

University of Wisconsin
Department of History
Fall 2002-03

History 861
Thursday, 3:30-5:30
Humanities 5255
office hours: Tuesday, 2:00-4:30

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African Christianity

Christianity in Africa today is a vibrant social, cultural, and religious force, and yet less than a century ago, it was largely an alien faith introduced by foreign missionaries who sought to convert Africans to their faith as part of the 'civilizing mission' of colonialism. Rather than uncritically adopting the religion of the missionaries, however, Africans had their own reasons for becoming Christians, interpreted the Bible in the context of their own experience, and founded their own churches. The seminar will explore the diverse ways Africans interpreted Christianity and appropriated it within their own cultural constructs to produce a distinctive African Christianity.

Requirements: Students will be expected to write two formal papers during the course of the seminar: the first a critical review of the literature (ca. 10-12 pp) on one of the general topics listed for weeks 3-8, and the second a major research paper (ca. 20 pp) on a select topic chosen in consultation with me. In each case, students will electronically distribute copies of their paper to the other seminar participants by Tuesday noon preceeding the relevant class. Research papers will first be presented in class, and then revised for final submission at the end of the seminar. Students will also be expected to write and present a short critique of one of the research papers during weeks 11-15.

Reading: All required and some recommended books are available on reserve at H.C. White; copies of journal articles will be available for copying outside my door (5101). Other books and articles are in the Memorial stacks. The following are also available at the University Bookstore:

J. Thornton, The Kongoese Saint Anthony (Cambridge)
J. Peires, The Dead will Arise (Indiana)
D. Lan, Guns and Rain (California)
L. Sanneh, Translating the Message (Orbis)
B. Meyer, Translating the Devil (AWP/IAI)
C. Hoehler-Fatton, Women of Fire and Spirit (Oxford)

Research Topics: appropriate research topics are limited by the availability of sources. You should thus make sure that there are adequate primary (published and unpublished) and secondary sources available here or on Interlibrary Loan before committing to a topic. The following areas are particularly rich in terms of source material. See the Bibliography for other possibilities.

| | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| Congo/Zaire | Nigeria (southern) |
| Ghana | South Africa |
| Ivory Coast/Liberia (Harrisites) | Uganda (Buganda) |
| Kenya | Zambia |
| Malawi | Zimbabwe (Shona) |

Schedule9/5 Christianity in the 18th c KongoJ. Thornton, The Kongolesse Saint Anthony*9/12 History & Historiography**Library Session (443A Memorial Library)**

begin to research topics and availability of materials

T. Ranger, 'Religious Movements & Politics in Sub-Saharan Africa,' Af. Studies Review, 29(1986), 1-70.T. Spear, 'Toward the History of African Christianity' in T. Spear & I. Kimambo (eds.), East African Expressions of Christianity (xerox)*recommended:*B. Ray, African Religions (1976)A. Hastings, African Catholicism (1989)R. Gray, Black Christians and White Missionaries (1990)*D. Chidester, Religions of South Africa (1992)A. Hastings, The Church in Africa, 1450-1950 (1994)*B. Sundkler & C. Steed, A History of the Church in Africa (2000)N. Levtzion & R. Pouwells (eds.), The History of Islam in Africa (2000)9/19 Prophets & Prophecy: The Xhosa Cattle KillingJ. Peires, The Dead Will Arise (1989), 1-186, 309-323.**recommended:*E.E. Evans-Pritchard, Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (1937)J. Fernandez, Bwiti (1982)W. MacGaffey, Modern Kongo Prophets (1983)*W. MacGaffey, Religion and Society in Central Africa (1986)S. Bockie, Death and the Invisible Powers: The World of Kongo Belief (1993)D. Anderson & D. Johnson, Revealing Prophets (1995)9/26 Ancestors & Chiefs: Mediums & GuerillasD. Lan, Guns and Rain (1985)**recommended:*T. Ranger, Revolt in Southern Rhodesia (1967)N. Sithole, Obed Mutezo: The Mudzimu-Christian-Nationalist (1970)P. Fry, Spirits of Protest (1976)T. Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe (1985)N. Kriger, Zimbabwe's Guerilla War (1992)D. Maxwell, Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe (1999)S. Barnes (ed.), Africa's Ogun (2nd ed., 1997)

* on reserve in H.C. White

10/3 Missionaries & Converts: Dialectics of Conversion

film in class: 'Zulu Zion'

L. Sanneh, Translating the Message (1991)*

recommended:

- cf. Horton, et al; Peel, 'The Pastor and the Babalawo'; Gray, Black Christians and White Missionaries; and Hastings, Church in Africa, in Bibliography
 R. Strayer, The Making of Mission Communities in East Africa (1978)
 L. Pirouet, Black Evangelists (1978)
 T. Beidelman, Colonial Evangelism (1982)
 D. Sandgren, Christianity and the Kikuyu (1989)*
 J. & J. Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution (1991-97)
 J. Campbell, Songs of Zion: The AMEC in the US and South Africa (1995)
 R. Elphick & R. Davenport (eds.), Christianity in South Africa (1997) (arts. by Hodgson & Etherington)*
 D. Maxwell, Christians and Chiefs in Zimbabwe (1999)
 T. Spear & I. Kimambo (eds.), East African Expressions of Christianity (1999) (arts. by Waller & Smythe)*
 H. Hansen & M. Twaddle (eds.), Christian Missionaries and the State in the Third World (2002)
 N. Levtzion, Conversion to Islam (1979), chs. 1, 10-13.*

10/10 Struggles for Control and Meaning: Christianity in Ewe

B. Meyer, Translating the Devil (1999)*

recommended:

- J. Taylor, The Growth of the Church in Buganda (1958)
 J. Parratt, Reinventing Christianity (1995)
 P. Landau, The Realm of the Word (1995)*
 P. Geshire, The Modernity of Witchcraft (1997)
 J.D.Y. Peel, Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba (2000)*
 P. Ryan, Imale: Yoruba Participation in the Muslim Tradition (1978)
 R. Launay, Beyond the Stream (1992)

10/17 African Apostles and the Quest for African Christianity: The Holy Spirit in Western Kenya

Topics and Bibliography for research papers due in class

C. Hoehler-Fatton, Women of Fire and Spirit (1996)*

recommended:

- B. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets of South Africa (1949)* and Zulu Zion (1976)
 D. Barrett, Schism and Renewal in Africa (1968)
 J.D.Y. Peel, Aladura (1968)
 M. Daneel, Old and New in Shona Independent Churches (1971-88)
 D. Shank, Prophet Harris (1994)
 F. Githieya, The Freedom of the Spirit (1997)
 Elphick & Davenport, Christianity in South Africa (1997) (arts by Pretorius & Jafta, Anderson & Pilay)*

* on reserve in H.C. White

- Spear and Kimambo, East African Expressions (1999) (arts. by Sandgren, Githieya, Kassimir, Comoro & Sivalon)*
 R. Edgar & H. Sapire, African Apocalypse (2000)
 J. Peel & C. Steward (eds.), Popular Islam South of the Sahara (1987)

10/24 Religion and Politics

read one of the following and be prepared to introduce it in class:

- K. Fields, Revival and Rebellion in Colonial Central Africa (1985)*
 H. Behred, Alice Lakwena and the Holy Spirits (1999)
 S. Biko, I Write What I Like (1978)* & Black Consciousness in South Africa (1979)
 G. Bond, The Politics of Change in a Zambia Community
 R. Edgar, Because They Chose the Plan of God (1988)
 P. Landau, The Realm of the Word (1995)*
 I. Linden, Church and Revolution in Rwanda (1977)
 N. Long, Social Change and the Individual (1972)
 T. Longman, 'Christianity and Crisis in Rwanda' (PhD, UW, 1995)
 D. Low, Religion & Society in Buganda (1957); C. Wrigley, 'The Christianity Revolution in Buganda,' CSSH, 2/1(1959) ; J. Rowe, 'Revolution in Buganda' (PhD, UW, 1966); J. Bearley & T. Spear, 'Mutesa, the Missionaries and Christian Conversion in Buganda,' IJAHS, 21(1988), 601-18.
 J. Nyerere, Freedom and Unity/Socialism*/ Development (1967-73)
 R. Packard, Chiefship and Cosmology (1981)*
 J.D.Y. Peel, Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba (2000)*
 R. Rotberg, The Rise of Nationalism in Central Africa (1965)
 N. Sithole, Obed Mutezo (1970) & T. Ranger, Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe (1985)

10/31 no class -- work on research paper

11/7 no class -- work on research papers

11/14 no class -- work on research papers

11/21 Presentations

11/27 Presentations (class rescheduled from 11/28?)

11/28 no class -- Thanksgiving

12/4 Presentations (class rescheduled from 12/5?)

12/5-8 no class -- African Studies Association meeting (Washington)

12/12 Presentations

12/13 Final Research Papers due

* on reserve in H.C. White

8/1/02