

# Henry Martyn Lectures 2005

## Religion and Politics in Kenya

**Professor John Lonsdale**



A series of three lectures was given by Professor John Lonsdale of Trinity College, Cambridge on Monday 7th, Tuesday 8th and Wednesday 9th February at the Faculty of Divinity, West Road, Cambridge. The lecture titles were: [Foundations](#), Conflicts and Questions. Guests who attended the reception, which followed the first lecture included:



**The High Commissioner of Kenya, His Excellency, Mr Joseph Muchemi/Bishop Simon Barrington-Ward/Dr Brian Stanley**



**Mrs Muchemi and Mrs Moya Lonsdale**

# THE HENRY MARTYN LECTURES

2005

## "Religion and Politics in Kenya"

by John Lonsdale

*Trinity College, Cambridge*

LECTURE 1: Monday 7th February 2005

### FOUNDATIONS

#### Introduction

Two centuries ago, in 1805, the young Henry Martyn left his fellowship at St John's College and curacy at Holy Trinity Church to set sail for India. In his first five years out there, as chaplain to the East India Company, he had translated the New Testament into Urdu and Persian. In his short life he also helped in the translation of the Gospels into Arabic. Much of what I have to say in these three lectures given in his honour is an historian's comment on the consequences of vernacular translations of the Bible, especially their gifts to political identity in Kenya and to that country's sometimes critical, sometimes vainglorious, language of politics.

Some of these gifts of the translated Word can be counted as blessings to the people of Kenya, some as hindrances. The *ambiguity* of the relations between religion and politics in the modern history of that country lies at the core of

what I have to say. How Martyn would have reacted to that hesitancy of judgment I cannot know. But I am reassured by Kenneth Cragg, when he writes of his, Martyn's, 'anguish of spirit' when facing the seemingly impossible task of translation. How can anyone hope to summon up in *another's* language, with all its treasured idioms, the theological and moral resonances of a text that has acquired embedded depths of particular meaning in the translator's mother tongue? [1]So perhaps Martyn would understand my own uncertainties of historical interpretation.

What then made me jump at the invitation that the Faculty of Divinity so kindly extended a couple of years ago? Anything is possible at two years' notice, of course; and it is only in the last month or so that endless possibilities have shrunk into the complete impossibility of matching the spoken word to the first ideas that sprang to mind when Brian Stanley asked me to give these lectures. But what *were* those ideas to which I shall not do justice?

It is a commonplace to say that Africa is now Christianity's most ebullient frontier, and that the religion which not long ago used to be the faith of the world's affluent North is now, more accurately, that of its impoverished South-although of course the world's most powerful nation is also said to be its most Christian, if often in ways not easily grasped as such by someone like myself, brought up as an Anglican of low church leanings and prejudices.

Kenya is no exception to the African rule of energetic Christianity. Perhaps 70 per cent of its 32 million people claim to be Christian, and of these no less than 10 per cent claim to attend church regularly-and that was reported by an evangelical survey that seems not to have counted Catholics as Christians.[2]So my first response was that to talk about religion and politics in Kenya-a country I first visited as a boy half a century ago when it was in the grip of its Mau Mau emergency and have studied more or less ever since-was that I would, at last, be talking about what most Kenyans most talk about. As with other Africans, 'it is largely through religious ideas that [they] think about the world today.' [3]Religion and politics are topics that obsess them, whether in bars or bus queues. [4] They ask, constantly, both in private and in public (and the Kenyan press is more outspoken than our own), how it is that a country so avowedly Christian in culture can be so badly governed by

politicians who loot the public purse as if they were blood-sucking ogres or the equally life-sapping Devil (two common figures of political speech), who seem to have no sense of the common good, and yet who were educated at church-related schools; who go, ostentatiously, to church most Sundays; who invoke the name of God whenever they pay funeral tributes to their departed colleagues in ministerial kleptocracy; and who sleep soundly at nights. [5] It is a question to which Kenyans give healthily cynical answers. Their leaders appear to have no shame, and yet are full of the hypocrisy that pays tribute to virtue. [6] Sadly these reflections apply, today, as much to church leaders as to politicians, and in a country where Christ himself was seen by many at a service of faith-healing in a Nairobi slum not twenty years ago. [7] When I was in Nairobi before Christmas the papers were reporting the proceedings of a judicial enquiry into the 'Goldenberg' financial scandal of the 1990s, that under the former regime had debauched the currency and made all Kenyans 30 percent poorer. The then President, Daniel arap Moi, claimed to be not only Christian but one born again. There were calls for him to testify before the enquiry. Everybody believed he had been personally and profitably involved in the grand fraud. But an ecumenical gathering of church leaders declared that for Moi to be put in the dock would demean national honour. The next day the leading Nairobi daily carried a cartoon showing a gimcrack procession of sanctimonious bishops and other holy dignitaries trooping past a disbelieving crowd of citizens, one of whom exclaims, 'Ah! Those are Moi's new lawyers!' At the bottom the cartoonist's signature mouse asks, 'With bishops like these, who needs lawyers!' [8] Public respect for episcopacy had not been helped by reports a few weeks earlier-headlined 'Rent-a-Bishop' or 'Prayers for cash'-of how the new Anglican bishop of Nairobi had been put on the city council's pay roll. He was promised an exorbitant fee for a monthly prayer that most observers saw to be only his bounden Christian duty-as his archbishop's rebuke confirmed. At about the same time, there was also the 'miracle babies' scandal. In this the self-styled Bishop Deya, a Kenyan, promised to relieve the misery of childless couples in London by offering instant infant births. These had been discovered to be no miracle but, tragically, abandoned babies sold off by a Nairobi orphanage.

I do not recall much popular reaction to this scandal in Britain, certainly not from students. They see things differently in Kenya. A University of Nairobi drama society produced a play lampooning Bishop Deya. Flyers advertising the show were pasted all over the campus in December last. They portrayed Death, with bishop's mitre and bishop's crook. Shouted out from the posters were the promises 'Prayers and miracles for sale! Instant Miracle Childbirth, from 149,999/-. Instant riches, 29,999/-. Husband Repossession 24, 999/-. Hurry now while stocks last!' A repossessed husband was clearly a cheap sort of miracle. Kenyan women always strike me as far stronger than their men; they are also up in arms at their menfolk's unmanly behaviour-a matter to which I will return in my last lecture, on Wednesday.

I hope that in these lectures I can give some idea of why Kenyans can be so cynical and yet at the same time take their religion so seriously. At stake, for them, is no less than their very survival, moral no less than physical, in peace and in justice. They have an acute sense of how fine is the line between civilisation and anarchy. Their theologies, I will argue, reflect urgently on the sheer uncertainty of life in Africa, pauperised as it can too often be by the fickleness of tropical nature, the uncertainty of human fertility, the malevolence of man for man, or the arbitrariness of state power. [9]

So-to answer the question why I am here-the Faculty's invitation to give these lectures was an invitation, quite simply, to take Kenya's modern history as seriously as Kenyans take it themselves. That was my first reason for wanting to be here, and it is, on reflection, the one sufficient reason, since it incorporates all the others: for there is no better way into the often bitter life experience of modern Africans, one that they bear with stoicism and cynicism, hope, humour-and, many of them, with faith. This Kenyan political and religious culture raises two fundamental questions to which I shall offer ambiguous and inadequate answers:

**1) Does whatever one understands by 'religion' help or hinder Kenyans to imagine a culture of citizenship? Does their religion-or better, do their religions-unite them or divide them?**

Christianity and Islam, Kenya's two main religions of the book, both make universalist claims on their adherents. The children of God or the *'umma* are

both, in imagination, global. They ought, in theory, to unite Kenyans, no matter what their ethnic origin. Furthermore, one of Kenya's bravest newspaper groups, the *Nation* Group, always so far as possible on the side of liberty and good governance, has for the past forty years been owned by Muslims-by the Shii Ismaili sect, followers of the Aga Khan. And yet, as elsewhere, in practice these religions also divide Kenyans, most obviously, one might think, between the perhaps 70 percent Christians, the perhaps 20 percent Muslims (religious affiliation is not asked for by Kenyan censuses and the figures are disputed) and, finally, the perhaps 10 percent who follow various 'traditional' religious practices. But in fact the divisions *within* the religions of the book have perhaps more power to inflame passions than divisions *between* them. So the answer to my first question is both Yes and No.

**2) Does their 'religion' inspire in Kenyans a critical desire for good governance or collude in its absence?**

My answer here can only echo my first: Yes and No. Take, first, Islam. Of all the world's religions it has the clearest injunctions on how rulers should act justly, not least with respect to the fatherless and widow. It is no accident that the new President, Mwai Kibaki, a Catholic, has appointed a Muslim, a Somali, to be his Chief Commissioner of Police, charged with cleansing the police service of its corruptions. Yet in Kenya Islam is a minority faith, and a potentially secessionist one at that, in the minds of its two main minorities, the Somali pastoralists (and gun- and drug-runners) of Kenya's north-eastern deserts; and the Swahili and Arab townspeople of the Indian Ocean coast. The Muslim desire for the entrenchment of *shar'ia* courts is, in the eyes of many Christians, one of the main obstacles in the way of much needed constitutional reform. There is little evidence, however, despite the 750 locally recruited guards on the payroll of the US embassy in Nairobi to reinforce the US Marine contingent, [10] that local Muslims harbour terrorist designs. If Islam, then, is united in a critical political *theology* but divided in its political *allegiance*, Kenya's Christianities are divided on *both* grounds. They do not agree theologically on the need for good governance. None of them, apart

from the Catholics and perhaps the Anglicans, can claim to speak on behalf of all Kenya's peoples.

To take, first, theology and the so-called mainline churches, the Catholics and the Protestant churches with British missionary origins-Anglicans, Presbyterians, and Methodists: They all espouse a liberal, incarnational, political theology. This tells them what obedience is due to Caesar and how much Caesar owes in return, including the duty to protect all children of God, especially the least of them. [11] Their clergy quote from the Beatitudes as much as from the Old Testament prophets; they have engaged in vigorous and courageous voter education. Nonetheless Kenya's political theology, a local version (some might call it a local subversion) [12] of a theology of liberation, has borne a cyclical tendency to worship the state, a matter to which I will return in my later lectures.

But the mainline churches, Catholic and evangelical Protestant, have in recent years haemorrhaged followers to the charismatic churches 'sheep-stealers' as their critics call them-as everywhere else in Africa. And for Kenya's charismatics or its calmer, conservative evangelical churches descended from American faith missions, the nature of secular governance seems to be largely immaterial to personal salvation. Indeed, insofar as they comment on politics at all, they would say it is the conviction of personal salvation in the country's rulers, rather than their respect for democratic rights and procedures, that is the only sure recipe for honest and just government.

These churches quote more from the Old Testament than from the New. They recall stories of how God rewarded or punished Israel's rulers according to their obedience or disobedience to Him, not according to their adherence or otherwise to democratic procedure and the will of the people. [13]

But these distinctions I have drawn relate to formal theologies, to the Bible learning of Kenya's clergies. One suspects, again as elsewhere in Africa, that many laypeople judge politicians according to the inherent quality of their personal power to *exploit* rather than to be *defeated* by unseen forces, often ancestral forces, curses, or the sorcery employed by rivals, that neither Christianity nor Islam seem willing to overcome. [14] Not many years ago President Moi felt obliged to set up a commission of enquiry into Devil

worship, mainly to clear himself of the popular suspicion of sharing in his occult power. I will be returning to this issue again: in a continent so full of unseen powers, both malevolent and benign, some people, some times, believe it to be only prudent that one's rulers should have some familiarity with them while others, or the same people at other times, are terrified or repelled by that prospect. [15]

If these theological differences were not enough to cast doubt on the capacity of Kenya's Christianities to inspire good governance or effectively reprove the bad, there is the still more disabling fact that many of its churches bear an ethnic rather than national character in the popular mind. This segmentation makes it easy for politicians to scorn clerical critics as representatives of ethnic self-interest rather than of the common good. [16] The problem stems from the early twentieth century when a colonial government nervous of the potential for religious strife between excitable natives permitted different missionary denominations to enjoy separate spheres of territorial, and therefore ethnic, influence. This correlation between church and tribe is said to be fading today. Urbanisation, and social and denominational mobility, may in time produce a cohesive Christian voice less vulnerable to factional competition for political favour, but in the popular mind that time has not yet come. Only the Catholic church dares to post some of its clergy-but almost none of its bishops-to areas of the country other than those into whose ethnic culture they were born.

So the answers to my two questions must be hedged with ifs and buts.

Nonetheless-despite the manifest failings in both Kenya's Islams, Sunni and Shii, and in all its many Christianities, with respect to their capacity to nourish a critical citizenry or transparency in government-there remains much that the religions of the

book can claim to have achieved in helping to imagine the Kenyan state and even a Kenyan nation. Unlike too many of its near neighbours, Rwanda and Burundi, Uganda, the Sudan, Ethiopia and Somalia, Kenya has not fallen apart in civil war; it retains some semblance of constitutional procedures. It has recently recovered some capacity to pursue, however inadequately, reforms aimed to cut public corruption. Its government can still respond to

interest groups that represent the impoverished many as well as the privileged few, even if the income differentials between Kenyans remain, one might think scandalously, among the widest in the world. My last lecture will try to answer the question why the churches and Islamic civic bodies have helped so much to preserve some of the formal decencies of good governance while changing so little in Kenya's more fundamental political culture.

It is not difference in religious allegiance, not directly, that most threatens Kenya's peace. Many would say, indeed, that Kenyans were encouraged to take the risky plunge back into competitive party politics in the 1990s because their experience of mutually tolerant religious pluralism-within families as much as between neighbours-had taught them that difference did not necessarily invite mutual hostility. [17] Moreover, where Kenya's public life has descended into violence, and I shall give examples in both colonial and post-colonial history of war both within ethnic groups and between them, it could well be claimed that religious communities, have done more to bind up wounds than to inflame them. [18]

After these *introductory* doubts and queries let me set out still *more* questions as I turn to the fundamentals of any attempt to understand religion and politics, and the relations between them, in modern Kenya. In the beginning here, as elsewhere, are Words, especially words in songs. They invite reflection on what sort of social, political, and religious transition, if such it may be called, Kenyans have undergone in the past century or more.

### **Foundations**

Thirty years ago-which is to say, ten years after her country's independence - one of Kenya's best-known woman poets, Micere Githae Mugo, wrote a lament for the lost songs of her people's oral tradition that once upon a time had imparted purpose and discipline to their lives, *Where are those Songs?*

Let me read parts of it:

Where are those songs  
My mother and yours /always sang  
fitting rhythms / to the whole / vast span of life?

What was it again / they sang  
harvesting maize, threshing millet, storing the grain . .

What did they sing /bathing us, rocking us to sleep . . .  
and the one they sang /stirring the pot.  
(swallowed in part by choking smoke)?  
What song was it?

And the row of bending women / hoeing our fields  
to what beat /did they break the stubborn ground  
as they weeded our *shambas*?

What did they sing / at the ceremonies  
child-birth / child-naming / second birth / initiation . . ?  
how did they trill the *ngemi*  
what was / the warriors' song?  
how did the wedding song go?  
sing me / the funeral song.  
What do you remember?

Sing  
I have forgotten / my mother's song  
my children / will never know.  
This I remember: Mother always said  
sing child sing / make a song / and sing  
beat out your own rhythms / the rhythms of your life  
but make the song soulful /and make life / sing.

Sing daughter sing  
around you are / uncountable tunes  
some sung / others unsung / sing them / to your rhythms  
observe / listen / absorb / soak yourself  
bathe / in the stream of life  
and then sing / sing / simple songs / for the people  
for all to hear / and learn / and sing / with you.

[19]

Today, thirty years on, one can say that Kenya weddings smart enough to have service sheets printed in English, are made joyful or meditative with songs like 'To God be the Glory, great things he hath done....', 'Great is thy faithfulness, great is thy faithfulness...', and 'Guide me oh thou great Redeemer': simple songs to make lives sing. At funerals, the soulful words

that give rhythm to the lives that are past and are to come are, for example: 'Abide with me', 'What a friend we have in Jesus', 'Rock of Ages', 'The Lord's my Shepherd'-Psalm 23, sung to the Church of Scotland tune Crimond, even in a Catholic cathedral (and crooned to an electric guitar). The recessional hymn at funerals is almost always 'God be with you 'til we meet again'. This is also the modern warriors' song, since it often ends the term at the most prestigious, mission-founded, boarding schools, the oldest of which, the Alliance High School, will be eighty years old next year. [20]

### **A Transition?**

Such changes in popular song-and in the sites of their singing, from cooking stoves to Cathedral, or in their singers: from mothers or grandmothers to choir-led congregations-all invite the idea of *transition*: from tradition to modernity, from small-scale, simple societies, to large-scale social complexity, or from a formerly laborious self-sufficiency to an often unemployed half-existence today under the market rigours and inequalities of globalisation. Micere Mugo's lament, and the hymns that Kenyan friends and I have sung more recently suggest stark differences between an oral culture in which the symbols of meaning and rules of life were fragmented into different ethnic songs around the cooking pots, to an increasingly literate culture in which hymn-books and Bibles provide the rhythms of a life now bounded by the much larger community ruled over by the Kenyan state. I want to ask if this is the best way to approach the history of modern Kenya's religion and politics. How much of a transition has there been? How full is it of continuities and, if so, what discords have been stirred up? But if one needs to question the notion of transition, as one must, it is difficult to give another such simple name to the process that Kenyans have undergone. Most of them see it as a transition, and not necessarily for the better. Nor, in answering, must I forget the twenty percent of Kenyans who, when at public worship, do *not* sing, because they are Muslim.

One distinguished Kenyan, one of the small number who are beginning to write autobiography, Professor Joseph Maina Mungai, has described this transition, if such it is, very well for my purposes. Mungai-herdboy when small and then head boy at the Alliance High School in the 1950s; record three-mile

runner at Makerere University College where his medical training reinforced his Christian faith; who got his London PhD for research into the brain's nervous system, was first African dean of Nairobi's medical school and ended his career as vice-chancellor of the University of Nairobi-has described the transition as one 'from multiple simplicity to integrated complexity'. He saw this definition of transition embodied in his own life, from herdboyer to vice-chancellor; he used it as a method of teaching his medical students; he has observed it in the life of his country, from the multiple simplicities, so-called, of ethnic existence under alien rule to the integrated complexity of life in a self-governing, urbanising and perhaps industrialising nation. [21]

That is one way of seeing the transition, rather a helpful one since it is free of value judgments, free of teleology. There have been at least three others, both in African historiography and in Kenya's popular perceptions. These are full of value judgments, since those who lived through them, and provided historians with the evidence, were themselves of a teleological, in some cases Whiggish, in others pre-millennialist, cast of mind: white missionaries, the first African Christian converts, and British officials all convinced of their civilising mission, and thereafter the nationalists who were equally convinced of theirs.

a) Perhaps the most popular account of this transition among Kenyans is that of the **breakdown and decay of traditional societies** that are imagined, once upon a time, to have practised a communitarian ethic of care for all their members, an ethic that has now fallen apart, no longer at ease in a world corrupted by colonialism, capitalism and, now, globalisation. It is the 'Garden of Eden' theory of African history, [22] espoused as much by frustrated colonialists or alarmed anthropologists in times gone by as by disappointed Kenyan Christians today. Where now are those songs, asks an African Eve driven from the Garden. More insistently, many Kenyans ask, is this decay the main cause of their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS? Has there been no effective moral replacement for the lost sense of ethnic virtue, for the old disciplines that once taught responsible man- and womanhood in the sacred work of procreation? [23] Most would agree that their communities have double standards; in Kenya even the law represents 'a jumble of different traditions'.

[24]

But, (b) there is, or there used to be, a more optimistic variant, a sense that transition might indeed entail decay of old, small-scale, social obligations but only because they were supplanted by an **enlargement in the scale of social and moral community** as migrant labour, literacy, world religion, urbanisation and so on remade African selves, African identities, from other-directed tribespeople into inner-directed citizens. [25] This transition used to be called modernisation. Almost everywhere in Africa such expectations of modernity have been dashed, [26] not least in Kenya-but might it not be the case that the anger of dashed expectations provides the stimulus to political and moral reform? Kenya, as I will argue in my last lecture, [27] presents only rather equivocal evidence in support of that hopeful case, largely because of the continuities in value systems that had created double standards of moral judgment.

But the weaknesses in Kenya's theologies and traditions of political thought could also be attributable to (c) a **more oppressive, or perhaps captivating, view of modernisation** that is associated with the Chicago anthropologists, Jean and John Comaroff, who study the cultural history of the Tswana people of southern Africa in the era of missionary Christianity and white settler colonialism. On their reading of this history, African minds were colonised by the seductive affinities to be found between Christianity, commercial capitalism and domestic commodities. In the Comaroffs' analysis of this 'lop-sided conversation', [28] African subjects, Christians especially, almost literally lost the plot, that is, the ability to imagine the possibility of exercising their own choices, their own agency in history, except insofar as they parroted the seductive revelations of their Christian colonisers. [29] This is a view that a surprising number of Kenyan ordinands seem to take-to judge by the criticisms of their supposedly 'too Western' Christianity that I met when lecturing recently at St Paul's College, Limuru. They thought that it was useless to expect much social energy from their churches until they came to know a more truly African Christ. Until that time came the churches were bound to be seen as voicing the views of a deracinated, westernised, elite, not the earthier instincts of Wanjiku-the embodiment of authentic womanly

wisdom. I will explain later why I refute that view of an anaemic, inauthentic, still expatriate Christianity.

All these different approaches capture different aspects of modern African experience-and are espoused, to differing degrees, by most educated Kenyans today, but they all miss that which I regard as vital, namely, (d) a **continuity in moral argument between Africans in the also continuous social change** that, with most people in the world, they have experienced through most of human history. But this argument has, until the last forty years or so, occurred mostly within ethnic groups, each of them possessing their own public sphere of argument, rather than within any all-Kenyan public sphere. My definition of an ethnic group in fact is that group of people with whom you feel the greatest need to debate the most important questions of life, all the time-most of which have nothing directly to do with one's own ethnic identity as distinct from that of others. [30] *Other* ethnic groups will get drawn only occasionally into the argument, until they become, along with one's own, that community which we imaginatively call a nation. Just as there is as yet no European public, so also there is as yet only a very small Kenyan one. The 'democratic deficits' of the EU and Kenya have similar historical sources.

But, and this is my point, all Kenya's ethnic groups have always been in some kind of motion, whether geographically or socially or economically for as long as one can trace back their history. They have always been welcoming strangers (often as wives) or casting off failures, seekers after some generous or enserfing asylum to be found elsewhere. They were never static, isolated, self-sufficient, societies. They lived in no idyllic Gardens of Eden but were always experimental in their means of subsistence or in their religious or legal practices or in their means of defence. They had to be. They faced too many disasters *not* to look for new ways of doing things, if always with a simple toolkit. They were always hybrid in culture. There is nothing especially new about the present day, except perhaps insofar as the advent of literacy and its accompanying religious and historical sensibilities have enabled Kenyans to imagine, as Benedict Anderson would say, their ethnic groups as the pristine communities they can never have been in real history as distinct from the

myths of ethogenesis that are fondly conjured up in print, on the page. [31]  
That will bring me back to Biblical translation and Henry Martyn-but not just yet.

Those are the main questions that occur to me when joining in with Kenyans in speculating on the nature of their modern predicament. I do not think they have undergone a transition: that is too neat and tidy an image, too linear, too purposive, and with some final end in sight. That final end never comes in real history. If there were a word like 'complexification' that would fit, and I think Professor Mungai would approve. So, for want of any better, complexification will have to do.

But what are the peculiarly Kenyan elements of this complexification, that have made Kenya what it is and not any other African country?

There are three threads to my reply. They are closely intertwined. Kenyan religious and political culture is Kenyan because of,

*First*, the competition between Islam and Christianity that the latter has, at least for the moment, won, not least because of its affinity with colonial and post-colonial state power.

*Second*, the superior translatability of the Christian over the Muslim Word, and its ability therefore to infuse local narratives of history and destiny, both ethnic and national. Biblical texts and images give Kenyans a moral and political language that most of them share, so that no matter what their ethnicity they can understand each other on matters of personal and public morality-well enough to agree on what they disagree about.

That is as far as I shall get today. To-morrow I want to tell modern Kenya's history, up to 1963 and the end of colonial rule, by focussing on the *third foundational element* of what is peculiarly Kenyan, namely, the lasting *tension* between the local and the national, between local church or mosque on the one hand and colonial or national state on the other, a tension that rests on the contradictory interdependence that has long existed between household authority over labour on *household* land, and the lost, alienated, migrant, labour that works in *town*, often for the state. Salaried urban workers still say that they live, in today's Nairobi, in a house rather than a home. Home is where one's umbilical cord is buried out in the rural areas, or where one was

once circumcised, or where the spirits of the ancestors feel most comfortable, where everybody tries to spend Christmas and the New Year, and where one expects in the end to be buried. [33] Home upcountry is also where, until recently at least, one's church was almost bound to be. The state, by contrast, is too often in the hands of strangers, once the British, and now politicians of whom most are not of one's own people.

In these intertwined threads there are, perhaps, the makings of a critically alert Kenyan political culture. Provided, that is, one adds to them a *fourth* thread, namely the self-interest of clerical patrons who seek to protect and promote the interest of their own community of the faithful, whether they be a particular local church or the *'umma*. It may be that here one can see the beginnings of a healthy redefinition of the relationship between small-scale society and the state. And may be not. But that is to anticipate.

### **1) Islam & Christianity**

Two world religions compete for the allegiance of modern Kenyans, Islam and Christianity. Islam came to Kenya's coasts in Islam's first century. But until recently it has been in a longterm decline of intellectual vitality and political power. In recent years it has come back to intellectual life, thanks to Arab and Iranian oil money rather than to Wahhabi extremism [34] Christianity on the other hand made a late start in Kenya, but has never stopped growing and mutating as it grows, becoming ever more popular in its practices and beliefs. This competitive religious history has been of profound importance to Kenya's politics. Ibn Battuta visited Kenya's coastal towns, then the only towns in the region, in the 14th C. He was impressed by the rigour of their Islamic practice. [35] He would find them perhaps 30 per cent Christian in their population today, as Kenya's upcountry peoples have come to the coastal ports to find work. This relative decline of Islam in the past century has deprived Kenyans of a potential source of religious and linguistic unity, even (possibly) of a sense of nationality. KiSwahili-the local language of Islam with around 20 percent of its vocabulary derived from Arabic, the language of the Qu'ran-has never been so important to Kenyan identity as it has been to that of Tanzania, Kenya's southern neighbour. [36]

Because of Islam's relative decline, the foundations of Kenya's nationalism have been Christian, and therefore linguistically and territorially divided, for Kenya's upcountry missionary Christianities were in their origins-barely a century ago-rural and, therefore, ethnically specific. Islam was preeminently the religious culture of Kenya's first towns and their trading networks. The coastal towns, Mombasa especially, have been there for centuries. But Islam also dominated African Nairobi, Kenya's first new town, probably until the 1940s. Rural Christianities did not come to town until the First World War. They consolidated their urban presence as recently as the 1950s, with the triumph of the African nationalism they had helped to inspire. That is a topic for to-morrow. But Kenya's Christianities retain today all the energy of the late-comer.

These two world religions have provided Kenyans with contrasting visions of progress and civilisation. Muslims called civilisation *ustaarabu*, being like an Arab, which in Kenya meant to be a sophisticated townsman; [37] or else *uungwana*, the state of being free, not slave, and it was of course on slavery that Islamic civilisation in East Africa was founded. Non-Muslims, if they were not slaves, were known by Muslims as barbarians, *washenzi*. But upcountry Kenyans, the *washenzi* themselves-and they knew they were despised by the townsmen-returned the complement. In a variety of upcountry vernaculars Arabs and Swahili were urban strangers, the *wacomba*-and Nairobi 'the place of strangers', *gecombaini* in the Gikuyu vernacular. To carry on the contrasts, if coastal Muslims were strangers upcountry, Kenya's first Christians, in the late nineteenth century, were runaway slaves at the coast, refugees from Muslim power or from famine, the *watoro*. [38] There was good precedent for this: the Holy Family, parents of Christianity itself, had come down to Africa, Egypt, as refugees from an earlier power, Herod's. [39] As recently as 1993, when speaking at a national holiday, Moi publicly reminded Muslims that they had once enslaved fellow Kenyans. [40]

Unlike the Muslims, Kenyan Christians rather rarely named themselves according to a sense of cultural or status distinction, as civilised or free for instance. True, early Luo Christians, in the far west of the country, called themselves *jo-ngwana*, free men like Muslims, but free from the authority of

parents or chiefs, not of slave-owners or, more commonly, *jo-nanga* or clothes-wearers, shockingly distinct from their parents. [41] They could as well have called themselves the dwellers in square houses or, if in Kikuyuland, the buriers of the dead.

But this self-appellation according to cultural status was rare. Early Kenyan Christians more commonly named themselves for their peculiar skill: *wasomaji* if they were at the coast, *athomi* if they were from central Kenya, *josomo* if they were Luo speakers in the west, on the shores of Lake Victoria- in short, they called themselves 'readers'. Their missionaries wanted them to be able to read the Bible, but many African evangelists advanced the frontier of literacy on their own, with the benefit of a bicycle but without the presence of a missionary. [42] Reading led on to writing. Clerical skill was not only a catechetical requirement but also a political technology, as much a tool of imaginative new organisation as a means to write petitions, as Derek Peterson has taught us. [43] Mission education was also an apprenticeship to the machinery of the state, of administration. In 1913 no less than the British Governor of the colony acted as examiner for the standard African typists' exam. [44] This combination of political and bureaucratic skill gave a great advantage to Kenya's Christians over the country's Muslims, only recently awakened to the need to repair their relative backwardness in modern educational skills.

That then is the first foundation of Kenya's modern complexification, the religious competition that, with the aid of its political technology, Christianity has for the moment won. Christians may not have named themselves after a new concept of civilisation (others did so for them, calling them tie-wearers or black Europeans) but *kusoma*, to read, was nonetheless to be modern, if in very Kenyan ways for my second foundation element is:-

## **2) The narrative character of the Word**

This was highly important, as J D Y Peel[45]and Adrian Hastings or Lamin Sanneh have rightly insisted. The technology of the word was not the Christians' only advantage. Their Book was also very different from that of the Muslims. By contrast with the Qu'ran the Bible is more translatable, it tells a

national history, it is full of heroic biography, of individual endeavour under the eye of God. Let me take those three points in turn.

Lamin Sanneh is surely correct to contrast the ready translatability of the Bible into many languages with the Islamic insistence that the Qu'ran remain for liturgical and expository purposes in its unpolluted Arabic. He argues that the vernacularisation of Christianity, Pauline in origin, has been a major influence on the formation of local cultural identities since it has made Christianity's texts their own, to be ruminated on and elaborated on in their own familiar terms, something not so clearly true of Islam.[46] The Bible has been translated into many of the world's vernaculars. One third of its translations have been into African languages. By 1971 portions of the Bible had been translated into twenty-eight of Kenya's tongues, the complete Bible into nine, including KiSwahili; in that year alone 73, 000 New Testaments were sold in the country, 60, 000 complete Bibles. [47]

I would go further, with Adrian Hastings, to contrast the narrative *natures* of the Christian and Islamic words. The Bible is full of stories, Hebrew in origin but universal in appeal, all woven into the history of a suffering yet at times faithful people, a veritable primer in nationalism. [48]The Qu'ran, on the other hand, at least on my own inexperienced reading, is for the most part a compendium of God's commands and of the moral behaviour that should follow, not the history of a community. Such heroes as it celebrates-Noah, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and David-are in any case taken from the Torah or Old Testament, and they are heroes of an Israelite nation without a destiny, thanks to its corruptions of belief. [49] Until the 1950s, moreover, the Qu'ran was available only in Arabic. Since then it has been translated into Swahili and three upcountry vernaculars, Gikuyu, Kikamba, and Dholuo, and moreover with the same Ismaili money that has run the English-language *Daily Nation*, a wonderful (and by no means unique) example of Islamic money funding both national and local needs. [50]But one is told that the vernacular Qu'ran holds less authority than the Arabic original.

By contrast with Kenya's Muslims, Christian scholars among Kenya's upcountry peoples found a book in which national and personal destinies were often gloriously intertwined and in their own language, a tongue which

they themselves helped to standardise in print while sitting with their white co-translators on the mission verandah, and whose images and proverbial formulae found their way into Testaments old and new, making the Bible very much their own tribal story. Some of these organic intellectuals have gone so far as to locate their people's origins in a refugee migration from *misri*, Egypt, even on occasion as one of the lost tribes of Israel. [51]Kikuyu detainees during the Mau Mau war of the 1950s had particular reason to reflect on the similarity between their situation and that of the children of Israel when enslaved in Egypt. [52]In the Gikuyu-language Bible, after all, Egyptian taskmasters had become corporals of police or Boer farmers, *akaburu* as Kikuyu called them both. [53]Local oppression acquired global significance. Missionaries, moreover, made biblical biography the subject of school textbooks, to inspire their young 'readers' to match the moral endeavours of the ancients in their own lives. [54]One of the most popular Gospel parables was the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15: 11-32). Many early Christians, often seen as delinquents by their elders, were anxious to count themselves worthy sons of their ancestors, [55]to put their own lives back into the tribal story, so much so that Kenya's African churches have in many ways strengthened the real and mythical solidarities of co-ethnic neighbours who might otherwise have found themselves estranged by social mobility, by class formation and the other complexities peculiar to modern life. [56]

While Islam might just possibly have united Kenyans, Christianity, I will argue further to-morrow, has tended to keep them separated-local, or indeed 'tribal', as Kenyans unabashedly call themselves. And Islam lost its opportunity very early on, before there was more than a handful of missionaries in the country. The moment was 1887, when Sir Arthur Hardinge, British Consul-General in Zanzibar, with responsibility for Kenya, then called the East Africa Protectorate, travelled upcountry with the Arab Sultan of Zanzibar for 'a State levee' with local chiefs, most of whom were naked. The Sultan and the chiefs had nothing much to say to each other. [57]There was no possibility of the British using the Sultan as an intermediary authority. And thereafter the Christians could the more easily be let in.

But let me re-introduce ambiguity at this point, a fitting reflection with which to end this first lecture, for the Bible furnishes Kenya's shared *national* language of politics as much as it feeds its several ethnic imaginations. If Micere Mugo's mother sang for her *ethnic* folktales, the Bible is a national store house of folktales. They may be told in different vernaculars but they are still the same stories. And it shows in everyday Kenyan culture.

In July 2004 the Bishop of Liverpool, James Jones, was reflecting on religion and the environment in BBC Radio 4's 'God Slot', that is, 'Thought for the day' in the morning's news magazine, the *Today* Programme. He remarked that the only place he had ever heard the Lord's Prayer said with the correct syntactical rhythm by a mass congregation was in All Saints, the Anglican Cathedral in Nairobi, where, without a pause at the end of the line after 'be done', the people prayed 'Thy will be done / on earth-as it is in Heaven'. Bishop Jones speculated that that was because Kenyans lived closer to the soil than did Britons, who, not seeing the connection between God and the environment, leave an uncomprehending pause between God's will and the earth on which it should be seen to be done. I can report at first hand the same holistic understanding of the Lord's Prayer in the Catholic Basilica of the Holy Family, half a mile from All Saints. [58]

But it is not only in Cathedrals that Kenyans get their religious syntax correct, or where they produce their religious imagery. It is everywhere, in the press, in daily conversation, in greetings and farewells. One could cite endless examples. I must be content with one or two.

In 1994 I was mugged by three strapping young men who claimed to be in the police drug squad. They left me penniless, without my passport, without my three weeks work in the archives, having driven me off to the slum area called *Bahati*, which means (generally good) luck. Certainly my luck changed there, since a kind young man came up and led me to the nearest police station. I made a statement to the sergeant of police, ending with my rescue by the young man. The sergeant read my statement back to me, ending with the sentence: 'And then a Good Samaritan came by.' Those were his words, not mine. He had translated my misfortune into a Kenyan story of salvation.

As I say, one could go on for ever. But the pervasiveness of Biblical imagery and metaphor raises the question: is this because Kenya is predominantly Christian (as it is)? Or because the Bible has become the nearest thing to a national narrative, a storehouse of universally recognised moral and political images, akin to what anthropologists once said of oral tradition, or the songs Micere's mother sang? Ngugi wa Thiongo, an avowed atheist, has complained that he simply cannot escape the Bible if he wishes to make himself understood in his novels. I think that the answer to that question perhaps is not vital for the issue of religion and politics. Politicians can be stung by being compared to the Emperor Darius, or to the Egyptian Pharaoh, or to King Ahab lusting after Naboth's vineyard, whether they are believers or not. For the vivid aptness of the simile, they will know all too well, will be equally apparent to all Kenyans, no matter what corner of the country they hail from. The Bible may not be taken by all Kenyans to be God's holy word, but it is certainly at the centre of their political culture-if in, as you would expect by now, a rather ambiguous way.

For let me end with Mr Mburu from Murang'a, who wrote to *The People* newspaper ('Fair, Frank and Fearless' as its masthead proclaimed) on 9th September 2002, shortly before Kenya's last general election. He warned the Luo people that their most influential leader, Raila Odinga, had made a mistake in taking his party, the National Democratic Party, into a merger with KANU, the then ruling party which was widely believed, and correctly, to be about to lose its first election in forty years: 'You are being taken back to Egypt by your Joshua' he warned. 'Your Joshua has feared to cross [the] River Jordan, unlike the Joshua of the Bible.' But Mr Mburu had no trouble in switching to a less Biblical, more vernacular, political image in his next paragraph:- 'I am asking you not to be misled by Raila and his bunch of eaters while you have no bone to chew.' In Kenya, as in most of the rest of Africa, political power is often expressed in the imagery of the belly, of eating and being eaten, or of being famished by political failure. The Bible and the belly are each as homely as the other.

But what does that mean? Are Bible and belly in conflict, as the New Testament surely insists, or in collusion as many heroic stories in the Old

Testament would suggest, where faith gives rise to prosperity and progeny? To this fundamental question there are many Kenyan answers, as I shall try to illustrate on Wednesday. But to-morrow I want to concentrate on the history of the conflicts and compromises between the local and the central in modern Kenya, where the local was the site of church building and the centre was the focus of the state, colonial and national alike.

### Footnotes:

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- i[1] Graham Kings, 'Foundations for Mission and the Study of World Christianity: The Legacy of Henry Martyn'\_Mission Studies\_XIV 1&2 (1997), 248-65 <http://www.martynmission.cam.ac.uk/CLife.htm>.
- i[2] Africa Center for Missions-Finish The Task Afriserve, with Discipling A Whole Nation Ministries, *The Unfinished Task: A National Survey of Churches in Kenya* (Nairobi, 2004).
- i[3] Stephen Ellis and Gerrie ter Haar, *Worlds of Power: Religious Thought and Political Practice in Africa* (London: Hurst, 2004), 2.
- i[4] Cf Thomas Spear, 'Christianity and Society', in Thomas Spear and Isaria N Kimambo, *East African Expressions of Christianity* (Oxford, Dar es Salaam, Nairobi, Athens OH: Currey, Mkuki wa Nyota, EAEP, & Ohio University Press, 1999), 307.
- i[5] But it is said that President Kibaki needs the comforting moral simplicities of P G Wodehouse as an anti-depressant: Adrian Bloomfield, 'President goes to bed as Kenya declines', *Daily Telegraph* (London, 16 Feb 2005), 15.
- i[6] This double standard of self-esteem is examined in John Iliffe, *Honour in African History* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), and will be addressed in my last lecture.
- i[7] Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, 43.
- i[8] *Daily Nation*, (Tuesday 7 December 2004), 8.
- i[9] Where else can one find a glossy magazine called *Disasters* (website: [www.disasterke.org](http://www.disasterke.org)), with articles on how to cope with rural banditry, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS in school, muggers, female genital mutilation, or IT fraud, with offers of training in disaster management? Vol 10, p. 19 has 'Thug

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Tips' (clearly borrowed from an American magazine) that opens: 'Please remember there are 11,500 thugs that were released during the month of December from Prison: please read on . . .'

i[10] Rita Abrahamsen & Michael C. Williams, *The Globalisation of Private Security. Country Report: Kenya* (University of Wales, Aberystwyth, 2005).

i[11] The then Bishop Gitari visualised the state and the churches in the same storm-tossed boat, in his sermon on Mark 12: 13-17 in October 1988, a point to which I shall return. See David Gitari, *In Season and out of Season: Sermons to a Nation* (Carlisle: Regnum, 1996), 71-6

i[12] A term I take from Paul Freston, *Evangelicals and Politics in Africa, Asia and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

i[13] In this Kenya's charismatics, conservative evangelicals, and the more senior of the African Initiated Churches are similar to their counterparts in Ghana, for which see Paul Gifford, *Ghana's New Christianity: Pentecostalism in a Globalising African Economy* (London: Hurst, 2004).

i[14] See, Ellis and ter Haar, *Worlds of Power*, for a general view; and Gerrie ter Haar, *Spirit of Africa: The Healing Ministry of Archbishop Milingo of Zambia* (London: Hurst, 1992) for the church's hostility to a cleric who did have the power to cast out demons. Nairobi pavement kiosks sell, for KSh30/- each, pamphlets on *How to Identify and Break Curses*, and *The Dangers of Witchcraft Covenants Practices*, published by Stephen Gichuhi, founder-director of Global Revival Ministries, with many references to *Deuteronomy*, *Leviticus*, *Proverbs* and other largely Old Testament texts..

i[15] Yvan Droz, 'Si Dieu veut . . . ou Suppots de Satan: incertitudes, millénarisme et sorcellerie parmi les migrants kikuyus', *Cahiers d'études africaines* 145 (1997), 85-117; idem, *Migrations kikuyus: Des pratiques sociales à l'imaginaire* (Editions de l'Institut d'ethnologie, Neuchâtel, 1999), 331-90. I failed to track down the Presidential Commission of Enquiry, printed but not published.

i[16] Mutahi Ngunyi, 'Religious Institutions and Political Liberalisation in Kenya', in Peter Gibbon (ed), *Markets, Civil Society & Democracy in Kenya* (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1995), 121-77.

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i[17] The view of Dr Thomas P Wolf, Kenya's best informed political analyst, among others: in conversations in Nairobi, December 2004.

i[18] For reconciliation after the Mau Mau war see, David Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged: Britain's Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2005), 338, 340; and Caroline Elkins, *Britain's Gulag: The Brutal End of Empire in Kenya* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2005), 367. For reconciliation in the 1990s: Gideon G Githiga, *The Church as a Bulwark against Authoritarianism* (Oxford: Regnum, 2001), 122-7; Galia Sabar, *Church, State and Society in Kenya: From Mediation to Opposition 1963-1993* (London: Cass, 2002), 218-20, 247-8. For insights available to Kenyan readers see, International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Faults of the Past* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2000).

i[19] In Stella and Frank Chipasula (eds), *The Heinemann Book of African Women's Poetry* (Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers, 1995), 129-31.

i[20] B E Kipkorir, 'The Alliance High School and the Origins of the Kenya African Elite 1926-1962' (Cambridge University PhD thesis, 1969). My sense of Kenya's favourite hymns comes from correspondence with Dr Kipkorir and visits to Nairobi churches.

i[21] Joseph M Mungai, *From Simple to Complex: The Journey of a Herdsboy* (Nairobi: Kenway Publications, 2002), chapter 1.

i[22] A term I owe to Ronald Robinson, my first mentor in African history

i[23] Lynn Thomas, *Politics of the Womb: Women, Reproduction, and the State in Kenya* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 2003), 17-18; The Catholic Bishops of Kenya, 'The Challenge of AIDS', June 1987, in Catholic Bishops of Africa and Madagascar, *Speak out on HIV and AIDS* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications, 2004), 11-12; Bethwell A Ogot, *Politics and the AIDS Epidemic in Kenya 1983-2003* (Kisumu: Anyange Press, 2004), 53-4; P Wenzel Geissler, "'Are we still together here?': Negotiations about Relatedness and Times in the Everyday Life of a Modern Kenyan Village' (Cambridge University PhD thesis, 2003), ch 6.

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i[24] Marjorie Oludhe Macgoye, *Moral Issues in Kenya* (Nairobi: Uzima Press, 1996, 2003), 22.

i[25] Godfrey & Monica Wilson, *The Analysis of Social Change* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1945] 1968).

i[26] James Ferguson, *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles & London: University of California Press, 1999).

i[27] Following Iliffe, *Honour in African History*.

i[28] Brian Stanley's term, in his article, 'Conversion to Christianity: The Colonization of the Mind?' *International Review of Mission* 92, 366 (July 2003), 320.

i[29] Jean & John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution*, 2 vols (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1991, 1997).

i[30] Argued at length in my 'Moral Economy of Mau Mau', in Bruce Berman and John Lonsdale, *Unhappy Valley: Conflict in Kenya and Africa* (London, Nairobi, Athens OH: James Currey, Heinemann Kenya, Ohio University Press, 1992), 265-504.

i[31] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London & New York: Verso, 1983, revised 1991).

i[32] The classic study is David William Cohen & E S Atieno Odhiambo, *Burying SM: The Politics of Knowledge and the Sociology of Power in Africa* (Portsmouth NH & London: Heinemann & James Currey, 1992).

i[33] Yvan Droz et Hervé Maupeu (Dir.), *Les figures de la mort à Nairobi: Une capitale sans cimetières* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2003).

i[34] John Chesworth, 'Inter-Faith Relations: What hope do we have? Revisionist histories of the role of Muslims in the independence struggle', paper for Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT), Kenya Chapter's national conference, 2001; idem, 'A Clash of Civilisations? Islam and Christianity in Kenya today', paper for EATWOT conference, 2002; idem, 'Fundamentalism and Outreach Strategies in East Africa: Christian

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Evangelism and Muslim Da'wa', paper for Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA) colloquium, 2003-all by courtesy of the author.

i[35] David C Sperling, 'The Growth of Islam among the Mijikenda of the Kenya Coast, 1826-1933' (PhD dissertation, SOAS, London, 1988), 18.

i[36] Ali A Mazrui and Alamin M Mazrui, *Swahili State and Society: The Political Economy of an African Language* (Nairobi and London: EAEP and Currey, 1995), 22 and passim.

i[37] For recent studies of coastal urban civilization see John Middleton, *The World of the Swahili: An African Mercantile Civilization* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1992); Patricia W Romero, *Lamu: History, Society, & Family in an East African Port City* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997); Margaret Strobel, *Muslim Women in Mombasa 1890-1975* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1979); Marc J Swartz, *The Way the World Is: Cultural Processes and Social Relations among the Mombasa Swahili* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, Oxford: University of California Press, 1991); Justin Willis, *Mombasa, the Swahili, and the Making of the Mijikenda* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993).

i[38] W B Anderson, *The Church in East Africa 1840-1974* (Nairobi, Dodoma, Kampala: Uzima Press, Central Tanganyika Press, Centenary Publishing House, 1977, 1988), 15; Carolyn Emerson, 'Early Kenyan Christianities: Geography, Ethnicity and Denomination' (Faculty of History, University of Cambridge: BA dissertation, 2002), ch 1.

i[39] Bengt Sundkler & Christopher Steed, *A History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: at the University Press, 2000), 7.

i[40] Nathalie Gomes et Anne Cussac, 'Les Musulmans de Nairobi: Du sentiment de marginalité à la volonté d'affirmation politique' (typescript, 2004, by courtesy of the authors), footnote 49.

i[41] For the shock of hiding the body by Luo Christian converts see, Margaret J Hay, *Who Wears the Pants? Christian Missions, Migrant Labour and Clothing in Colonial Western Kenya* (Boston: Boston University African Studies Center, Discussion Paper 23, 1992), 15.

i[42] Anderson, *The Church in East Africa*, chapter 12.

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- i[43] Derek R Peterson, *Creative Writing: Translation, Bookkeeping, and the Work of Imagination in Colonial Kenya* (Portsmouth NH: Heinemann, 2004).
- i[44] John Spencer, *James Beuttah, Freedom Fighter* (Nairobi: Stellascope, 1983), 10.
- i[45] J D Y Peel, *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2000).
- i[46] Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1989).
- i[47] David B Barrett, George K Mambo, Janice McLaughlin, Malcolm J McVeigh (eds), *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973* (Kisumu: Evangel Publishing House, 1973), Table 1, p. 99.
- i[48] Adrian Hastings, *The construction of Nationhood: Ethnicity, Religion and Nationalism* (Cambridge & New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 3-4, 18, 195.
- i[49] My acquaintance with the Qu'ran comes courtesy of the translation by N J Dawood, *The Koran* (London: Penguin, [1956], 2003).
- i[50] Gomes & Cussac, 'Les Musulmans de Nairobi', 2.
- i[51] W R Ochieng' 'Misri Legends in East African History', *East Africa Journal* 9, 10 (October 1972), 27-31; Alfred M M'Inyara, *The Restatement of Bantu Origin and Meru History* (Nairobi: Longman Kenya, 1992); Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1938), 275; Yvan Droz, *Migrations Kikuyu: Des Pratiques Sociales à l'Imaginaire* (Neuchâtel: Editions de l'Institut d'Ethnologie; Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, 1999), 343.
- i[52] Elkins, *Britain's Gulag*, 200.
- i[53] *Ibukuria Ngai, Thama* 1: 11 (etc). [Exodus 1: 11]. *Kaburu* now means any European in Nairobi's street slang, Sheng.
- i[54] Derek R Peterson, 'Introduction: Autobiography as History and Literature', iv-xix in Charles Muhoro Kareri, *The Life of Charles Muhoro Kareri* (Madison: African Studies Program, University of Wisconsin, 2003).

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i[55] John Lonsdale, "'Listen while I Read": Orality, Literacy, & Christianity in the Young Kenyatta's Making of the Kikuyu', in Louise de la Gorgendière et al, (eds), *Ethnicity in Africa: Roots, Meanings & Implications* (University of Edinburgh Centre of African Studies, 1996), 17-53.

i[56] F B Welbourn & B A Ogot, *A Place to Feel at Home: A Study of Two Independent Churches in Western Kenya* (London & Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1955), especially Part IV. For modern moral and behavioural uncertainties, Geissler, "'Are We Still Together Here?'"

i[57] Sir Arthur H Hardinge, *A Diplomatist in the East* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928), 153-4.

i[58] When at the funeral of Dr Pius Okelo, 2 December 2004.