundreds' confessing that he felt were genuine.⁶⁸

From the security of a calm and controlled atmosphere Dr Church reflected upon the causes of the ecstaticism that had been a feature of the previous years. The cause of ecstatic spirituality in Africans, he felt, was a cultural one.

I think this the equivalent of our [English] experience of the entering of the Holy Spirit only perhaps there must be more distinction here [in Africa], because of the absolute bondage of Satan these people dwell in until they come to Christ. It is something we cannot fully understand, even from a Christian land.⁶⁹

Bishop Stuart was able to write with satisfaction that 'all is well in your mission'

⁶⁶ J. Church to D. Church, 31 March 1937. JEC 3/4/5.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

following a tour around Ruanda-Urundi in 1939.⁷⁰ Ecstaticism was considered almost affectionately as evidence of African immaturity, just ‘growing pains’ that ‘God is able to guard against’. The answer was found in encouraging peace, or ‘waiting on the Lord’, instead of hysteria.

There have been mistakes which are almost inevitable in a young church full of zeal for the Lord. There are even now, I think, exaggerated emphases, but they are overcome by waiting on the Lord. I have been very cheered by what I have seen.

In his letter to his wife Dr Church concluded with almost prophetic insight that despite their success in curtailing unwanted behaviour the troubles might not yet be over. ‘Satan is ahead’, he wrote.⁷¹ Within a matter of months of Bishop Stuart’s tour reports came in from the borders of Ruanda-Urundi and Tanganyika that more ecstatic signs were appearing in the young CMS stations of Katoke, Bukoba, and Bugufi.

The control of Revival manifestations in 1936-1937 was brought to the front of the Revival Party’s agenda by the extreme nature of the behaviour. Unlike the previous episodes of ecstaticism in 1935 and early 1936 these did not follow a Bible Convention and could not be attributed to missionary teaching. The safety of conceptualising such behaviour through an evangelical ‘conversionist’ lens was removed not only by the extremity of ecstaticism but the sheer timing of it. The similarities to Nyabingi were uncanny but, in many ways, the extent to which it *was* a true outbreak of Nyabingi or not is irrelevant to the argument that it was *perceived* to be by missionaries and colonial authorities. Ecstatic phenomena had moved beyond the realm of theological justification and the seedbed of anti-ecstatic thought that had been sown during Dr Church’s time at

⁷⁰ Bishop of Uganda to ‘Friends’, 30 February 1939. JEC 3/4/11.

⁷¹ J. Church to D. Church, 31 March 1937. JEC 3/4/5.

Keswick began to come to the fore. The highest priority of Revivalists was in the protection of the work of Revival and the preservation of the integrity of their Christocentric message and it was this that drove them, beyond anything, to bring an end to the controversy of ecstaticism.

Chapter Six

Ecstaticism in Tanganyika

‘Picture an African diocese as large as the whole of New South Wales, with a widely scattered native population, continual problems of transport and communication and a small staff of less than 50 missionaries’, started one article in *The Sydney Morning Herald*. ‘Is it a wonder that scant enthusiasm was shown for the ambitious venture of further extending the work to include those areas to the extreme west of Tanganyika?’¹ The area known as ‘The Far West Mission’ was crucial to the fate of ecstatic phenomena in CMS missions in interlacustrine East Africa. It was populated primarily by the Bahaya who were, in many respects, similar in spirituality to the Bakiga and Banyaruanda. It was culturally similar to many stations in the Ruanda Mission but most importantly a number of its leaders were already familiar, albeit informally, with Dr Church’s teaching. ‘Bugufi’, wrote Dr Church to the Bishop,

¹ N. Langford-Smith, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 14 July 1934, p. 7. Accessed online 3/1/2013. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/article/28023859>

‘... is a first cousin of Ruanda and we have for a long time wanted to get more in touch... I have visited...and was much impressed with the great work being done’.²

There were even linguistic similarities between the two regions, so similar that Kirundi testaments and ‘other books’ were offered by the Ruanda Mission to help at Bugufi. A previous visit in 1934 had found that the Bugufi Christians could understand Kinyaruanda, perhaps more easily, thought Dr Church, than Swahili (the government language of Tanganyika).³

As has been discussed in Chapter II of this thesis, there were similarities in spirit possession practice throughout the areas of Kigezi, Ankole, Ruanda, Congo and north-western Tanganyika. Muga has argued that there was a ‘prevailing African religious belief’ system that encompassed the Bahaya and Bakiga. Even in cases of confession the concept of ‘taboo’ was as prevalent in Tanganyika as elsewhere.⁴ The most important aspect of ecstaticism in Tanganyika for this thesis, however, is not the reasoning behind why it occurred but the manner in which it was controlled by the Revival party. When ecstatic phenomena did occur between 1939 and 1940 in Tanganyika they did so as the only other recorded outbreak of such behaviour in association with the Revival Movement.

The establishment of CMS in German East Africa (as it was initially known) from 1876 had been fraught with difficulty. A ‘declaration’ of intent was necessary from CMS headquarters in 1911 to assure missionaries that they would not be closing the

² J. Church to Bishop Chambers, 1 November, 1937. JEC 1/3/2.

³ Ibid.

⁴ E. Muga, ‘The Impact of Western Christian Religion on the Development of Leadership Groups in East Africa’, DPhil, New School for Social Research, 1967, p. 46ff.

struggling mission, the onset of war led to the imprisonment of CMS and some UMCA missionaries and the mid-1920s were described as a 'constant struggle against difficult circumstances and serious losses of staff'.⁵ Financial difficulties ensured that in 1921 every mission of CMS was asked to consider reducing salaries by twenty per cent. Funding commitments were so stretched that the CMS Parent Committee felt it necessary to ask the Australian CMS to partner them when a new diocese was set up in Central Tanganyika in 1926 by nominating a Bishop and funding all mission costs apart from European salaries.⁶

Bishop G. A. Chambers was consecrated at Lambeth Palace on All Saints Day, 1927 and wrote with pride that 'From Canterbury...I, an Australian, went forth to Africa as first Bishop of Central Tanganyika, to provide an outlet for Australian aspiration in fellowship with England'.⁷ £11,000 was raised in Australia for the new mission in 1928, £6,500 raised from a BBC radio appeal for a Mvumi hospital extension and, with connections in England (the evangelical and wealthy parish of St Paul's, Onslow Square was run by Chambers' father-in-law, Canon W. Talbot-Rice), this ensured, at least initially, that finances continued made their way to Tanganyika.⁸

In September 1928 a large group of 2,000 former CMS adherents requested intervention from Bishop Chambers. In a letter forwarded by Bishop Willis of Uganda and signed by seventeen evangelical Christians, representing seventy-two churches in Bukoba, he was

⁵ G. Hewitt, *The Problems of Success: A History of the Church Missionary Society 1910-42* (London, 1971), p. 181-186. A 1920 report indicated some 2,400 baptised members and almost 19,000 in CMS schools in comparison to some 1,000 baptised members and 17,000 in CMS schools in 1913. Hewitt, op. cit., pp. 185, 183.

⁶ Hewitt, op. cit., p. 187.

⁷ Hewitt, op. cit., p. 188. See also G. A. Chambers, *Tanganyika's New Day* (CMS, 1931) and N. de S. P. Sibtain and W. M. Chambers, *Dare to Look Up: A Memoir of George Alexander Chambers* (1968).

⁸ Hewitt, op. cit., p. 189.

informed that ‘We, who were baptized in the CMS want you to be our father’.⁹ Bukoba was established, despite protestations from the German Lutheran missions, in 1929 right on the Western shores of Lake Victoria under Rev. Lionel Bakewell and became known in Australia as ‘The Far West Mission’.¹⁰

By 1934 Bukoba had six missionaries and a Teachers Training school of forty students and had just opened an outstation 200 mile away at Bugufi, right on the borders of Ruanda-Urundi, under the care of Church Army Captain Jack Bennett.¹¹ Within a couple of years there were eight ‘bush-schools’ around Bugufi under African teachers with almost 1,000 children in attendance. These were simple affairs, ‘built of poles, bamboo, mud and grass, at a cost of some twenty or thirty shillings each’ with a resident teacher on a salary of five pounds a year.¹²

The most important aspects of the ‘Far West Mission’ in relation to the appearance of ecstatic phenomena in 1939 were three-fold: the chronic shortage of funds throughout the 1930s, the relative isolation of Bugufi and Bukoba and their proximity to Ruanda and Kigezi. Despite the initial hope of financial security, funds continued to be a problem in the diocese. In the early 1930s a £1,000 a year externally-granted fund for local African workers was cut and they were increasingly forced to become self-supporting. Fees were introduced for certain medical treatments, local African workers were encouraged to find support through their parishes, offerings were taken at baptisms and confirmations and no new out-stations were established without material support

⁹ Carl-J. Hellberg, *Missions on a Colonial Frontier West of Lake Victoria*, (1965), pp. 206ff, cited in Hewitt, p. 203.

¹⁰ Langford-Smith, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Saturday 14 July 1934, p. 7.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

from local chiefs and communities.¹³

In 1930 London was informed that the Australian CMS had a large deficit and was cutting its support for the diocese from £7,720 to £6,000 a year and all missionary salaries were cut by ten per cent, with an additional cut to African workers' salaries reported in 1938.¹⁴ In 1933 the Tanganyika Diocesan Council complained to CMS Federal Council in Australia that it was the only CMS area in the world having to meet the costs of adverse exchange rates and implored the Council for more funds.¹⁵ The result was that in the midst of a large diocese with already poor transport and communication there was little support for the adequate manpower to enable Bishop Chambers to manage the area under his care. Three missionaries were retired for financial reasons in 1932, although one was retained under a special plea, and by the onset of the second world war stations such as Bugufi and Bukoba were not only left in geographical isolation but without the continual contact and oversight from other missionaries that was so common in the smaller, more densely structured Ruanda Mission.¹⁶ The absence of adequate supervision and the remoteness and isolation of the western Tanganyikan stations would be fundamentally important to the appearance of ecstasism in the region.

The missionary view of the arrival of open manifestations in Western Tanganyika echoed that found in the Ruanda Mission – missionaries believed it was due to Dr

¹³ Hewitt, op. cit., p. 190.

¹⁴ G3 A/8, P1, 1930/22, cited in Hewitt, op. cit., p. 190. Hewitt, op. cit., p. 192.

¹⁵ P1, 1933/20, cited in Hewitt, op. cit., p. 191.

¹⁶ Hewitt, op. cit., p. 191.

Church's team's three day teaching on the 'Victorious Life' at Katoke station in April 1939.¹⁷ The teaching followed the same evangelical, Keswick line as all of their previous missions. The focus was crucicentric - the need for salvation and the Cross of Christ as the means to that salvation. On the first day they preached on sin, the second day on repentance and the third on the Blood of Jesus.¹⁸ Initially very little seemed to happen; on the second day 'several boys made earnest confession of sin' but 'no similar occasion occurred again during the mission'.¹⁹ Along with their previous mission to Kaloleni, Kenya, Church's team commented that this was one of 'the two hardest places they have visited'.²⁰ It was quite unremarkable.

Almost directly after their visit, however, local missionaries reported results already so familiar to the Ruanda mission. The effects of the visit of the RGMM team - confession of sin, behavioural change and enthusiasm for the Bible - could not have been more desirable to the European missionaries. Bakewell's eight page letter continued to describe all number of confessions, returning of stolen goods, singing and praying and the attribution of all of these expressions was made very clear; 'We owe an unrepayable debt', finished off Bakewell, 'to Dr Church and his team who have given us just what we so sorely needed'.²¹ The night after the mission ended three boys came to Bakewell confessing to 'stealing, cleaning latrines with a bad heart and taking school blankets'. 'It has been...terrible', he wrote, being exposed was the 'the inner lives of those whom we had looked on as good Christians'.²²

¹⁷ Report on the mission, Lionel Bakewell to Bishop Chambers, 29 April, 1939, p. 1. JEC 1/3/10. 'Open manifestations' was the term most used by missionaries in Tanganyika to describe the ecstatic phenomena of the sort previously witnessed in Ruanda and Uganda.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 2.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 3.

²¹ Ibid, p. 8.

²² Ibid.

These results were exactly what Bishop Chambers had been hoping for when the initial invitation had gone out to Dr Church. He had heard of Church's ministry through a Tanganyikan mission worker, Captain Shaw of the Church Army, and had written to Dr Church asking about the

‘Bible Teams’ in Ruanda ‘ablaze for God’. I would be grateful if you could tell Captain Shaw... how he could start them...[if] you could pay this station a visit...I am so keen for the people to be filled with an evangelistic spirit.²³

The next place to receive a mission from Dr Church's team after Katoke was Bugufi, a station headed up by two members of the Church Army, Captains Jack Bennett and Shaw and later also by Captain W. McKee after Shaw left for Kibondo, another station in the diocese. From April 27 to May 3 1939, Dr Church, Lawrence Barham, Joy Gearson and ‘about six Africans, from Ruanda and Uganda’ were due to lead a ‘Convention for all Teachers, and Christians’ at Bugufi.²⁴ Other duties kept Dr Church away and Barham found the initial result, just as at Katoke, to be slightly disappointing.²⁵ Biblical instruction was given, however, and this was pleasing enough for the Bishop to invite Church to take a further team to Dodoma.²⁶

The headmaster of Dodoma Boys’ School, Tanganyika, wrote to excitedly to Dr Church in October: ‘I can say without hesitation that the bishop, who is most impressed with the revival at Katoke and Bugufi and whole-heartedly behind it, is most anxious that a real

²³ Bishop Chambers to J. Church, 14 October, 1937. JEC 1/3/1. The station in question was Ngara, Bugufi.

²⁴ ‘Bugufi Convention’ [sic] outline, JEC 1/3/8.

²⁵ L. Barham to J. Church, 11 May, 1940, p. 2. JEC 1/3/11.

²⁶ Bishop Chambers to J. Church, 21 September, 1939. JEC 1/3/15. See also N. Langford-Smith to J. Church, 3 July, 1939. JEC 1/3/14..

stirring up of this part of the diocese should come'.²⁷ It is important to note that at this feedback came in response to two visits that had been somewhat unremarkable from a Ruandan perspective. It was simple, Biblical instruction and the confession of sin that pleased Bishop Chambers.

There were, however, already indications that Katoke was going down a different route from that hoped for by Chambers, Church and his revival team. Elsewhere in the revival, there was constant and substantial guidance given by Church's team to ensure reactions to the revival message remained acceptable to the European and Keswick spiritual paradigm. Some of this took place through correspondence with other Europeans but much of it was given in person by members of the 'Revival Party' such as Dr Church, Rev. Barham, Yosia Kinuka, Ezekieri Balaba, William Nagenda, Simeoni Nsibambi or trusted individuals that they sent to problem areas. Only weeks before leading the team to Tanganyika Dr Church had been exercising exactly this kind of control. A friend of his recounted the occasion:

You will remember too when we had the African meeting at my house we had some singing. There came a point in that singing when I felt God telling me that it should stop, and almost immediately you brought things to a close. It was as though we had started expressing our joy and then were in danger of being caught up by the emotions which were expressed; as though the dog started to wag his tail and finished by the tail wagging the dog. It struck me then, and I believe that someone remarked on it, that the woman's voice had got shrill just before we stopped.²⁸

The reason, in fact, that only a few boys had the chance to confess on the second day of the mission to Katoke in April 1939 was that it was stopped short by Dr Church before anything further could happen. Bakewell witnessed the entire meeting and reported that

²⁷ N. Langford-Smith to J. Church, 27 October, 1939. JEC 1/3/18.

²⁸ 'Charles' to J. Church, 29 October, 1939. JEC 11/1/4.

he thought many, perhaps most, of the boys would have followed in confession if they had not been stopped short. 'I thought he had made a mistake', writes Bakewell, 'I thought the boys were ready, perhaps most of them, to be broken and make confession then'.²⁹

The follow-up visit from Dr Church that was proposed by the Tanganyikan Diocesan Council was not to materialise until the following year (1940) so continued guidance of this type was absent in these new revival hotspots. Bakewell did not seem to have the same reserve and demonstrated little fear on his part that there could be any risk of over-emotionalism. He happily reported that in late April two teachers asked 'if they could have an all-night prayer meeting'. Bakewell himself attended but instead of supervising it he happily 'left it to the boys and teachers to conduct the meeting'.³⁰ The preaching safaris, Bible conventions and travelling teams led by Church, Barham, Balaba and Kinuka that had been a feature of Gahini and Kigezi Revival Christianity since the early 1930s were conspicuously absent in the isolated and poorly funded diocese of Central Tanganyika. While the Ruanda Mission had created a special position just for Dr Church to be free from normal mission duties in order to oversee and guide the Revival, Central Tanganyika was only narrowly avoiding the forced resignation of its senior Archdeacon for financial reasons.

²⁹ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 29 April, 1939. p. 2. JEC 1/3/10.

³⁰ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 29 April, 1939. pp. 6-7. JEC 1/3/10.

On 28 October Bakewell wrote to Dr Church about the recent appearance of a new revival phenomenon, a 'baptism of the Holy Spirit' with open manifestation. Bakewell appeared to believe it was the natural culmination of Revival preaching and referred to it as the 'seal' to the message of the 'Victorious Life':

Katoke...has now received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus' Name has been most wonderfully glorified. The first to receive the seal were [names]...then others received in little groups, and then Sandi prayed for an open manifestation of the Spirit's power in the open church. The prayer was answered last Monday, when boys were simply being carried out one after another, their frail bodies overpowered by the entering in of omnipotence. There are now some fifty odd who have been baptised.³²

The experience had become personal to Bakewell:

praise God I was sealed this morning....God himself has now often laid the seal on those who are ready for it....All these months I have thought I was cleansed by the blood...Eternal thanks to you and your four brethren who were God's ambassadors to us. Your embassy is now fulfilled.³³

The account of 28 October was the first to be sent out from Katoke that mentioned these new occurrences, for they only began earlier that month. Presumably a summary, it provides only a brief description of events. There are two other accounts from Bakewell, that of the 25 October (which is no longer extant) and a letter to Dr Church dated 22 March 1940. By March 1940 being 'overpowered by the entering in of

³¹ Taken from Bakewell's own description of the events as 'the outpouring in Katoke'. L. Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940, p. 3. JEC 1/3/35.

³² L. Bakewell to J. Church, 28 October 1939, JEC 1/3/19.

³³ Ibid.

omnipotence' was the most common manifestation described by Bakewell: 'Some who received [the Holy Spirit] were bowled over, almost as if they had fainted or had an electric shock or fit. They did not faint, but fell to the floor'.³⁴ Once on the floor the experience continued, 'often rolling about, sometimes calling out inarticulately, sometimes words of praise to the Lord Jesus, sometimes laughing'.³⁵

These experiences appeared to occur continuously between October and March and were seemingly unaffected by the students being away from the school. 'Many have had many re-fillings', Bakewell wrote about January after the Christmas holidays had given his boys a temporary absence from Katoke School.³⁶ The only thing that was noted to have changed after the initial 'filling' was that with the many 're-fillings' were 'generally not with such strong physical accompaniments'.³⁷ The 'baptism of the Holy Spirit', Bakewell concluded 'came...always with open signs' but it was only 'some' who received by falling.³⁸

Another manifestation was the reputed occurrence of 'divine encounters'. Although in some senses they were 'visions', these particular 'visions' tended to be highly experiential, often accompanied by physical manifestations and great internal emotion. Thus they encompassed more of a total body 'encounter' than a 'vision'. This experience, or the 'seeing', was so profound that it was noted as being evident even on the faces of the recipients. Bakewell does not share many more details but presumably these were enjoyable experiences as he notes that 'Often it is during a service when they

³⁴ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940, p. 3. JEC 1/3/35. p. 1.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 4.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 1.

have been praying or singing, they start laughing and laughing and laughing'.³⁹ From 'the look of ecstasy' on the recipients and 'the descriptions some have given me afterwards', Bakewell felt it was clear that something unusual was being experienced.⁴⁰ What recipients described suggested that they were 'enjoying visions that are not of this world'. The visions appeared to fit within the Christian biblical paradigm, however paranormal the method of receiving them might have been, for Bakewell hungered after the same for himself. 'Perhaps I am wrong', he wrote, 'but I wish I could get some of the same experiences some of them get'.⁴¹

Katoke had received no further visits from the Ruanda Mission nor, according to Dr Church's meticulous records, is there any evidence of further communication from Ruanda despite the arrival of Bakewell's shocking reports so there was certainly no way Bakewell could know that such behaviour had been intentionally controlled by the leaders in Ruanda and Kigezi for the previous three years. Whether it was because they lacked the strict intellectual conditioning of Cambridge University or because they had missed the internal conflict that was on-going in English Keswick, Evangelical spirituality over the nature of Pentecostal phenomena the Bakewells and their friends, the Bennetts (who worked at Dodoma) were known for being much more pro-Pentecostal than the Europeans of the Ruanda Mission. The daughter of Bakewells, Kathy Kozlowski, recalled, for example, visiting the Swedish Pentecostal Mission in Tanganyika even as child with her parents 'when people started talking in tongues'.⁴²

³⁹ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Kathy Kozlowski, 'Childhood Memories in Tanzania', accessed 3/01/2013.

http://www.wynnjones.com.au/mishkids/documents/Childhood%20Memories%20in%20Tanzania%20-%20Kathy%20Koslowski%20_Nee%20Bakewell_.pdf

In April 1940 Bishop Chambers visited Katoke and saw for the first time what had been happening since October 1939. It was indicative of the remarkable isolation of both stations in Western Tanganyika that it took six months before their own Bishop had any idea what was happening. Chambers' previous enthusiasm for the effects of Dr Church's teaching was completely withdrawn.

I am greatly disturbed over the confusion, disorder and unseemly conduct in meetings of the "wugufu" (converts) here conducted by Africans which Bakewell regards as the work of the Holy Spirit and which he connects with your [Dr Church] visit. He has been kind enough to let me see his letter to you of March 22nd when he says page 9, "When you came to Katoke and Barham and the others to Bugufi you certainly threw down a match which God has lit in the dry grass and the fire will never go out". The confusion, disorder and unseemly conduct with concomitants are connected with the fire.⁴³

Chambers provides us in this letter with our only other major written description of the situation at Katoke. He writes from only a brief visit but it is full of detail nevertheless:

At the meeting of the Wongofu on Wednesday last I was present. It began at 3:45pm and ended at 7:45pm as darkness drew on the raising of hands and arms increased to the rhythm of popular hymns times and choruses. Clapping of hands took place, people began to sing different hymns at the same time and persisted to do so, some finished the hymns with a mocking laugh, then followed cryings, screamings, shoutings, making noises like those of animals such as calcalls, the yelping of dogs and the snorting of wild beasts, two women grovelled and rolled on the floor of the church, another woman crawled on the floor like a reptile, the girl kept on incessant shouting and crying for an hour, in a kneeling posture, there were loud utterances and unintelligible to others, mutterings and murmurings. In fact to me it seemed to me like pandemonium let loose...someone would read the scripture. Immediately another would sing and drown out the reading of God's word.⁴⁴

He recalls events with a little less admiration than Bakewell and thus provides us with a vivid, emotional picture of how events could have been perceived by the outsider. He was able to recall, for example, that there were 'about 70' in the congregation, of whom

⁴³ Bishop Chambers to J. Church, 5 April, 1940. p. 1. JEC 1/3/36.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 1-2.

‘about’ fifty-five were school boys one of whom was very small, six or seven African teachers, three women and one girl with the rest workmen or villagers.⁴⁵ This was in contrast to the position taken by Bakewell, who appeared to be completely engaged with the meeting, ‘kneeling in the midst of the assembly’.⁴⁶

Open Manifestations at Bugufi

The open manifestations began at Bugufi one week after they began at Katoke. There was a strong position of mutuality that existed between Katoke and Bugufi and it was evident that the appearance of ecstacism in both stations was heavily linked. Bakewell had a good relationship with both McKee and Bennett, both of whom had spent time at Bugufi, and many Bugufi boys attended school at Katoke.⁴⁷ It is not surprising, therefore, that there was a significant similarity between both stations in their pursuit of revival and in the timing of the appearance of open manifestations. ‘A week after the outpouring in Katoke in October’, recalled Bakewell,

the baptism with outward manifestations came to Murugwanza (Bugufi). The first two were a very stupid houseboy and a Hospital girl. They got the missionaries down onto their knees the very next morning and they more or less stayed on them till they received.⁴⁸

In February a team from Bill Church’s station at Buhiga, Burundi, had just returned from visiting Bugufi. Bill writes:

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Both men spent some time at Bugufi, Bennett leading a revival team of Bugufi Christians on mission to Kibondo in December/January 1939/40 and McKee being in charge of the revival their throughout the season of open manifestations. L. Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940, p. 3. JEC 1/3/35.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

They had the most interesting experience. They found the whole congregation has adopted the most advanced body swaying...effect while singing in church, led by McKee and when our people did not join in they had what for. They had the most difficult few days.⁴⁹

Although he did not visit Bugufi in person he evidentially did get a detailed report from his team as he is able to describe with some confidence the situation at Bugufi:

The European Capt. McKee has led them into...rather extreme practices in one or two things....One of the signs in which most store was placed was falling on the ground, (groaning) or laughing accompanied by heavy breathing. These were then carried out. This happens frequently...20-30 at a time.⁵⁰

One of Bill Church's team also wrote about the visit noting that 'Dancing in church' had become a custom of every reader and the European clergy were leading it:

they think that if a man has not fallen down and lost conscience several times he is not born again or not receipt [sic] Holy Spirit. Therefore we found falling and becoming funny was too much in their church and meetings.⁵¹

At Katoke they had a system whereby 'those who received thus were generally carried out...those who carried them out tried to quieten them and bring them to their senses.'⁵²

These experiences had the potential to be interruptible, particularly by the intervention of fellow members of the congregation. One young teacher, recalled Bakewell, was the victim of an over-eager team of carriers who, once he had fallen, 'seized him before he had seen all, and therefore he did not receive a full filling'.⁵³ It was a process that was, however, repeatable and seemed to be encouraged to be so. The teacher was noted to

⁴⁹ B. Church to J. Church, 19 February, 1940. JEC 1/3/36.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 'John' to J. Church, 19 February, 1940. JEC 1/3/27.

⁵² L. Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940. JEC 1/3/35, p. 1.

⁵³ Ibid.

have ‘received much more the second time’.⁵⁴ Just as they had a system for removing and quietening those who had ‘fallen’ at Katoke so it seems they had one Bugufi. ‘They shouted and laughed until they were carried outside’, the Buhiga team member recalled with disapproval, ‘Satan was working’.⁵⁵ Visions, dreams and clapping were also all mentioned by Captain McKee, who lead the station at Bugufi, as well the necessity of external signs in a human being during a visitation of the Holy Spirit. In this he quotes Bakewell:

When one reads of the outpouring or Infilling of the Holy Spirit [in the Bible], it is noticed that these experiences of the Spirit’s power are accompanied with signs of power. As one of our missionaries says: “When omnipotence enters a person, the human frame is hardly able to contain it, so there must be some outward manifestation of such a visitation”.⁵⁶

The effect of such behaviour, wrote McKee, ‘[has] brought a deeper love for the Master, and a hunger for the word of God, two new Bible Study Circles have been started. In December we sold 100 New Testaments in 10 days, and could have sold more if we had them, in the last 10 days [of March] we have sold more than 80’.⁵⁷

Kibondo.

Kibondo was also mentioned by missionaries as receiving these ‘open manifestations’.⁵⁸ Africans and Europeans from all three remained in close contact and identified with each other during the revival. Most of Bakewell’s students at Katoke, for example,

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ ‘John’ to J. Church, 19 February, 1940. JEC 1/3/27.

⁵⁶ W. McKee to J. Church, copies to Bishop Chambers and L. Bakewell, 28 March, 1940. JEC 1/3/25.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ J. Bennett to J. Church, 20 February, 1940. JEC 1/3/30.

came from Bugufi and Kibondo.⁵⁹

Revival with open manifestations had come soon after it appeared in Bugufi. Bennett and his wife, Ethel, led a team of Bugufi teachers and Katoke school boys (who lived in Bugufi during the holidays) to Kibondo just after Christmas 1939.⁶⁰ The ‘baptism of the Spirit with manifestations’ became evident in many of the Africans and in the Europeans – described as part of the ‘Blessing’ by Bennett in his report on Kibondo.⁶¹ ‘The Lord did a mighty work there in spite of the tremendous opposition’, wrote Bakewell in a later report, ‘I have not heard very much of Kibondo since, but I know some have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit’.⁶²

Once Bishop Chambers discovered the extent of the disorder in Western Tanganyika he feared the influence these ‘methods of the West’ might have on the rest of his diocese.⁶³ It is clear that he felt the blame rested firmly on the European missionaries who were, he felt, simply manipulating Africans in their purposes. ‘I fear...a very subtle and determined effort will be made through the Africans to use any revival in any other part of the Diocese as “a glorious opportunity” of bringing to the church these “signs and wonders” which to me are a shame and a scandal on the Name of Christ’.⁶⁴ He quickly began to regret his second invitation to Dr Church, originally planned for February but

⁵⁹ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 16 June, 1939. JEC 1/3/13.

⁶⁰ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940. JEC 1/3/35. See also J. Bennett to J. Church, 20 February 1940. JEC 1/3/30.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Bakewell to Church, 22 March, 1940.

⁶³ ‘Methods of the West’ was the phrased used by Jack Bennett to describe how the ‘baptism in the Holy Spirit’ appearing in western Tanganyika was thought of in central Tanganyika. J. Bennett to J. Church, 19 February, 1940. JEC 1/3/29.

⁶⁴ Bishop Chambers to J. Church, 8 April, 1940. JEC 1/3/37.

now delayed until June 1940. 'I was completely ignorant of the state of things here', he wrote from Katoke, 'when I said to you [Dr Church], come [again]'.⁶⁵

It is notable, however, that open manifestation did not appear in significant strength beyond the stations that occupied the western side of Tanganyika nearest Ruanda-Urundi – Katoke, Bugufi and Kibondo. Dodoma provides one example. Like Katoke, Kibondo and Bugufi, was also the subject of an episcopal invitation to Dr Church and his 'bible team'.⁶⁶ Church was due to take over Kabale Hospital later that year for twelve months and had been feeling he 'should have a rest from continual missions and go back for a time to routine work again'.⁶⁷ The timing was just too difficult. 'Let us reconsider it next year or in 1941', he wrote, 'It seems really a bit too rushed now'.⁶⁸

The scene was set, therefore, for an excited Bakewell, McKee and Bennett to begin to take up Dr Church's commission and spread what had become a 'revival of the west', centred at Katoke, Bugufi and Kibondo - and spread it into the centre of Tanganyika to Dodoma, Mwanza and the area surrounding. '[We have] links with Dodoma and the surrounding stations', wrote Bakewell. Two teachers at Katoke, William and Simeoni, provided those. They had both previously been resident in Dodoma and Bakewell wrote of them that 'these two men have been gloriously saved and are just straining at the bit to get down to Dodoma to tell their fellows, who, they know, are where they were [unsaved]'.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Bishop Chambers to J. Church, 5 April, 1940. JEC 1/3/36.

⁶⁶ Bishop Chambers to J. Church,, 14 October, 1937. JEC 1/3/1; Bishop Chambers to J. Church, 29 November, 1937. JEC 1/3/2; Bishop Chambers to J. Church, 31 March, 1939. JEC 1/3/5.

⁶⁷ J. Church to N. Langford-Smith, 8 June, 1939. JEC 1/3/12.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 16 June, 1939. JEC 1/3/13.

The team was carefully planned and consisted only of those who had had the ‘open manifestation’ - Yonathani Bengesi, Simeoni Muya (a Katoke school master), and two Bugufi teachers, Gerevazi Bitetei and Matia Gwasa.⁷⁰ ‘Bakewell thinks this fire will spread to the older part of the Tanganyika mission where things are so terribly dead’, wrote Langford-Smith.⁷¹ ‘Please try to remember us’, he wrote to Dr Church on 28 October, ‘It is our first mission. May Dodoma get what Katoke has got and more’.⁷² They preached from 19 November to 25 November but found that ‘the place was as hard as nails’.⁷³ ‘You couldn’t imagine anything deader’, wrote Langford-Smith of the area around Dodoma.⁷⁴

Whilst at Dodoma Bakewell’s team preached in the parts of the surrounding area, namely Mvumi and Mwanza. Mvumi had two missions, one to the girls’ boarding school and one to the hospital, and both showed little in the way of open manifestations. ‘If ever Satan had a stronghold’, Bakewell commented, ‘he has one there...in the Mvumi church and District generally’.⁷⁵ Mwanza proved to be more receptive. It was an Africa Inland Mission (AIM) run-station, headed up by a man called Sywulka who had already been writing to Dr Church, inviting him to visit. Sywulka was ‘overjoyed about the baptism of the Holy Spirit with outward signs’ for it had, in fact, occurred at their mission four or five years before but it had been ‘promptly squashed by most of the authorities’.⁷⁶ Likewise little was reported occurring at Biharamulo in the way of open manifestations when it too received a mission from Katoke. Yonathani Bengesi of Katoke, who had ‘received the baptism’ and accompanied Bakewell to Dodoma went

⁷⁰ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940. p. 2. JEC 1/3/35.

⁷¹ N. Langford-Smith to J. Church, 3 July, 1939. JEC 1/3/14.

⁷² L. Bakewell to J. Church, 28 October, 1939. HEC 1/3/19.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ N. Langford-Smith to J. Church, 27 October, 1939. JEC 1/3/18.

⁷⁵ Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940. p. 3. JEC 1/3/35.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

with one other to Biharamulo to preach. After a few weeks there, however, Bengesi had written to say that ‘they were preaching the word, but people had not seen the way yet’.⁷⁷

There was one notable exception and that was the case of Yohan Omari. Omari was ordained at Dodoma during the visit of the team from Katoke. After going back to his home at Kasulu, the ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ with open manifestations appeared in his family and church. Bakewell provided the translation from Swahili:

I tell you about the great joy there is here at Kasulu since 12 Jan., 1940, namely that fire which was lit at Katoke and Bugufi, and then at Kibondo, has gone on till it has reached Kasulu on the above mentioned date. Oh Bwana I was thanking God very much, Who was pleased to give us His strength like this.⁷⁸

The description of the ‘open signs’ were similar to those described at Katoke, consisting of ‘falling’, ‘laughing’ and similar ‘visions’, appearing first to a few individuals, as at Katoke, before spreading to others:

First in our house we received this strength. It came to my wife by her being thrown down and laughing very much and trembling much and saying “I rejoice” and singing very much. The God has used me by amazing dreams openly, and some things which I was told have come to pass.⁷⁹

Ten more ‘received the power of God’ on 21 January, just nine days later.⁸⁰ It was so significant for them that Omari wrote, ‘This day we have called the Pentecost of the people of the Kasulu Church because of the joy we have’. From Kasulu it was reported spreading in a small way to a few other outstations, although no large numbers are

⁷⁷ Y. Bengesi, cited in Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March 1940, p. 7. JEC 1/3/35.

⁷⁸ Y. Omari to L. Bakewell, March, 1940. Translated by L. Bakewell and recorded in Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940. p. 9. JEC 1/3/35.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

mentioned.⁸¹

The signs that were mentioned were felt to indicate a baptism in the Holy Spirit, a further encounter with God to that experienced at conversion. The key was found in Bakewell's assessment. He wrote,

I have just read this letter to Yonathani Bengesi and a Bugufi boy I have with me (both have had the baptism of the Spirit) and they agree with me that he is describing the baptism of the Holy Spirit, not just conversion. Kasulu is 96 miles south of Kibondo, and gets very little European supervision. So what is happening there has come almost entirely, if not entirely, through African agency.⁸²

It is evident that the appearance of ecstasism, or 'open manifestations' as it was known in Tanganyika, was almost entirely isolated to the western region, a region that was significantly absent of adequate supervision from either the diocesan bishop or the Ruandan teams. Here, there were no sophisticated structures of control, such as travelling teams, nor was there constant supervision. The appearance of these manifestations appears to be directly related to the level of supervision and control. Despite efforts to bring the teaching of 'open manifestations' to the more central areas of Tanganyika little success was made. The one other area that was affected was Kusulu, an area which was isolated and receiving of 'very little European supervision'. As Bakewell himself inferred, the appearance of ecstasism was largely down to 'African agency' and this was the case across the western region. The similarities between the local linguistic systems in Ruanda and Western Tanganyika as well as the similarities of spiritual beliefs between the regions adds weight to the suggestion that

⁸¹ Ibid..

⁸² Bakewell to J. Church, 22 March, 1940. p. 9. JEC 1/3/35.

appearance of ecstaticism reflected the roots of local belief systems as much as the Christianity that was being taught. Although missionaries in the Australian-managed Western Tanganyika appeared to take an active role in participating in these manifestations, it is notable that they did so as clergymen who were not rooted in the stalwart CICCUC evangelicalism of their English contemporaries in Ruanda, who had missed out on the natural suspicion for ecstaticism that emerged in the English Keswick movement and, in at least one case, who were personally inclined towards Pentecostal or Pentecostal-type behaviour. Bakewell's daughter's recollections are evidence of this. Unlike the natural suspicion of many in Ruanda, Bakewell, Bennet and Shaw allowed ecstaticism to emerge without restriction. Without the close supervision of either their Bishop or Dr Church's team, they continued, quite remarkably, for six months in the belief that ecstaticism was not only appropriate but that it was the natural culmination of the message of the 'Victorious Life', the intended result from Dr Church's visit. It was an extraordinarily different attitude from that held by the Ruanda Mission and in its dissent from the practices of revival in Ruanda/Kigezi it would provide the perfect setting for the perfect demonstration of the RGMM's ideas and practices for the censorship and control of ecstaticism.

Chapter Seven

Controlling Ecstasism in Tanganyika

The key to understanding this episode lies in the length of time Katoke and Bugufi were left to their own devices following Church and Barham's visit in April 1939, the fact that Tanganyika had not yet had sufficient exposure to the Revival to provide teams or overseers who were trained to restrain outward signs or 'excesses' and the fact that the leaders at both stations, Lionel Bakewell and Captain McKee, did not understand a need to restrain what they assumed was meant to be part of the revival experience. The first record we have of anyone outside of Tanganyika hearing about such 'excesses' like falling over in church is Bakewell's letter to Church in October 1939, something that Church appears to have kept relatively quiet.

The indication is that Dr Church had done very little with the information he had received from Bakewell. This could be partly to do with limited information, although the language in Bakewell's letter was so explicit it was clear something more was

happening than an outbreak of the ‘victorious life’, or it could be based on Church’s philosophy that these were signs of immaturity and thus would cease of their own accord. Certainly he gives no mention of it whatsoever in his communication with the Bishop of Tanganyika on 14 January 1940, in whose territory these things were occurring. The whole tone reflects a celebration of the successes of the previous visit. No indication is given of difficulties that were arising.

Two other letters arrived for Dr Church in February, one from his brother Bill Church and one from an African colleague of Bill’s. A team from Bill Church’s station at Buhiga, Burundi, had just returned from visiting Bugufi. Bill wrote that ‘they had the most difficult few days’.¹ It was not just in the experiences that Bill saw trouble. It was, far more importantly, what he saw as the underlying theology behind these experiences. ‘Capt. McKee has led them into the...rather extreme practices...the difficulties arise in two particular things 1) Receiving the Holy Spirit with Signs 2) the Victorious life’.² The Holy Spirit, Bill felt (as did the rest of Ruanda Mission), was not to be received with signs such as these and they were too dramatic to be ignored: ‘One of the signs in which most store was placed’, he writes, ‘was falling on the ground, (groaning) or laughing accompanied by heavy breathing...This happens frequently’.³ The practice of ‘the victorious life’, he suggests, was being disrupted because this experience of being ‘filled with the spirit’ was attributed such power. The man practising the ‘victorious life’ was believed to have been transformed by the recognising of continuous sin, recognition of the need for Christ’s help and adopting of humility to continually confess such sin. Dr Church’s apt illustration of the kneeling man, titled ‘Not I, but Christ’, sums up the position of humility before the ‘saviour’ that was so central to the

¹ B. Church to J. Church, 19 February, 1940. JEC 1/3/36.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

‘victorious life’.

Such was the power attributed to being ‘filled with the spirit’ (Bill’s term) as was being practised under McKee that it was believed to even begin to remove the desire and frequency of sin. ‘If...[a] man was filled with the spirit’, Bill writes of McKee’s congregation, ‘[it was believed] he could not sin and therefore frequent public confession of sin in such a man was impossible’.⁴ It was a direct rebuttal of the Keswick theology of sin repression, rather than eradication, and stood against all of Dr Church’s experiences that suggested an admission of the worthlessness of the sinful man and the *imitatio dei* through suffering and humility were the only way to come to terms with man’s true, unalterable sinful nature. It was not just a decision to believe in the miraculous so that a believer could be free from sin but a fresh understanding of how the identity of the believer was portrayed in the Bible. He quoted their use of 1 John 3:9:

No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God’s seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God.⁵

The association between ecstatic manifestations of spirituality in Tanganyika and in Ruanda was made by the Ruanda missionaries. It was, he suggests, the unchecked result of the revival theology. ‘I think this is just the same as that which happened at Gahini except it has not been checked by European and African...if anything [it has been] encouraged’.⁶ Bill’s understanding of the whole experience was that it could be counted as erroneous theology, erroneous practice and worthy of censorship before those in authority saw it and turned against revival as a whole. ‘Our people came

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ 1 John 3:9 (NIV)

⁶ Ibid.

back...I think realising more clearly the dangers of Satan leading good people astray’, he finishes,

I think they [in Bugufi] need prayer because [Bishop] Chambers might turn up and have a grand lesson...I thought you would like to hear about this. I believe you ought to visit Tanganyika...because the same thing might be going on elsewhere. The movement just needs a little leading.⁷

‘John M’ also wrote to Dr Church from Buhiga, on the same day along similar lines. On the ‘baptism in the holy spirit’ he wrote, ‘they think that if a man has not fallen down and lost conscience several times he is not born again or not receipt Holy Spirit (sic).’⁸ On the ‘victorious life’ he wrote ‘they believe that once a man is born again there is no need of repenting any other sin and they cannot sin their entire life’.⁹ He raised a third issue in his letter – dancing. ‘Dancing in church is or has become a custom or every reader’, he wrote disapprovingly. ‘We found falling and becoming funny was too much in their church and meetings. They shouted and laughed until they were carried outside’.¹⁰

His letter, like Bill Church’s, had a significant tone of disapproval but this is understandable given what the Buhiga Christians experienced in Bugufi. The Buhiga Christians, as with many in other stations of RGMM, were in the habit of making regular public confessions. This was the focus of the victorious life – to recognise sin was inherent in humanity and constant repentance necessary. Those at Bugufi suggested that this meant they were not overcoming the devil and had therefore not ‘received the

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ John M. to J. Church, 19 February, 1940. JEC 1/3/27

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Holy Spirit'.¹¹ Consequently the Buhiga Christians were not asked to speak in the Bugufi church during their visit as was customary. They noted it and did not react kindly.¹² The concept was clearly foreign to John, for whom much of the revival had consisted of a focus on continual sin, continual repentance and continual restoration in repeated patterns. 'Most of their people, once they stand in church and confess their sins openly...have never repented again because they [believe they] have become conquerors of the devil'.¹³ Notably, 'dancing' was not restricted; it was even encouraged and led by Mckee, who remarked to 'John M' that 'if younger readers has [sic] to copy good things like these it is a pleasure to him'.¹⁴

Dr Church did nothing until, at the end of February, he received the panicked letter from his brother about 'the dangers of Satan leading good people astray' at Bugufi. On 7 March, a couple of weeks after receiving the letters from Bill, five months after getting word from Bakewell and eleven months after his original visit to Tanganyika, Dr Church broke the news to Bishop Chambers and began to take action.

I think that I ought to add a few things about Revival problems. I hear from time to time of things that have been going on at Bugufi. We have been praying much about these and for those who have undoubtedly had great blessing. We are linked up with them and have sent a small team of our senior Buhiga Christians to visit them after the Diocesan Council.¹⁵

Further to a team being sent from Buhiga he also promised to send a team from Katoke

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ J. Church to Bishop Chambers, 7 March, 1940. JEC 1/3/33.

to Bugufi to quieten things down. He made it clear he felt these ‘problems’ were signs of immaturity and needed to be corrected. Having sent this letter to Bishop Chambers he then sent a copy to McKee, whose station it was, to Langford-Smith and Bennet at Dodoma and to Bill Church at Buhiga. It is at this point that we get one of the most interesting communications of the entire Revival period up until this point – a defence of the manifestations from McKee.

McKee’s response was anything but half-hearted:

As you invited us to reply to you...I now heartily accept that invitation. At the outset, I must say how surprised we were to receive a copy of such a letter to the Bishop of this Diocese, containing statements of ‘happenings’ at Bugufi, the truth of which you did not previously ascertain, but merely relied upon second or third-hand information...in your letter you said, ‘If I am wrong, forgive me’...yet you never wrote to us to know if these things were happening before writing to our Bishop.¹⁶

The ‘happenings’ at Bugufi were, McKee claimed, entirely in line with Bible precedent:

We do not expect to be understood by all people, just as we do not expect all people to understand the Gospel Message until they are convicted by the Holy Ghost, as that is one of His offices in the world. The early Church were greatly misunderstood in this work, as is evident by the sermon of Peter on the Day of Pentecost, also in his vindication of his ministry to the House of Cornelius Acts II. Even those with Peter were astonished when the Holy Ghost fell on the household, Acts 10: 44-46, and these were people who were accustomed to the Spirit’s outpouring in power.

Three primary aspects of manifestations referred to in Acts 2 were: xenolalia (the spontaneous speaking in foreign, human languages), the manifestation of intoxication and the manifestations of visible phenomena (audible wind and visible fire). The second passage referred to takes place slightly later in the Book of The Acts of the Apostles and

¹⁶ W. McKee to J. Church, copies to Bishop Chambers and L. Bakewell, 28 March, 1940. JEC 1/3/25.

begins as follows:

While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God.¹⁷

McKee's defence of open manifestations was not, however, restricted to his African Christians but were, he insists, the Biblical right of every Christian.

Visions are not peculiar to Africans. The New Testament is not without its evidence of visions. Acts 9, 3-7 tells of Paul's experience, and in Acts 26, 13-16, Paul himself testifies to these visions. He also dreamed dreams, others have had visions, we have clapped our hands when singing our praises to God, some have danced (the Buhiga Christians were not still when singing one of their new hymns to use during their last visit in February). Yet there has been order after the first mighty outpouring in November. Never once did we feel that we had lost control of the work of services.¹⁸

The effects, he felt, were entirely in line with any Bible centred form of evangelicalism. Two new Bible studies were started, a hundred New Testaments sold in ten days before they ran out and another eighty were sold in the ten days before he sent his letter. It was a 'blessing' that had 'brought a deeper love for the Master and a hunger for the word of God'.¹⁹ It was a view that was at odds with Dr Church's assessment which maintained that such manifestations were generally associated with the African culture and spiritual immaturity. It was also dangerously close to the Pentecostalism that had been so threatening in Ruanda and Kigezi. He wrote very confidently to the Bishop of Tanganyika concerning the matter.

God has allowed me to have some experience now of Revival in different parts

¹⁷ Acts 10:44-46 (NIV)

¹⁸ W. McKee to J. Church, copies to Bishop Chambers and L. Bakewell, 28 March, 1940. JEC 1/3/25.

¹⁹ Ibid.

of East Africa and it seems to me that, with the Africans at any rate, some signs of spiritual excitement do constantly occur. They almost invariably occur, in our experience, in the early stages, and among the less educated.²⁰

Dr Church's opinion, expressed on behalf of the Ruanda Mission and with the affirmation of Bishop Stuart of Uganda was that occurrences like these were to be put down, discouraged and gently forgotten through the 'patient and careful handling by those who are spiritually able to guide and are trusted by the Africans'.²¹ The 'African', he suggests, is 'already susceptible' to such displays and must not be encouraged.²² Throughout the course of events, however, Dr Church was less concerned with addressing the theological questions of the inquisitive members of the Tanganyikan revival than he was in protecting the reputation of his message of a 'victorious life'. He had received warning of unusual occurrences with Bakewell's initial letter but took little action to engage with it. It was only after his brother Bill Church's communication that stressed the danger that these occurrences were having to the 'victorious life' that action was taken. Theology was what had to be protected.

Their expectation of their revival message was to induce a 'victorious life' in their listeners, not 'Pentecostal' experiences. 'It would be easy to put the label Pentecostalism there', wrote Dr Church of these events in Tanganyika, 'but we mustn't'.²³ He was desperate to avoid giving credence to anything in Tanganyika except the 'life of victory' that he considered so central. The focus had to remain on what he considered most important, not what the masses wanted to do. Emotionalism, he would maintain, was not a solution. 'So many have got the idea that the "all out" life

²⁰ J. Church to Bishop Chambers, copies to Bugufi, Dodoma and Buhiga, 7 March, 1940.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid.

²³ J. Church to Bishop Stuart, 30 March, 1940. JEC 3/ 4/27.

for Christ is something to do with singing and late night meetings’, he complained to Bishop Stuart, ‘forgetting that it is primarily the life of full surrender lived every day in the home’.²⁴ It is entirely in response to this that 1940 Revival convention in Uganda took a new direction. Africans and Europeans across East Africa had been hearing the core revival message for many years and the task was now to correct the ‘excesses’. ‘I am not saying that I am against our old method’, Church wrote in his resume of the convention plans, ‘but the people who will be coming will be those who should already be well grounded’.²⁵ And what was this proposed new direction? It was a re-focusing of revivalists on a ‘victorious life’ and away from ‘excesses’. He summarised his proposal as follows:

The theme that has been running through the Bible teaching of many of our stations for some months past is briefly: The Victorious Life lived in everyday life...As a subject round which we centre the Convention we thought of, - ‘CHRIST JESUS VICTORIOUS IN UGANDA’...Then we might take each day the different departments of life in Uganda: the heart, the home, the shamba, the business, the Church, the government, and the Nation. Each day, sin, repentance, the Cross, the Holy Spirit.²⁶

Bishop Chambers wrote to Dr Church on 7 May, 1940 to report on the effects of a further visit he had taken to Katoke to censor the manifestations as Church had suggested. He reported that Church’s communications with Katoke had been successful and the ‘signs’ had ceased (although he later allowed ‘clapping’). Bakewell ‘has followed all of my guidelines and is restraining in the excesses, although there was unrest among the Africans of his station.’²⁷ ‘Unfortunately’, Chambers observed, ‘the

²⁴ J. Church to Bishop Stuart, 25 May, 1940. JEC 3/ 4/31.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Bishop Chambers to J. Church, May 7 1940. JEC 1/3/45.

whole of his staff are [now] against him and preaching against him'.²⁸ Captain McKee, he reported, had also written to him, noting that since January he had stopped all evening meetings and obeyed all requirements set by the Bishop for self-control. A day later Bishop Chambers wrote on similar grounds to the Bishop of Uganda, 'You will be pleased to know that on my return to Bukoba I found that the excesses had been restrained, though there was a considerable amount of soreness and resentment'.²⁹

The pressure of episcopal authority and the respect offered to the views of the teams from Ruanda, particularly those of Dr Church, meant that both Bakewell and McKee went through a complete rejection of their previously established views, in both cases to the detriment of their reputation with the indigenous Christians at their stations. 'Things are comparatively quiet. No further outbreaks of the "signs"...My name is mud, I'm unsaved, a blasphemer, quenching the Spirit, seeking rank and position', Bakewell wrote to Dr Church.³⁰ Bakewell explained his thought process to Bennett, McKee and Church. 'As I prayed and thought over it all, I asked myself which of the things [signs]...did I feel were essential, and realising that refusing to obey the Bishop's letter would mean resigning or being sacked, I asked myself what of these things was worth being sacked for'.³¹ He concluded to open himself to such a possibility would require 'giving up all opportunity I now have of preaching the Gospel to the people of this land' and it was a sacrifice he did not feel he could make.

By June 1940 the headmaster of Arusha School was able to write to Dr Church that he has recently visited Katoke and 'much of the overstress in signs and emotion had

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Bishop Chambers to Bishop Stuart, May 8, 1940. JEC 1/3/46.

³⁰ L. Bakewell to J. Church, 15 May, 1940. JEC 1/3/47.

³¹ L. Bakewell to J. Church, J. Bennett and W. McKee, 18 May, 1940. JEC 1/3/52.

passed'.³² A year later Bakewell was sailing home and another had taken his place. 'Charles Debaling' was firmly along the lines of the Ruanda Mission and wrote of the whole episode with disapproval. 'Some of the ground work done by your mission here in 1939 was destroyed by the emotional excesses which came in later...[for many] it was merely a hysterical show made to cover spiritual lack'. He reports that since he arrived in July, 1940 they had 'faded away' and instead he was focusing his mission adherents on a study of the word in an unemotional fashion. 'The 1st Chapter of Corinthians convicted many', he wrote to Joe, 'and a study of the epistle to the Hebrews have a forward and upward trend to eyes that were looking inwardly'.³³

The timing of the outbreak of ecstaticism in Tanganyika was such that it provides one of the most useful insights into the relationship between the Revival party, the Ruanda Mission and ecstatic phenomena. It had been three years since the 1936 outbreak in Ruanda and Kigezi and two years since methods of censorship ensured the behaviour had come to an end. The crucial difference between the two settings is that whereas in Ruanda there was a process and a journey towards censorship, in Tanganyika there was not. The Revival party had, by 1939, already established the need for control of ecstaticism learnt the theology and methodology to deal with it. Tanganyika serves as an example of the mature expression of Revival censorship operating in tandem with (and under pressure from) the East African episcopate in Bishops Stuart and Chambers as every effort was made to avoid 'dangerous' over-emotionalism, Pentecostal tendencies and, particularly in the context of the declaration of War in 1939, possible subversive behaviour. One of the major questions that arises from the Tanganyikan episode is why it was here, and not Kenya, Sudan, Uganda (other than Kigezi), South

³² Headmaster of Arusha School to J. Church, 16 June, 1940. JEC 1/3/57.

³³ Charles Debaling to J. Church, 12 June 1941, JEC 1/3/58.

Africa or any other of the plethora of places in which the Revival Message was preached. The answer, in as much as it can be given in the within the limits of this study, has to be seen in the isolation of western Tanganyikan stations and the convenient positioning of missionaries who were in some cases ignorant of ‘correct procedure’ and in other cases unashamedly ‘pro-Pentecostal’. Kenya was well served by CMS, as was Uganda. Both colonies offered a ‘hands-on’ and pro-active ecclesiastical hierarchy. It was an environment in which it was impossible to achieve the isolation found in Tanganyika. Ultimately Tanganyika proved the lessons learnt in Ruanda and Kigezi between 1936 and 1937, that ecstaticism was controversial and divisive and the strength of belief in the Christological Revival message that was held by Church and Revival party would drive them to apply control and censorship even outside the borders of their own mission.

Conclusion

The case has been made for a strong and incontrovertible link between evangelical-holiness Christianity, as found in CICCU and Keswick, and the European missionaries of the Ruanda Mission. In the midst of enormous theological turmoil they found themselves driven ever deeper in their determination to stand up for (as they saw it) superior doctrine, even at the expense of unity. There was by no means a clear theological stance within the mission, despite the efforts of the regular outline of beliefs in every issue of *Ruanda Notes* to present the image of a united mission. The reality was that there was a multiplicity of theological layers to the mission. On the broadest level they identified with Protestantism, making every effort to unite with other Protestant missions against what they perceived to be the threat of Roman Catholic advance in Belgium Ruanda-Urundi. As a single mission they identified, more specifically, with the Evangelical form of Protestantism, although on this issue there were varying degrees

of support for CMS which was perceived by some to be dangerously liberal and by others to be less so. Esther Sharp, for example, put it that ‘We are very evangelical C of E [sic] as you know but we ARE C of E and we ARE CMS...and the property of the MISSION IS CMS however these “antis” dislike it’.¹ The issue that provided the most division, however, was the Revival. What message was preached, which methods used and even the phraseology employed was a cause of consternation between the missionaries, leading to those most heavily involved in the Revival being designated a separate ‘party’ within the mission.

From the perspective of the African participants in the Revival, be they Banyaruanda, Bakiga , Banyankole, Bahaya or Baganda, the intricate theological disputes of their European missionary leaders were of little importance. Right from the outset of missionary endeavour in Kigezi there was little sensitivity to indigenous cosmological and spiritual belief systems. Bakiga behaviour was routinely seen through the paradigm of European Evangelicalism and when Gahini was established as an outpost into Ruanda and Dr Church set out to share his personal experiences of holiness-spirituality there was every indication that he had completely misunderstood the Banyaruanda and Bakiga he attempted to reach. Even with retrospect missionary and historian alike have attempted to link the beginnings of Revivalism with the formation of systematic Bible study under Dr Church. The reality, however, is that as convenient as it was for Evangelical Christianity to have the association made between Revivalism and Biblical study the latter began in 1929 and Church himself acknowledges that little effect was seen until the early 1930s. Even then it was only a small measure of support that he received and the first major incident of *en masse* response to any Bible message was the

¹ E. Sharp to ‘Marion’, p. 4. G3 A11/8. Original emphasis.

Gahini convention of 1933, almost four years after the Bible studies began at Gahini.

It was to the intervention of Yosiya Kinuka, who himself only found enthusiasm for the Revival message through an interaction with Simeon Nsibambi, that we must look to explain the trickle of support for Church's message of 'victorious living'. Crucially, however, even Nsibambi and Kinuka, who were so frequently claimed by Church to be his close partners in the Revival work, demonstrated significantly different understanding of the message of victory to that which was being taught at Gahini and later in Kabale. The missionary commentary on Revival events would continue to present indigenous behaviour through a conversionist, individualistic and sin-orientated framework but the influence of community-based 'cause and effect' concepts of spirituality that were strong in many interlacustrine belief systems played a much larger role in the enthusiastic confession of sin from many of the Revivalists. A simple 'conversionist' approach to spirituality did not account for the enthusiasm of many Bakiga for other elements of the supernatural found in healing, visions and dreams.

Although ecstaticism is identifiable throughout East Africa in association with both Anglican and Evangelical Christianity before the Ruanda Mission's intervention, evidence does suggest the Bible conventions of 1933 and 1935 did play a significant part in their promulgation. Even accounting for unreported ecstatic behaviour that was not seen or recognised by the missionaries there was a notable increase in phenomena from public confession to 'shaking' and 'dreaming' around the time of the conventions. At the very least this was the first time such spiritual enthusiasm had been seen *en masse* in a mission-sanctioned environment.

The major period for ecstaticism in the Ruanda Mission, therefore, came after these conventions had offered some sense of permission and encouragement to religious enthusiasm and at their height in the summer of 1936 they were dramatic, widespread and increasingly spontaneous in their occurrence. It is unclear how Dr Church, who was by this time set aside as the Ruanda Mission's full-time leader of the Revival, would have reacted to these manifestations if it were not for the internal tensions from within the mission, the threat of sectarianism among many of the Revivalists and the continual suspicions from the Colonial government that rebellion was brewing in the form of a resurgence of Nyabingi shamanism. No doubt there were many times when he and others had similar suspicions of some of the behaviour they witnessed. Certainly it was remarkably close in its nature to much of the traditional *emandwa* spirit possession practices which were so easily confused with Nyabingi. The threat was perceived to be very real and very imminent and the initial ambivalence towards ecstatic manifestations and spiritual enthusiasm was increasingly overshadowed by suspicion, alarm and eventually theological disdain for what came to be seen at its best as an immature expression of revival, simply the natural tendency of the African to hysteria and emotionalism and at its worst a deliberate attack from Satan to undermine the true message of Revival – the gospel of Christ.

It is in this pursuit of Christological doctrine that the significance of the internal divisions of the missionaries was found for, as they divided amongst themselves in pursuit of 'correct' doctrine, those missionaries most heavily involved in the Revival, the 'Revival Party', increasingly aligned with an African leadership - represented most strongly in Simeon Nsibambi, William Nagenda, Ezekieri Balaba, Yosiya Kinuka and Blasio Bamonyo - that was prepared to share its desire for Revival. It was a symbiotic

relationship as African and European worked together to ensure only that which was deemed 'correct' behaviour by them, the 'Revival Party', could continue. Few would pretend that even within the 'Revival Party' there was complete consistency of belief, for the difference between the spiritual backgrounds of the European and African would be enough to ensure it was not so, but there was enough co-operation to ensure that by the end of 1937 ecstatic behaviour in the Ruanda Mission was increasingly absent.

In the process of reacting to the internal and external pressures around them the theological stance that developed in RGMM towards ecstatic manifestations became intensely Christological, Protestant and conversionist. While many things may have been permissible, anything that detracted from the centrality of Christ became undesirable. Thus exuberant displays of ecstaticism or emotionalism that were thought to attract attention to the individual, rather than to the work of Christ, were quietened and controlled. Meetings were ended where out of hand and rational, peaceful spirituality was encouraged.² RGMM insisted that salvation could only be by Luther's famous cry of '*sola fide*' ('faith alone'). Anything that might be perceived to be a 'sign' of conversion was to be avoided. The centrality of conversion to the Revival message meant that there was little scope to see manifestations in any other regard. If the object of an interaction with God was to come to a place of conversion and from then on to maintain a life of victory by the confession and repentance of sin then the logical understanding of unusual phenomena, particularly 'trembling' or 'weeping', was to see it as part of this journey towards conversion and victory over sin.

In the later occurrence of ecstatic manifestations in Bugufi, Katoke and Kabondo there

² J. Church to D. Church, 31 March 1937. JEC 3/4/5.

was found the final testing ground for the now fully developed RGMM theology on ecstasism. Importantly it was in these stations nearest Ruanda-Urundi, considered in the case of Bugufi to be a 'first cousin' of Ruanda, that these manifestations occurred and despite extensive efforts to spread the Revival message into central Tanganyika there was, with only one notable exception, very little result. In the relative isolation of western Tanganyika, a diocese that was large, underfunded and under-staffed there was every opportunity for deviation from the Revival praxis that was in full swing in Ruanda and Kigezi. No follow up visits came from RGMM for nine months after the initial mission in April 1939. There was no evidence of communication between RGMM and any of the stations of western Tanganyika for much of that period and certainly not before the 'Katoke Outpouring' in October 1939 brought the onset of increasingly dramatic expressions of Revival. Here, ecstatic manifestations were preached as 'signs', not of conversion but of Spirit baptism. *Glossolalia*, the famous Pentecostal ability to speak spontaneously in 'unknown languages' was recorded, as were a large number of incidents involving the loss of motor control, or 'falling'. In these experiences, developing as they did away from the direction of RGMM with its distinctive background and ethos, there was a different understanding of Christian spirituality. Ecstatic manifestations were no longer entirely seen as a sign of 'struggle' or entirely as part of the journey towards conversion. Instead they were being reported to be accompanied at times by emotions of joy and peace. They were thought of not, as signs of spiritual immaturity, to be drawn to an end but as positive experiences to be encouraged and even repeated. In the 'entering of omnipotence' that was believed to occur during these ecstatic manifestation there was thought to be the reception of spiritual power, not to help daily overcome the inherent sin of humanity, as preached at Keswick and in RGMM, but to abolish sin entirely. The possession of the Holy Spirit in

these incidences went further than an empowerment for service; it was indicative of the adoption of the recipients as children of God.

In the midst of the development of an alternative understanding of Christian spirituality Dr Church and the 'Revival Party' stepped in, ensuring that what he, and they, considered to be the most important aspects of RGMM doctrine, the pursuit of the 'victorious life', was not sacrificed. Ironically for an evangelical spirituality that rebelled against the strictures of ecclesiastical hierarchy, it was the pressure applied by the combined episcopal might of Uganda and Central Tanganyika that enabled the message of Revival as taught by RGMM to remain dominant. Ecstatic manifestations of Revival were curtailed in Tanganyika by mid-1940 just as they had been in Ruanda and Kigezi by 1937. In the midst of uproar and dissent from the Africans of Katoke and Bugufi stations, the pressure applied by the European ecclesiastical hierarchy prevailed.

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