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From Democratization to Ethnic Revolution:
Catholic Politics in Rwanda, 1950-1962

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From Democratization to Ethnic Revolution:
Catholic Politics in Rwanda, 1950-1962

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In the shadow of a 1994 genocide which cost nearly 800,000 lives, 20th-century Rwandan history has become a highly polemical and contested field. This is especially true for the history of the Catholic Church, one of the dominant social, political and religious institutions in Rwanda from the 1920s to the 1990s. This dissertation explores Catholic politics in Rwanda between colonial Belgium's introduction of political reforms in 1950 and Rwandan independence in 1962. The primary subjects of the thesis are Rwanda's two preeminent church leaders of the period, the Swiss White Father Mgr. André Perraudin and the Rwandan prelate Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami.

In engaging the pastoral writings and personal correspondence of Perraudin and Bigirumwami, this study analyzes the two bishops' reactions to the rapid political developments of the 1950s, their divergent analyses of the contested Hutu-Tutsi question, and their grappling with ethnic violence during the revolutionary changes of 1959 to 1962. This study also evaluates how Catholic bishops responded to Rwanda's first major ethnic massacres in 1963-64 and 1973. Drawing on newly released archival material from the period, this dissertation highlights the extent to which the Catholic major seminary and other church institutions served as sites of contestation in Rwanda's growing inter-racial and intra-ethnic disputes.

Post-genocide scholars have critiqued the close association of church and state during Rwanda's colonial period and highlighted missionary contributions to the hardening of Hutu-Tutsi identities. Overlooked in this standard narrative, however, is the complexity of Catholic political discourse in the early 1950s, a discourse in which the Hutu-Tutsi question was oddly muted. In turn, the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi question in elite Catholic circles in the later 1950s reflected a broader array of ideological contexts than ethnicism, including decolonization, democratization, anti-communism, Catholic social teaching, and rising intra-clerical tensions. By returning to the 1950s genesis of Hutu and Tutsi as political identities, this dissertation sheds light on how and why this cleavage became the fulcrum of post-colonial Rwandan politics in church and state alike, offering constructive lessons for Christian ecclesiology and social ethics.

This dissertation by James Jay Carney fulfills the dissertation requirement for the doctoral degree in Church History approved by Jacques M. Gres-Gayer, S.T.D., Ph.D., as Director, and by Thomas M. Cohen, Ph.D., and Paul V. Kollman, Ph.D., as Readers.

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Acknowledgments

This thesis began in 2002 in the library of Marquette University in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Tasked with the responsibility of writing an undergraduate term paper on human rights and Christian theology, I located a number of texts on the Rwandan genocide of 1994 and decided to explore one of the great human rights tragedies of the 20th century. As I delved deeper, however, I realized the extent to which my own religious tradition, Catholicism, had shaped the entire 20th-century history of Rwanda. I grappled with seeming church complicity in the massacres of 1994, wondering how such a devout country could fall into the depths of human barbarity. This grappling only grew through studies with Emmanuel Katongole at Duke University, a pilgrimage to Rwanda in 2004, and my own theological reflections on the ecclesiological ramifications of the Rwanda genocide.¹ But while I began my explorations of Rwanda as a student of Christian ethics and theology, I found myself drawn to Rwanda's history in an effort to understand better how and why Rwanda's pernicious Hutu-Tutsi *mythos* came to be. I am not sure I have wholly achieved this goal, but recognizing limits to one's knowledge is itself an important step on the path to wisdom.

There are many people who have aided me in this journey. First I thank my dissertation committee – Dr. Jacques Gres-Gayer, professor of modern church history in the School of Theology and Religious Studies at The Catholic University of America; Dr. Thomas Cohen, Associate Professor of History at CUA; and Dr. Paul Kollman, Associate Professor of Theology at the University of Notre Dame. Dr. Gres-Gayer generously agreed to

¹ Cf. J.J. Carney, "Waters of Baptism, Blood of Tribalism?" *African Ecclesial Review* 50, 1-2 (2008): 9-30.

direct a project that lay outside of the traditional areas of study in Catholic University's Church History department; Profs. Cohen and Kollman in turn provided detailed feedback on my research and writing over the course of three years. Even as my committee gave me ample freedom to develop my own research agenda, they modeled collegiality, refined my thinking, and strengthened my writing. I also thank CUA's School of Theology and Religious Studies for awarding me a Hubbard Dissertation Fellowship in 2010, a scholarship that greatly facilitated my ability to finish this thesis. I am also grateful to the Diocese of Little Rock and St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish in Fayetteville, Arkansas, my current employer who has demonstrated remarkable flexibility with me as I've researched and written this thesis over the past two and a half years.

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Introduction

A. Overview of thesis & argument

The overarching theme of this study concerns the development of Catholic politics in Rwanda during the 20th century, specifically in the final years of Belgian colonial rule between 1950 and 1962. When I say “Catholic politics,” I imply three things. One, I am interested in understanding how church leaders – primarily bishops, influential clergy, and lay elites working in the Catholic media – interacted with colonial and Rwandan political leaders and envisioned church-state relations. Second, I explore how the Catholic Church itself served as a locus of political contestation, focusing in particular on intra-clerical relations between European missionaries and African priests as well as the Catholic seminary which shaped a generation of religious and political leaders alike. Third, while this thesis is primarily a work of church history rather than political theology, I am interested in exploring the theo-political visions of Rwanda’s Catholic leaders, particularly their visions of church, state and the application of Catholic social teaching to Rwanda. I do this for two reasons. One, I think vision matters – what Emmanuel Katongole has termed “theological imagination” helps establish what the church deems possible, and the lacunae and silences often reveal as much as the actual visions themselves.¹ Second, for all of its historical uniqueness, the Rwandan case offers instructive lessons, examples and warnings for ecclesiological and ethical reflection in other parts of the Catholic world. Finally, Rwanda’s Catholic leaders did not exist in a historical or geographical vacuum. The post-colonial tendency to dwell on the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic has tended to overshadow other key themes in

¹ Emmanuel Katongole, *A Future for Africa: Critical Essays in Christian Social Imagination* (Scranton: University of Scranton Press, 2005), xiii-xvi.

late colonial Rwandan history, such as the church's vociferous anti-communism, opposition to apartheid, or newfound commitments to democratization and social justice.

Chronologically, this dissertation focuses on the crucial decade that preceded independence from 1950 to 1962. I again have particular reasons for selecting this decade. In part due to archival access and in part due to ideological presuppositions, recent scholarship in Rwandan history has tended to focus on the early decades of Rwanda's missionary history and the years preceding the genocide of 1994. In church history, the resulting meta-narrative has highlighted the early White Fathers' commitment to top-down evangelization, church leaders' efforts to cultivate close relations with Rwanda's central court, the mass conversions of Tutsi elites in the 1930s, and the establishment of Rwanda as a "Christian kingdom in the heart of Africa" in the 1940s. The narrative then skips to the 1980s and early 1990s, emphasizing the close ties between Vincent Nsengiyumva, the Hutu Archbishop of Kigali, and President Juvenal Habyarimana as well as the church's silence and complicity during the 1994 genocide. If the 1950s and early 1960s are mentioned at all, it is to highlight the Machiavellian role that church leaders played in switching ecclesial favor from Tutsi to Hutu elites, thereby ensuring the rise of an ethnicist, Hutu-dominated republic after independence in 1962.

This standard narrative – repeated most recently in the influential English-language works of Mahmood Mamdani and Timothy Longman – is not without its merits.¹ I will reinforce several of these points, such as Catholic leaders' commitment to church-state

¹ Cf. Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

cooperation, contributions to the hardening of ethnic categories, and obsession with protecting what they perceived to be the church's institutional interests. But in studying the 1950s, I also draw out themes overlooked in this standard meta-narrative. First, the focus on top-down Tutsi evangelization tends to overshadow how early Catholic missions supported a counter-cultural church of poor peasants. In fact, the first generation of Rwandan converts and priests came from the ranks of Hutu peasants and marginalized *petit* Tutsi. In addition, the earliest Banyarwanda term for Christian, *inyangarwanda*, literally meant "haters or repudiators of Rwanda" – not exactly the term one would associate with top-down evangelization.² And while Longman and others have argued that these early narratives were lost after the Tutsi *tornado* of the 1930s, I argue that the 1950s represented the resurgence and ultimate triumph of this "church from below." This in turn explains the passion with which church leaders, missionaries, and lay Hutu elites embraced the revolutionary cause between 1959 and 1962: they saw the revolution as a sacred mission to liberate the poor and establish an egalitarian Rwandan society marked by social justice, Christian democracy, and economic equality.

Focusing on late colonial Rwandan history also reveals the birth of Hutu and Tutsi as politically-contested labels. In saying this I do not follow contemporary polemicists who claim that the Belgians invented Hutu and Tutsi categories out of whole cloth. Nor do I embrace the more widespread notion that Hutu-Tutsi relations in Rwanda were harmonious before the arrival of Europeans at the turn of the century. What the 1950s reveals is the moment when Rwandans – and particularly Hutu elites – began to think of themselves first

² Allison Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news: Rwanda under Musinga*. Diss. Yale University, 1972: 99.

and foremost as “Hutu” and “Tutsi.” Clan identities, patron-client relationships, religious affiliations, ideological loyalties, and even national identities were subsumed under the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic. For Hutu elites, the pan-ethnic democratization and decolonization processes which began in 1952 transformed by 1957 into a mission to empower the Hutu masses over and against their Tutsi masters. Tutsi elites responded in kind, refusing to incorporate Hutu elites into Rwanda’s governing structures and defining Rwandan nationalism over and against the growing movement of Hutu social democracy. In turn, this period reveals the extent to which other ideological issues such as democratization, anti-communism, and anti-clericalism shaped Catholic leaders’ responses to the political parties which formed in 1959. Essentially, I argue that missionary support for Hutu parties stemmed more from ideological sympathy and perceived institutional self-interest than ethnicism per se. In particular, missionaries feared for their post-colonial future in light of Tutsi elites’ growing association with the *Union National Rwandaise* (UNAR), an anti-colonial, nationalist party which openly stated its plans to nationalize missionary schools and reduce White Father influence in Rwanda.

Catholic politics in the 1950s also challenges our stereotypical notions of what we mean by the term “church.” Far from the monolithic, missionary-dominated church of the early 20th century, the Rwandan church of the 1950s had Belgian Africa’s first African bishop and a majority African clergy. Most of these clergy were Tutsi and adopted a different analysis of Rwanda’s late colonial developments than Rwanda’s European-born clergy. Such analytical divisions extended into Rwanda’s seminaries, revealing deep inter-racial tensions that are sometimes overshadowed by scholars’ focus on the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic. In turn,

Catholic seminaries formed a generation of Hutu elites denied access to Belgium's colonial schools, creating what Ian Linden has termed a "Hutu counter-elite" notable for both their fealty to church authorities and commitment to social democracy.³

Finally, this period introduces two prelates who serve as the historical foci for the study. One is Mgr. André Perraudin, a Swiss White Father who arrived in Belgian Africa in 1948. After spending two years in the neighboring Burundian missions, Perraudin became a theology professor at Nyakibanda major seminary, an institution through which nearly all future Rwandan priests passed on their way to ordination. After a major crisis that divided Nyakibanda's Burundian, Rwandan and Congolese students, Perraudin was named rector of the seminary in 1952. Three years later, he was the surprise choice to replace Mgr. Laurent Déprimoz, the Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi (1945-1955), who had suffered a serious injury and could no longer fulfill his episcopal duties. At the age of 41 – and with only five years of experience in country – Perraudin became the most powerful churchman in Rwanda. The next six years would be momentous ones, as Perraudin attempted to navigate Rwanda's increasingly treacherous political waters.

The second principal church leader of this era was Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami. A native of Gisaka in eastern Rwanda, Bigirumwami hailed from one of Rwanda's first Catholic families and became one of the mission's first indigenous priests. He served in pastoral ministry for over 20 years before being named in 1952 as the first African bishop in the Belgian colonies. As Vicar Apostolic of Nyundo in northwestern Rwanda, Bigirumwami

³ Ian Linden with Jane Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1977), 220.

would serve as a bridge between Rwanda's increasingly polarized missionary and indigenous clergy. As this study will reveal, however, he also adopted a contrasting analysis of Rwanda's social and political situation than Perraudin and his White Father allies.

The first chapter of this dissertation analyzes Rwanda's political and ecclesial history between the late 1800s and 1950. A proper understanding of Rwandan church history requires an understanding of the missionaries who evangelized Rwanda, the Missionaries of Africa or White Fathers. I therefore begin this chapter by considering the ecclesial and theological vision of the White Father founder Charles Lavigerie, placing Lavigerie in the context of a 19th-century French Catholic missionary revival that focused in particular on Africa. Lavigerie emphasized several principles that shaped the Rwandan missions, including top-down evangelization, missionary adaptation, and the importance of Christian civilization. I then turn to the Buganda missions of the 1880s-90s. These White Father missions in present-day Uganda became the model for Catholic success in the colonial world; at the same time their experiences of state persecution and internecine Protestant-Catholic rivalries left ambiguous legacies for many of Rwanda's earliest missionaries. The longest section of the chapter begins with the founding of Rwanda's first Catholic missions in 1900 and concludes with the golden jubilee of these missions in 1950. I highlight several themes, including the legacies of German and Belgian colonial rule, missionary attempts to support the Hutu-dominated peasantry while also cultivating Rwanda's predominantly Tutsi elites, church leaders' contributions to the hardening of ethnic discourse, and the remarkable transformation of Rwanda in the 1920s and 1930s from a struggling mission outpost to a celebrated "Christian kingdom" in the heart of Africa. While not denying missionary impact

on the hardening of the Hutu-Tutsi cleavage, I argue that Catholic political engagement during this period was marked far more by institutional self-interest than by ethnicism per se. In telling this story, I draw primarily on the secondary works of Allison Des Forges, Stefaan Minnaert, Ian Linden, Paul Rutayisire, Gamaliel Mbonimana, Fortunatus Rudakemwa, Filip Reyntjens, and Justin Kalibwami. I also integrate correspondence and pastoral directions from Mgr. Léon Classe, the preeminent Catholic churchman of the period, who arrived in Rwanda in 1902 and served as Vicar Apostolic of Rwanda between 1922 and his death in 1945.

The second chapter traces Rwandan church history from 1950 to 1955. Here I consider the political changes that swept through Rwanda after World War II, including Belgium's decision to introduce a ten-year political decentralization plan in 1952. Along with increasing United Nations pressure, this decision led to a series of social and political reforms inside Rwanda, including the abolition of the traditional institutions *ubuhake* (patron-client relationships revolving around cattle usage) and *uburetwa* (forced labor imposed primarily on Hutu). After the pastoral triumphs of the 1930s and 1940s, the Rwandan Catholic Church in the early 1950s experienced new tensions between White Father missionaries and Rwanda's rising numbers of indigenous clergy. These tensions were especially acute at the major seminary of Nyakibanda where in 1951-52 Rwandan students helped force out both their Burundian and Congolese colleagues and the White Father rector of the seminary. Pastoral leaders and Catholic journalists also became more concerned with the fate of the *évolués*, the rising generation of Catholic and Belgian-trained Rwandan elites entrusted with the future leadership of the country. Surprisingly absent in these reflections

was the Hutu-Tutsi question. This lacuna reflected a much broader political context than the ethnic dualism that post-genocide commentators often read back into the period. Finally, this chapter introduces the two prelates who came to dominate Rwandan church politics in the late 1950s and early 1960s – Mgr. André Perraudin, the Swiss rector of Nyakibanda seminary named Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi in 1955 and Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami, the first Rwandan bishop named as Vicar Apostolic of the new vicariate of Nyundo in 1952. Early 1950s correspondence reveals analytical and pastoral tensions between Perraudin and Bigirumwami which would become increasingly pronounced in the latter years of the decade.

The third chapter begins with Perraudin's consecration to the episcopate in March 1956 and concludes on the eve of the Hutu uprisings of November 1959. This was one of the most volatile three-year periods in Rwandan history, marked by Rwanda's first direct legislative elections in 1956, the irruption of the Hutu-Tutsi question in Rwandan media between 1956 and 1958, Mwami Mutara Rudahigwa's sudden death in July 1959, and the rapid mobilization of political parties in the fall of 1959. The 1957 publication of the Tutsi-dominated Superior Council's *Mise au point* and Hutu elites' *Bahutu Manifesto* established the political framework for the subsequent five years – Tutsi elites' desire for immediate independence from Belgium and preference for Rwanda's traditional social hierarchy versus Hutu elites' demands for greater Hutu integration into Rwanda's ruling structures prior to Belgian withdrawal. Inside the church, Catholic leaders struggled to gauge and shape the growing movement for decolonization, releasing an unprecedented number of pastoral statements on church-state and social justice questions. In the meantime, the Hutu-Tutsi question emerged as a contested point of discussion, culminating with the publication of

starkly contrasting social analyses by Bigirumwami and Perraudin in late 1958 and early 1959. The emergence of Hutu-Tutsi tensions only added to the pre-existing European-African tensions which threatened to rend the Rwandan church. Political and social tensions also re-emerged at Nyakibanda seminary after the relative stability of Perraudin's rectorship. I conclude the chapter by considering if and how Catholic leaders – and particularly Mgr. Perraudin – stand responsible for fomenting the revolutionary politics and Hutu-Tutsi divisions which permeated Rwanda by the fall of 1959.

The fourth chapter begins with the Hutu *jacquerie* of November 1959 which forced thousands of Tutsi from their homes and precipitated sweeping political changes on the part of Belgium's colonial authorities. Led by Col. Guy Logiest, the devoutly Catholic Belgian military resident who helped suppress the November uprisings, colonial officials took the momentous decision to transform the uprising into a veritable political revolution, replacing hundreds of Tutsi chiefs and sub-chiefs with Hutu elites from Gregoire Kayibanda's Parmehutu party. These actions helped precipitate the exiling of Mwami Kigeli V Ndahindurwa and many of his allies in the Tutsi-dominated UNAR party. They also facilitated the establishment of an effective one-party dictatorship by Kayibanda's Parmehutu party, helping to transform Rwanda from a Tutsi-dominated traditional monarchy to a Hutu-dominated democratic republic by the time of independence in 1962. Inside the church, Perraudin, Bigirumwami and other Catholic leaders spoke out on Rwanda's increasing ethnic and political violence but generally steered clear of political controversy. Behind the scenes, however, Perraudin and Bigirumwami – and the European and African clergy they represented – engaged in increasingly fractious disputes over how to engage Rwanda's new

political leaders and how to resolve the Hutu-Tutsi crisis that threatened to destroy Nyakibanda seminary. In turn, this period saw the emergence of Catholic political discourse which would continue into the post-colonial period. Catholic leaders took a strong rhetorical stand against political and ethnic violence, but they also betrayed what I term “analytical partisanship.” This entailed adopting Hutu elites’ socio-political vision, offering uncritical support to the state, and blaming Rwanda’s increasing ethno-political violence on those unwilling to accept Parmehutu rule. Many scholars have accused the Catholic Church of serving as an epicenter for the development of Hutu-Tutsi tensions in late colonial Rwanda. Where I break new ground in this dissertation, however, is in actually studying the internal politics of the church between 1959 and 1962, including issues of intra-clerical relations, seminary developments, and episcopal appointments. This chapter therefore offers my most original contribution to research on Rwandan history, especially as I am the first researcher to have gained access to White Fathers archival material for the period.

My concluding fifth chapter considers the development of church-state relations in the 1960s and Catholic responses to the anti-Tutsi massacres of 1963-64 and 1973. While the genocide of 1994 stands in the background of this study, I also include a brief epilogue that considers post-1973 developments and analyzes Perraudin’s own reactions to the 1994 genocide. This study is primarily a historical work, but it raises theological, ecclesiological, and ethical questions for Catholic leaders struggling to recover their credibility after the holocaust of 1994. I therefore conclude the thesis by offering several principles for an alternative Catholic politics, including the necessity of ecclesial repentance, the imperative of maintaining prophetic distance from the state, the importance of nonviolence and social

analysis, and the need to emphasize the corporate nature of Christian identity *vis à vis* competing identities of nationality, ethnicity, race, and class.

Looking to transcend the polemics of oral history in post-genocide Rwanda, I have chosen to engage in a largely documentary study of Rwandan church history in the 1950s and early 1960s. I studied a wide range of pastoral letters, newspaper articles and missionary correspondence located in the online, Belgium-based *Centre d'Information et d'Etude sur le Rwanda* (C.I.E.R.), the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome, the regional White Fathers archives in Kigali, Rwanda, and the Diocese of Kabgayi archives in Rwanda. I have also reviewed a number of newspapers from the period, including *L'Ami*, the White Fathers' periodical for Rwandan Catholic elites in the early 1950s; *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, the controversial weekly newspaper which the White Fathers published out of Bujumbura, Burundi between 1954 and 1962; and *Trait d'Union* and *Civitas Mariae*, the diocesan newspapers for Kabgayi and Nyundo, respectively. I have also read leading French-language secondary histories on Rwanda as well as local Rwandan journals like *Dialogue* and *Cahiers Lumière et Société*. Finally, I conducted several interviews with White Father missionaries and Rwandan Catholic leaders but have used these sparingly in light of the contemporary polemics surrounding church, state, and ethnic questions in Rwanda.

As in all scholarly works, there are gaps in my sources. The biggest lacuna is *Kinyamateka*, the Kinyarwanda-language Catholic newspaper that exercised a considerable political effect in the late 1950s; I have read detailed commentaries on *Kinyamateka's* news coverage during this period by Paul Rutayisire and other Rwandan scholars. In addition, the Diocese of Nyundo archives were destroyed during the genocide and wars of the 1990s.

These would surely have provided even deeper insight into Bigirumwami and the Catholic story in northwestern Rwanda. In addition, Vatican archives can only be accessed 75 years after the time period, so I will have to wait several more decades to consult sources from Propaganda Fide and other Vatican congregations during the 1950s and early 1960s. When these documents are released, they will offer invaluable insights into how the Holy See responded to political and ecclesial developments in Rwanda at the end of the colonial period. From what I have gleaned from the documents I have consulted in Rome and Rwanda, I anticipate that there will be considerable differences between the responses of the Vatican and those of the White Fathers during the sociopolitical crises which afflicted the Rwandan church in the 1950s and 1960s.

The Hutu-Tutsi dynamic stands at the heart of this thesis. To conclude this introduction, I will offer a brief historiographical overview of the complex categories which proved so divisive in Rwanda's late colonial and post-colonial eras.

A. Contested categories: Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda

Despite their central importance in Rwanda's tragic post-colonial history, the categories of "Hutu" and "Tutsi" are not easily defined.⁴ Various descriptions of race, ethnicity, caste, socioeconomic status, or political power, the terms used to explain Hutu and Tutsi themselves reflect deep ideological presuppositions.⁵ The argument over how

⁴ The following narrative draws on Justin Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme et la société Rwandaise 1900-1962* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1991), 47-60; Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda : Droit public et évolution politique, 1916-1973* (Tervuren: Musée Royale de L'Afrique Centrale, 1985), 26-30; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 41-75; Fortunatus Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda 1900-1959* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), 23-30.

⁵ This narrative will largely focus on Hutu and Tutsi, but Rwanda also contains a third ethnic or social group, the pygmy Twa. Twa have lived in Rwanda for several thousand years ago, residing in the northwestern

to define Hutu and Tutsi reflects longstanding divisions on the history of ethnic migration into Rwanda. If there is a narrow consensus, it holds that Bantu-speaking groups later associated with the Hutu arrived in Rwanda around 1100 AD as part of the broader Bantu migrations that occurred during Africa's Iron Age.⁶ While they took up both agricultural and pastoralist work, Hutu were more associated with the former. These Hutu communities maintained a high degree of political independence in northern and western Rwanda into the early colonial period.

The geographical and chronological origins of the Tutsi are more controversial. Colonial theorists tended to trace the Tutsi to Ethiopia or Egypt.⁷ Modern scholars locate their origins much closer to Rwanda, perhaps among the Ankole in southwestern Uganda or pastoralists on the plateaus of Tanzania.⁸ Tutsi pastoralists likely moved into Rwanda over the course of several centuries between 1100 and 1650. While colonial and Hutu nationalist historiography described Tutsi migration as a military conquest,⁹ modern scholars favor a more gradual infiltration and mixing with the local Hutu population, noting that many of the

mountains, western forests, and near the royal court in Nyanza. They have remained the most endogamous ethnic community in Rwanda, numbering around 1% of Rwanda's total population. While most scholars focus on the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic, there are exceptions. For example, Josias Semujanga views the transition from "Munyarwanda tripolarity" to "Hutu-Tutsi bipolarity" as a key moment in the formation of genocidal discourse, as Rwanda's traditional tri-linear system became a "dualistic vision contrasting friend and foe" (Josias Semujanga, *Origins of Rwandan Genocide* (Amherst, NY: Humanity, 2003), 77-81).

⁶ Cf. John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). One of the major themes of Iliffe's study is the continual migration that has marked African history from the earliest human settlements to the present.

⁷ Cf. Louis de Lacger (and Pierre Nothomb), *Ruanda* (Kabgayi : 1961), 56; Léon Classe, "Le Ruanda et ses habitants," *Congo: Revue générale de la Colonie belge* I, no. 5 (May 1922) , 680-81.

⁸ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 22 ; Iliffe, *Africans*, 106-07.

⁹ Writing in the late 1930s, De Lacger compared the initial Tutsi conquest to the Germanic invasions of the late Roman world – a political conquest leading to mutual cultural and linguistic mixing (De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 67-68). While his views would change later, Marcel d'Hertefeldt wrote in 1960 of the "Tutsi conquest" of central, eastern, and western Rwanda leading to Tutsi monopolization of economic wealth, governmental administration, and political mythology. See M. d'Hertefeldt, "Myth and Political Acculturation in Rwanda," in Rhodes Livingstone Institute and Allie A. Dubb, *Myth in Modern Africa; The Fourteenth Conference Proceedings* (1960), 115-19.

political and religious traditions associated with the Tutsi (e.g., pastoralism, monarchy and the military) likely originated among Hutu communities.¹⁰

Stemming from the oral traditions of the royal court, two Banyarwanda myths explained the origins of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa.¹¹ In the first, Kigwa, the son of the heavenly king Nkuba and first earthly king of Rwanda, had three sons – Gatutsi, Gahutu and Gatwa. All three of his sons were deprived of a social faculty. The first son, Gatutsi, suggested that they petition Imana (the high god of traditional Rwandan religion) for new faculties. Imana then gave anger to Gatutsi, disobedience and labor to Gahutu, and gluttony to Gatwa. The second myth relates how Kigwa tested his three sons by entrusting each of them with a calabash of milk. The next morning, Gatwa had drunk his milk, Gahutu had spilled his milk, and Gatutsi had preserved his calabash of milk. For his courage and obedience, Kigwa rewarded Gatutsi with command over the “gluttonous serf” Gatwa and the “clumsy peasant” Gahutu. Such myths thus justified the social hierarchy that arose in pre-colonial Rwanda.¹²

Reacting to the physical differences between the Tutsi royal court and a peasantry that they tended to describe as Hutu,¹³ European missionaries and scholars writing in the first

¹⁰ Cf. Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 30; Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyaginya Kingdom* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), 198; Alison Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 1-4; Maquet, *The Premises of Inequality in Rwanda* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 170.

¹¹ The following narrative is adapted from Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 79-80.

¹² While current scholars like Bernardin Muzungu are correct to note that these traditional myths never posited different geographical or racial origins for Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa, Muzungu fails to note the inherent moral hierarchy implicit in these origin myths. Both stories reinforced ethnic stereotypes while lending an air of divine sanction to Rwanda's traditional social hierarchy, undermining Muzungu's romanticist claims that “all the millennial history of co-existence between the two groups [Hutu and Tutsi] had been characterized by a flawless harmony.” (Bernard Muzungu, “Le problème des races au Rwanda,” *Cahiers Lumière et Société* 42 (March 2009): 61, 67.) One should note, however, that the Hutu-Tutsi-Twa division was not the sole concern of 19th-century origin myths. As Jean-Pierre Chrétien writes, “clan alliances, religious power, and warrior conquests” were discussed as much or even more than the Hutu-Tutsi division.” (Cf. Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: 2000 Years of History*. Trans. Scott Straus (New York: Zone, 2003), 115).

¹³ Colonial theorists developed their Tutsi paradigm from their experiences at the royal court. They tended to overlook the thousands of poor *petit Tutsi* spread across the Rwandan countryside.

half of the 20th century viewed the Hutu-Tutsi distinction as racial or biological, distinguishing Tutsi from Hutu according to the Hamitic Thesis.¹⁴ Propagated by the 19th-century explorer John Hanning Speke and early 20th-century scholars like C.G. Seligman, the Hamitic thesis combined the biblical narrative of the curse of Ham with the scientific racialism of the late 19th century.¹⁵ Rather than use the curse of Ham to justify slavery (as in antebellum America), late 19th-century European theorists viewed a so-called “Hamitic race” of North African and Ethiopian pastoralists as culturally superior to what they termed the “Bantu” populations of sub-Saharan Africa. They then traced any signs of advanced civilization to the influence of such Hamitic groups. For European theorists in Rwanda, the Tutsi fit the role of Hamitic civilizer; the Hutu were seen as less advanced Bantu Africans. In the words of Louis de Lacger, an early chronicler of Rwandan history, the Tutsi were originally “brothers of the Nubians, the Galla, the Danakil. They have the Caucasian type and have come from Semitic roots in Asia...before being in this way blackened they were bronze.”¹⁶ For Mgr. Léon Classe, the “Tutsi are not Bantu, they are, if one wants, Negroids – they are an African people which possesses the strongest Hamitic indices.”¹⁷ In turn, these “Caucasians under a black skin” were seen as culturally and racially superior to their Bantu

¹⁴ On the Hamitic thesis, see Edith R. Sanders, “The Hamitic Hypothesis: its origin and functions in time perspective.” *Journal of African History* (1969): 521-32; Paul Rutayisire, “Le Tutsi étranger dans le pays de ses aïeux, » *Les Cahiers : Evangile et Société : Les Idéologies*, no. 4 (Dec. 1996) : 42-55.

¹⁵ Cf. C.G. Seligman, *Races of Africa*. 4th Ed. (London/New York: Oxford, 1966); John Hanning Speke, *Journal of the Discovery of the Source of the Nile* (Eugene, OR: Resource, 1868, 2007).

¹⁶ De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 56. As early as the First Vatican Council in 1869-70, the Catholic Church appealed to missionaries going to Central Africa to “alleviate the ancient malediction weighing on the shoulders of the misfortunate Hamites inhabiting the hopeless Nigricy” (quoted in Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1900-1994* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005, 65-66)).

¹⁷ Léon Classe, “Le Ruanda et ses habitants, » 680.

Hutu neighbors.¹⁸ As late as the early 1960s, the influential Belgian anthropologist Marcel d'Hertefelt continued to describe the Tutsi as an “Ethiopian race.”¹⁹

While the Hamitic thesis retained a powerful political mythos throughout the 20th century, scholars in the 1950s and early 1960s emphasized the new language of caste to describe the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. Caste underlined the supposedly endogamous and occupational distinctiveness of each group while emphasizing the integrated history of Hutu and Tutsi inside Rwanda. In this sense, J.J. Maquet, the leading proponent of the functionalist school of anthropology in Rwanda, presented the Rwandan caste system as hierarchical yet harmonious. More critical anthropologists like Helen Codere and Luc de Heusch saw the caste system as fraught with social tension, maintained only by Tutsi monopolization of political power and military force. Political studies in the 1960s – particularly the influential English-language work of René Lemarchand – also utilized the terminology of caste to describe Hutu and Tutsi.²⁰

The late 1960s and 1970s saw further development towards a socioeconomic understanding of the Hutu-Tutsi divide. In this view Tutsi referred to the land-owning aristocracy and Hutu to the landless peasantry.²¹ Noting that Hutu and Tutsi contained no connotations of purity and pollution, scholars rejected caste labels as inappropriately

¹⁸ This language is taken from Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 82. For Mamdani, the Hamitic thesis connected race with the even more important issue of indigeneity. The allegedly exotic origins of the Tutsi would prove most damaging in the post-colonial period. See also Rutayisire, “Le Tutsi étranger dans le pays de ses aïeux, » 42-49.

¹⁹ Marcel d'Hertefelt, *Les anciens royaumes de la zone interlacustre méridionale Rwanda, Burundi, Buha* (Tervuren, Belgium: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1962), 18.

²⁰ Cf. J.J. Maquet, *The Premise of Inequality*; Helen Codere, *Biography of an African Society, Rwanda 1900-1960* (Tervuren: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1973); René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger, 1970); Luc de Heusch, *Le Rwanda et la civilisation interlacustre* (Brussels : Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1966).

²¹ Cf. Marcel d'Hertefelt, *Les clans du Rwanda ancien: Eléments ethnosociologie et d'ethnohistoire* (Tervuren: Musée royal de l'Afrique centrale, 1971) : 3.

transferred from an Indian context.²² The language of social class also avoided the genetic and biological associations of racial, tribal, or ethnic terminology.²³ Such language also reflected the dominance of Marxist theory in social history during the 1970s; one can see such influences in the constant references to feudalism in Ian Linden's widely-read *Church and Revolution in Rwanda*.²⁴ Having said this, not all were enamored with describing Hutu and Tutsi in economic terms. The influential anthropologist Claudine Vidal rejected feudal terminology as anachronistic and overly rigid, failing to account for the fluidity of economic status in pre-colonial Rwanda.²⁵ And while the socioeconomic school remains influential, especially among Westerners writing after the 1994 genocide, skeptics note that there were many wealthy Hutu who never became Tutsi.²⁶ At the same time, there were thousands of lower class Tutsi who struggled to eke out a living far from the luxuries of the Mwami's court.

²² Cf. D.M. Todd, "Caste in Africa?" *Africa* 47.4 (1977): 398-412.

²³ There is an enormous literature on the roots of ethnic discourse. For the Rwandan context, relevant secondary works include Aidan Southall, "The Illusion of Tribe," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 5.1/2 (1970), 28-50; Leo Kuper, *The Pity of It All: Polarisation of Racial and Ethnic Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977); Donald L. Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); M. Crawford Young, "Nationalism, Class, and Ethnicity in Africa: A Retrospective," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 26.3 (1986): 421-95; Leroy Vail, ed., *The Creation of Tribalism in Southern Africa* (Berkeley: Univ. of California, 1991); Thomas H. Eriksen, "Ethnicity, race and nation," in *The Ethnicity Reader: Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Migration*, eds. Montserrat Guibernau and John Rex (Cambridge: Polity, 1997), 33-42; Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Gerard Prunier (eds.), *Les Ethnies ont une histoire* (Paris: Karthala, 2003).

²⁴ Linden, *Church and revolution*, ix-xi, 4, 18, 24. The feudal theme also dominates Linden's presentation of Catholic mission history in Rwanda, especially in his portrayal of the White Fathers as "feudal overlords" (59-61).

²⁵ Claudine Vidal, "Colonisation et décolonisation du Rwanda: La question tutsi-hutu," *Revue française d'études politiques africaines* 91 (1973): 32-47.

²⁶ In his widely-read study of the Rwandan genocide, Philip Gourevitch describes Hutu and Tutsi as socioeconomic categories (cf. Philip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1998). But as Mamdani notes, the so-called "10-cow" rule for becoming a Tutsi does not grapple with the complexity of pre-colonial or colonial classification schemes. For example, the 1930s population census that classified Rwandans as Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa utilized cattle ownership data along with church records and physical measurements (Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 99). On the prevalence of poor Tutsi, see Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 58-59.

Contemporary reflections thus tend to break down along two lines. On one side are those who see the Hutu-Tutsi distinction as an ethnic or tribal division representing a conflictual pre-colonial history. Comprised primarily of Hutu expatriates and Westerners critical of Rwanda's current RPF government, this school sees current efforts to subsume Hutu and Tutsi under the national Banyarwanda identity as overtly ideological and historically naïve. While still emphasizing the colonial role in exacerbating Hutu-Tutsi tensions, these scholars argue that Hutu-Tutsi identities reflect cultural and even biological distinctiveness. In turn, Hutu-Tutsi social tensions predated the arrival of German and Belgian colonial officials. For example, while admitting that racist Belgian colonial policies exacerbated Rwandan social tensions, Johan Pottier argues that one should see through the "smokescreen of sameness (same territory, same clans, same political institutions, same language) and must appreciate the divisive institutions and practices which preceded European rule."²⁷ In an often contentious dialogue with Jean-Pierre Chrétien, René Lemarchand has voiced a similar perspective over the past two decades, arguing that "European prejudice and misperception" alone cannot explain the recurrent massacres of Tutsi and Hutu in either Rwanda or Burundi.²⁸ Bernard Lugan may go the furthest, claiming that in Rwanda "we are living in the presence of two peoples, of distinct origins, living in the same land, and constituting the same nation."²⁹

²⁷ Johan Pottier, *Re-Imagining Rwanda: Conflict, Survival and Disinformation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 116. For similar perspectives, see Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation*.

²⁸ René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Institute, 1994), xv.

²⁹ Pierre Erny, "'Races' et 'ethnie' au Rwanda selon l'historien Bernard Lugan," *Dialogue* 235 (July-August 2004): 3-14.

On the other side are those who, chastened by the post-colonial violence that culminated in the 1994 genocide, emphasize the ideological nature of Hutu and Tutsi categories. More important than the origins of these groups are how and why these identities (and not others of clan, family, lineage, or nationality) became politicized and institutionally reproduced in the 20th century.³⁰ This approach highlights the problematic history of racial, tribal, ethnic, or even economic terminology, describing Hutu and Tutsi instead as “social categories.”³¹ Associated with the current Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) government of Paul Kagame and the Burundi-based French academic Jean-Pierre Chrétien, this school emphasizes the integrated nature of traditional Rwandan clans and the military, Rwanda’s shared linguistic and political heritage, and the pre-colonial fluidity of the Hutu-Tutsi line.³² More radical voices reject Hutu-Tutsi categories as colonial impositions lacking any foundations in traditional Rwanda, arguing that pre-colonial inter-marriage and cultural mixing eliminated any earlier distinctions. In this sense, Bernardin Muzungu notes that *ubwoko*, the Banyarwanda term for race, referred to a group descending from the same patrilineal ancestor – clans rather than Hutu, Tutsi, or Twa social groups.³³

³⁰ Representative texts here would include Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*; René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice*; Emmanuel Katongole, “Christianity, Tribalism and the Rwandan Genocide,” in Emmanuel Katongole, *A Future for Africa* (Scranton, PA: University of Scranton Press, 2005): 95-117.

³¹ Cf. Joseph Gahama and Augustin Mvuyekure, “Jeu ethnique, idéologie missionnaire et politique coloniale: Le cas du Burundi,” in Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Gerard Prunier (eds.), *Les Ethnies ont une histoire* (Paris: Karthala, 2003), 303-13. For Mvuyekure, the great error of missionary discourse was that Hutu and Tutsi “socio-professional categories... were fixed, ossified in ‘races,’ in ‘ethnicities’” (Augustin Mvuyekure, “Idéologie missionnaire et classification ethnique en Afrique centrale,” in *Les Ethnies ont une histoire*, 321).

³² Chrétien’s writings on the region are voluminous. His overarching views are found in English translation in *The Great Lakes of Africa* (2003). For his specific approach to the Hutu-Tutsi question in Rwanda, see Jean-Pierre Chrétien, “Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi,” in *Au coeur de l’ethnie: Ethnie, tribalisme et État en Afrique*, eds. Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M’Bokolo (Paris: La Découverte, 1999), 129-66.

³³ Cf. Bernard Muzungu, « Le problème des races au Rwanda, » 51; See also Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M’Bokolo, *Au coeur de l’ethnie: Ethnie, tribalisme et État en Afrique* (1985, 1999). For Amselle and M’Bokolo, terms like Hutu and Tutsi are politicized labels that must be understood in specific historical

In evaluating this debate, a critical factor to consider is the extent to which the 1860-1895 reign of Mwami Rwabugiri marked a significant stratification in Hutu-Tutsi relations.³⁴ The term “*abahutu*” came into common usage as a socially derogatory term implying political marginalization; one thinks here of a traditional Kinyarwanda phrase like “*sindi umuhutu wawe*,” literally “I am not his servant.” In this sense, Jan Vansina notes that Hutu was originally a “demeaning term that alluded to rural boorishness or loutish behavior,” a term applied to servants and foreigners but not initially to farmers.³⁵ Chrétien concurs. “The term Hutu meant, in the clientage relationship, the subordinate position of the recipient: even if the recipient was Tutsi, the donor spoke of him as ‘my Hutu.’ In Rwanda, the term ‘Tutsi’ little by little was perceived as an identity closely related to power.”³⁶ In addition, Rwabugiri’s military conquests extended the central court’s authority into previously independent Hutu regions in the north and west, provoking strong resistance from powerful Hutu lineages in these regions. As Vansina notes, these uprisings targeted the Nyiginya court but also took on a broader anti-Tutsi caste.³⁷ And while large numbers of *petit* Tutsi continued to live alongside their fellow Hutu peasants, royal ideology increasingly equated

contexts (ii). They reject “ethnic” language as a colonial construct to classify and homogenize African peoples and see pre-colonial identity as much more fluid and multivalent. In the same volume, see J.L. Amselle, “Ethnies et espaces: pour une anthropologie topologique,” 11-48.

³⁴ For an overview of 18th and 19th-century Rwandan history, see Jan Vansina’s *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda* (2003). Vansina sees Hutu and Tutsi as historically variable terms but also argues that Hutu-Tutsi tension predated European arrival. See also Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 8-16; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 69-72; Catherine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda 1860-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 207-09; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 23-30.

³⁵ Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 134.

³⁶ C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, “Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme, » 2000 : 5 ; J.P. Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 190.

³⁷ “The 1897 uprising is particularly significant because it proves without any ambiguity not only that the population at this time was conscious of a great divide between Tutsi and Hutu, but also that the antagonism between these two social categories had already broken into the open. One can therefore summarily reject the views of those who attribute the distinction between Tutsi and Hutu as well as the engendering of their mutual hostility to each other to the first Europeans” (Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 137-38).

the term “Tutsi” with political and economic power. In summary, Hutu-Tutsi labels developed ideological overtones in the late 1800s missing in earlier periods of Rwandan history.³⁸

In addition, traditional hierarchical institutions like *ubuhake* continued in the late 19th century while new practices like *uburetwa* land *corvées* developed. *Ubuhake* was a patron-client relationship in which the client (*garagu*) offered his services in exchange for the patron’s (*shebuja*’s) protection and usage of land and cattle. The client retained full ownership rights over milk, new male calves, and the meat and skin of deceased cows. The patron also provided for the client’s family after death. Client service included accompanying the patron on trips, working fields, and keeping night-watch. The patron could also choose to extend the *ubuhake* relationship to a deceased client’s heirs. The clientage system existed among Tutsi, although it was rare for a Tutsi *garagu* to enter into relationship with a Hutu *shebuja*.³⁹ First instituted under Mwami Rwabugiri, *uburetwa* required the Hutu client to devote two of every five days to working his Tutsi patron’s land. While *ubuhake* applied to both Tutsi and Hutu, only Hutu were required to perform *uburetwa* service.⁴⁰

Even with these changes, though, the Hutu-Tutsi line remained comparatively fluid, and significant “factors of integration” should not be overlooked.⁴¹ Inter-marriage continued, wealthy Hutu could still be ennobled as Tutsi, and Hutu and Tutsi co-existed in socially

³⁸ Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda*, 16-20; Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda*, 134-39.

³⁹ Maquet, *Premise of Inequality*, 129-31.

⁴⁰ For more on *uburetwa*, see Jan Vansina, *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2003), 135-36; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 134-42, 206-08; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 140-47; Linden, *Church and revolution*, 228.

⁴¹ Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology*, 5. Following Jan Vansina and others, Danielle de Lame agrees that Hutu in the 19th century conveyed a general sense of “submissiveness” but argues that this “had not yet crystallized into a collective identity” (Danielle de Lame, *A Hill among a Thousand: Transformations and Ruptures in Rural Rwanda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 48).

formative institutions like the military. While the Mwami had theoretically unlimited power, three chiefs divided responsibility for agricultural, pastoral, and tax issues on each of Rwanda's hills. Significantly, one of these chiefs was always Hutu.⁴² In addition, the patron-client *ubuhake* system closely connected the welfare of the Hutu client with the Tutsi patron. The former provided services to the latter in exchange for protection and advocacy at the Mwami's court. Nor was *ubuhake* limited to a Hutu-Tutsi relationship; in some regions the custom may have been more prevalent between Tutsi.⁴³ It would be inaccurate, therefore, to describe *ubuhake* as either feudal in the traditional European sense or as a form of involuntary slavery. And while pre-colonial rulers all came from the Tutsi-dominated Abega and Abanyiginya lineages, the king was viewed as a transcendent, pan-ethnic figure for Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa alike. Finally, a traditional Rwandan was not merely Hutu or Tutsi. Family, clan, and lineage ties were often more determinative, whether on the local hill or in the often-vicious succession struggles at court.⁴⁴ In light of this relative fluidity in the pre-colonial period, the subsuming of all identities under the supposed dualist struggle of Tutsi lord and Hutu serf is one of the most regrettable legacies of European colonialism.⁴⁵

⁴² Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 22.

⁴³ See here David Newbury, *The Land Beyond the Mists: Essays on Identity and Authority in Precolonial Congo and Rwanda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 326-29. Following the work of Jean-François Saucier, Newbury argues that only 10-15% of Rwandans were involved in *ubuhake* relationships in the late 19th century. *Ubuhake* served more as a means to build alliances between politically-powerful Tutsi than as a means to connect upper class Tutsi and Hutu peasants. For Newbury, *ubuhake* was neither universal, primordial, or exclusively hierarchical, nor was it a "pervasive cultural institution in pre-colonial Rwanda" (329).

⁴⁴ As Chrétien notes, clans are Rwanda's oldest social structures, "combining kinship, exogamy, shared symbols, and rules of solidarity" (Chrétien, *Great Lakes*, 88; see also Gahama and Mvuyekure, "Jeu ethnique," 308-09.). This does not mean that Rwanda's 18 clans were not subject to similar ideological influences; see here David Newbury, "The Clans of Rwanda: An Historical Hypothesis," *Africa* 50.4 (1980): 389-403 which shows how royal political ideology shaped pre-colonial clan identities on Rwanda's frontiers.

⁴⁵ As Jean-Pierre Chrétien writes, "clan alliances, religious power, and warrior conquests" were discussed as much or even more than the Hutu-Tutsi division in pre-colonial royal narratives. Cf. Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: 2000 Years of History*. Trans. Scott Straus (New York: Zone, 2003), 115.

While reminding us to exercise considerable caution when using any label, a century of scholarship has not resolved the seemingly simple questions, “who are the Tutsi?” and “who are the Hutu?” Notwithstanding the considerable ambiguity of the term, “ethnicity” remains the conventional term for the Hutu-Tutsi distinction and will be used throughout this thesis. When I utilize the term “ethnic,” however, I do not imply that Hutu and Tutsi were timeless, unchanging, or even genetically-distinct categories. Nor do I adopt the traditional understanding of ethnicity as a cultural group sharing a common language and religion.⁴⁶ Rather, I follow David Newbury’s description of ethnicity as a political identity formed in historical context.

Ethnic identities were not primordial; they were contextually created, they altered over time, and they evolved differently in different places and contexts. Therefore, ethnic groups cannot be seen as internally homogenous, externally distinct, and constantly in confrontation with other such groups. Like many social categories, ethnicity was not an institution but an identity, and hence ethnic categories were contextually defined...Only with the slow infiltration of state power, and in a complex process of mutual agency, did people come to see themselves as part of a collective Hutu identity that transcended lineage and hill.⁴⁷

And while denying neither the distinctive origins of Hutu and Tutsi nor the shared heritage of Banyarwanda culture, I will focus on how these labels were essentialized, politicized, and institutionalized during the Catholic missionary era, particularly in the years preceding the November 1959 Rwandan revolution. In doing so, I hope to move beyond recent Rwandan historiography’s obsession with race – an analysis that assumes that transforming Hutu and Tutsi into racial categories inevitably led to social conflict.⁴⁸ Social conflict is not inherently or exclusively racial, however. Nor is racial or ethnic difference inherently conflictual.

⁴⁶ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 52.

⁴⁷ Newbury, *Land Beyond the Mists*, 298, 300.

⁴⁸ Nor does the Rwandan government’s recent decision to ban Hutu-Tutsi terms in public discourse necessarily resolve the problem. As René Lemarchand noted in the Burundian context, “By abolishing ethnic otherness as a socially relevant term of reference, Tutsi regimes [in Burundi] removed the critical issue of ethnic hegemony and discrimination from the realm of legitimate debate” (René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice*, 32).

Historians' obsession with Europeans' inappropriate application of the Hamitic thesis to Rwanda risks obscuring other dimensions of Rwanda's political history.⁴⁹

In conclusion, while post-genocide claims concerning the colonial invention of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction are overstated, pre-colonial Hutu-Tutsi labels were neither static nor wholly determinative for individual or group identity. The French political theorist Jean-François Bayart has convincingly shown that identity itself is a fleeting concept. What may be more important is how and why people choose the "operational acts of identification" that favor one identity over another.⁵⁰ Recent scholars are rightly concerned with better understanding the ethnic dynamics of the 1994 genocide, but we must also remain wary of reading Rwandan history exclusively through the lens of the nation's tragic recent history.

⁴⁹ C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, "Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 5. Even a strident critic of colonial anthropology like Bernardin Muzungu implies the hierarchical and political nature of the traditional Hutu-Tutsi distinction. While emphasizing the fluidity of *kwi hutura* (changing social status), Muzungu admits that "this setback [becoming Hutu] could be the result of simple misfortune, dispossession or even confiscation of cows by one's patron (*kunyagwa*) or by foreign aggressors in war, or even as a result of famine or cattle epidemics like rinderpest" (B. Muzungu, "Le problème des races au Rwanda," 54).

⁵⁰ Jean-François Bayart, *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*. Trans. Steven Rendall, Janet Roitman, Cynthia Schoch, and Jonathan Derrick (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 92; Claudine Vidal, "Situations ethniques au Rwanda," in Amselle and M'Bokolo, *Au coeur de l'ethnie*, 184. As Jean-Pierre Chrétien notes, the point is not "to deny how old this cleavage is...but to understand why this cleavage has become so obsessive to the point of eclipsing every other problem" (Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 281-82).

Ch. 1. Building the Christian Kingdom: Catholic Politics in Rwanda, 1900-1950

While this dissertation primarily focuses on the 1950-1962 period, the ethnic and political tensions of the late colonial era did not arise in a historical vacuum. This first chapter therefore outlines the historical contexts that set the stage for the rapid political and ecclesial changes of the 1950s. I begin with the missiological vision of Charles Lavigerie, the founder of the Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) whose writings set the theological contours for missionary engagement of pastoral and political questions in early 20th century Rwanda. Recognizing the Buganda missions' importance for shaping the outlooks of the first generation of Rwandan missionaries, I also offer a brief overview of the early history of Catholic mission in neighboring Uganda.

After considering these late 19th century contexts, I delve into a more detailed study of Rwandan Catholic history between 1900 and 1950. Here I highlight how Catholic leaders' concerns for the church's own institutional and evangelical interests shaped their engagement with political and ethnic questions, focusing in particular on the visions of Rwanda's first three vicars apostolic – Jean-Joseph Hirth, Léon Classe, and Laurent Déprimoz. I argue that two lasting and contrasting themes emerged in the earliest years of Catholic mission – proclaiming the kingdom of God to the poor and marginalized while striving to build the kingdom of God by converting Rwanda's political elites. After achieving success among marginalized Hutu and Tutsi populations during the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Catholic Church adopted a more top-down approach after the First World War. Under the leadership of Classe, the Catholic Church built its pastoral capacity and formed

stronger relationships with colonial officials and local Tutsi elites during the transitional decade of the 1920s. This work bore fruit in the 1930s with the mass conversions of Tutsi elites that placed Rwanda on the road to becoming one of the most Catholic countries in Africa. I conclude by considering the 1940s period, an era which symbolized Rwanda's public embrace of Catholicism as a national creed yet also foreshadowed the intra-elite divisions and tensions that would come to dominate ecclesial and political life in the 1950s.

As this period is prolegomena to my primary research on the 1950-1962 period, my analysis here stems largely from a close reading of key secondary sources on Rwanda's early political and ecclesial history, including the works of Stefaan Minnaert, Ian Linden, Gamaliel Mbonimana, Paul Rutayisire, Allison Des Forges, and Justin Kalibwami. I also integrate select primary sources, including several key reflections from the pen of Léon Classe which reveal the complexity of missionary discourse on the Hutu-Tutsi distinction and church-state relations during the first half of the 20th century.

A. 19th-century contexts: Charles Lavigerie's missiological vision and the legacy of Buganda, 1865-1900

Catholic history in Rwanda is a distinctively 20th century story. The first White Father missionaries arrived at the royal court in 1900, and the first five mission posts in the country were established between 1900 and 1905. Rwanda did not develop its international reputation as a Christian kingdom in Central Africa until the 1930s, and it was not until after World War II that Mwami Charles Rudahigwa Mutara dedicated the country to Christ the King. That said, the roots of Rwanda's first Catholic missions grew out of a 19th century context. The first section of this chapter thus explores the missiological vision of Charles Lavigerie, the French founder of the White Fathers, in the context of a 19th century European missionary

revival that sent thousands of young men and women to spread a gospel of Christian conversion and European civilization to the farthest corners of the globe. I then offer an overview of the early Buganda missions. The 1880s martyrdoms and subsequent growth of the Catholic and Protestant missions in Uganda served as implicit models for missionaries throughout the region, establishing important legacies in areas of state power, Christian rivalry and mass conversions.

1. Charles Lavigerie and the origins of the Missionaries of Africa

Archbishop of Algiers and Carthage, founder of two African missionary congregations and an Eastern Rite seminary, international crusader against slavery, liaison between Paris and Rome, confidant of Pope Leo XIII – Charles Lavigerie witnessed many of the most important movements, people, and events in 19th-century Catholicism. Lavigerie remains one of the seminal figures in modern European and African Christian history. In turn, his Missionaries of Africa (White Fathers) were arguably the most significant missionary congregation in 20th-century Africa.¹ Their influence in Rwanda was unsurpassed – “kings without crowns” in the words of Richard Kandt, an early German colonial official² – and a proper analysis of Rwandan church history entails understanding the White Fathers and their founder.

¹ Adrian Hastings calls Lavigerie “the most outstanding Catholic missionary strategist of the 19th century” (Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 254). John Baur notes that White Father influence extended well beyond the missionary era, as the first three African bishops and first two African cardinals all trained in White Father seminaries. By the 1960s, Missionaries of Africa (M.Afr.) dioceses included one-sixth of African territory and one-quarter of Catholic Christians on the continent, and the Society counted 4,350 missionaries in its ranks (John Baur, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African History 62-1992* (Nairobi: Paulines, 1994), 187).

² Paul Rutayisire, *La christianisation du Rwanda (1900-1945): Méthode missionnaire et politique selon Mgr Léon Classe* (Fribourg: Éditions Universitaires Fribourg Suisse, 1987), 53. The metaphor is further developed in Alison des Forges, “Kings without Crowns: the White Fathers in Rwanda,” in *Eastern African History*, eds. Daniel McCall, Norman Bennett, and Jeffrey Butler (New York: Praeger, 1969), 176-207.

Charles Martial Allemand Lavigerie was born in 1825 in a Europe still recovering from the calamities of the French Revolution and the Napoleonic period. The France of his early years remained bitterly divided over the legacy of the Revolution and the role of Catholicism in French society. Lavigerie himself pursued his priestly vocation over the opposition of his anti-clerical Gascony family. The extent to which a French Catholic could engage the French Republic would remain a central issue throughout Lavigerie's life, and he himself would play no small role in helping to resolve this controversy in his final years.³

For all of the challenges, though, Lavigerie joined a European Catholic Church experiencing a major renewal at home and abroad. This 19th century Catholic revival shared its early modern predecessor's close association of internal renewal with overseas mission.⁴ Recovering from the dechristianization of the revolutionary period, 19th-century European missions correlated Christianity with Western civilization.⁵ Rome also played a central role in the 19th-century revival, beginning with the pontificate of Pope Gregory XVI (1831-1846). Former prefect of *Propaganda Fide*, the Vatican's congregation for evangelization, Gregory approved multiple missionary congregations focusing exclusively on the African continent. These new groups supplanted the traditional Catholic missionary orders (e.g., the

³ For Lavigerie's life, see François Renault, *Cardinal Lavigerie: Churchman, Prophet, Missionary*, trans. John O'Donohue (London/Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Athlone Press, 1994). Helpful English-language studies of 19th century French church history include Adrien Dansette and John Dingle, *Religious History of Modern France* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1961); Ralph Gibson, *A Social History of French Catholicism 1789-1914* (New York/London: Routledge, 1989); Mary Heimann, "Catholic revivalism in worship and devotion," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity VIII - World Christianities c. 1815-1914*, eds. Sheridan Gilley and Brian Stanley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006): 70-83.

⁴ I date the early modern period of mission history from Portugal and Spain's late 15th century explorations to the suppression of the Jesuits in 1773. As a sign of the vitality of French missionary work in the 19th century, 82 missionary congregations were founded in France alone during the 1800s (Stefaan Minnaert, *Premier Voyage de Mgr Hirth au Rwanda, Novembre 1899 – Février 1900: Contribution à l'étude de la fondation de l'église catholique au Rwanda* (Kigali: Les Editions Rwandaïses, 2006), 205.

⁵ Minnaert notes the importance of a text like Chateaubriand's *Le génie du Christianisme* (1802) for shaping the 19th century spirit of missionary romanticism with its concomitant commitments to evangelizing and civilizing (Minnaert, *Premier Voyage de Mgr Hirth*, 206).

Franciscans, Dominicans, and Jesuits) in spearheading Catholic outreach in 19th century Africa.⁶

Among these pioneers, Francis Libermann, Justin de Jacobis, and Daniel Comboni foreshadowed the later vision of Charles Lavigerie's Missionaries of Africa. A converted Jew from Alsace-Lorraine, Libermann founded the Congregation of the Immaculate Heart of Mary which later merged with the Holy Ghost Fathers (Spiritans).⁷ He sent one of the first large contingents of European missionaries to West Africa in the early 1840s. Their subsequent calamities caused Libermann to shift his focus to encouraging missionary adaptation, appointing capable administrators, and developing indigenous catechists and priests.⁸ Working in Ethiopia in the 1840s and 1850s, De Jacobis showed uncommon sensitivity to the ancient traditions of the Ethiopian Church, ordaining married priests and adopting the Ge'ez liturgical rite. In addition to Libermann's emphasis on developing indigenous priests and De Jacobis's focus on cultural adaptation, Daniel Comboni's 1864 plan for the evangelization of Africa – particularly its concern for medical missions and vision of “saving Africa through Africa” – influenced Lavigerie as he began to envision his own missionary societies of men and women religious.⁹

⁶ On African church history, see Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950*; Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of Christianity in Africa: From Antiquity to the Present* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995); Bengt Sundkler and Christopher Stead, *The History of the Church in Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). John Baur's *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa* offers a thorough if hagiographic account of the personalities who shaped African church history, focusing on the Roman Catholic tradition.

⁷ Particularly influential on the West and East African coasts, the Spiritans founded the first Catholic missions in East Africa at Zanzibar (1863) and Bagamoyo (1868) in present-day Tanzania. On the Spiritans, see Henry J. Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth: A General History of the Congregation of the Holy Ghost* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1983); Paul V. Kollman, *The Evangelization of Slaves and Catholic Origins in East Africa* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2005).

⁸ Koren, *To the Ends of the Earth*, 185-88. Koren notes that 80% of the initial missionary contingent sent to Guinea died within 12 months.

⁹ Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 226-29; Baur, *2000 Years*, 174-75.

In addition, all of these congregations focused their pastoral outreach specifically on the continent of Africa, and Lavigerie shared with these earlier missionaries a distinct “idea of Africa.”¹⁰ In this vision, Africa needed Christianity both for spiritual salvation and material civilization. Africa had possessed an element of the exotic in Jewish and Christian discourse as far back as biblical times.¹¹ 19th-century explorations into the interior only enhanced the tantalizing if foreboding image of the “Dark Continent.”¹² While missionary apologists often point to the pre-colonial roots of many African Christian missions, missionaries also embodied a distinctly modernizing and Westernizing influence.¹³ In this sense, the White Fathers were very much men of their times.

Lavigerie’s early biography is noteworthy in three ways.¹⁴ First, he pursued doctoral work in church history, developing a particular interest in the ancient catechumenate. His later introduction of a four-year catechumenate in the White Fathers’ Buganda missions

¹⁰ The language is borrowed from V.Y. Mudimbe’s seminal two-volume study, *The Invention of Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988) and *The Idea of Africa* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994).

¹¹ If biblical Egypt represented the land of oppression and deliverance, Ethiopia symbolized God’s providential care for Gentiles living at the farthest ends of the earth. Representative texts here would include Psalm 68’s prediction that “Ethiopia will stretch out her hands to God,” the Queen of Sheba’s visit to King Solomon (1 Kings 10), and Philip’s encounter with the Ethiopian Eunuch in Acts 8:26-39. For further commentary on these passages, see Baur, *2000 Years*, 1-17; Andrew Walls, “Africa in Christian History,” in Andrew Walls, *The Cross-Cultural Process in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2002): 85-87.

¹² This language is borrowed from Adrian Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 298-301. Here Hastings notes the polyvalent meanings of “Dark Continent” – the unmapped interior, the seeming lack of civilization, the legacy of the slave trade, the corruptions of heathenism, and indigenous skin color.

¹³ On the connections between modernity and 19th-century mission, see David Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1991), 262-345; John L. and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 1-24; Stephen B. Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2004), 206-38. For studies that emphasize the pre-modern or non-Western components of 19th century African missions, see Walls, *Cross-Cultural Process*; Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1996); Aylward Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa: The “White Fathers” and the Colonial Scramble, 1892-1914* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2006); Lamin Sanneh, *Translating the Message: The Missionary Impact on Culture* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1989).

¹⁴ The following material is drawn from Renault, *Cardinal Lavigerie*, 13-14, 31-58.

placed a distinct emphasis on Christian formation, rejecting any recourse to mass baptisms. Second, he spent a crucial period in the early 1860s coordinating Catholic relief work for Lebanese orphans. This experience taught him the importance of the humanitarian dimensions of mission. Finally, Lavigerie in the early 1860s served in the Roman Rota, the Holy See's highest appellate tribunal. This allowed Lavigerie to gain *entrée* into the Vatican circles that would facilitate the work of his missionary congregations in later years.

Lavigerie traced his missionary vocation to a revelation in November 1866. On the feast of St. Martin of Tours, Lavigerie received a dream of "dark-skinned people" asking him to restore the African Church.¹⁵ Already the Bishop of Nancy and groomed for probable succession to the important French see of Lyons, Lavigerie abruptly changed course, petitioning Rome for the long-neglected mission outpost of Algiers. It was in Algeria that Lavigerie envisioned the revival of the ancient North African church, the inauguration of an apostolate to North African Muslims, and the establishment of a missionary gateway to the African continent.

He only achieved the last of his three pastoral goals. Stymied by an anti-clerical colonial government, a hostile settler population, and a committed Muslim populace, Lavigerie in the 1870s turned his proselytizing zeal to the emerging mission fields south of the Sahara. Working through his new missionary congregations, the Missionaries of Africa and the Sisters of Africa,¹⁶ Lavigerie established Catholic outposts stretching from present-

¹⁵ Renault, *Cardinal Lavigerie*, 67-70.

¹⁶ Adopting the white *gandourah* dress common in Arab North Africa, the Missionaries of Africa become popularly known as the "White Fathers" and "White Sisters." I will use the names interchangeably throughout this dissertation.

day Mali to Malawi. Lavigerie's vision of the Missionaries of Africa is summarized in their initial charter.

A Society of secular priests, dedicated to the Missions of Africa, living in community, practicing the same rule, and bound to each other and to the common work by an oath to consecrate themselves to the Missions of Africa, either within the Delegation or beyond its boundaries, according to the rules of the Society and in obedience to its Superiors.¹⁷

In the final decade of his life, Lavigerie combated the international slave trade, contributed to the *First Ralliement* in France, strengthened relations with Eastern Rite Catholics, and oversaw the continued growth of the White Father missions in central Africa. He died in November 1892, surrounded by confreres from as far away as Jerusalem and Buganda and praised in Paris and Rome alike.¹⁸

If Charles Lavigerie's missiological vision could be summarized in one scriptural verse, it would be St. Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 9:22: "To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some." At the White Fathers' first general chapter meeting in 1874, Lavigerie called on his missionaries to adopt the exterior habits of the people they were trying to convert, from clothing to language to diet.¹⁹ He mandated that White Fathers speak the local vernacular exclusively within six

¹⁷ Quoted in Renault, *Cardinal Lavigerie*, 153.

¹⁸ After a century of church-state intransigence, Pope Leo XIII asked Lavigerie to begin preparing the way for a rapprochement between the Catholic Church and France's Third Republic (what became known as the "First *Ralliement*"). This effort culminated with Lavigerie's famous 1890 "toast of Algiers" in which Lavigerie, surrounded by French naval officers, raised a glass to the French Republic. Lavigerie's efforts to reconcile French Catholics with the Third Republic made him a popular Catholic figure in the halls of government. On hearing of his death, Pope Leo XIII is said to have remarked, "I loved him as a brother, as Peter loved Andrew" (Renault, *Cardinal Lavigerie*, 427).

¹⁹ Charles Lavigerie and Xavier de Montclos, *Le Cardinal Lavigerie: La Mission Universelle de L'Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1991), 94. See also Renault, *Cardinal Lavigerie*, 107-08.

months of arrival. In part due to such expectations, the White Fathers became some of the pre-eminent linguists of modern Africa.²⁰

Adaptation also included transcending loyalty to the land of one's birth. While by no means unfriendly to French colonial ambitions, Lavigerie reminded his missionaries that their primary identity should be one of "Christian" and "apostle" rather than "Frenchman" or "European."²¹ He also argued that it would be "absurd" to educate African students in the same way as French students. "These are Negroes of the African interior, which one must elevate in a way which offers them the greatest possible utility to their compatriots, and not as children destined to live in France."²² Like Libermann, De Jacobis, and Comboni, Lavigerie also shared a strong commitment to developing local clergy, going so far as to initiate a new congregation of lay doctor-catechists. His openness to cultural adaptation thus reflected both a spirit of colonial paternalism and a relatively optimistic anthropology. For Lavigerie, the death-knell of the missions would not be polygamy or idolatry, but rather Jansenist expectations for a pure church.²³

After witnessing the withering of his early Algerian missions among impoverished orphans, Lavigerie became a committed devotee of top-down evangelization. For Lavigerie, converting rulers and chiefs would facilitate the rapid growth of Christianity and allow the faith to develop deep roots within a local culture. For this reason Lavigerie also insisted on a four-year catechumenate, leaving ample time for the in-depth formation necessary for the

²⁰ Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 281; Renault, *Cardinal Lavigerie*, 239.

²¹ Lavigerie and Montclos, *Le Cardinal Lavigerie*, 94. Minnaert sees Lavigerie's "French spirit" as bordering on "chauvinistic patriotism." He notes that despite Lavigerie's efforts to internationalize the congregation, the Missionaries of Africa remained 60% French in 1900 (S. Minnaert, *Premier Voyage de Mgr Hirth*, 100).

²² Lavigerie and Montclos, *Le Cardinal Lavigerie*, 104.

²³ *Ibid.*, 103. The legacy of the 17th-century Jansenist controversy remained with the 19th-century French missions; Lavigerie was constantly warning his zealous missionaries against the temptation of rigorism.

successful implanting of Christianity in African soil.²⁴ Yet while emphasizing rigorous formation, Lavigerie also conveyed surprising flexibility on key ethical questions like polygamy.²⁵ His emphasis on communal rather than individual conversion also explains why he became so deeply involved in eradicating social sins like slavery and why the White Fathers became such devoted purveyors of education, medical care, social services, and indigenous culture. After seeing his North African Christian villages marginalized in the broader community, he would never again underestimate the importance of social norms and elite opinion. As he instructed his first caravan of missionaries traveling to central Africa, “Once the chiefs convert, all the rest will follow after them.”²⁶ Here we may recognize *realpolitik* as the reverse side of adaptation.

For all of his rhetorical commitment to cultural adaptation, Lavigerie shared his generation’s commitment to civilizing and transforming Africans through the introduction of European art, trade, and religion.²⁷ While he favored working through local leaders whenever possible, he saw colonial protection as critical to suppressing the slave trade and protecting missionaries from local persecution. Like many of his Catholic contemporaries, Lavigerie also traced any so-called civil quality in European civilization to Europe’s embrace of Christianity, a commitment that appeared increasingly tenuous in the late 19th century. The Rwanda missions did not begin until seven years after Lavigerie’s death, but his emphases on

²⁴ Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 474.

²⁵ “Polygamy is not contrary to the natural law, since Moses permitted it, so one should not force the prince to renounce his wives before baptism” (Charles Lavigerie, “Lettre au R.P. Livinhac et aux missionnaires du Nyanza (2),” 1 April 1880,” in Charles Lavigerie and A.G. Hamman, *Écrits d’Afrique: Lettres chrétiennes* 3, (Paris: B. Grasset, 1966), 196).

²⁶ Lavigerie, “Premières instructions aux Pères Blancs de l’Afrique équatoriale (1878),” in Lavigerie and Hamman, *Écrits d’Afrique*, 154.

²⁷ Lavigerie and Montclos, *Le Cardinal Lavigerie*, 99.

top-down conversion, Christian formation, cultural adaptation, and the mission's civilizing role would be keenly felt in the years to come.

2. Lessons from Buganda: mass conversions, martyrs & political conflict

Lavigerie's vision for the White Fathers was not the only major influence on the early Catholic missions in Rwanda. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Buganda missions in what is now south-central Uganda served as the shining success story and implicit model for other White Father communities in Africa. Buganda bordered Rwanda and shared Rwanda's strong monarchical tradition and political centralization. If Lavigerie took his inspiration from the ancient catechumenate and early medieval monasteries, Buganda inspired early White Fathers' dreams of mass conversions in Rwanda.

By the time Catholic and Protestant missionaries arrived in Buganda in 1878-79, the region had undergone a mild Islamization and economic modernization stemming from Buganda's contacts with Zanzibari traders from the East African coast. Mutesa, Buganda's *kabaka* or king, viewed the competing Catholic and Anglican missionaries as French and British emissaries, and he expertly played off their rivalries in hopes of discerning the intentions of the encroaching European powers.²⁸ As with the Rwandan court's reaction to European leaders after 1900, Mutesa saw European missionaries as potential allies in his efforts to resist colonial military agents and suppress local rivalries.²⁹ The missionaries proved impotent in this regard, failing to cultivate economic relations between Buganda and

²⁸ This reflected Mutesa's style of politics, a style quite similar to that of Rwanda's Mwami Musinga discussed below. As John Rowe writes, "Mutesa ruled by means of a balancing of interest groups, rather than awarding any one exclusive power and privilege" (John Rowe, "Mutesa and the Missionaries: Church and State in Pre-colonial Buganda," in *Christian Missionaries and the State in the Third World*, eds. Holger B. Hansen and Michael Twaddle (Athens, OH: James Currey/Ohio University Press, 2002), 63.

²⁹ Rowe, "Mutesa and the Missionaries," 52-54; Holger B. Hansen, *Mission, Church and State in a Colonial Setting: Uganda 1890-1925* (London: Heinemann, 1984), 6-17.

their home countries. This reflected a crucial difference between Ugandan and Rwandan mass evangelization movements. Introduced before the advent of British colonialism, Christianity and especially Catholicism were never as intricately connected with the colonial project in Uganda as in Rwanda, where Catholic missionaries arrived in the company of German soldiers.

Even as Mutesa distanced himself from Christian missionaries, young elites at his court flocked to the missions. Simon Lourdel and his fellow White Fathers were so impressed with the quality of the young Catholic postulants that they proceeded to baptize several lay leaders after only one year of formation, breaking with Lavigerie's instructions concerning the requisite four-year catechumenate.³⁰ This confidence would be vindicated when Mutesa expelled foreign missionaries from Buganda in 1882, leaving the nascent Catholic communities in the hands of local lay leaders. Far from disintegrating, Catholic and Protestant communities alike grew rapidly under the leadership of local elites, laying the roots for the more extensive expansion of Christianity in Buganda in the 1890s.

By the mid-1880s there were strong Anglican and Catholic parties at the new Kabaka Mwanga's court. In late 1885 Mwanga turned resolutely against the Christians, suspecting their connections with European powers and frustrated with their unprecedented refusals to indulge his sexual advances. In October, Mwanga ordered the execution of the Anglican Bishop James Hannington as his caravan approached the borders of his Buganda kingdom. When this failed to stem the Christian tide, he unleashed more widespread attacks

³⁰ Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 375-76.

on Christian nobles in May and June of 1886.³¹ This persecution did not rival the crackdowns in 17th-century Japan, 19th-century Madagascar, or even 1870s Buganda, but the steadfast and joyful witness of court page Charles Lwanga and his companions became locally renowned.³² The “Uganda Martyrs” developed a global cult with Pope Benedict XV’s 1920 beatification of twenty of the martyrs as the first sub-Saharan African saints.

While Anglican and Catholic missionaries showed little tolerance for each other, their converts did not immediately inherit the age-old denominational and national rivalries between Britain and France. After the 1886 persecutions subsided, the parties even joined forces as Muslims, adherents of traditional religion, and Christians battled for political supremacy. Relations quickly soured, however, culminating with the 1892 Battle of Mengo in which British soldiers helped the Anglican party defeat the more numerous Catholics. The British subsequently divided territory according to a *cuius regio, eius religio* principle – the local chief’s religious preference would determine which denomination could establish itself in a particular region. Partly due to these political divisions, Uganda’s intra-Christian struggle became one of the fiercest in early 20th-century Africa.³³

³¹ Ibid, 378-81. For a dated but still reliable study, see J.F. Faupel, *African Holocaust: The Story of the Uganda Martyrs* (New York: P.J. Kennedy, 1962).

³² For example, Mutesa’s 1875-76 crackdown on Muslim chiefs and their followers was far more vicious than his son Mwanga’s more notorious Christian persecutions in the 1880s. While Mutesa killed over 1,000 Muslims, Mwanga executed around 100 Christians (cf. Isichei, *History of Christianity in Africa*, 147). On the rapid growth and vicious suppression of Catholic missions in Japan, see Charles R. Boxer, *The Christian Century in Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1951); George Ellison, *Deus Destroyed: The Image of Christianity in Early Modern Japan* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973); Andrew Ross, *A Vision Betrayed: The Jesuits in Japan and China, 1542-1742* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1994). Lasting over 25 years under Queen Ranavalona I (1835-61), the Madagascar persecutions were among the worst in 19th-century Africa. Like Uganda, Madagascar also became the home of thriving Anglican and Catholic communities. It is not insignificant that the first two African Catholic bishops of the 20th century came from Uganda (Joseph Kiwanuka) and Madagascar (Ignace Ramarosandratana). (cf. Klaus Koschorke, et al., *A History of Christianity in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, 1450-1990: A Documentary Sourcebook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2007), 198-200; Baur, *2000 Years*, 497-500; Isichei, *History of Christianity in Africa*, 150-52).

³³ Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 391-95.

Throughout the 1890s, Anglican and Catholic communities grew rapidly in Uganda. By 1910 a vast majority of local chiefs and nearly half the Buganda population (some 300,000 people) had converted to Christianity.³⁴ Ganda catechists spread into surrounding territories, sharing the gospel of Christianity and Ganda culture in an imperialistic mix not unlike their European counterparts.³⁵ Anglican and White Father missionaries marveled at the maturity and growth of the young churches even as they lamented the political and religious divisions in Uganda.

In summary, the Buganda model was one of mass conversion led by youthful Christian elites. Missionaries initially targeted the king but learned to work around royal intransigence by recruiting young elites open to Christianity's modernizing project. Martyrdom, persecution, and denominational competition helped foster the early growth of Christianity. For all of the successes, Anglican and Catholic missionaries lamented the extent of religious and political division. Because of this, the Catholic missionaries who moved from Uganda to Rwanda in the early 1900s obsessed over potential religious rivals. Their commitment to elite conversion was also tempered by a certain ambivalence concerning the role of state politics in Christian mission. For some, the marginalized masses appeared as a suitable audience for a gospel message that had proclaimed "blessed are you poor, for the kingdom of God is yours" (Luke 6:20). The question of whether to follow Lavigerie's vision of top-down conversion or to build instead a more egalitarian church of the poor would remain one of the central issues facing the first generation of Rwandan missionaries.

³⁴ Isichei, *History of Christianity*, 150.

³⁵ For a detailed study of the early growth of Christianity in Uganda, see M. Louise Pirouet, *Black Evangelists: The Spread of Christianity in Uganda 1891-1914* (London: Rex Collings, 1978).

B. Catholic missions in Rwanda, 1900-1950

After a mixed record in the late 19th century, Christian missions began to lay much deeper roots across Africa during the first decades of the 20th century. This growth was particularly marked on the Catholic side. By 1910, the overall Catholic missionary population in Africa reached 6,000, surpassing the Protestant missionary population for the first time.³⁶ The White Fathers stood at the heart of this expansion, nearly doubling in the decade following the death of their founder.³⁷ Local conversions were also growing. While there were only seven million baptized African Catholics in 1914, the upward trajectory was notable, especially in areas of strong colonial influence like Uganda, South Africa, and Nigeria.³⁸

While the Christian churches had a relatively late start in Rwanda – the first White Father missions began almost a generation after their Ugandan counterparts – they too would see remarkable growth during the first half of the 20th century. Having considered the theological and historical antecedents which shaped the White Fathers prior to their arrival in Rwanda, the rest of this chapter will take up the story Rwandan Catholicism between 1900 and 1950, focusing in particular on Catholic evangelization practices, church-state relations, and missionary views of the Hutu-Tutsi question.

³⁶ Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 419.

³⁷ At the time of Lavigerie's 1892 death, there were 234 Missionaries of Africa. By 1900 there were over 470, and the congregation would nearly double again to 900 in 1914 (Minnaert, *Premier Voyage de Mgr Hirth*, 104; Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa*, 235).

³⁸ Philip Jenkins, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 46. Jenkins notes that the number of African Catholics doubled between 1914 and 1938. In 2000 the African Catholic population stood at 140 million, or roughly 40% of the continent's 360 million Christians.

1. The initial colonial encounter: Germany's arrival in Rwanda

Unlike its neighbors in Buganda and Tanganyika, Rwanda resisted colonial encroachment until the end of the 19th century.³⁹ The kingdom had never entered into the regional East African trading system, avoiding entanglement with the Zanzibari slave trade that ravaged the region in the latter decades of the 1800s. Rwanda had developed a militaristic regional reputation under Mwami Rwabugiri, and his unexpected death in 1895 left a power vacuum at the Rwandan court. His chosen successor, Rutarindwa, lost favor after suffering military defeat at the hands of a Congolese-Belgian force at Shangi in 1896. Leaders of the Abanyiginya's rival clan, the Abega, staged a successful *coup d'état*, executing Rutarindwa in a bloody court battle and placing fifteen-year-old Musinga on the throne in February 1897 under the close tutelage of his mother, Kanjogera, and his uncles Kabare and Ruhinankiko. In the long term, Musinga's uncertain succession claims would make him highly suspicious of rivals inside and outside of the court.⁴⁰

Several weeks after his elevation to the throne, a small German military force marched into Musinga's court, and Musinga soon accepted the Germans' offer of a protectorate. Germany's arrival in the country came at the peak of the thirty-year "scramble for Africa" inaugurated by the Congress of Berlin of 1885.⁴¹ Although initially more

³⁹ Iliffe sees Rwanda as the most isolationist country in Eastern Africa in the late 1800s (cf. Iliffe, *Africans*, 183.)

⁴⁰ On this transitional period in Rwandan history, see Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news: Rwanda under Musinga, 1896-1931*. Diss. Yale University (1972), 12-26; Justin Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme et la société rwandaise, 1900-62* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1991), 140-49; David Newbury, *The Land Beyond the Mists: Essays on Identity and Authority in Precolonial Congo and Rwanda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2009), 334-35.

⁴¹ In an effort to defend Germany's commercial interests while establishing clearer guidelines for European colonial protectorates in Africa, Otto von Bismarck convened the Congress of Berlin in 1884-85. The Congress

skeptical than Britain or France concerning the financial burdens of colonization, Germany in the 1890s established colonies in southwestern Africa (Namibia) and eastern Africa (Tanganyika and Burundi). Rwanda's military reputation preceded itself, and German officials were anxious to outflank their Belgian and British rivals in forming an alliance with one of the most powerful kingdoms in the region.

More puzzling is why the historically isolationist and militaristic Rwandans did not resist German overtures. Several explanations can be offered. First, in light of the Rwandan army's 1896 defeat at Shangi, Musinga and his advisors recognized the superior firepower of the Europeans and determined that a German alliance would be preferable to Belgian conquest, securing Rwanda's vulnerable western border with Belgian Congo. Second, Musinga's own uncertain claims to the throne made the offer of German military protection particularly attractive. While agreeing to the protectorate, Musinga looked to maintain as much authority as possible within his borders. In this he achieved a modicum of success. Under the Germans, Rwandan elites retained far more political autonomy than their counterparts in other African colonies.

The German partnership proved beneficial to Musinga in other ways as well. Namely, Germany helped Musinga extend and strengthen central court authority in recalcitrant territories on Rwanda's northern, western, eastern, and southern borders. At the time of the German arrival, the heart of the Rwandan kingdom lay on a central plateau near Nyanza, the home of the Mwami's royal court. The court also administered nearby areas beyond central

recognized King Leopold's claims to the Congo Independent State, acknowledged existing French and British protectorates in southern and western Africa, and paved the way for German expansion in southwestern and eastern Africa. The European "Scramble for Africa" peaked in the 1890s and 1900s before falling off after the advent of World War I. On the Congress of Berlin and its impact in Africa, see Iliffe, *Africans*, 189-90. On how Berlin shaped Christian missions, see Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 397-420.

Rwanda, working through local Tutsi notables who served on behalf of the court. Finally, there were outlying frontier zones of weaker government influence. Particularly contested regions included the Congo-Nile border area of northwestern Rwanda, the Bushiru province in the northeast, and Bukunzi and Busozo in the southeast. Significantly, local Hutu lineage chiefs controlled all of these territories. Musinga's court also faced opposition from rival Tutsi nobles in eastern Gisaka and Kinyaga in the west. As will be discussed below, German and then Belgian military support finally enabled Rwanda's central court to achieve sovereignty over these contested regions in the 1910s and 1920s.⁴² And as we will see in the following section, European colonial power also enabled Catholic missions to gain a foothold in an initially resistant kingdom.

2. Catholic missions on the margins, 1900-1905

If colonial officials were eyeing Rwanda in the late 1890s, the same held true for Catholic missionaries. With mission stations in Buganda, Eastern Congo, Tanganyika, and Burundi, the White Fathers surrounded Rwanda geographically. After the Germans established an alliance with the Rwandan court in 1897, the White Fathers sought permission from Germany to establish an outpost in Rwanda. Limited in budget and staffing, German colonial offices saw the merit of utilizing Catholic missionaries to educate and pacify the Rwandan people, even if this would entail predominantly German Lutheran colonial officials working with predominantly French Catholic missionaries. The Germans also viewed French missionaries as less threatening than British missionaries whose political designs on the

⁴² Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda : Droit public et évolution politique, 1916-1973* (Tervuren: Musée Royale de L'Afrique Centrale, 1985), 95-100.

region were well-known.⁴³ After the Germans gave their approval in 1899, the White Fathers organized a missionary caravan under the leadership of Jean-Joseph Hirth, a French-speaking Alsatian of German descent.⁴⁴ Accompanied by German soldiers, Hirth's caravan arrived at Rwanda's royal court in Nyanza in February 1900. Fearing a possible religious curse, Mwami Musinga sent out another noble to pose as the king. Skeptical about missionary entreaties yet aware of Germany's support, Musinga agreed to a compromise option: the Catholics could establish mission stations in outlying territories but not in the immediate vicinity of Nyanza.⁴⁵ Contrary to later assumptions, however, Musinga did not immediately limit the missions to Hutu populations; this directive would come later in 1903.⁴⁶

The White Fathers set up five mission stations over the next three years, including Save and Mibirizi in the south, Zaza in the east, Nyundo in the northwest, and Rwaza in the northeast. All were strategically positioned beyond the royal capital yet within the court's sphere of influence; Musinga aimed to keep the missionaries at a distance while utilizing them to extend his own influence over restive local populations.⁴⁷ Like the Germans before them, the White Fathers were greeted as political liberators in some areas, but their religious message met with a cool reception.⁴⁸ Unlike Buganda, the White Fathers initially attracted

⁴³ C.M.L., Minnaert to Superior General, 8 March 2001. Such tensions did not disappear. German officials decided in 1907 to invite Lutheran missionaries into Rwanda to provide religious competition for the Catholics.

⁴⁴ Minnaert notes that Hirth was ably assisted by Mgr. Gerboin, a White Father with close connections to the Germans through Richard Kandt, a German settler and writer who served as governor general of Rwanda after 1907. Without Gerboin's connections, it is doubtful that the Germans would have approved the White Fathers' missionary caravan (C.M.L., Minnaert to Superior General, 8 March 2001).

⁴⁵ Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 38-40; see also Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 151-53.

⁴⁶ Stefaan Minnaert, email message to author, October 2, 2008.

⁴⁷ Bernard Lugan, "L'Eglise Catholique au Rwanda 1900-1976," *Etudes Rwandaises* XI (March 1978): 69-70; Claudine Vidal, "Colonisation et décolonisation du Rwanda : La question tutsi-hutu," *Revue française d'études politiques africaines* 91 (1973) : 32-33.

⁴⁸ In their initial march through eastern Rwanda in 1897, the Germans had been welcomed enthusiastically in Gisaka, a territory where Hutu and Tutsi alike had rebelled against Court authority in the mid-1890s (cf. Marcel

only the marginalized to their missions, especially women, children, and poor Hutu and Tutsi men looking for economic patronage and political protection.

This emphasis on the poor and marginalized also reflected the missiological vision of Jean-Joseph Hirth, the leader of the first missionary caravan who served as Vicar Apostolic of the Rwandan church during its first two decades. Hirth had joined the Missionaries of Africa during Lavigerie's first recruiting efforts in the early 1870s and served in Uganda in the late 1880s and early 1890s. These experiences in the thriving but politically-unsettled Buganda missions profoundly shaped his ministry in Rwanda. After seeing Anglicans and Catholics fight a civil war in Uganda, he looked to ensure a Catholic monopoly of Christian missions and never lost his deep suspicion of Protestant missionaries.⁴⁹ While hoping for the Mwami's conversion, Hirth's Bugandan experience also revealed the dangers of a politicized church and the importance of both religious freedom and what he termed "protect(ing) the poor and feeble from the abuses of the powerful."⁵⁰ Unlike his successor Léon Classe, Hirth conveyed little ambivalence about establishing the church among the "poor suffering peasants" who showed openness to the Christian gospel. Significantly, Hirth generally described such poor peasants as Hutu while associating the Tutsi with the royal court.⁵¹ This in turn gave rise to what the Rwandan historian Paul Rutayisire has called the "stereotype of the completely devout Hutu."⁵² While Hirth opposed forced conversion or political

D'Hertefelt, "Myth and Political Acculturation in Rwanda," in Rhodes Livingstone Institute and Allie A. Dubb, *Myth in Modern Africa; The Fourteenth Conference Proceedings* (1960), 119).

⁴⁹ The original motivation for Hirth's journey into Rwanda was a rumor that the Anglicans were about to enter the country under British patronage (Minnaert, *Premier Voyage de Mgr Hirth*, 303; C.M.L., Minnaert to Superior General, 8 March 2001).

⁵⁰ Minnaert, *Premier Voyage de Mgr. Hirth*, 314.

⁵¹ Ibid., 393.

⁵² Paul Rutayisire, « Rapports entre l'église Catholique et l'état Rwandais pendant la période coloniale, » *Cahiers Lumière et Société : Histoire III*, no. 7 (Oct. 1997) : 19.

disruption, he saw social development as necessary for evangelizing poor Hutu and for Christianizing Rwandan society. This also seemed to underwrite Hirth's intertwining of Christianity and civilization. In Hirth's words, "we should make the blacks in the manner of being human before bringing about their Christianization."⁵³ For all of the later emphasis on top-down conversion of the Tutsi elites, we see in these earliest days a strong focus on evangelizing from below. These two competing approaches – one following Lavigerie's emphasis on top-down conversion, the other building a more egalitarian church of the poor – would remain with the Rwandan church throughout the 20th century.

During its first five years, the latter tendency seemed dominant. While Hirth shared his colleagues' tendency to juxtapose class and ethnicity, the mission stations themselves embodied a certain pan-ethnic egalitarianism, especially under the leadership of Alphonse Brard at Save mission in southern Rwanda. For noted Rwandan historian Gamaliel Mbonimana, this "phenomenon of (pan-ethnic) friendship between baptized people" existed across multiple Rwandan mission posts.⁵⁴ These early converts were also looking to the White Fathers as political patrons. Brard and several other missionaries obliged them, advocating for them in court against the exactions of local Tutsi notables (*abaaatware*).

Contrary to the recent arguments of Timothy Longman, however, Brard's legacy was not just one of cultivating a pan-ethnic church of the poor.⁵⁵ He also developed a reputation for using force to keep Rwandan children in school and their parents in mission stations.⁵⁶

⁵³ Quoted in Minnaert, *Première Voyage de Mgr Hirth*, 291.

⁵⁴ Gamaliel Mbonimana, "Ethnies et Église catholique: Le remodelage de la société par l'école missionnaire (1900-1931)," *Cahiers lumière et société* 1 (1995), 55). Mbonimana challenges Linden and others for speaking of a "Hutu Church" in the early years of the 20th century, preferring to call this a "poor church."

⁵⁵ Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 46-48.

⁵⁶ Rutayisire, *La christianisation du Rwanda*, 29.

His heavy-handed instincts were only reinforced by the proselytizing tactics of zealous Ugandan (Ganda) catechists who assisted the White Fathers at many Rwandan mission stations. The missions' expropriation of land and increasing usage of forced labor further alienated local populations, leading to attacks on several Catholic outposts in northern Rwanda in 1904.⁵⁷

Hirth acted to assuage both German authorities and the Nyanza court by reprimanding Brard and ultimately expelling him from Rwanda in 1906.⁵⁸ He also replaced the Ganda with indigenous Rwandan catechists, reiterated the mission's official opposition to forced conversion, and restated Catholic support for Musinga. Despite Hirth's actions, these would be tense years for the embryonic Catholic mission in Rwanda. Powerful voices in Nyanza called for their ouster, and the Germans sided with the royal court in several legal and land disputes with the missionaries. Fearful of political retribution against the *inyangarwanda* – the popular name given to early Christian converts which meant “haters or repudiators of Rwanda” – the Hutu and *petit* Tutsi who had frequented the missions now kept their distance.⁵⁹ The contrast with 1880s Buganda is telling. Six years into the Buganda mission, a young church was thriving without missionary tutelage. In 1906 the Rwandan missionaries were struggling to find any converts at all.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Ian Linden (with Jane Linden), *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 54.

⁵⁸ The following narrative draws on Des Forges, *Defeat is the Only Bad News*, 63-78; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 32-67; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 63-65.

⁵⁹ Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 99.

⁶⁰ De Lacger notes that there were only 1,108 baptized Christians in 1905. (cf. Louis de Lacger (with Pierre Nothomb), *Ruanda* (Kabgayi : 1961), 442).

3. A poor church seeks power, 1906-1914

The year 1905-06 marked a turning point in the early history of the Catholic Church in Rwanda. Mwami Musinga relented and allowed the White Fathers to establish a mission station at Kabgayi in central Rwanda, only 50 kilometers from the royal capital at Nyanza. Kabgayi would become the center of Catholic life throughout Rwanda's colonial history. In addition, Léon Classe – an upper-class French missionary who had arrived in Rwanda in 1901 – replaced Alphonse Brard in 1906 as superior of the Save mission station in southern Rwanda. Classe spent his first five years in Rwanda ministering at the Rwaza and Nyundo stations in the Hutu-dominated north. Unlike Brard and Hirth, Rwanda was his first mission posting; Classe never served in Uganda, Tanzania, or elsewhere in East Africa.⁶¹ He became known for his opposition to forced conversion and for supporting Musinga's territorial claims in a politically contentious region, urging local Christians at Rwaza mission in northern Rwanda to show their "obedience to the chiefs." He also had a reputation for maintaining high standards for baptism.⁶²

In 1907 Classe became vicar general of the Rwandan missions under Bishop Hirth, working out of the new Kabgayi mission station. Classe took a more accommodating line towards the royal court than many of his fellow White Fathers in part because of his fears that Rwandan elites would otherwise embrace Protestantism. While Classe and Hirth stood by each other in the years to come, Hirth remained warier of the risks of church-state

⁶¹ Stefaan Minnaert argues that this explains Classe's "doctrinal" support for Lavigerie's theories of top-down conversion. Namely, Classe had not experienced the risks of elite conversion like the Buganda missionaries (C.M.L., Minnaert to Superior General of the White Fathers, 8 March 2001, 2).

⁶² C.M.L., Léon Classe, « Batutsi et Bahutu, » [c. 1905-06], 184. Rutayisire, *La christianisation du Rwanda*, 30-31, 92. Historians are beginning to scrutinize the authenticity of some of Classe's claims in the Rwaza mission diaries, including his accounts of missionary self-defense from local Hutu attacks. Minnaert thinks that Classe himself may have initiated the violence (Stefaan Minnaert, email message to author, 2 October 2008).

cohabitation, focusing instead on lobbying for religious freedom and ensuring missionary independence. In contrast, Classe unequivocally embraced Lavigerie's goal of spreading Christianity through elite conversion, fearing that Tutsi elites were dismissing Christianity because of "our ideas of justice, our defense of the rights of the poor."⁶³ As Classe said shortly before becoming the leader of Save mission, "our dear mission...can look forward to some dark days if we take no interest in the apostolate to the ruling class, if, by our acts, we give ground for the opinion that the Catholic faith is that of the poor."⁶⁴ Classe's arrival and the weakening of anti-Catholic forces at court marked the first tentative rapprochement between Nyanza and the Catholic missions, symbolized by a 1907 meeting in which Musinga's pagan uncle Kabare shared sorghum beer with a Christian neophyte.⁶⁵

The following two years saw both the strengthening of German colonial rule and the arrival of the Catholics' first religious rivals. Richard Kandt, a medical doctor and one of the first European settlers in Rwanda, began serving as German colonial resident in 1908. Kandt raised the German profile in Rwanda in the years preceding World War I while simultaneously strengthening the royal court's control over Tutsi notables in the east and Hutu chiefs in the north and west. The colonial office invited German Lutherans to establish new missions in 1907 and 1908, offering the White Fathers a long-feared Christian rival. Musinga lost no time in playing off the Europeans' religious antagonisms even as he remained far more concerned with their political motivations.⁶⁶

⁶³ C.M.L., Léon Classe, « Batutsi et Bahutu, » 185. See also Rutayisire, *La christianisation du Rwanda*, 10-11, 41, 49.

⁶⁴ C.M.L., Léon Classe, « Batutsi et Bahutu, » 186.

⁶⁵ Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: 2000 Years of History*, trans. Scot Straus (New York: Zone, 2003), 254; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 84.

⁶⁶ Cf. Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 118-26; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 73-85; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 167-69.

Musinga's fears were not without merit. While Hirth encouraged missionaries to disengage from local political conflicts, this proved difficult in practice, especially in the restive northwest region of Rwanda where Kandt himself praised the missions for "contributing in large part to the pacification of the district."⁶⁷ Such political engagement reached a nadir with the shooting death of the White Father Paulin Loupias in 1910. Loupias was killed while attempting to mediate tense negotiations between Musinga's representatives and Lukara, a northern Hutu chief rebelling against Musinga's rule. Some accounts allege that Loupias precipitated his own shooting, losing his temper and threatening Lukara with a gun.⁶⁸ The death of the White Father missionary led to a brutal German scorched earth policy in the north. When another Hutu of mixed descent, Ndungutse, revolted in 1912, the White Fathers defended Musinga's claims and actively discouraged Christians from joining in the uprising.

In the meantime, the Catholic Church in Rwanda was growing at a slow but steady rate, counting 10,000 baptized members in 1914. This outnumbered the 3,000 Christians in Burundi where Catholic missions had faced more vociferous opposition from the state, but it fell far short of the estimated 100,000 Ugandan Christians in 1914.⁶⁹ As a sign of the Holy See's commitment to the region, Propaganda Fide created a new Vicariate of Kivu in 1911 out of a previous vicariate which had stretched from Uganda in the north to Tanganyika in the east to Belgian Congo in the west.⁷⁰ The White Fathers' rhetorical commitment to

⁶⁷ Kandt quoted in De Lager, *Ruanda*, 426.

⁶⁸ For more details on the killing of Loupias and Ndungutse's revolt, see Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 88, 105-08; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 177-94. Shorter notes that Loupias was the only White Father to suffer a violent death in Africa during the entire 1892-1914 period (Shorter, *Cross and Flag*, 115).

⁶⁹ René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 47; Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 213; Shorter, *Cross and Flag*, 236).

⁷⁰ Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 23.

adaptation was becoming a reality under the leadership of Hirth, the “father of the East African seminaries” who made the indigenization of the Catholic priesthood one of his top pastoral priorities.⁷¹ Hirth established major and minor seminaries in Rwanda during the first decade of the 1900s, enrolling both Hutu and Tutsi youth. Founded in 1913, the indigenous Benedikira sisters grew rapidly and spread to Uganda and elsewhere in the surrounding region.

On the eve of World War I, the tenuous early years of the Rwandan missions were giving rise to something more permanent. Uncertainties remained, however. Bishop Hirth focused on the ordination of native clergy yet failed to develop Catholic schools, the training grounds for a future generation of Catholic elites. Classe’s cultivating of the Rwandan nobility was beginning to bear fruit as royal pages came for secret instruction at Kabgayi.⁷² Despite Classe’s efforts to nurture better relations with the royal court, however, Musinga and his allies remained wary of the White Fathers and appeared to be building closer relations with the White Fathers’ German Lutheran rivals. Musinga was in his strongest position since taking power in 1897, controlling more territory than even his legendary father Rwabugiri. Yet Musinga continued to fear the encroachment of German rule and potential challengers to his own ambiguous claims to the throne. The Germans themselves were divided over whether to work through Musinga or implement more direct colonial rule in Rwanda.⁷³ In the midst of these competing local agendas, global history intervened.

⁷¹ Shorter, *Cross and Flag*, 53.

⁷² C.M.L., Classe to Livinhac, 28 April 1911.

⁷³ For more on Rwandan church-state affairs on the eve of World War I, see Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 190-97; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 109-13

4. World War I, the Belgian takeover, and missionary divisions, 1914-1922

Africa's Great Lakes region experienced some of the worst effects of the First World War on the continent, in part because the German territories of Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanganyika bordered Belgian Congo and the British territories of Kenya and Uganda. The burden of war was keenly felt by Rwanda's civilian population. Porterage and food requisitions rose, and Rwanda in 1915 suffered through its worst famine in nearly 20 years. Some mission stations experienced 50% mortality rates during this famine.⁷⁴ Despite Hirth's commitment to missionary neutrality, the Germans suspected the loyalties of French White Fathers and ordered non-German missionaries to stay 70 kilometers from the Congolese border.⁷⁵ Many priests were called up to serve in their respective national armies, and mission activity disappeared within several months of the outbreak of war. In contrast to the European theater, however, World War I ended relatively quickly in Rwanda. Germany retreated from Rwanda in early 1916, and the Belgians marched across the Congolese border and captured Nyanza in March.⁷⁶ A new epoch had begun.

Far from welcoming the Belgians into Rwanda, Musinga feared the implications of this shift in the European balance of power. He had entered into the original German protectorate in 1897 to fend off Belgian influence. After the 1914 outbreak of war, Musinga mobilized Rwanda on behalf of the Germans. Stories from Belgian Congo convinced him

⁷⁴ Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 261; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 128. The Rumanura famine would be followed by two other colonial-era famines in the late 1920s and the early 1940s.

⁷⁵ Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 98.

⁷⁶ Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 123-26; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 199-204.

that Belgium would exercise more onerous rule than Germany, and he feared – rightly as it turned out – that the Belgians would depose him in favor of a more pliable monarch.⁷⁷

While the Belgians flirted with direct military rule in 1916-17, they concluded that it would make more financial and political sense to follow the German model of indirect rule.⁷⁸ For the next decade, the Belgians proved to be as supportive of Musinga as their German predecessors. The inherent contradictions of indirect colonial rule – propping up local authorities while implementing European notions of modernity, civilization, and ethnicity, or attempting to reify tradition in the context of unprecedented modernization and social change – became ever more apparent.⁷⁹ In this sense, the Belgian colonial official Louis Franck's 1920 commentary on Rwanda captured the paternalistic and often contradictory goals of indirect rule. While claiming that Belgium should respect indigenous institutions, Franck also insisted that Belgium should modify these institutions to enhance economic productivity. And while reiterating the Belgian commitment to protecting the Hutu from arbitrary injustice, he also argued that Belgium should resist an "egalitarian temptation" which might disturb the ancient political institutions established by the Tutsi. Achieving what Filip Reyntjens has termed a "double consensus" of both the rulers and the ruled would prove elusive.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ To understand better why stories from Belgian Congo raised such fears, see Adam Hochschild's *King Leopold's Ghost* (New York: Mariner, 1998). Marvin D. Markovitz picks up the Congolese story after Leopold's era, providing a thorough overview of colonial church-state relations in *Cross and Sword: The Political Role of Christian Missions in the Belgian Congo 1908-1960* (Stanford: Hoover, 1973).

⁷⁸ The "indirect" nature of German rule should not be exaggerated. As Reyntjens notes, the Germans pacified the country, opened it to international commerce, introduced Christian missions, abolished slavery, and started a new currency (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 38).

⁷⁹ Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 236-37.

⁸⁰ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 65-66, 75.

Relieved by the end of the war and the prospect of restarting their missions, the White Fathers were also grateful for what the church historian Louis de Lacger termed a “Catholic and Latin” victory.⁸¹ Facing Lutheran encroachment and German intransigence in the immediate pre-war years, Catholics welcomed the far more accommodating Belgian power. While Belgium’s 20th-century domestic politics were marked by a degree of anti-clerical tension, this metropolitan struggle did not influence the mission field in the early 1900s. Rather, secularists and churchmen alike saw Catholic missions as the best means of civilizing and pacifying the African, ensuring the economic productivity of the colony and the humanitarian uplift of a benighted people.⁸² Catholic missions would enjoy a *de facto* establishment in Rwanda well into the 1950s.

Belgian pressure also began to shift the political calculus in favor of the Catholic missions. Under orders from Belgian military officials, Musinga in 1917 issued a decree on religious freedom which officially legalized Christian missions in Rwanda.⁸³ Musinga also relinquished the right to impose the death penalty, ceding significant judicial authority to the Belgian courts. The Mwami’s loss of the right over life and death should not be underestimated, as this had been crucial to his legitimacy as a semi-divine religious figure. Combined with later Belgian proscriptions of traditional court rituals, what Reyntjens terms the “secularization of Rwandan society” helped pave the way for the growth of the Catholic

⁸¹ De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 463.

⁸² On Belgian church-state relations, see Martin Conway, “Belgium,” in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, eds. Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996): 187-218; Emmanuel Gerard, “Religion, Class and Language: The Catholic Party in Belgium,” in *Political Catholicism in Europe 1918-45*, eds. Wolfram Kaiser and Helmut Wohnout (New York: Routledge, 2004): 94-115; Roger Aubert, *150 ans de Vie des Eglises* (Brussels: Legraine, 1982).

⁸³ Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 220.

Church in Rwanda.⁸⁴ The first elite Tutsi postulants, including several of Musinga's relatives, arrived at the Catholic missions at the end of 1917. The first Rwandan priests – both Hutu – were also ordained in 1917, demonstrating how the church had become an avenue of upward mobility for select Hutu elites.⁸⁵

Yet for all of these positive developments, the missions were also experiencing great strains in the immediate post-war period.⁸⁶ Missionaries based in Burundi accused Hirth and Classe of focusing all of their energies and resources on Rwanda. For their part, missionaries in Rwanda criticized Hirth as a remote administrator obsessed with indigenous ordinations and attacked Classe as a heavy-handed micromanager. Hirth stood by Classe and defended his seminary policies, blaming his declining health for his inattention to details. Classe attempted to stay above the fray. In 1920, however, the White Fathers recalled Classe to Europe for consultations, and Hirth resigned the vicariate two months later. It remained to be seen who would lead the Rwandan church into its next decade.

5. Classe's tragic triumph: Ethnic discourse & the Christian *coup d'état*, 1922-1931

The "Scramble for Africa" that followed the 1885 Berlin Congress collapsed under the weight of colonial overextension and nationalistic rivalries which culminated in the global conflagration of World War I.⁸⁷ The post-war League of Nations acknowledged the principle of national self-determination, especially for former German and Ottoman Empire

⁸⁴ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 81-85, 171; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 308-09.

⁸⁵ Fortunatus Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda 1900-1959* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), 159; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 166; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 131-34.

⁸⁶ This section draws on Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 180-86; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 138-39; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 265; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 120-31.

⁸⁷ Cf. Hastings, *Church in Africa*, 400-13, 541-43; Iliffe, *Africans*, 189-211.

colonies. Such principles did not yet apply to Central Africa, however. Rather, the League classified Rwanda as a Mandate B territory, handing the territory over to Belgium on the condition that Belgium guaranteed freedom of religion and commercial access, maintained public order and good morals, and administered the territory “to the benefit of the population.”⁸⁸

This mission faced its first major test when Great Britain annexed the eastern province of Gisaka in 1922. Gisaka had a long history of political tensions with the Nyanza court, and most local elites welcomed the economic opportunities and relative political autonomy offered by British rule. Musinga on the other hand saw this as the first step in the dismemberment of his kingdom and implored the Belgians to preserve the territorial integrity of his country. After blustering on both sides – and thanks in part to a crucial intervention from Léon Classe in favor of Musinga – the British withdrew in 1923.⁸⁹

Classe’s intervention marked his return to prominence after a brief exile in the political and ecclesial wilderness.⁹⁰ After his 1920 recall to Europe, Classe spent two years consulting with his superiors, writing about Rwanda, and dialoguing with Belgian colonial officials. He managed to restore his reputation and was consecrated to the episcopate in 1922, returning in triumph to head the newly-established Rwanda vicariate. Determined to expand Catholic missions, increase the local church’s financial assets, and recruit Tutsi elites to Catholicism, Classe also looked to establish a Catholic religious monopoly in Rwanda. In this vein, Classe opposed British interests in Gisaka since he feared that British inroads would advance the prospects of the Anglican Church. He also convinced the Belgian

⁸⁸ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 43.

⁸⁹ Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 182-94.

⁹⁰ This section draws on the more detailed presentation in Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 235-90.

administration to lower the required distance between Catholic and Protestant missions from ten to five kilometers. This mission in turn entailed a deeper indigenization of clergy and religious. Between 1922 and Classe's death in 1945, Rwandan clergy grew from five to sixty. The number of Benebikira sisters surpassed 120 during the same period. In addition, Classe proved to be a strong supporter of both lay catechists and the local branch of Catholic Action, *Bakura b'inama*.⁹¹

Classe also shifted the church's relations with Rwanda's indigenous leaders. If Hirth discouraged his missionaries from disrupting the Tutsi hierarchy, Classe went a step further and established the church as a close ally of Musinga's court. As noted above, Classe adopted this view very soon after arriving in Rwanda, parting ways with Alphonse Brard's efforts to establish Christianity among the poor and marginalized. Positing that "in this country, as in Uganda, the King is the soul of the country," Classe argued in 1911 that failing to cultivate chiefs would "give Catholicism a situation of inferiority and slavery, condemning it to be forever taken with the difficulties of oppression."⁹² In the 1920s Classe defended Musinga's claims to Gisaka, opposing British rule and supporting the "rights of Musinga and the Batutsi" in these regions. Classe also supported the Belgian and Tutsi pacification campaigns across the northern and western regions of Rwanda. This often entailed replacing

⁹¹ Growing out of early 20th-century Belgian Catholic efforts to break the link between industrialization and secularization, Catholic Action aimed to "evangelize within the heartlands of Catholicism, to regain for the Catholic Church those sections of modern industrial societies which had fallen victim to secularization along the way" (Gerd-Rainer Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology: The First Wave (1924-1959)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 20). Rejecting the late 19th and early 20th-century emphasis on Catholic political parties, Catholic Action looked to re-Christianize modern society through social associations of committed Catholic laity. Embraced by Pope Pius XI after 1922, the movement spread across Europe and areas of European influence, gaining particular traction in Latin America. Horn's *Western European Liberation Theology* offers one of the most thorough recent studies of the movement. For a more critical analysis, see William T. Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), 124-150.

⁹² C.M.L., Classe to Livinhac, 28 April 1911.

local Hutu lineage heads with imported Tutsi notables, a process that Classe vociferously supported.⁹³

In this vein, Classe helped to ensure that political and class issues were analyzed through the lens of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. First, he made a broad association between “Tutsi” and “nobility,” writing in 1911 that “it is a grave error to say that the people will be Catholic without the chiefs (as) the chiefs and the people are not of the same race” and surmising in 1922 that “when we speak of the Batutsi, we think very uniquely of the great Tutsi chiefs, who constitute a very restrained aristocracy.”⁹⁴ Second, Classe argued that colonial policy should favor Tutsi chiefs as much as possible. As early as 1906 he exhorted the German administration to “augment their (Tutsi chiefs’) existing authority,” recognizing that “the more the authority of the Europeans is established in the country, the more they (the Hutu) believe in the power of the Tutsi.”⁹⁵ As noted above, Classe supported Musinga’s claims in Gisaka and northwestern Rwanda in the 1910s and 1920s. And when Belgian officials wavered in their commitment to an all-Tutsi ruling class in 1927-28, it was Classe who insisted that reinstituting Hutu chiefs would lead the country to “anti-European communism and anarchy.”⁹⁶ Even as he turned against Musinga after 1927, Classe favored a Tutsi monopoly of the *chefferies* and *sous-chefferies*, the chiefdoms and sub-chiefdoms that Belgian colonial authorities established in the 1920s. “Generally speaking, we have no chiefs

⁹³ Rutayisire, *Le Christianisation du Rwanda*, 112 ; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 194.

⁹⁴ C.M.L., Classe to Livinhac, 28 April 1911; Léon Classe, “Le Ruanda et ses habitants,” *Congo: Revue générale de la Colonie belge* I, no. 5 (May 1922) : 681. See also Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 286. By associating Tutsi exclusively with the nobility, Classe estimated in 1916 that Rwandan Tutsi comprised no more than 20,000 people. By 1922 he had raised this figure to 80,000, but his language still underplayed the large numbers of poor Tutsi.

⁹⁵ C.M.L., Léon Classe, « Batutsi et Bahutu », 184.

⁹⁶ Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 202; Gamaliel Mbonimana, “Christianisation indirecte et cristallisation des clivages ethniques au Rwanda (1925-31),” *Enquêtes et documents d'histoire africaine III* (Louvain: Centre d'histoire de l'Afrique (1978)) : 153.

who are better qualified, more intelligent, more active, more capable of appreciating progress and more fully accepted by the people than the Tutsi.”⁹⁷ To be clear, Classe favored not the older court nobles but young Tutsi elites who had been trained in Catholic schools. Openness to European modernization and Christianization were as important as ethnic heritage.⁹⁸

Under Classe’s watch, ethnic stratification grew inside the Catholic Church as well. This was most evident in the area of schooling, a pastoral priority that Classe saw as essential to determining whether “the leadership elite will be for us or against us.”⁹⁹ Whereas Hutu and Tutsi had been educated together before 1920, Classe introduced a two-tiered Catholic educational system in the 1920s. Students were segregated by ethnic group, and Tutsi received a far more rigorous course than their Hutu colleagues. This helped ensure that only Tutsi qualified for the most influential positions in the colonial administration. For Classe, Hutu children should receive an education, but it should be an education suited to those who “would have places to take in mines and farming.”¹⁰⁰

However, Classe did not categorically oppose Hutu advancement in the church. While he patronized the Tutsi-dominated Josephite priests and Benébikira sisters, he also ordained multiple Hutu to the priesthood, appointed Hutu priests and catechists to lead mission stations, and named the Hutu Gallican Bushishi as professor of the major seminary in Kabgayi. Catholic schools educated Hutu throughout the 1910s and 1920s, and the Catholic seminary remained one of the only avenues for Hutu advancement in colonial

⁹⁷ Classe quoted in Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 105 and Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 73.

⁹⁸ Classe, « Circulaire N°14, Écoles et Apostolat près des Batutsi, 15 May 1928, » in Léon Classe, *Instructions Pastorales 1922-1939* (Kabgayi : 1940) : 40-43.

⁹⁹ Classe, « Circulaire N°11, Les écoles, 16 July 1927, » in Classe, *Instructions Pastorales*, 31.

¹⁰⁰ Classe, « Circulaire N°14, Écoles et Apostolat, » in Classe, *Instructions Pastorales*, 40; Mbonimana, “Christianisation indirecte,” 139-45; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 163-64, 198.

Rwanda. Writing in the Belgian magazine *Congo* in 1922, Classe rejected the notion of inherent Tutsi intellectual superiority and hinted at the complexity of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. “I would say that the Tutsi are not, in general, more intelligent than the Hutu...Tutsi refers not to origin but social condition, a state of fortune...whoever is a chief, or is rich, will often be called Tutsi.”¹⁰¹

If anything, Classe’s rhetoric demonstrates how difficult it was to classify “Hutu” and “Tutsi,” even during the 1920s-30s period when Belgium was undertaking just such a task. In the same 1922 article, Classe wrote that “the Tutsi and the Hutu speak the same language, they have the same religion and the same customs...the Hutu are Bantu but, in the center of the country, with a certain proportion of Tutsi blood.”¹⁰² By 1935 Classe was propagating a more racist vision, writing in a widely-read *Grands Lacs* article that “the Tutsi are not Bantu, they are, if you will, Negroids – they are the African people which displays the strongest Hamitic indications.”¹⁰³ He posited differing origins for the Tutsi and Hutu, arguing that the former emigrated from Asia Minor through Ethiopia while the latter came west to east through central Africa. Even in the mid-1930s, however, Classe admitted that many Hutu “have a certain proportion of Tutsi blood” and that Rwanda’s 80,000 Tutsi “are not a pure race, and for those which fortune does not favor, alliances with female Hutu are not rare.”¹⁰⁴ Classe also continued to emphasize the political horizon that underlay the Hutu-Tutsi distinction, noting that when he used the term “Tutsi” he was speaking of “the great Tutsi chiefs” rather than the broader Tutsi population. And yet even here he recognized that

¹⁰¹ “Classe, “Le Ruanda et ses habitants,” 681; Rudakemwa, *L’évangélisation du Rwanda*, 277; Mbonimana, “Ethnies et Église catholique,” 63; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 266-67.

¹⁰² Classe, “Le Ruanda et ses habitants,” 680.

¹⁰³ Léon Classe, “Un pays et trois Races,” in *Grands Lacs* nos. 5-6 (March 1935) : 138.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

the ranks of the great chiefs included Hutu and Twa alike.¹⁰⁵ Louis de Lacger – the historian that Classe commissioned to write the first official history of the Rwandan church – also emphasized Rwandan national unity over ethnic disunity, writing in 1939 that “there are few peoples in Europe in which one finds together the three factors of national cohesion: the same language, the same religion, and the same customs.”¹⁰⁶

More than a racist ideologue convinced of the biological superiority of Tutsi over Hutu, Classe was a pragmatic churchman protecting what he perceived to be the political interests of the Catholic Church. His much-quoted 1930 essay calling for Musinga’s removal from power called for an exclusively Tutsi ruling caste. Often overlooked, however, were his subsequent statements proscribing any sort of permanent ban on Hutu leadership and rejecting any Tutsi favoritism in employment or high school enrollment.¹⁰⁷ In other words, Classe’s insistence on a temporary Tutsi monopolization of chiefdoms was a tactical move to ensure that the Catholic Church (and not its Protestant rivals) shaped the next generation of Tutsi political leaders. As he said in 1927, “the question is whether the ruling elite will be for us or against us, whether the important places in native society will be in Catholic or in non-Catholic hands; whether the Church will have through education and its formation of youth the preponderant influence in Rwanda.”¹⁰⁸ This does not lessen Classe’s responsibility for his divisive rhetoric, nor does it deny that Catholic institutions exacerbated ethnic tensions in

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 139.

¹⁰⁶ De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 37.

¹⁰⁷ Léon Classe, “Pour moderniser le Ruanda. Le problème des Batutsi,” *L’Essor colonial et maritime* IX (Dec. 1930): no. 489: 1-2; no. 490: 7; no. 491: 11. See also Mbonimana, “Ethnies et Église catholique,” 64; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 105.

¹⁰⁸ Classe quoted in Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 162.

Rwanda. But as will be evident in the 1950s, Classe and other Catholic leaders acted as much out of perceived institutional self-interest as ideological or racist bias.¹⁰⁹

In the meantime, Hutu-Tutsi divisions were hardening in the 1920s and 1930s. This resulted in large part from colonial innovations that linked political power to Hutu and Tutsi categories and created what Filip Reyntjens has termed a “more and more pronounced ethnic conscience.”¹¹⁰ Notable among these was the 1926-1932 reorganization of the complex hill-based chiefdoms into unitary *chefferies* and *sous-chefferies*. This made for more efficient tax collection but destroyed the delicate balance of power that had existed between pre-colonial Hutu and Tutsi hill chiefs. As noted above, all of the new chiefs were Tutsi, most of them young elites trained at the official government school in Nyanza (to be replaced in the 1930s by the *Group Scolaire d’Astrida* in southern Rwanda). Derisively nicknamed *abakaraani* (“clerks”) by local residents, the new chiefs’ inexperience and lack of local legitimacy only encouraged them to further emphasize Tutsi privilege. By 1933, the Belgians were conducting censuses on ethnic grounds and issuing identity cards that legally classified Rwandans as Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa.¹¹¹ And while reducing *corvée* rates under traditional

¹⁰⁹ In this analysis I follow Paul Rutayisire over Mahmood Mamdani. For these alternative views, see Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 175-78; Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), 92-93.

¹¹⁰ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 176. This section also draws on Danielle de Lame, *A Hill Among a Thousand: Transformations and Ruptures in Rural Rwanda* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005), 46; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 109-13, 123-29; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 150-57; Mbonimana, “Christianisation indirecte,” 128-29, 156-57; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 164, 197; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 70-71; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 294-301, 326-35; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 99; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 166-68; Octave Ugirashebuja, “L’idéologie du Tutsi oppresseur,” *Les Cahiers : Evangile et Société : Les Idéologies*, no. 4 (Dec. 1996): 57-61. Similar reforms were undertaken at this time in neighboring Burundi (cf. Augustin Mvuyekure, “Idéologie missionnaire et classification ethnique en Afrique centrale,” in *Les Ethnies ont une histoire*,” 319-20).

¹¹¹ Rwandans were required to carry ethnic identity cards for the next 60 years. These cards served an instrumental role in facilitating the massacres of Tutsi during the 1994 genocide. Rwanda’s post-genocide government eliminated ethnic identity cards and banned individual Rwandans from publicly describing themselves as Hutu and Tutsi.

uburetwa, the Belgians were increasing both labor and tax obligations among the Hutu people. This contributed to mass Hutu emigrations to Uganda and Tanganyika in the late 1920s and to the Rwakayihura famine of 1928-29 in which upwards of 35,000 Rwandans died.

In the face of these social upheavals, Classe and Belgian colonial officials pondered whether to force political change on Rwanda.¹¹² Classe had defended Musinga against a reform-minded Belgian official looking to depose the Rwandan king in 1925-26, arguing that the Mwami had “favored the material improvement of his people” and consistently sided with Belgian interests. But as Musinga continued to vacillate in his posture towards the Catholic missions and their Anglican and Adventist rivals, Classe appeared to give up on the notion that Musinga would ever become a Rwandan Clovis.¹¹³ Committed to traditional religion and Rwandan sovereignty, Musinga had no place in the emerging Belgian-Catholic order.¹¹⁴

By 1930 Classe and the Belgians were secretly grooming Rudahigwa, one of Musinga’s sons, to assume his father’s position as Mwami. While not initially associated with the modernizing Tutsi party, Rudahigwa had begun administering the province of Nduga-Marangara in January 1929. This chiefdom included Kabgayi, Classe’s see and the traditional center of Rwandan Catholic life. Later that year he became a secret catechumen,

¹¹² This section draws upon Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 318-20; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 168; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 208-12.

¹¹³ Clovis, king of the Franks, converted to Catholicism in the 590s. In Catholic tradition, he was credited with establishing France as the “first daughter of the Church.” A Rwandan historian would later compare the 1943 baptism of Musinga’s son Mutara Rudahigwa to “St. Remi’s baptism of Clovis in ancient France” (C.M.L., Alphonse Ntezimana, “Brin d’histoire à l’occasion du Sacre du premier évêque du Ruanda,” 1952).

¹¹⁴ This is one of the central themes of Des Forges’s *Defeat is the only bad news*. Des Forges recognized the integral connection between religion and politics in Rwandan thought; the Mwami himself had a central ritual role in these traditions, making him especially loathe to convert to Christianity. See also Des Forges, “Kings without crowns,” 180-81.

all the while maintaining close relations with his father until the final months of Musinga's rule.¹¹⁵

The Belgians made their move in November 1931. Calling Rwanda's chiefs to Nyanza for an economic briefing, colonial officials whisked Musinga off to exile on Lake Kivu and installed Rudahigwa as *mwami*. Even as Musinga retained a popular following among the people, Rwandan elite opinion seemed resigned to this outcome, muting any public dissent. Mwami Mutara Rudahigwa's first royal trip was a visit to the Catholic mission at Kabgayi. Within a year, 4,000 Rwandans received baptism, and 10,000 catechumens enrolled at Kabgayi.¹¹⁶ After thirty years of frustration, Catholic missionaries had found their Clovis, and Rwanda's Tutsi elites were soon to make Rwanda into the first daughter of the African church.

6. The Tutsi *tornado*, 1931-1939¹¹⁷

While Rwanda's mass conversions are traced to the years following Mutara Rudahigwa's accession to the throne, the roots had already been laid in the 1920s.¹¹⁸ Between 1922 and 1927, the number of catechumens grew four-fold from 5,000 to 20,000. This figure quintupled to 100,000 at the time of Mutara's installation in 1931 when Rwanda counted 70,000 baptized Catholics, 17 indigenous priests, 43 mission stations, and over 1,100 lay catechists. The accession of a Catholic catechumen to the throne only accelerated this

¹¹⁵ Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 220; Des Forges, "Kings without Crowns," 350; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 182-91.

¹¹⁶ Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 172; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 217.

¹¹⁷ This term was famously used in the 1935 issue of the White Fathers periodical *Grands Lacs* to describe the mass conversions in Rwanda: "Où l'Esprit saint souffle en tornade" (cf. Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 261).

¹¹⁸ This section draws on Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 316; Des Forges, *Kings without Crowns*, 195-98; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 204; De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 632; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 236; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 190; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 126.

trend. The number of Catholics trebled to over 200,000 in the first four years of Mutara's reign and grew to 300,000 by 1939.¹¹⁹ While this remained less than 20% of the total Rwandan population, elites were disproportionately affected; 80% of chiefs and sub-chiefs identified as Catholic in 1936.¹²⁰

In contrast, Protestant numbers remained comparatively low. In 1936 there were a combined 13,800 adherents and 6,800 baptized across Adventist, Anglican, and Belgian Protestant missions. Their small numbers should not mask their importance, however. For example, Rwanda played a central role in the East African Revival, leading to sizeable increases in the Anglican population that would continue after World War II.¹²¹ As Catholicism grew into a veritable state religion in the 1940s, Anglicanism drew the theologically disenchanted and politically marginalized. It would remain a small but vigorous minority alternative to established Catholicism into the independence period.

If Protestantism remained on the margins, what explains the phenomenal growth of the Catholic Church in the 1930s? A frequently overlooked factor is Classe's expansion of the Catholic Church's institutional capacity during the 1920s. Even before thousands of converts were approaching the mission stations, Classe embarked on an ambitious program to build new mission stations, increase the ranks of clergy and catechists, and encourage local

¹¹⁹ Burundi experienced an even greater wave of mass conversions at this time. A church that had counted a mere 7,000 Christians in 1916 numbered 176,000 in 1935 and 365,000 in 1940. Elite conversion was not as rapid, however. Two-thirds of Burundian chiefs and one-half of the nation's sub-chiefs had converted to Catholicism by 1933 (Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 269).

¹²⁰ These numbers grew even more by 1947 when 48 of 51 Rwanda's chiefs and 555 of 635 of its sub-chiefs identified as Roman Catholic (Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 266).

¹²¹ Known as the *Balokole*, these evangelical Anglicans were notable for crossing ethnic lines, rejecting traditional religion, turning away from politics, and focusing on the individual experience of salvation. They looked to convert lukewarm Christians, Catholic and Protestant alike, to a more rigorous form of Christianity (cf. Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1900-1994* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005), 95-96); Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 204-05).

Catholic Action groups. And even when fellow missionaries questioned the authenticity of some of the 1930s *tornado* conversions, Classe argued that the key to developing these new Christians was not to make baptism more difficult but to increase the church's pastoral ability to form new Christians.¹²²

Another crucial factor was the close association of Christian mission and Western modernization.¹²³ Far from their European perception as bastions of conservative tradition, Catholic churches in Rwanda were notable for their cosmopolitan association with Belgian francs, literacy, health, and emancipation from traditional hierarchies.¹²⁴ For the young Tutsi elite, traditional religion had become not so much idolatrous as anachronistic and ineffective; the 1928-29 famine had disillusioned many Rwandans concerning the efficacy of traditional religion. This association of religious conversion with Western civilization was not lost on contemporary observers. Classe's determination to build the church's pastoral capacity in the 1920s reflected his belief that spiritual conversion and material progress could not be separated. "We must try hard to give these good populations true civilization which is founded on Christian morals and which alone can assure the future."¹²⁵ He later credited Belgian government, road construction, famine relief and the demystification of traditional religion for the mass conversions of the 1930s. Louis de Lacger echoed these comments in his 1939 history of Rwanda, praising the *tornado* as "a second birth of the Rwandan people

¹²² Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 175-78, 337-38; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 235; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 246-53.

¹²³ This section draws on Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 227-28, 265; De Lame, *Hill among a Thousand*, 51-53; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 242; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 340.

¹²⁴ John Iliffe sees the youthful nature of Christian conversion as a continental theme in the 1930s and 1940s, comparing this "generational revolt" in Africa to that engendered by communism in 20th century Asia (Iliffe, *Africans*, 224-25).

¹²⁵ Classe, "Le Ruanda et ses habitants," 693.

in a baptism of Christianity and civilization.”¹²⁶ In this sense Justin Kalibwami accurately describes the goal of the 1930s missions as creating a new man, the “Catholic Rwandan,” who would transform Rwanda into a distinctly modern, European, and Christian society.¹²⁷

The Catholic monopolization of schooling also facilitated elite *entrée* into the church.¹²⁸ Always valued for teaching the technical and literacy skills necessary for colonial service, Catholic schools received a virtual monopoly on primary schooling after 1925. In 1930, Classe convinced the colonial administration to allow Catholic educators to run the colonial government’s secondary schools. This included the influential *Group Scolaire d’Astrida*, the training ground for future Tutsi elites entrusted to the Brothers of Charity. Catholic theology and ethics became key components for the education of a new cadre of Tutsi leaders.¹²⁹

In addition, Mutara’s and the Rwandan nobility’s public attachment to Catholicism clearly facilitated the *tornade*. Classe himself noted in 1935 that “the catechumen king and the Christian chiefs are great forces for the mission” and argued three years later that “giving confidence to our Christian chiefs is the first duty of all of us” for achieving Lavigerie’s dream of establishing a Christian kingdom in central Africa.¹³⁰ Elite opinion was especially important in the case of Rwanda, a hierarchical society in which patrons brought clients with them into the church. Regardless of its veracity, the early 1930s rumor that Mutara had

¹²⁶ De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 548. Elsewhere De Lacger writes that the reign of Mutara Rudahigwa marked “the decisive and ultimately official acceptance of European and Christian civilization” (504).

¹²⁷ Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 240.

¹²⁸ Cf. Rutayisire, *Le Christianisation du Rwanda*, 299, 314 ; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 239, 170.

¹²⁹ Hutu enrollment in the *Group Scolaire* never rose above 5% until the mid-1950s. Between 1946 and 1954, 389 Tutsi and 16 Hutu enrolled (Mbonimana, “Christianisation indirecte,” 149; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 196; “Reportages: Le Groupe Scolaire d’Astrida 1952,” *L’Ami* 87 (March 1952): 45).

¹³⁰ Léon Classe, “Roi et Chefs,” in *Grands Lacs* nos. 5-6 (March 1935) : 155, 158 ; Léon Classe, « Circulaire N°106, Conduite a l’égard des chefs, 5 May 1938, » in Classe, *Instructions Pastorales*, 341.

ordered his Rwandan subjects to become Catholic captured the broad sense of Christian conversion as an act of social and political obedience.¹³¹

At the same time, it would be inaccurate to reduce all of Rwanda's conversions to a strictly socio-political logic. The 1935 issue of the White Fathers periodical *Grands Lacs* highlighted the number of converts, but it also marveled at the fervor of the new Christians as reflected in the distance that Christians walked for church, the frequency with which laity received communion, the catechists' proselytizing zeal, and the six to seven-hour Saturday confessional lines that one missionary described as "apostolic *corvées*."¹³² While Classe reduced what he termed the White Fathers' "special rules of exaggerated severity" for baptism to facilitate the *entrée* of young Tutsi into the church, most missions maintained a three-year catechumenate prior to baptism.¹³³ Even Mwami Mutara did not receive preferential treatment; the king was not baptized until 1943. There were more mundane factors at work in the 1930s *tornado* than the blowing of the Holy Spirit, but political and spiritual motivations were not necessarily mutually exclusive.

A minority of missionaries raised objections to the mass conversions happening in their midst. Critics like Fr. Smoor protested looser baptismal requirements, the reduction of the catechumenate from four to three years, the heavy-handed proselytizing of Catholic chiefs and Catholic Action cadres, and the rising numbers of apostasies to Protestantism and traditional religion. Led by Classe, however, the majority of missionaries retained a more

¹³¹ The Kinyarwanda term was "*Irivuze umwami*," "the word pronounced by the king" or "what the king has said you must follow" (Gatwa, *Churches and Ethnic Ideology*, 91; Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 322; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 220-21).

¹³² The special Rwanda issue came out as *Grands Lacs* nos. 5-6 (March 1935). See also Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 325.

¹³³ Classe, « Circulaire N°14, Écoles et Apostolat près des Batutsi, 15 May 1928, » in Classe, *Instructions Pastorales*, 41-42.

gradualist understanding of conversion, trusting that over time God would deepen the faith of the political convert. In Classe's words, "the motive is perhaps not the most disinterested, but with the help of God's grace they will be turned into good Christians." Classe and his allies also accused their opponents of rigorism and racism and accused them of trying to stifle the growth of a burgeoning African church.¹³⁴

This section has been entitled "the Tutsi *tornado*," for the unique aspect of Rwanda's 1930s Catholic growth was the conversion of vast numbers of formerly reluctant Tutsi elites. While the majority of Rwandan peasants retained their adherence to traditional religion, elites embraced the Western faith and made it their own.¹³⁵ Roman Catholicism offered a new spiritual legitimacy for Mwami Mutara and served as a religious glue for an emergent stream of Rwandan nationalism propagated by Fr. Alexis Kagame and other Tutsi elites. In the words of Gérard Prunier, "Catholicism after Mutara III Rudahigwa became not only linked with the highest echelons of the state but completely enmeshed in Rwandan society from top to bottom. It was a legitimizing factor, a banner, a source of profit, a way of becoming educated, a club, a matrimonial agency and even at times a religion."¹³⁶ The next section will trace Rwanda's Catholic story into the 1940s, a decade which saw the public triumph of Catholicism amidst signs of a growing pastoral crisis.

¹³⁴ Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 329-36, 355; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 189.

¹³⁵ If Rwandan elites converted in the 1930s, the 1960s may have witnessed the true *tornado* of the Rwandan people. Catholics became a majority of the Rwandan population as the Catholic population doubled from 900,000 to 1.8 million (cf. Rutayisire, *La Christianisation du Rwanda*, 342-48; Lugan, *L'Eglise Catholique au Rwanda*, 72).

¹³⁶ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 34. See also Jean-Pierre Chrétien, "Hutu et Tutsi au Rwanda et au Burundi," in Jean-Loup Amselle and Elikia M'Bokolo, eds., *Au Cœur de l'ethnie: Ethnie, tribalisme, et état en Afrique* (Paris : La Découverte, 1999) : 146-47.

6. Triumphs and tensions in Africa's Catholic kingdom, 1939-1950

If the seeds of church growth were planted in the 1920s and flowered in the 1930s, Catholicism became Rwanda's national religion in the 1940s. In addition to the church's qualitative and quantitative growth, three events signified the triumph of Catholicism in the public sphere – the 1943 baptism of the Mwami Mutara Rudahigwa, Mutara's 1946 dedication of Rwanda to Christ the King, and the 1950 golden anniversary of Rwanda's first Catholic mission at Save. At the same time, the Rwandan church experienced new strains during World War II and the immediate post-war period. Baptismal numbers and ecclesial participation flattened near the end of the war, raising concerns about the church's pastoral strategy. In turn, the first significant strains between European and Rwandan clergy arose, foreshadowing a 1950s period in which intra-clerical cracks would become full-scale fissures.

To an outside observer, the Rwandan church seemed healthy in the 1940s.¹³⁷ The number of Rwandan clergy more than doubled between 1937 and 1948 from 30 to 81. By the end of the war, 155 Rwandan women were serving as Benebikira sisters. Nor were these indigenous priests and sisters toiling in obscurity; by 1948 the White Fathers had turned over nearly half of Rwanda's 40 mission stations to indigenous clergy.¹³⁸ In 1950 Rwanda had over 230,000 Catholic catechumens and nearly 400,000 baptized Catholics, and Easter communion rates were approaching 80%. Together with Burundi and Belgian Congo,

¹³⁷ The following section draws on Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 198, 223; De Lacger, 679-80.

¹³⁸ Aloys Bigirumwami, « Le clergé indigène du Ruanda, » *L'Ami* 67-68 (July-August 1950): 125, 131. This represented a stark contrast with Belgian Congo, Rwanda's much larger neighbor to the east. While only 10% of Congo's priests were African, 36% of Rwanda's clergy were indigenous. Rwandans comprised a similarly large percentage of vowed religious sisters and brothers (*L'Ami* 79 (July 1951): 128-29).

Rwanda formed the largest block of Catholics in Africa.¹³⁹ In the words of Adrian Hastings, Rwanda in 1950 “might have appeared to the observer the nearest approach to a Catholic country in black Africa.”¹⁴⁰

As discussed above, Rwanda’s Catholic identity was even more visible in the echelons of power. The symbolic culmination of the 1930s *tornade* came in October 1943 when the Catholic Church baptized Mwami Mutara after a 12-year catechumenate. Mutara had divorced his pagan wife in 1941, ostensibly on the grounds of infertility.¹⁴¹ His subsequent marriage to Rosalie Gicanda, a Christian, paved the way for a public baptism. Standing at Mutara’s side for the baptismal ceremony were Léon Classe, his spiritual mentor, and Pierre Ryckmans, his godfather and Belgium’s colonial governor-general. Mutara took the Christian name Charles Léon Pierre to signify his admiration of Classe and Ryckmans and his commitment to following Charlemagne’s model of Christian royalty.¹⁴²

Rwanda’s Christian king followed through on his pledge three years later when he dedicated Rwanda to Christ the King. Instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1922 to combat rising tides of secularism, fascism and communism in Europe, the feast of Christ the King had become a symbol of Catholicism’s continuing claims in the public sphere. Coming a year after Classe’s death, Mutara’s October 1946 dedication also symbolized the fulfillment of Classe’s dream for his adopted country – the creation of “a Christian kingdom” in the heart

¹³⁹ In 1956 Ruanda and Burundi had 1,373,297 baptized Catholics and 488,527 catechumens – a larger Catholic population than much larger territories such as South Africa, Nigeria, Tanganyika, Uganda, and Angola (cf. “22 millions de catholiques en Afrique,” *Grands Lacs* no. 186 (August-September 1956): 14).

¹⁴⁰ Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 62.

¹⁴¹ Although, as Paul Rutayisire points out, Mutara actually had a daughter with his first wife; this daughter died young in 1937. He never successfully conceived a child with Rosalie (Paul Rutayisire, “Rudahigwa et les missionnaires,” *Dialogue* 188 (2009): 24).

¹⁴² See Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 279-82; Rudakemwa, *L’évangélisation du Rwanda*, 224-25.

of Africa. Mutara's words on the occasion reflected the extent to which Christianity had relativized the Mwami's own claims to power:

Lord Jesus, it is you who have formed our country. You have given us a long line of kings to govern in your place, even though we did not know you. When the time fixed by your Providence had arrived, You have been made known. You have sent us your apostles; they have opened to us the light...Now that we know you, we recognize publicly that you are our Lord and our King.¹⁴³

While sacrificing any lingering claims to divine right, Mutara gained the good favor of the Holy See. In 1947, the Apostolic Nuncio, Mgr. Dellepiane, duly rewarded Mutara by enrolling him in the prestigious order of St. Gregory the Great.¹⁴⁴ The Vatican would retain positive ties with Rwanda's Mwami and his allies long after the White Fathers began to distance themselves in the mid-1950s.

Finally, the August 1950 jubilee of the founding of Save Mission represented an apogee for a young church celebrating the advent of Catholic civilization in Rwanda. Thousands of Rwandan Catholics gathered for three days of festive celebrations, including representatives from all 40 Catholic missions and Pierre Sigismondi, the Vatican's apostolic delegate to Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi. Demonstrating the political salience of the Catholic missions, the highest-ranking political leaders in the region also attended this ostensibly ecclesial gathering, including Marshall Pétillon, the vice governor-general for the Belgian colonies; General Sandrart, the colonial resident in Rwanda; Mwami Mutara; and Burundi's Mwami Mwambutsa.¹⁴⁵ While scholars like Catherine Newbury and Ian Linden have retrospectively highlighted the Save gathering's importance for conscientizing Hutu political elites, the major theme of the meeting itself was celebrating "Christian civilization

¹⁴³ Quoted in C.M.L., Alphonse Ntezimana, "Brin d'histoire à l'occasion du Sacre du premier évêque du Ruanda, » 1 June 1952.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. See also Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 286.

¹⁴⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°540758-62, "Le Jubile du Ruanda Catholique 1900-1950. »

and Belgian material assistance” to Rwanda.¹⁴⁶ Church leaders noted the extent to which Christianity had shaped Rwandan political and social organizations, contributed to social justice, and given people a sense of duty before the law.¹⁴⁷ As we will see in chapter two, the issue of Christian civilization shaped Catholic literature in the early 1950s far more than the Hutu-Tutsi question.

For all of the public spectacle, however, the 1940s also saw emerging challenges for Central Africa’s Christian kingdom.¹⁴⁸ After experiencing exponential growth throughout the 1930s, the Rwandan Catholic population declined slightly in the first half of the 1940s from 330,000 to 312,000. Part of this fall stemmed from the effects of World War II, especially the Ruzagayura famine of 1943-44 that killed upwards of 300,000 people and caused the colonial vice-governor to allege that Mutara and his fellow Tutsi nobles were more concerned with Mutara’s baptism than the welfare of Rwanda’s Hutu peasants.¹⁴⁹ Colonial forced labor, crop failures, and higher export requirements also took their toll on the local Hutu population, leading to more widespread anti-Belgian and anti-Tutsi protests and higher Hutu emigration rates to neighboring Congo, Uganda and Tanganyika. Protestant churches were also making inroads during the post-war period. By 1958, nearly 100,000 Rwandans and Burundians professed the Anglican faith, and the Seventh Day Adventists counted 120,000 adherents.

¹⁴⁶ In Linden’s words, “major Catholic events brought the counter-elite together, and the first memories of serious discussion amongst the Gitarama, Save, and northern Hutu were from the celebrations for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Save mission” (Linden, *Church and revolution*, 258). See also Catherine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860-1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 191.

¹⁴⁷ A.G.M.Afr. N° 540758, [Anon.], “Le Jubile du Ruanda Catholique 1900-1950. » For similar sentiments, see the July-August 1950 issue of *L’Ami*, especially “Jubilé de Ruanda 1950,” *L’Ami* VI, no. 67-68: 121-49, as well as the entire issue of *Grands Lacs* 1, no. 135 (15 Sept. 1950).

¹⁴⁸ This section draws on Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 154, 202-07; Rudakemwa, *L’évangélisation du Rwanda*, 231, 253, 269-70; De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 657; Des Forges, *Defeat is the only bad news*, 353.

¹⁴⁹ Paul Rutayisire, “Rudahigwa et les missionnaires,” *Dialogue* 188 (April-July 2009): 27-29.

As Catholic growth stalled, tensions were rising between European and Rwandan clergy. Many of the strains revolved around the perceived paternalism of the White Fathers. In a 1946 petition to the superior general of the White Fathers, three indigenous priests wrote of a “difficulty of comprehension between blacks and whites,” arguing that “indigenous priests are not destined to be auxiliaries of the whites, but it is the whites who should be the auxiliaries of the indigenous.”¹⁵⁰ While the Hutu-Tutsi question is not wholly absent from this document – Tutsi are described as “more intelligent than Bahutu,” and Catholic mission history is divided into phases of “the first conquests of the Bahutu” and “the second hour of the Batutsi” – the black-white question emerges as the dominant issue in the document.¹⁵¹ As we will see in chapter two, European-Rwandan tensions emerged in the early 1950s as a prominent strain in the local church, especially at the major seminary of Nyakibanda.

In the midst of the turmoil, the Rwandan Catholic Church underwent its first transition in leadership in two decades. Léon Classe suffered a stroke in 1940, and three years later Rome named Laurent Déprimoz as coadjutor of the Vicariate of Rwanda. Déprimoz officially succeeded Classe upon the latter’s death in January 1945. Like Classe, Déprimoz came from an upper-class French background. Joining the Missionaries of Africa in 1901 at the age of 17, Déprimoz served for several years in the Burundian missions before taking up a position at the minor seminary in Kabgayi in 1913. Over the next thirty years, he

¹⁵⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°206706, *Au Cœur du Ruanda Chrétien (1900-1946)*, 3 August 1946, 13. This document is housed as a loose file in the library annex of the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa, Rome.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 3-5.

served as Catholic schools inspector, vicar delegate, and rector of the major seminary at Nyakibanda.¹⁵²

After Classe's death, Déprimoz laid out a new catechetical strategy that emphasized the formation of new Christians. Déprimoz sensed that in their efforts to attract Rwandan elites during the 1930s *tornado*, missionaries had allowed standards to slip. For Déprimoz, the "conversions of opportunity" of the 1930s helped explain the flattening of Catholic growth in the early 1940s.¹⁵³ Déprimoz subsequently restored the four-year catechumenate, expanded oversight in the seminaries, undertook more pastoral visits to mission stations, and attempted to strengthen clerical unity by organizing national synods in 1945 and 1950. These efforts bore visible fruit, most significantly the increase in Easter communion rates from 50% in 1945 to 90% by the early 1950s.¹⁵⁴

Déprimoz's concerns about the politicization of conversion did not mean that he gave up Classe's vision of elite conversion and church-state cohabitation. On the contrary, he actively recruited chiefs to join Catholic Action, a movement which he expanded in the early 1950s through introducing the League of the Sacred Heart, the Legion of Mary, and the Eucharistic Crusade. A former editor of *Kinyamateka*, the Kinyarwanda-language Catholic newspaper, Déprimoz also recognized the importance of the press for forming the rising generation of middle class elites. Towards this end he started the academic journal *Theologie*

¹⁵² On Déprimoz's life, see [Anon.], *Son Excellence Mgr. Laurent Déprimoz, Evêque de Mateur, Vicaire Apostolique de Kabgayi, 1884-1962* (Kabgayi : 1962). This small biography was released at the time of Déprimoz's death but not published outside of Rwanda; I consulted a rare copy in the Roman archives of the Missionaries of Africa. See also De Lacger, *Ruanda*, 662; André Perraudin, *Par-dessus tout la charité": un évêque au Rwanda : les six premières années de mon épiscopat (1956-1962)* (Saint Maurice: Editions Saint-Augustin, 2003), 27-28.

¹⁵³ *Son Excellence Mgr. Laurent Déprimoz*, 41.

¹⁵⁴ Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 220. Easter communion (or "Easter duty") referred to the Lateran IV (1215) requirement that lay Catholics receive sacramental confession and Eucharist at least once a year. Prior to Vatican II, Catholic parishes often used this statistic as a gauge of local participation.

et Pastorale for local priests and the monthly review *L'Ami* for former seminarians.¹⁵⁵ And while Déprimoz was by no means a theological or political radical, he encouraged *Kinyamateka's* editors to move beyond the paper's traditional ecclesial fare to a more explicit engagement with contemporary social and political questions.¹⁵⁶ Perhaps most importantly, in 1953 he appointed a young teacher and former seminarian named Gregoire Kayibanda as co-editor of *L'Ami*. Kayibanda subsequently became one of the most influential voices shaping the Rwandan social and political conversation in the 1950s.

Finally, Déprimoz continued and even expanded upon Classe's commitment to the indigenization of the local church. Having served as rector in both the minor and major seminary, Déprimoz had helped train nearly all indigenous Rwandan clergy by the mid-1940s. Alexis Kagame served as his personal secretary. He appointed one of his favorite former students, Aloys Bigirumwami, as the first Rwandan priest on the Council of the Vicariate in 1947, and he also named indigenous priests to serve as inspector general of school, vicar delegate, and vicar general. Déprimoz also chose Deogratias Mbandiwimfura as the first Rwandan priest to pursue higher studies abroad, sending him to Rome to pursue a doctorate in canon law in 1947. By the time Déprimoz retired in 1955, there were over 100 indigenous priests in Rwanda, and Bigirumwami had become the first indigenous bishop in Belgian Africa – an event to be discussed in depth in chapter two.¹⁵⁷

As Rwanda celebrated a half-century of Catholic evangelization, the dream of Lavigerie, Hirth, and Classe to create a Christian kingdom in the heart of Africa had become

¹⁵⁵ *Son Excellence*, 43-47.

¹⁵⁶ Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 254-55.

¹⁵⁷ C.M.L., Endriatis to Priests/Religious, 12 Jan. 1951; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 256.

a visible reality. From its nondescript beginnings in the early 1900s, the Rwandan church had become a model of rapid growth and indigenization. The Catholic Church crossed ethnic and political lines, including both Hutu and Tutsi in its ranks. After early trepidations, Rwandan elites had embraced the Catholic faith as colonial politics shifted in the 1920s and 1930s. From the journalists at *Kinyamateka* to missionary anthropologists to indigenous scholars like Alexis Kagame, Catholic elites shaped Rwanda's social milieu, historical understanding, and modern vision of itself. And yet even as the church's power grew, deep internal cleavages also emerged, reflecting lingering tensions over the church's longstanding commitment to both popular uplift and elite conversion as well as church leaders' meddling in ethnic discourse and colonial politics. It is to this story of rising political, racial and clerical tensions in the early 1950s that we now turn.

Ch. 2. Success Breeds Restlessness: Catholic Politics in Rwanda, 1950-1955

The first half of the 1950s witnessed subtle but important shifts in Rwandan politics. The first signs of decolonization appeared with Belgium's announcement of a ten-year economic and political plan in 1952 that promised regional and national councils, democratic elections, and increasing local autonomy. In the midst of these reforms, local Rwandan politics were becoming more complex and variegated, sparking new divisions between conservative nationalists associated with Mwami Mutara, pro-Belgian Tutsi reformists, and a rising class of Hutu intellectuals who had received much of their academic formation in Catholic seminaries.

On the surface, the Rwandan Catholic Church appeared to be flourishing in the early 1950s. The church celebrated record numbers of baptisms and a growing catechuminate, improved sacramental practice, and the 1952 consecration of Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami, the first African bishop in the Belgian colonies. While Mgr. Laurent Déprimoz never enjoyed the same rapport with Mwami Mutara that Mutara had shared with Léon Classe, public relations remained amicable among Catholic missionaries, Belgian colonial officials, and local Rwandan authorities. Beneath this seeming tranquility, however, new fissures were erupting, including unprecedented strains between the White Fathers and a more anti-clerical colonial regime, rising tensions among the Rwandans, Burundians and Congolese studying in Rwanda's major seminary, and a growing power struggle between European and Rwandan clergy.

Recognizing how Catholic politics developed both inside the church and within broader Rwandan society, I divide my analysis in this chapter into two sections. I first address what I term the “*ecclesia ad extra*” – namely, Catholic engagement with broader currents of socioeconomic and political change in early 1950s Rwanda. After offering a brief overview of economic, social, and political developments in Rwanda during the late 1940s and early 1950s, I highlight two major themes in the church’s engagement with Rwandan politics in the early 1950s. First, church leaders carried forward their mission to build Christian civilization, but this mission took on a new key: embracing democratization and economic reform while resisting communism and secularization. To support these ends, Catholic leaders focused on keeping the rising class of Rwandan social and political elites within the church’s sphere of influence. Surprisingly in light of later historical developments, it was this elite category of *évolué* rather than Hutu-Tutsi categories which dominated Catholic political discourse between 1950 and 1955.

The second half of the chapter turns to the Catholic Church’s internal politics. Here I analyze the nationalist and intra-clerical tensions swirling at Nyakibanda major seminary as well as the appointment of Aloys Bigirumwami as the first indigenous bishop in Belgian Africa and third indigenous bishop in all of sub-Saharan Africa. I also describe the background and meteoric rise of Fr. André Perraudin, a 36-year-old Swiss White Father who arrived in Rwanda in 1950 with only two years of missionary experience, became rector of Nyakibanda major seminary in 1952, and succeeded Déprimoz as vicar apostolic of Kabgayi at the end of 1955.

In terms of my overall thesis concerning Catholic engagement with political and ethnic questions in Rwanda, my analysis of this period offers three primary contributions. First, the advent of democratization and decolonization did not fundamentally alter Catholic missionaries' vision of the state as an indispensable partner in maintaining Rwanda's status as a Christian enclave in central Africa. Rather, these political developments merely altered the means that missionaries used. Rather than convert the king and his court, the Christian *polis* of the 1950s required the adherence of a new class of rising lay elites (*évolués*) who would determine the course of post-colonial Rwandan politics.

Second, Catholic politics in Rwanda in the early 1950s concerned a far wider array of themes than the Hutu-Tutsi question, challenging the post-colonial tendency to read Rwandan history exclusively through the Hutu-Tutsi lens. In turn, Catholic leaders' ideological concerns with communism, democracy, and anti-clericalism help contextualize the attitudes that church leaders like Perraudin and Bigirumwami later adopted towards the Hutu-Tutsi question. This chapter also shows how divisions of race, nationality, and social class divided Catholic clergy and seminarians. Whatever their public protestations of undivided unity, internal correspondence reveals that a deep-seated mistrust already existed between the White Fathers and Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated indigenous clergy long before the irruption of the Hutu-Tutsi question in 1956 and 1957.

Third, this section provides crucial insight into the backgrounds and personalities of Mgr. André Perraudin and Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami, the two ecclesial figures who led the Catholic Church in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Perraudin emerges in this narrative as a popular professor of missiology, advocating for social justice but steering clear of

controversial ethnic questions. We also see Perraudin as a consummate church politician, skilled at publicly reconciling opposed factions even as he worked behind the scenes to achieve his own agenda. Bigirumwami, on the other hand, found himself encountering resistance from both Perraudin and White Fathers in Rome as he strove to establish his own authority in Nyundo. Bigirumwami's advocacy earned him few missionary allies but marked him as an independent voice – a voice that would ultimately challenge some of the stereotypical shibboleths of Rwandan politics in the late colonial period.¹

A. *Ecclesia ad extra*: Catholic engagement with Rwandan society, 1950-1955

The early 1950s in Africa was an era of anticipation. Nationalist movements were gaining ground across the continent. These took various forms, including Kwame Nkrumah's pan-Africanism in Ghana, the cultural nationalism of the Senegalese Leopold Senghor's *négritude* movement, violent Mau-Mau uprisings in Kenya, and the African National Congress's anti-apartheid protests in South Africa.² European colonial powers were recognizing the necessity of devolution and local autonomy if not yet full independence. By the mid-1950s, even officials in paternalistic Belgian Congo had begun using language of “partnership,” “non-racialism,” and the “Belgian-Congolese community,” although these officials were still thinking of decolonization in terms of decades rather than years.³

¹ My argument in this chapter is based primarily on correspondence from the Missionaries of Africa archives in Rome, select letters and commentaries from local archives in Rwanda, and early 1950s articles from White Father publications like *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* and *L'Ami: La revue des elites de l'Est de la Colonie*. Targeted at French-speaking Catholic elites, the latter two journals are especially important for understanding Catholic intellectual debates on politics, ethnicity, and religion in early 1950s Rwanda.

² For a helpful thematic overview of the intersection of political and religious change in 1950s Africa, see Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 5-120.

³ *Ibid.*, 86-90. As late as 1956 one prominent Belgian official was proposing a “thirty-year plan for the political emancipation of Belgian Africa” (A.A.J. Van Bilsen, “Un plan de 30 ans pour l'émancipation politique de

As in the rest of Africa, political change in Rwanda accelerated with the end of World War II, the advent of the United Nations, and the expansion of anti-colonial political movements in the early 1950s. The U.N. placed Rwanda under an international *tutelle* (guardianship) in 1946. Consisting of members of the Belgian colonial administration, the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, and three rotating nations, this *tutelle* replaced the permanent commission of the League of Nations that had exercised official oversight of the Rwanda-Burundi trust territory since 1922. The *tutelle*'s responsibilities included examining colonial reports, evaluating petitions from Rwanda and Burundi, and conducting triennial visits to assess Belgium's oversight of the two colonies. Conducted in 1948, 1951, 1954, 1957, and 1960, these visits precipitated flurries of political lobbying and sparked degrees of political reform.⁴

Following the 1948 U.N. Charter's calls for national self-determination, the U.N. *tutelle* instructed Belgium during its 1948 and 1951 visits to accelerate Rwanda and Burundi's paths towards political autonomy.⁵ On July 14, 1952, Belgium announced the inauguration of a ten-year political devolution plan that included the establishment of representative structures in 1953 and universal *sous-chefferie* (sub-chiefdom) elections in 1956. The new *sous-chefferies* consisted of one sub-chief and five to nine counselors; one counselor represented 500 inhabitants. Five to nine members of the *sous-chefferies* were chosen for each *chefferie* (chiefdom) council; the *chefferie* councils then sent representatives

l'Afrique Belge," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (13 May 1956): 3. See also Marvin D. Markowitz, *Cross and Sword: The Political Role of Christian Missions in the Belgian Congo, 1908-1960* (Stanford, CA: Hoover, 1973), 156.

⁴ Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Ruanda : Droit public et évolution politique, 1916-1973* (Tervuren, Belgium: Musée Royal de L'Afrique Centrale, 1985), 212-213.

⁵ Louis de Lacger (with Dominic Nothomb), *Ruanda* (Kabgayi: 1961), 682-683.

to the territorial councils. The most important consultative body, the *Conseil Supérieur du Pays* (CSP), included the presidents of the nine territorial councils, six additional chiefs, nine notables, and four royal appointees. Belgium entrusted this council with the task of advising Mwami Mutara on internal Rwandan matters. Since local chiefs had to approve candidates for higher councils, the new structures also tended towards oligarchy rather than representative democracy, encouraging a continuing Tutsi predominance in higher office. As we will see below, while two-thirds of the sub-chiefs elected in 1956 legislative elections were Hutu, 31 of the 32 CSP members remained Tutsi.⁶

The most significant socioeconomic changes of the post-war period were the Mwami's 1949 decision to abolish *uburetwa* and his 1952 decision to eliminate *ubuhake*. As discussed in chapter one, *uburetwa* required Hutu workers to spend two days per week cultivating a local Tutsi patron's land. The Mwami's decision to abolish the practice appeared to confirm his pre-war reputation as a reformist and modernizer, although the failure of corresponding land reform exacerbated tensions in a country where improved health and higher agricultural yields were facilitating rapid population growth.⁷

The abolition of *ubuhake* in the mid-1950s had even greater symbolic value.⁸ As discussed in the introduction, *ubuhake* was a patron-client relationship in which a client offered his services in exchange for utilizing the patron's land and cattle. When he

⁶ "Page du Ruanda-Urundi : Nouvelle organisation politique au Ruanda-Urundi," *L'Ami* 105 (Sept 1953): 187-91. See also Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 185-96; Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 115.

⁷ In Mamdani's words, "in the absence of corresponding reform redistributing grazing land monopolized by Tutsi patrons, it left Hutu owners of cattle dependent on former patrons for access to pasturage" (Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 115).

⁸ This narrative draws on Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 199-207; Ian Linden (with Jane Linden), *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 225-26; Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History*. Trans. Scott Strauss (New York: Zone, 2003), 299, 407; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 111.

announced the abolition of *ubuhake* in 1952, Mwami Mutara justified this in the context of the advent of modern capitalism. For Mutara, *ubuhake* had helped to “peacefully regulate relations between Tutsi and Hutu” in past eras and underlay the social, political and economic stability of Rwanda’s *ancien régime*. However, the modernizing, international economy of the 1950s necessitated a wage and property-based system.⁹ In addition to undermining the social stereotype of the Tutsi as protector and overlord, the abolition of *ubuhake* facilitated the rise of a new class of Hutu elites, many of them prosperous emigrants returned from Uganda. This in turn leveled any ethnic economic gap. A survey of hundreds of family incomes in the mid-1950s revealed an average annual Hutu family income of 4,249 francs, just below the Tutsi figure of 4,439 francs. In 1959, a Belgian working group for Rwanda and Burundi concluded that only 6,000 to 10,000 of Rwanda’s over 150,000 Tutsi should be classified as upper class elites. “But the advantages (of being Tutsi) are situated more in the plan of social organization and of prestige; they do not necessarily imply elevated revenues, out of proportion with the level of the life of the masses.”¹⁰

The primary political cleavage in the early 1950s did not divide Hutu from Tutsi but developed between traditionalist Tutsi chiefs and the “Astridiens,” younger Tutsi chiefs trained at the *Groupe Scolaire d’Astrida* in Butare in southern Rwanda. This school was led by Br. Secundien, a politically-savvy Brother of Charity noted for his patronage of some of the younger Tutsi students and his alleged involvement in a late 1940s plot to topple Mwami

⁹ Mwami Mutara, « Problèmes Africains : Project de Suppression du Régime féodal (Ubughake), » *L’Ami* 90 (June 1952) : 105-09.

¹⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°721001, *Rapport du Groupe de Travail concernant le problème politique du Ruanda-Urundi, 1958-59* (September 1959): 35.

Mutara.¹¹ Seeing themselves as a reforming, non-hereditary meritocracy, the Astridiens embraced Western democracy and the continuing liberalization of Rwanda's economy. Their leader was Prosper Bwanakweri, a prominent Tutsi chief based in Nyanza who hailed from the Abega, the rival clan to Mwami Mutara's Abanyiginya clan. Bwanakweri took the lead in initiating land reform in his own chieftdom and briefly became something of a national hero for reformist Tutsi and Hutu alike.¹² His rising profile ran afoul of Mwami Mutara who convinced the Belgians to relocate Bwanakweri to a remote area of northwestern Rwanda. Yet by publicly challenging a Mwami who had cultivated a supra-political image, Bwanakweri split the Tutsi leadership between conservative traditionalists and reform-minded modernizers and legitimized political debate in Rwanda for Tutsi and Hutu alike.¹³

Bwanakweri also represented a brief moment in the early 1950s when ethnicity played little role in shaping Rwandan political identities. Bwanakweri was one of the founders of *L'Association des Amitiés Belge-Rwandaïses* and the *Mouvement Politique Progressiste* (MPP). Launched in 1951 to support the moral, intellectual and material progress of Rwanda, *L'Association des Amitiés* had a diverse membership, including Fr. Arthur Dejemeppe, a progressive White Father missionary who briefly served as vicar delegate of Kabgayi; Gregoire Kayibanda, journalist and emerging leader of a rising group of Hutu former seminarians; Fr. Alexis Kagame, the intellectual author of the Rwandan nationalist revival of the 1940s who served as a close advisor to Mwami Mutara; and Lazare

¹¹ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°543010, Gilles to Durrieu, 19 Aug 1950; Br. Secundien, "Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida," *Grands Lacs* 156 (Oct. 1952): 37-41.

¹² For an example of such lionization, see "Un abbé ruandais: nous parle, » *La Presse Africaine*, 21 July 1956; "Des notables ruandais nous parlent," *La Presse Africaine*, 4 Aug. 1956; "Un abbé ruandais nous parle," *La Presse Africaine*, 23 Aug. 1956 (Cf. C.I.E.R., <http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc7.pdf> (accessed 7 February 2011)).

¹³ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 225.

Ndazaro, a moderate Tutsi chief and political ally of Bwanakweri.¹⁴ Initiated in 1955, the successor of *L'Association des Amitiés Belge-Rwandaïses* was the *Mouvement Politique Progressiste* (MPP). Like its predecessor, the MPP charted a moderate course between nationalism and ethnicism, striving to improve relations between Rwandans and Europeans while avoiding both anti-European nationalism and what it termed “social discrimination based on race.” Its roster included Bwanakweri, Kayibanda, the Hutu journalist Aloys Munyangaju, the Burundian prince Pierre Baranyanika, and 39 other Tutsi chiefs.¹⁵ For a moment in the mid-1950s, pan-ethnic social reform appeared to be the harbinger of Rwanda’s post-colonial future. As we will see in chapter three, this moment proved ephemeral.

For all of their collaboration, however, Tutsi and Hutu elites in the early 1950s continued to face different professional ceilings. While ambitious Tutsi elites could anticipate rising through the colonial administration or serving on a *chefferie* or territorial council, Hutu opportunities were more circumscribed – teaching in a village school, serving on a local sub-council, providing medical care in a rural dispensary, or writing for a Catholic newspaper. At the same time, such opportunities proved valuable in light of the growing democratic turn in 1950s Rwandan politics. While Tutsi elites sought influence through traditional hierarchical offices and tended to emphasize the necessity of elite rule, Hutu leaders like Kayibanda were mobilizing the people through the mass media and Catholic Action groups, rooting the new

¹⁴ « Les amitiés Belge-Rwandaïses, » *L'Ami* 78 (June 1951) : 105-06.

¹⁵ “Un Parti Politique in Partibus au Ruanda-Urundi,” *Presse Africaine*, 17 Sept. 1955. In C.I.E.R., <http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc2-2.pdf> (accessed 7 February 2011).

“elites of the country” in the rural people themselves.¹⁶ The top-down Tutsi approach had worked for decades, but the grassroots work of Kayibanda and his allies established a better base for electoral democracy, as we will see in subsequent chapters.

In the midst of the political and socioeconomic changes of the early 1950s, three major ideological themes came to dominate Rwandan Catholic political discourse. First, church leaders wrote of the need to protect the church from communism and secularism, ideologies that had made inroads in Europe and now threatened to swamp Rwanda’s nascent Christian civilization. In contrast to their fears of communism and secularism, however, Catholic commentators were far more sanguine about the advent of a more democratic and egalitarian era in Rwandan history. In turn, church leaders obsessed over how to keep Rwandan lay elites in the Catholic fold. Finally, the commentaries of this period are marked by a surprising lacuna – namely, the dearth of references to the Hutu-Tutsi question. While this question would come to dominate Rwandan political life after 1956 and Rwandan ecclesial life after 1959, the early 1950s silence demonstrates that the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic was not the primordial cleavage that later commentators would make it appear.

1. A new civilizing mission: communism, secularism, development, & democracy

In the early 1950s, Catholic commentators feared that decolonization would open Africa’s doors to international communism, godless atheism and religious indifference. The division of Berlin in 1948, communist triumph in China, Cold War stalemate in Korea, and ongoing struggle in French Indochina (Vietnam) appeared to confirm this pessimism and

¹⁶ « Formation politique – la meilleure forme de Gouvernement, » *L’Ami* 113 (May 1954) : 178-82 ; Gregoire Kayibanda, « Les Évolués de campagne, » *L’Ami* 110 (Feb 1954) : 56-63; Gregoire Kayibanda, « Editorial : Un peu d’optimisme, » *L’Ami* 118 (Oct. 1954) : 353.

colored missionary views of African nationalism, especially the movement's most vociferous pan-Africanist and anti-colonial streams. Pius XII's 1951 and 1957 encyclicals on Christian mission, *Evangelii Praecones* and *Fidei Donum*, offered scant support for anti-colonial movements while warning of the grave dangers of the "proponent of atheistic materialism... stirring up the emotions of the natives by encouraging mutual envy among them and distorting their unhappy material condition in an attempt to deceive them...or to incite them to seditious acts."¹⁷ Such suspicions were echoed in the White Fathers' publications in Rwanda. From describing the error of Marx's views to detailing the anti-clerical abuses of communist China to relating a supposed Soviet plot to have communist agitators impersonate black Catholic priests, the White Fathers attempted to steel Rwandan Catholic elites against the perceived red menace.¹⁸ Even the White Fathers' growing emphasis on social justice and land reform stemmed in part from the fear of peasant resentment opening Rwanda to "the subversive ideas of communism."¹⁹ As André Perraudin expressed in 1955, after swallowing

¹⁷ Pope Pius XII, *Evangelii Praecones* ("On the Promotion of Catholic Mission"), 2 June 1951, pars. 17, 27, 49, (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_02061951_evangelii-praecones_en.html) (accessed 7 February 2011). See also Pope Pius XII, *Fidei Donum*, "On the present conditions of the Catholic missions, especially in Africa" (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/pius_xii/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_21041957_fidei-donum_en.html), accessed 7 February 2011).

¹⁸ Cf. "Savez-vous ce qu'est le communisme?" *L'Ami* 61-63 (Jan.-March 1950) : 3-4, 6, 25-26, 43-44; "Des Noirs Communistes formés comme Prêtres Catholiques," *L'Ami* 109 (Jan 1954): 27. Launched in 1950 as a weekly newspaper for Catholic intellectual elites in Belgian Africa, *L'Ami's* international pages reflected a deep concern with the fates of Indochina, China, Hungary, Yugoslavia and other nations buckling under communist pressure (*L'Ami* 71 (Nov 1950): 206; *L'Ami* 93 (Sept. 1952): 179-80; *L'Ami* 98 (Feb 1953) : 22-23); *L'Ami* 104 (Aug 1953): 164-65; *L'Ami* 113 (May 1954): 176; *L'Ami* 116 (Aug. 1954): 304-05). Its successor *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* also carried forward the anti-communist theme (cf. "Le communisme et l'Afrique noire?" *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (22 Jan. 1956) : 1, 8).

¹⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°543033, Cattin to Durrieux, 3 Oct 1952; « Actualité sociale : Chasser les communistes n'est rien, il faut établir la justice sociale », *L'Ami* 118 (Oct 1954) : 383. The 1954 electoral successes of the socialists in Guatemala loomed in the background of this latter article.

Indochina and India “the red monster will turn its eyes towards Africa...the future (of communism) is not perhaps that far off.”²⁰

To fight communism, Rwandan Catholic elites struck a balance between defending private property rights and encouraging workers’ associations that could improve conditions for the laboring poor. In rural Rwanda, this took the form of mutualities and cooperatives, joint associations of farmers, workers and artisans who sold products collectively and distributed the profits equitably among members. Just as Belgian and Swiss cooperatives had protected Christian workers while rejecting Marxist visions of class warfare,²¹ Rwandan Catholic commentators saw local cooperatives as an “effective anecdote against the opposition of classes and races” which would “build mutual confidence between the great and the small, between the races, between the evolved and the less evolved.”²² Cooperatives tempered the excesses of capitalism, encouraging profit while avoiding the individualism and business abuses that made communism so appealing in European societies.²³ They allowed Catholics to address the direct material suffering of the poor, provide social security for workers, and fulfill the church’s mandate to address social problems while avoiding the secular humanism that had come to dominate Europe’s working classes.²⁴

²⁰ C.M.L., André Perraudin to Henry Sillion, 16 Feb. 1955.

²¹ Cf. Gerd-Rainer Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology: The First Wave (1924-1959)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 5-25.

²² Gregoire Kayibanda, « Editorial – L’union fait la force, » *L’Ami* 107 (Nov. 1953) : 233-34. Burundi also developed cooperatives and mutualities during this time (cf. “Le première congrès mutualiste chrétien du Burundi,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (9 September 1956) : 3).

²³ « Questions Sociales – L’Avenir de nos Coopératives, » *L’Ami* 116 (Aug. 1954) : 291 ; « Les Coopératives, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 7 Aug. 1955. On the necessity of steering Catholic social teaching on a middle course between communism and liberal capitalism, see « Les abus inhumains du capitalisme libéral, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (10 June 1956): 2.

²⁴ “Pour le progrès des Missions,” *Theologie et Pastorale au Rwanda* 24 (July 1952): 524-37.

Such secularization loomed as another major ideological threat for Catholic missionaries in early 1950s Rwanda. This challenge emerged most prominently in the lay schools debate of 1954-1955. Supported by Belgium's anti-clerical minister for colonies, Augustin Buisseret, Mwami Mutara and many nationalist Tutsi elites advocated for Belgium to curtail missionary influence in Rwandan schools and develop an independent state school system. A similar debate was underway in Belgium and Burundi at the same time.²⁵ Part of the objection to Catholic schools was ideological; some critics also raised concerns over the academic rigor of Catholic education.²⁶ The argument also reflected a broader debate on the extent to which the Rwandan state should chart an independent course from the Catholic Church, particularly as instantiated in the White Fathers and other missionary clergy. Tensions between Mutara and the White Fathers grew precipitously after a missionary denied Mutara communion in 1951 and after the Belgian government in 1952 moved a Jesuit humanities college from its planned location in Nyanza to Burundi.²⁷ While Mutara steamed at what he saw as deliberate missionary snubs, the White Fathers saw the rising opposition of Mutara and his allies as part of a larger laicist, French-Mason conspiracy to eliminate Catholic influence from society.²⁸

²⁵ See here Emiel Lamberts, "The Zenith of Christian Democracy," 69-73; Martin Conway, "Belgium," in *Political Catholicism in Europe, 1918-1965*, eds. Tom Buchanan and Martin Conway (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 212-13; "La question scolaire en Belgique," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 13 March 1955. The Burundian Mwami and nobility generally took a more pro-church line in these debates than their Rwandan colleagues. Cf. "Le conseil supérieur de l'Urundi, présidé par Le Mwami Mwambutsa, se prononce à l'unanimité contre le création d'écoles officielles laïques dans l'Urundi," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 30 Jan. 1955.

²⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°540034, Cattin to Durrieu, 3 Oct 1952.

²⁷ Cf. Paul Rutayisire, « Rudahigwa et les missionnaires, » *Dialogue* 188 (April-July 2009): 39-43.

²⁸ See here « La Franc-maçonnerie lutte contre l'Eglise, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 23 Oct. 1955.

In response, Rwanda's Catholic bishops launched a vociferous attack against the laicization of schools.²⁹ In an October 1954 joint pastoral letter on "the danger which menaces teaching in Rwanda," Déprimoz and Bigirumwami, Rwanda's two vicars apostolic, reiterated the centrality of religion for Rwanda's moral formation and argued that the Catholic Church had a "sacred right" to educate children. "IN A CATHOLIC COUNTRY as is Rwanda, THE ONLY OFFICIAL TEACHING SHOULD BE CATHOLIC TEACHING. We must protect the most sacred rights of the church, those of the education of children."³⁰ For Déprimoz, Catholic schooling was critical to preventing a nation like Rwanda with its "pagan shadows" and "barbarous superstitions" from sinking into "total moral anarchy," exposing the population to the temptations of communism. In contrast, lay schools would "prepare children for materialist and liberal ideas which are in opposition to Christian religion."³¹ The formula was simple. Morality undergirded civilization, and Catholic education underwrote morality. Therefore, the decline of Catholic education would open Rwanda to tides of neo-paganism and communism.³² Whatever its merits, such rhetoric proved convincing. Two-thirds of the Superior Council voted against Buisseret's and Mutara's plan in 1955, and the Catholic Church maintained a near monopoly on primary and secondary schooling for another decade.³³

²⁹ For background, see Fortunatus Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda 1900-1959* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), 272-75; Linden, *Church and revolution*, 236.

³⁰ The emphases are found in the original French. « DANS UN PAYS CATHOLIQUE comme l'est le Ruanda, LE SEUL ENSEIGNEMENT OFFICIEL DEVRAIT ETRE L'ENSEIGNEMENT CATHOLIQUE... Nous devons tous revendiquer les droits les plus sacrés de l'Eglise, ceux de l'éducation des enfants. » (A.G.M.Afr.N°540785, *Lettre des Vicaires Apostoliques de Kabgayi et de Nyundo sur le danger qui menace l'enseignement au Ruanda*, 25 Oct. 1954).

³¹ Laurent Déprimoz, « Mandement en Charité, 1 février 1955, » *Trait d'Union* 33 (Feb 1955).

³² « Leçons de Morale Sociale : La Patrie, » *L'Ami* 88 (April 1952) : 63.

³³ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°526358, Perraudin to Volker, 19 Nov 1954; "La question de l'enseignement au Ruanda-Urundi – Les anciens élèves du groupe scolaire d'Astrida," *L'Ami* 116 (Aug 1954): 301-02 ; "Ecole laïque au

As evidenced by the rhetoric of the lay schools debate, Catholic leaders saw the upbuilding of Christian civilization as a central plank of their evangelical mission. Europeans like Déprimoz or the Belgian primate Cardinal Van Roey praised missionaries for being “messengers of Christian civilization” in black Africa.³⁴ Nor were such sentiments limited to white Europeans. Tutsi elites like the Catholic priest and royal *biru* Alexis Kagame thanked White Father missionaries for developing the written Kinyarwanda language that facilitated the cultural renaissance of the 1930s and 1940s, noting that “religious formation is an irreplaceable element in the initiation of Black Africa to Western civilization.”³⁵ Meanwhile, young Hutu elites like Gregoire Kayibanda, editor of *L’Ami* after 1953, associated this civilizing mission with the Catholic duty to protect the common good and defend Rwanda’s status as a bulwark of African Christianity.³⁶ Even on the eve of decolonization, then, prominent European, Tutsi and Hutu commentators agreed that the Christian civilizing mission remained a central component of the church’s evangelical call.

In turn, developing Christian civilization required an ongoing alliance between church and state. As discussed in chapter one, missionaries and colonial officials assumed a close working relationship between church and state through much of the first fifty years of Rwandan Catholic history. However, the election of an anticlerical government in Belgium in

Ruanda,” *Revue du clergé africain* X, no. 6 (November 1955) : 602 ; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda*, 225-28; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 236.

³⁴ Cf. Cardinal Joseph Ernst van Roey, « L’Eglise et Enseignement Moyen, » *L’Ami* 90 (June 1952) : 104 ; Laurent Déprimoz, « Le Jubilé du Ruanda Catholique 1900-1950 » *L’Ami* 67-68 (July-August 1950) : 165.

³⁵ The *biru* were the royal keepers of Rwandan custom and played an especially important role in consecrating the Mwami’s successor, as we will see in Ch. 3. The quotation is taken from Alexis Kagame, « Leçons de Morale Sociale : La Justice Distributive, » *L’Ami* 84 (Dec 1951) : 223. For similar sentiments, see Tharcisse Gatwa, « Editorial – Un appel : que penser des questions familiales, » *L’Ami* 116 (Aug 1954): 284. For Kagame’s emphasis on missionary contributions to the development of the written Kinyarwanda language, see Alexis Kagame, « Le Christianisme dans le poésie du Ruanda, » *L’Ami* 67-68 (July-August 1950): 137-40.

³⁶ Gregoire Kayibanda, « Editorial – Il nous fait aussi des penseurs, » *L’Ami* 105 (Sept. 1953) : 169 ; Gregoire Kayibanda, « La recontre Europe-Afrique, » *L’Ami* 109 (Jan 1954) : 7.

the early 1950s offered a robust challenge to this colonial status quo.³⁷ In response, church leaders attempted to walk a tightrope, recognizing the autonomy of the state while reiterating the church's right to exercise its voice in public life. While at least one missionary spoke of his duty to "remain in the sacristy and leave the Mwami to his politics,"³⁸ most Catholic commentators stressed how the holistic and material dimensions of the gospel required Christians to evangelize both state and society. In the 1955 words of André Perraudin, "the Catholics are strong and do not fear to speak up... We do not have any desire to create here a religion of the sacristy."³⁹ From his editorial perch at *L'Ami*, Kayibanda wrote that the new missionary task entailed Rwandans "baptizing the structures and institutions" of Rwanda. While this would not require a theocracy, only an *entente* between church and state could provide a healthy basis for the further evolution of Rwandan society.⁴⁰

If such a church-state *entente* had helped to propagate a neo-traditional, hierarchical vision of Rwandan society during much of the first half of the 20th century, new winds were blowing in the early 1950s. In the face of Belgium's proposed political decentralization and Mutara's abolition of *uburetwa* and *ubuhake*, 1950s missionaries and indigenous Catholic elites exhorted Catholics to join and shape Rwanda's evolving "march for progress."⁴¹ In practical terms this meant replacing the ancestral customs of Rwanda's pagan past with

³⁷ Belgium's Socialists took power in 1954, placing the pro-church *Christelijke Volkspartij/Parti social chrétien* (PSC/CVP) in opposition until 1958. In addition to their suspicions of the Catholic Church, the Socialists took a more negative view of Belgian colonial endeavors. Cf. Emile Lamberts, "The Zenith of Christian Democracy: The Christelijke Volkspartij/Parti Social Chrétien in Belgium," in *Christian Democracy in Europe since 1945*, eds. Michael Gehler and Wolfram Kaiser (New York: Routledge, 2004): 67-84.

³⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°541449, Klep to Durrieu, 8 Aug 1955.

³⁹ C.M.L., Perraudin to Henry Sillion, 16 Feb. 1955.

⁴⁰ Gregoire Kayibanda, "Editorial – Un nouveau problème," *L'Ami* 113 (May 1954): 173-74 ; Gr. Kayibanda, « En Marche du Progrès : La condition essentielle, » *L'Ami* 117 (Sept. 1954) » 344. See also Ignace Nzamwita, "Le Droit d'Intervention de l'Eglise en matière Sociale, » *L'Ami* 107 (Nov. 1953) : 236-37.

⁴¹ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°542130, *Rapport du Vicariat du Ruanda 1950-51*; A.G.M.Afr.N°543036, Volker to Cattin, 22 Oct 1952; A.G.M.Afr.N°526777, Dejemeppe to Déprimoz, 14 Feb. 1954.

Western economic, political and human rights standards, closely associating the building of the Christian kingdom with the furthering of democracy and calling for a new focus on Rwanda's "social problem."⁴² In this vein, missionaries rejected *ubuhake* as "non-Christian" and "the Middle Ages in miniature," advocating instead for private property, mutualities and cooperatives.⁴³ Mwami Mutara himself described the 1953 decree establishing the *Conseil supérieur du pays* (CSP) as "introducing democratic principles in the functioning of our institutions...posing the foundations for the transformation of a feudal Rwanda into a modern state."⁴⁴ For his part, Kayibanda saw the Christian task as "challenging barbarous mentalities which cloaked themselves in the language of the sacred custom of the country."⁴⁵ A series of 1954 *L'Ami* articles outlined democratic models, while the Hutu writer and former Catholic seminarian Aloys Munyangaju called his readers to the "ballot boxes" and celebrated the suppression of *ubuhake* as the "the beginning of democracy."⁴⁶ Even the White Fathers began rewriting the history of Belgian occupation through the lens of elevating the masses out of feudal oppression, particularly in the pages of *L'Ami*. *Kinyamateka* showed a similar interest with the issues of *ubuhake* and *uburetwa* in the early and mid-1950s.⁴⁷ Here Christianity emerged as an ethical faith that encouraged fraternity between all, respected the

⁴² [Anon.], "Pour le progrès des Missions," *Theologie et Pastorale au Ruanda* 24 (July 1952) : 524-37.

⁴³ A.G.M.Afr.N°540335, Cattin to Durrieu, 3 Oct 1952; A.G.M.Afr.N°526778, Dejemeppe to Déprimoz, 14 Feb 1954. See also « Realisations Sociales : La mutualité de Byumba, » *L'Ami* 86 (Feb 1952): 23-24.

⁴⁴ Mutara's February 1954 speech is quoted in A.G.M.Afr.N°526777, Dejemeppe to Déprimoz, 14 Feb. 1954.

⁴⁵ Kayibanda, "En Marche du Progrès, » 343, 347.

⁴⁶ Cf. "Formation politique, L'organisation du pouvoir dans les pays d'Europe et d'Amérique – Les régimes démocratiques, » *L'Ami* 112 (April 1954) : 133-37 ; Aloys Munyangaju, "Aux Urnes," *L'Ami* 112 (April 1954) : 155-56.

⁴⁷ Paul Rutayisire, "Les signes précurseurs de la crise de la Toussaint rwandaise, » *Dialogue* 189 (Nov. 2009) : 8-12. This issue of *Dialogue* focuses on the complex historical role of *Kinyamateka* during the last half of the 20th century.

rights of each human person, and supported justice for the proletariat.⁴⁸ If Léon Classe had spent three decades establishing the Catholic missions as firm supporters of the Mwami and his Tutsi oligarchy, the egalitarian ghosts of Alphonse Brard and the early 1900s Save mission appeared to be stirring.

2. Keeping the *évolués* in the Catholic fold

To withstand the threats of communism and secularism and further an egalitarian vision of Christian civilization, the Catholic Church needed to win over the new generation of political and social elites who would lead Rwandan society as the nation moved towards political autonomy and democracy. Conversant in French and filling the lower echelons of the Belgian colonial administration, these elites were known as *évolués*. Comprised of both educated young Tutsi and former Hutu seminarians, the *évolués* owed their social status to European commerce and Catholic schools like the *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida* rather than Rwanda's ancestral institutions.⁴⁹ As Mutara's generation aged, these younger elites emerged as Rwanda's rising leadership class. Facing new ideological currents of communism, secularism, and anti-colonial nationalism, the *évolués* were also seen as an especially volatile group whose long-term Catholic sympathies could not be assumed. In the words of Louis Gasore, the Tutsi vicar general of Nyundo, "one day they (the missionaries) will be surprised to find pagan, the country which they believed entirely converted because, as they worked to

⁴⁸ Cf. « Le manifeste de la J.O.C. internationale, Bruxelles, 10 Sept. 1950, » *L'Ami* 73 (Jan 1951): 7 ; « Contrat et Travail, » *L'Ami* (April-June 1950): 63-66; 105-08; « Leçons de Morale Sociale, » *L'Ami* 76-79 (April-July 1951): 63-64, 83-84, 103-04, 123-24 ; « Le Ruanda-Urundi en 1952, » *L'Ami* 112 (April 1954) : 157-61.

⁴⁹ On the *évolués*, see A.G.M.Afr.N°543009-13, Gilles to Durrieu, 19 Aug 1950; A.G.M.Afr.N°543027, Derson, « Question des Évolués, » 23 March 1951; A.G.M.Afr.N° 731603-05, Innocent Gasabwoya, « Etude sur les relations du Clergé avec les Évolués, » 9 Feb. 1955.

earn the mass of the faithful. Certain *évolués*, working in the manner of Renan, Voltaire and Diderot, will in a century render void the land of missions.”⁵⁰

On paper, Rwanda in the early 1950s had become one of the most Catholic countries in Africa.⁵¹ Of a 1950 population of just over 1.8 million, Rwanda had nearly 372,000 baptized Catholics in 1951 with an additional 200,000 catechumens. This represented a 900% increase since the church’s silver jubilee in 1925. 1951 also saw the ordination of 20 indigenous priests. Qualitative zeal matched this quantitative growth. In 1955 over 90% of Rwanda’s Catholics made their Easter duty, up from 65-70% in the mid-1940s.⁵² And as in the 1930s and 1940s, Catholicism dominated Rwanda’s elite class even more than its peasants.⁵³ In 1950 647 of Rwanda’s 674 Tutsi chiefs had converted to Catholicism, while nearly all educated Hutu had been trained in Catholic schools and seminaries. Recognizing that Catholics outnumbered Protestants by fifteen to one and Muslims by one hundred to one, longtime White Father missionary R.P. Endriatis wrote that “it is not exaggerated to say that

⁵⁰ Louis Gasore, « L’Evolue face aux problèmes économique-sociaux, » *Théologie et Pastorale au Ruanda* 1 (June 1956) : 54.

⁵¹ Statistical information comes from « Rapport du Vicariat du Rwanda, » *Theologie et Pastorale au Ruanda* 18 (May 1950) : 412-15 ; C.M.L., « Souvenirs du Sacre de Son Excellence Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami, Vicaire Apostolique du Nyundo, » 1 June 1952, 29; A.G.M.Afr.N°542127, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat du Ruanda*, 1 July 1950 to 30 June 1951; C.M.L., Alphonse Ntezimana, « Brin d’histoire à l’occasion du Sacre du premier évêque du Ruanda, » 1952 ; Dominic Nothomb, *Petite Histoire de L’Eglise Catholique au Rwanda* (Kabgayi : 1962), 121 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°542212, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat du Kabgayi*, 1 July 1955 to 30 June 1956.

⁵² Instituted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215, the Easter duty referred to the Catholic obligation to partake in sacramental confession and receive Eucharist at least once a year. Missionaries viewed this statistic as a quantifiable measurement of how many local Catholics were practicing their faith.

⁵³ For example, while 58% of Burundi’s people were either baptized Catholics or Catholic catechumens in 1955, only 33% of Rwandans had joined the Catholic Church (Jan Adriaenssens, *Rapport sur la situation religieuse, sociale, et économique du Ruanda-Urundi* (Geneva : Institut International Catholique de Recherches Socio-Ecclésiiales, 1956), 22).

all the elite of this country is Catholic.”⁵⁴ The 1953-54 annual report from Kabgayi boldly claimed that “Rwanda has made its choice – it wants to be a Catholic country.”⁵⁵

And yet for all of the church’s evangelical successes, missionary doubts remained.⁵⁶ In addition to the ideological risks discussed above, Anglicanism and Seventh-Day Adventism continued to make inroads in Rwanda’s northern, northwestern, and eastern territories. And while Rwandan elites may have accepted Christian baptism, this did not mean that they had embraced Christian morality. Here missionaries criticized Rwanda’s “elastic” view of justice, hateful political intrigues, and lingering pagan attitudes, wondering if elite conversions reflected the Holy Spirit or a spirit of political expediency – and whether these new Christians would continue to support Rwanda’s missionary clergy or seek a more independent course. The 19th-20th century history of Europe – namely the losses of intellectual elites and the urban working class – played no small role in raising the anxieties of the White Fathers. In the face of all these challenges and ambiguities, one can better understand the prominent Tutsi priest Stanislas Bushayija’s worries that religious indifference, anti-clericalism, and neo-paganism were threatening to subsume the Tutsi *tornado*. For André Perraudin, the primary pastoral challenge of the 1950s was to “strengthen the converts of yesterday and form Christian elites capable of training the masses.”⁵⁷

⁵⁴ R.P. Endriatis, « L’Eglise actuelle du Ruanda, » *L’Ami* 67-68 (July-August 1950) : 141; Adriaenssens, *Rapport sur la situation religieuse*, 16.

⁵⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°542164, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat Apostolique du Kabgayi, 1 juillet 1953 au 30 juin 1954*.

⁵⁶ This section draws on R.P. Endriatis, « L’Eglise actuelle du Ruanda, » *L’Ami* 67-68 (July-August 1950); A.G.M.Afr.N°542146, *Rapport du Vicariat Apostolique du Kabgayi 1 Jul 1952 au 30 Juin 1953* ; Laurent Déprimoz, “Mandement de Carême,” in *Trait d’Union* 33 (Feb. 1955) ; A.G.M.Afr.N°543009-13, Gilles to Durrieu, 19 Aug 1950 ; A.G.M.Afr.N° 526781-83, Bushayija to Durrieu, 26 July 1955 ; C.M.L., Perraudin to Ducrey, 8 Sept. 1955.

⁵⁷ In this sense I would agree with Paul Rutayisire that Catholic leaders in the mid-1950s were more preoccupied with religious indifference and resurgent paganism than political change or the Hutu-Tutsi question. Cf. Paul Rutayisire, « L’Eglise catholique et le décolonisation du Rwanda ou les illusions d’une

To achieve this, the Catholic Church undertook three primary pastoral strategies. First, they enlisted the *évolués* in Catholic Action leadership. Launched in the 1920s by Pope Pius XI, Catholic Action aimed to re-Christianize European society through committed cadres of young Catholics, enlisting them in a social movement which would counter communism on the left and fascism on the right.⁵⁸ In Rwanda Catholic Action focused on empowering lay leaders to further evangelize the pagan peasantry while reforming social structures to better reflect gospel values. Catholic Action leaders applied the movement's "see, judge, act" methodology to topics ranging from instructing children and influencing political institutions to serving as Christian professionals in agriculture, commerce or administration.⁵⁹

Second, the Catholic Church commissioned groups of indigenous clergy, advanced seminarians, and lay elites to study Rwanda's social problems. These included the *Cercle Lavigerie* at the royal capital Nyanza, the *Cercle Saint Paul* at Kabgayi, and the national *L'association d'anciens* for former seminarians.⁶⁰ While missionaries preferred to describe these circles as social rather than political, these groups represented a concerted Catholic effort to indirectly influence political conversation in Rwanda on topics like democracy, economic development, and education. Mwami Mutara participated in the *Cercle Lavigerie*

victoire, » in *Rwanda: L'Eglise catholique à l'épreuve du génocide*, eds. F. Rutembesa, J.P. Karegeye, P. Rutayisire (Greenfield Park, Canada : Les Editions Africana, 2004) : 42.

⁵⁸ For a helpful summary of European Catholic Action, see Horn, *Western European Liberation Theology*, 38-53.

⁵⁹ Cf. Nothomb, *Petite Histoire*, 135; A.G.M.Afr.N°543012-13, Gilles to Durrieu, 19 Aug 1950; A.G.M.Afr.N°543024, Volker to Dejemeppe, 8 Jan 1951; « Action Catholique des Évolués, » *Trait d'Union* 28 (Aug 1954).

⁶⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°543012, Gilles to Durrieu, 19 Aug 1950 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°543027, Derson, "Question des Évolués," 23 March 1951 ; "Pour former une élite: Notre enquête sur les Cercles d'Évoluant, » *L'Ami* 81 (Sept 1951) : 163-65 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°543192-94, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariate du Kabgayi 1 July 1954 – 30 June 1955*.

gatherings in Nyanza, and several members of these groups assumed political leadership. So while claiming that “in these meetings we have never spoken of politics...but have discussed social problems,” the influential White Father Arthur Dejemeppe also celebrated the inclusion of two former members of the *Cercle Léon Classe* on the first Superior Council.⁶¹

Third, the hierarchy initiated an “apostolate of the press” to enable Catholic elites to form the masses while keeping the *évolués* within the folds of the church.⁶² Started in the 1930s, the Kinyarwanda-language Catholic weekly *Kinyamateka* addressed a more popular audience and was designed to be read orally to Rwanda’s masses of illiterate peasants. Under the 1940s editorship of Alexis Kagame, the journal emphasized the synthesis between Roman Catholicism and Rwanda’s monarchy and traditional institutions. The White Fathers’ 1953 decision to send Kagame to Rome to pursue doctoral studies in theology facilitated a major change in *Kinyamateka*’s editorial policy.⁶³ As the progressive missionary Arthur Dejemeppe replaced Kagame, *Kinyamateka*’s editorial vision shifted from a top-down focus on the monarchy to a more grassroots emphasis on social justice, the Hutu peasantry, and democracy. Over the next two years, the newspaper’s circulation more than doubled from 10,000 to 22,000. As we will see in chapter three, the newspaper also grew in controversy as the decade progressed.⁶⁴

⁶¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°526774, Dejemeppe to Déprimoz, 14 Feb 1954.

⁶² The phrase is taken from “Communications Officielles – Dimanche de la Presse,” *Trait d’Union* 30 (Oct. 1954).

⁶³ The White Fathers’ request that Kagame avoid political issues in his writing inadvertently led to one of the most influential works of early African theology, *La philosophie bantou-rwandaise de l’être*. (Cf. Alexis Kagame, *La philosophie bantou-rwandaise de l’être* (Brussels: Académie Royale des Sciences Coloniales, 1956)). For examples of White Father suspicions of Kagame’s political interests, see A.G.M.Afr.N°543089, Van Volsem to Durrieu, 26 July 1952 and A.G.M.Afr.N°543125-26, Wouters to Van Volsem, 3 July and 29 July 1952.

⁶⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°542214, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat du Kabgayi, 1955-56*, 30 June 1956 ; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 235.

In the early 1950s, *L'Ami* was the primary Catholic journal directed at elites. The White Fathers started *L'Ami* in 1950 to fight the materialist tides which threatened to swamp Rwanda's Christian elites, offering a Christian perspective on the complex questions of Rwandan social and political life.⁶⁵ Seminarians filled the pages of *L'Ami* with Catholic social teachings. For example, members of the *Cercle Saint Paul* penned over 60 articles for the Catholic press between January 1953 and June 1954.⁶⁶ *L'Ami* tended to adopt a pro-Belgian editorial policy, chastising unnamed Rwandan elites for their "unnecessary" and "destructive" criticisms of political and ecclesial authorities and defending Belgian colonial policy.⁶⁷ In 1953 the White Fathers appointed Gregoire Kayibanda as the first lay editor of *L'Ami*, giving the emerging Hutu spokesman a key platform from which to develop and propagate his political thought.

Considering his later notoriety as co-author of the 1957 Bahutu Manifesto, founder of the *Mouvement Social Muhutu*, and president of the Hutu-dominated First Republic, what is perhaps most striking in Kayibanda's early 1950s writings is the muting of the Hutu-Tutsi question. For example, while Kayibanda laments the "feudal mentality" infecting the wealthier classes, he never labels this mentality "Tutsi."⁶⁸ Even his famous 1954 manifesto, "Marching towards Progress," reads like a paean for inter-racial and intra-class collaboration

⁶⁵ « *L'Ami* à ses amis, » *L'Ami* 102 (June 1953) : 101 ; Gregoire Kayibanda, « Editorial – Entre autres choses, » *L'Ami* 108 (Dec. 1953) : 261-62.

⁶⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°526538, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariate du Kabgayi 1953-54*, 7 July 1954.

⁶⁷ Gregoire Kayibanda, « Editorial, Critique destructrice ou Action ? » *L'Ami* 104 (Aug 1953) : 155-56. See also Clays Bouuaert, "La page du Ruanda-Urundi – Discours de Monseigneur Claeys Bouuaert au conseil du Vice-Gouvernement Général," *L'Ami* 102 (June 1953): 107-10; "Conseil de Gouvernement 1953 – Discours de Mr. Pétillon, » *L'Ami* 104 (Aug. 1953) : 149-51.

⁶⁸ Gregoire Kayibanda, « Ce sera un peu dur..., » *L'Ami* 112 (April 1954) : 129-31.

on the pressing social issues of the day.⁶⁹ Significantly, Kayibanda does not name the Hutu-Tutsi question as one of these “pressing social issues.” And even after taking over the editorship at *Kinyamateka* in 1955, Kayibanda’s social critiques were marked by a surprising absence of Hutu-Tutsi language as late as January 1957.⁷⁰ As we will see in chapter three, his language would change markedly with the release of the Bahutu Manifesto in March 1957.

The early 1950s absence of Hutu-Tutsi language was not limited to Kayibanda’s writings. While themes of anti-communism, secularization, democratization, land reform, and elite conversion emerged prominently in White Father literature in the early 1950s, Hutu-Tutsi ethnic discourse was almost completely absent. Brief anthropological studies in Catholic newspapers focused instead on the categories of clan and family.⁷¹ The inter-racial question emerged as the decade progressed, but these commentaries concerned black-white relations in Belgian Congo and apartheid South Africa, not Hutu-Tutsi relations in Rwanda.⁷² Nor did the Hutu-Tutsi distinction dominate the White Fathers’ political analysis. For example, an anonymous October 1952 study of Rwandan politics described the Rwandan

⁶⁹ Gregoire Kayibanda, « En Marche du Progrès : La condition essentielle, » *L’Ami* 117 (Sept 1954) : 339-47. See also Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 67-68.

⁷⁰ Paul Rutayisire, “Les signes précurseurs de la crise de la Toussaint rwandaise, » *Dialogue* 189 (Nov. 2009) : 16-17.

⁷¹ Cf. Laurent Nkongori, “Etudes: la parenté au Ruanda,” *L’Ami* 82 (Oct 1951): 183-86 ; Marcel Pouwels, “Le Munya-ruanda,” *Grands Lacs* 164 (July 1953): 49-55 ; Marcel Pouwels, “Le Munya-Ruanda,” *Grands Lacs* 165 (Sept 1953): 23.

⁷² Cf. “Blancs et Noirs, Noirs et Noirs, Blancs et Blancs,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 24 April 1955 ; « Le problème de races, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 7 Aug. 1955 ; « Il n’y a pas de race supérieure, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 23 Oct. 1955. In commentaries on South African apartheid, White Fathers offered strident critiques of South Africa’s Dutch Reformed Church for allowing segregation in its churches and for retreating from its social responsibility in the public realm. Rather than embrace liberal structural reform or radical civil disobedience, however, the White Fathers emphasized the duty of altruistic whites to help black South Africans raise their economic and cultural aptitude. Nor were the White Fathers free from racial prejudice, accepting South Africa’s racial hierarchy as the result of deep cultural, historical, physical, and psychological differences. “Europeans are much superior to the others by the level of their culture and their education, by their intellectual and technical capacities, and also by their wealth. They form in fact a sort of especially privileged aristocracy” (« Problèmes sociaux et raciaux en Afrique du Sud, » *Grands Lacs* 158 (Dec. 1952), 26). See also « Les Protestants et la question raciale en Afrique du Sud, » *L’Ami* 112 (April 1954) : 168).

mentality as “characterized by duplicity, xenophobia, and a lack of scruples in choosing means to an end.”⁷³ While colonial writers would later associate such language with Tutsi, the labels in 1952 were national rather than ethnic.

In concluding this section, then, I would argue that the dominant socio-political category of the early 1950s was *évolué* rather than Hutu or Tutsi. Integrating the best of European and Rwandan tradition, *évolués* were a class of men who thought differently than either their royal predecessors or the common masses. “The *évolués* are the elites of Africa: a category of men who by their intellectual, moral and religious formation, and often through their social situation and material assistance, find themselves in the forefront of progress.”⁷⁴ For both Kayibanda the Hutu journalist and Louis Gasore the Tutsi priest, the “evolved men” of Rwanda had emerged from the masses and were now entrusted with the task of leading the lower classes to a higher level of civilization.⁷⁵ Likewise, for the Tutsi priest Innocent Gasabwoya, the key social division was not Hutu-Tutsi but the cleavage between “the class of *évolués* at the head of the country which have in their hands (the nation’s) destiny, and the class of the peasants.”⁷⁶ As will be seen in chapter three, this pan-ethnic *évolué* unity did not last. In the face of democratizing currents, elitist identities proved to be no match for ethnicity and nationalism in mobilizing the Rwandan masses.

⁷³ A.G.M.Afr.N°526651-52, [Anon.], « Pro Memoria sur quelques difficultés particulières au Ruanda, » 30 Oct 1952.

⁷⁴ « Tribune Libre – L’évolué, sa place, ses responsabilités, » *L’Ami* 117 (Sept 1954) : 333.

⁷⁵ Gregoire Kayibanda, “Editorial – Un peu d’optimisme,” *L’Ami* 118 (Oct. 1954): 352 ; Louis Gasore, « L’Evolue face aux problèmes économique-sociaux, » *Théologie et Pastorale au Ruanda* 1 (June 1956): 7.

⁷⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N° 731603-05, Innocent Gasabwoya, « Etude sur les relations du Clergé avec les Evolues, » 9 Feb. 1955.

B. *Ecclesia ad intra*: Internal Catholic politics, 1950-1955

While the Catholic Church grappled with Rwanda's broader social, economic and political changes, it also faced its own post-war "period of crisis."⁷⁷ In particular, nationalist rivalries between Rwandan, Burundian, and Congolese students threatened to subsume Nyakibanda seminary, the primary training ground for Catholic priests in Africa's Great Lakes region. As the number of indigenous clergy passed 100, European White Fathers and Rwandan clergy also engaged in a growing battle for ecclesial influence. In the midst of all this ferment, two churchmen – one with deep roots in Rwanda, the other recently arrived in country – rose to prominence.

The first priest was Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami. A native of Gisaka in eastern Rwanda and one of the first baptized Catholics in the country, Bigirumwami was ordained to the priesthood in 1929 and served for over twenty years as one of the first indigenous leaders of a local mission station. In 1952, the Holy See announced his appointment as Vicar Apostolic of the new vicariate of Nyundo in northwestern Rwanda. Bigirumwami thus became the first indigenous priest and first non-White Father to serve as a bishop in the Belgian colonies.

The second priest, Fr. André Perraudin, arrived in Rwanda in the midst of the Save jubilee celebrations of August 1950 after only two years in the Burundian missions. He quickly rose to prominence as a popular lecturer and then rector of Nyakibanda seminary. When Mgr. Déprimoz broke his leg in January 1955 and then resigned his position as Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi, the 41-year-old Perraudin emerged as the leading candidate to replace

⁷⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°543001, De Meire to Durrieu, 2 May 1948.

him. In the final half of this chapter, we will introduce the two ecclesial figures who led the Catholic Church through the epochal political and ethnic upheavals of 1956 to 1962.

1. Intra-clerical tensions and the appointment of a Rwandan bishop

By the early 1950s, Catholic Rwanda was no longer the exclusive province of the White Fathers. Many new priests belonged to other missionary orders. The Jesuits arrived in 1949, while the Salesians started a secondary school in Kigali in 1954. Others came from diocesan backgrounds, like the *Fidei Donum* priests who responded to Pius XII's 1957 exhortation for more African missionaries. Many of these younger missionaries came from working class backgrounds and harbored suspicions of the traditional Rwandan ruling class.⁷⁸ In addition, the White Fathers were handing over a majority of mission stations and pastoral leadership positions to Rwanda's growing indigenous clergy.⁷⁹ Several indigenous clergy traveled abroad for the first time, exposing them to a broader milieu of intellectual and ideological streams. Lay leaders were also asserting themselves, especially the leaders of groups like the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Legion of Mary.

It was the elevation of Bigirumwami, however, that symbolized the most decisive shift in ecclesial leadership in Rwanda's history.⁸⁰ Since the Holy See's 1939 decision to appoint Uganda's Joseph Kiwanuka as the first black Catholic bishop in modern Africa, *Propaganda Fide* and the White Fathers had pondered the idea of restructuring the Rwandan

⁷⁸ René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger, 1970), 107.

⁷⁹ C.M.L., Christian Gesché, « Le Vicariat Apostolique de Nyundo, » 1952, 27-36.

⁸⁰ This section on the establishment of Nyundo draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°542077-78, Durrieu to Wouters, 10 April 1949; A.G.M.Afr.N°542079, Déprimoz to Durrieu, 11 April 1949; A.G.M.Afr.N°540744, Hove to Mosmans, « Climat du Ruanda Indigène en 1952, » [n.d.]; C.M.L., Christian Gesché, "Le Vicariat Apostolique de Nyundo," 1952, 27-36.

church and appointing an indigenous bishop to head one of Rwanda's new vicariates.⁸¹

Observers speculated on the potential for an indigenous episcopal appointment during the jubilee year of 1950, but the reticence of leaders like Louis Durrieu, the Superior General of the White Fathers, delayed the appointment by another two years. Even then colonial and White Father officials helped ensure that the new vicariate of Nyundo would be far smaller than the primatial see of Kabgayi. Allegedly described by the Belgian minister of colonies as a "token indigenous vicariate" to satiate black nationalists, Nyundo received only 9 of Rwanda's 45 mission stations and included one-eighth of Rwanda's Catholic population.⁸² It also contained the largest Adventist and Anglican populations in the country, populations suspected of being "agents of British propaganda and zealots of pan-Africanist xenophobia."⁸³ Due to this religious competition and economic emigration to Congo and Uganda, Nyundo's Catholic population growth remained stagnant throughout the 1950s.⁸⁴ Whatever its shortcomings, Nyundo would serve as a trial for the broader indigenization of the church, like Kiwanuka's diocese of Masaka in southwestern Uganda. In this vein, Nyundo's Rwandan priest to White Father ratio was three to one in 1952.

⁸¹ Rome's advocacy of indigenization can be traced back to the founding of *Propaganda Fide* in the 17th century (cf. Adrian Hastings, *The Church in Africa 1450-1950* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 88-89). Establishing an indigenous hierarchy in the Catholic missions became one of the central goals of Catholic ecclesiology after Pope Benedict XV's 1919 apostolic letter *Maximum Illud*, considered to be the charter of papal missiology in the 20th century.

⁸² In 1952 there were 54,000 baptized Catholics and 27,000 catechumens in Nyundo and 350,000 baptized and 150,000 catechumens in Kabgayi (cf. De Lacger and Nothomb, *Ruanda*, 688; Nothomb, *Petite Histoire*, 130; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 291-97).

⁸³ A.G.M.Afr.N°540743, Hove to Mosmans, « Climat du Ruanda Indigène en 1952, » [n.d.].

⁸⁴ Nothomb, *Petite Histoire*, 146.

Bigirumwami came from Christian nobility with mixed Hutu-Tutsi heritage.⁸⁵ His family had deep roots in the eastern Rwandan province of Gisaka. Bigirumwami was a direct descendant of the Gisaka royal line through the king's Hutu son, although Bigirumwami would be publicly classified as a Tutsi.⁸⁶ The Gisaka royal line represented a regional rival to Rwanda's Nyanza royalty and had served as a political hotbed from the first German encounter in the 1890s through the brief British takeover of Gisaka in 1923-24. The British had even considered installing Bigirumwami's father, the devout Catholic and former seminarian Joseph Rukambwa, as an autonomous regional chief. Considering this context, Bigirumwami was fortunate to receive a name that meant "all things belong to the *mwami*."

Bigirumwami's Catholic *bona fides* were no less impressive than his noble pedigree. His family converted to Christianity in the early 1900s; his 1904 baptism was one of the first at Zaza mission station. At the age of 9, Bigirumwami became one of the first Rwandans to enter the Catholic minor seminary at Kabgayi, a primary/secondary school which helped form young boys considering the priesthood. Significantly, the seminary's rector – none other than Laurent Déprimoz, future vicar apostolic of Kabgayi – became his spiritual mentor. It was Déprimoz who shepherded Bigirumwami through the seminary system until his ordination in 1929, appointed him as superior of Muramba mission, and named him as one of the first indigenous members of the Rwanda vicariate's presbyteral (priest) council.

⁸⁵ This biographical section draws on *Hommage à Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami: Premier Evêque rwandais* (Kigali: Editions du Secrétariat général de la C.E.P.R., 2009), 5-13; Alexis Kagame, « Le Page du Ruanda, » *L'Ami* 82 (Oct. 1951) : 73 ; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 244 ; Aloys Bigirumwami, « Le clergé indigène du Rwanda, » *L'Ami* 67-68 (July-Aug 1950) : 130-31.

⁸⁶ Bigirumwami's mixed ethnic heritage exerted no small influence on his political views, as we will see in chapter three.

The day of Bigirumwami's ordination, 1 June 1952, rivaled the 1950 Save jubilee in its national scope.⁸⁷ 25,000 Rwandans gathered for Bigirumwami's consecration at Kabgayi, including 350 European representatives, Rwanda's 52 chiefs, representatives from all 45 Catholic missions, delegations from Burundi and Belgian Congo, and two of the first three African Catholic bishops in modern history (Uganda's Joseph Kiwanuka and Tanzania's Laurean Rugambwa). Bigirumwami's mentor, Mgr. Déprimoz, consecrated him to the episcopate and spoke of how this event fulfilled Lavigerie's 19th-century dream of evangelizing Africa through Africa. Days of celebration preceded and followed the event as tens of thousands of people lined the roads leading to and from Kabgayi. Echoing his comments at the Save jubilee that "our (indigenous priests') apostolic ministry is not only traced to the White Fathers but is absolutely the same,"⁸⁸ Bigirumwami professed his fidelity to Rwanda and to the missionaries who had brought the gospel to his native land, stating that "they were and remain our Fathers in the faith."⁸⁹ If the Mwami's 1946 dedication of Rwanda to Christ the King marked the high-water mark of Rwandan Christendom, the 1952 ordination of Aloys Bigirumwami to the Catholic episcopate symbolized the pinnacle of European-Rwandan cooperation in building one of the most robust Catholic churches in Africa. As Durrieu wrote in a congratulatory letter to Bigirumwami, "whether secular

⁸⁷ This description of Bigirumwami's consecration stems from A.G.M.Afr.N°542140, *Rapport du Vicariat du Ruanda du July 1951 au Juin 1952* ; "Sacre de Son Excellence Monseigneur Bigirumwami 1 Juin 1952, » *L'Ami* 91 (July 1952) : 128-33 ; *Hommage à Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami*, 14-20 ; C.M.L., « Souvenirs du Sacre de Son Excellence Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami, Vicaire Apostolique de Nyundo, » 1 June 1952.

⁸⁸ Aloys Bigirumwami, « Le clergé indigène du Ruanda, » *L'Ami* 67-68 (July-August 1950) : 131.

⁸⁹ "Sacre de Son Excellence Monseigneur Bigirumwami 1 Juin 1952," *L'Ami* 91 (July 1952): 133.

African clergy or foreign missionary clergy, our providential destiny is to work together in this divine work...in perfect fraternal unity.”⁹⁰

As so often in Rwandan history, however, the public triumph masked deeper private divisions. First among these were rising intra-clerical tensions between indigenous and European priests. Whatever his collegial words to Bigirumwami, Durrieu was already on record in 1949 positing “the profound differences which psychologically separate us [Europeans] from the blacks.” The 1950-51 Kabgayi annual report described black-white relations in the vicariate as “very delicate.”⁹¹ Missionaries in 1952 lamented the “xenophobic nationalism, lack of candor, schismatic spirit, and Machiavellian conduct” of their African priest counterparts, while the Belgian minister for colonies distinguished between indigenous priests “tinged with white” and “integrally black priests” who betrayed an African materialism more concerned with secular influence than spiritual gain.⁹² For his part, Bigirumwami grew increasingly frustrated with European missionaries’ refusal to serve under secular Rwandan clergy, a pattern which he saw contributing to a “lack of understanding and fraternal charity” on the side of the Rwandan *abbés*.⁹³

Nor was Bigirumwami himself immune from outside critique. Shortly after Bigirumwami’s consecration, the aforementioned Belgian colonial official W.V. Hove described Bigirumwami as “too pledged to the politics of the White Fathers for the

⁹⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°543191-92, Durrieu to Bigirumwami, 5 May 1952. See also A.G.M.Afr.N°543193-94, Volker to Bigirumwami, 9 May 1952.

⁹¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°526570, « Visite de Mgr. le Supérieur Général au Grand Séminaire Saint Charles à Nyakibanda, 5-11 April 1949. »

⁹² A.G.M.Afr. 542130, “Rapport du Vicariat du Ruanda du Juillet 1950 au 30 Juin 1951” ; A.G.M.Afr.N°526651, [Anon.], « Pro Memoria sur quelques difficultés particulières au Ruanda, » 30 Oct 1952 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°540747, Hove to Mosmans, “Climat du Ruanda Indigène en 1952, » [n.d.].

⁹³ A.G.M.Afr.N°543229, Bigirumwami to Hellemans, 11 April 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°543228, Bigirumwami to Durrieu, 15 Apr 1954 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°543226-27, Bigirumwami to Van Volsem, 28 Jan 1954.

nationalist priests, too indifferent to indigenous public life for the chiefs and the sub-chiefs, too rigid from a disciplinary point of view and too heretical for the Hutu priests, too foreign for the chauvinist Tutsi, a little old for the priests of the new school.”⁹⁴ Bigirumwami was not a close confidant of Mutara or his Nyanza circle, refusing the Mwami’s 1954 invitation to serve on Rwanda’s first Superior Council despite the presence of two other priests.⁹⁵ But Bigirumwami also challenged the White Fathers when necessary, defending the boundaries of his vicariate and protesting the treatment of Nyundo seminarians.⁹⁶ As we will see in subsequent chapters, Bigirumwami’s independent streak would leave him in an awkward if often-prophetic political position as Rwandan ecclesial and political life became more polarized in the late 1950s and early 1960s.

2. The Nyakibanda seminary crisis of 1952

The major seminary of Nyakibanda replaced the former major seminary at Kabgayi in 1936. Intended as a regional seminary for African students from Rwanda, Burundi, and the Kivu districts of eastern Congo, Nyakibanda produced 143 African priests in the 1930s and 1940s – over 25% of all African Catholic priests during those two decades.⁹⁷ Since the seminary remained one of the few avenues for higher education in Rwanda, the seminary

⁹⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°540747, Hove to Mosmans, “Climat du Ruanda Indigène en 1952, » [n.d.].

⁹⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°526774, Dejemeppe to Déprimoz, 14 Feb 1954. The two priests who served on the CSP in the mid-1950s were Stanislas Bushayija and Boniface Musoni. The former was seen as an ideological opponent of the Mwami, which may explain Mutara’s desire to enlist Bigirumwami. (Cf. C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, “Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 3).

⁹⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°543198-99, Bigirumwami to Durrieu, 1 Sept 1952; A.G.M.Afr.N°543200, Bigirumwami to Durrieu, 24 Jan 1953.

⁹⁷ C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Les Grands Séminaires du Centre Africain, » 3 Dec. 1950. The Nyakibanda figures even surpassed Uganda’s famous Katigondo seminary which by 1950 had formed 137 priests and enrolled 86 seminarians. Across the African continent, Rwanda had the third highest number of priestly ordinations (32) between 1910 and 1940 and the fourth highest (112) figure for the 1940 to 1957 period (*Civitas Mariae* 15 (April 1959): 7-8).

served an important social role, as many former seminarians moved into politics, business, journalism, and education. In light of this, the church faced considerable pressure to ensure that the seminary contributed to both religious and social unity. As André Perraudin wrote in a 1954 letter to his brother, “we know well that the religious and even human future of these regions is at play in the Major Seminary.”⁹⁸

By the early 1950s, however, morale was sinking as unprecedented numbers of seminarians left Nyakibanda. While 47% of major seminarians persevered to ordination between 1909 and 1946, 66% of the major seminarian population turned over between 1949 and 1953.⁹⁹ In light of the seminary’s continuing importance for forming Rwanda’s future social and political elites, the divisions that wracked Nyakibanda in the early 1950s had the potential to subvert Rwandan society.

Nyakibanda’s turnover resulted from divisions between faculty and students and between the seminarians themselves. Durrieu attributed much of the blame to the seminary’s White Father professors, arguing that they were alienating the seminarians and driving them into the hands of anti-Belgian nationalists and other “propagators of subversive doctrine” rather than forming “men of the church.”¹⁰⁰ Notable here was the degree to which missionary commentators analyzed these tensions in nationalist rather than ethnicist language, writing for example that “the mentality of the Banyarwanda is very different than that of surrounding peoples, and it seems that we cannot employ the same means with them as with the

⁹⁸ C.M.L., André Perraudin to Francis Perraudin, 3 April 1954.

⁹⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°731595, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1954-55*, 9 Aug 1955.

¹⁰⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N° 52670-71, « Visite de Mgr. le Supérieur Général au Grand Séminaire Saint Charles à Nyakibanda, 5-11 April 1949. »

others.”¹⁰¹ While Tutsi comprised a sizeable majority of Rwandan Catholic seminarians at the time, the language of “Bahutu” and “Batutsi” does not appear here. Nyakibanda’s divisions are described in inter-national rather than intra-ethnic terms.

This stemmed in part from the fact that nationalism rather than ethnicism was driving the seminarian community apart in the early 1950s.¹⁰² In 1951, the seminary’s Rwandan majority demanded the establishment of a separate seminary for Burundian and Congolese students. Rather than acquiesce to these demands, Nyakibanda’s rector, the White Father Xavier Seumois, dismissed four of the Rwandan seminarians in 1951. Following this, a small coterie of the remaining Rwandans took the unusual step of sending an official letter to Rome requesting Seumois’s dismissal, highlighting his Belgian identity and alleged bias in favor of the Burundian students (since Seumois had previously served in the Burundian missions). During the first three months of 1952, 23 seminarians departed Nyakibanda, including over 50% of the Burundian student population.

The White Fathers themselves disagreed on the proper response. On one side was Déprimoz, the champion of the indigenous clergy who had stated as early as 1949 that Seumois should resign and sided with the Rwandan seminarians in the latest dispute. On the other side was Durrieu who had resisted the appointment of an indigenous bishop and feared the consequences of acquiescing to seminarian pressure. Whatever his frustrations with the White Father professors, Durrieu accused the Rwandan clergy of corrupting the seminarians

¹⁰¹ A.G.M.Afr.N° 526594-97, Van Volsem to Durrieu, *Rapport de Visite du Grand Séminaire Régional de Nyakibanda*, 26 Mars au 3 Avril 1952.

¹⁰² This analysis of the 1952 Nyakibanda crisis draws on A.G.M.Afr.N° 526594-97, Van Volsem to Durrieu, *Rapport de Visite du Grand Séminaire Régional de Nyakibanda*, 26 Mars au 3 Avril 1952 ; A.G.M.Afr.N° 526023-24, *Rapport de la réunion des ordinaires*, 7 April 1952 ; A.G.M.Afr.N° 526583, Hellemans to Van Volsem, 22 April 1952; A.G.M.Afr.N°526649, Durrieu to Déprimoz, 21 May 1952 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°526213, *Rapport Annuel 1953, Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda*, 7 July 1953.

and chastised Déprimoz for tolerating insubordination in the seminary and undermining Seumois's authority. As the situation continued to deteriorate throughout 1952, however, Déprimoz's position grew stronger. In September, the White Fathers agreed to limit Nyakibanda to Rwandans and reassigned the seminary's Burundian and Congolese students to Burundi's new major seminary at Burasira, reducing Nyakibanda's population from 83 to 50. The White Fathers also decided to appoint a new Swiss rector to replace the Belgian Seumois. The man they chose, Fr. André Perraudin, was one of the few Nyakibanda professors whose reputation had improved between 1950 and 1952.

3. André Perraudin's background

Born in 1914 in the mountainous region of Valée de Bagnes in French-speaking Switzerland, André Perraudin was one of nine children of a devout Catholic schoolmaster.¹⁰³ Two aspiring White Fathers in his rural parish encouraged Perraudin and his brother Jean to join the Missionaries of Africa. His parents enthusiastically supported their sons' vocations, writing as early as 1925 of their "future missionaries" and praying a decade later that "God will bless you and grant you all that you need to become good missionaries after the heart of Jesus."¹⁰⁴ After attending a White Father minor seminary in Valais, Perraudin pursued his early philosophy studies in France before completing his novitiate in Algeria and his

¹⁰³ This biographical section is drawn from André Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda: Les six premières années de mon épiscopat (1956-1962)* (Paris: Éditions Saint-Augustin, 2003), 12-16 ; « Un nouvel évêque au Ruanda, » *Revue du Clergé Africain* XI, no. 3 (May 1956) : 276-77 ; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 328-29. Perraudin's nominating documents as rector of Nyakibanda also describe his background (A.G.M.Afr.N°526660, Van Volsem to Fumasoni-Biondi, 22 Sept. 1952).

¹⁰⁴ C.M.L., Angeline and Louis Perraudin to Rev. Père Supérieur de l'Institut Lavigerie, 11 Dec. 1925 ; Louis Perraudin to André Perraudin, 17 May 1936. From the archival records in Kigali, it appears that Louis Perraudin continued a close correspondence with André Perraudin throughout the 1920s and 1930s.

scholasticate in Tunisia. After ordination in 1939, he initially dreamed of undertaking an apostolate to Muslims in North Africa or the Middle East like his cousin Hubert Bruchez.¹⁰⁵

At the outbreak of the Second World War, such dreams were placed on hold. The White Fathers sent Perraudin back to Switzerland where he spent the war years directing a minor seminary in his hometown of Valais and overseeing a new White Father scholasticate in Fribourg. These years saw the French-speaking Perraudin develop a deep disdain for Nazism and its sympathizers in German-speaking Switzerland. As we will see in chapter three, he would read political developments in late 1950s Rwanda in part through the Nazi prism.¹⁰⁶

By the end of the war, Perraudin's evangelical interests had shifted from the Middle East to the White Fathers' most successful missions in Africa's Great Lakes region. The missionary call finally came in 1947. Dispatched to replace his brother Jean, Perraudin ministered for two and a half years in rural Burundi. His mission in Kibumbu included 20,000 Christians, representing over 25% of the local population. Dominated by Tutsi pastoralists, however, Kibumbu missionaries struggled to cultivate a regular worshipping community.¹⁰⁷ Despite these challenges, Perraudin's early comments reflected the enthusiasm of a new missionary. "Our brave people are certainly far from perfection, but their Christian behavior can well serve as a lesson to Europe where religion too often tends to

¹⁰⁵ Perraudin's correspondence with Bruchez in the early 1950s reflected the esteem in which Perraudin held his cousin. This respect only grew after Bruchez was martyred in Kabylie, Algeria in October 1956 during the Franco-Algerian war (cf. C.M.L., *Lettres de Père Hubert Bruchez*, 11 Jan. 1956, 22 Oct. 1956).

¹⁰⁶ In their personal correspondence, Perraudin's brother Jean wrote in 1938 of the "menace of Hitler" and celebrated a recent Swiss victory over the German soccer team (C.M.L., Jean Perraudin to André Perraudin, 19 June 1938). For more on the effect of the Fribourg years on Perraudin's political theology, see Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 223.

¹⁰⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°545023, Bernard Hellemans, "Visite de Règle du 10-21 March 1950 (Kibumbo)."

become a religion of Sunday...Missionary life seems magnificent to me in Burundi.”¹⁰⁸

Perraudin did note Hutu-Tutsi differences in his early letters. He described Hutu in one letter as “one of the subjects of an inferior caste” and elsewhere mentioned his experience instructing a “semi-circle of Batutsi of the purest kind.” Overall, though, these early letters focused more on the cultural and spiritual transformation wrought by Christianity in a pagan Burundi that Perraudin described as existing in a “miserable state” prior to the arrival of the first missionaries.¹⁰⁹

For all of his pastoral zeal, Perraudin was an intellectual with years of experience forming young seminarians back in Switzerland. Because of this, he was not left toiling in upcountry mission stations for long. In June 1950, the White Fathers appointed him as a professor at Nyakibanda major seminary.¹¹⁰ Perraudin arrived in Rwanda during the August 1950 golden jubilee of Save mission. Not surprisingly, his first impression of Rwanda was that of a flourishing church. In a reflection on the celebration, Perraudin highlighted the inter-racial nature of the jubilee Mass “with white and black ministers fraternally united in service of the same Master” and underlined how the White Fathers and Belgium had placed Rwanda on a path to “true progress,” describing the Eucharistic Host as a “sun for destroying the pagan night and its miseries.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Premier voyage à Burundi, » 15 December 1947.

¹⁰⁹ C.M.L., André Perraudin, “Les fêtes de l’action de grâces du Burundi, 1898-1948, » 23 Aug. 1948; André Perraudin, « Sous les étoiles, » 7 Jan. 1950. Elsewhere Perraudin noted the challenge of translating Burundians’ frequent confessional practice into behavioral change. “The old pagan blood still circulates very vividly in our neophytes” (C.M.L., André Perraudin, “Visite d’une succursale au Burundi,” Munyange, 1948).

¹¹⁰ Perraudin regretted how quickly the White Fathers moved him from a parish station to the seminary. “I regret often this life which is so true and so near the people. At the Seminary one often has the impression that it is like Europe” (C.M.L., André Perraudin to Francis Perraudin, 3 April 1954). For similar sentiments, see C.M.L., Perraudin to Wyckaert, 14 June 1955.

¹¹¹ C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Le Jubilé du Rwanda, 1900-1950, » 15 Aug. 1950. For Perraudin’s retrospective comments on this event, see his autobiography (Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 16).

Perraudin himself flourished in his new role as seminary professor. Echoing Lavigerie, he wrote early in his tenure that the faculty's goal was "not to make them Europeans but good priests of the country from which they come."¹¹² Perraudin taught a wide range of courses including sociology, morality, pedagogy, canon law, and a two-month diaconal course on justice. His most popular class was missiology.¹¹³ Engaging questions of ethnology, local culture, and church growth, missiology was a perennial favorite among the Rwandan seminarians. Perraudin gained even more adherents by expanding the curricular focus to include broader questions of European-African race relations, the tensions between Western and customary law, and "the problem of evolution," namely Rwanda's development from a feudal monarchy to a modern capitalist democracy. Perraudin also de-emphasized the traditional ethnological component of Catholic missiology, recognizing the potential pitfalls of studying such a subject in Rwanda. "This course should be conceived differently than in Europe: treating systematically ethnology seems to me extremely delicate considering the reactions which would be produced in the audience."¹¹⁴ His superiors seemed less hesitant, however, recommending that Perraudin address the "delicate questions" through a full presentation of Catholic social doctrine. Unmentioned, however, is the content of these "delicate questions," whether the Hutu-Tutsi distinction or something else.¹¹⁵

As Perraudin developed a devoted following at Nyakibanda, he became the logical choice to succeed Seumois after the crisis of 1951-52. His nomination documents praised his

¹¹² C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Les Grand Séminaires du Centre Africain, » 3 Dec. 1950.

¹¹³ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°526658-62, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1952*, 5 March 1953 ; A.G.M.Afr.N° 526661, *Rapport Annuel 1952*, 5 March 1953 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°526516, *Rapport de la Réunion Annuelle des Ordinaires*, 29 March 1954 ; A.G.M.Afr.N° 526537, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1953-54*, 7 July 1954 ; C.M.L., André Perraudin, "Je rends grace à Dieu, » 25 Aug. 1989.

¹¹⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°526006-015, André Perraudin, "Un curriculum nouveau pour le séminaire régionale de Nyakibanda, 1952, » [n.d.].

¹¹⁵ C.M.L., Leo Volker to André Perraudin, 12 July 1951.

intellectual gifts, linguistic skills, pastoral judgment, personal holiness, and political moderation. As a Swiss native, he also stood outside of the Belgian paradigm; Perraudin's nationality would serve him well as he advanced up the church ladder in the early 1950s. He seemed to be the one European professor who retained a "great and profound influence" on the seminarians.¹¹⁶ Perraudin himself attributed his positive relations with the Rwandan seminarians to his lack of caste prejudice, a seeming reference to Hutu-Tutsi distinctions which Perraudin at this point never described in racial terms. "I do not believe...that I have a very bad press among the Banyarwanda. I have not come here like others with the ideas of caste"¹¹⁷ Perraudin's only shortcoming was his initial posting in the Burundian missions; Rwandan seminarians tended to oppose missionaries seen as having Burundian sympathies. But this problem was declining with the transfer of the Burundian seminarians in 1952, and the White Fathers subsequently appointed Perraudin as the new rector of Nyakibanda in September.

4. Perraudin's leadership at Nyakibanda, 1952-1955

After being appointed rector, Perraudin's first decision was to clean the slate. He worked with his superiors to replace or reassign all six of Nyakibanda faculty members. Four were dismissed, and the remaining two were assigned new subjects.¹¹⁸ He also decided not to inform the new professors about Nyakibanda's recent problems. "It is perhaps better

¹¹⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°526660, Van Volsem to Fumasoni-Biondi, 22 September 1952.

¹¹⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°526239, Perraudin to Seumois, 22 Sept. 1952. As noted above, his 1948 letter on the 50th anniversary of the first Burundian missions described Hutu as "one of the subjects of the inferior caste" (C.M.L., André Perraudin, "Les fêtes de l'action de grâces du Burundi, 1898-1948," 23 Aug. 1948).

¹¹⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°526658, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1952*, 5 March 1953.

moreover for the orientation of new personnel that they not know the former atmosphere.”¹¹⁹

As we will see in subsequent chapters, this would not be the last time that Perraudin would attempt to start fresh after a particularly controversial period.

Perraudin also developed a somewhat uneven relationship with Rwanda’s newest bishop, Aloys Bigirumwami.¹²⁰ In light of the seminary’s recent struggles, the White Fathers asked Perraudin in 1952 to coordinate a curricular overhaul at Nyakibanda. Perraudin consented to his superiors’ plans to exclude Bigirumwami from this process, preferring to keep the new curriculum firmly under White Father control. In early 1953, he antagonized Bigirumwami when he refused to allow several Nyundo minor seminarians to commence studies at Nyakibanda. Tensions increased when Perraudin expelled several Nyundo major seminarians from the seminary during 1954. In addition, Perraudin vigorously opposed Bigirumwami’s 1952-53 requests to send Nyundo seminarians to Rome in part because Perraudin saw *Pontifical Urbaniana*, the Roman college for the missions, as “anti-white.” He went so far as to describe Bigirumwami’s plans as “premature innovations on the part of a young Vicar Apostolic,” language which he later regretted.¹²¹ Although Déprimoz supported Bigirumwami’s plans to send his seminarians abroad, Perraudin temporarily convinced Bigirumwami to follow the strictures of the 1951 Leopoldville conference which advised against sending seminarians to Rome.¹²² But after Bigirumwami sent several seminarians to

¹¹⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°526241, Perraudin to Volker, 16 Oct. 1952.

¹²⁰ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°526249, Perraudin to Volker, 20 Nov. 1952; A.G.M.Afr.N°526252-53, Perraudin to Durrieu, 22 Dec. 1952; A.G.M.Afr.N°526370, Perraudin to Durrieu, 24 Dec. 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526288, Perraudin to Durrieu, 29 Sept. 1953.

¹²¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°526254, Perraudin to Volker, 20 Jan 1953. Perraudin wrote in February 1953 of expressing himself too “crudely” on this issue (A.G.M.Afr.N°526259, Perraudin to Volker, 20 Feb. 1953).

¹²² A.G.M.Afr.N°526261, Perraudin to Volker, 7 March 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°526266, Perraudin to Bigirumwami, 29 March 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°526272, Perraudin to Volker, 3 June 1953.

Louvain in 1954, Perraudin lamented Bigirumwami's seeming lack of confidence in Nyakibanda seminary.¹²³

Like Durrieu, Perraudin also worried that indigenous clergy were corrupting Rwanda's seminarians.¹²⁴ Advocating for a reduction in seminarian vacation time, Perraudin lamented the "critical spirit" in the mission stations which he attributed in part to the "psychosis of independence" which had grown "especially since the consecration of His Excellency Mgr. Bigirumwami."¹²⁵ While Perraudin lauded improvements in seminarian formation during the course of 1953 and 1954, he continued to view the sanctification of the clergy and clerical unity as the most pressing problems facing the Rwandan church. He feared that social changes in Rwanda would spark further intra-clerical divisions and worried especially about inter-racial clerical tensions in the parishes. While recognizing the reality of white racism, Perraudin also worried about black racism and insisted that the church's catholicity provided the only long-term solution to the problem. In an effort to address the problem directly, Perraudin in 1955 instituted recollection days for local clergy at Nyakibanda.

¹²³ A.G.M.Afr.N°526330, Perraudin to Volker, 4 July 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526361, Perraudin to Volker, 23 Dec 1954.

¹²⁴ This section draws upon A.G.M.Afr.N°526281, Perraudin to Durrieu, 27 Aug. 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°526288, Perraudin to Durrieu, 29 Sept. 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°526330, Perraudin to Volker, 4 July 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526338, Perraudin to Seumois, 7 July 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526370, Perraudin to Durrieu, 24 Dec. 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°731600, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1954-55*, 9 August 1955.

¹²⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°526268, André Perraudin, « Rapport du Conseil du Séminaire sur les Vacances des Séminaristes, » 9 April 1953. In a separate circular, Perraudin instructed local priests to keep their distance from the seminarians (A.G.M.Afr.N°526116, André Perraudin, "Circulaire au Prêtres," 8 July 1953).

Like many of his confreres, Perraudin saw Catholic social teaching as the antidote to many of the nationalist and inter-racial tensions that threatened to divide Rwanda's clergy.¹²⁶ Shaped especially by the French theologian Jacques Leclercq, who shared Jacques Maritain's commitment to translating Christian values into a pluralistic social milieu, Perraudin saw the clergy as teachers who would guide laity in making Christian decisions in the world.¹²⁷ Perraudin wrote in the 1952 Nyakibanda annual report of the need to "form their [seminarians'] consciences on questions of justice" and a year later agreed that the key to Rwanda's healthy political evolution was the influence of Catholic social doctrine on Rwanda's morals and institutions. In his lectures Perraudin frequently commented on contemporary political events. His missiology curriculum engaged problems of public security, the judiciary, and the distribution of public office.

But while Perraudin showed a definite interest and concern for issues of social justice, one must be careful about transforming him into some kind of proto-liberation theologian. Rather Perraudin comes across as a man of Catholic Action, more concerned with forming strong Catholic elites (e.g., chiefs, teachers, *évolués*) than in advocating any kind of preferential option for the poor (Hutu or otherwise). And contrary to the anti-statist critique of much liberation theology, Perraudin continued to support a broad alliance between church and state, writing as early as 1947 that missionary works had resulted from the "fruit of the

¹²⁶ This section draws upon A.G.M.Afr.N°526662, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1952*, 5 March 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°526537, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1953*, 7 July 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°731599, *Nyakibanda Rapport Annuel 1954-55*, 9 Aug. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°731591-94, Perraudin to [Anon.], 15 Dec. 1953.

¹²⁷ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 18. For Leclercq's views on Christian civilization, church-state relations and social ethics, see Jacques Leclercq, *La Vie du Christ dans son Église* (Paris: Cerf, 1947), 217-47, 254-301 and Jacques Leclercq, *Vivre chrétiennement notre temps* (Tournai, Belgium : Casterman, 1957), 11-21, 38-83.

sincere collaboration of the Church and the government of the colony.”¹²⁸ If anything, the real proto-liberationist churchman of the mid-1950s was Arthur Dejemeppe, the aforementioned vicar delegate of Kabgayi whose two years at the helm of the Catholic newspaper *Kinyamateka* shifted its editorial line from Kagame’s focus on Rwanda’s cultural past towards a new emphasis on social justice.¹²⁹

With the exception of the “caste” language above, Perraudin rarely alluded to a Hutu-Tutsi problem in the early 1950s.¹³⁰ To be sure, Perraudin wrote in the 1952 Nyakibanda annual report of wanting to foster “a more forthright fusion between subjects of the different races and vicariates,” attributing seminary tensions to “the human tendency of people of the same ethnic group to come together.” Yet in this same report he noted that the White Fathers’ decision to relocate the Burundian and Congolese seminarians stemmed from a desire to “suppress at its root certain difficulties stemming from ethnic differences” – a comment which reflected how easily ethnic and national language could meld and overlap. Later in 1953, Perraudin traced intra-ecclesial divisions to political agitation, the promise of independence, and “fights between blacks and whites,” but he never mentioned Hutu-Tutsi tensions. Likewise, White Father superiors praised Perraudin for “maintaining perfect union between the two clerical factions in Rwanda.” The language of “two” rather than “three” should be noted – the division here was black-white, not Hutu-Tutsi-European. Even in his

¹²⁸ C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Premier voyage à Burundi, » 15 Dec. 1947. A year later he praised the “frank collaboration” between the Belgian Resident, the Burundian Mwami, and Burundi’s Vicar Apostolic as symbolized by the Resident’s gift of 300 million Belgian francs to the mission and the Mwami’s gift of 50 million Rwandan francs (C.M.L., André Perraudin, “Les fêtes de l’action de grâces du Burundi, 1898-1948,” 23 Aug. 1948).

¹²⁹ Jean-Paul Harroy, *Rwanda : Souvenirs d’un Compagnon de la marche du Rwanda vers la démocratie et l’indépendance* (Brussels : Hayez, 1984), 228.

¹³⁰ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°526559, *Rapport Annuel 1952*, 5 March 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°526272, Perraudin to Volker, 3 June 1953; A.G.M.Afr.N°526343, Volker to Perraudin, 4 Sept. 1954.

2003 autobiography, Perraudin wrote that “there were no visible ethnic problems during my sojourn at the major seminary of Nyakibanda,” claiming that he only realized the extent of Tutsi domination after being named Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi in 1956. Namely, of the 100 priests that Perraudin ordained between 1951 and 1962, 75 were classified as Tutsi.¹³¹

Whatever their origins, the divisions which rent the Nyakibanda community in the late 1940s and early 1950s healed considerably by the 1954-55 academic year.¹³² The seminarian population rebounded from its 1953 low of 50 to 67 by late 1955. White Fathers in Rome described the students as “serious” and “submissive to authority,” the professorial staff as “homogenous,” and Perraudin as “supernatural.” In particular, Perraudin’s superiors attributed the improvement to Perraudin’s calm but resolute leadership and the decision to turn Nyakibanda into an exclusively Banyarwanda seminary, as this eliminated the Burundian-Rwandan-Congolese tensions of previous years. European-African clerical tensions remained problematic but now stood alongside more perennial challenges like a clerical petition to remove the obligation of priestly celibacy (a petition which Perraudin robustly opposed). As 1955 began, the major seminary of Nyakibanda seemed restored to its former stability, the infighting of the early 1950s a distant memory. And as Nyakibanda’s atmosphere improved, the reputation of its rector rose to the point that a priest who had only

¹³¹ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 19, 134. Perraudin struck a more antagonistic note in a 1995 interview with the Hutu priest and church historian Fortunatus Rudakemwa, allegedly commenting that “Hutu (seminarians) were considered as second class men by the others who said they were made to command with the mentality of the *Übermensch* which you have known well in Germany” (Rudakemwa, *L’évangélisation du Rwanda*, 331-32).

¹³² This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°526539, *Rapport Annuel 1953-54*, 7 July 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526374-75, Langevin to Côte, 12 Jan. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°526395, Boutry to Volker, 31 July 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°526542, *Rapport de la réunion annuelle des Ordinaires*, 10 Nov. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°526401, Perraudin to Volker, 4 Oct. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°526322-23, De Canniere to Volker, 23 Feb 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526363, De Canniere to Volker, 15 Dec. 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526380-81, Cogniaux to Volker, 13 March 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°526380-81, Cogniaux to Volker, 13 March 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°526609, Hellemans, Nyakibanda *Carte de Visite*, March 19-30, 1954; A.G.M.Afr.N°526401, Perraudin to Volker, 4 Oct. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°526398, Perraudin to Durrieux, 12 Aug. 1955.

worked in the country for five years became the leading candidate to assume the most important ecclesial post in Rwanda.

5. Nyakibanda to Kabgayi: Perraudin's appointment as Vicar Apostolic

The sudden vacancy at the head of the Kabgayi vicariate came about through unfortunate circumstances. Although the 70-year-old Déprimoz had struggled with medical problems for years, he continued serving as Vicar Apostolic until he broke his leg in an overnight accident on 17 January 1955.¹³³ The injury required him to seek treatment in Belgium, and in March Déprimoz decided that Kabgayi's demands were too much for him to bear.¹³⁴ As Déprimoz tendered his resignation to the Vatican, the search began for a suitable replacement.

The first candidate was Arthur Dejemeppe, the man appointed to oversee the vicariate after Déprimoz's January injury.¹³⁵ Dejemeppe had replaced Déprimoz's close confidant R.P. Endriatis as vicar delegate in 1954, perhaps in response to Endriatis's and Déprimoz's perceived biases towards the indigenous clergy and traditionalists at court.¹³⁶ Close to Prosper Bwanakweri and the other Astridiens, Dejemeppe had also accompanied Gregoire Kayibanda to the international *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne* (JOC) conference in Belgium in 1950. He later proved instrumental in Kayibanda's appointment as the editor of *L'Ami*

¹³³ Nothomb mentions a hemorrhage in November 1950 which sent Déprimoz back to Europe for months. Déprimoz also fell seriously ill near the end of 1951 (Nothomb, *Petite Histoire*, 120, 125).

¹³⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°542071, Déprimoz to Durrieu, 9 March 1955. The Catholic Church did not announce Déprimoz's resignation publicly until 3 June 1955 (A.D.K., Déprimoz to Clergy & Religious, 3 June 1955).

¹³⁵ This section draws upon A.G.M.Afr.N°543024, Volker to Dejemeppe, 8 Jan 1951; A.G.M.Afr.N°526782, Bushayija to Durrieu, 26 July 1955; Nothomb, *Petite Histoire*, 145; A.G.M.Afr.N°541408, Hartmann to Volker, 8 June 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°541426-27, Van Heeswijk to Durrieu, 25 July 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°541468-71, Aelvot to Durrieu, 13 Oct 1955.

¹³⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°540034, Cattin to Durrieu, 3 Oct 1952. Until he was sent to Rome in September 1952, Alexis Kagame had served as Déprimoz's personal secretary (Nothomb, *Petite Histoire*, 122).

(1953) and then *Kinyamateka* (1955). Dejemeppe also attended the February 1954 opening of Rwanda's new Superior Council, an event which he celebrated as "a commencement of the democratization of (Rwandan) institutions."¹³⁷ By 1955, however, Dejemeppe's activism had become as much of a liability as Déprimoz's perceived passivity. He was criticized for needlessly alienating the Mwami, Rwanda's traditional leadership, the majority of *évolués*, and even the Belgian colonial resident. Even as a few indigenous priests spoke up in his defense, Dejemeppe was never seriously considered for the final appointment as Vicar Apostolic.¹³⁸

Rather than Dejemeppe, the White Fathers proposed three candidates to *Propaganda Fide* in May 1955 – Johannes Hartmann, Alphonse Van Hoof, and André Perraudin.¹³⁹ In nominating three Europeans, the White Fathers demonstrated that they were not quite ready to concede ecclesial power inside Rwanda. Born in 1921, the Belgian-Flemish Hartmann served as superior of the minor seminary of Kabgayi. Praised for improving discipline and morale in the seminary, the 34-year-old Hartmann was also criticized for his youth and deemed too "timid" for the job.¹⁴⁰ Van Hoof, a Belgian Flemish native of Antwerp, offered a stronger portfolio. In fact, the White Fathers had just appointed Van Hoof to serve as their regional superior for the Rwandan and Burundian vicariates. While praised for his intelligence, piety, zeal, and lack of racial bias, Van Hoof was also known for his brusque manner, a particular liability for a bishop in Rwanda. Even more significantly, he was a

¹³⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°526774, Dejemeppe to Déprimoz, 14 Feb 1954.

¹³⁸ Stanislas Bushayija protested the "intense campaign against Fr. Dejemeppe" which he traced to the Mwami and his entourage (A.G.M.Afr.N°526782, Bushayija to Durrieu, 26 July 1955).

¹³⁹ Most of this commentary comes from A.G.M.Afr.N°542056-57, Durrieu to Propaganda Fide, 13 May 1955.

¹⁴⁰ Hartmann himself endorsed Perraudin, lauding Perraudin's piety, tact, Swiss identity, and the respect he had earned from missionaries and indigenous clergy (A.G.M.Afr.N°541408, Hartmann to Volker, 8 June 1955).

Flemish Belgian at a moment in Rwandan history when Belgian-Rwandan relations were becoming increasingly tenuous.

Perraudin thus emerged as the leading candidate for the job.¹⁴¹ A Swiss whose country had no colonial designs in the region, Perraudin was also an intellectual whose passion for social justice did not trump his overriding commitment to ecclesial and national unity. Unlike the more traditionalist Déprimoz or the social democrat Dejemeppe, Perraudin was not associated with the growing ideological and ethnic factions within the church.¹⁴² His nominating documents highlighted his success in restoring harmony to Nyakibanda and his positive relationships with white and black clergy. His superiors also praised Perraudin's spiritual depth and diplomatic skills while underlining his willingness to stand up to indigenous authorities, Rwandan priests, and Mgr. Bigirumwami. Most importantly, Perraudin was not French or Belgian. In the words of Antoine Grauls, the Vicar Apostolic of Gitega in Burundi, "there is an anti-Belgian movement which has developed for a long time and in particular in recent times, and I believe that a foreigner would be more easily accepted."¹⁴³ Even Perraudin's relative novelty on the Rwandan stage could be viewed as a strength – he appeared as an attractive new face for a new moment in the history of the Rwandan church. In Durrieu's concluding recommendation, "I know little personally about Fr. Perraudin, but what I know makes me think that he is the man of the situation in

¹⁴¹ This section also draws on the nominating documents for Perraudin found in A.G.M.Afr.N°542042, Durrieu to Propaganda Fide, 13 May 1955 and A.G.M.Afr.N°542061, Durrieu to Propaganda Fide, 17 May 1955.

¹⁴² Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 328. Appointing Swedish, Danish, and Swiss missionaries to leadership was not uncommon in post-war Africa, as they stood outside the national mission model and could theoretically offer more dispassionate guidance as decolonization accelerated (Hastings, *History of African Christianity*, 43).

¹⁴³ Grauls quoted in A.G.M.Afr.N°542042, Durrieu to Propaganda Fide, 13 May 1955.

Rwanda.” In a non-binding survey of White Fathers in Rwanda, Perraudin outpolled Van Hoof by 25 votes to 13.¹⁴⁴

Despite the approbations, however, the nomination did not come for months.¹⁴⁵ By October, missionaries openly worried about the delay, noting that the issue of the Kabgayi succession had become a point of political gossip. The Nyanza superior described the royal capital as reaching a “boiling point,” while the Italian superior of Save depicted Rwanda as “akin to a stormy sea.” Even Durrieu sent an impassioned letter to *Propaganda Fide* demanding an immediate decision as local clergy wondered if the delay portended the appointment of another indigenous bishop.

Christmas finally brought the long-awaited news. Notified on December 19, Perraudin was officially announced as the new Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi on December 30, 1955.¹⁴⁶ The initial reaction was enthusiastic. Missionaries lauded Perraudin as “the man of the moment,” noting the positive reaction of the indigenous clergy to the selection of a non-Belgian known for assuaging white-black tensions at Nyakibanda. “Mgr. Perraudin...is universally known and liked in Rwanda for his supernatural spirit, his clear views, his good will and his simplicity. We are all of one heart with him.”¹⁴⁷ *“Le plus chic confrere au*

¹⁴⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°542040, [anon.], [n.d.].

¹⁴⁵ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°541449, Klep to Durrieu, 8 Aug 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°541473-74, Levie to Durrieu, 18 Oct. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°541494, Contini to Volker 15 Nov. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°542065, Durrieu to Fumasoni-Biondi, 13 Oct 1955.

¹⁴⁶ Cf. “Musenyeri André Perraudin, Umushumba wa vikariyati ya Kabgayi,” *Kinyamateka* 25, 279 (January 1956): 1.

¹⁴⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°541550-51, Gasqui to Durrieu, 23 April 1956. For other positive comments, see A.G.M.Afr.N°526411, Kaisin to Durrieu, 23 Dec. 1955; A.G.M.Afr.N°541513-14, Clemens to Durrieu, 3 Jan. 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°541519, Volker to Schaetzen, 23 Jan. 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°541417, Volker to De Canniere, 11 Jan. 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°526544, Permentier to Durrieu, 6 March 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°541542, Levie to Durrieu, 5 April 1956.

Vicariat’ was about to become its leader “with the confidence of all.”¹⁴⁸ The extent to which Perraudin retained this confidence is the subject of the next chapter.

In describing Catholic politics in early 1950s Rwanda, I have underlined three important points for the rest of our study. First, Rwandan politics concerned a far wider array of themes in the early 1950s than the Hutu-Tutsi question. These themes of secularization, democratization, anti-communism, and Christian civilization will provide important ideological contexts for understanding both the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi question and why this question became so divisive in the latter years of the 1950s. In the face of this ideological pluralism, I have also argued that the Catholic Church’s primary pastoral strategy in the early 1950s focused on retaining the loyalties of Rwanda’s *évolués*, the rising generation of Rwandan elites who had been trained in Catholic and colonial schools. In this sense, church leaders recalibrated rather than rejected Classe’s focus on elite conversion.

Second, I have demonstrated that political and racial tensions inside the Rwandan church predated the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi question in 1956 and 1957. Rwandan, Congolese and Burundian seminarians were already dividing in 1951 and 1952, reflecting the salience of national identity in a political era marked by accelerating movements towards devolution and decolonization. These nationalist tensions also divided European missionaries and African priests, up to and including the early relationship between Aloys Bigirumwami, Rwanda’s first indigenous bishop, and André Perraudin, rector of the major seminary and future bishop of Kabgayi.

¹⁴⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°541526, Beghin to Durrieu, 8 Jan. 1956.

Finally, I have introduced Perraudin and Bigirumwami, the two churchmen who would later symbolize the contrasting poles of Catholic politics in Rwanda. Bigirumwami has emerged here as an independent figure, grateful to White Father mentors like Déprimoz but keeping a certain critical distance from Mwami Mutara and White Father missionaries alike. Perraudin also cultivated a largely apolitical image in the early 1950s, although his correspondence and seminary work revealed his commitments to social justice, church-state partnership, and the importance of maintaining an influential Catholic voice in the public sphere. In contrast, Perraudin largely steered clear of ethnic issues in the early years of the decade, rarely framing his political and social views in Hutu-Tutsi terms. This would change as the decade progressed, as we will see in chapter three.

Ch. 3: Did the Catholic Hierarchy Incite an Ethnic Revolution? **Catholic Politics in Rwanda, 1956-1959**

If narratives of democratization, de-feudalization, and anti-communism dominated Rwandan politics in the early 1950s, the latter part of the decade saw the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi question as the polarizing division in Rwandan political life. The surfacing of the ethnic question stemmed in part from Tutsi elites' failure to share political power and in part from Hutu elites' growing recognition of the electoral salience of ethnic labels. Belgian colonial officials played their part as well, moving away from Mwami Mutara and his court and towards a rising group of Hutu elites who promised fealty to Belgium, the Catholic Church, and majoritarian democracy. The 1957 Bahutu Manifesto and an increasingly independent Catholic media broke previous taboos in publicly criticizing Mwami Mutara and many of his fellow Tutsi chiefs. The Mwami and Tutsi chiefs responded by advocating for an elitist, non-ethnic Rwandan nationalism. At the same time, political debates from the period reveal the continuing fluidity of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction which was framed in alternatively economic, social, and racial terms. Finally, the unexpected death of Mwami Mutara in July 1959 and the anticipation of "winner take all" elections in early 1960 unleashed a three-month political mobilization which left Rwanda deeply polarized between Hutu ethnicist and Tutsi nationalist parties.

Appointed Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi for his perceived moderation, lack of Belgian colonial ties, and newness on the Rwandan stage, Mgr. André Perraudin avoided political and ethnic issues during the first three years of his episcopate. While Catholic lay elites like

Gregoire Kayibanda, Joseph Gitera and Aloys Munyangaju led an increasingly strident grassroots campaign for Hutu rights, Perraudin, Aloys Bigirumwami, Guy Mosmans and other ecclesial leaders publicly ignored the Hutu-Tutsi question until late 1958. When these churchmen finally entered the debate, however, they revealed a fundamental analytical divergence over the nature of the political and social problems facing Rwanda. In a widely-read European newspaper article in September 1958, Bigirumwami cast doubt on the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction and called for Rwanda to embrace national unity and pan-ethnic social justice. Six months later, Perraudin released his Lenten pastoral “*Super omnia caritas*.” While sharing Bigirumwami’s broad Catholic emphases on charity, justice and unity, Perraudin framed Rwanda’s political and social problems in Hutu-Tutsi terms. This divergence on the ethnic question placed Rwanda’s two Catholic leaders on opposite sides of a growing analytical divide between Hutu and Tutsi elites and undermined both clerics’ cherished goal of clerical unity. In turn, Perraudin’s perceived efforts to push the Catholic Church away from its traditional cohabitation with the Tutsi monarchy to a new egalitarian emphasis in favor of the Hutu masses led to charges of ethnic divisionism and revolutionary incitement, especially after violence broke out in November 1959.

Rwanda’s late colonial history has been thoroughly documented in older monographs by René Lemarchand, Ian Linden, Filip Reyntjens, and Justin Kalibwami.¹ These scholars

¹ Cf. Ian Linden (with Jane Linden), *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1977); René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Anchor, 1970); Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda: droit public et évolution politique, 1916-1973* (Tervuren, Belgium: Musée royal de l’Afrique centrale, 1985); Justin Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme et la société Rwandaise 1900-1962* (Paris: Présence africaine, 1991). Reyntjens’s text is the most thorough and balanced of the four, although his emphasis falls primarily on legal, political, and economic issues; the church is a relative afterthought. And while it betrays much of the broadly pro-Hutu sentiment of 1970s Rwandan historiography, Linden’s text remains the definitive

provide thorough chronological histories of the period informed by invaluable first-person interviews. What is missing is sufficient attention to the public and private writings of Perraudin and other Catholic leaders themselves.² Written before the 1994 genocide, these older histories also tend to assume the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic rather than consider how and why these categories came to dominate Rwandan political imagination in the late 1950s. In addition, these studies pay insufficient attention to how ethnic and political questions developed inside the church itself – on the grounds of Catholic mission stations, in the halls of the Catholic seminary, and in relationships between Catholic missionaries and indigenous priests.

This chapter attempts to address these lacunae, tracing Rwanda's political and ecclesial developments in the critical period between early 1956 and late 1959. Taking Perraudin's March 1956 consecration as Vicar Apostolic as a starting point, I first consider Rwanda's political development in the run-up to Rwanda's September 1956 legislative elections, highlighting the public emergence of the ethnic question in local newspapers as well as the continuing (and oft-overlooked) importance of other political issues like nationalism, communism, inter-racial relations, and population growth. I also consider the Catholic bishops' responses to these developments, focusing on the bishops' June 1956 Leopoldville statement on Christianity and politics, Perraudin's encouragement of Catholic

one-volume study of Rwandan Catholic history in English. For all of the literature spawned by the 1994 genocide, I have yet to find a strong historical analysis of the late colonial period, although the third chapter of Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001): 100-131 provides an influential analytical assessment of the period.

² Linden comes closest, but his access to written sources was limited in the 1970s. He therefore relied heavily on interviews with the key protagonists. This gave him a deep insight into the missionaries' worldviews but may have overly colored his own conclusions.

social teaching, the hierarchy's evolving relations with Mwami Mutara, and missionary responses to the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi question in public discourse.

The second part of the chapter takes up Rwandan political history in 1957. In anticipation of the triennial United Nations visit to Rwanda and Burundi, Rwanda's Superior Council and a group of Hutu counter-elites released a *Mise au point* (statement of views) and Bahutu Manifesto, respectively. These documents established the fundamental analytical divergence that marked Rwandan politics in the final years of Belgian colonial rule – Hutu elites' insistence on the centrality of the ethnic question and calls for Hutu empowerment versus Tutsi elites' emphasis on anti-colonial nationalism and downplaying of ethnic distinctiveness. Rival Hutu and Tutsi political movements developed in support of these alternative views, marking the end of the pan-ethnic progressivism that had marked the early years of the decade. As Rwanda's ethno-political tensions rose, Catholic leaders urged their clergy to speak out on social issues while avoiding political entanglements, a model which the hierarchy outlined in an April 1957 pastoral letter on justice. In the meantime, Hutu-Tutsi tensions emerged at the Catholic seminary at Nyakibanda in the context of Mwami Mutara's triumphal silver jubilee celebrations in June. Privately Perraudin and other missionaries utilized increasingly racist language to describe the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. In public, however, Perraudin maintained a low profile throughout the year, noted more for his advocacy of indigenous Tutsi clergy than any commitment to the emerging Hutu emancipation movement.

If 1957 saw the breakout of the Hutu-Tutsi question in Rwandan political discourse, the first national efforts to resolve this growing political cleavage occurred in early 1958. The third part of the chapter begins by considering the deliberations of the national Hutu-Tutsi study commission during the spring of 1958, deliberations which reveal a surprising ambiguity on the nature of Hutu and Tutsi categories. Unfortunately, Mwami Mutara's and the Superior Council's failure to heed the commission's recommendations led to a further polarization of Rwandan politics and hardening of ethnic discourse. On the Tutsi side, conservative traditionalists released a "Great Servants of the Court" letter which claimed intrinsic Tutsi superiority over the Hutu. In turn, Joseph Gitara, Aloys Munyangaju, Gregoire Kayibanda and other Hutu journalists and political leaders utilized increasingly strident anti-Tutsi rhetoric. In the midst of these polemics, Aloys Bigirumwami broke the hierarchy's public silence on the Hutu-Tutsi question, downplaying ethnic distinctions and calling for national unity in a widely-read interview in the Belgian Catholic newspaper *Témoignage Chrétien*. In response, two influential White Fathers, Dominic Nothomb and Guy Mosmans, attempted to apply Catholic social teaching to the Rwandan context, describing the Hutu-Tutsi distinction as racial and advocating for a pro-Hutu vision of social justice. Even as his fellow Catholic leaders spoke out, André Perraudin retained his silence on Rwanda's ethnic question, focusing instead on trying to reconcile Rwanda's increasingly divided seminarian and clergy population.

Perraudin's public silence did not last for long, however. In February 1959, he released *Super omnia caritas*, his Lenten pastoral on charity which became the most

important political statement of his long episcopacy. Here Perraudin sided with the social analysis of Nothomb, Mosmans, and Hutu elites rather than Bigirumwami and Tutsi nationalists, describing Rwanda as rent asunder by the racial and social division between Hutu and Tutsi. Despite the statement's later notoriety, however, it caused little furor upon its release. The early months of 1959 were in fact marked by a general amelioration of ethnic and political rhetoric in the media, Catholic parishes, Nyakibanda seminary, and even mainstream political movements. Perraudin's statement also coincided with a growing Belgian interest in Rwanda's political and ethnic disputes, symbolized by the colonial governor's *volte-face* on the Hutu-Tutsi question in December 1958 and the April 1959 arrival of an official Belgian *Groupe du Travail*.

Just as Rwanda's political prospects were improving, however, Mwami Mutara died under the care of Belgian physicians in July 1959. The Mwami's sudden and suspicious death precipitated a permanent rupture in relations between Belgian colonial officials and Tutsi elites, particularly after the latter unilaterally named Mutara's half-brother Kigeri V Ndahindurwa as the new Mwami. The power vacuum left by Mutara's disappearance from the political scene along with the prospect of January 1960 communal elections led to an unprecedented mobilization of political parties and an increasing radicalization of political rhetoric. In response, Perraudin and Bigirumwami attempted to offer pastoral guidance to their divided flock, issuing comprehensive statements on church-state relations and more targeted warnings against several of Rwanda's political parties. Behind the scenes, however, Rwanda's two Catholic leaders struggled to maintain a united voice in the midst of their

contrasting views of Rwandan society and the proper role of Catholic media and Catholic clergy in Rwandan political life.

In the chapter's conclusion, I take up the question with which I titled this chapter. Namely, did the Catholic hierarchy – and specifically Mgr. André Perraudin – contribute to the inflaming of Rwanda's ethno-political tensions in the late 1950s? While Perraudin's public statements, pastoral actions and private correspondence do not reveal the politically-obsessed Hutu partisan of later caricature, his uncritical embracing of racist rhetoric to describe the Hutu-Tutsi distinction eliminated the previous fluidity of these terms, undermined his cherished goal of Catholic unity, and contributed to the polarization of Rwandan politics after 1959. More broadly, Rwandan church and state history in the late 1950s reveals the importance of balancing the prescriptive goals of Catholic social teaching with accurate social description. Finally, I argue that Catholic leaders would have benefitted from following Bigirumwami's inchoate calls to embrace an alternative Catholic politics, adopting a more critical attitude towards both egalitarian democracy and anti-colonial nationalism while focusing on building Christian communities that could offer a third way between Tutsi nationalism and Hutu ethnicism.

A. 1956: Perraudin's consecration and the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi question

1956 began with great promise for Rwanda. Following the introduction of a degree of representative government in 1953, U.N.-mandated triennial elections were scheduled for September 1956, promising universal suffrage at the lowest (*sous-chefferie*) level of

government. The newly-founded *Mouvement Politique Progressiste* (MPP) offered a potential pan-ethnic movement for pursuing democratic political reform. Mwami Mutara's reputation as a Western modernizer and recent suppression of *uburetwa* and *ubuhake* reflected a seeming openness to political change. And within the Catholic Church, the elevation of André Perraudin as Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi represented a generational shift in Catholic missionary leadership, portending a new era in the life of the Rwandan Catholic Church.

The iconic image of this new era came on March 25, 1956, the day of Perraudin's installation as vicar apostolic. To emphasize the indigenization of the church, Perraudin requested that Bigirumwami serve as the official episcopal consecrator rather than the Apostolic Nuncio to Belgian Africa.³ This would become the first known instance in modern history of a black bishop consecrating a white priest to the Catholic episcopate. In the midst of South Africa's anti-apartheid struggle, growing racial tensions in the southern United States, and rising nationalist currents across Africa, the image of Bigirumwami laying his hands on Perraudin splashed across European newspapers and American televisions alike, symbolizing the seeming inter-racial harmony of the global Catholic communion. In the words of Perraudin's own homily that day, "this is the first time perhaps in the annals of the world (that) a black bishop has conferred the plenitude of the priesthood on a white priest...the Church is in all the races, in the heart of all the races, unifying them from the

³ According to Perraudin's retrospective account, Bigirumwami initially resisted Perraudin's requests. Perraudin does not speculate on Bigirumwami's possible reasons (C.M.L., André Perraudin « Je rends grâce à Dieu, » (25 Aug. 1989): 1. See also A.G.M.Afr.N°542203, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat du Kabgayi, 1 juillet 1955 au 30 juin 1956*.

inside.”⁴ Inside Rwanda, Bigirumwami’s consecration of Perraudin offered much-needed political capital for the beleaguered White Fathers. In the words of Leo Volker, soon to be named superior general of the White Fathers, “the event should be exploited to the maximum.”⁵

Whatever the visual audacity of his consecration, Perraudin’s early statements represented more a spirit of continuity than radical change. His first letter to Catholic clergy in the vicariate of Kabgayi spoke of the need to continue the march of “Christian progress” in Rwanda, while his first pastoral letter focused on the importance of hierarchical authority in the church while warning of the continuing danger of communism.⁶ Perraudin’s homily on his day of consecration reiterated the importance of a close alliance between church and state in jointly protecting the common good. “When the spiritual power and the temporal power get on well, the world is well-governed...you will find always in the Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi a servant fully devoted to the dear country of Rwanda.”⁷

If Perraudin retained Classe’s and Déprimoz’s emphases on Christian civilization, anti-communism, and church-state cohabitation, the new Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi showed more commitment to engaging questions of social justice. Even before his consecration, he organized a February gathering on Catholic social teaching which addressed themes like

⁴ A.D.K., André Perraudin, “Sacré,” 25 March 1956. See also « Le Sacré de Monseigneur Perraudin,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (1 April 1956): 4-5; « Byose bigengwe n’urukundo, Myr Andreyia Perraudin umushumba wa Vikariyati ya Kabgayi, y ahawe Ubwepiskopi, » *Kinyamateka* 25, 282 (April 1956) : 1, 4-5.

⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°526546, Volker to Permentier, 16 March 1956.

⁶ A.D.K. André Perraudin, « Super omnia caritas, » 6 Jan. 1956 ; A.D.K., André Perraudin, « Aux fidèles du Vicariat apostolique de Kabgayi, » 16 Feb. 1956. In his autobiography Perraudin claimed to address the exigencies of social justice in these early letters, but I saw no such references in the letters themselves (André Perraudin, *Un évêque au Rwanda : les six premières années de mon épiscopat (1956-1962)*. (Saint Maurice: Editions Saint-Augustin, 2003), 53-54).

⁷ A.D.K., André Perraudin, « Sacré, » 25 March 1956.

worker pensions and universal suffrage. At his March consecration, he announced that his episcopal motto would be *Super omnia caritas* (“above all things charity”), and Perraudin’s first annual report stressed his obligation to Christianize Rwanda “in its institutions, in its cultural, social, and familial life, so that the word of Christ will be the uncontested King.”⁸ Weeks after becoming Vicar Apostolic, Perraudin announced that the summer retreat for priests would consist of four study days on social questions in Rwanda.⁹ These July seminars reinforced what Perraudin termed the “very grave obligations of social justice” for preaching and confessional practice alike. While reminding priests that they were “men of God and the Church” and should not partake in “partisan political fights,” Perraudin also instructed his priests to take responsibility for the social education of their parishioners. This included encouraging laity to take part in syndicates, mutualities, and cooperatives and reminding lay Catholics of their duty to participate in political life. Significantly, the assembled priests agreed that Perraudin should publish a “Mandate on Charity” that would clarify the attitudes laity should adopt towards pressing social issues in Rwanda. Perraudin fulfilled this request two and a half years later when he issued his Lent 1959 pastoral “*Super omnia caritas*,” a letter which we will consider in detail later in this chapter.

As he took the bishop’s miter, Perraudin encountered an increasingly recalcitrant Mwami Mutara. As discussed in chapter two, relations between the Mwami and the White Fathers had begun to decline with the 1945 death of Mutara’s mentor Léon Classe, the growing tensions between Mutara and the Astridiens, and the lay schools debate of 1954-55.

⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°542203, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat du Kabgayi, 1 juillet 1955 au 30 juin 1956*.

⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°526303, Perraudin to Van Volsem, 13 April 1956; see also *Trait d’Union* 48, August-September 1956.

At the same time, Mutara continued to enjoy a reputation in Rome and Brussels as a devout African Catholic king and a friend of Belgium.¹⁰ As Mutara prepared to celebrate his 25th anniversary as Mwami in 1956-57, the Vatican proposed elevating Rwanda's king to the rank of papal nobility. While missionaries had celebrated when the Holy See enrolled Mutara in the papal order of Gregory the Great in 1947, many White Fathers now saw the Mwami as an obstacle to the future growth of the church. When asked his opinion on the proposed papal honor, Perraudin refused to endorse Mutara while revealing his typical diplomatic caution. "I find the decision very delicate for reasons which are difficult to write."¹¹ Ultimately, Rome granted Mutara the honor. As we will see in subsequent chapters, this was not the last time that the Vatican and the White Fathers clashed over Rwandan politics.

Even as Perraudin tried to preserve the hierarchy's delicate relationship with Mwami Mutara, Kabgayi's new Vicar Apostolic looked with anticipation to Rwanda's September 1956 legislative elections.¹² In offering a universal male franchise for the first time, these elections raised popular expectations for continued reform and sparked deeper interest in a political process that had been heretofore an elite domain. Anticipating a popular mandate, the national *Conseil Supérieur du Pays* (CSP) proposed a new executive office of CSP president. While rejecting this potential rival to his authority, Mutara embraced universal

¹⁰ The colonial governor, Jean-Paul Harroy, later noted that he enjoyed very good relations with Mwami Mutara until the close of 1957 (cf. Jean-Paul Harroy, *Rwanda : Souvenirs d'un Compagnon de la marche du Rwanda vers la démocratie et l'indépendance* (Brussels : Hayez, 1984) : 208).

¹¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°526306, Perraudin to Durrieu, 15 May 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°540316, Volker to Perraudin, 14 June 1956.

¹² This analysis of the 1956 elections draws on Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 185-96, 233; Fortunatus Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda 1900-1959* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2005), 268 ; Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 126 ; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 227 ; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 81-88; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 360-63; Harroy, *Rwanda : Souvenirs d'un Compagnon*, 226-27.

suffrage in hopes of establishing his government's democratic *bona fides*. For his part, Perraudin welcomed the democratic turn in Rwandan politics, publishing a pastoral letter in September 1956 in which he embraced the principle of universal suffrage, reminded Catholic laity of their civic obligation to vote for virtuous candidates, and encouraged Rwandan politicians to avoid undue partisanship.¹³

The Rwandan people turned out en masse for the 1956 legislative elections with over 75% of adult males voting. After the elections, Tutsi elites controlled 81% of Rwanda's territorial council seats, 57% of colonial administrative positions, and 31 of the 32 seats on Rwanda's superior council. Members of Rwanda's traditionally dominant *Abanyiginya* and *Abega* clans alone controlled over 50% of the colony's *sous-chefferies* and 80% of its *chefferies* after the elections.¹⁴ While the elections appeared to reinforce Rwanda's traditional rulers, they also contained signs of coming change. The percentage of Hutu sub-chiefs rose from 50% in 1953 to 66% in 1956, reflecting the importance of a rising class of young Hutu leaders at the local level. While Mwami Mutara had denied the existence of a Hutu-Tutsi problem in February 1956, the major discrepancy between Hutu-Tutsi percentages at the local versus national levels of government did not bode well for the future.¹⁵

¹³ André Perraudin, « En vue des élections du 30 septembre, » 9 Sept. 1956. In *Centre d'Information et d'Étude sur le Rwanda (C.I.E.R.)*, http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=3 (accessed 9 Feb. 2011).

¹⁴ Paul Rutayisire, « L'Eglise catholique et le décolonisation du Rwanda ou les illusions d'une victoire, » in *Rwanda: L'Eglise catholique à l'épreuve du génocide*, eds. F. Rutembesa, J.P. Karegeye, P. Rutayisire (Greenfield Park, Canada : Les Editions Africana, 2004), 47. These clans had typically dominated the Rwandan nobility. Mutara himself came from the *Abanyiginya* clan; many of his rivals like Bwanakweri came from the *Abega* clan.

¹⁵ Harroy, *Rwanda : Souvenirs d'un compagnon*, 249 ; Rutayisire, « L'Eglise catholique et le décolonisation du Rwanda, » 50.

Ahead of these elections, the ethnic question emerged more prominently in Catholic discourse during the summer of 1956. The controversy was sparked by “*Un Abbe ruandaise: nous parle*,” a July article in the Bukavu-based *La Presse Africaine* in Eastern Congo.¹⁶ Purportedly reflecting the views of an anonymous Rwandan priest, the article was dismissed by some as a colonial effort to sully the local clergy.¹⁷ It detailed the rivalry between Prosper Bwanakweri and Mwami Mutara, positing that the former’s progressive vision offered hope for a “Belgian-Rwandan community based on confidence and friendship” and the only possible salvation for a Hutu people “abused by centuries of servitude and famine.” The interview sparked a series of replies and ripostes in *La Presse Africaine*, Leopoldville’s *Le Courrier d’Afrique*, and the White Fathers’ Bujumbura-based *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*.¹⁸ These articles raised taboo subjects such as the machinations surrounding Mwami Mutara’s 1931 accession to the throne, the history of Hutu-Tutsi relations, the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction, and the Mwami’s own ethnic identity. In contrast to the traditional vision of Rwanda as a harmonious society of integrated social groups, this new literature painted a highly conflictual picture of deep social stratification. In the words of one anonymous

¹⁶ “Un Abbé Ruandais: nous parle,” *La Presse Africaine*, 21 July 1956. In C.I.E.R., <http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc7.pdf> (accessed 9 Feb. 2011).

¹⁷ “Que valent les affirmations de la ‘Presse Africaine’?” *Courrier d’Afrique*, 7 August 1956. In C.I.E.R., <http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc10.pdf> (accessed 9 Feb. 2011).

¹⁸ Cf. “Des notables Ruandaises nous parlent,” *La Presse Africain*, 4 Aug. 1956 (<http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc9.pdf>); « Que se passe-t-il au Ruanda-Urundi ? » *Le Courrier d’Afrique*, 1 Aug. 1956 and “Que valent les affirmations de la ‘Presse Africaine’ ? », *Le Courrier d’Afrique*, 7 Aug. 1956 (<http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc10.pdf>); « Procédés discutables, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 12 August 1956 and « Déclaration du Mwami Mutara au pays, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 2 Sept. 1956 (<http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc11.pdf>). In C.I.E.R. (accessed 9 Feb. 2011).

polemicist, “the reign of Tutsi terror has existed since before the arrival of the whites.”¹⁹

Regardless of its veracity, this media controversy had what colonial governor Jean-Paul Harroy termed “an enormous impact.”²⁰

The controversy reached the point that Mwami Mutara intervened. Writing in a September 1956 issue of *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, Mutara painted a pleasant picture of pre-colonial social mobility and ethnic intermingling, emphasizing Rwanda’s cultural unity and shared Banyarwanda identity. “Rwanda is a habitat of one homogenous people where rights should be the same for all and not a field of quarrels between racial and social factions.”²¹ A month later a group of Tutsi chiefs echoed these sentiments, writing that after centuries of inter-mixing, “Rwanda has become a land of one homogenous people” where “all ethnic distinction is impossible.”²²

After years of focusing on the *évolué* question, Catholic missionary leaders also began discussing the Hutu-Tutsi question in 1956. In response to Mutara’s decision to embrace universal suffrage, Guy Mosmans, the Belgian provincial, wrote that “one thinks that he has adopted this attitude in hopes that the result of the votes would favor the Batutsi and that this would demonstrate that the Council which is composed of a majority of Batutsi

¹⁹ [Anon.], “Impressions sur le Ruanda d’un autochtone,” *Dépêche du Rwanda-Urundi*, 24 August 1956. In C.I.E.R., <http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc13.pdf> (accessed 9 Feb. 2011).

²⁰ Harroy, *Rwanda : Souvenirs d’un Compagnon*, 230.

²¹ “Déclaration du Mwami Mutara au pays,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 2 September 1956. In C.I.E.R., <http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc11.pdf> (accessed 9 Feb. 2011). This article was reprinted in the 1 Oct. 1956 issue of *Le Courrier d’Afrique*. Perraudin also quotes this text at length in *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 114-116.

²² “Les chefs du Rwanda expriment leur loyalisme envers le Mwami, » in Fidele Nkundabagenzi, ed., *Rwanda Politique 1958-1960* (Brussels: Centre de Recherche et d’Information Socio-Politique (CRISP), 1962), 34. See also « Déclaration des chefs du Ruanda, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (7 October 1956) : 4.

represents all the country.”²³ Perraudin admitted privately that many Rwandans traced the emergence of the ethnic question to the Kabgayi vicariate and the Catholic *Kinyamateka* newspaper, noting that the mission posts of Nyagahanga and Rwaza had also registered Hutu-Tutsi strains ahead of the September elections.²⁴ In these early comments, Perraudin framed the Hutu-Tutsi question in terms of political access and abuse, placing the blame on the shoulders of local authorities and defending the church’s right to speak on moral issues.

One notes rising tension between Bahutu and Batutsi; the Bahutu want more and more the lead and do not want to trail behind...I have permitted myself to say to the Governor and the Mwami that one of the immediate remedies is to fight more and more seriously against certain exactions of those who are in power, and that the Church can only be for justice and truth.²⁵

Whatever Perraudin said to the Mwami in private, he did not yet share his views more publicly, and both Perraudin and Mutara maintained public decorum throughout 1956.

Mutara congratulated Perraudin on his appointment as Vicar Apostolic in March, and Perraudin’s limited 1956 correspondence with Mwami Mutara offered little in the way of political advocacy.²⁶

The Hutu-Tutsi question also circulated in other Catholic missionary quarters in 1956.²⁷ In his influential study of Rwanda and Burundi, the Nyakibanda seminary professor

²³ A.G.M.Afr.N°526312-314, Mosmans to Perraudin, 25 May 1956.

²⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°526307, Perraudin to Durrieu, 15 May 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°540323, Perraudin to Van Volsem, 23 July 1956.

²⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°526307, Perraudin to Durrieu, 15 May 1956.

²⁶ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°526552, « Nyakibanda rapport annuel pour l’exercice 1955-56, » 31 Aug. 1956. The brief Perraudin-Mutara correspondence can be reviewed in a dossier marked “Rwanda 1955-58” in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives (A.D.K., Mutara to Perraudin, 21 May 1956 ; Mutara to Perraudin, 21 Dec. 1956; Perraudin to Mutara, 28 Dec. 1956). This last letter is also found at the C.I.E.R website (<http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc17.pdf> (accessed 9 Feb. 2011)).

²⁷ This section draws on Jan Adriaenssens, *Rapport sur la situation religieuse, sociale, et économique du Ruanda-Urundi* (Geneva : Institut International Catholique de Recherches Socio-Ecclesiales, 13 July 1956), 10;

Jan Adriaenssens noted growing Hutu peasant resentment of Tutsi authorities. Writing in August, another missionary serving at the minor seminary of Kabgayi excoriated the “racist spirit of the Tutsi,” critiqued the Tutsi-dominated Josephite brothers for their “anti-white racism,” and traced all seminary problems to the Tutsi students who comprised 80% of the seminary population. By the end of the year, the superior of Save mission in southern Rwanda had joined the chorus, criticizing his fellow missionaries for first promoting the Tutsi and now switching their favor to the Hutu.

Whatever the White Fathers’ growing frustration with Rwanda’s Tutsi-dominated social order, they did not undertake any kind of Hutu affirmative action plan in the late 1950s. While Perraudin retained Gregoire Kayibanda as lay editor of *Kinyamateka*, he also appointed the Tutsi priest Innocent Gasabwoya as overall director of the controversial Catholic weekly. The Tutsi priest Jean-Marie-Vianney Rusingizandekwe also served on *Kinyamateka*’s editorial staff in 1957-58; Hutu priests in fact remained conspicuously absent from *Kinyamateka*’s editorial board throughout the rest of the 1950s.²⁸ And while Perraudin’s April 1956 shakeup of mission staffing was described in some quarters as an “audacious coup,” the controversy stemmed more from his promotion of indigenous clergy than any fomenting of Hutu-Tutsi tensions. For example, Perraudin named Gasabwoya to

A.G.M.Afr.N°541588-89, Watteuw to Durrieu, 4 Aug. 1956 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°541626, Righi to Durrieu, 28 Dec. 1956.

²⁸ Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 371; C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, “Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 4.

replace Dejemeppe as vicar delegate of the Kabgayi vicariate and appointed the Tutsi priest Gerard Mwerekande to lead the Kabgayi mission station.²⁹

It would also be a mistake to reduce all of Catholic life in 1956 to the Hutu-Tutsi question. Not only was Kabgayi celebrating its 50th anniversary, but pastoral issues such as expanding infrastructure, developing Catholic Action, and recruiting foreign missionaries appeared far more often in missionary correspondence and commentaries than Hutu-Tutsi issues.³⁰ In 1955-56 alone, Perraudin approved seven new mission stations as Kabgayi's Catholic population grew by over 36,000. Rwanda's rapidly increasing population sparked unprecedented commentary on the risks of demographic growth. For example, the 1956-57 Kabgayi annual report highlighted Rwanda's population growth rate of 5% per annum, noted that the Rwandan population had doubled in 40 years, and expressed concerns over the employment prospects for Catholic school graduates.³¹ In his own study, Adriaenssens named population growth, not Hutu-Tutsi relations, as Rwanda's greatest social problem. Such sentiments were echoed by the U.N. Trusteeship Council.³² In a December 1956 letter to Perraudin, Fidele Nkundabagenzi – the Hutu seminarian who later served in Rwanda's

²⁹ On the personnel shifts, see A.G.M.Afr.N°541547, Cattin to Durrieu, 20 April 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°541627, Righi to Durrieu, 28 Dec. 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°526735-37, [untitled], 9 April 1956; A.D.K., André Perraudin to Priests & Religious, 9 April 1956. The Kabgayi annual report described these appointments as “the most sensational event” since Perraudin's consecration (A.G.M.Afr.N°542206-07, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat du Kabgayi, 1 juillet 1955 au 30 juin 1956*). Perraudin himself later described this as “le massacre après le sacre” (C.M.L., André Perraudin, “Je rends grâce à Dieu” (25 August 1989) : 2).

³⁰ This section draws on « Un Jubilé Historique 1906 – 1956, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (16 Dec. 1956) : 9 ; « 1906 – Kabgayi – 1956, » *Kinyamateka* (Dec. 1956) : 6-7 ; « Message de Son Exc. Mgr Perraudin, » *Grands Lacs* 186 (Aug.-Sept. 1956) : 11 ; Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 65-67 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°542210-12, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat du Kabgayi, 1 juillet 1955 au 30 juin 1956*, 10-12; Adriaenssens, *Rapport sur la situation religieuse*, 9.

³¹ This report claimed that 80% of Catholic school graduates in education and artisanry were not locating jobs (A.G.M.Afr.N°738370, *Rapport annuel du Vicariat du Kabgayi*, 1956-57).

³² A.D.K., U.N. Trusteeship Council, T/Ac.36/L.60, “Study of Population, Land Utilization, and Land System in Ruanda-Urundi” (26 March 1957): 3.

first post-colonial government – wrote of Rwanda’s struggles with ideologies of liberty, religious freedom, democracy, authority, and church-state relations. Notably missing was any mention of the Hutu-Tutsi question.³³

In addition, a key tension from the early 1950s – inter-racial tensions between Europeans and Rwandans – remained salient in 1956.³⁴ In February, Mosmans critiqued two Nyundo priests looking to study in Belgium as “politicians whose anti-white attitudes are well-known” and expressed fears that Belgian Communist agents would target them upon arrival. He later argued that in light of ongoing inter-racial tensions, the *évolué* question remained the most important social issue in Rwanda. Leo Volker, Durrieu’s assistant at the White Fathers’ headquarters in Rome, claimed that professors in Rome and Europe did not understand the African mentality. “It is nearly impossible for professors and directors from there to know and understand well the mentality of our blacks.” Nor was the importance of the inter-racial question limited to the conservative wing of the church. More leftist commentators like Adriaenssens mentioned the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi strains but saw black-white and Asian-African tensions as more pressing. Significantly, Adriaenssens lay most of the blame on what he termed a “white superiority complex” and denied that proto-nationalist movements had direct communist inspirations. Such sentiments were echoed by Louis Gasore, a Tutsi priest and vicar delegate in Nyundo.

³³ A.D.K., Fidele Nkundabagenzi to André Perraudin, 25 Dec. 1956. Nkundabagenzi’s important collection of primary sources is cited throughout this thesis (cf. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique 1958-1960*).

³⁴ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°526293, Mosmans to Dejemeppe, 21 Feb. 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°740003, Mosmans to Van Overschelde, 18 Nov. 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°740004, Van Overschelde to Mosmans, 21 Nov. 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°526308, Volker to Perraudin, 1 June 1956; Adriaenssens, *Rapport sur la situation religieuse*, 10-14; Louis Gasore, « L’Evolue face aux problèmes économique-sociaux, » *Théologie et Pastorale au Ruanda* 1 (June 1956) : 1-59.

Adriaenssens's commentary reflected the Catholic hierarchy's continuing struggle to offer an authoritative ethical voice as Africa inched closer to independence. Globally, the Bandung, Indonesia conference of April 1955 marked a symbolic escalation of the anti-colonial movement as representatives from 30 African and Asian countries condemned racial segregation and colonialism.³⁵ Perhaps because Belgian Africa chose not to send any representatives to Bandung, Catholic bishops from Belgian Congo, Rwanda and Burundi took the initiative to discuss similar issues at a plenary gathering in June 1956. Looking back, Perraudin described this Leopoldville meeting as "the [African Catholic] Church disassociating itself from the colonial state."³⁶ If not a full-scale endorsement, the language of the Leopoldville pastoral letter revealed a measure of openness to decolonization. Noting that a legitimate state could take diverse forms ranging from clans and tribes to modern kingdoms and republics, the bishops posited that "all the inhabitants of a country have a duty to actively collaborate in the common good... The autochthonous have the obligation to become conscious of the complexity of their responsibilities and to make themselves capable of assuming them." Defining the church as a "supernatural society founded by Jesus Christ for conducting people to eternal life" with responsibility for "purely spiritual matters," the

³⁵ Joseph Ngomanzungu, "L'attitude de l'église catholique au Rwanda face aux problèmes sociopolitiques des années 1956-1962 : Une pastorale de prévention, de médiation, et d'accompagnement, » Mémoire le License, Pontifical Gregorian, Ecclesiastical History (2000) : 4. The Nyakibanda Seminary library in Rwanda shared this thesis with me.

³⁶ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 100. For the text of the document, see Ordinaries of Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, "L'Eglise et les problèmes politiques et sociaux," 29 June 1956. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=2 (accessed 11 Feb. 2011) and « Déclaration de l'Épiscopat du Congo Belge et Ruanda-Urundi, 1956, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (8 July 1956): 2-3. For background on this statement, see Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation*, 301; Donat Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise, 1959-1962* (Louvain : Institut des Sciences Politiques et Sociales, 1975), 731-32; Louis de Lacger (with Pierre Nothomb), *Ruanda* (Kabgayi : 1961) , 714.

bishops' statement entrusted the state with responsibility for the common good; church and state in turn shared authority over key social issues like education and youth associations. As we will see later, the bishops' decision to entrust the common good to the state while defining the church in exclusively spiritual terms left the Catholic hierarchy incapable of challenging the Rwandan state when the state itself became an enemy of the common good.³⁷ Regardless, this 1956 statement showed the Catholic hierarchy distancing themselves from Belgium while beginning to envision the church's post-colonial future.³⁸ Not insignificantly, they passed over the Hutu-Tutsi question in silence.

In addition to sparking the creation of a regional bureau of Catholic works encompassing Catholic Action, Catholic schools, social and medical apostolates, and the press, the Leopoldville conference strengthened Perraudin's hand in expanding the Rwandan church's own social outreach.³⁹ In September 1956, Perraudin agreed to allow Fr. Louis Pien to start the agricultural cooperative TRAFIPRO (*Travail, Fidélité, Progrès*). Focusing on producers of sorghum, rice, corn, peanuts, manioc, soap, sugar, and coffee, the cooperative aimed to promote the social and economic interests of its members on issues of price stability, working conditions, and infrastructure. This initiative grew out of Perraudin's own familiarity with cooperative movements in Switzerland; Swiss development workers would

³⁷ This will not be the last time that Rwandan church leaders engage political issues while citing a "distinction of planes" between the spiritual and the material. For a fascinating parallel with post-Vatican II Chile, see William T. Cavanaugh's *Torture and Eucharist: Theology, Politics and the Body of Christ* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998), especially his third and fourth chapters on social Catholicism and the influence of Jacques Maritain.

³⁸ For similar sentiments, see "Colonialisme," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (20 April 1958) : 1.

³⁹ This section draws on "Lettre de Monseigneur le Vicaire Apostolique de Kabgayi," *Trait d'Union* 47, July 1956 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°541552-54, Pien to Durrieu, 28 April 1956; A.G.M.Afr.N°738366, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat Apostolique du Kabgayi*, 1956-1957 ; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 147-48; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 239; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 118.

prove integral in facilitating TRAFIPRO's success in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Led from its earliest days by Gregoire Kayibanda, TRAFIPRO helped the Rwandan church develop stronger grassroots networks in the countryside and would serve as a highly effective means for mobilizing peasants after Kayibanda delved into politics.

As 1956 drew to a close, Rwanda's traditional rulers seemed to be successfully managing Rwanda's transition from oligarchy to representative democracy. On their face, the September council elections gave Mutara and Rwanda's CSP an apparent popular mandate. But by not including more Hutu in the top echelons of the government, the Mwami and his allies were undermining their own claims to stand above ethnic politics and sowing deep discontent among Hutu counter-elites.⁴⁰ As for the Catholic Church, its national scope, ethnically mixed clergy, and European missionary presence made it the most diverse social institution in Rwanda. In 1956 Catholic leaders could still speak in broad platitudes of social justice, charity, and the common good, publicly avoiding the more contested Hutu-Tutsi question. Likewise, Perraudin could maintain cordial relations with Mwami Mutara and his fellow chiefs while also encouraging *Kinyamateka's* social focus and starting a cooperative like TRAFIPRO. The hardening of ethnic language in 1957 would make this balancing act substantially more difficult.

⁴⁰ Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 251.

B. 1957: The year of manifestoes and the irruption of Hutu-Tutsi tensions

If 1956 saw the emergence of the Hutu-Tutsi question in Rwandan political and ecclesial discourse, this issue still competed with older narratives of inter-racial tensions, anti-communism, church-state relations, and the church's overall commitment to social justice. Many of these themes would continue through 1957.⁴¹ However, the release of rival Tutsi and Hutu manifestoes in early 1957 elevated the Hutu-Tutsi question to the top of Rwandan political discourse. Even as the Catholic hierarchy resisted entering this debate, ethnic tensions emerged inside the Catholic Church, particularly in the Nyakibanda major seminary.

Scheduled for September 18 through October 8, 1957, the U.N. *tutelle*'s fourth triennial visit to Rwanda and Burundi loomed over the Rwandan political scene in early 1957.⁴² As discussed in chapter two, the United Nations established the *tutelle* in 1946 to exercise oversight over the Belgian colonies of Rwanda and Burundi. Each of its subsequent triennial visits sparked a flurry of political activity and reform. The U.N. *tutelle*'s 1948 visit praised the "constructive work" of the Belgians but encouraged the hastening of political

⁴¹ On the communist risk, see "Danger Communiste en Afrique," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (13 January 1957) : 1 ; « La Franc-maçonnerie, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (3 February 1957) : 8 ; « L'Afrique sera-t-elle communiste ? » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (31 March 1957) : 1 ; « L'Afrique deviendra-t-elle communiste ? » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (7 April 1957) : 3 ; « L'avenir de l'Afrique est sombre: Ce que l'on sait du Communisme en Afrique, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (21 July 1957) : 3 ; « Présence du Communisme en Afrique, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (25 August 1957) : 3. See also the Belgian missionary reflections contained in the 1957 « Semaine de Missiologie » in Louvain, particularly T. Theuws, "Le danger communiste et la mission au Congo," *Communisme et Missions, XXVII Semaine de Missiologie* (Louvain : 1957) : 131-32. On the continuing problem of race relations, see « Un dialogue entre Blancs et Noirs est-il encore possible ? » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (20 Oct. 1957) : 1 ; « L'Afrique noire perdra-t-elle son âme ? » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (3 November 1957) : 1.

⁴² Information here is drawn from A.D.K., U.N. Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, *1957 Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, 6 Dec. 1957, 7-8; Reynjtjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 214-17.

reforms, leading Mutara and the Belgian colonial government to establish local advisory councils. The 1951 visit criticized Belgium for not incorporating more indigenous representatives in the administration of the territory, spurring Belgium to announce a ten-year development plan and the initiation of local elections. On the eve of the 1954 U.N. mission, the Mwami announced the abolition of *ubuhake*. Despite this, the commission still critiqued the colonial administration for favoring cultural, social and economic progress over political evolution. Expectations were high as U.N. officials prepared to travel to Rwanda in September 1957, and rival groups began mobilizing to influence the views of the visiting commission.

Rwanda's Superior Council initiated the year's political debate. Released in February 1957, the CSP's *Mise au point* described black-white racial tensions as the dominant social cleavage in Rwanda and criticized the extent to which Belgians continued to dominate Rwanda's local government.⁴³ Favoring the rule of an experienced elite as Rwanda moved towards democracy, the authors demanded a rapid timeline for national independence. They also noted Rwanda's internal social and economic inequalities but envisioned the solution in improved access to secondary and higher education. Perhaps most telling, the *Mise au point* wholly ignored the question of ethnic inequality and never addressed the Hutu-Tutsi relationship or the concerns of the rural poor. Rather, the CSP argued that the true political grievance lay with the nation's dispossessed elites. "It is an error to believe that one must refuse the recognition of political rights to an elite which possesses political maturity." In

⁴³ The Superior Council's *Mise au point* is transcribed in its entirety in Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 754-57.

summary, the *Mise au point* outlined the principles – nationalism, elitism, rapid independence, and the denial of any kind of ethnic problem – which comprised the core of the conservative Tutsi nationalist position until the November 1959 revolution.

In response to the *Mise au point*, nine Hutu intellectuals released the Bahutu Manifesto in March 1957. Controversy continues to swirl over who actually wrote this document with several historians implicating the White Fathers.⁴⁴ Perraudin himself rejected such insinuations, claiming that Kayibanda kept his own political counsel and never shared this document with him.⁴⁵ Justin Kalibwami, a former Tutsi priest, journalist, and historian who served as general editor of *Kinyamateka* between 1958 and 1960, posited that “the manifesto of the Bahutu is without the least doubt the work of those who have signed it.”⁴⁶ It is true that the authors of the Bahutu Manifesto came from ecclesial backgrounds – three were former seminarians, two served as editors at *Kinyamateka*, one worked as Perraudin’s personal secretary, and two were employed in Kabgayi by a Catholic school and Catholic press.⁴⁷ While such facts seem to reinforce the perceived alliance between Hutu elites and the

⁴⁴ Cf. Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History*. Trans. Scot Strauss (New York: Zone, 2003), 301; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 249; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 125; Jean Nizurengo Rugagi, “Décolonisation et démocratisation du Rwanda,” *Cahiers Lumière et Société* 7 (Oct. 1997): 48-49.

⁴⁵ C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Je rends grâce à Dieu » (25 Aug. 1989) : 2. Perraudin here rejected the idea that he served as a political counselor for Kayibanda. “Kayibanda was very independent in his political action...He had great respect for the Church; but I have never influenced him politically” (2). See also Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 138.

⁴⁶ Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 386. See also Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation du Rwanda*, 306.

⁴⁷ Perraudin’s personal secretary was Calliope Mulindahabi, not Gregoire Kayibanda. Perraudin notes that his personal secretary in 1957 was Mulindahabi rather than Kayibanda; Kalibwami and Rudakemwa confirm this. (cf. Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 141; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 374 ; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation*, 307-08). The mistaken (and often polemical) claim that Kayibanda was Perraudin’s personal secretary has been repeated widely, especially in recent Anglophone literature on Rwanda (cf. Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 143; Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 118; Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 45.

White Fathers, it should also be recalled that the church represented the only avenue of Hutu social advancement until the 1960s.⁴⁸ We may never know the extent to which Hutu intellectuals consulted with European missionaries in drafting the Bahutu Manifesto, but I follow Perraudin and Kalibwami in seeing the nine Hutu signers as the principal authors of the document.

The Bahutu Manifesto's social analysis was the polar opposite of the CSP's *Mise au point*.⁴⁹ In the Bahutu Manifesto, the primary political cleavage in Rwanda was not black-white colonial tension but rather the "indigenous racial problem" between "Hamitic" Tutsi and the Hutu peasantry. This problem had social, cultural, economic and above all political dimensions, as the Tutsi had monopolized all influential political offices. For this reason, ethnic democratization of Rwandan society must come before national independence. Not only did the authors of the Bahutu Manifesto avoid any overt nationalist sentiments, but they alleged that "without the European we would have been subjected to a more inhumane exploitation...to total destruction."⁵⁰ They advocated what could be termed a Hutu affirmative action plan, calling for an "integral and collective promotion of the Muhutu" which would include naming Hutu as chiefs, sub-chiefs, and judges, expanding rural

⁴⁸ Murego notes that the *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida* was only opened to Hutu students in 1955. Prior to this date, the Catholic seminary provided the only viable means for secondary education for Hutu (Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 679).

⁴⁹ I have not located a reliable English translation, but the Bahutu Manifesto is available in French in Fidele Nkundabagenzi's 1961 collection of primary sources ("Le Manifeste des Bahutu, 24 March 1957," in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 20-29). Interestingly, *Temps Nouveaux* did not present the document until four months after its publication ("Le manifeste des Bahutu," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 14 July 1957: 1; repeated in *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (4 May 1958): 5). For secondary commentary, see Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 375-84; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 149-51; Mamdani, *When victims become killers*, 116-17.

⁵⁰ "Le Manifeste des Bahutu" in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 24.

development to benefit Hutu cultivators, and raising the percentage of Hutu in secondary schools.⁵¹ The authors opposed eliminating ethnic identity cards for fear that Tutsi rulers would continue to occlude the inherent biases in Rwanda's educational and political systems. The petitionaries concluded by rejecting any revolutionary accusations, arguing that they were simply "collaborators conscious of their social rights" struggling against a "racist monopoly in Rwanda."⁵² Like the *Mise au point* for Tutsi conservatives, the *Bahutu Manifesto* encompassed the key principles of Hutu nationalism in the late 1950s – the primacy of the ethnic question, the positive view of Europeans, the increasingly strident critiques of Tutsi rulers, and the preference for democratization and redistribution over nationalism and independence. Whether the Manifesto represented the silent Hutu majority in 1957 is another matter all together. In the telling 1957 words of Jean-Paul Harroy, the colonial governor, "the manifesto expressed the views of a still-limited group of Bahutu but reflected a tendency which in a confused form was already part of the consciousness of a great many members of that social group."⁵³ Harroy himself doubted the Bahutu Manifesto's racial analysis, writing in July 1957 that "I am personally convinced that the distinction at

⁵¹ Ibid., 28.

⁵² Ibid., 29.

⁵³ Harroy quoted in U.N. Visiting Mission, *1957 Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, 6 Dec. 1957: 16. Harroy did not even mention the Hutu-Tutsi question in his long discourse to the Superior Council in August 1957 (cf. "Discours de M. le Vice-Gouverneur Général Harroy au Conseil Général du Ruanda-Urundi," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (4 August 1957): 1-8). This contradicts his later claims that he informed the U.N. Visiting Commission that the Hutu-Tutsi question was the "chief problem of the country" (Harroy, *Rwanda: Souvenirs d'un compagnon de la marche*, 232).

stake between Hutu and Tutsi concerns nowadays two social groups identified less and less with two racial groups recognized by physical anthropology.”⁵⁴

After visiting Rwanda in September and October 1957, however, the U.N. Visiting Mission largely adopted the Bahutu Manifesto’s political conclusions if not necessarily its ethnic analysis.⁵⁵ Its subsequent report warned of the dangers of a continued Tutsi monopolization of power and admitted the existence of an internal Hutu-Tutsi problem, even if *tutelle* members still disputed the exact meaning of this distinction. For example, a preliminary U.N. study in March 1957 borrowed Hamitic language in describing Hutu as “Negroes of Bantu origin and average height” and Tutsi as “(of) Hamitic or Nilotic origin...remarkable for their size and statures.”⁵⁶ The December 1957 U.N. report shared some of this language in describing how Rwanda’s “different racial groups” historically lived in a “symbiotic relationship.” Yet the Commission also warned against “placing undue stress upon the opposition between Bahutu and Batutsi” and even claimed that Belgian economic and social reforms helped to “break down and change the nature of the distinction between the Batutsi and the Bahutu, so that the terms have come to denote social rather than racial or political groups.”⁵⁷ And in the words of a Belgian representative on the U.N. Visiting

⁵⁴ Quoted in Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 863-64 and Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 134. See also Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 218-20.

⁵⁵ Background information here is drawn from Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 218-20 ; Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 125-26, 153; Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 709-10.

⁵⁶ A.D.K., U.N. Trusteeship Council, T/Ac.36/L.60, “Study of Population, Land Utilization, and Land System in Ruanda-Urundi,” 26 March 1957: 4-5.

⁵⁷ A.D.K., U.N. Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, *1957 Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, 6 Dec. 1957: 14-15.

Commission, “these classes are not castes...the terms Batutsi and Bahutu should be understood as names of common usage and not as exclusive predicates of closed castes.”⁵⁸

If the U.N. Visiting Commission’s analysis of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction betrayed a degree of ambiguity, the Commission showed no reticence about pushing Rwanda towards full-fledged democracy. After 40 years of Belgian political reforms and Western modernization, the U.N. *tutelle* concluded that Rwanda was ready to take its place in the pantheon of modern democracies. While “not anticipating spectacular and revolutionary changes overnight,” the Commission envisioned the transformation of a “regime still characterized by vestiges of feudalism to institutions that are more in keeping with democratic principles.” Betraying a naïve optimism that would be shattered by later events, the Commission wrote that “we have every reason to hope that the transition will take place with a minimum of tension, friction, and difficulties.”

What is striking in this narrative is the extent to which the U.N. in 1957 continued to echo Louis Franck in the 1920s or Pierre Ryckmans in the 1930s – namely that Belgium and the international community should, in Ryckmans’s memorable words, “dominate to serve.” In the words of the December 1957 report, “(Rwanda-Burundi) has confronted the Administering Authority with a well-established political and social structure that may have been suited to conditions in bygone centuries but is basically incompatible with the democratic principles which it was Belgium’s mission to gradually implant in the country.”⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Leroy quoted in Murego, *Révolution Rwandaise*, 863-64.

⁵⁹ A.D.K., U.N. Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, *1957 Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, 9-10.

This excursus reveals two important points. One, the colonial project contained not just authoritarian impulses but a deep and often uncritical embracing of democratization; the *tutelle* never questioned why Belgium felt it had a mission to democratize Rwanda.⁶⁰ Two, colonial officials seemed incapable of considering how democratic institutions – particularly those imposed from the top down – could undermine social and national unity. The failure to critique the darker side of democratization remained a major analytical problem for church and state alike into the 1960s.⁶¹

In the midst of rising ethnic and political ferment in 1957, the Catholic hierarchy tried to steer a middle course.⁶² While several missionaries critiqued the Tutsi-dominated Josephite brothers for their allegedly anti-European nationalism, their superiors cautioned against taking sides in Rwanda's Hutu-Tutsi disputes. To this end, Louis Durrieu reminded one missionary of the necessity of "prudence for not compromising the mission in questions of a political order...we are not men of one or another fraction of the population; we must be all for all (*omnibus omnia factus sum*).” Perraudin echoed similar sentiments in a September-October exchange of letters with Fr. Noti, a mission superior at Nyabahanga who rankled local authorities when he publicly preached against the exactions of local chiefs. While

⁶⁰ Cf. "Vers une doctrine sociale coloniale, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 15 July 1956.

⁶¹ I would argue that the talisman of democracy remains tantalizing even today, as evidenced in the recent work of Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). For all of his keen analysis of the ethnic question, Longman seems wholly incapable of recognizing the potential social risks of democratization. For example, he describes the major cleavage in Rwandan Christianity as dividing those who "created support for democratic reform" and those who "defended the entrenched interests of the elite" (23).

⁶² This section draws upon A.G.M.Afr.N°541630, Werleye to Durrieu, 5 Jan. 1957; N°541645-48, Hartmann to Durrieu, 21 April 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°541644, Durrieu to Derson, 8 June 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°731083, Volker to Boutry, 14 Dec. 1957. The Perraudin-Noti correspondence can be found at A.G.M.Afr.N°739483-487, 25 Sept. 1957, 30 Sept. 1957, 3 Oct. 1957

reiterating his own unwavering commitment to justice, Perraudin reminded Noti that souls were won to the truth through “persuasion” and “interior conversion,” not angry denunciation. He also advised Noti to take up such questions in Catholic Action study groups rather than in Sunday sermons. This cautious effort to keep the church above ethnic politics extended to the seminary where Leo Volker, the new Superior General of the White Fathers, demanded in December 1957 that Nyakibanda professors cease lecturing on the Hutu-Tutsi question and exercise great prudence in all matters related to the seminarians’ “diverse tribes of origin.”

While attempting to steer clear of political conflict, the missionary hierarchy continued to utilize language that reinforced Hutu-Tutsi stereotypes and further divided these groups into discrete racial categories and social classes. As early as February 1957, Perraudin utilized racial language to describe the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. “The inhabitants (of Rwanda) all have the same language but they are of a different race: there are the Batutsi – the privileged class – around 10% - and the Bahutu – cultivators – which form the mass, near 90% - and some Batwa, pygmies, of very few numbers.”⁶³ And even as he cautioned against taking sides in ethno-political quarrels, the superior general of the White Fathers, Louis Durrieu, spoke of the “Tutsi tribe’s real qualities for governing” and attributed much of the political tension in Rwanda to the “inferior class” challenging the Tutsi monopoly.⁶⁴ None of these sentiments were publicly aired, however.

⁶³ A.G.M.Afr.N°542046, Perraudin to [Anon], 15 Feb. 1957.

⁶⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°541644, Durrieu to Derson, 8 June 1957.

Even as they discussed ethnic issues in private, the vicars apostolic of Rwanda and Burundi offered public guidance for the Catholic lay faithful as the two nations moved towards democracy and self-determination. Following the regional Leopoldville statement of June 1956, the Catholic bishops of Rwanda and Burundi released a pastoral letter on justice in March 1957.⁶⁵ As in 1956, the bishops in 1957 attempted to offer apolitical commentary on politics, “shedding light on the moral laws that should reign” in society rather than “offering directives of an economic or political order” that would “substitute for the people in their temporal relations.” After these opening caveats, the bishops described justice in distributive terms as “that virtue which disposes man to render to each his due,” producing a society which ensures economic progress, civil peace, familial love, and the common good. Injustice, on the other hand, “renders human relations unsupportable, summoning tyranny and provoking revolt. It will foment and keep alive hatreds.” While the church had no magic recipe for resolving social injustice, it had a duty to expose social abuses existing in Rwanda and Burundi while reiterating the moral principles which should guide the laity in resolving these social problems.

The 1957 pastoral letter on justice was significant for three reasons. First, it demonstrated that the church hierarchy would continue to follow the course set by the 1956 Leopoldville conference in speaking to issues of social injustice. Whereas previous episcopal statements had concerned issues directly related to the church’s institutional interests like

⁶⁵ Ordinaries of Rwanda-Burundi, *Lettre pastorale sur la justice*, April 1957. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=5 (accessed 9 Feb. 2011). See also “Lettre pastorale des Vicaires Apostoliques du Ruanda-Urundi – La Justice, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (31 March 1957) : 2. For commentary, see Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 421-22.

Catholic versus state schools, the 1956-57 statements stood much more clearly within a post-*Rerum Novarum* tradition of Catholic social teaching.⁶⁶ Second, while not directly addressing the Hutu-Tutsi question, the 1957 statement on justice offered much stronger critiques of indigenous authorities than the 1956 Leopoldville document. The church appeared here as the moral soul of society, the prophet drawing attention to great evils in hopes of inspiring the powerful to change their ways. Finally, the statement marked the last time for three years that the bishops of Rwanda and Burundi spoke together on social and political issues. As we will see later in this chapter, Perraudin and Bigirumwami diverged on the Hutu-Tutsi question in 1958-59 while Rwanda and Burundi charted increasingly independent political courses after 1957.⁶⁷

The 1957 statement on justice was also significant for what it did not accomplish or even address – namely, resolving the fundamental analytical dispute on how to interpret the ethno-political divisions in Rwandan society. In this sense the bishops' efforts to stand above politics and "avoid technical solutions" ensured that each side could interpret Catholic principles in whatever way they saw fit. Thus Tutsi nationalists emphasized Catholic teachings on unity, dismissing the writers of the *Bahutu Manifesto* as treasonous insurrectionaries dividing Rwandan society into illusory ethnic groups. Hutu leaders, on the

⁶⁶ Released in 1891, Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* focused on the labor question in industrial Europe and inaugurated the modern era of Catholic social teaching. (Cf. http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum_en.html (accessed 9 Feb. 2011)).

⁶⁷ To highlight just one example, Burundi's Mwami Mwambutsa assumed a much more pro-Belgian line than Mwami Mutara between 1957 and 1959. While Mutara's allies on the Superior Council were calling for Rwandan independence as early as 1957, Mwambutsa requested as late as 1959 that Belgium *not* set a deadline for relinquishing its territorial trusteeship. For an example of Mwambutsa's pro-Belgian rhetoric, see "Discours du Mwami du Burundi au Groupe de Travail – 23 April 1959," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (10 May 1959): 3.

other hand, emphasized the Catholic principle of justice and its corresponding demands for an equitable distribution of political and economic power, rejecting Tutsi calls for unity as smokescreens for perpetuating a fundamentally unjust system. Catholic Hutu and Tutsi elites agreed with their bishops that Rwandan society should be unified, charitable, and just, but episcopal pronouncements on these matters had little transformative effect since lay leaders interpreted the church's teachings in whatever way suited their own group's interests.

Rwanda's growing fissiparous tendencies were reflected in the rise of new ethnic political movements in 1957. While the *Mouvement Progressiste Politique* (MPP) had united progressive Hutu and Tutsi elites for a brief moment in 1954-55, the party lost momentum by early 1956, and the summer 1956 press disputes and 1957 manifestoes finished it off.⁶⁸ Three months after helping to co-author the Bahutu Manifesto, Gregoire Kayibanda founded the *Mouvement Social Muhutu* (MSM) in Kabgayi in June 1957. This movement advocated for the political, social, cultural and economic uplift of the Hutu peasantry. After founding the MSM, Kayibanda traveled to Belgium in late 1957 to begin an internship with *Vers l'avenir*, a left-leaning Catholic publication based in Namur. Kayibanda used this experience to cultivate important political and financial relationships with leftist Christian political parties and trade unions like the *Parti Social Chrétien* (PSC) and the *Confédération des Syndicats Chrétiens* (CSC).⁶⁹ Far from defusing the political situation, however, Kayibanda's departure left a political vacuum filled by the devoutly Catholic and passionately anti-Tutsi Joseph

⁶⁸ Adriaenssens, *Rapport sur la situation religieuse*, 14.

⁶⁹ Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 251. On the connections between the Belgian Left and Hutu politics, see Léon Saur, *Influences parallèles: L'Internationale démocratie-chrétienne au Rwanda* (Brussels: Editions Luc Pire, 1998). Saur, a former Belgian politician himself, is currently finishing a new work on the relationship between Belgian Catholic progressive organizations and the Hutu social movement of the late 1950s.

Gitera. Gitera launched *L'association pour le promotion des masses bahutu* (Aprosoma) in southern Rwanda in November 1957. During this same month, a group of conservative nationalist Tutsi started *L'association des éleveurs du Ruanda-Urundi*, a movement that would grow into the *Union Nationale Rwandaise* (UNAR) in 1959. While not yet official political parties, the rival movements demonstrated the growing salience of ethnicity for political mobilization in Rwanda.⁷⁰

Rising ethnic tensions in Rwandan politics also began to spill over into the Catholic seminary if not the mission stations themselves.⁷¹ If the four years between 1953 and 1956 had been calm ones at Nyakibanda seminary, 1957 began a four-year period which saw the entire faculty turn over and two-thirds of the student body depart. The celebration of Mwami Mutara's 25th jubilee from June 29 to July 1, 1957 brought some of the latent ethnic tensions into the open. The jubilee days turned into a boisterous celebration of the monarchy and traditional Rwandan culture, including a laudatory sermon from Bigirumwami and lavish tributes from Belgian colonial officials and Rwandan chiefs alike.⁷² Some seminarians embraced the jubilee, while others lamented how the Mwami overlooked both the Hutu-Tutsi question and the need for further social democratization. In the words of Nyakibanda's

⁷⁰ Cf. Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 231; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 234.

⁷¹ It is always dangerous for the historian to extrapolate from absence. However, in light of the growing ethnic disputes amongst intellectuals, political elites, and Catholic seminarians, the lack of references to ethnic tensions in the mission stations should be noted. Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°739340, Longueval (Astrida) to Volker, 22 July 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°739343, Duchamps (Mushishoro) to Volker, 8 Aug. 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°739348, Marien (Kansi) to Volker, 22 Sept. 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°739355, Franzen (Nyamata) to Volker, 26 Sept. 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°739362, Tasse (Rwesero) to Volker, 21 Nov. 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°739375, Landtmeters (Zaza) to Volker, 4 Dec. 1957.

⁷² Cf. "Les vingt-cinq ans de règne du Mwami du Ruanda, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (7 July 1957) : 8-9. For background, see Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 143-44; Rudakemwa, *L'évangélisation*, 313; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 255.

rector, Pierre Boutry, “the Mwami’s jubilee days have revealed the Hutu-Tutsi antagonism, and the seminarians are avoiding each other.”⁷³ And in an illuminating commentary on the extent to which ethnic identity stemmed from political imagination, the Nyakibanda annual report admitted frictions between Hutu and Tutsi students after “certain seminarians became conscious of a problem of which they were (previously) ignorant.”⁷⁴ Having said this, however, one should not retrospectively exaggerate the impact of the 25th jubilee – even the Mwami’s media foil, *Kinyamateka*, included positive accolades for Rwanda’s king.⁷⁵

Nine seminarians – seven Tutsi and two Hutu – left Nyakibanda at the beginning of the 1957-58 academic year, marking the largest student withdrawal since 1952. The controversy was precipitated by Fr. Corneille Slenders, a seminary professor who taught on social issues and provided much of the spiritual direction in the seminary. Slenders had only joined the faculty in 1956 and initially cultivated positive relations with the seminarians.⁷⁶ By 1957, however, his public engagement of the Hutu-Tutsi question and criticisms of some Tutsi seminarians had proven more controversial, and his superiors directed him to cease speaking publicly on ethnic issues.⁷⁷ Both Slenders and an ally, Fr. Cogniaux, were removed from the seminary at the end of the 1957-58 academic year. Since both were known for their

⁷³ A.G.M.Afr.N°731006, Boutry to Volker, 19 July 1957.

⁷⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°731287-88, *Rapport annuel du Nyakibanda*, 1956-57.

⁷⁵ Cf. « Yubile y’Ingoma 1931-ya Mutara III-1957, » *Kinyamateka* 25, 13 (July 1957): 1. For background, see Paul Rutayisire, “Les signes précurseurs de la crise de la Toussaint rwandaise, » *Dialogue* 189 (Nov. 2009) : 18.

⁷⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°741610-13, « Rapport de la visite du Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda du 31 Octobre au 13 Novembre 1956, » 14 Nov. 1956.

⁷⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°731083, Volker to Boutry, 14 Dec. 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°731081-82, Boutry to Mondor, 4 Dec. 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°727057-62, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 5 Dec. 1957.

strident critiques of Tutsi seminarians, their dismissals point more to a hierarchy trying to avoid political entanglements rather than to a church switching over to the Hutu side.⁷⁸

If Nyakibanda was sliding back into a familiar pattern, the seminary's former rector was also sparking new controversies. But as in 1956, the critique of Perraudin in 1957 concerned not his social justice views or possible pro-Hutu leanings but rather the rapid pace at which this relative newcomer to the Rwandan scene was indigenizing the local church. A fellow White Father described him in late 1956 as "a spiritual man, but a little political. He came to the seminary without missionary background. He wants, they say, at all costs to get on well with the king and the *abbés* (indigenous priests)."⁷⁹ A year later Jan Hartmann – the same Hartmann who had been a finalist to replace Déprimoz in 1955 – lamented the low morale of the White Fathers which he traced to Perraudin's favoring "all which is indigenous," including the construction of a new minor seminary for the Josephites.⁸⁰ Behind the scenes, Perraudin advocated for the establishment of a new vicariate in Kigali with an indigenous bishop, a doubling of indigenous clergy, and a 50% reduction of missionary priests.⁸¹ Since in 1957 the vast majority of indigenous Catholic priests were Tutsi, this can hardly be seen as the first step in an anti-Tutsi conspiracy.

One should not make the mistake, however, of concluding that Perraudin abandoned the social justice vision which he brought to the vicariate in 1956. For example, he wrote in

⁷⁸ In late 1957 Cogniaux named the arrogance, pride and "profoundly pagan mentality" of the Tutsi seminarians as the primary explanation for Nyakibanda's problems (A.G.M.Afr.N°7310768, Cogniaux to Mondor, 16 Dec. 1957).

⁷⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°541627, Righi to Durrieu, 28 Dec. 1956. For Righi this explained why Perraudin had promoted undeserving indigenous priests to lead local mission stations.

⁸⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°739367-68, Hartmann to Volker, 24 Dec. 1957.

⁸¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°542049, Perraudin to [Anon.], 15 Feb. 1957; A.G.M.Afr.N°739003, Volker to Perraudin, 3 Dec. 1957.

the 1956-57 Kabgayi annual report of the importance of exposing the Rwandan population to the social teachings of the popes and the local bishops “which is absolutely necessary in these difficult times where democracy tends to replace the former feudalism.”⁸² A November speech to the alumni of the *Groupe Scolaire d’Astrida* offered a synopsis of Perraudin’s social vision at the end of 1957:

The Church is not a Society of the sacristy, but the community of the children of God, who pray always and sanctify themselves individually and together, but who try also to work with all their strength for the construction of a truly just, truly free, truly fraternal world on the basis of Christian principles...If she does not destroy social inequalities, she works to reduce them to just and healthy proportions.⁸³

If Perraudin had not lost his social commitment, he spent four months outside of the country in early 1957 and was not even in the country when the regional bishops released their letter on justice. He continued to maintain amicable relations with the ruling regime, focused on indigenizing the local clergy and building pastoral capacity, and worked to improve “fraternal charity” between European and African clergy through a series of reflection days.⁸⁴ In retrospect, it is difficult to imagine that a man criticized for being too close to the Mwami and Tutsi clergy in 1957 would find himself in 1959 facing accusations of regicide and inciting ethnic revolution.

⁸² A.G.M.Afr.N°738366, *Rapport Annuel du Vicariat Apostolique du Kabgayi*, 1956-57.

⁸³ A.D.K., André Perraudin, “Allocution aux Anciens du Groupe Scolaire d’Astrida à l’occasion du 150^{me} anniversaire de la Fondation de la Congrégation des Frères de la Charité,” 8 Nov. 1957.

⁸⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°739345, Levie to Volker, 23 Aug. 1957. Cogniaux credited Perraudin’s and Bigirumwami’s retreat days for ameliorating intra-clerical tensions at the seminary (A.G.M.Afr.N°731076, Cogniaux to Mondor, 16 Dec. 1957). On Perraudin’s ongoing focus on building pastoral capacity, see “Brève rencontre avec S. Exc. Mgr. Perraudin vicaire apostolique de Nyundo et M. Abbé Cuvellier l’envoyé du diocèse de Namur à Nyanza, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (12 May 1957) : 2.

C. 1958: The Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission and Bigirumwami's intervention

By 1958 the Hutu-Tutsi question had risen to the top of the Rwandan political agenda. Rival political movements had mobilized to contest anticipated 1959 elections, and the U.N. and Belgian government were struggling to balance their mandate's dual commitments to devolution and democratization.⁸⁵ Even as ethno-political tensions increased inside church and state alike, however, the rhetoric surrounding the Hutu-Tutsi distinction showed a striking degree of variability, reflecting the extent to which Hutu and Tutsi represented shifting political identities. In particular, the spring 1958 debates of the Mwami's Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission and Aloys Bigirumwami's September article in *Témoignage Chretien* revealed the complexities of ethnic discourse and demonstrated that Rwanda did in fact have "alternatives to the tribal construction of politics" which Philip Gourevitch and others have often overlooked.⁸⁶

After publicly ignoring the Bahutu Manifesto for nearly a year, Mwami Mutara in March 1958 agreed to establish a special commission to study the Hutu-Tutsi question.⁸⁷ The ten-man commission included figures as varied as the conservative Tutsi chief Justin Gashugi, the Tutsi reformer Prosper Bwanakweri, and the Hutu advocates Joseph Gitera and Calliope Mulindahabi. The ethnic and ideological diversity of the commission offered hope

⁸⁵ In the words of the U.N. Visiting Commission report of December 1957, "the Belgian authorities must do everything within their power to hasten the Bahutu's emancipation so as to be able to accelerate still further the current transfer of power to the constituted indigenous authorities without endangering democratic principles" (A.D.K., U.N. Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, *1957 Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, 21).

⁸⁶ "To be sure, nobody in Rwanda in the late 1950s had offered an alternative to a tribal construction of politics" (Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our children: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1998), 61).

⁸⁷ Cf. « Les Bahutu au Conseil Supérieur du Ruanda, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (23 March 1958) : 3. For background see Ernest Mutwarasibo, "Crispation ethnique à la fin du règne de Mutara III Rudahigwa, » *Dialogue* 188 (April-July 2009) : 157-80.

for resolving Rwanda's increasingly intractable political situation. One could argue that the Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission's ultimate failure to achieve consensus on the key issues which divided Hutu and Tutsi elites placed Rwanda on a road to revolution. In Perraudin's words, after these meetings "the rupture was consummated between Hutu and Tutsi (and) a new phase was opened in the conflict which opposed them."⁸⁸ In light of their importance for understanding how leading Rwandan elites understood the ethnic question on the eve of the 1959 revolution, I will devote a considerable part of this chapter to analyzing the commission transcripts.

The study commission gathered three times in April 1958 and a fourth time in June.⁸⁹ The initial meeting did not start well. When fifteen Hutu petitioners requested an early audience with the Mwami on March 30, Mutara initially refused to see them. Once admitted, the Mwami had a heated exchange with the Hutu leaders where he allegedly grabbed Gitara by the throat. He later issued a statement dismissing the petitioners as separatists and enemies of Rwanda.⁹⁰ The incident further politicized the Mwami in the eyes of Hutu elites. In subsequent committee dialogues on the Mwami, Gitara agreed to call Mutara the "common father of us all" yet also posited that "the Mwami belongs to the Tutsi group." This contradicted the traditional view that the Mwami stood above ethnic categories, that in the words of one Tutsi commission member he was "neither Muhutu nor Mututsi nor Mutwa."⁹¹

⁸⁸ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 169.

⁸⁹ For secondary commentary on the Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission and the reactions of the Mwami and CSP, see Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 252-555; Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 153-67; Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 871 ; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 450-55.

⁹⁰ Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 252.

⁹¹ The quotations are taken from the transcript of the first debate of the CSP commission on the Hutu-Tutsi question: "Comité de l'étude de l'aspect social Muhutu-Mututsi (CSP), 31 March – 3 April 1958,"

Despite this rocky beginning, a broad, pan-ethnic majority concurred on several key issues. First, the commission agreed on the existence of an ethnic problem in secondary and higher education, as Tutsi comprised over 60% of secondary students and over two-thirds of the student populations at elite schools like the *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida*.⁹² The commission also agreed that Hutu were vastly underrepresented in administrative and judicial positions and that Hutu had suffered disproportionately under traditional institutions like *uburetwa* and *ubuhake*. A majority envisioned an independent Rwanda with a constitutional monarchy, representative democracy, and universal male suffrage. Reflecting the Mwami's increasingly precarious political future, Tutsi chiefs like Bwanakweri and Gashugi enthusiastically endorsed circumscribing the Mwami's powers in a new Rwandan parliamentary democracy.⁹³

While commission members agreed on the necessity of political reform and the reality of Hutu-Tutsi inequality, they differed on what precipitated the problem. Tutsi members tended to blame the European administration for favoring Tutsi chiefs and limiting secondary education to Tutsi in the 1920s and 1930s.⁹⁴ Conservatives like Gashugi noted past failures of Hutu chiefs and the unwillingness of Hutu peasants to live under the rule of fellow Hutu. Gitera and his Hutu colleagues placed more responsibility at the feet of the Mwami and

<http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc25.pdf>. In *C.I.E.R.* (accessed 9 Feb. 2011). For similar sentiments, see "Interview de M. Joseph Gitera, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (27 April 1958) : 3.

⁹² Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 127-28.

⁹³ "Deuxième Séance de l'étude de l'aspect social muhutu-mututsi, 10-12 April 1958," 5-9. In *C.I.E.R.*, <http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/Vol0Doc27.pdf> (accessed 9 Feb. 2011).

⁹⁴ *C.I.E.R.*, "Comité de l'étude de l'aspect social Muhutu-Mututsi (CSP), 31 March – 3 April 1957, » 6.

the pre-colonial Rwandan political system, highlighting the exclusion of the Hutu from the royal court and the social inculcation of a Hutu inferiority complex.⁹⁵

The commission also split over how to resolve the relationship between ethnicity and political representation. Dismissing the current Belgian and Tutsi-dominated system as a “feudal system of courtesan culture and favoritism,”⁹⁶ Mulindahabi and his Hutu colleagues advocated for “Hutu representatives” on the Superior Council, arguing that the current Tutsi-dominated CSP could not be trusted to serve the general interests of the country. Despite Tutsi protestations, the Hutu advocates could claim some precedent for their demand. After admitting the existence of racial discrimination against the Twa, the CSP in June 1955 agreed to admit a Twa representative to the Council.⁹⁷ And in light of the continuing Tutsi dominance of the CSP, some Belgian officials had proposed Hutu representatives as early as 1956.⁹⁸ But embracing Hutu representatives who could claim to stand for 85% of the population posed a more direct political challenge to traditional rule than a token Twa minister representing 1% of the Rwandan population. Making ethnicity the basis of political representation also challenged the Superior Council’s trans-ethnic, nationalist ideal.⁹⁹

The Tutsi members of the Hutu-Tutsi study commission therefore stood united against the idea of Hutu representation on the CSP, arguing that existing educational and political discrepancies would resolve themselves as Rwandan schools improved, the Belgians

⁹⁵ C.I.E.R., “Deuxième Séance de l’étude de l’aspect social muhutu-mututsi, 10-12 April 1958,” 7.

⁹⁶ C.I.E.R., “Comité de l’étude de l’aspect social Muhutu-Mututsi (CSP), 31 March – 3 April 1957, » 5.

⁹⁷ “Egalité raciale au Ruanda,” *Revue du clergé africain* X, no. 6 (November 1955) : 602.

⁹⁸ « Lettre de M.A. Maus au Vice-gouverneur Général, » in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 13. After his superiors ignored his April 1956 letter, Maus left the Belgian administration and later became a pro-Hutu polemicist during the Rwandan revolution.

⁹⁹ C.I.E.R., “Deuxième Séance de l’étude de l’aspect social muhutu-mututsi, 10-12 April 1958,” 15-16 ; A.D.K., “Le Comité d’étude du problème social muhutu-mututsi reprend session, » 9-11 April 1958, 5-6.

withdrew, and Rwanda embraced a more meritocratic political system. In the words of the Tutsi chair Bagirishya, the state should “give equality of opportunity to all three ethnic groups to access public office” while avoiding a “representation by racial group that could only engender harmful rivalries based on race.”¹⁰⁰ Even a reformist chief like Bwanakweri disputed Gitera’s proposal for a Hutu representative, responding that “this is not democratic and it is separatist...we would not base this choice on either intelligence or capacity...it’s an unjust method which can only be separatist and anti-democratic.”¹⁰¹ Bwanakweri also took issue with Gitera’s tendency to speak in collective ethnic terms, reminding him that the majority of Tutsi were poor and that the Tutsi class did not conspire to discriminate against Hutu.¹⁰² For his part, Gashugi claimed that Kayibanda had rejected the Mwami’s earlier offers of a chieftaincy, demonstrating that Kayibanda was merely looking to gain electoral leverage with the Hutu masses.

These debates over Hutu representatives on the CSP symbolized a broader controversy over which side bore most responsibility for Rwanda’s growing political divisions. While the Tutsi chiefs blamed Hutu polemicists for dividing the country into contrived ethnic groupings, Gitera, Mulindahabi, and their Hutu allies pointed to recalcitrant Tutsi elites who refused to share political power. In this view, Hutu elites were not undermining national unity but making people aware of a nation that had already been rent asunder. Given the current political impasse, some even argued that national division was

¹⁰⁰ C.I.E.R., « Comité de l’étude de l’aspect social Muhutu-Mututsi (CSP), 31 March – 3 April 1957, » 3.

¹⁰¹ Ibid. Bwanakweri was willing to compromise and allow for the appointment of a special Hutu advisor to the Mwami (A.D.K., “Le Comité d’étude du problème social muhutu-mututsi reprend session, » 9-11 April 1958 , 6, 11).

¹⁰² C.I.E.R., « Deuxième Séance de l’étude de l’aspect social muhutu-mututsi, 10-12 April 1958, » 13.

inevitable. In the words of Gitera, “the division that we want is equalizing, that which you want is division by monopoly.”¹⁰³ The tragedy here is that politics had been reduced to a zero-sum game of division.

While the political debate became increasingly contentious, the rhetoric concerning the Hutu-Tutsi distinction remained remarkably ambiguous. The Hutu Balthazar Bicomupaka offered a socioeconomic understanding, arguing that “our sense of Bahutu encompasses all the poor people, so that a poor Mututsi is at the same time Muhutu, that is Hutu in a social sense.”¹⁰⁴ Another Hutu representative, Bendantuguka, provided a more biological definition, positing that “I understand a Muhutu in the genealogical sense, a Muhutu by race.” Gitera appeared to retain both understandings yet emphasized the solidarity of all poor Rwandans. “A Muhutu in our sense then is the poor and simple man, excluding at the same time the racial Hutu who becomes socially Hamitic. The Mututsi for us is the super-human...who socially is higher and mistrusts the Hutu, so that the Tutsi who sympathizes (with us)...is not a Tutsi in our sense.”¹⁰⁵ Even after the hardening of ethnic discourse in 1957 and early 1958, three prominent Hutu could still publicly disagree on how to understand the term “Tutsi.”¹⁰⁶ This does not mean that the distinction was invented out of

¹⁰³ Ibid., 16.

¹⁰⁴ In a contemporaneous article on the CSP debates, the White Fathers’ journal *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* referred to Hutu and Tutsi as “social groups.” Cf. “Pendant quinze jours: Les Bahutu à Nyanza...,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (20 April 1958) : 1.

¹⁰⁵ All of these quotations can be found in C.I.E.R., « Deuxième Séance de l’étude de l’aspect social muhutu-mututsi, 10-12 April 1958,” 13. In a later conversation, however, Gitera rejected the idea that a poor Tutsi could represent the Hutu masses, claiming that this “would not alleviate our fears” (A.D.K., “Le Comité d’étude du problème social muhutu-mututsi reprend session, » 9-11 April 1958, 9).

¹⁰⁶ Writing some seven months later, even the Hutu propagandist Gaspar Cyimana admitted a high degree of ethnic intermixing in central Rwanda, admitting that observers could only make clear racial distinctions

whole cloth by Europeans bent on dividing Rwanda. But as with the language of “black” in apartheid South Africa, “Hutu” and “Tutsi” reflected a far more complex reality than later commentators would make it appear.

The Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission gathered a third time between June 4 and June 7, 1958 to consider the schools question. To explain the discrepancy in Hutu-Tutsi secondary school enrollment, the commission proposed four reasons: 1) the Tutsi monopoly of political and economic life under Belgian colonial rule, 2) socially-inculcated Tutsi superiority and Hutu inferiority complexes, 3) the negligence of local authorities, and 4) the legacy of *uburetwa* work *corvées*. Recognizing the empirical reality of Tutsi dominance of secondary education, the commission offered several tangible suggestions.¹⁰⁷ First, they urged the CSP and the Belgian government to launch a propaganda campaign to recruit and retain Hutu students. Second, the commission demanded that the *Group Scolaire d'Astrida* eradicate any Tutsi favoritism in promoting students to the administrative sector that determined the next generation of Rwandan chiefs. Third, the commission urged the government to rapidly expand schools construction. Fourth, committee members suggested the creation of a permanent commission to monitor the government's progress in strengthening educational equality. Finally, the committee unanimously agreed that secondary schools should adopt an

between Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa in other regions of the country (G. Cyimana, “Problèmes sociaux et ethniques au Ruanda,” *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (2 November 1958): 3).

¹⁰⁷ While Hutu made up a large majority of younger primary school populations, Tutsi comprised a majority in later primary and secondary years. Statistics at the Diocese of Kabgayi archives detail this ethnic breakdown in 21 Catholic schools in central Rwanda (A.D.K., “Enquête Bahutu-Batutsi 1956-57, Secteur Nord, Kigali”).

ethnic-blind admissions policy.¹⁰⁸ A key testimonial here came from none other than Msgr. André Perraudin. After instructing his vicar general in April to not share ethnic statistics from Catholic schools, Perraudin wrote in a May letter to the Commission that “an individual has never been dismissed (from Catholic schools) because of his race” and claimed that Catholic schools based promotion on exit exams rather than ethnic identity.¹⁰⁹

In the midst of the Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission debates, a group of conservative Tutsi chiefs threw in a bombshell in the form of two May 1958 letters from the “Twelve Great Servants of the Court” (in Kinyarwanda “*Bagaragu b’ibwami bakuru*”).¹¹⁰ These writers accused Hutu advocates of treasonous rebellion and opposed any changes to Rwanda’s traditional monarchical system. In more inflammatory language, the Great Servants denied any fraternity between Tutsi and Hutu and argued that the superior Tutsi had conquered and enslaved the weaker Hutu. “Those which claim the sharing of common patrimony are those who share bonds of fraternity. Now the relations between us Tutsi and those Hutu has from all time been based on slavery; between us and them there is no foundation of brotherhood.” The document seemed to confirm the worst fears of Hutu reformers; over the next several years Hutu polemicists would continually cite this text as evidence of Tutsi malfeasance.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ «Troisième Session du Comité de l’étude la question sociale Muhutu-mututsi, » 7-9. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/02_Comite_question_sociale_3o_session_4-7_juin_1958.pdf (accessed 9 Feb. 2011).

¹⁰⁹ A.D.K., Innocent Gasabwoya to School Directors, 30 April 1958; C.I.E.R., «Troisième Session du Comité de l’étude la question sociale Muhutu-mututsi, » 8.

¹¹⁰ « Premier écrit de Nyanza » and « Deuxième écrit de Nyanza, » 17-18 May 1958, in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 35-37.

¹¹¹ « Le dernier Conseil Supérieur du Rwanda : Lamentables débats, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (6 July 1958) : 5. I would agree with Ian Linden, however, that the document’s signatories reflected an older generation

Called by Mutara in a special night session on June 12, 1958, Rwanda's Superior Council gathered to consider the recommendations of the Hutu-Tutsi study commission. On the Mwami's recommendation, the CSP rejected all of the committee's conclusions. Seemingly contradicting the commission's *raison d'être*, Mutara issued a statement denying the existence of a Hutu-Tutsi problem in Rwanda, claiming that such polemics had originated from "the foreign influence of some whites on blacks, from communist ideas whose intention is to divide the country."¹¹² Over stringent Hutu protests, the CSP went so far that night as to ban any further usage of the terms Hutu, Tutsi and Twa in official documents.¹¹³ While avoiding the polemical language of the Great Servants document, Mwami Mutara adopted its one-sided political analysis rather than the more nuanced critique of the Hutu-Tutsi study commission.

In response, Hutu elites took their argument to the hills. In May 1958, the U.N. *tutelle* approved the statutes of Gregoire Kayibanda's new *Mouvement Social Muhutu*, lending public legitimacy to the MSM's demands for democratization and the promotion of what the MSM termed the "Bahutu race-class." Gitara's APROSOMA released "*La voix de petit peuple*" ("The Voice of the Peasants") in late June 1958. This publication turned the CSP's "enemies of the people" discourse on its head, positing that the only enemies of Rwanda were those who "sucked the blood of their brothers," hated foreigners, opposed the reign of

of Tutsi chiefs rather than the younger generation of Tutsi *évolués* more enamored with anti-colonial nationalism than South African-style apartheid (Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 253-55).

¹¹² Quoted in « Le dernier Conseil Supérieur du Ruanda : Lamentables débats, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (6 July 1958) : 5.

¹¹³ « Position du Conseil Supérieur et du Mwami, » in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 37. The Hutu delegation to the CSP immediately protested that « we want the term Muhutu strongly and frequently utilized in view of its REHABILITATION, a term whose original sense has been associated with slavery (servage). » ("Le dernier Conseil Supérieur du Ruanda: Lamentables débats," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (6 July 1958): 5.)

Christ and Europeans, and suppressed all voices of progress. For APROSOMA, the spirit of Hutu brotherhood stood in sharp contrast to the “Hamitic spirit of exploitation and extermination.” Their concluding exhortation could have been mistaken for a Jacobin rally in 1793 Paris: “Young men and young women of the Hutu movement: Liberty! Let’s liberate ourselves from Tutsi slavery. We have had enough. Justice!”¹¹⁴ Political rhetoric had undergone a radical shift in three years; the pan-ethnic moderation of the *Mouvement Politique Progressiste* had given way to a much more radical spirit.

Where did the Catholic Church stand in the midst of these momentous debates? As usual, the church did not speak with one voice. One of the more politically-minded White Fathers, Louis Gilles, called the Tutsi-dominated CSP a “distortion” in a majority Hutu country and anticipated major political changes in the next round of elections.¹¹⁵ Another White Father continued to worry about the old problem of the *évolués*, noting that it was “harder to manage 20 of them than 10,000 peasants.”¹¹⁶ The rector of Nyakibanda, Pierre Boutry, lamented the “aggressive” tone of the Bahutu Manifesto as well as the Mwami’s failure to make a conciliatory gesture at his 1957 jubilee.¹¹⁷ But as was the case in 1956-57, most missionaries did not mention political or ethnic problems in reports to their superiors back in Rome.¹¹⁸ Even the hierarchy seemed to be playing a cautious waiting game. While

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 882.

¹¹⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°739394, Gilles to Volker, 3 March 1958.

¹¹⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°739414, Reners to Van Volsem, 10 Oct. 1958. The continued importance of winning over the *évolués* is echoed by the director of Catholic Action (cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°739420-24, De Renesse to Volker, 6 Nov. 1958).

¹¹⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°731049, Boutry to Volker, 27 March 1958.

¹¹⁸ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°739372, Van Oosterhout to Volker, 7 Jan. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739381, Van der Meersch to Volker, 25 Jan. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739383, Nothomb to Volker, 4 March 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739389, Van Oosterhout to Volker, 6 April 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739389, Martin to Volker, 7 April 1958;

Perraudin later called Mutara's rejection of the recommendations of the Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission the turning point in a "volcanic" year for Rwandan politics, he made no mention of such issues in his limited correspondence with his White Father superiors in 1958.¹¹⁹ For his part, Leo Volker, the new superior general of the White Fathers, instructed Boutry "not to enter into problems of a political order."¹²⁰

If missionary superiors were instructing their priests to avoid "problems of a political order," indigenous Catholics sensed no such strictures. As discussed above, Hutu lay activists like Joseph Gitara and Aloys Munyangaju led the movement for political change, utilizing sympathetic left-leaning journals like *La Libre Belgique*, *Témoignage Chrétien*, *La Cité*, *La Revue Nouvelle*, and *Les Dossiers de l'Action Sociale Catholique* to present their case to the French and Belgian public.¹²¹ On the other side of the divide, Louis Gasore, the Tutsi vicar delegate of Nyundo, continued to focus on the black-white colonial problem. In a 1958 article in the White Fathers' monthly *Vivante Afrique*, Gasore noted the rising tensions between Tutsi and Hutu, describing these categories as "the traditional nobility and minority" and "large peasant masses" and expressing his fears that ethnic parties would "compromise the unity of the country." After this brief paragraph on the Hutu-Tutsi question, he then

A.G.M.Afr.N°739386, Gasser to Volker, 21 April 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739397, Noti to Volker, 22 May 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739413, Quanonne to Volker, 20 June 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739399, Brutsaert to Volker, 4 July 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739140, Werly to Volker, 24 Sept. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739417, Bourgois to Volker, 20 Oct. 1958.

¹¹⁹ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 151; A.G.M.Afr.N°738023, Perraudin to Cauwe, 18 Jan. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°738039, Perraudin to Cauwe, 27 Jan. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°738033-34, Perraudin to Cauwe, 21 March 1958.

¹²⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°731050, Volker to Boutry, 21 April 1958. The views of the Holy See and the Apostolic Delegate would offer a more complete picture of Catholic hierarchical reactions at this time. Unfortunately, my access to Vatican sources is limited by the 75-year archival rule.

¹²¹ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 107.

devoted the next thirteen paragraphs to discussing what he saw as the more pressing issue of white-black racism in the Great Lakes region.¹²² Reflecting the presence of both leading Tutsi and Hutu elites, the White Fathers' weekly *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* possessed the most conflicted editorial policy in 1958. Cover stories alternated between the traditional European preoccupation with communism, pro-Hutu articles which openly questioned Rwanda's traditional institutions, and ongoing Tutsi critiques of Belgian colonialism.¹²³

Perhaps the most complex Catholic voice came from Bigirumwami. Unlike the "Great Servants of the Court" or many of the Superior Council chiefs, Bigirumwami could not be stereotyped as a Tutsi royalist unconcerned with the conditions of poor Hutu peasants. He had joined the other bishops of Rwanda and Burundi in drafting the 1957 pastoral letter on justice and issued several other stinging rebukes of customary abuses during the spring of 1958.¹²⁴ Bigirumwami was fundamentally a political conservative, however, and advocating for social justice did not entail undermining traditional authority or supporting revolutionary political change. Rather, Catholic social teaching should serve as a conscience for Rwanda's political authorities, reminding them that Rwanda's long-term stability and prosperity rested

¹²² Louis Gasore, "Quelques problèmes de l'élite africaine," *Vivante Afrique* 198 (Aug.-Sept. 1958): 29-32.

¹²³ Cf. « Colonialisme, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (20 April 1958) : 1 ; « Le Colonialisme est-il légitime ? » and « Interview de M. Joseph Gitara, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (27 April 1958) : 1 ; « Le Conseil-General du Ruanda-Urundi – Un conseil représentatif de quoi ? » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (15 June 1958) : 1 ; « L'avenir de l'Afrique n'est pas dans le colonialisme, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (22 June 1958) : 1 ; « Le temps de la décolonisation est arrivé, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (6 July 1958) : 1 ;

¹²⁴ Cf. Aloys Bigirumwami, « L'Eglise a raison d'exiger plus de justice, » 15 April 1958. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=7 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). For background, see Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 256.

on the nation's treatment of the poor masses. "Well-treated, they [the peasants] are grateful; poorly treated, they revolt."¹²⁵

After years of avoiding public commentary on the Hutu-Tutsi question, Bigirumwami joined the debate while traveling in Europe during the fall of 1958. Here he penned an article entitled "The problem of Hutu, Tutsi and Twa" in the Belgian weekly *Témoignage chrétien*.¹²⁶ While admitting a growing crisis between the "'social' or 'racial' groups of Batutsi, Bahutu and Batwa," Bigirumwami rejected the historical theory of a Tutsi conquest, arguing that the Tutsi established a political dynasty in Rwanda because local Hutu wanted access to Tutsi cattle and valued patron-client relations. More significantly, he also questioned the categories of Hutu, Tutsi, and Twa themselves. Pointing to the discrepancy between his so-called Tutsi appearance and mixed ethnic background, Bigirumwami lambasted the "inanity of physical criteria" in determining Hutu and Tutsi identities. He also downplayed ethnic discrepancies in secondary schools, claiming that Hutu and Tutsi elites together comprised a privileged class over and against the impoverished masses of Hutu cultivators and *petit* Tutsi. Bigirumwami also criticized the writers of the Bahutu Manifesto for addressing their petition to an imagined "Tutsi collectivity" rather than the actual leaders of the country – namely the Belgian government and Rwanda's Superior Council. He

¹²⁵ C.I.E.R., Bigirumwami, "L'Eglise a raison d'exiger plus de justice." Bigirumwami's gradualist, pan-ethnic vision of social justice is reflected in a commentary from his diocesan newspaper, *Civitas Mariae*, in December 1958. Here Bigirumwami wrote that the church "looked not only to apostolic and purely spiritual action, but also in the temporal plan, especially in a campaign for the construction of houses in durable materials, searching to help all those who make efforts to improve their homes, work as artisans, and join cooperatives" (Aloys Bigirumwami, *Civitas Mariae* 11 (December 1958): 3).

¹²⁶ The article appeared in the 5 September 1958 edition of *Témoignage Chrétien* and can be consulted in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda politique*, 38-42 or "Le problème des Batutsi, Bahutu et Batwa (Bigirumwami, 5 septembre 1958)," in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=8 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). For a thorough secondary analysis, see Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 422-33; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 256.

concluded by issuing a pan-ethnic call for social justice along with a plea for Rwandans to avoid discord, tension and hate, again emphasizing the social and economic but not ethnic nature of Rwanda's problems. "The very rapid evolution that passes through our country should not and cannot blind us to the point of misunderstanding realities, such as social and economic differences."¹²⁷

Just as Perraudin's February 1959 *Letter on Charity* would symbolize Perraudin's public adoption of Hutu social analysis, so Bigirumwami's September 1958 *Témoignage chrétien* article appeared to place him in the ideological camp of the moderate Tutsi nationalists. The article also signaled a shift in Bigirumwami's attitude towards Rwanda's traditional authorities. While he had critiqued them on social justice grounds throughout 1957 and 1958, he began to worry that such critiques risked undermining Rwanda's social fabric. Upon his return to Rwanda in December, Bigirumwami began pressuring Fr. Sebastian Grosjean and Abbé Justin Kalibwami, the editors of *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, to moderate their critiques of the Mwami, chiefs, and sub-chiefs.¹²⁸

Within weeks of the publication of Bigirumwami's article in *Témoignage Chrétien*, two influential White Fathers penned their own political analyses of the Rwandan situation. First came Dominique Nothomb.¹²⁹ An influential spiritual advisor and intellectual from an upper-class French family, Nothomb maintained close ties with both Bigirumwami and Perraudin into the 1960s and gained a reputation as a political moderate. It is noteworthy,

¹²⁷ Cf. Bigirumwami in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda politique*, 42.

¹²⁸ A.D.K., Bigirumwami to [Anon.], 16 March 1959.

¹²⁹ Dominique Nothomb, « Note sur la pensée chrétienne, face au conflit Batutsi-Bahutu, tel qu'il se pose au Rwanda. » In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/08_Pensee_chretienne_face_au_conflit_Batutsi-Bahutu_9_septembre_1958.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

then, that Nothomb claimed in his September 1958 political analysis that the Hutu-Tutsi debate reflected not merely a social conflict but a racial problem with “hereditary, physiological, innate factors (e.g., height, form of head, blood) and a fixed discrimination of rights and of duties.” According to Nothomb, the Catholic Church was neither racist nor blind to racial difference. So even if “the Tutsi seem to possess certain qualities for command, the Hutu certain qualities for work,” the Catholic Church also “rejects absolutely all definitive and fixed superiority of one race over another race.” Since all humans were created in the image of God and redeemed from original sin through Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross, all were destined for the same eternal home and deserving of the same rights and responsibilities.¹³⁰

Nothomb then outlined key principles for guiding Catholic involvement in Rwandan society. He argued here that core rights could never be violated, such as the rights to life, property, free movement, marriage, family, education, and association. Yet Nothomb did not appear here as an unqualified social democrat. He expressed his hopes for an egalitarian, multi-racial society yet also advocated for “attributing social and political functions to those who have the competencies and the requisite qualities to exercise them in view of the common good.” Far from encouraging demagoguery, the church condemned the fomenting of conflict and hatred even as she promised not to stand idly by while a regime abused its citizens. “The church’s will for peace and justice is not to say that she preaches the passive

¹³⁰ Revising De Lacger’s historical survey to include the 1940s and 1950s, Dominique Nothomb’s brother Pierre Nothomb saw the emergence of racial language as one of the major changes in Rwandan political discourse in 1958. Cf. De Lacger and Nothomb, *Ruanda*, 715.

acceptance of all regimes so as to avoid conflicts.”¹³¹ As we will see later in the chapter, Perraudin adopted much of Nothomb’s social analysis in his more widely-distributed “Letter on Charity” in February 1959, describing Hutu and Tutsi as racial categories, condemning racism, emphasizing the importance of Christian identity, presenting a vision of a multicultural, meritocratic Rwandan society, and reiterating the church’s obligation to prophetically denounce state abuses when necessary.

If Nothomb and Bigirumwami were beginning to speak out on the Hutu-Tutsi question in late 1958, influential missionaries back in Belgium were also trying to shape the debate. In this regard, the most important missionary statement of 1958 came from the pen of Guy Mosmans, the Belgian provincial of the White Fathers. Always one of the more politically-savvy White Fathers, Mosmans’s September 21, 1958 letter to the Belgian foreign ministry exhorted Belgium to help establish a new Hutu republic.¹³² Claiming that Tutsi elites preferred retaining a political monopoly to instituting a genuine democracy, Mosmans encouraged Belgium to break with Mwami Mutara and to strengthen the colonial administration’s own authority over the Rwandan people. This would set the stage for the indigenization of the colonial administration by promoting Hutu elites, suppressing the Tutsi-dominated CSP, and offering the “genuine LIBERATION” of the people.¹³³ While Mosmans admitted that his plan risked national division, Belgium’s continued support for Tutsi indirect rule would propagate even worse alternatives – anti-Belgian nationalism among Tutsi elites and anti-Western communism among Hutu masses. Faced with such a stark choice, the

¹³¹ Nothomb, « Note sur la pensée chrétienne, » 3.

¹³² A.G.M.Afr.N°720645-66, Guy Mosmans, “L’avenir politique du Ruanda-Urundi,” 21 Sept. 1958.

¹³³ Ibid. Emphases are found in the text.

Belgians had only one option: “suppress the privileges of the castes and make justice reign.”

Here Mosmans reminded his colonial interlocutors that one of the primary purposes of Belgium’s colonial empire was to bring social justice to the masses. As it completed its “magnificent work in Rwanda-Burundi,” Belgium had to once again impose its benevolent will on the Rwandan people. “The only acceptable method is to act with authority and impose indispensable measures for the general good and evolution of the country.”

Mosmans’s advice for the church echoed his political vision. Facing the inevitable rise of the Hutu people, the local church should distance itself from Tutsi elites. Clergy should also maintain a united front across ethnic lines. In this area, Mosmans reserved special praise for Bigirumwami for defending Hutu peasants against Tutsi nobles. “Mgr. Bigirumwami has many times taken the defense of unjustly condemned Hutu. This has strongly annoyed the Tutsi. The rumor has spread that Mgr. was the bishop of the Hutu but not the bishop of the Tutsi.”¹³⁴ He also warned his fellow priests to be on guard against Mwami Mutara, noting Mutara’s recent criticisms of missionaries and indigenous priests for fomenting the “false problem” of Hutu-Tutsi tension. If the Catholic clergy could resist the Mwami’s entreaties and maintain a united front in favor of social justice, Mosmans envisioned the Rwandan feudal system collapsing like a house of cards. If they gave in to nationalist temptations, however, it was the church that stood at greatest risk.¹³⁵

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ The risk of nationalism to Christian mission was also a prominent theme in the annual “Semaine de Missiologie” hosted in Belgium in 1958. See in particular R.P. de Soras, “Les tentations du nationalisme,” 9-33 ; M.M. Lihau, “Les aspirations nationales au Congo belge,” 157-164; M. Espéret, “Le laïc chrétien devant le nationalisme,” 195-214 ; R.P. Masson, “Le missionnaire et le nationalisme,” 215-26. All of these articles can be located in *Aspirations Nationales et Missions, 1958. XXVIII Semaine de Missiologie* (Louvain: Desclee de Brouwer, 1958).

Maintaining this unified clerical front was proving difficult in the cauldron of 1958 Rwanda, however. First were the perennial tensions between white and black clergy and especially between Kabgayi and Nyundo priests. While a White Father report from the beginning of the year praised Bigirumwami for improving relations between the missionaries and the indigenous *abbés*, old strains soon reappeared. European missionaries issued frustrated critiques of their Rwandan colleagues, highlighting the spiritual poverty of the indigenous *abbé* as well as his materialism, politicization, and anti-White Father bias.¹³⁶ Another tension concerned the shortage of priests in the vicariate of Nyundo, especially in comparison with the much larger Kabgayi vicariate. In his 1957-58 annual report, Bigirumwami lamented that 40 priests, 30 sisters, and 64 lay auxiliaries could not possibly shepherd 60,000 Catholics, especially in light of the vigorous pastoral challenge arising from growing Anglican and Adventist communities.¹³⁷

The priest shortage only exacerbated the longstanding tensions over seminary admissions and dismissals.¹³⁸ Bigirumwami could barely contain his rage with Boutry when the latter rejected three Nyundo candidates for Nyakibanda major seminary in June 1958. Far from his 1952 rhetoric about sharing “absolutely the same apostolic ministry” as the White Fathers, Bigirumwami wrote here that Nyundo seminarians “had without a doubt a mentality other than that inculcated by the White Fathers.” While admitting that many seminarians

¹³⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°740379, Alphonse van Hoof, *Rapport on le vicariat du Nyundo*, 3 Jan. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°739402-07, Rommelaere to Volker, 17 Aug. 1958; A.D.K., Vargas to Perraudin, 25 June 1958.

¹³⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°740329-41, *Rapport du Vicariat Apostolique de Nyundo, 1957-58*, 1 July 1958.

¹³⁸ This paragraph draws on “Sacre de Son Excellence Monseigneur Bigirumwami 1 Juin 1952,” *L’Ami* 91 (July 1952): 133; A.G.M.Afr.N°740209, Bigirumwami to Boutry, 21 July 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°731130-33, Boutry to Bigirumwami, 8 Aug. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°740204, Bigirumwami to Boutry, 20 Aug. 1958.

would not ultimately persevere to the priesthood, he argued that the seminary formed not just priests but the nation's political elite, and it was important not to alienate these future leaders by dismissing them without just cause. This controversy over seminarian admissions and dismissals lingered throughout 1958 and foreshadowed even greater tensions between Bigirumwami and the White Father leadership during the revolutionary upheavals of 1959 to 1962.

The seminarian dispute also reflected a broader crisis of leadership at Nyakibanda.¹³⁹ After losing nine seminarians at the beginning of the 1957-58 academic year, Nyakibanda saw 16 more seminarians depart by the fall of 1958. Growing mistrust marked relationships between seminarians and professors, and the professors themselves divided along ideological and generational lines. The rector, Pierre Boutry, found himself under increasing scrutiny, criticized by old opponents like Corneille Slenders and former supporters like André Perraudin. While Boutry himself blamed the "critical spirit of the Banyarwanda" for Nyakibanda's problems, his colleagues pointed to Boutry's dearth of leadership skills. Perraudin recommended Boutry's replacement in March 1958, and by June Boutry had lost Rome's confidence as well. He was replaced for the 1958-1959 term by Paul Baers, a White Father who had been teaching in a Catholic seminary in Belgian Congo.

¹³⁹ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°731304, *Rapport annuel du Nyakibanda, 1957-58*, December 1958 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°731066-68, Feys to Cauwe, 7 March 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°731046, Boutry to Mondor, 8 Feb. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°727046-48, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 3 Feb. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°738025, Cauwe to Perraudin, 15 Feb. 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°738027, Cauwe to Perraudin, 4 March 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°738033-34, Perraudin to Cauwe, 21 March 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°731060, Mondor to Boutry, 25 June 1958; A.G.M.Afr.N°731063, Slenders to Volker, 17 Aug. 1958.

Perraudin attempted to address these intra-clerical problems by holding a series of clerical study days at Nyakibanda seminary in July 1958.¹⁴⁰ In addition to local European and Rwandan priests, the gathering included Perraudin, Mosmans, several Jesuit leaders, and the African representative for the *Jeunesse Ouvrier Chretienne* (JOC). Bigirumwami was notably absent. The gathered leaders reiterated their vision of the church as a “purely spiritual” community lacking specific expertise in economic, social and political questions. At the same time, speakers emphasized the importance of guiding the political formation of elites and the masses, avoiding partisanship and passivity alike. Perraudin encouraged priests to study socio-political problems like the Hutu-Tutsi question and to consider developing engaged “social apostolates” that moved beyond the religious orientation of Catholic Action. Significantly, he also appointed a four-member commission to study the Hutu-Tutsi question.¹⁴¹

To summarize, Rwanda’s increasingly polarized political environment in 1958 took its toll on intra-clerical relations. This polarization was especially evident in the major seminary of Nyakibanda. Ideological divisions were also becoming more public, as expressed in the writings of prominent churchmen like Guy Mosmans, Dominique Nothomb, Louis Gasore, and Aloys Bigirumwami. Following the 1956 Leopoldville statement and 1957 letter on justice, André Perraudin encouraged his clergy to engage social questions. Overall, though, one does not see the Catholic hierarchy mobilizing a political or ethnic movement in

¹⁴⁰ For summaries of the clerical study days, see *Trait d’Union* 62 (Aug. 1958): 122-23; Rudakemwa, *L’évangélisation du Rwanda*, 326-27.

¹⁴¹ Unfortunately I have not located any records of these deliberations in either the White Fathers archives in Rome or Rwandan diocesan archives. I assume their conclusions informed Perraudin’s Lent 1959 pastoral on social, political and ethnic issues in Rwanda.

1958. Hutu-Tutsi divisions remained an intra-elite dispute with little noticeable impact in the mission stations themselves, while Perraudin's late 1958 circulars concerned broader Catholic issues like the death of Pope Pius XII and subsequent election of John XXIII.¹⁴² Even when Perraudin engaged political issues, he avoided taking controversial stands. For example, Perraudin refused Joseph Gitera's impassioned October 1958 request for an official Catholic condemnation of the Kalinga drums, the chief symbol of the Nyanza monarchy.¹⁴³ While Perraudin maintained public neutrality throughout 1958, his February 1959 pastoral letter on charity would bring him off the ideological fence.

D. Early 1959: Perraudin's *Super omnia caritas* and the amelioration of ethno-political discourse

When he was named Vicar Apostolic in 1956, Mgr. André Perraudin had developed two reputations. On one hand, he was seen as a social justice advocate who had revamped Nyakibanda's seminary courses to offer a more explicit engagement with Catholic social teaching. On the other hand, he had developed a reputation as a diplomatic seminary rector, praised for his mediation skills, commitment to strengthening clerical unity, and success in avoiding political controversy. Between his consecration in March 1956 and the end of 1958, Perraudin seemed to follow the rector's model of keeping the church on a neutral road. Even as colleagues like Bigirumwami and Mosmans waded into the political fray, Perraudin

¹⁴² A.D.K., André Perraudin, Circulaire N°17, 9 Oct. 1958.

¹⁴³ The original Aprosoma manifesto against the Kalinga drums can be consulted in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives (A.D.K., Joseph Gitera, "Ijwi Lya Rubanda Rugufi," Oct. 1958). Perraudin also critiqued Gitera for issuing a political manifesto under the umbrella of the Catholic youth organization *Jeunesse Chrétienne Ruandaise* without obtaining Perraudin's authorization. (Perraudin to Gitera, 21 Oct. 1958. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/09_Perraudin_a_Gitera_sur_Jeunesse_Chretienne_Rwandaise.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

retained his diplomatic caution, careful not to take public sides in the rising disputes between Hutu and Tutsi elites. Rather, he focused on pastoral care for his burgeoning vicariate – building new parishes and substations, constructing schools and seminaries, initiating work on vernacular translations of the liturgy, and blessing the first Benedictine monastery in Rwanda.¹⁴⁴ Even as he described Africa as “boiling over” from anti-colonial tensions and Rwanda as an “unsettled country searching for equilibrium,” Perraudin as late as January 1959 expounded far more on Rwanda’s pastoral needs than its political problems. So the same month that Mosmans wrote hopefully of the Belgians’ newfound commitment to a “real democratization” of Rwandan political structures, Perraudin lamented priest shortages and requested funds for a new medical center.¹⁴⁵ If a poll was taken at the beginning of 1959 concerning the most politicized leader of the White Fathers, Mosmans would surely have beaten Perraudin.

These perceptions changed on February 11, 1959 when Perraudin issued his Lenten pastoral *Super omnia caritas* (“above all things charity”).¹⁴⁶ This letter established Perraudin’s public reputation as a Hutu partisan, marking the definitive break in the missionary-monarchy alliance forged in the 1930s by Mgr. Classe and Mwami Mutara. While Hutu elites celebrated Perraudin’s message, Tutsi nationalists came to view Perraudin as the embodiment of negative European influence in Rwanda. Despite the controversy,

¹⁴⁴ The January 1959 dedication of the Benedictine monastery at Gihindamuyaga drew a large crowd and included one of the last joint public appearances of Perraudin and Mwami Mutara (cf. “Bénédiction de la chapelle et inauguration monastique á Gihindamuyaga,” *Trait d’Union* 67 (Feb-March 1959), 73-77).

¹⁴⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°738058-060, Perraudin to Cauwe, 27 Jan. 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°720625, Guy Mosmans, « Note sur l’évolution politique du Ruanda-Urundi, » 17 Jan. 1959.

¹⁴⁶ André Perraudin, « *Super omnia caritas*, » 11 Feb. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/03_Perraudin_mandement_careme_11_fevrier_1959.pdf (accessed 11 Feb. 2011). This letter can also be consulted as “Par dessus tout, la charité,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (1 March 1959): 8.

Perraudin at the end of his life still described *Super omnia caritas* as “the charter of my episcopate,” arguing that his letter did not represent an inappropriate episcopal intervention into political life but an appropriate application of Catholic social teaching to a “regime of servitude and humiliation for the large proportion of the population.”¹⁴⁷

Perraudin began his Lenten pastoral by underlining the essential connection between charity and Christianity. “Without charity one is not truly Christian, even if one is baptized.”¹⁴⁸ More than a sign of harmonious interpersonal relationships, charity undergirded the social order and provided the foundation for social tranquility, justice, and peace. Citing the call of John 15:13 to “lay down his life for his friends” and the command to serve the “least of these” from Matthew 25:34-46, Perraudin argued that charity was marked by sacrificing oneself for the common good and serving the needs of the marginalized. By aiding his nation’s enemy, St. Luke’s Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29ff) emerged as a biblical model of charity in Perraudin’s letter.¹⁴⁹

Controversy arose not from Perraudin’s biblical analysis but rather from his subsequent application of these Christian principles to the Rwandan social context. For Perraudin, Rwanda’s social divisions broke down along a Hutu-Tutsi axis, for “in our Rwanda social differences and inequalities are for a large part linked to racial differences.” Positing God’s equal love and respect for all races, Perraudin exhorted Christians to love

¹⁴⁷ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 187, 194. Perraudin’s redactions of the original text reflected his self-confidence – there are very few differences between his original draft and the final version. Early redactions of *Super omnia caritas* can be consulted in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives (A.D.K., André Perraudin, “Lettre pastorale pour l’année 1959,” [undated].)

¹⁴⁸ Perraudin, “*Super omnia caritas*,” 5.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 9-13, 23.

everyone regardless of their racial identity. Therefore, the racial differences between Hutu and Tutsi should not divide Christians who “find themselves in the higher unity of the Communion of Saints.”¹⁵⁰ Perraudin did not elaborate on either the empirical grounds for describing Hutu and Tutsi as separate races or the practical implications of what it would mean for Christians to co-exist in the communion of saints.

Perraudin concluded by listing key principles that should guide the “city of man.”¹⁵¹ He did not break substantially new ground here, echoing previous magisterial calls for the state to facilitate universal access to public office, respect the right to political association, serve the common good, and oppose class struggle and factionalism. Here Perraudin seemed closer to post-war Catholic social teaching than post-Vatican II liberation theology, writing that “the common good cannot consist finally in an ongoing (class) struggle but only in a real and fraternal collaboration.” Perraudin also reminded his readers not to separate means from ends. “Hate, mistrust, a spirit of division and disunity, lies and calumnies are means of dishonest struggle and are severely condemned by God. Do not listen, dear Christians, to those who, under pretext of love for one group, preach hate and mistrust to another group.”¹⁵²

In an effort to ensure that Catholic clergy modeled such fraternal collaboration, Perraudin issued an accompanying circular to guide priests in their interpretation and presentation of *Super omnia caritas*. Here he instructed priests to avoid partisanship on one side and social indifference on the other, charting a middle course that recognized the need for structural reform, the centrality of Catholic social doctrine, and the importance of the

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., 33.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., 33-37.

¹⁵² Ibid.

priest's witness of fraternal charity.¹⁵³ Mindful that many priests would ignore the letter or manipulate it for their own political purposes, Perraudin directed his clergy to read the letter without commentary. He also requested that catechumens and lay Catholic Action groups study the document as they strove to "impregnate a Christian spirit in the social milieu, the laws and the institutions of the country."¹⁵⁴ Finally, Perraudin reaffirmed the church's support for the right to association, offering a tacit endorsement for Hutu political gatherings viewed with great suspicion by Rwanda's customary authorities.

What can we make of Perraudin's document fifty years after its publication? First, the document was consistent with Perraudin's vision. Following his missionary predecessors and much of the Rwandan intelligentsia, Perraudin described Hutu and Tutsi as racial groups.¹⁵⁵ Likewise, he echoed here previous magisterial calls for pan-ethnic and trans-racial unity, the right to association, the importance of Catholic social teaching, and the necessity of political nonpartisanship. Even the title of the letter reflected the episcopal motto that Perraudin chose in 1956: "charity above all." In some ways, then, Perraudin's statement was only radical for those who did not know the man or his writings.

What explains, then, the controversial historical legacy of *Super omnia caritas*? First was Perraudin's timing. The document was released in early 1959 after the 1957 *Mise au point* and *Bahutu Manifesto*, the 1957 U.N. Report, and the 1958 Hutu-Tutsi Study

¹⁵³ « Circulaire no. 20, 11 Février 1959, » In *C.I.E.R.*, http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/02_Perraudin_circulaire_no20_11_fevrier_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Nor would his analysis shift during the polemics of 1959-60. Writing to Rome in May 1960, Perraudin still described Rwanda according to classic missionary typologies. "The inhabitants all have the same language but they are of different races: we have distinguished the Batutsi, until now the leadership class (around 14% of the population), the Bahutu, cultivators, who form the mass (85% of the population), and some Batwa, pygmies." (A.G.M.Afr.N°739011, André Perraudin, "Renseignement concerne Archidiocèse de Kabgayi," 19 May 1960)

Commission debates. The statement contained no calls for further study of Rwanda's social and ethnic problems in light of ongoing intra-Catholic analytical divisions. Rather the statement appeared as a definitive hierarchical judgment on a longstanding debate. Published only months after Bigirumwami's *Témoignage Chrétien* article, Perraudin's letter also represented a radical departure from Bigirumwami's own analysis, reinforcing a perception of clerical division (ironic in light of Perraudin's obsession with presenting a united ecclesial front). Its release in early 1959 also came in the midst of a rapid escalation in political rhetoric. Perraudin's statement was thus used – and abused – by partisans on both sides to galvanize supporters and influence public opinion. In this sense the document's contextual effect was greater than its language might retrospectively convey.

In addition, the document's analytical lacunae contributed to *Super omnia caritas*'s later reputation as a pro-Hutu diatribe. Whereas Bigirumwami's article nuanced ethnic and political stereotypes, Perraudin wrote without qualification that Hutu and Tutsi were racial groups, that Rwandan social, economic, and political inequalities fell along a Hutu-Tutsi axis, and that Christians had a duty to oppose this structural sin. Notably missing were any comments on the historical role that European colonists and Catholic missionaries played in establishing an exclusively Tutsi aristocracy. The document did not delve further into what lay behind the racial description of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction, nor were there any caveats concerning the shared cultural heritage of the Banyarwanda. So while *Super omnia caritas* was not a call to arms or an early foreshadowing of Hutu power ideology,¹⁵⁶ it betrayed what

¹⁵⁶ Here I would challenge the efforts of current scholars like Mahmood Mamdani to trace 1990s Hutu power ideology to the 1950s Hutu reform movements (cf. Mamdani, *When victims become killers*, 117-18).

we might term an “analytical partisanship.” Its social imagination was wholly that of the Hutu counter-elite. In Weberian terms, one could argue that Perraudin’s pastoral letter legitimized Hutu ideology inside the church and for a broader international public.

What were the reactions to Perraudin’s document? While Perraudin later described this document as a “declaration of war on feudalism” and while recent critics have argued that the letter “unleashed” years of ethnic hostility, one might be surprised to learn that there was no immediate political backlash in Rwanda.¹⁵⁷ Rwandans did not gather to burn the document, and clergy did not organize public boycotts or protests of the letter. The colonial governor, Jean-Paul Harroy, expressed his “very great satisfaction” at how “the action of the representatives of the Church, whose role is supernatural, has developed in fertile harmony with the efforts of the secular authority in favor of the well-being of the laboring population of Rwanda.”¹⁵⁸ While he continued to build contacts with the Anglican missions, Mwami Mutara issued no protest letters. In fact, Perraudin recalled the Mwami commenting only that the document “came too late.”¹⁵⁹ The international Catholic press celebrated Perraudin’s statement.¹⁶⁰ Inside Rwanda, Joseph Gitera’s February 15 announcement of the formal

¹⁵⁷ C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Je rends grâce à Dieu » (25 Aug. 1989) : 2 ; C.M.L., Bernard Muzungu, « Le rôle des responsables des religions reconnues au Rwanda, pendant le génocide, » [n.d.].

¹⁵⁸ A.D.K., Harroy to Perraudin, 9 March 1959. Perraudin had sent Harroy and Mutara personal copies of *Super omnia caritas* in February 1959.

¹⁵⁹ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 192 ; C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Je rends grace à Dieu » (25 Aug. 1989) : 2. Perraudin admitted in this 1989 presentation that “God alone knows what he (the Mwami) wanted to say by this.” It should be noted that Mutara developed especially close relations with Dr. Joe Church and the Church Missionary Society at Gahini. Rumors were already circulating in early 1959 that he might convert to Anglicanism, in part so he could remarry and possibly conceive an heir (Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 259-61; Rudakemwa, *L’évangélisation*, 330-33).

¹⁶⁰ The letter was published in full in a 5 March 1959 issue of *Le Courrier d’Afrique*. The Belgian-based *Le Croix* requested a copy of the letter, as did the missiology faculty at the Catholic University of Nijmegen in Holland. See here Perraudin’s media file on the *Letter on Charity* in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives.

establishment of a new political party, “*Mouvement actuel de la Promotion Sociale de la Masse Paysanne*” (Aprosoma), garnered more local attention.

What did Aloys Bigirumwami think of Perraudin’s letter? Despite their evident analytical divergence on the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction, Bigirumwami did not publicly challenge Perraudin’s vision. In fact, Bigirumwami’s circular of March 10, 1959 exhorted local clergy to read Perraudin’s pastoral letter and study Rwanda’s political and social problems in their local contexts. In this vein, Bigirumwami touted his own Nyundo vicariate’s commitment to all the poor (whether Hutu, Tutsi or Twa) and celebrated Nyundo’s model of intra-ethnic harmony. Bigirumwami publicly defended Catholic periodicals like *Kinyamateka* and *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* for their impartial defense of the poor and marginalized, noting that the church had never shied away from critiquing the “feudal regime of the Mwami, the chiefs, the sub-chiefs, and the judges.”¹⁶¹ And while condemning late-night political meetings and implicitly connecting Nyundo’s social stability to the region’s slower political mobilization, he attached to his circular a political manifesto from none other than Joseph Gitera. Here Bigirumwami praised Gitera’s “dynamism,” voicing his hope that Aprosoma would continue evolving into a pan-ethnic movement defending the collective interests of the Rwandan peasantry. Even in his private correspondence, Bigirumwami directed his harshest criticism not at Perraudin but at the editorial staffs at *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* and *Kinyamateka* who he accused of “helping

¹⁶¹ « L’évêque de Nyundo parle de l’Aprosoma, » 10 March 1959, in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=12 (accessed 11 Feb. 2011). Rutayisire also notes that *Kinyamateka* maintained an admirably broad editorial policy on the Hutu-Tutsi question between 1955 and 1959, serving as a “tribune of expression” for the competing voices in Rwandan politics (P. Rutayisire, “Les signes précurseurs de la crise de la Toussaint rwandaise, » *Dialogue* 189 (Nov. 2009) : 29-38).

to create cold relations between Hutu and Tutsi” and “being more destructive than constructive.”¹⁶² If anything, Bigirumwami worried more in these letters about the missionary interpretation of *Super omnia caritas* than Perraudin’s own intentions, expressing his hope that Perraudin would remind missionaries in Nyundo to “be on guard against those who want to trouble public order under the pretext of defending the weak.”¹⁶³ In his own diocesan newspaper, Bigirumwami publicly castigated the “unfair critiques” of European missionaries circulating in anti-clerical nationalist circles.¹⁶⁴

Bigirumwami’s relative optimism also reflected the extent to which Rwandan political rhetoric in early 1959 had shifted away from the acrimonious atmosphere of late 1958. Strident voices remained, as evidenced by Gaspard Cyimana’s March 15, 1959 article in *Revue Nouvelle* in which Cyimana described Rwanda as a “tripartite society” and traced Rwanda’s ethno-racial problem to the historic Tutsi enslavement of the Hutu.¹⁶⁵ And yet most Hutu elites in early 1959 were emphasizing the pan-ethnic nature of their political visions. This was symbolized by Gitera’s February 1959 decision to strike the word “Bahutu” from the end of his *L’association pour le promotion des masses Bahutu (Aprosoma)*. For Gitera, the new party “recognizes that it is in its essential interests to promote indistinctly the

¹⁶² A.D.K., Bigirumwami to [Anon.], 16 March 1959. Bigirumwami addresses this letter to “my dear *abbé*” but does not specify his name. Considering the tone of the letter and its housing in the official archives of the Diocese of Kabgayi, I think it plausible to identify the recipient as Innocent Gasabwoya, the Tutsi vicar general of Kabgayi and overall director of *Kinyamateka* at the time.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ *Civitas Mariae* 15 (April 1959) : 6-7.

¹⁶⁵ M.G. Cyimana, « Plaidoyer pour le menu peuple au Rwanda-Burundi, » in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 55-75. In this article Cyimana praises Belgian colonists for eliminating the worst abuses of the pre-colonial Tutsi regime. He also argues that the pre-colonial ennoblement of Hutu elites undermined Hutu dignity by reclassifying them as Tutsi (63-64).

Rwandan mass, to know those Twa, Hutu and Tutsi which in their social condition are reduced to being poor people.”¹⁶⁶

Recently returned from Belgium, Aloys Munyangaju shared Gitera’s rhetorical commitment to pan-ethnic social justice. While arguing that Rwanda’s key political challenge in the late 1950s was not overcoming European imperialism but moving from “the execrable feudal absolutism of the old regime” to popular democracy, Munyangaju targeted his critiques at Rwanda’s customary authorities rather than the Tutsi as a race or collectivity.¹⁶⁷ He also claimed that Hutu demands would benefit poor Tutsi who were “practically assimilated to the Hutu in all domains of life.” And while he argued that the “Hamitic Tutsi” had always looked down upon the Hutu as a “congenitally inferior race,” he also admitted that these groups were not closed castes. “The Hutu-Tutsi duality results from two distinct races but permeable to the infiltration one by the other...All generalization without nuance constitutes an error in this domain.”¹⁶⁸

Gregoire Kayibanda also struck a conciliatory tone in the early months of 1959. Writing in *Kinyamateka*, Kayibanda claimed that Hutu petitioners did not aim to establish their own ethnic monopoly. “I have never appreciated a regime based on slavery...their (the Hutu) manifesto stipulates well that a mono-ethnic regime should not cede to another of the

¹⁶⁶ « L’évêque de Nyundo parle de l’Aprosoma, » 10 March 1959, in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=12 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

¹⁶⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°722156, A. Munyangaju, « L’actualité politique au Ruanda, » Jan. 1959, 13, 28.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., 32, 35-36. Munyangaju continued to frame his argument in democratic rather than ethnic terms through the spring of 1959 (cf. Aloys Munyangaju, “Le Ruanda-Urundi sera-t-il autonome en 1960?” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (10 May 1959): 1.

same genre.”¹⁶⁹ Extending an olive branch to any Tutsi who shared the Hutu vision of egalitarian democracy, Kayibanda presented a populist vision of pan-ethnic solidarity among Rwanda’s poor masses. “I can assure you that the Hutu and the simple Tutsi who are with me support you in fighting for their development.”¹⁷⁰ And countering accusations that Hutu agitators were influenced by communists looking to overthrow the monarchy, Kayibanda concluded that “those who love Rwanda want to destroy all who could separate the Banyarwanda.”¹⁷¹

On the other side of Rwanda’s ideological divide, the Tutsi-dominated Superior Council also sounded mollifying notes during the spring of 1959.¹⁷² In their first public statement on the ethnic question since the June 1958 rejection of the findings of the Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission, the CSP admitted that “the problem of relations between different ethnic groups in the country is certainly of first importance. The commission estimates that the problem is more social, but that it has a tendency to become racial.” At the same time, the CSP continued to condemn those propagating “racial hate” and “division.” Reflecting its growing independence from Mwami Mutara, the CSP also recommended the establishment

¹⁶⁹ G. Kayibanda, “Ce que visent les Bahutu est une démocratie sans esclavage, » *Kinyamateka*, 15 April 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/06_Kinyamateka_15_avril_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). As will be discussed below, Kayibanda continued to serve as an editor at *Kinyamateka* until Perraudin removed him from the position in October 1959.

¹⁷⁰ Kayibanda, « Nos devises sont presque les mêmes (Tunyuranyije kuri bike), » *Kinyamateka*, 15 May 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/11_Kinyamateka_15_mai_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

¹⁷¹ Kayibanda, « Renoncez à la désinformation (Impuha nimuzange), » *Kinyamateka*, 15 June 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/12_Kinyamateka_15_juin_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

¹⁷² « Rapport soumis au Groupe de Travail par le Conseil Supérieur du Pays, April 1959, » in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 76-84.

of a constitutional monarchy and the CSP's transformation from a consultative to a deliberative legislative body.¹⁷³

For their part, Belgian colonial officials seemed more receptive to Hutu critiques by the end of 1958. After steering clear of the “delicate” issues of ethnicity in 1956 and 1957, Governor Harroy changed tack in early December 1958.¹⁷⁴ Claiming that it would be worse to remain silent on Rwanda's social question than to engage in a “frank and direct exposé” of the subject, Harroy posited that “there is a problem, not precisely a problem of Tutsi and Hutu, but of rich and poor, of capitalists and workers, of governors and governed.” While resisting an unqualified ethnic description of the problem, Harroy argued that since members of the “anthropological group of the Tutsi” comprised the vast majority of those in authority while Hutu made up the vast majority of disenfranchised peasants, it was licit to incorporate Hutu and Tutsi terms in describing this social problem.¹⁷⁵ Recognizing the extent to which Rwanda's political “misunderstandings were often the fruit of a discordance of vocabulary,” Harroy tried to overcome the Hutu-Tutsi question by positing that “a Hutu is one who says he is Hutu, a Twa one who says he is Twa, a Tutsi one who declares that he is Tutsi.” Lest he be construed as unabashedly pro-Hutu, however, Harroy noted his sympathy with the Superior Council's resistance to incorporating ethnic discourse into official legislation or political

¹⁷³ Ibid., 82-83.

¹⁷⁴ « Mr le Vice-gouverneur Général Harroy traite du problème hutu-tutsi, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (7 December 1958) : 3. All of the subsequent quotations are taken from this address.

¹⁷⁵ Harroy later claimed that he issued this statement as a response to Mwami Mutara's denial of the existence of a Hutu-Tutsi problem at the June 1958 CSP session (Harroy: *Rwanda: Souvenirs d'un compagnon*, 251).

representation, arguing that from a juridical point of view “there are only Banyarwanda in Rwanda. In Burundi, there are only Barundi.”¹⁷⁶

Responding to Harroy’s admission of a Rwandan social problem, the Belgian government announced in January 1959 that it would send a *Groupe de Travail* (Belgian Working Group) to tour Rwanda and Burundi, interview locals, and recommend a framework for resolving the colony’s social and political problems.¹⁷⁷ The commission included prominent colonial officials like M.A. De Schrijver and Augustin Buisseret as well as J.J. Maquet, the influential anthropologist and Rwanda scholar. Arriving in April 1959, the *Groupe de Travail* received over 500 written testimonies and conducted over 700 interviews over the course of three weeks. Whatever its exhaustive research, the commission’s conclusions may have been predetermined. Writing in January 1959, Guy Mosmans argued that the Belgians were sending a working group to Rwanda-Burundi “to avoid the reproach of having imposed some choice without having taken the advice of interested parties...(the working group) will be very useful for giving the government a solid basis for imposing reforms.”¹⁷⁸

In its final report released in September 1959, the Belgian Working Group saw the political trend in Rwanda pointing towards democratization. All sides had accepted the basic

¹⁷⁶ See also Harroy, *Rwanda : Souvenirs d’un Compagnon*, 209-13.

¹⁷⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°721001, *Rapport du Groupe du Travail concernant le problème politique du Ruanda-Urundi*, 1958-59, Sept. 1959 (130 pp). For secondary commentary, see Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 892-93.

¹⁷⁸ *Rapport du Groupe du Travail*, 4 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°720625, Guy Mosmans, “Note sur l’évolution politique du Ruanda-Urundi,” 17 Jan. 1959. Leon Saur notes that August de Schryver, the head of the Working Group, was a former leader of the Belgian PSC-CVP (Parti Social Chrétien-Christelijke Volkspartij), a center-left party rooted in the Catholic Church and known for its commitment to decolonization and social justice. The PSC-CVP won a majority in the June 1958 Belgian elections and subsequently advocated for Belgium to disengage from its colonies and support Hutu counter-elites in Rwanda (Saur, *Influences parallèles*, 29).

democratic principles of universal suffrage, constitutional monarchy, and separation of powers.¹⁷⁹ Other political recommendations included the institution of a land reform commission, the establishment of a loose political federation between Rwanda and Burundi, and the granting of equal political rights to non-autochthonous Africans living in Rwanda or Burundi.¹⁸⁰ Crucially, however, the Groupe du Travail sided with Hutu elites in favoring a longer-term political devolution rather than immediate independence, claiming that the latter would only benefit an “oligarchic minority.”

While describing the Hutu-Tutsi question as the “grave socio-racial problem” of the territories, the Belgian Working Group’s ethnic analysis retained a degree of nuance.¹⁸¹ Their concluding document described Rwanda and Burundi as “peopled by three ethnic groups that represent...three distinct cultures,” yet they also wrote that European colonists found populations “at once homogenous and strongly stratified.” If Tutsi controlled 99% of Rwanda’s *chefferies*, 94% of Rwanda’s Superior Council, 81% of Rwanda’s territorial council, 67% of Rwanda’s colonial administrators, and 61% of Rwanda’s secondary school placements, the vast majority of these elites came from only two royal clans, the

¹⁷⁹ *Rapport du Groupe du Travail*, 29.

¹⁸⁰ *Rapport du Groupe du Travail*, 100-09. One should note that the Belgian Working Group applied this language of “non-autochthonous” only to resident Congolese, not to local Tutsi. There are ample references to the Tutsi as a racial group in both Catholic and colonial literature in the 1950s, but I have not located a reference to the Tutsi as a non-indigenous race until the 1960s. This challenges Mahmood Mamdani’s influential thesis alleging that the racialization of the Tutsi transformed them into a non-autochthonous race. “The third phase (in changing Hutu-Tutsi identities) came with the colonial period, when both Hutu and Tutsi were racialized, Tutsi as a nonindigenous identity of (subordinate) power and Hutu as an indigenous identity of (nativized) subjects. To the late nineteenth century dynamic whereby Tutsi symbolized power and Hutu subject, a new and truly volatile dimension was added. This was the dimension of indigeneity; for the first time in the centuries-long history of the Rwandan state, Tutsi became identified with an alien race and Hutu with the indigenous majority” (Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 102). For another version of this indigeneity thesis, see Paul Rutayisire, “Le Tutsi étranger dans le pays de ses aïeux, » *Les Cahiers : Evangile et Société : Les Idéologies*, no. 4 (Dec. 1996) : 42-55).

¹⁸¹ *Rapport du Groupe du Travail*, 7 ; 33-35.

Abanyiginya and the Abega.¹⁸² The Working Group admitted that only 6,000 to 10,000 Rwandan Tutsi benefitted from the spoils of public office; the other 140,000 Tutsi were no wealthier than their fellow Hutu peasants.¹⁸³ If anything, the ethnic distinctions in neighboring Burundi were even less evident.¹⁸⁴ If Harroy had correctly noted that Tutsi comprised the vast majority of Rwanda's political authorities, the corollary that the vast majority of Tutsi possessed economic or political leadership had no basis in reality.

If most Tutsi were poor, what explained the rise of a uniquely Hutu social movement in Rwanda? For the Groupe du Travail, responsibility lay largely with the Catholic Church. First, the commission argued that "it is among the Rwandan priests that the working group has found the most convinced democrats," a revealing claim in light of the Tutsi dominance of the Catholic priesthood in the late 1950s. In addition, the church had trained most Hutu elites in seminaries, giving them the education necessary to participate in public affairs. Most critically, "the (Christian) doctrine of the functional equality of all men" raised Hutu consciousness of their own relative deprivation. But rather than blame the missions for inciting ethnic discord, the Groupe du Travail praised them for "making people conscious of a social state founded on oligarchy and privilege." For the Belgian Working Group,

¹⁸² A.G.M.Afr. N°722156, Aloys Munyangaju, « L'actualité politique au Ruanda, » Jan. 1959, 19, 23.

¹⁸³ Harroy echoed this thirty years later, writing that only 12,000 of Rwanda's 300,000 Tutsi were directly implicated in Rwanda's hierarchical political system (Harroy, *Rwanda: Souvenirs d'un compagnon*, 234). Rutayisire puts this number even lower at 1,000 (Paul Rutayisire, « Les mythes fondateurs de 'la Revolution » Rwandaise de 1959 », *Cahiers Lumière Et Société: Dialogue. IV : 40th anniversaire des événements de 1959*, no. 16 (Dec. 1999) : 49.

¹⁸⁴ The most prevalent ethno-political division in Burundi separated Baganwa elites associated with the royal court from rising Tutsi and Hutu elites outside of the court. A specifically Hutu-Tutsi dynamic did not emerge until after the Rwandan revolution. On Burundi, see René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Prager, 1970); René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Chretien, *The Great Lakes of Africa*.

missionaries and colonial officials did not create the Hutu-Tutsi problem but rather changed attitudes towards it. “Little by little, the spirit of courtesan culture was replaced by the consciousness of human rights equal for all.”¹⁸⁵ Regardless of whether one accepts this positive analysis of the church’s role, it again underlines the extent to which the Hutu social movement represented a distinct political imagination – and the extent to which Catholic social teaching lay behind this imagination.

Just as the Belgian Working Group was leaving Rwanda in May 1959, the U.N. Tutelle for Rwanda-Burundi released its long-awaited summary of its 1957-58 deliberations. Reflecting a growing analytical divergence between Belgium and the United Nations, the U.N. report downplayed the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic, criticized Catholic schools, and emphasized the problem of over-population. The report briefly mentioned the “so-called ‘problem’ of the two kingdoms, or the Batutsi-Bahutu relationship,” noting presciently the “danger which a racial discrimination complex might represent for the territory.”¹⁸⁶ For the U.N., however, Rwanda and Burundi’s most serious problem was not the Hutu-Tutsi question but the post-war demographic explosion which exacerbated land tension and sparked a flood of emigration.¹⁸⁷ While Hutu-Tutsi discrepancies in secondary school enrollment go unmentioned, multiple Tutelle members critiqued the extent to which the Catholic Church dominated Rwandan schools and favored the cultivation of secular state

¹⁸⁵ *Rapport du Groupe de Travail*, 37-38. Elsewhere social tension is attributed to two other modernizing currents – the rise of individualism and the undermining of traditional social structures (25-27).

¹⁸⁶ “Summary of the Discussion of Ruanda-Urundi at the Twenty-First Session of the Trusteeship Council January-March 1958,” 12 May 1959, 1, 8. In *C.I.E.R.*, http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/10_21o_session_du_Conseil_de_Tutelle_12_mai_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 1, 3.

schools as a viable educational alternative. For all of these divergences, however, the U.N. Tutelle's final recommendations echoed the consensus of Belgian colonial officials, Hutu elites, and Tutsi authorities: encouraging local elections and universal suffrage, granting more authority to these local organs of government, integrating European and indigenous administrations, and developing explicit benchmarks towards self-government and independence.¹⁸⁸ In the middle of 1959, it appeared that Rwanda was progressing on a smooth road to political democratization. Ethnic revolution appeared as a far more distant prospect.

After the seminary troubles and media polemics of 1958, the first months of 1959 saw a relative amelioration of sociopolitical tensions within the Catholic Church. To be sure, inter-racial tensions between European missionaries and Rwanda's predominantly Tutsi clergy remained fraught with tension.¹⁸⁹ At the historic Save mission in southern Rwanda, two missionaries quit over inter-racial disputes with local clergy. At Cyanika mission on the Burundian border, a Belgian missionary critiqued the church's embrace of inculturation for opening the door to African materialism and the politicization of the clergy. The Flemish superior of Kinyaga mission expressed his reluctance to live in a racially mixed community, especially since his Tutsi superior, Gerard Mwerekande, belonged to a local family of chiefs. "The simple people are becoming conscious of their state and desire to catch up culturally to

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 6-8.

¹⁸⁹ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°739278, Alphonse van Hoof, « Rapport de la visite de Save, » 6 May 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°739444, C.A. de Vincke to Volker, 15 June 1959; A.D.K., Watteuw, "Que se passé-t-il au Kinyaga?" 22 April 1959 ; A.D.K., Watteuw, "Que se passé-t-il au Kinyaga?" 22 April 1959.

their compatriots... The Hutu here have started to wake up and are opposed to the majority of sub-chiefs.”

Notwithstanding these concerns, the overall ethnic situation within the Rwandan church appeared to be stabilizing during the spring of 1959. Kabgayi missionary reports from the first six months of 1959 do not mention Hutu-Tutsi tensions at all.¹⁹⁰ Even the situation at Nyakibanda seminary appeared to have stabilized. Reporting on his 16-day visit to Nyakibanda in April 1959, the regional superior of White Father seminaries admitted that he arrived with apprehensions but left hopeful about the seminary’s future. While expressing concerns over the spiritual depth of the seminarians, white-black tensions, and an anti-hierarchical, critical atmosphere, this White Father never mentioned the Hutu-Tutsi question.¹⁹¹ Nor did lingering seminary tensions necessarily reflect a zero-sum Hutu-Tutsi struggle. For example, André Makarakiza, a Burundian White Father appointed to the Nyakibanda faculty in 1958, wrote in June of his difficult relations with Hutu and Tutsi seminarians alike. “For the Hutu I have the shortcoming of being Tutsi, for the Tutsi the shortcoming of not wanting to mix myself in their particularism, and for all the shortcoming

¹⁹⁰ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°739428, Frauzen (Simbi) to Volker, 11 Jan. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739435, Arcelay (Byumba) to Volker, 2 Feb. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°740422, Hechedel (Ruhengeri) to Volker, 22 Feb. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739440, Gasser (Mibirizi) to Volker, 8 April 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739437, Martin (Kabgayi) to Volker, 3 May 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739445, Franzen (Nyamata) to Volker, 22 July 1959. In addition, Alphonse van Hoof’s semi-annual reports from April-May 1959 omit references to ethnic tensions in the mission stations. Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°739260, « Rapport de la visite de Kabgayi, » 3 April 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°739270, « Carte de visite de Mushishiro, » 8 April 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°739266, “Carte de visite de Kanyanza,” 13 April 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739272, “Carte de visite de Nyanza,” 19 April 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739274, “Carte de visite de Kaduha,” 24 April 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°739276, “Carte de visite de Kiruhura,” 29 April 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739268 ; “Carte de visite de Simbi,” 10 May 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739284-85, « Carte de visite de Nyumba, » 19-25 May 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°739286-87, « Carte de visite de Kansi, » 28 May 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°739264, « Carte de visite de Cyanika, » 8 June 1959.

¹⁹¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°731335-39, *White Father Regional Superior for Seminaries, Report on the Major Seminary of Nyakibanda*, April 14-30, 1959.

of being Murundi.”¹⁹² Yet even in the face of his own personal challenges, Makarakiza expressed relief that the atmosphere at Nyakibanda had improved since the fall of 1958.

Nor were the White Fathers concerned about the prospect of further indigenizing Nyakibanda seminary.¹⁹³ After appointing Makarakiza to serve on the Nyakibanda faculty for the 1958-59 academic year, Volker in May 1959 requested the services of Bigirumwami’s Tutsi vicar delegate, Louis Gasore, as a spiritual director at Nyakibanda. In May 1959, the White Fathers announced that the Hutu priest Bernard Manyurane would serve as a moral theologian on the Nyakibanda faculty for the 1959-60 academic year. Rumors circulated of the imminent appointment of an indigenous rector. With the notable exception of Manyurane, all of the possible candidates were Tutsi.¹⁹⁴ Ethnic identity would become a major factor in seminary appointments in the early 1960s, but this was not yet the case in 1959.

Compared to the travails of 1950-1952 or 1957-1958, the Rwandan Catholic Church appeared to be on the upswing in mid-1959. Nyakibanda’s new leadership had helped stabilize the seminary’s atmosphere, the mission stations were not wracked by political or ethnic tensions, and the church was conducting a gradual but steady shift from missionary to indigenous leadership. Whatever their interpretive differences, Perraudin and Bigirumwami maintained public unity as they spoke out in favor of social justice, national unity, and reconciliation. Even the Catholic king turned missionary *bête noire*, Mwami Mutara, was

¹⁹² “Pour les Bahutu j’ai le tord d’être mututsi, pour les Batutsi le tord de ne pas vouloir me mêler de leur particularisme, et pour tous celui d’être murundi. » (A.G.M.Afr.N°731108, Makarakiza to Mondor, 8 June 1959).

¹⁹³ A.G.M.Afr.N°738063, Volker to Perraudin, 21 May 1959.

¹⁹⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°740197, Volker to Bigirumwami, 2 May 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°738604, Cauwe to Perraudin, 27 May 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°731009-103, Baers to Volker, 8 Feb. 1959. Mentioned as possible rectors were Manyurane, Gasore, the Tutsi priest Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, and two other Tutsi priests – Kabgayi’s schools inspector, Aldephonse Kamiya, and the vicar delegate of Kabgayi, Innocent Gasabwoya.

regularly confessing to a local Tutsi priest and future bishop, Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, who in turn received effusive missionary praise for improving relations between the church and the royal court.¹⁹⁵ It is no wonder that in 1959 the Holy See initiated the reclassification of Rwanda from mission territory to local church. Before the announcement of this decree in November 1959, however, Rwanda underwent seismic political changes.

E. July-October 1959: Mutara's death and the rending of Rwanda's sociopolitical fabric

In comparison to its neighbor Belgian Congo where January 1959 Leopoldville riots had targeted Europeans and created a virtual state of siege, Rwanda in mid-1959 seemed to be undertaking a much more orderly transition towards local autonomy and eventual independence.¹⁹⁶ The specter of communism that so worried European observers in Congo had not gained traction in Rwanda.¹⁹⁷ As Rwanda's January 1960 elections approached, a growing consensus in Kigali and Brussels favored the establishment of a constitutional monarchy, further devolution of power to indigenous authorities, and the expansion of a meritocratic system of secondary schools and universities. For all of the continuing talk of Hutu emancipation, mainstream political rhetoric inside Rwanda placed equal emphasis on national unity and discouraged ethnic division. For all of the continuing challenges, then, Rwanda appeared to be undergoing a smooth and peaceful decolonization process in the summer of 1959.

¹⁹⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°739272, Alphonse van Hoof, "Rapport de la visite de Nyanza," 14-20 April 1959.

¹⁹⁶ "Les événements de Léopoldville," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (11 January 1959) : 1.

¹⁹⁷ A. Bruniera, "L'Église au Congo et au Ruanda-Urundi," *Vivante Afrique* 198 (August-September 1958): 1-2; "Il n'y a pas de coïncidences! L'agitation en AFRIQUE est (avant tout) COMMUNISTE," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (22 March 1959): 2. For background, see Marvin Markowitz, *Cross and Sword: The Political Role of Christian Missions in the Belgian Congo 1908-1960* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1973), 167.

This all changed on Saturday, July 25. While seeing his personal physician in Bujumbura, Burundi, Mwami Charles Mutara Rudahigwa fell gravely ill. Rushed to a local hospital, he died later that afternoon, likely felled by an overdose of penicillin.¹⁹⁸ While Mutara's health had declined in the late 1950s, his sudden death came as a shock to the Rwandan people, local Rwandan elites, and Belgian colonial officials. His passing was even more destabilizing since Mutara died without a male heir or appointed successor. In addition, his death in the care of Belgian doctors stoked widespread rumors of another colonial-missionary plot to replace an obdurate Rwandan king with a more compliant pro-Western figure.¹⁹⁹ For their part, colonial officials speculated that Mutara may have killed himself to stoke such rumors, furthering popular support for independence.²⁰⁰

Condolences poured in from throughout the Catholic world, including a telegram from Pope John XXIII. The White Fathers issued a glowing tribute to Mutara in their August 2 edition of *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, praising the late Mwami's "true progressive spirit" and highlighting Mutara's suppression of *ubuhake* and central role in Christianizing the

¹⁹⁸ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 240-41. The penicillin theory is also the most plausible possibility for A. Bushayija, "« Le décès de Mutara III Rudahigwa et les différentes interprétations, » *Dialogue* 188 (April-July 2009): 227-232.

¹⁹⁹ Cf. "La Pays demande le lumière," *Kinyamateka*, 1 August 1959, 11. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/10_Kinyamateka_01.08.1959_-_tribune_libre.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011); "Charles Mutara III Rudahigwa est décédé, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (2 August 1959). 1 In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/39_Temps_nouveaux_d_Afrique_02.08.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). Whatever their frustrations with Mutara, Reyntjens doubts the Belgians would have risked such political uncertainty, although he admits that the whole truth may never be known (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 241).

²⁰⁰ Harroy cites as evidence Mutara's mother's refusal of an autopsy, the Mwami's alleged farewells to close friends in the weeks leading up to his death, the predictions of his death that circulated in July 1959, the scandal of Mutara's alcoholism, and Mutara's decision to begin preparing Jean-Baptiste Ndahindurwa as his successor after years of ignoring the succession question (Harroy, *Rwanda: Souvenirs d'un compagnon*, 269-70).

Rwandan people.²⁰¹ Privately the White Fathers in Rome were less mournful, hoping that Mutara's death would present an opportunity for the "Belgian government to make known its new politics."²⁰² Implicated in many of the conspiracy theories circulating in the days following the Mwami's death, Perraudin himself neither left Kabgayi nor travelled at night until mid-August.²⁰³ His only public comments came during his eloquent eulogy at Mutara's funeral on July 28. Here he praised the late king for championing the Christianization of Rwanda and steadfastly supporting the Catholic Church, highlighting his 1943 baptism, 1946 dedication of the country to Christ the King, and membership in the papal order of Gregory the Great. Perraudin also underlined how Mutara supported "the great and fruitful principle of loyal collaboration between the temporal and spiritual powers."²⁰⁴

While mourning their late king, Rwanda faced the pressing challenge of finding a suitable replacement for Mutara. While Hutu agitators like Aloys Munyangaju advocated for Belgium to use this opportunity to establish a republican regime with universal suffrage, Tutsi nationalists sought a constitutional monarch who would maintain Rwanda's traditional institutions. According to Fr. Alexis Kagame, who served as one of Rwanda's *biru* or "keepers of the traditions," Mutara had anointed his half-brother Jean-Baptiste Ndahindurwa

²⁰¹ "Curriculum vitae de Charles, Léon, Pierre, Mutara III, Mutara, Mwami du Ruanda," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 2 August 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/39_Temps_nouveaux_d_Afrique_02.08.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²⁰² A.G.M.Afr.N°738075, Cauwe to Perraudin, 1 Aug. 1959.

²⁰³ A.G.M.Afr.N°727161, Van Hoof to Volker, 8 Aug. 1959. Perraudin later noted that these conspiracy theories began circulating only days after Mutara's death (C.M.L., André Perraudin, "Je rends grace à Dieu" (25 Aug. 1989): 2).

²⁰⁴ André Perraudin, « Oraison Funèbre 28 juillet 1959. » In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/21_Perraudin_-_oraison_funebre_28_juillet_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

as his successor in March 1959 and entrusted the young chief to Kagame's tutelage.²⁰⁵

Unlike in 1931, the Belgians did not have a well-groomed candidate ready to step into office, which in my mind offers the strongest argument against the theory of a Belgian conspiracy in the Mwami's death. Instead, colonial officials favored a slower transition, allowing for an interregnum of several weeks while a Belgian-Rwandan regency council determined a new constitutional monarch.

In contrast to the 1930s, however, the Belgians could not simply impose their will in 1959. During Mutara's funeral, Tutsi notables closely associated with the royal court staged what a critical Belgian observer termed the "coup d'état de Nyanza."²⁰⁶ Claiming that Rwandan custom dictated the naming of a new mwami before the burial of his predecessor, the royal *biru* unilaterally announced the selection of Jean-Baptiste Ndahindurwa as Rwanda's new king. Belgian colonial officials did not protest, cowed into silence by the heavily armed Twa guards that surrounded them. The crowd acclaimed Rwanda's new leader, a slight, bespectacled 24-year-old who had entered the Catholic Church as a teenager,

²⁰⁵ Cf. Kagame to Perraudin, 27 July 1959, in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/20_Kagame_Alexis_a_Perraudin_27_juillet_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011); Kagame to Perraudin, 30 July 1959, in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/31_Kagame_Alexis_a_Perraudin_30_juillet_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). Interestingly, Kagame notified Perraudin of the *biru*'s intentions but did not tell Belgian colonial officials. A contemporary Perraudin defender, Venuste Linguyenzeza, interpreted Kagame's actions as an effort to enlist Perraudin in a Classe-like coup to install a new Catholic king. Perraudin refused, thereby demonstrating his apolitical inclinations (V. Linguyenzeza, « Mgr. André Perraudin : L'homme de la justice, » *Dialogue* 234 (May-June 2004): 101).

²⁰⁶ This polemical label was supplied by M.A. Maus in a 1 August 1959 article in *Eurafrica*. Maus was the pro-Hutu Belgian colonial official who had resigned over the Hutu-Tutsi question in April 1956. The language of *coup d'état* implied that Belgium or the Hutu people were the proper repositories of political power in Rwanda. I would agree with Filip Reyntjens that the events of July 28 did not fundamentally violate the traditional mode of succession. In many ways it was more legitimate than the ambiguous successions of 1897 and 1931. (Cf. M. Maus, "Le coup d'Etat de Nyanza, *Eurafrica* VIII (August 1959)," in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 87-92; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 246-48).

studied at the *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida*, and finished only his second month as a territorial administrator in southern Rwanda.²⁰⁷

Considering the polemics which had swirled in Rwanda since 1956, Kigeri V Ndahindurwa came to office with surprisingly widespread support. This stemmed in part from Ndahindurwa's reputation as a Tutsi modernizer who had cultivated good relations with Hutu elites in his district. Court traditionalists in turn saw Kigeri as a man who would maintain Rwanda's monarchical tradition. Even Catholic missionaries were enthused by his selection. In a letter to Rome, Alphonse Van Hoof noted the "extraordinary enthusiasm" which greeted the announcement of Kigeri's elevation while noting the new Mwami's positive relations with the Astrida mission and the fervent faith of Ndahindurwa's mother.²⁰⁸ Even a Hutu nationalist like Aloys Munyangaju struck an optimistic note. In an August 1959 postscript to his January 1959 essay *L'actualité politique au Ruanda*, Munyangaju pointed to Ndahindurwa's reputation as a popular, modest, and simple man and praised him as one of the few prominent Tutsi who had not publicly opposed the Hutu emancipation movement.²⁰⁹ Kigeri's early gestures appeared to support Catholic optimism. On July 31, he undertook his first official trip to Kabgayi to ask for Perraudin's blessing. While this precedent had been established by Mutara in 1931, Kigeri's last-minute decision seemed designed to quell the swirling rumors of church involvement in his half-brother's death. He visited Aloys

²⁰⁷ "Kigeri V, Mwami du Rwanda," *Le Courrier d'Afrique*, 30 July 1959, » in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/34_Courrier_d_Afrique_30_juillet_1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²⁰⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°727162, Van Hoof to Volker, 8 Aug. 1959. This was no small matter, as the queen-mother traditionally retained strong influence in Rwandan politics. Mutara's 1950s turn against the missionary church was blamed in part on the supposed anti-clerical tendencies of his mother.

²⁰⁹ A. Munyangaju, « Supplément : L'avènement du premier mwami constitutionnel du Ruanda, » in *L'Actualité Politique au Ruanda*, 50-51. For background, see Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 242-43.

Bigirumwami three weeks later, greeted by 100 cyclists, lines of cars, and festive shouts of “long live the king.”²¹⁰

As Kigeri would discover over the next three months, however, Mutara’s death had ushered in a new era in Rwandan politics, an era in which the Mwami no longer set the political agenda. By mid-August Kigeri’s natural allies – conservative nationalists based at the Nyanza court, northwestern Tutsi chiefs, and Muslim traders – had formed a new political party, the *Union Nationale Rwandaise* (UNAR). Growing out of the *Association des Eleveurs Ruandais* (Association of Rwandan Cattle Breeders) founded in 1958, UNAR proclaimed a political program first outlined in the 1957 *Mise au Point*. This included advocating a rapid timeline for independence from Belgium, celebrating Rwanda’s pre-colonial traditions, denying the empirical reality of a Hutu-Tutsi problem, and emphasizing national unity above all else. The UNAR charter also included a more visceral current of anti-colonialism, comparing the Belgian persecution of Rwanda to racial oppression in the southern United States, South Africa, and Vietnam. “The West wants always to enslave Africa, to exploit her without pity or respite, and to deny to the black man the fundamental rights of man.”²¹¹ Retaining the hierarchical vision of traditional Rwandan society, the writers of the UNAR charter criticized Hutu elites’ egalitarian discourse for “according the same valor to the vulgar thought of ordinary man as to the perspicacious judgment of the capable man.” Breaking from tradition, the UNAR charter promised to transform independent Rwanda into a constitutional monarchy, establishing a representative parliamentary system in which Hutu

²¹⁰ Perraudin, “Accueil du nouveau roi Kigeri V à Kabgayi, 31 July 1959. » In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=16 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011); *Civitas Mariae* 19 (August 1959): 5.

²¹¹ « Charte de fondation du Parti UNAR, » in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 92-94.

and Tutsi would receive the same rights and responsibilities. To symbolize their supposed pan-ethnic vision, UNAR named François Rukeba, a half-Congolese Hutu, as their party spokesman.²¹²

It was anti-colonial nationalism, however, that would become UNAR's calling card. On September 13, UNAR held its first party conference and released a new political manifesto, gathering 3,000 members in downtown Kigali. Here UNAR leaders launched fierce diatribes against the Catholic Church and Belgium. As cars circled the streets of Kigali, partisans chanted, "Long live Rwanda! Long live the Mwami! Long live independence! Down with the whites, the missionaries, the dividers of the people!"²¹³ UNAR's new manifesto called for the secularization of schools and an "urgent revision of the agreement with the teaching missions," reviving the schools debate of 1954-55.²¹⁴ The party's emphasis on national unity also took on a more sinister tone as patriotism became synonymous with party loyalty. "Those who do not enter this party will be considered as enemies of the people."²¹⁵ In turn, the manifesto described the Hutu-Tutsi problem as "the creation of the missionaries." For UNAR, Europeans were using the ethnic question to divide the country and delay Rwanda's rightful claims to independence. Michel Kayihura, the

²¹² Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 263.

²¹³ « Première réunion du Parti de l'Union nationale Ruandaise, Kigali, 13 septembre 1959, » 1. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/27_Premiere_reunion_de_l_UNAR_-_13.09.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). For background, see Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 264.

²¹⁴ « Première réunion du Parti de l'Union nationale Ruandaise, Kigali, » 5. See also "Manifeste du Parti Politique 'Abashyirahamwe B'Urwanda (UNAR)," 13 September 1959," in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 98.

²¹⁵ « Première réunion du Parti de l'Union nationale Ruandaise, Kigali, 13 septembre 1959, » 2. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/27_Premiere_reunion_de_l_UNAR_-_13.09.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

influential Tutsi chief and brother of Fr. Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, concluded the meeting with a rousing call to arms:

We share with all the same will of fighting for the unity of the country, for its autonomy first and for its independence following, against those who look to divide all that you know, combating the white monopoly and that of the missions in the schools, fighting against other Banyarwanda who are not of this party, since they are against unity, against Rwanda, against the Mwami, against the customs of the country.²¹⁶

Doubting the power of royal tradition to mobilize the masses, UNAR looked to gain a populist following by clothing its traditionalist vision in the guise of anti-colonial nationalism.

In response to UNAR's manifestoes, Joseph Gitara's Aprosoma party lost whatever pan-ethnic elements it had briefly embraced in early 1959. Following a September 20 Twa assault on Gitara thought to be ordered by UNAR leaders,²¹⁷ Aprosoma titled its September 27 press communiqué as the "date of Hutu liberation from the secular slavery of the Batutsi." This document described the Tutsi people as "exploiters by nature, xenophobic by instinct, and communist by need, as manifested by the UNAR party."²¹⁸ Far from critiquing missionary or colonial influence, Aprosoma claimed that Catholic authorities had condemned the Kalinga drums, the symbol of the monarchy, and invoked Christian rhetoric in predicting

²¹⁶ Ibid. « Partons tous avec la même volonté de lutter pour l'unité du pays, pour son autonomie d'abord et pour son indépendance ensuite, contre ceux qui cherchent à nous diviser que vous connaissez tous, combattons le monopole des blancs et celui des missions dans les écoles, luttons contre les autres Banyarwanda qui ne sont pas de ce parti, parce qu'ils sont contre l'unité, contre le Rwanda, contre le Mwami, contre les coutumes du pays. »

²¹⁷ Cf. *Rudipresse (Bulletin Hebdomadaire d'Information)* no. 132, 26 September 1959, in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/33_Rudipresse_no136_-_26.09.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²¹⁸ « Meetings d'APROSOMA, Parti social hutu en date du 27.9.59 à Astrida, » 7. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/21_Meetings_de_l_Aprosoma_-_umunsi_mukuru_w_ibohorwa_ry_Abahutu_-_27.09.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). See also A.D.K., Aprosoma, "Fête la liberation des Bahutu à l'égard de l'esclavagisme séculaire des Batutsi, » 27 Sept. 1959.

the coming “resurrection” of Hutu society.²¹⁹ Aprosuma’s call to arms was no less fiery than UNAR’s earlier proclamations. “Long live the liberation of the Hutu! Down with Tutsi slavery! The cohabitation of Tutsi with Hutu is a gnawing wound, a leech in the body, and a cancer in the stomach. Hutu, from now on believe and hope in God and in each other, never in the Tutsi!”²²⁰

Aprosuma soon had an official political rival on the Hutu side. Since its founding as an officially non-political association in 1957, Gregoire Kayibanda’s *Mouvement Social Muhutu* (MSM) had built a grassroots network across Rwanda, taking advantage of Kayibanda’s and Calliope Mulindahabi’s extensive connections within TRAFIPRO, the *Association of Moniteurs*, and the Legion of Mary.²²¹ In October 1959, Kayibanda announced that the MSM was becoming a formal political party, the *Parti du Mouvement de l’Emancipation Hutu* (Parmehutu). Like UNAR, Parmehutu attempted to present itself as a national party that could unify the Rwandan people. But while UNAR saw national unity threatened by the Hutu social movement, Parmehutu’s manifesto described Rwanda as an ethnically-stratified country that could come together only with “the end of ‘Tutsi colonialism’ and the feudal regime instituted by the Tutsi.”²²² Unlike Aprosuma, Parmehutu shied away from extremist ethnic rhetoric, inviting Tutsi sympathizers into its ranks, differentiating between the feudal system and “our Tutsi brothers,” and admitting that

²¹⁹ Ibid, 7-8.

²²⁰ Quoted in Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 885.

²²¹ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 253 ; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 258. See also « Le mouvement social muhutu, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (9 November 1958) : 3-4.

²²² Quoted in Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 904.

injustices had been suffered “not only by the Bahutu, but also by the poor Tutsi.”²²³ Favoring gradual democratization over immediate independence, Parmehutu’s manifesto otherwise echoed themes shared by the other major parties – a constitutional monarchy, separation of administrative and judicial powers, support for private property rights and school construction, and a “refusal of tribal fights.” At the same time, Parmehutu offered a far more sanguine vision of the European and Catholic role in Rwandan society than UNAR, rejecting anti-European xenophobia and “thanking the missions for their work of educating the masses of the country.”²²⁴

The fourth of the major parties to emerge in the fall of 1959 was perhaps closest to the Catholic hierarchy’s and Belgian government’s own political views. Encouraged by the Belgian Resident, André Preud’homme, and led by the pro-Western Tutsi chiefs Prosper Bwanakweri and Lazare Ndazaro, the *Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais* (Rader) issued its own manifesto on October 1, 1959. Here the party proclaimed its support for universal suffrage, the democratization of Rwandan institutions, the privatization of property, economic cooperatives, and foreign investment. Rader reiterated its belief in the fundamental unity of Rwandan society, proclaiming that “it is profoundly erroneous to think that the good of one (ethnic group) depends on the crushing of the others.”²²⁵ Embracing both UNAR’s emphasis on national unity and Parmehutu’s commitment to democratization, Rader surpassed both parties in its praise for Belgian and Catholic influence, noting “the civilizing

²²³ “Manifeste-Programme du Parmehutu, 18 Oct. 1959, » in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 114.

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, 119-21.

²²⁵ « Manifeste du RADER, 1 Oct. 1959, » in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 129. The manifesto was printed as « Manifeste du Rassemblement Démocratique Ruandais, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (11 October 1959) : 2.

work accomplished by the Belgians in the political, social, economic and cultural domains” and claiming that “it is impossible to give a true education to people without the foundation and animation of true religion.”²²⁶ It may be that Rader’s awkward melding of pro-Western rhetoric and pan-ethnic nationalism foiled the party from the start. For all of its laudable moderation, the party of reforming Tutsi elites never developed a popular following.²²⁷

By the middle of October 1959, then, four major political parties had mobilized to contest U.N.-sponsored elections expected in early 1960. Notwithstanding their passionate disagreements on the ethnic question and their contrasting views towards Belgium and the Catholic Church, the four parties shared a broadly similar political vision of post-colonial Rwanda. This vision included direct elections, universal suffrage, a constitutional monarchy, an independent judiciary, codification of customary law, and financial and land redistribution. One could even have imagined a future in which the parties came together across ethnic lines to forge a genuinely nationalist movement; Bwanakweri apparently approached Kayibanda in September 1959 with just such an offer. Ever the opportunist, Kayibanda demurred, recognizing the potency of ethnicity and class for mobilizing political support in the countryside. Kayibanda’s decision helped ensure that Rwandan politics would continue to revolve around the Hutu-Tutsi question.²²⁸

As political mobilization accelerated in the fall of 1959, the Catholic hierarchy attempted to reassert its magisterial voice. Over the course of 60 days between mid-August and mid-October, the bishops issued public statements on Christianity and politics, brought

²²⁶ « Manifeste du RADER, 1 Oct. 1959, » in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 127-28.

²²⁷ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 252.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, 252-56.

the nation's priests together for a major synod at Nyakibanda, and issued warnings against two of Rwanda's new political parties. I will address each of these areas in turn, beginning with the joint pastoral letters of August 1959.

On August 15, 45 Catholic bishops and priests in Rwanda, Burundi, and Belgian Congo issued a statement entitled "*Le chrétien et la politique*." Ten days later, the four Vicars Apostolic of Rwanda and Burundi released "*Consignes et directives des Vicaires Apostoliques du Ruanda-Urundi*." Combined, these two documents provide the most thorough insight into the theo-political visions of the region's bishops on the eve of independence. Shifting from the day-to-day developments of Rwandan politics to church leaders' broader theological and political visions, I will address four particular areas. One, how did the bishops understand the term "church"? Second, what did they see as the proper relationship between church, state and society? Third, how did they envision the lay Catholic's responsibility in politics and public life? Finally, what concrete proposals did the bishops offer in this crucial period of political transition?

For the most part, the bishops betrayed an implicitly clericalist understanding of the term "church," implying a strict line between the temporal and the spiritual and between lay and clerical roles. In this sense, "the church" consisted first and foremost of bishops, priests, and religious. While baptized as members of the church, lay Christians were expected to live out their vocations in the world and under the tutelage of the state. If the temporal domain belonged to the laity, the church's proper domain was spiritual. In political affairs, the church's role was to offer guiding principles, leaving their contextual application to

individual lay judgment. “If it remains to the Church to define the moral principles that should guide society, in the temporal domain it is often left to the Christian himself to decide its practical application.”²²⁹ In summary, the Catholic hierarchy had a responsibility to offer moral and social guidance to the lay faithful, but ultimately the laity would determine how to implement these principles into political life, understood here as “the art of conducting society towards the common good.”²³⁰

As decolonization progressed, traditional church cooperation with the colonial state appeared as a political albatross. In this light, the bishops in August 1959 placed far more emphasis on the separation of church and state than they had in previous statements in 1956 and 1957. Writing that church and state “constitute two different and autonomous societies...each with its own goal,”²³¹ the bishops placed under the spiritual domain the sanctification of souls, doctrinal teaching, liturgy, and sacraments. In turn, the temporal domain included state laws and institutions, government administration, social relations, and the economic production and distribution of goods. There was no sense in either document that African Catholics should develop explicitly Catholic political parties. Rather, they should try to inspire existing parties with Christian principles. In turn, priests should refrain from making dogmatic pronouncements on political questions for which they possessed at best indirect authority. In this vein, the bishops strongly discouraged clergy from entering the

²²⁹ Ordinaires of Congo and Rwanda-Urundi, “Le Chrétien et la politique,” 15 August 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=17 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). This letter was also reprinted as “Lettre pastorale des leurs excellences les vicaires et préfets apostoliques du Congo belge et du Ruanda-Urundi,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (30 August 1959) : 9. For background, see Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 161.

²³⁰ C.I.E.R., Ordinaires of Congo and Rwanda-Urundi, “Le Chrétien et la politique. »

²³¹ Ibid.

political field or giving any appearance of partisanship (e.g., propagating political parties, attending political gatherings, or using mission buildings for political meetings). If the clergy must stay out of national politics, the government should not interfere in church affairs. “The Church, and consequently her clergy, refuses to serve as an instrument of civil authority.”²³²

While recognizing a certain autonomy for the secular sphere, the bishops resisted what they saw as modernity’s aim to privatize the church. Towards this end, the bishops argued that the church should not be confined to “purely religious questions in the sanctuary or sacristy,” arguing that “the good of the city” depended on a collaborative, reciprocal relationship between the religious apostolate and political action.²³³ On these grounds, the bishops claimed the right and responsibility to speak out on any matter of faith and morals, including education, youth formation, social work, medical institutions, property rights, and government subsidies for the missions.

If priests were discouraged from entering the political realm, lay Catholics were ordered to do so. “A Christian who, in his place, following his age and social condition, is not preoccupied with the political, economic and social problems of his country, would not be a true Christian.”²³⁴ And if lay Catholics should generally follow Romans 13 and accept

²³² Ibid.

²³³ Vicaires Apostoliques du Rwanda-Urundi, “Consignes et Directives, » 25 August 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=18 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²³⁴ C.I.E.R., Vicaires Apostolique du Rwanda-Urundi, « Consignes et Directives, » 25 August 1959. A *Temps Nouveaux* article which appeared around this time also castigated those who would abstain from voting. “At the same time those who do not vote allow the election of bad candidates... Therefore those who do not vote contribute as well to an evil made by these (bad) candidates. One names those who do not vote abstentionnistes.” (“La politique et les chrétiens en Afrique Noire,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (16 August 1959) : 3).

duly constituted authority,²³⁵ they “cannot accommodate a Constitution of aggressive laicization which eliminates all reference to God, the principle of legitimate authority.”²³⁶ Such language appeared to offer tacit justification for rebellion against a Marxist or Communist government which “opposes the fundamental theses of Christian dogma and applies methods contrary to Christian morality, notably the respect due to the human person.”²³⁷ Political authority might come from God, but this did not offer governments a *carte blanche* to abuse their people. “God will not continue to mandate an authority which does not fulfill its mission and does not serve the good of all on whose behalf she serves.”²³⁸

Finally, these two episcopal statements offered a measure of prescriptive advice for the emerging nations of central Africa. Endorsing the goal of independence for Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi, the bishops spoke favorably of the right to association, the right to form political parties, and the importance of respecting minority political rights. Second, the bishops argued that while government should protect the rights of the poor masses, society should also be marked by economic, racial, and cultural solidarity. Division was thus the principle enemy of church and state alike, breaking Christian bonds between blacks and whites, missionaries and indigenous clergy, and Rwandan and Burundian nationals. “Racial, ethnic, social and cultural oppositions can only engender incomprehension and disorder...one must absolutely surmount all oppositions of race, tribe, social milieus, and economic

²³⁵ Romans 13:1-7 is typically invoked to justify Christian obedience to established state powers. “Let every person be subordinate to the higher authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been established by God. Therefore, whoever resists authority opposes what God has appointed, and those who oppose it will bring judgment upon themselves” (Rom 13:1-2, NAB).

²³⁶ *Ordinaires of Congo and Rwanda-Urundi*, “Le Chrétien et la politique,” 15 August 1959.

²³⁷ *Vicaires Apostolique of Rwanda-Urundi*, « Consignes et Directives, » 25 August 1959

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

interests.”²³⁹ Third, Catholic leaders saw the family as the core unit of society and thereby claimed the authority to condemn laws propagating polygamy, divorce, and arranged marriage. Finally, while not delving deeply into the ethnic question, the Vicars Apostolic of Rwanda and Burundi followed Perraudin’s “Letter on Charity” in highlighting the importance of a social problem which “is particularly delicate since it doubles as a racial problem.”²⁴⁰ Perhaps reflecting the influence of the Congolese majority, the broader statement from the bishops of Congo, Rwanda, and Burundi avoided the Hutu-Tutsi question all together.

In summary, then, the bishops in August 1959 envisioned greater separation between the respective spheres of church and state. At the same time, they still envisioned church and state collaborating as partners in building up the common good. To be sure, priests and lay Christians had different responsibilities in constructing a just society – clerics shaped lay consciences, while laity elected leaders who would “defend the interests of the Church and the true common good of the country, as for example Christian marriage and Catholic schools.”²⁴¹ The temporal and spiritual spheres should remain autonomous, but autonomy should not be confused with separation. In this vein, the bishops offered several tangible political recommendations, supporting the transition from colonialism to independence, standing up for the poor masses and the family, and balancing a concern with political divisionism with an equal concern for lingering ethnic inequality. Above all, the bishops

²³⁹ Ordinaries of Congo and Rwanda-Urundi, “Le Chrétien et la politique,” 15 August 1959.

²⁴⁰ Vicars Apostolic of Rwanda-Urundi, “Consignes et Directives, » 25 August 1959.

²⁴¹ C.I.E.R., Vicars Apostolic of Rwanda-Urundi, “Consignes et Directives, » 25 August 1959.

claimed that the Catholic Church retained a central role in providing both education and social formation.

The deeper question, of course, is whether Catholic leaders' political visions had undergone any substantial evolution in the late colonial period. The means had surely changed. Rather than follow Lavigerie's and Classe's top-down approach in forming kings and elites, the bishops in 1959 emphasized a more bottom-up approach that placed a premium on the clerical formation of lay consciences. In many ways such an approach fit perfectly with the emergence of representative democracy in which the common masses rather than the elite class would determine the future of the nation. Neither pastoral statement, for example, includes any reference to the formation of the *évolués*, the cherished goal of the early 1950s. Yet if cloaked in liberal democratic language, the hierarchy's overarching goal remained the same – ensuring that the Catholic Church continued to build a Christian civilization in the heart of Africa.²⁴² Unfortunately, the bishops failed to consider the potential dangers of the civilizing mission, from the compromising of the gospel in the cauldron of electoral politics to the loss of a distinctive ecclesiology in which the church – lay and clergy together – could embody an effective political alternative.

As the region's bishops released these political statements, Perraudin and Bigirumwami gathered Rwanda's priests for a national synod at Nyakibanda between August

²⁴² In the contemporaneous words of Leo Volker, "it is not sufficient to baptize individuals...we must establish Christianity in the African continent." (C.M.L., Leo Volker, "Formation liturgique et formation d'élites chrétiennes" (25 September 1959) : 7).

24 and 29.²⁴³ Topics included reorganizing missions and substations, improving training for lay catechists, enhancing lay participation in a more inculturated liturgy, considering the future of Catholic Action and Catholic schools, strengthening clerical unity, and reconsidering the relationship between the priesthood and socio-political problems in Rwanda.²⁴⁴ 60 priests from Kabgayi and 18 from Nyundo participated; most were superiors of mission stations. Publicly, the synod members expressed their commitment to clerical unity, their filial obedience to the bishops, and their regret at the “injuries and calumnies” suffered by their bishops.²⁴⁵ In their concluding statement, Bigirumwami and Perraudin agreed that the church should avoid political entanglements except in matters of faith and morals, instructing priests to form lay faithful who could make responsible political decisions in light of their Catholic faith. They also re-emphasized the importance of maintaining Christian unity and avoiding political parties that contradicted the core truths of Catholic teaching.²⁴⁶

While the two bishops readily concurred on the importance of clerical and national unity, they continued to differ on how to achieve these goals. For Bigirumwami, the primary culprit remained the artificial Hutu-Tutsi problem; downplaying this distinction would restore unity within church and state alike. In contrast, Perraudin saw the solution to clerical disunity as keeping the clergy out of politics. But if for Perraudin priests should leave

²⁴³ *Trait d'Union* 61 (Aug-Sept. 1959), 7-20 offers a detailed overview of the Synod of Nyakibanda. The *Centre d'Information et d'Étude sur le Rwanda* also includes the joint episcopal statement issued at the close of the synod (Ordinaires de Rwanda (Perraudin and Bigirumwami), « Le Synode à Nyakibanda, » 29 August 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=19 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²⁴⁴ A.D.K., André Perraudin, « Circulaire N°21, » 26 June 1959. See also Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 206.

²⁴⁵ *Trait d'Union* 71 (Aug.-Sept. 1959): 19.

²⁴⁶ Perraudin and Bigirumwami, « Le Synode à Nyakibanda, » 29 August 1959.

political action to the laity, clerics retained the right and responsibility to teach boldly on the nation's pressing social issues. "We cannot be a partisan clergy: the priest is a man of all the world, but we do not have the right to close our eyes before the problems which are posed to us; we must form our faithful, to each group to which they belong, to take all their temporal responsibilities as convinced Christians."²⁴⁷

The analytical division between the two bishops also emerged in a rising debate over the Catholic media. As noted above, Bigirumwami had expressed his frustration with the Catholic media in the spring of 1959, arguing that Catholic journals should speak more of authority, civility tradition and ethnic *entente* than democracy and Hutu emancipation.

Our journals TN (*Temps Nouveaux*) and KM (*Kinyamateka*), Catholic journals in Rwanda-Burundi...should smell more of a 'good sanctified odor' and in their expressions should stir hearts to sentiments of justice and love and obedience...Our journals have made much evil, and already we are undergoing the consequences which will become more pronounced if we do not stop our democratic propaganda which tends to destroy what has been constructed.²⁴⁸

In August Bigirumwami took his critiques of *Kinyamateka* and *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* to the White Fathers, accusing their newspapers of inciting ethnic divisionism and undermining his own authority as bishop.²⁴⁹ While agreeing that the Catholic press should criticize abuses of power and anti-Christian customs, Bigirumwami posited that Catholic editors had forgotten the fundamental principle that "all authority comes from God."²⁵⁰ Inaccurately

²⁴⁷ *Trait d'Union* 70 (June-July 1959) : 122. For further commentary on the Perraudin-Bigirumwami analytical dispute, see A.G.M.Afr.N°727089-90, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 6 Sept. 1959

²⁴⁸ A.D.K., Bigirumwami to [Anon.], 16 March 1959. As noted above, I believe that this letter was addressed to Innocent Gasabwoya, vicar general of Kabgayi and overall director of *Kinyamateka* at the time.

²⁴⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°740223-26, Bigirumwami to Grauls, Martin, Perraudin, Ntuyahaga, and Volker, 8 Aug. 1959.

²⁵⁰ Bigirumwami overlooked here the glowing press that *Temps Nouveaux* continued to offer to the Burundian monarchy, especially the crown prince Louis Rwagasore who was known for his pro-Catholic sentiments. See here Matthieu Akobaseka, "Louis Rwagasore," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (13 September 1959): 3; « Le mariage du prince Rwagasore et de Marie Rose Ntamikeyo, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (20 September

claiming that the missionary journals had attacked the Mwami and customary authorities for “10 to 15 years,”²⁵¹ Bigirumwami feared that these newspapers were now turning against the indigenous church, thereby giving more ammunition to the church’s true enemies. “I believe that in attacking local civil and ecclesiastical authority, legitimately established, the missionary journals can create an immense and irreparable evil in our country and in our Church and at the same time attract hatreds and maledictions on the missionaries.”²⁵² For Bigirumwami, the missionary press had contributed to Rwanda’s growing internal divisions by “accentuating incomprehension and malaise” between Hutu and Tutsi.²⁵³

Bigirumwami’s critiques had an effect. While the White Fathers’ Superior General, Leo Volker, considered Bigirumwami’s diatribes to be “very exaggerated,” he also wrote to the editors of *Temps Nouveaux* to instruct them to exercise more prudence when writing on ethnic and political questions.²⁵⁴ For his part, Perraudin in late August agreed to ban all

1959) : 9 ; « Allocutions du Mwami et du Prince Rwagasore, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (18 October 1959) : 1.

²⁵¹ This appears to be an exaggerated claim in light of the fact that Alexis Kagame, court historian and royal confidant, served as the editor of *Kinyamateka* until 1953.

²⁵² A.G.M.Afr.N°740226, Bigirumwami to Grauls, Martin, Perraudin, Ntuyahaga, and Volker, 8 Aug. 1959.

²⁵³ A.G.M.Afr.N°740227, Bigirumwami to Volker, 10 Aug. 1959. For similar critiques of the missionary press, see A.G.M.Afr.N°739497-98, De Schrevel to Volker, 5 Aug. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°740220-22, Anonymous to Bigirumwami, 15 Aug. 1959.

²⁵⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°727099, Volker to Van Hoof, 24 Aug. 1959. See also A.G.M.Afr.N°740203, Cauwe to Bigirumwami, 3 Sept. 1959. *Temps Nouveaux* would have also benefitted from broadening their interlocutors. Likely reflecting the prominent presence of *TN* correspondent and Aprosoma leader Aloys Munyangaju, their interviews and extracts typically engaged prominent Hutu spokesmen rather than their Tutsi critics (cf. “Interview de M. Joseph Gitera, Président de la Délégation Bahutu à Nyanza,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (27 April 1958) : 1 ; « Le délégation des Bahutu à l’Ibwami, Nyanza-Ruanda, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (8 June 1958) : 7 ; « Kalinga drapeau du Ruanda ? » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (12 April 1959) : 3 ; G. Cyimana, « Plaidoyer pour le menu peuple au Ruanda-Urundi, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (7 June 1959) : 6 ; A. Munyangaju, « Le pays demande la lumière, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (16 August 1959) : 1, 10). In other cases Hutu writers provided commentary on the writings of their ideological opponents, such as Munyangaju’s commentary on the Tutsi priest Janvier Mulenzi’s social analysis of Rwanda (« Etude sur quelques problèmes du Ruanda, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (14 December 1958) : 3, 7. For a rare exception to this generally pro-

political writing in *Kinyamateka* and to expand the newspaper's editorial range. After Kayibanda founded Parmehutu in October, Perraudin removed Kayibanda from *Kinyamateka*'s editorial staff.²⁵⁵ At the same time, Perraudin's appointments helped ensure that *Kinyamateka* maintained a broadly pro-Hutu outlook. As the newspaper's general editor, Justin Kalibwami was one of the few Tutsi priests known for his overt sympathies for the Hutu emancipation movement. And after the November 1959 Hutu uprising, Perraudin added the Hutu priest Alphonse Ntezimana to the editorial staff.²⁵⁶

Even as they grappled over the political culpability of Catholic newspapers, Rwanda's bishops attempted to maintain a united front as new political parties mobilized in the late summer and early fall. On September 24, Bigirumwami and Perraudin issued a confidential circular to their priests expressing grave concerns over UNAR's nationalistic rhetoric. The legacy of Perraudin's wartime years in Switzerland reemerged as he wrote that "this [UNAR] tendency resembles strongly the 'national socialism' that other countries have known and which have caused them so much grief."²⁵⁷ Perraudin and Bigirumwami also criticized UNAR's anti-missionary language and opposition to Catholic schools, sentiments which they attributed to possible Communist and Muslim influences. As with the lay schools debate of the mid-1950s, perceived anti-clericalism served to unite Catholic leaders across

Hutu line, see « S'accrocher au passé ou construire l'avenir : Une voix tutsi, Une voix Hutu, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (27 July 1958) : 3.

²⁵⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°727089-90, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 6 Sept. 1959.

²⁵⁶ *Trait d'Union* 70 (June-July 1959) : 115 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°727138, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 20 Jan. 1960. Van Hoof notes that Ntezimana was a Hutu priest. This account contradicts Ian Linden's claim that Perraudin appointed "Ntezimana, a more hard-core Tutsi priest," to the editorial staff in late 1959 (Cf. Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 270).

²⁵⁷ Bigirumwami and Perraudin, « Mise en garde des Vicaires Apostoliques contre l'UNAR 24 sept. 1959. » In *C.I.E.R.*, http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/23_Mise_en_garde_des_Vicaires_Apostoliques_contre_l_UNAR_-_24.09.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

ideological lines. As Bigirumwami stated in a circular letter released just days after the anti-UNAR statement, “the bishops will not oppose any party unless it is manifestly anti-Catholic.”²⁵⁸

Rumors have persisted that the White Fathers leaned on Bigirumwami to sign a document that essentially reflected Perraudin’s personal views. Guy Mosmans’s September 21 visit to Nyundo lends a measure of credence to such theories. Yet not only did Bigirumwami never hint at such pressure, but his subsequent September 26 letter echoed the September 24 joint circular. Here Bigirumwami informed his flock to watch out for an upcoming transcript from UNAR’s September 13 gathering as well as the bishops’ official commentary, asking them to “understand the role of the good Pastor who must look over his sheep” and to judge a political party “by its fruits.” Overall, though, Bigirumwami does not come across in this letter as a man obsessed with national politics. Rather, his focus lay with maintaining Catholic fidelity and charity in the midst of an overheating political cauldron. Reminding his priests that one “cannot oppose the Church of missionaries with the autochthonous or national Church,” he banned clergy from attending political meetings and exhorted lay Catholics to “make a politics of silence, calm, prayer, peace, prudence, and confidence in your Bishops.” Bigirumwami exhorted his people to “love all Banyarwanda whether small or great, rich or poor, good or malicious, just or unjust” and to surround themselves with Christian teachers and catechists “without neglecting good relations with the chiefs, sub-chiefs, and *évolués* and without forgetting to defend the poor for love and justice

²⁵⁸ A.D.K., Aloys Bigirumwami, « Lettre circulaire, » 26 Sept. 1959.

and truth.”²⁵⁹ To his credit, Bigirumwami recognized the risks that political mobilization – or partisanship of any type – posed to Christian charity.

The bishops also reserved some harsh words for Aprosuma, UNAR’s ideological opposite. Despite or perhaps because of Aprosuma’s proclaimed fealty to Catholic teaching, Perraudin and Bigirumwami did not welcome the party’s late September manifesto. On October 11, Perraudin and Bigirumwami issued another circular to the Rwandan clergy condemning Aprosuma’s “spirit of non-Christian racial hatred incompatible with the teachings and the exhortations of Our Lord and of the Holy Church.”²⁶⁰ Perraudin and Bigirumwami demanded that Gitara retract his statement on the *Kalinga* drums, chastising him for misappropriating their August directive in which they demythologized but did not condemn the traditional *Kalinga* rituals.²⁶¹ Gitara proved to be a loyal son of the church. Two days after the release of Perraudin and Bigirumwami’s letter, he resigned his leadership of Aprosuma and apologized for any statements that could be misconstrued as inciting racial hatred. In parting, however, he reiterated his belief that the Bahutu Manifesto embodied “the social doctrine of the Church in a Christian spirit.”²⁶²

²⁵⁹ A.D.K., Aloys Bigirumwami, “Lettre circulaire,” 26 Sept. 1959.

²⁶⁰ Perraudin and Bigirumwami, “Mise en garde des Vicaires Apostoliques contre le Parti Social Hutu 11 octobre 1959, » 1. In *C.I.E.R.*, [http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/22 Mise en garde des Vicaires Apostoliques contre le Parti Social Hutu - 11.10.1959.pdf](http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/22_Mise_en_garde_des_Vicaires_Apostoliques_contre_le_Parti_Social_Hutu_-_11.10.1959.pdf) (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²⁶¹ Cf. Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 251 ; Rudakemwa, *L’évangélisation du Rwanda*, 341; Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 173-75 ; Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 932.

²⁶² Perraudin and Bigirumwami, “Mise en garde des Vicaires Apostoliques contre le Parti Social Hutu 11 octobre 1959, » 3. As early as spring 1958, Joseph Gitara draped his Hutu emancipation movement in the flag of Christian civilization. “Their (Hutu) inferiority complex and their desire for emancipation from the social, economic and industrial point of view, cannot find satisfaction other than in a Western, human and Christian civilization” (“Interview de M. Joseph Gitara,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (27 April 1958): 3).

As October progressed, Bigirumwami and Perraudin withheld any further political critiques, offering tacit approval to both Rader and Parmehutu and reiterating the church's officially non-partisan stance. In a letter to his clergy, Bigirumwami condemned those who would divide missionary from indigenous clergy. He also repeated that Catholic clergy should abstain from speaking on political matters unless politicians explicitly contravened Catholic dogma or morality.²⁶³ On October 31, Perraudin penned an angry protest letter to the Belgian newspaper *La Libre Belgique* for claiming in an October 27 article that Perraudin had "taken up the cause, by word and by action, for the emancipation of the Hutu." While admitting that his February letter on charity had "publicly affirmed the existence of a grave moral problem and took to heart the interests of the poor people," Perraudin denied that he had any racist motives and expressed his desire to be a bishop for all Rwandans. Unlike in February, this letter carefully avoided juxtaposing "poor" with "Hutu."²⁶⁴

But even as Bigirumwami appealed for national unity and Perraudin defended his neutrality, Rwandan priests were beginning to chafe at their superiors' efforts to muzzle their political voices. A group of Tutsi priests near Aprosoma's stronghold in southern Rwanda issued a public statement on October 4 criticizing the political involvement of European missionaries, the close association of Catholic Action with Hutu political movements, and the

²⁶³ "Lettre de Mgr. Bigirumwami, » in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=28 (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²⁶⁴ Cf. "Les Craintes de la population des Bahutu," *La Libre Belgique*, 27 Oct. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/13_La_Libre_Belgique_-_27.10.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011); « Lettre Perraudin à *La Libre Belgique* 31 octobre 1959, » in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/29_Prottestations_de_Mgr_Perraudin_contre_La_Libre_Belgique_-_31.10.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

bishops' labeling of UNAR as a communist movement.²⁶⁵ Like Mwami Kigeri, the Catholic bishops of Rwanda could no longer control political developments on the ground.

In this sense, I would argue that Rwanda's growing political crisis in the fall of 1959 stemmed from a collapse of authority. The Catholic hierarchy issued its statements and critiques, but observers struggled to reconcile Perraudin's and Bigirumwami's contrasting visions of Rwandan society. And despite the bishops' statements, the political atmosphere in September and October 1959 only worsened as Rwanda's politicians accused each other of communism, atheism, and inciting national division and racial hatred.²⁶⁶ For example, even as UNAR protested its opponents' charges of anti-Catholicism, xenophobia, feudalism and communism,²⁶⁷ the party circulated anonymous tracts calling for the elimination of ten "enemies of Rwanda" including Perraudin and Rader's Tutsi leadership.²⁶⁸ Despite his initial promise, Kigeri V was proving to be a weak monarch, overshadowed by UNAR partisans at his own court. His failure to condemn some of UNAR's more excessive claims cost him the Mwami's most important traditional attribute – the reputation as an impartial king standing

²⁶⁵ "Cyahinda le 4 Oct. 1959, Rencontre fraternel des Abbés du Sud." In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/30_Rencontre_fraternel_des_Abbes_du_Sud_-_04.10.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²⁶⁶ Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 479.

²⁶⁷ UNAR leaders consistently denied the reported xenophobic and anti-Catholic statements at their September 13 meeting, noting in a November 7, 1959 statement of views that they respected the Catholic hierarchy, credited the missions for helping to develop the Rwandan people, and thanked Belgium for ushering Rwanda into the modern world. Calling the Belgians "honored and privileged friends of Rwanda," UNAR reiterated that it "wanted to be the party of fraternal unity." (cf. "Une Mise au Point de l'UNAR," 7 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/38_Mise_au_point_de_l_UNAR_-_07.11.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011). In another protest, they noted the "radical contradiction between the two qualifications of feudalism and communism" ("L'UNAR fait une mise au point," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 15 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/64_Temps_nouveaux_d_Afrique_-_15.11.1959_-_5.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011)).

²⁶⁸ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°720623, « Les 10 commandements des ABATABAZI, » Oct. 1959 ; "Une mise au point de l'UNAR," in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 108-11 ; Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 903 ; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 267.

above political disputes.²⁶⁹ Yet if the Catholic bishops and Mwami Kigeri could not offer an authoritative voice, neither could Belgium. The Belgian Resident's decision in mid-October to exile three prominent Tutsi chiefs for inciting political violence further alienated Mwami Kigeri and many other Tutsi chiefs. This led to the first public split between Kigeli and the Belgians, mass protests in Kigali, and the Belgian shooting of a protester on October 17.²⁷⁰

Rwanda stood on a knife's edge as Sunday services celebrating the Feast of All Saints began on the morning of November 1, 1959. The combustible political environment needed only a spark, and it was not long in coming.

F. Conclusion: Did the Catholic hierarchy incite an ethnic revolution?

I conclude by addressing the question with which I titled this chapter: "Did the Catholic hierarchy incite an ethnic revolution?" This is after all a widespread view in the post-1994 academy and on the Rwandan street alike.²⁷¹ In particular, André Perraudin has been accused of political divisionism, regicide, and offering tacit approval for ethnic massacres. Gourevitch, Mamdani and other critics have repeatedly underlined the connections between the institutional church and emerging Hutu political movements, implying that the church played a revolutionary role in Rwandan society. Mamdani has gone so far as to describe the church as "the womb that nurtured the leadership of the insurgent

²⁶⁹ Cf. "Une explosion de xénophobie au Ruanda," *La Libre Belgique*, 16 October 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/12_La_Libre_Belgique_-_16.10.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).

²⁷⁰ Kigeli's stern letter to Governor Harroy can be found in "Lettre du 14 Octobre 1959 à M. le Ministre du Congo belge et du Rwanda-Burundi," in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 103-05. See also Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 260; Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 267; Murego, *Révolution Rwandaise*, 911-14.

²⁷¹ See here Deogratias Byanafashe, "Mgr. A. Perraudin et les changements politiques au Rwanda entre 1952 et 1962." *Etudes rwandaises: série lettres et sciences humaines* 1 (July 2000): 120-37.

Hutu movement.”²⁷² Perraudin in turn has defended himself and his record at the United Nations, in the Vatican, and ultimately in a 2003 memoir published shortly before his death.

Examining the historical record, it seems easy to parry the charge that Perraudin was a radical liberation theologian advocating for Hutu revolution. He never called on the Hutu masses to rise up and throw off their Tutsi rulers. If there is one theme repeated in all of the bishops’ pastoral writings, it is not the exigency of liberation but the importance of unity. On the eve of the revolution, Perraudin condemned extremists on both sides of the Rwandan political debate, from UNAR radicals looking to extirpate all Rwandans who did not support their party to Aprosoma militants calling for the violent overthrow of Tutsi authorities.

In addition, Perraudin’s and Bigirumwami’s writings in 1958-59 belie any stereotypical division between Perraudin the progressive advocate of Hutu rights and Bigirumwami the conservative defender of Tutsi privilege. There are important differences between the two churchmen. For example, if Perraudin emphasizes social justice and Christian unity and utilizes racial categories to describe Hutu and Tutsi, Bigirumwami tends to focus on national unity and political reform and downplays the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. Yet in terms of their politics, both come across as moderate progressives committed to the gradual democratization of Rwanda’s political institutions and opposed to anti-clerical nationalism, anti-Tutsi racialism, and the exploitation of the peasantry.

²⁷² Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 232. This is also the premise of Ian Linden’s argument in *Church and Revolution in Rwanda*. “I was impressed during an interview with Gregoire Kayibanda, then President of Rwanda, in June 1973, by the intensity of his feelings against the Tutsi. Interviews with missionaries who had known him intimately during the years 1950-61 convinced me that social Catholicism, rather than any other philosophy, informed his actions and planning” (Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 245).

Inside the church, Perraudin showed a judicious balance in his ecclesial appointments, increasing Hutu enrollment in the seminaries and naming Tutsi to prominent positions in his vicariate.²⁷³ Perraudin made Kayibanda work under Tutsi priests at *Kinyamateka* and removed him from the newspaper's editorial board after he founded the Parmehutu political party in October 1959. And as we will see in chapter four, when violence broke out in November 1959, Perraudin and Bigirumwami issued an immediate condemnation and opened up mission stations and churches to thousands of Tutsi refugees. Unlike in 1994, these missions were not later compromised. So while Perraudin clearly had a passion for social justice, it would be anachronistic to call him a post-Vatican II liberationist, much less the violent revolutionary of UNAR mythology.²⁷⁴

If Perraudin was not a radical liberationist, was he simply reincarnating Leon Classe's Constantinian vision in liberal democratic clothing?²⁷⁵ Like his predecessor, Perraudin believed that the church had a central role to play within Rwandan civil society, and he continually defended the church's right to address pressing moral and social questions. He celebrated the extent to which Mwami Mutara had institutionalized Catholicism as a national religion. Like many of his post-war missionary colleagues, Perraudin saw political independence as a gift only in so far as Rwanda retained Catholic schools and traditional

²⁷³ As noted above, the Tutsi Innocent Gasabwoya served as general editor of *Kinyamateka* between 1956 and 1959. The Tutsi priest Justin Kalibwami took over from Gasabwoya in 1959 (Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 443).

²⁷⁴ In saying this I do not mean to imply that all post-Vatican II Latin American liberation theology supported violent revolution. On the complexity and depth of this movement, see Alfred Hennelly, *Liberation Theology: A Documentary History* (Maryknoll: Orbis, 1990).

²⁷⁵ The pejorative term "Constantinianism" references Constantine's 312 AD conversion to Christianity and the subsequent legalization and then establishment of Christianity in 4th century Rome. The early church of martyrs was replaced by caesaro-papism in the Greek East and medieval Christendom in the Latin West.

marriage laws. If Perraudin was not a radical liberationist, he stood in a long line of African missionaries looking to strengthen the church by cultivating close relations with the state.

It would be inaccurate, however, to dismiss Perraudin as a court prophet. He moved sharply away from Rwanda's traditional authorities in the late 1950s. Along with Bigirumwami, he joined his fellow bishops in condemning colonial and customary abuses in 1956 and 1957 pastoral statements. His 1959 statement *Super omnia caritas* spoke even more definitively of structural evil in Rwandan society. He helped start the TRAFIPRO cooperative and encouraged Catholic Action to consider social justice questions. And unlike Mosmans, Perraudin never wrote of the virtues of colonialism or Belgium's "magnificent work" in Africa.²⁷⁶ Perraudin in this sense was a distinctively post-war missionary, far more concerned with democratization and social justice than with cultivating close relations with the Rwandan king or the colonial administrator. And while some recent scholars see his actions as a cynical effort by church authorities to maintain the church's traditional social privileges,²⁷⁷ the ultimate political success of the Hutu social movement was by no means evident prior to the November 1959 revolution. And unlike his White Father confreres Arthur Dejemeppe, Guy Mosmans or even Alphonse van Hoof, André Perraudin does not come across as a politically-obsessed man in his private correspondence. On the contrary, he appears as a cautious Catholic churchman, concerned with developing the Catholic Church's pastoral capacity, maintaining internal unity, and resisting secularization.

²⁷⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°720666, G. Mosmans, "L'avenir politique du Ruanda-Urundi," 21 Sept. 1958.

²⁷⁷ See here Josias Semujanga, *Origins of Rwandan Genocide* (Amherst: NY: Humanity, 2003), 78-81.

Another complicating factor is the extent to which ethnic discourse developed in two directions. As we have seen in the “Great Servants of the Court” letter, the early discourse of UNAR, and the general attitudes of the Tutsi-dominated Superior Council, ethnicist attitudes were not limited to Hutu elites. If post-genocide writers look to the 1950s for the roots of “Hutu power,” earlier commentators like Ian Linden, Catherine Newbury and René Lemarchand saw the Tutsi as the first Rwandan group to develop ethnic consciousness.²⁷⁸ There is truth in both accounts. For example, Mwami Mutara’s failure to countenance any of the proposed Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission reforms further alienated Hutu leaders and emboldened radicals on both sides. On the other hand, Hutu leaders’ egalitarian and ethnic discourse undermined the hierarchical social bonds on which traditional Rwandan society rested and further hardened formerly fluid ethnic lines. The key for our narrative, however, is that it may have been impossible for Perraudin and Bigirumwami to wholly extricate themselves from ethnic politics in the late 1950s. To say nothing would have maintained Léon Classe’s concordat between the missionary church and Rwanda’s customary authorities, thus endorsing the conservative Tutsi position.²⁷⁹ As it is, Perraudin’s attempts to speak out on Rwandan social injustice were invariably construed by his opponents as pro-

²⁷⁸ In Anglophone literature, Mamdani and Gourevitch are representative of such post-genocide commentary. In contrast, Linden writes that “Tutsi intransigence and (their) egregious sense of historical superiority attracted waverers and forced on the Hutu a militant ethnic consciousness” (Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 227). Newbury concurs, writing that “for Rwanda it would be more accurate to argue that Tutsi chiefs, through their use and abuse of power, created Hutu consciousness. It is in this sense that the analysis concerns the ‘cohesion of oppression.’” (cf. Catherine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda 1860-1960* (New York: Columbia, 1988): 209).

²⁷⁹ This in fact happened in neighboring Burundi, where Catholic authorities stood in pusillanimous silence as the Tutsi-dominated military massacred 200,000 Hutu in 1972. Cf. Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 200-02. The most thorough recent study of the 1972 genocide is likely Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *Burundi 1972: Au bord des génocides* (Paris: Karthala, 2007).

Hutu propaganda. In turn, this quandary reveals the complexity of “the church” or Catholic politics in the late 1950s. Kayibanda, Munyangaju, and Bicamumpaka had their clerical supporters, but then so did Mwami Mutara, Michel Kayihura, and Prosper Bwanakweri. Furthermore, all of these individuals were part of “the church,” and we should be careful about turning them into lay puppets for missionary puppeteers. As Paul Rutayisire has said, the violence of 1959 arose as much through the agency of Rwandan *évolués* as through their supposed missionary masters. “Two very small groups of candidates for power opposed themselves through third-party popular masses.”²⁸⁰

And yet it may be more difficult to defend Perraudin against the accusation that he further hardened ethnic discourse and helped lay the rhetorical groundwork for the Rwandan revolution. His invoking of Hutu-Tutsi language in the post-1956 period seems incongruous after he barely mentioned the distinction in his years at Nyakibanda. Most of all, Perraudin’s *Letter on Charity* exacerbated the zero-sum nature of ethnic discourse by describing Hutu and Tutsi as biologically-distinct racial groups. Perraudin’s Manichean ethnic vision remained in his memoirs. “Similarly if the Hutu population had enough to eat (and was) protected by the Tutsi patron, (the Hutu) was considered as inferior, a workhorse to do his master’s bidding...living in very humiliating dependence on his patron, ultimately neither free nor independent.”²⁸¹ The rise of the middle class and the fact that Hutu incomes had nearly reached Tutsi levels in the 1950s are strangely missing from Perraudin’s analysis. If it ever held true, the stereotypical notion of the wealthy Tutsi cattleholder and poor Hutu

²⁸⁰ Paul Rutayisire, “Les mythes fondateurs de ‘la Révolution Rwandaise’ de 1959 »; *Cahiers Lumière et Société* 16 (Dec. 1999) : 54.

²⁸¹ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 194-95.

subsistence farmer no longer applied in the late 1950s. In this sense, Perraudin erred grievously in framing social justice questions in exclusively ethnic terms, omitting the nuances of Rwanda's social groupings. In the 1958 words of one anonymous Hutu contributor to *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*,

The majority of high dignitaries respond to certain bodily characteristics which immediately classify them among the Tutsi...yet we know well that the problem is more social than racial. It is not because they have other characteristics that Bahutu and Batutsi are posing a problem: it is because one has in practice...the power and that the others do not have it. If one says "Batutsi-Bahutu," the problem takes a racial cast, and it is too easy then to remark that many are poor and miserable Tutsi and that there are rich and fat Bahutu who are very successful in their affairs.²⁸²

More than anything, the late 1950s reminds us that the Rwandan revolution – like all revolutions – was first and foremost a revolution of ideas. Post-war support for free markets, democracy, and social egalitarianism shifted attitudes on Rwandan society; the natural social hierarchy celebrated by the White Fathers in the 1920s and 1930s became anachronistic feudalism by the 1950s. Missionary commentators from Dominic Nothomb to André Perraudin claimed that the church did not create the Hutu-Tutsi problem but merely made people aware of it. The question is whether any objective problem can be distinguished from people's subjective views of it; Hutu-Tutsi social divisions were not inherently problematic until Christian egalitarianism led Hutu to question traditional social hierarchies. In a sense, then, one could argue that Catholic human rights discourse did in fact divide Rwanda by raising the peasant's consciousness of his own relative deprivation. Jan Adriaenssens argued as much in a 1960 political analysis of Rwanda, noting that the development of Catholic

²⁸² « Le féodalité n'est pas éternelle, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (12 October 1958): 3. On Hutu-Tutsi financial levels, see J.P. Chrétien, *Great Lakes of Africa*, 299

education and evangelization opened Hutu eyes to the injustices they were suffering.²⁸³

“Raised Hutu consciousness” was repeatedly named as a precipitating cause of the November violence in Rwanda.²⁸⁴ Even Perraudin conceded this point, writing in 1962 that “the revolution has not been only political; it is above all psychological and social. The masses have become conscious of their rights as human persons and will no longer accept...the return to a regime which suppressed them.”²⁸⁵ Nor can it be denied that Catholic media played a central role in this conscientizing process. For example, whereas *Temps Nouveaux*’s articles in 1956 and 1957 generally steered clear of the ethnic question and avoided directly critiquing Rwanda’s Tutsi authorities, the newspaper’s tone changed markedly in the spring of 1958 under the influence of the Hutu journalist Aloys Munyangaju. By mid-1958, the newspaper was publishing lead articles which openly questioned Rwanda’s political institutions.²⁸⁶

²⁸³ Jan Adriaenssens, *La situation politique et sociale du Ruanda*, 30 May 1960, 2. I consulted a copy of this important document in the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome.

²⁸⁴ Cf. “Graves Incidents au Ruanda,” *Courrier d’Afrique*, 9 Nov. 1959, in which the violence is seen as originating in the sudden rise of political consciousness among the Hutu “after centuries of servitude under the Tutsi.” (C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/08_Courrier_d_Afrique_-_09.11.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011)). Similarly, the Belgian U.N. representative Clays-Bouuaert attributed the violence to ethno-social tensions between Hutu and Tutsi, tensions which originated in raised Hutu consciousness which could be traced to the spread of Christianity with its “diffusal of the principles of fundamental equality between all men.” (“La situation reste grave au Ruanda,” *Courrier d’Afrique*, 10-11 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/09_Courrier_d_Afrique_-_10.11.1959.pdf (accessed 10 Feb. 2011).) Explaining why many Hutu continued to support traditionalist parties like UNAR, Hutu leaders tended to attribute this to a lack of awareness, arguing that Hutu leaders would win elections wherever they had “crystallized the Hutu conscience” (“Les Leaders Bahutu de R-U précisent leurs craintes de voir se renforcer la féodalité et la discrimination raciale,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 8 Nov. 1959).

²⁸⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°738265, André Perraudin, “Note rectificative á propos d’un document de Monseigneur Gasore,” 18 May 1962.

²⁸⁶ “Le Conseil Général du Ruanda-Urundi : Un Conseil Représentatif de Quoi ? » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (15 June 1958) : 1 ; « Le dernier Conseil Supérieur du Rwanda : Lamentables débats, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (6 July 1958) : 5.

Rwandan Catholic leaders suffered from other shortcomings in the late 1950s. First, the church could not reach consensus on the primary social division of the day – the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction. No matter Perraudin's or Bigirumwami's exhortations to unity and consensus, then, church leaders split on the root cause of rising political tensions in the late 1950s. For Perraudin, Rwanda's social problems stemmed from the economic and political marginalization of the Hutu majority in a Tutsi-dominated state. For Bigirumwami, the blame lay with propagandists introducing ethnic discord into a previously united Rwandan society. Because of this fundamental analytical division, the church failed to present a united front in the face of rising political polemics.

Second, the church's triumphal ecclesiology prevented leaders from taking responsibility for their own shortcomings. As noted above, Perraudin's "Letter on Charity" included no commentary on how Catholic missionaries had helped foment ethnic division in Rwanda by favoring Tutsi in administrative positions and colonial schools. No one in the late 1950s (or even in Perraudin's memoirs) apologized for Leon Classe's role in the illegal *coup d'état* against Mwami Musinga in 1931. If anything, Perraudin in the late 1950s was trying to leave the past behind rather than grapple with its incontrovertible legacies.

Third, Catholic leaders failed to consider how the church could embody a distinct alternative to electoral party politics. The Catholic Church had remarkable political and social capital in the late 1950s, and it was the only social institution that encompassed both Hutu and Tutsi elites. But rather than envision how Catholic sacramental practices like the Eucharist could themselves challenge the imaginative world of ethnicity or nation-state,

Catholic leaders saw politics as a wholly non-ecclesial matter.²⁸⁷ In this vein, Perraudin vacillated between defending the church's right to offer moral guidance on social or racial questions and insisting that the church had no explicitly political mission. And yet, to echo Ian Linden, "what politics are not about social or racial issues?"²⁸⁸ Reducing themselves to moral and social lobbyists, Catholic leaders were both overly ambitious and not ambitious enough – overly ambitious in thinking they could Christianize the democratization process in Rwanda; not ambitious enough in failing to consider what a non-statist Catholic politics would look like. In this sense, one regrets the failure of Catholic leaders to initiate alternative social movements like Martin Luther King's civil rights movement or Desmond Tutu's nonviolent resistance to apartheid.²⁸⁹ In turn, Perraudin's conflicted rhetoric on the church's political role – trying to influence politics while still claiming a ground above politics – left the church looking simultaneously hypocritical and impotent. Lacking a social identity as Christians, Rwandan elites identified first and foremost as Hutu or Tutsi, anti-colonial or pro-Belgian, monarchist or republican.²⁹⁰ Writing in the spring of 1959, Bigirumwami sensed the church's failure to establish its own independent political voice. "As for me, I have apprehensions for the direction given to our country. [Media] propaganda wants to destroy all

²⁸⁷ See here Cavanaugh, *Torture and Eucharist*, 205-81. Cavanaugh combines a close historical reading of Chilean Catholicism under Pinochet with a Eucharistic ecclesiological vision, emphasizing how Catholic practices of excommunication, the holistic ministries of COPACHI (Committee of Cooperation for Peace in Chile), and the Sebastian Acevedo Movement against Torture helped to "build a visible social body capable of resisting the state's strategy of disappearance" (251).

²⁸⁸ Linden, *Church and Revolution*, 278.

²⁸⁹ On the civil rights movement as a nonviolent, grassroots Christian alternative to state politics, see Charles Marsh, *The Beloved Community: How Faith Shapes Social Justice from the Civil Rights Era to Today* (New York: Basic, 2004). On Tutu's vision, see Desmond Tutu, *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999).

²⁹⁰ Cavanaugh's *Torture and Eucharist* demonstrates a similar dynamic in a post-Vatican II Chilean church whose rush to relevancy sacrificed its ability to offer a viable communal alternative to Pinochet's regime.

which is Tutsi but does not say what the Hutu party should become. I myself imagine that we are indisposing thousands of our sheep by our not neutral politics. We should be making a Catholic and apostolic and peaceful politics.”²⁹¹ Dismissed as a traditionalist by many missionaries and ignored by more radical Tutsi clergy, Bigirumwami’s voice remained a lonely one. By the early 1960s, he would be writing for the archives rather than for contemporary public opinion. In hindsight, his words seem prophetic, reminding us that while the church cannot avoid politics, Christian politics should look very different than the politics of Parmehutu, UNAR, or the partisan politics of any day and age.

As we will discover in chapter four, these three shortcomings – analytical divergence, triumphalist ecclesiology, and the failure to explore an alternative political imagination – would leave the Rwandan Catholic Church deeply divided, dangerously unrepentant, and ultimately impotent in the face of the violence which swept Rwandan society between 1959 and 1962.

²⁹¹ A.D.K., Bigirumwami to [Anon.], 16 March 1959. Emphases are from the original text.

Ch. 4: “A country where nothing ever changed now changes every day”: Catholic politics in Rwanda, 1959-1962¹

The years 1959-62 marked a profound rupture in Rwanda's long history as a unified state. In less than three years, the state shifted from a traditional monarchical system to a democratic republic and from a Tutsi-dominated oligarchy to a Hutu-dominated one-party state. The bloodshed, ethnic cleansing, and mass refugee movements profoundly destabilized Rwandan society and established the zero-sum ethnic logic that reaped such a terrible harvest in the post-colonial period, culminating with civil war and genocide in the early 1990s.

Recent commentators such as Mahmood Mamdani and Philip Gourevitch have recognized the ideological significance of the revolutionary period for shaping post-colonial consciousness in Rwanda.² Older studies by Filip Reyntjens, Donat Murego, and René Lemarchand offered detailed historical studies of the 1959-1962 period.³ In addition, Ian Linden, Justin Kalibwami, Tharcisse Gatwa and most recently Timothy Longman have mentioned the Hutu social revolution in their surveys of Christian history in Rwanda.⁴ Largely missing in the historical literature, however, is sustained attention to the Catholic

¹ The quotation is taken from a Rwandan missionary writing in late 1960 (cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°739465, Van Overschelde to Volker, 4 Nov. 1960).

² Cf. Phillip Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow We Will Be Killed with Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1998); Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

³ Cf. René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Anchor, 1970); Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda: Droit publique et évolution politique, 1916-1973* (Tervuren, Belgium: Musée royale de l'Afrique centrale, 1985); Donat Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise 1959-1962* (Louvain : Institut des Sciences Politiques et Sociales, 1975).

⁴ Ian Linden (with Jane Linden), *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester : University of Manchester Press, 1977), Justin Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme et le société Rwandaise 1900-1962* (Paris : Présence africaine, 1991) ; Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises, 1900-1994* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2005); Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

hierarchy's public and private reactions to Rwanda's political upheavals of 1959-1962 or the effect of Rwanda's social revolution on the Catholic Church's internal life, particularly in the areas of intra-clerical relations and seminary life. This chapter looks to fill in these lacunae, drawing from pastoral statements, diocesan newspapers, and personal correspondence found in the online *Centre d'Information et d'Étude sur le Rwanda (C.I.E.R.)*, the Missionaries of Africa archives in Rome, and the Diocese of Kabgayi archives in Rwanda.¹

Continuing the chronological approach of previous chapters, the chapter begins with the November 1959 Hutu uprisings.² Here I analyze the complex and contested history of the first two weeks of November 1959, highlighting the political dimensions of the violence and noting the complicity of both Tutsi and Hutu partisans. I also argue that it was the subsequent Belgian reaction – specifically the military resident Col. Guy Logiest's decision to install hundreds of Hutu as interim chiefs – that ensured the long-term political ramifications of the Hutu *jacquerie*. I then consider Mwami Kigeli's fallout with Belgian authorities over the Belgian response to the November uprisings, the growing polarization of Rwanda's political

¹ I am grateful to the Missionaries of Africa in Rome for granting me access to archival material through 1962, especially as I am one of the first researchers to consult this material. I also thank the Diocese of Kabgayi for sharing a wide range of newspapers and correspondence with me. The Rwandan priest Venuste Lingunyanza should be credited for launching the C.I.E.R. website. This makes available an important range of critical documents (including nearly all of Bigirumwami's and Perraudin's pastoral letters) to researchers studying the late colonial and revolutionary periods in Rwanda.

² As with most areas of Rwandan history, intense debate surrounds the terminology one should use to describe the events of November 1959. Prior to the 1994 genocide, Hutu historians and most Western commentators described this as the "Hutu social revolution" (Donat Murego's *La Révolution Rwandaise* (1975) is representative here). After the genocide, historians – and particularly Rwandan commentators – largely rejected the label of "revolution," arguing that such terminology implied a "homogeneity and political consciousness" that did not in fact exist (Cf. Paul Rutayisire, "Les mythes fondateurs de 'la Révolution' Rwandaise de 1959 » *Cahiers Lumière Et Société* 16 (Dec. 1999): 45; Déogratias Byanafashe, *Les Défis de l'Historiographie rwandaise : Le Rwanda précolonial* (Butare : Editions de l'Université Nationale du Rwanda : 2004) : 9-10). I will describe the November 1959 events in terms of "uprising," "*jacquerie*," and "government-ordered assassinations," but I will also utilize revolutionary language. Here I follow Filip Reyntjens in seeing the November events as precipitating a "transformation of the political order" which replaced a Tutsi-dominated monarchy with a Hutu-dominated republic in less than three years (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 233-34).

parties in early 1960, and the reasons why Gregoire Kayibanda's Parmehutu party came to dominate Rwandan politics by 1961. I also analyze how and why ethnic and political violence became entrenched in Rwandan society during 1961 and 1962.

While grounding this narrative in Rwanda's better-known political history, my goal in this chapter is to explain the Catholic Church's complex history during a period of rising political polemics. For example, Catholic parishes served as places of refuge during the 1959 violence (in contrast to the 1994 genocide when more people died in churches than anywhere else).³ At the same time, Catholic missionary leaders increasingly demonized the leaders of the Tutsi exile community and acquiesced in the rise of Parmehutu's one-party rule. And while Catholic leaders continued to speak of the virtues of ecclesial unity, their priests and seminarians divided more and more on ethnic and political grounds, particularly after the White Fathers embarked on an unprecedented Hutu affirmative action program in both the seminary and the episcopacy. In addition, Rwanda's ecclesial instability further strained relations between the White Fathers and the Vatican, as the Holy See sympathized more with Bigirumwami and Rwanda's Tutsi-dominated clergy than Perraudin and the White Fathers.⁴

At the same time, the Rwandan church underwent extraordinary pastoral changes during this three-year period – shifting from mission territories to local churches in November 1959, adding two new dioceses in 1961-62, and preparing for the Second Vatican Council which opened in October 1962. Several new indigenous church leaders emerged on

³ Many Tutsi took refuge in churches in 1994 thinking that they would again serve as places of asylum as they had in 1959 and 1973 (African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair, Defiance* (London: African Rights, 1994): 485-88).

⁴ One of the shortcomings of this thesis is the lack of access to Vatican documents – *Propaganda Fide* archival sources will not be released for another 25 years. I therefore have to interpret Vatican reactions largely through the writings of the White Fathers and Bigirumwami.

the scene, including Bernard Manyurane, Rwanda's first Hutu bishop who died suddenly and suspiciously in May 1961; his successor Joseph Sibomana, a Hutu priest known for his political moderation; and Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, the Tutsi brother of the UNAR leader Michel Kayihura, close confidant of André Perraudin, and first bishop of Butare in southern Rwanda.

More than these emerging church leaders, however, I continue to focus on the two churchmen who led the Rwandan Catholics through the 1950s – Archbishop André Perraudin of Kabgayi and Bishop Aloys Bigirumwami of Nyundo. I do this in part because Perraudin and especially Bigirumwami are largely ignored in the secondary literature on Rwanda. In many ways scholars have been too enamored with the legacy of Mgr. Léon Classe, ignoring the extent to which Perraudin's contrasting political emphases on social justice, democracy, and Hutu rights shaped the contours of post-colonial Rwandan politics.⁵ In turn, Bigirumwami reminds us of the complexity of Catholic politics at the time of independence and challenges the scholarly tendency to conflate the terms “church” and “missionaries.” Whether one celebrates or denigrates Catholic mission history, it was never just a story about missionaries.

In my presentation of Bigirumwami, Perraudin, and Catholic politics during the Rwandan revolution, I make four primary arguments. First, the caricatures of Bigirumwami

⁵ Timothy Longman's 2010 *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* is a case in point. While offering the most thorough English-language study of the intersection of Christianity, politics, and ethnicity since Ian Linden's *Church and Revolution in Rwanda*, Longman attributes the paradigm of 20th-century Catholic politics almost exclusively to Classe's efforts to ally the church with political elites. He does not mention Bigirumwami and gives short shrift to Perraudin, failing to even mention Perraudin's 1959 *Letter on Charity*. This may stem in part from Longman's desire to oppose “a conservative, hierarchical, bigoted version of Christianity” with his preferred ecclesial politics of grassroots democracy (304). With his pro-democracy, pro-social justice, and pro-Hutu worldview, Perraudin problematizes such a binary narrative.

as a conservative traditionalist and Perraudin as a Machiavellian revolutionary do not do justice to their ecclesial visions.⁶ Both supported the political ends of democracy and social justice, rejected violence, opposed clerical involvement in secular politics, and shared a Pauline vision of the church as a unified Body of Christ. Second, while their prescriptive visions of Catholic politics were similar, they differed markedly in how they applied these principles to the Rwandan context. While Perraudin saw a need for immediate political change, Bigirumwami envisioned a more gradual transfer of power that would leave in place many of Rwanda's traditional institutions. This analytical difference also helps explain Bigirumwami's continuing critiques of the Catholic newspapers *Kinyamateka* and *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*. Third, the two bishops continued to disagree over the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction and the extent to which social justice and democracy could be mapped on a Hutu-Tutsi axis. Since the Hutu-Tutsi question came to dominate every aspect of Rwandan life during the revolutionary years, this analytical divergence in turn undermined their cherished goal of clerical unity. Finally, in his efforts to defend himself and what he perceived to be the Catholic Church's institutional interests, Perraudin and his missionary colleagues established the framework of church politics in the post-colonial period: 1) a pro-Hutu analytical partisanship that underplayed the risks of conflating democracy, social justice, and ethnicity, 2) an ideological paranoia about the Tutsi exile community which tended to tolerate (if not condone) ethnic violence, and 3) a close collaboration with the state

⁶ Perraudin is still viewed this way among many former exiles, as multiple conversations in Rwanda revealed in 2010. If Perraudin's reputation has declined since 1994, Bigirumwami has undergone an ecclesial rehabilitation. For example, Rwandan Catholic leaders used the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Rwandan revolution and the institution of the local hierarchy to issue a special tribute to Bigirumwami (*Hommage à Mgr. Bigirumwami: Premier Evêque Rwandais* (Kigali: Editions du Secrétariat général de la C.E.P.R., 2009).

which protected the church's institutional interests but undermined the church's ability to offer a counter-narrative to the state.

As a Tutsi bishop who witnessed tremendous suffering in northwestern Rwanda, Bigirumwami offers what in hindsight appears as a lonely prophetic voice. While never renouncing social justice and democratization, Bigirumwami recognized the darker side of these movements – namely, the violent persecution of the minority Tutsi on the grounds of their alleged social intransigence, authoritarian elitism, communist ties, and opposition to the Catholic Church. More than Perraudin and the White Fathers, Bigirumwami recognized the mortal danger of ethnicism and argued that the church's ultimate political enemy was not a political end like feudalism, communism, or monarchy but rather the means of political violence. Bigirumwami also offered a more self-critical ecclesial voice, questioning Rwanda's Christian identity and wondering why so many Christians had abandoned what he termed the "politics of Jesus" for the politics of Parmehutu and UNAR. In summary, Bigirumwami reveals the ecclesiological promise of the persecuted church – a church that can speak truth to power, identify with the victims, and strive towards an alternative Christian political imagination that transcends the limitations of ethnic and national identity.

A. From *jacquerie* to *coup d'état*: The November 1959 revolution and its political aftermath

The violence which erupted during the first week of November 1959 had been anticipated for some weeks.⁷ Political tensions had risen precipitously in preparation for

⁷ The most comprehensive and balanced international account of the November violence comes from the U.N. Visiting Mission's June 1960 report, although the Belgian Commission of Inquiry report from January 1960

Belgium's November 1959 response to the Belgian Working Group document as well as communal elections anticipated for January 1960. As discussed in chapter three, precipitating incidents included the fiery UNAR and Aprosoma speeches and manifestoes of August-September 1959 and the Twa attack on Aprosoma leader Joseph Gitera on September 20. Anticipating further disturbances, the Belgian governor, Jean-Paul Harroy, banned political meetings in October and reassigned three chiefs who served in UNAR leadership. Despite this, the three deposed chiefs – Michel Kayihura of Bugoyi, Pierre Mungalurire of Kigali, and Christian Rwangombwa of Byumba – rallied thousands of mostly Hutu supporters and refused to leave their territories.⁸ During one mass protest in Kigali on October 17, the Belgians shot and killed three protestors, further exacerbating an already-tense situation. On October 25, anonymous pamphlets calling for the death of “all traitors of Rwanda and their chief, Mgr. Perraudin” appeared on trees across southern and central Rwanda.⁹ Meanwhile rumors circulated that Belgium's long-anticipated response to the September Belgium Working Group report would signal an imminent withdrawal from the country, transforming

should also be consulted (cf. “Report of the United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1960, on Ruanda-Urundi (T/1538),” 14 April to 30 June 1960, 72 pp. (consulted in Missionaries of Africa archives as A.G.M.Afr.N°720669); “Rapport de la commission d'enquête au Ruanda, 7-17 Jan. 1960,” 26 Feb. 1960, 72 pp. The heart of this document is transcribed in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique 1958-1960* (Brussels: Centre de Recherche et d'Information Sociopolitique (CRISP), 1962), 148-56). On the Catholic side, Alphonse van Hoof's November 1959 article in the White Fathers journal *Petit Echo* offers a thorough overview of the November violence and the official Catholic response (A.G.M.Afr.N°727114-16). For colonial perspectives, see Jean-Paul Harroy, *Rwanda : Souvenirs d'un Compagnon de la marche du Rwanda vers la démocratie et l'indépendance* (Brussels : Hayez, 1984, 301-12 ; Guy Logiest, *Mission au Rwanda : Un blanc dans le bagarre Tutsi-Hutu* (Brussels : Didier Hatier, 1988), 43-50.

⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°727106, Van Hoof to Volker, 13 Nov. 1959.

⁹ This « Déclaration des Ruandais authentiques » document is discussed in « Climat de terreur au Ruanda : ou les féodaux menacent de mort les progressistes, » *La Cité*, Nov. 7-8, 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/19_La_Cite_-_07_et_08.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

January 1960 communal elections into a possible gateway to independence. The political stakes in Rwanda had never been higher.¹⁰

Despite the anticipation, however, the scale and style of the November disturbances came as a surprise. First, the revolution largely took the form of an Hutu insurrection against local Tutsi. The pillaging, arson, and forced displacement of thousands of Tutsi families and hundreds of Tutsi chiefs broke from any precedents in Rwanda's history; this was in fact the first time in Rwandan history that Hutu attacked Tutsi *qua* Tutsi. In addition, the early days of November saw a concerted effort at counter-revolution instigated by Mwami Kigeli and other high authorities in Nyanza, resulting in the targeted assassination of nearly 20 Hutu political leaders and an aborted military campaign against Save hill, the home of Joseph Gitera's Aprosoma movement. In part due to rapid Belgian intervention, these incidents in central and southern Rwanda never turned into full-scale civil war. But because of the one-sided nature of its intervention, Belgium lost whatever reputation it retained as a neutral arbiter, precipitating a final break between the colonial power and Rwanda's customary authorities.

The spark which lit the early November revolution was the November 1 beating of Dominique Mbonyumutwa by nine partisans associated with UNAR's youth wing. One of only ten Hutu sub-chiefs in Rwanda, Mbonyumutwa also served in the leadership of Gregoire Kayibanda's Parmehutu party in the Gitarama region near Kabgayi. While grudgingly admired by the late Mwami Mutara, Mbonyumutwa had earned recent UNAR wrath through

¹⁰ U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 39.

his refusal to sign a protest letter over the transfer of the three chiefs.¹¹ Accosted as he left Mass on All Saints Day, Mbonyumutwa fought off his attackers and made it back to his home in Byimana. Perhaps at his own instigation, however, rumors of his death quickly spread. By Monday evening, November 2, a large group of Hutu had gathered outside the local Tutsi Chief Athanase Gashagaza's house in nearby Ndiza. While the crowd dispersed peacefully that night, an even larger group of 1,000 men returned the next day. A confrontation ensued, and by nightfall a Hutu mob proclaiming themselves for "God, the Church, and Rwanda" had killed two Tutsi notables and driven Gashagaza into the home of a sympathetic Hutu member of the Legion of Mary. The mob thus accomplished by force what Mbonyumutwa had intended to do at the ballot box – replace Gashagaza as chief in the forthcoming communal elections.¹²

Fires erupted across Ndiza district on November 3 and spread quickly to north-central and northwestern Rwanda.¹³ Hutu arsonists roamed the countryside in bands of ten, pillaging and burning Tutsi homes and driving thousands onto the grounds of local Catholic missions, into Belgian colonial posts, and across Rwanda's border into Uganda and Congo. The destruction spread to central and eventually southern Rwanda by the end of the week, affecting eight of Rwanda's ten territories.¹⁴ While Belgian troops intervened to arrest some

¹¹ Cf. RADER, « La voie de la paix au Ruanda, 15 Nov. 1959, » in F. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 134 ; Nkundabagenzi, "La guerre civile de Novembre 1959," in *Rwanda Politique*, 141-42. Kalibwami notes that Mwami Mutara had respected Mbonyumutwa for his administrative abilities but feared that the Hutu sub-chief had acquired the "ideas of Gitera" (Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 480).

¹² A.G.M.Afr.N°727119, Van Hoof to Volker, 21 Nov. 1959; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 480.

¹³ Linden notes that Ndiza had been the center of the monarchy's political repression after Ndungutse's 1912 uprising; local Hutu resentment of the imposed Tutsi chiefs ran deep (Linden, *Church and revolution*, 267).

¹⁴ « A propos des troubles, » *Civitas Mariae* 21 (Nov. 1959). In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php?id_article=33 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

arsonists, Harroy, Preud'homme and other local administrators claimed they lacked sufficient manpower to stop a popular insurrection that was literally spreading like wildfire.¹⁵ As Belgium called in *Force Publique* reinforcements from Congo, Mwami Kigeli on November 5 appealed to Harroy and Preud'homme to allow him to utilize his own militia to restore order in the country. Preud'homme refused, fearing the outbreak of a wider civil war and allegedly claiming that he “didn't give a damn” about the violence sweeping the country.¹⁶ If accurate, such sentiments must have been challenged by the subsequent mob which surrounded Harroy and Preud'homme as they tried to leave the Mwami's residence on November 5. Mwami Kigeli had to personally rescue the Belgian Governor and Resident and drive them to Kigali in his own vehicle.¹⁷

On November 7, Kigeli and other high-ranking customary chiefs initiated a more targeted counter-revolution aimed at decapitating the Hutu political movements. Comprised of Twa, Tutsi and sympathetic Hutu, these parties assassinated twenty suspected Aprosoma and Parmehutu political leaders, including the secretary-general of Aprosoma and the brother of Joseph Gitera. Hundreds more were arrested, and many were tortured. This counter-revolution culminated with a November 9-10 mobilization of thousands of militia to attack Save hill, Gitera's home and the locus of anti-UNAR feeling in southern Rwanda. Gitera in

¹⁵ Nkundabagenzi notes that the Force Publique in Rwanda grew from 4 divisions and 300 soldiers on Nov. 1 to 24 divisions with 1,800 soldiers on Nov. 11 (Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 142). Van Hoof described the early November Belgian presence in northern Rwanda as “a few Jeeps speeding along the road” (A.G.M.Afr.N°727115, Alphonse Van Hoof, *Petit Echo*, Nov. 1959).

¹⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°722008, U.N. Trusteeship Council, “Petition from the ‘Union Nationale Rwandaise’ concerning Rwanda-Urundi,” 11 Nov. 1959. Lemarchand notes that this Belgian decision to prevent Rwanda's authorities from organizing a counter-attack was itself one of its most consequential political decisions (Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 111).

¹⁷ U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 30.

turn began mobilizing thousands of his own militia to defend the hill. The militia's lack of coordination along with the rapid and timely intervention of Belgian soldiers prevented a bloodbath and marked the effective end of the counter-revolution.¹⁸

On November 8 Harroy placed Rwanda under military authority and imposed an overnight curfew. The next day Kigeli and Harroy issued a joint call for peace and civil obedience, airdropping 200,000 leaflets across Rwanda. Kigeli simultaneously released a second statement defending himself against accusations of partisanship and reiterating that "the Mwami is the Mwami of all. He cannot join one party and cannot favor one over the others." On November 11 Harroy declared a state of emergency in Rwanda and appointed Colonel B.E.M. "Guy" Logiest, a *Force Publique* officer serving in Congo, as military resident. Logiest was given wide latitude to restore order, from imposing curfews to establishing roadblocks to arresting suspected instigators of violence.¹⁹ After two weeks of arson, looting, forced displacement, and political assassinations, an uneasy calm descended on Rwanda by November 15.

How should one describe the November violence? While recent commentators have tagged these events as the first genocide in Rwanda's history, such descriptions seem polemical.²⁰ While a conclusive number remains elusive, the November death toll likely remained in the hundreds. The White Father Jan Adriaenssens estimated a death toll of 150,

¹⁸ Cf. "Discours de M. De Schrijver," 12 Nov. 1959, in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 146-47 ; "Rapport de la commission d'enquête au Ruanda," in *Rwanda Politique*, 152-55; 1960 *U.N. Visiting Mission Report*, 30-31 ; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 481.

¹⁹ « Graves Incidents au Ruanda, » *Courrier d'Afrique*, 9 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/08_Courrier_d_Afrique_-_09.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); Mwami Kigeli V, "Déclaration du Mwami Kigeli V à tous les Banyarwanda, » in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 105.

²⁰ Cf. Henri Bazot, "Ma vie de Missionnaire au Liban, au Rwanda, au Burundi, au Zaïre, en France » (2006), 13. I located this manuscript in the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome.

while the U.N. Visiting Mission noted the official death toll of 200 but argued that the actual figure was much higher due to rapid burials.²¹ In addition, most of these casualties stemmed from violent clashes between Hutu arsonists and ethnically-mixed local defense units.²² The November events were notable more for internal displacement and property damage than loss of life. Tens of thousands fled the country, over 8,000 homes were destroyed, and 7,000 Tutsi were internally displaced inside Rwanda.²³ In the words of the Hutu priest Bernard Manyurane, most Hutu “did not want to kill the Tutsi but only oblige them to leave.”²⁴

Underlying this apparent ethnic cleansing was an intensely political logic. We have already commented on the political campaign that shaped the violent incidents against both Dominique Mbonyumutwa and Athanase Gashagaza on November 1 and 2. One could also point to the words of an anonymous Belgian official on November 16 who described the past fortnight of violence as a dispute between rival political elites.

[Elites] learned that far-reaching reforms were soon to be carried out and that those reforms would mean another step towards self-determination. As of that moment, the parties and movements had begun to prepare for their future roles as interpreters of the people’s wishes in the more authoritative representative institutions, and they had come into a conflict. It was not simply a tribal conflict between the Tutsi and Hutu but a political and social struggle.²⁵

²¹ Even UNAR did not write of thousands of deaths in their early statements to the U.N.. In fact, their early protests were marked by a surprising absence of speculation on the number of deaths in the November uprisings (Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°722005-013, Kigali, 11 Nov 1959, UN Trusteeship Council, Petition from the “Union Nationale Rwandaise” concerning Ruanda-Urundi (T/PET 3/100, 8 Dec 1959); A.G.M.Afr. N°720672-75, UNAR in Exile to Harroy, 14 Nov 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°722015-17, UN Trusteeship Council, T/PET.3/102, 15 Jan. 1960; “Petition from Messrs. KS Ntauruhunga and BK Kavutse, on behalf of all Banyaruanda in Kigezi, Uganda, concerning Ruanda-Urundi,” 24 Nov. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°722040-51, UN Trusteeship Council T/PET.3/111, 11 Jan 1960).

²² A.G.M.Afr.N°720310, Jan Adriaenssens, *La situation politique et sociale du Ruanda*, 30 May 1960, 9; U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 31-32 ; “Rapport de la commission d’enquête au Ruanda, » 151-52.

²³ Harroy, *Rwanda: Souvenirs d’un compagnon*, 322-24.

²⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°741102, Manyurane to Parents, 8 Dec. 1959.

²⁵ Quoted in A.G.M.Afr.N°722023-24, United Nations T/L 955, “Conditions in the Trust-Territory of Ruanda-Urundi,” 19 Jan. 1960.

The uprising also showed the complexity of political allegiance in late 1959, as many of the arsonists claimed to be acting at the behest of the Mwami who was rumored to be imprisoned by a cabal of Tutsi chiefs. When Mwami Kigeli toured Rwanda in late 1959 and early 1960, numerous peasants requested salaries for the services they had performed on his behalf.²⁶

It was not the riots themselves but the subsequent Belgian reaction that ensured the November events would go down in history as the “Hutu Social Revolution.” This reaction was largely shaped by Logiest, the military resident. A devout Catholic and committed social democrat, Logiest saw oppressed Hutu peasants finally asserting their rights over and against Tutsi feudalists.²⁷ Rather than restore the hundreds of exiled or displaced Tutsi chiefs and sub-chiefs to their offices, Logiest unilaterally replaced them with Hutu teachers, businessmen, merchants, and catechists. Between early November and late December 1959, 158 of Rwanda’s 489 *sous-chefferies* 23 of its 45 *chefferies* changed hands. In fairness to Logiest, the top tiers of Rwanda’s pre-revolutionary political structures were heavily tilted towards the Tutsi. For example, in mid-1959 43 of Rwanda’s 45 chiefs were Tutsi, as were 549 of its 559 sub-chiefs. Nor was this the first time that Belgium intervened in local politics. The Belgian Administration removed 152 sub-chiefs from office between 1955 and 1957, although the Mwami had always retained the sole right to appoint new sub-chiefs and chiefs.²⁸

²⁶ Cf. “Rapport de la commission d’enquête au Ruanda, Jan. 7-17 1960,” in *Rwanda Politique*, 150; A.G.M.Afr.N°727107, Van Hoof to Volker, 13 Nov. 1959; *1960 U.N. Visiting Mission Report*, 28.

²⁷ For Logiest’s own retrospective and strongly pro-Hutu account of this period, see Guy Logiest, *Mission au Rwanda*. By his own confession, Logiest had only read one book on Rwanda prior to his arrival, Fr. Pages’ *Un royaume hamite au centre de l’Afrique*.

²⁸ Cf. Guy Logiest, « Communication N°3 du Résident Militaire du Ruanda, » 10 Dec. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/03_Communication_no3_du_Resident_militaire_du_Rwanda_-

If there was precedent for heavy-handed colonial intervention, Logiest broke new ground in his decision to make ethnicity the seemingly sole criterion for leadership. Logiest justified this on security grounds, arguing that placing Tutsi chiefs over restive Hutu populations would only lead to further violence and instability. Logiest also pointed to the “intermediary” nature of the new chiefs’ mandates, claiming that Hutu chiefs would have to prove themselves and could be voted out of office if they failed to satisfy popular expectations.²⁹ Whatever the authenticity of these protestations, the power of incumbency – and the fact that a vast majority of the new chiefs and sub-chiefs were Parmehutu members – went a long way towards turning Rwanda from a traditionalist monarchy into a Parmehutu-dominated republic.³⁰ Logiest admitted as much in retrospect, writing in his memoirs that “it was evident that this decision to eviscerate the Tutsi authorities had political consequences, but was this not the only means of ensuring that truly democratic elections could take place?”³¹

The Belgian government’s judicial proceedings furthered this trend. The military administration’s arrests targeted prominent UNAR chiefs and supporters; nearly all of those sentenced to death or long prison terms were UNAR members.³² At the same time, Parmehutu and Aprosona leaders remained unmolested despite suspicions that they had

10.12.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). See also U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 32-33 ; « Le bilan des événements, » in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 157 ; Rudipresse N°148, 19 Dec. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/49_Rudipresse_no148_-_19.12.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); A.G.M.Afr.N°721012, CRISP no. 51, 5 Feb. 1960; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 268-70; « Mr le Vice-gouverneur Général Harroy traite du problème hutu-tutsi, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (7 December 1958) : 3.

²⁹ C.I.E.R., Guy Logiest, « Communication N°3 du Résident Militaire du Ruanda, » 10 Dec. 1959. See also U.N. *Visiting Mission Report*, 32-33; Logiest, *Mission au Rwanda*, 59-60.

³⁰ In Reyntjens’ words, “the Hutu victory was only possible thanks to the installation of the intermediary authorities” (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 271).

³¹ Logiest, *Mission au Rwanda*, 60.

³² U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 31; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 262-63.

incited much of the anti-Tutsi violence. For example, Fr. De Renesse – Catholic Action leader, Kabgayi superior, and no fan of Tutsi traditionalists – wrote that Parmehutu leaders had utilized their Legion of Mary networks to initiate the November disturbances. “It is the legionary chiefs of Kabgayi (Gregoire Kayibanda and Calliope Mulindahabi, respectively president and secretary of the Committee of Kabgayi) who have triggered this entire revolt of the Bahutu which is bathing Rwanda in blood at the moment.” De Renesse noted that after he confronted Kayibanda and Mulindahabi with these charges, they reacted in an “unpredictable and uncontrollable” manner, implying the likelihood of “implacable racial fights for the future.”³³ Despite these suspicions, Kayibanda, Mulindahabi and other Hutu leaders were neither questioned nor disciplined, although the Belgian administration arrested hundreds of lower-level Hutu cadres. To be sure, many of Rwanda’s Tutsi chiefs were responsible for targeted assassinations, torture, and other heinous crimes. But Belgium’s decision to hold UNAR accountable while giving Parmehutu a free pass not only decapitated the internal UNAR movement but greatly strengthened the hand of its political rivals.

Adding to the atmosphere of political instability was the Belgian government’s November 10 announcement of a new long-term political framework for Rwanda and Burundi. In Belgium’s transitional plan, Rwanda’s traditional *chefferies* were reclassified as administrative bureaucracies, turning the chiefs into “functionaries without a political mandate” – in other words, bureaucrats without any political authority. In shifting the locus of political power from the *chefferie* to the local commune, Rwandan government underwent further decentralization, boosting the importance of local burgomasters and communal

³³ A.G.M.Afr.N°739452, De Renesse to Volker, 10 Nov. 1959.

councils. This in turn strengthened Parmehutu's hand since its political strength lay in Rwanda's hills rather than the corridors of power in Nyanza.³⁴ Finally, Mwami Mwambutsa of Burundi and Mwami Kigeli of Rwanda were classified as constitutional monarchs, further circumscribing their authority and opening a future path to elected executives.³⁵

Four other significant political decisions followed in December 1959. First, Harroy sent the long-time Belgian resident of Rwanda, André Preud'homme, into early retirement on December 5, replacing him with Logiest who assumed the new title of "special civil resident."³⁶ Harroy and Preud'homme had a longstanding rivalry, in part due to the latter's more cautious approach to political reform and more favorable attitude towards the Catholic missions.³⁷ In addition to eliminating a potential counter-weight to Logiest, Preud'homme's ouster precipitated the first tensions between the Belgian government and Preud'homme's Tutsi allies in the RADER party, furthering the perception that Belgium was reducing

³⁴ For historian Justin Kalibwami, this move initiated both centrifugal and centripetal political tendencies. *De facto* political power was redistributed more broadly from the *chefferie* to the commune level. At the same time, the number of communes was less than half the previous number of *sous-chefferies*, leading to more centralization of power at the local level (Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 486).

³⁵ Belgian Parliament, "Déclaration du gouvernement sur la Politique de la Belgique au Ruanda-Urundi," 10 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/11_Declaration_du_gouvernement_sur_la_politique_de_la_Belgique_au_Ruanda-Urundi_-_10.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

³⁶ "Communiqué spécial de Rudipresse," Administration Supérieure du Ruanda, 5 Dec. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/48_Rudipresse_-_communiqu%C3%A9_sp%C3%A9cial_-_5.12.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

³⁷ The superior of Kigali, Fr. Bourgois, wrote of his fears that the liberal Harroy would gain more influence in Rwanda with Preud'homme removed from the scene, encouraging the "very anticlerical tendencies coming from Usumbura to the detriment of the country" (Bourgois to Mosmans, 8 Dec. 1959, http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/33_Lettre_du_Pere_Bourgois_-_08.12.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). For all of the later accusations of an unholy alliance between Perraudin and Harroy, it should be noted that Perraudin initially dismissed Harroy as a liberal free-mason and predicted that the Catholic people would reject his ideas and ensure that their faith did not become a "religion of the sacristy" (C.M.L., Perraudin to Sillion, 16 Feb. 1955).

Rwandan politics to a binary Hutu-Tutsi conflict.³⁸ Second, the Belgian government announced that a new eight-member Special Provisional Council would replace the Superior Council as Rwanda's highest legislative body. Comprised of two members of each of Rwanda's four major political parties, the committee was supposed to embody a government of national unity. But since six of the eight members were hostile to the Mwami and Rwanda's customary authorities, it also represented a seismic shift in national leadership.³⁹ Third, Belgium on Christmas Day issued a new interim decree on the political organization of Rwanda and Burundi, giving the Resident-General the legal right to depose the Mwami and veto any of his decisions.⁴⁰ Finally, Belgium announced in December that it was delaying the January 1960 elections until June 1960. This gave Parmehutu further time to consolidate its recent gains and expand its already considerable networks of supporters across Rwanda's hills.

B. Catholic reactions to the November 1959 Hutu uprisings

If November 1959 marked a turning point in Rwandan political history, it also marked a historic month for the Catholic Church in Rwanda. On November 10, the Holy See issued the apostolic constitution *Cum parvulum sinapsis* which transformed the Rwandan vicariates of Kabgayi and Nyundo into local dioceses. No longer vicars apostolic ruling

³⁸ Some had accused Preud'homme of actually starting RADER in his Kigali office. If so, he would have appreciated RADER's official protest of his early removal. ("Ruanda," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 13 Dec. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/59_Temps_nouveaux_d_Afrique_-_13.12.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

³⁹ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 271-72.

⁴⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°722052-067, UN Trusteeship Council, "Conditions in the Trust Territory of Ruanda-Urundi – Interim decree of 25 Dec. 1959 on the political organization of Ruanda-Urundi," 25 Dec. 1959. See also Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 275.

mission territories, Perraudin and Bigirumwami had become the Archbishop of Kabgayi and Bishop of Nyundo, respectively. Significantly, Nyundo was classified as a “suffragette diocese” of Kabgayi, making Perraudin and not Bigirumwami the unofficial primate of the Rwandan church.⁴¹

The ethnic violence which erupted during the first week of November overshadowed this momentous ecclesial event, however. Meeting together in Nyakibanda for the annual seminary review, Bigirumwami and Perraudin strove to maintain public unity in a joint pastoral letter issued on November 6. Addressing themselves to “dear Christians of Rwanda” with “much pain in our hearts,” they condemned the atmosphere of “mutual fear, hate and vengeance” existing “between Banyarwanda.” (Significantly, the language of “Hutu” and “Tutsi” language did not appear in this statement). Calling for Christians to live more fully the Pauline vision of the church as a single united body, Perraudin and Bigirumwami appealed to civil authorities and political leaders to hold a “frank and fraternal” conversation on the social and political problems which sparked the violence. The statement was notable for its categorical denunciation of violence. “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ of whom we are representatives on earth, we say to you that all of this is not Christian and we deplore it and condemn it absolutely.”⁴²

Even beyond this joint pastoral letter, Perraudin seemed genuinely shaken by the violence that swept Rwanda in early November. In a November 8 letter to the White Fathers’

⁴¹ “Institution de la hiérarchie au Congo-Belge et au R-U, » *Trait d’Union* 4 (May 1960): 90-99.

⁴² “Message de leurs excellences Monseigneurs Bigirumwami and Perraudin aux chrétiens du Ruanda,” 6 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=30 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). Unfortunately, this public display of episcopal unity would be the last until *Vérité, Justice, Charité*, the regional bishops’ pastoral letter of October 1960.

General House in Rome, he described Rwanda's "civil war" as "tragic," writing of an atmosphere "heavy with hate and vengeance" and noting the concentration of violence in northern and central Rwanda.⁴³ Four days later, he distanced the church from Logiest's military government, recalling Abbé Stanislas Bushayija from his role as a spiritual counselor to Mwami Kigeli on Rwanda's Superior Council (CSP). Perraudin explained that "in the current circumstances the place of a priest is not on a Council operating under a military government."⁴⁴ In a subsequent November 21 circular on the crisis, Perraudin struck some unusually critical notes, bemoaning what he named the "superficiality" of Rwandan Christianity, calling for a day of reparation for "the very grave sins" committed against justice and charity, and reminding his readers that authentic politics must be "submitted to the law of God and consequently excludes methods of deception, calumnies, hate, menace, violence and dictatorship." Perraudin's pastoral actions in late November 1959 revealed a man preoccupied with the Tutsi refugee crisis which he described as "the urgent problem of the day."⁴⁵

For all of Perraudin's critiques of Rwanda's escalating political violence, however, others continued to perceive him as a pro-Hutu partisan. Some of the attacks were predictable. Already named by UNAR as one of the leading enemies of the Mwami in

⁴³ A.G.M.Afr.N°738097, Perraudin to Cauwe, 8 Nov. 1959. Ian Linden notes that this was "hardly the letter of a man pushing ruthlessly for a Catholic Hutu republic" (Linden, *Church and revolution*, 269).

⁴⁴ Perraudin to Logiest, 12 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/35_Lettre_Perraudin_a_Logiest_-_12_novembre_1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). Considering Bushayija's tensions with Mwami Kigeli's predecessor Mutara Rudahigwa, I am surprised that Bushayija was serving in this role in the first place.

⁴⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°727122, Van Hoof to Volker, 21 Nov. 1959; André Perraudin, "L'heure de la charité (Circ. N°23)," 21 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=32 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); "Note pour Mgr. Perraudin novembre 1959," in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/39_Note_pour_Mgr_Perraudin_-_novembre_1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); A.G.M.Afr.N°727120, Van Hoof to Volker, 5 Dec. 1959.

October 1959, Perraudin faced resurgent critiques from UNAR exiles in the early weeks of November 1959. The exiles alleged that Perraudin encouraged Joseph Gitera to start Aprosuma, harbored Hutu extremists, and conspired in the death of Mwami Mutara.⁴⁶ Nor were these menaces merely rhetorical. During the first days of the November crisis, UNAR supporters threatened Perraudin's Kabgayi see, viewing it as a bastion for the Hutu emancipation movement. Reputedly aided by two indigenous priests, a local Tutsi chief led a large crowd in burning 1,000 homes in Byimana, Mbonyumutwa's home near Kabgayi. Belgian soldiers intervened after hearing that the crowd was planning to torch Perraudin's residence and Kabgayi cathedral. Perraudin stayed under close Force Publique guard until the revolutionary troubles subsided in mid-November.⁴⁷

It was not just Perraudin's opponents, however, who continued to associate Perraudin with the Hutu side of Rwanda's ethno-political divide. For example, the White Fathers' newspaper *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* praised Perraudin on November 8 for "taking up the cause of Hutu emancipation by word and deed."⁴⁸ And even after hearing Perraudin's impassioned claims to political neutrality, the U.N. Visiting Commission concluded in mid-

⁴⁶ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°720623, « Comité de libération nationale (INGANGURARUGU), 'Les 10 commandements des ABATABAZI, » Oct. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°738140, « Extrait de La Cité, 7-8 Nov. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°720672-75, UNAR in Exile to Harroy, 14 Nov. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°722015-17, "Petition from Messrs. K.S. Ntauruhunga and B.K. Kavutse on behalf of all Banyaruanda in Kigezi, Uganda, concerning Ruanda-Urundi," 24 Nov. 1959. A.G.M.Afr.N°727122, Van Hoof to Volker, 21 Nov. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°722028-39, "Petition from the Banyarwanda and Barundi Abadhemuka of Kampala concerning Ruanda-Urundi," 14 Dec. 1959.

⁴⁷ This incident led to the arrest of a Tutsi priest seen as a liaison to local UNAR leaders. (Cf. "La guerre civil au Ruanda: Nécessité d'une forte autorité," *La Libre Belgique*, Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/21_La_Libre_Belgique_-_novembre_1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); Logiest to Perraudin, 24 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/32_Lettre_de_Logiest_a_Mgr_Perraudin_-_24.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁴⁸ "Les leaders Bahutu de R-U précisent leurs craintes de voir se renforcer la féodalité et la discrimination raciale, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 8 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/20_La_Cite_-_Temps_nouveaux_d_Afrique_08.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

1960 that “a large part of the population felt that the situation was not quite so simple. Many thought that the Archbishop of Kabgayi was the central figure in the support given to the Hutu parties.” For the Commission, this explained the vehemence of the attacks against Perraudin and his subsequent efforts to move towards the political middle.⁴⁹ Similarly, Jan Adriaenssens described Parmehutu leaders like Gregoire Kayibanda, Calliope Mulindahabi, and Maximilien Niyonzima as Perraudin’s “collaborators,” claiming that Perraudin “has looked after the Hutu leaders at Kabgayi for a long time” since he “favors Hutu emancipation as well as the installation of more humane political and social structures.”⁵⁰ For his part, Guy Logiest posited later that Rwanda’s Hutu elite had been “formed at Kabgayi, in the shadow of the bishop, in the minor and major seminary.” He also alleged that Perraudin had informed him in early November that political changes were necessary in light of the “injustices of which the Hutu had constantly been the victims.”⁵¹

Nor did Perraudin’s writings in November 1959 wholly embody the political and ideological neutrality that he retrospectively claimed. For example, his November 21 circular letter avoided the issue of refugee reintegration or the importance of combating ethnic partisanship. In a thinly-veiled critique of many of his Tutsi clergy, Perraudin criticized the “defeatism” and “useless lamentations” stemming from some clerical quarters, arguing that

⁴⁹ U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 25.

⁵⁰ Adriaenssens, *La situation politique*, 23. In a personal letter, Adriaenssens praised Perraudin for intervening in the Hutu-Tutsi conflict, claiming that “abstention would not have been neutrality but more complicity in injustice” (A.D.K., Adriaenssens to Perraudin, 17 Nov. 1959).

⁵¹ Logiest, « Mission au Rwanda, » 50. Logiest credited Perraudin for “restoring the Hutu people to its dignity as children of God. In a profoundly Christian country, this perspicacious action took on capital importance” (219).

“individual reparation will be difficult if not impossible.”⁵² He also continued to present Rwanda’s crisis through the familiar prism of an apocalyptic struggle between Christianity and communism, privately blaming UNAR for starting the troubles and claiming that their incitements “pushed the Hutu over the edge.”⁵³ Despite evidence of Christian involvement and even leadership in the November riots, Perraudin wrote in January 1960 that “I believe that all in all the Christian reactions were good.”⁵⁴ And demonstrating his own awareness of the potential impact of the revolts on the Catholic Church, Perraudin closed his aforementioned November 8 letter by advocating for the immediate appointment of the Hutu seminary professor Bernard Manyurane as bishop.⁵⁵ The White Fathers viewed Manyurane – a Ruhengeri native and recent recipient of a canon law doctorate from Rome – as the most suitable Hutu candidate for the episcopate in the anticipated see of Kigali. As we will see below, his candidacy took on increasing urgency for Perraudin as Rwandan politics continued accelerating in a pro-Hutu direction in 1960.

If André Perraudin was trying to position the church to benefit from the Hutu uprisings, Aloys Bigirumwami was becoming more publicly critical. Bigirumwami had also faced threats of violence in early November, stopped by angry crowds at two separate

⁵² Perraudin, “L’heure de la charité (Circ n°23),” 21 Nov. 1959.

⁵³ A.G.M.Afr.N°727122, Van Hoof to Volker, 21 Nov. 1959. Perraudin himself repeated these sentiments in 1962, claiming that UNAR persecution incited the Hutu masses to revolt against the feudal regime which “had decided to decapitate the parties who demanded a democratic regime” (A.G.M.Afr.N°738265, André Perraudin, “Note rectificative a propos d’un document de Monseigneur Gasore,” 18 May 1962).

⁵⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°738098, Perraudin to Volker, 8 Jan. 1960. Perhaps to make up for this overly sanguine analysis, Perraudin in his autobiography admitted that the principle leaders of the revolution were Christian and that many were former seminarians. Even here, though, Perraudin stopped short of any kind of apology. “It is undeniable that the Christians and the catechumens took part in the revolutionary actions...But is it not the case in all popular revolutions?” (Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 252).

⁵⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°738097, Perraudin to Cauwe, 8 Nov. 1959.

roadblocks before finally making it back to Nyundo on November 12.⁵⁶ Perhaps reflecting these encounters, his subsequent November 15 circular letter forcefully condemned arsonists and pillagers. “Those who have chosen to participate in attacks, massacres and fires are rendered gravely culpable, they are enemies of Rwanda, they have sinned against God and against their neighbor.”⁵⁷ In this letter Bigirumwami exhorted Christians not to retaliate but also called on perpetrators to offer reparations and assist in reconstruction. While he joined Perraudin in thanking the mission stations for accepting so many refugees, Bigirumwami was also far more critical of Christian behavior than the Archbishop of Kabgayi. Worrying that other nations would think that “Christianity is impossible in Rwanda,” Bigirumwami called on Christian catechists and local leaders to “show others how to live in harmony” and reminded perpetrators that “the Lord present in the Eucharist that you receive guards you against the sacrilege of hate, rancor, mistrustful words, and reprehensive attitudes.” He also exhorted Nyundo Catholics to oppose any efforts to “depose the chiefs and the subalterns named by the King, the Resident, and the Governor,” a message that may have been directed at Col. Logiest.⁵⁸

In addition to issuing his own statements, Bigirumwami ensured that his diocesan newspaper took a strong stand against the violence. While the Diocese of Kabgayi’s *Trait d’Union* remained silent and the White Fathers’ *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* continued to

⁵⁶ *Civitas Mariae* 22 (Nov. 1959) : 4-5.

⁵⁷ Aloys Bigirumwami, “Vivre chrétiennement les événements,” 15 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=31 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁵⁸ C.I.E.R., Aloys Bigirumwami, “Vivre chrétiennement...,” 15 Nov. 1959.

offer broad ideological support for the Hutu revolution,⁵⁹ Nyundo's *Civitas Mariae* condemned the "massive destitution of chiefs and sub-chiefs" as well as the forced exile of thousands of refugees into foreign lands. Bigirumwami's newspaper rejected the thesis that the Banyarwanda consisted of "three races opposed to each other" and reminded Christians that "racial hate is incompatible with the religion of Christ."⁶⁰ Over the next six months, *Civitas Mariae* castigated the evils of ethnic and racial hatred while describing Rwanda's ongoing revolutionary violence in far more detail than Kabgayi's *Trait d'Union*.

While Rwanda's bishops spoke out on the violence, their parish stations were experiencing it firsthand. Writing from Muyunzwe on November 8, the Hutu priest Damien Nyrinkindi described three deaths at his mission and credited the local sub-chief for preventing further bloodshed by guarding the church's doors.⁶¹ Likewise, mid-November reports from Janja and Runaba missions in northern Rwanda offered day-by-day accounts of the violence in the region. The Janja superior, Fr. Pierre Cattin, recounted the burning of all Tutsi homes in his parish "without exception, those of the old and the young."⁶² In southern Rwanda the Save superior and future Hutu bishop, Joseph Sibomana, noted that many

⁵⁹ Cf. « Les Leaders Bahutu de R.-U. précisent leurs craintes de voir se renforcer la féodalité et de la discrimination raciale, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (8 Nov. 1959) : 1.

⁶⁰ "A propos des troubles," *Civitas Mariae* 21 (Nov. 1959). In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php?id_article=33 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁶¹ Nyrinkindi to Perraudin, 8 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/27_Lettre_de_l_Abbe_Damien_Nyrinkindi_a_l_eveque_-_08.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁶² P. Cattin, "Relevé du diaire de la Mission de Janja," Nov-Dec. 1959, 2. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/46_Releve_du_diaire_de_Janja_-_novembre-decembre_1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

brigands with machetes stopped in to pray before heading back out to the hills, foreshadowing similar practices during the 1994 genocide.⁶³

In turn, mission reports revealed the social power that priests retained even in the midst of armed conflicts. For example, the Runaba superior brokered a peace accord between Hutu incendiaries and Tutsi refugees, stopping the violence in his region.⁶⁴ Cattin planted the Vatican's flag to mark Janja mission as a place of asylum, encouraging over 1,400 Tutsi to take up temporary residence at the mission. This bold gesture and the subsequent accusations that Janja mission was harboring a pro-UNAR priest nearly cost Cattin his job.⁶⁵ Even Perraudin drew rare cheers from Tutsi refugees when he paid an unexpected visit to Janja on November 23, handing out gifts and promising that "he was going to do all he could to find a rapid solution to the plight of the refugees."⁶⁶

Catholic parishes also served as welcome refuges from the violence. In addition to the Runaba and Janja examples cited above, Ruhengeri priests harbored 1,600 refugees, and two Hutu priests faced strong local opposition for housing 90 Tutsi refugees on the grounds of

⁶³ J. Sibomana to Perraudin, 16 Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/29_Lettre_de_l_Abbe_Joseph_Sibomana_-_16.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). It should also be noted here that the Save superior Joseph Sibomana is not the same Joseph Sibomana who served in Parmehutu leadership and suffered a UNAR attack in early November 1959. Linden conflates the two individuals, making it appear that the future Catholic bishop Joseph Sibomana was also a Parmehutu political leader (Cf. Linden, *Church and revolution*, 267). For a listing of the *Mouvement Social Muhutu* leadership in late 1958, see « Le mouvement social muhutu, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* (9 November 1958): 3-4.

⁶⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°741127, Alphonse Van Hoof, Visite de Runaba, 5-15 Nov. 1959.

⁶⁵ Van Hoof claims that Ruhengeri's colonial administrator put the mission under surveillance and lobbied Perraudin to replace Mgr. Cattin as superior (A.G.M.Afr.N°727122, Van Hoof to Volker, 21 Nov. 1959). For Cattin's fascinating account of November 1959, see A.G.M.Afr.N°741132, "Carte de visite de Janja," 30 Nov. 1959; A.D.K., Cattin to Perraudin, 10 Dec. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°739454, Cattin to Volker, 15 Dec. 1959.

⁶⁶ « Evénements de Novembre 1959 à Runaba, » Nov. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/13_Evenements_de_novembre_1959_a_Runaba.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); C.I.E.R., Cattin, "Relevé du diaire de la Mission de Janja," Nov-Dec. 1959, 3.

their isolated rural sub-station.⁶⁷ Nor was Ruhengeri an isolated example. 800 Tutsi sought refuge at the Rwankuba mission in northern Rwanda, while the Nemba mission took in over 900 refugees who had been expelled from their homes.⁶⁸ Even reputedly anti-clerical groups such as the UNAR militias attacking Save hill did not target Catholic missions or religious clergy.⁶⁹ While four pro-UNAR priests either fled the country or lived under house arrest and while some Hutu priests refused to take in Tutsi refugees, the vast majority of clerics responded on a humanitarian level.⁷⁰

Over time, though, the refugee issue emerged as an increasingly intractable problem. While many Tutsi were reintegrated in southern and central Rwanda, the Hutu population proved more hostile in northern Rwanda, refusing to welcome displaced Tutsi back into their villages. The mission stations were bursting at the seams, and the government decided to set up a permanent refugee camp at Nyamata south of Kigali. Most of the displaced Tutsi in northern Rwanda initially refused to relocate, fearing the reported malaria and tsetse fly epidemics in the camps and convinced that they would never regain their lands if they left the region.

⁶⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°727122, Van Hoof to Volker, 21 Nov. 1959.

⁶⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°727115, Van Hoof, *Petit Echo*, Nov. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°727108-09, Van Hoof to Volker, 13 Nov. 1959; A. Kazubwenge to Perraudin, 16 Nov. 1959, in C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/26_Lettre_de_l_Abbe_Aimable_Kazubwenge_-_16.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁶⁹ C.I.E.R., "J. Sibomana to A. Perraudin," 16 Nov. 1959.

⁷⁰ The four suspected UNAR sympathizers included two exiles (Runaba's Fr. Alexander who fled to Uganda and Kibungo's Fr. Thomas Bazarusanga who fled to Tanzania) and two priests under surveillance (Fr. Gabriel and Fr. Thadeé Ngirumpatse). Byimana's Fr. Gabriel had been seen marching with Tutsi arsonists looking to burn down Kabgayi cathedral in early November (Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°727119-20, Van Hoof to Volker, 5 Dec. 1959; N°738098, Perraudin to Volker, 8 Jan. 1960; N°740020-31, T. Bazarusanga to Volker, 23 Jan. 1960). Van Hoof notes that Hutu priests at Kanyanza did not take in Tutsi refugees but sent them to the homes of the nearby Josephite brothers. He neglects to mention that one of these refugees was none other than Athanase Gashagaza, the Tutsi chief whose political conflict with Dominique Mbonyumutwa had precipitated the violence in the first days of November (Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 480).

These Tutsi received an endorsement when Bigirumwami paid an unexpected visit to Janja mission on November 27. Speaking in unusually strident terms, Bigirumwami described the relocations as “deportations” and demanded that Logiest and Harroy promise to restore refugee land and property. The Belgian leaders demurred, threatening to expel the refugees from Janja mission. Despite these threats and the menacing of a local Hutu crowd, only 40 of the 1,400 refugees agreed to relocate.⁷¹ After days of rising tensions, Logiest backed down in early December, describing Nyamata as a voluntary and temporary solution to the refugee crisis and encouraging Tutsi to return to their hills of origin if they wished. Belgium provided scant support for reintegration, however, and many Tutsi ultimately chose Nyamata over the uncertainty of living with hostile Hutu neighbors. Nyamata’s refugee population bulged to 2,500 by the end of 1959 and over 5,000 by January 1960.⁷²

In response to the refugee crisis, Bigirumwami distanced himself further from Belgian colonial authorities. Reflecting on why “all the Tutsi” of Nyundo had seen their homes burned to the ground, Bigirumwami in a November 28 letter to Leo Volker accused the Belgian government of using “fire and blood and the massive destitution of all administrative officials even to deportation” to achieve its political goals.⁷³ His attitude towards Parmehutu was no less scathing, associating them with “communist agents” who were trying to hand Rwanda over to the “the representatives of a single party destined to place the whole country under the tyranny of a popular dictatorship.” Bigirumwami also

⁷¹ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°727118, Van Hoof to Volker, 5 Dec. 1959 ; C.I.E.R., Mgr. Cattin, “Relevé du diaire de la Mission de Janja, 5 Nov. – 5 Dec., » 4-10.

⁷² C.I.E.R., Guy Logiest, “Communication N°3 du Resident Militaire du Ruanda, » 10 Dec. 1959; C.I.E.R., Rudipresse n°148, 19 Dec. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°727126, Van Hoof to Volker, 19 Jan. 1960.

⁷³ A.G.M.Afr.N°740211, Bigirumwami to Volker, 28 Nov. 1959.

critiqued factions on both sides of the Catholic Church for failing to resolve Rwanda's political deadlock. Conservatives falsely claimed that "we cannot preach on justice and charity without leading the population into hate and vengeance," while more progressive voices sanctioned anti-Tutsi violence on the grounds of social justice.

Bigirumwami's anger reflected the extent to which the refugee crisis disproportionately affected him and his fellow Tutsi clergy. A majority of indigenous clergy and religious saw family members forced into internal or external exile, including relatives of Bigirumwami, Alexis Kagame, the future bishop Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, the journalist Justin Kalibwami, Kabgayi's vicar general Innocent Gasabwoya, and the leading intellectuals of Nyundo diocese, Janvier Mulenzi and Louis Gasore.⁷⁴ All of these priests were Tutsi, and many were associated with the nationalist, pro-UNAR side of the clergy. Their political sympathies may also explain the mixed attitudes that some White Fathers adopted towards the Tutsi refugees. Rather than condemn ethnic cleansing or call for the reintegration of refugees, the White Father Louis Gilles recommended prudent silence, noting that "in the north we must not speak of the Tutsi, they (the Hutu) no longer want them."⁷⁵

Gilles's words reflected the analytical framework that Catholic missionaries and Hutu priests would increasingly adopt during the revolutionary years. First, they pinned all responsibility for the revolution on UNAR. Thus while Alphonse Van Hoof initially blamed both sides and cautioned his White Father confreres in mid-November that "it would be unjust to endorse the political leaders responsible for the bloody troubles in which we have

⁷⁴ "Prêtres ruandais dont les familles sont sinistrées. » In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/42_Pretres_ruandais_et_Benebikira_dont_les_familles_sont_sinistrees.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁷⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°739458-59, Gilles to Volker, 14 Dec. 1959.

come to live,” he had changed his tone by early December, praising the new Hutu interim chiefs as “very good Christians” and describing Kayibanda as “very reliable from the doctrinal point of view.”⁷⁶ While admitting that the “reaction of the other parties was terrible, above all the two parties Aprosoma and Parmehutu,” Manyurane still argued that it was UNAR’s campaign of intimidation, terrorism and nationalism which incited Rwanda’s “fratricidal fight.”⁷⁷ And as noted above, Perraudin himself blamed UNAR for provoking the crisis.⁷⁸

If UNAR was becoming the missionary scapegoat for all that ailed Rwanda, I would also argue that missionary opposition to UNAR stemmed more from ideological preoccupations than ethnicism *per se*. In other words, missionaries opposed UNAR more for its perceived communist and feudalist sympathies than for its predominantly Tutsi leadership. So while defending Tutsi refugees in northern Rwanda, Mgr. Cattin lambasted UNAR as “full of communism” and an existential threat to the church.⁷⁹ The more leftist Adriaenssens agreed on different grounds, describing the revolution as the “logical (and tragic) outcome of a political and social situation which was deteriorating for a long time. The revolution of November was ‘inscribed’ in the history of the feudal regime.”⁸⁰

⁷⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°727114, Alphonse Van Hoof, *Petit Echo*, Nov. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°727117, Van Hoof to Volker, 5 Dec. 1959.

⁷⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°741102, Manyurane to Parents, 8 Dec. 1959.

⁷⁸ Nor did Perraudin’s perspective change in the subsequent 40 years. Writing in his autobiography, Perraudin claimed that “I am personally convinced also that the Hutu Revolution was a response of an exasperated mass to the systematic provocation organized by the Tutsi power of this epoch” (Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 237).

⁷⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°739455, Cattin to Volker, 15 Dec. 1959.

⁸⁰ Unlike Cattin, Adriaenssens doubted UNAR’s supposed communist sympathies, seeing their rumored outreach to China and the USSR as merely tactical. “The Unarists do not desire to introduce communism in their country. Their real goal is to conserve the monopoly of power and its advantages” (*La situation politique*, 18-19).

Unfortunately, while the roots of missionary opposition were primarily ideological, the close association of “UNAR” with “Tutsi” made these two terms increasingly synonymous. This in turn led missionaries into a worrying pattern of distinguishing deserving from undeserving Tutsi victims. Van Hoof wrote in December 1959 that the Hutu arsonists indiscriminately burned down Tutsi homes, “making no distinction between the good and the bad. The bad ones were those who had declared openly for UNAR.”⁸¹ He later associated these “bad ones” with indigenous clergy in Nyundo diocese who he accused of encouraging the UNAR publication *Rwanda Nziza*.⁸² This White Father tendency to ascribe moral fault to Tutsi victims would only grow in the years to come.

A year which had begun with the promise of Belgian reform and continued church growth had ended with social upheaval, ethnic violence, and political revolution. But while Rwanda’s national politics were in flux, the Catholic Church had survived the November troubles with its reputation largely intact. Catholic bishops and mission superiors had responded well to the crisis, rapidly and explicitly denouncing the violence and opening Catholic mission stations to refugees. Perraudin and Bigirumwami’s rhetoric differed according to their temperaments, but both seemed committed to maintaining official church neutrality while working to resolve the refugee crisis. A worrying trend, however, was the growing missionary suspicion of UNAR without any corresponding cautions about

⁸¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°727119, Van Hoof to Volker, 5 Dec. 1959.

⁸² A.G.M.Afr.N°727155, Van Hoof to Volker, 27 Dec. 1959. Adriaenssens went further, stating that Nyundo’s Tutsi clergy helped found *Rwanda Nziza* in mid-1959 as a mouthpiece for Rwandan nationalism (Adriaenssens, *La situation politique*, 24).

Aprosoma or Parmehutu.⁸³ As we will see, this analytical partisanship only grew deeper in 1960 and 1961, eliminating the church's ability to serve as a fair arbiter in Rwanda's accelerating political conflicts. At the same time, 1960 would see ethnic and political divisions fracture Nyakibanda seminary and further isolate Bigirumwami from his "fathers in the faith," the Missionaries of Africa.

C. Political developments in Rwanda in 1960

Historians have described 1960 as the "Year of Africa" due to the large number of countries which gained their independence during that year. In Rwanda, the "Year of Africa" began with an uneasy peace. In response to the November troubles, Belgium delayed communal elections from January to June. Hutu political movements were clearly on the rise, led by Aprosuma in southern Rwanda and Parmehutu in central and northern Rwanda. But even at this point no transcendent national leader emerged. Rather, select Hutu leaders dominated in their region of origin – Balthazar Bicomupaka in northern Rwanda, Dominique Mbonyumutwa and Gregoire Kayibanda in central Rwanda, and Aloys Munyangaju and Joseph Gitera in southern Rwanda. At the same time, UNAR's internal presence diminished while its exile community built what would become one of Africa's most influential international lobbying efforts. Although many of his strongest allies in the UNAR party were now in exile, Mwami Kigeli retained the symbolic power of Rwanda's

⁸³ This was in stark contrast to the official Anglican position at the time. For example, a February 1960 Anglican gathering of church leaders rejected the thesis that Rwanda's conflict should be described as a "conflict between Bahutu and Batutsi," arguing instead that "the Banyarwanda are fundamentally one people, with one language, one culture and one king, in spite of differences of origin." Echoing UNAR, the Anglicans went so far as to propose eliminating the terms Hutu and Tutsi from public discourse. (A.D.K., "Church Puts Forward Proposals to Heal Ruanda Dissension," *Uganda-Argus*, 27 Feb. 1960).

strong monarchical tradition. On a *de facto* level, however, Col. Guy Logiest was the single most powerful political figure inside Rwanda as he continued his mission to democratize Rwanda and empower its Hutu majority.

As the United Nations Visiting Mission prepared for its triennial visit in March 1960, Rwanda's political parties maneuvered for position.⁸⁴ Having broken with the Belgian administration, UNAR looked to the United Nations as a potential savior, hoping that the U.N. would adopt UNAR's political and social analysis, facilitate the return of refugees, declare a general amnesty, and agree to supervise the upcoming communal elections. UNAR continued to believe that it could contest and win fair elections. There is some merit to this claim. Far more than the "Tutsi party" caricatured by its opponents, UNAR had a majority Hutu membership. In September 1959, UNAR's 7,000 card-carrying members represented the largest committed political bloc in the country. This number continued to grow after the November revolution, tripling to 25,000 by June 1960. Despite its boastful claims to represent Rwanda's 85% Hutu population, Parmehutu remained nervous about its electoral prospects. Even after the restoration of civil order in late November 1959, Parmehutu implored Belgium to delay the scheduled January 1960 elections until after Hutu consciousness had "crystallized" across the country, arguing that further political evolution should wait until "the Hutu people were sufficiently emancipated to be able to defend their rights effectively."⁸⁵ Fearful of UNAR's electoral power, Parmehutu also tried to convince

⁸⁴ The following political history of Rwanda in 1960 is drawn from Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 181-383; U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 1-5, 39-42; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 171-94; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 276-88; and Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 487-94. Other sources are listed in the footnotes below.

⁸⁵ Cf. J. Adriaenssens, *La situation politique*, 6 ; U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 25.

the U.N. to dissolve UNAR outright before the summer elections. In the meantime, Rader staked out a middle ground, opposing Logiest's appointments for "favoring the antagonism of the two races" while continuing to decry UNAR as a group of "fanatics."⁸⁶

With the twin goals of evaluating Rwanda's political and economic progress since 1957 and investigating the causes of the November *jacquerie*, the two-week U.N. Visiting Mission to Rwanda initiated an intense electoral campaign. While scheduling official meetings with the visiting commission, Rwanda's political leaders mobilized thousands of supporters to rally along the U.N. caravan's travel route. While all four parties issued a joint March 14 statement appealing for political calm, street politicking spiraled into violence in Gitarama, Gisenyi, Shangugu and Byumba.⁸⁷ Shangugu and Byumba had not seen violence during the November troubles, making these new outbreaks all the more worrying.⁸⁸ Bishop Bigirumwami's see in Nyundo became the site of particular division and violence. As the U.N. convoy passed, pro-UNAR clergy led their predominantly Hutu schoolchildren in shouts of "independence" while their Hutu parents responded "democracy." In the meantime, UNAR literature speculated that the U.N. was going to restore Rwanda's exiled chiefs.⁸⁹ This politicking soon turned into something much more sinister. Between March 18 and March 22, Hutu mobs destroyed nearly every Tutsi home in the district and forced over 1,000 to flee

⁸⁶ Rader, « Situation politique actuelle du Ruanda, » *Le Dépêche du Ruanda-Urundi*, 8 Jan. 1960.

⁸⁷ Cf. "Appel des partis politiques à la tolérance, » 14 March 1960, in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 198-99. The U.N. Visiting Commission noted that this was the only post-November document signed by all four political parties, the Belgian government, and the Mwami (U.N. Visiting Mission, *1960 Report on Rwanda-Urundi*, 4). Kayibanda also issued a personal appeal to his supporters to maintain order in the hills, arguing that the fight against the "secular feudalism of the Tutsi" must be waged in a "peaceful spirit" (A.D.K., Gregoire Kayibanda, "Lettre au Parmehutu," 15 March 1960).

⁸⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°727173, Van Hoof to Volker, 25 March 1960; "Echo à une lettre des eveques de l'Urundi et nouvelles, » *Civitas Mariae* 26 (April 1960). In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=45 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁸⁹ A.D.K., Guy Logiest, "Communique n°10," 21 March 1960.

to the grounds of Nyundo parish. After four days of rioting, Belgian soldiers arrived to quell the disturbances, possibly saving Bigirumwami's life and the cathedral on Nyundo hill.⁹⁰ As violence continued into April and May, the number of internally-displaced Tutsi rose to over 10,000.⁹¹

These events had a sobering effect on the U.N. Visiting Commission which subsequently broke with Belgian policy in April 1960. Rather than proceed with the Belgian plan for June elections, the U.N. Commission called for the establishment of a Round Table unity conference that would bring together Belgium and all of Rwanda's major political parties under the overall auspices of the United Nations. UNAR celebrated the news while Rader met it with indifference. Parmehutu and Aprosuma appealed to Belgium to maintain its electoral timeline and commitment to "democracy before independence."

In the meantime, the relationship between Mwami Kigeli and Rwanda's emerging political parties became increasingly strained. On March 23 the Special Provisional Council submitted a series of seven reforms to the Mwami, including a multi-party cabinet, the suppression of the customary *biru*, and the symbolic replacement of the *Karinga* drums with a national flag. When the Mwami rejected all of these stipulations on April 23, Parmehutu, Aprosuma, and Rader broke with Kigeli, formed a "Common Front," and called for Kigeli's replacement with a more amenable constitutional monarch.⁹² By June Parmehutu had gone

⁹⁰ Van Hoof provides the most comprehensive recounting of these incidents (A.G.M.Afr.N°727177-78, Van Hoof to Volker, 14 April 1960). For Bigirumwami's own commentary, see Aloys Bigirumwami, "Quel avenir?" 25 March 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=44 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); "Les événements lors du passage de l'ONU, » *Civitas Mariae* 25, March 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=41 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

⁹¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°727176, Alphonse Van Hoof to [Anon.], May 1960; A.D.K., *Rudipresse* n°166, 23 April 1960.

⁹² Cf. Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 199-202.

further, changing its name to *Mouvement Démocratique Républicain-Parmehutu* (MDR-Parmehutu) and demanding the suppression of the monarchy. The issue of the Mwami split an already weakened Rader. Lazare Ndazaro called for Kigeli's deposition while Prosper Bwanakweri stood by the Mwami.⁹³ Kigeli himself chose to go into exile in late June 1960, taking refuge first in Tanzania and then with Patrice Lumumba's new government in Congo.

While calling for Kigeli's resignation, Parmehutu's political rhetoric also adopted a more radical ethnicist dimension. Reworking UNAR's nationalist language in a uniquely ethnicist key, Parmehutu wrote in June 1960 that "Rwanda is the country of Hutu and of all those, whites or blacks, Tutsi, Europeans, or other neighbors, who will rid themselves from feudal-imperialist designs."⁹⁴ More than an oppressive upper class, the Tutsi were now described as foreigners to Rwanda. As Parmehutu wrote in a subsequent manifesto, "when they (the Tutsi) claim to represent Rwanda, it is as if the French were representing their colony before independence."⁹⁵ If Mamdani's indigeneity thesis lacks credence in the 1950s, it accurately describes the development of Rwandan political rhetoric after 1960.⁹⁶

In the meantime, Belgium attempted to placate both the U.N. and Hutu leaders by scheduling an early June colloquy in Brussels while retaining its midsummer timetable for communal elections. While Parmehutu, Aprosoma and Rader joined the gathering, UNAR boycotted Belgium's colloquy, undermining its potential for political reconciliation. Even more momentously, UNAR announced on May 20 that it was pulling out of the Special Provisional Council and boycotting the communal elections. This proved to be a disastrous

⁹³ A.D.K., Bwanakweri to De Schrijver, 8 June 1960; A.D.K., Ndazaro to Perraudin, 3 May 1960.

⁹⁴ "Déclaration du Parmehutu (M.D.R.), » in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 245.

⁹⁵ "Appel pathétique du Ruanda," in Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda politique*, 247-52.

⁹⁶ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 9-39.

political move. While the boycott was successful in UNAR strongholds in Nyanza, Astrida, Shangugu, and Kibungu, it failed everywhere else in Rwanda. Overall turnout approached 80%, and 70% of voters supported Parmehutu. Thanks to its strength in southern Rwanda, Aprosuma came in a distant second with 17%. Despite protests from UNAR, Rader, and Mwami Kigeli, the United Nations refused to invalidate the results or schedule new elections. Controlling over two-thirds of Rwanda's 230 new burgomasters and 2,900 communal councilors, Parmehutu was on its way to dominating Rwanda's post-colonial future.⁹⁷ Accusing Parmehutu of becoming a "totalitarian republican party causing terrorism and intimidation across Rwanda," Rader pulled out of the Common Front in July, eliminating the chance for any serious Tutsi participation in the transitional government.⁹⁸

Meanwhile Congo officially declared its independence from Belgium on June 30. Led by Patrice Lumumba, Congo's first post-colonial government took a strong nationalist line against Belgium and welcomed financial support from the Soviet Union. Lumumba also hosted Mwami Kigeli and several UNAR leaders in Leopoldville during the summer of 1960, furthering suspicions that UNAR was building links with radical African nationalists and communists alike. Since Belgium assigned hundreds of Congolese soldiers to guard the camps for internally displaced Tutsi, Congolese-Belgian tensions had ramifications in Rwanda as well. In mid-July, Belgium forcibly disarmed the Congolese Force Publique

⁹⁷ In the words of Lemarchand, the communal council elections of June 1960 enabled Parmehutu to achieve "virtually unlimited control over local affairs, and thus to make full use of their prerogatives to hasten the tempo of revolutionary change" (Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 183).

⁹⁸ Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 269.

soldiers guarding the Nyamata refugee camp, fearing that the Congolese might arm the Tutsi refugees inside the camp.⁹⁹

In October 1960 Belgium approved a provisional government based on the results of the summer elections and announced another round of legislative elections in January 1961. The Provisional Council of Rwanda was installed on October 26 with Joseph Gitera as president and Gregoire Kayibanda as prime minister. Logiest continued to control the military as Belgium's special resident. Parmehutu's commanding majority raised hopes for political stability, and a confident Kayibanda even reached out to his Tutsi rivals. "The inhabitants of the country should arrive at a sincere entente, regardless of ethnicity, and live happily."¹⁰⁰ At the same time, Parmehutu's newfound political dominance alienated even ideological allies. Joining UNAR and Rader in a new Common Front in December 1960, Aprosuma accused Parmehutu of fomenting a "dictatorial and terrorist period marked by racial hate" and exhorted Rwandans "not to justify Tutsi feudalism, nor Parmehutu dictatorship, but (rather) a multi-ethnic and multi-party country."¹⁰¹

Facing growing dissent inside and outside of Rwanda, pressure rose on the United Nations to intervene. UNAR continued to call for the reintegration of Rwanda's foreign exiles, the suppression of the internal refugee camp at Nyamata, the withdrawal of Belgian soldiers, the return of Mwami Kigeli, and the organization of new U.N.-supervised elections.

⁹⁹ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°727169, Van Hoof to Volker, 15 July 1960. *Temps Nouveaux's* July 1960 issues chronicle Congo's rapid descent from celebratory independence ceremonies to political and territorial division. See here "Le Congo est indépendant, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 3 July 1960 ; « Proclamation de l'Indépendance, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 10 July 1960 ; « La situation au Congo, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 17 July 1960 ; « Situation tragique au Congo, » 24 July 1960

¹⁰⁰ A.D.K., Gregoire Kayibanda, "Communiqué n°2 sur la Paix," 1 Nov. 1960.

¹⁰¹ Nkundabagenzi, *Rwanda Politique*, 323-24.

In response to these demands, the United Nations released Resolution 1579 on December 20. The statement supported many of UNAR's aims, including general political amnesty, the return of Mwami Kigeli and other UNAR leaders, the reintegration of refugees, and the postponing of elections until after a national reconciliation process. Even as it lost ground inside Rwanda, UNAR appeared to be winning the battle for international opinion.

This in turn had an effect on Belgian policy. Reversing course, Belgium announced in December that it would host a reconciliation conference in early January 1961 which would include representatives from UNAR's external wing. At this January colloquy of Ostende, Brussels agreed to a six-month election delay, postponing the anticipated national elections of January 15 until the summer of 1961. Belgium also expressed openness to a political amnesty for prisoners who had not committed murder or torture.¹⁰² The colonial administration agreed to hold a separate referendum on the Mwami which would determine whether Rwanda would remain a constitutional monarchy or become a democratic republic. Mwami Kigeli was so encouraged that he prepared to return to Rwanda in February 1961. Before he could do so, however, Harroy signed a decree on January 15 granting Rwanda much broader internal autonomy.¹⁰³ The effects of this decision would become evident by the end of the month.

D. Navigating treacherous waters: Catholic reactions to Rwandan politics in 1960

In contrast to their roles in 1958 and early 1959, Bigirumwami, Perraudin and their fellow church leaders did not proactively shape political discourse after the November

¹⁰² D. Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 957-58.

¹⁰³ "Institutions nouvelles au Rwanda et au Burundi, » *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 29 January 1961.

revolution. Rather, they assumed a more reactive role, simultaneously trying to keep their priests out of politics, defend their political neutrality, respond to sporadic outbursts of ethnic violence, and grapple with Rwanda's ongoing refugee crisis. In analyzing Catholic politics in 1960, I address three areas. First, I consider the bishops' evolving views of the proper relationship between clergy, laity, and secular politics, noting the tensions in the church's commitment to maintaining both political neutrality and social influence. I also consider the fundamental analytical division between Perraudin and Bigirumwami over whether communism or ethnicism was the greatest political threat facing Rwanda. Second, I discuss Perraudin's and Bigirumwami's attitudes towards Rwanda's political parties, focusing in particular on Perraudin's testimony to the U.N. Visiting Commission. I argue here that UNAR's anti-Perraudin diatribes only furthered the White Father tendency to blame UNAR for all that ailed Rwanda. Finally, I consider how the bishops reacted to political and ethnic violence in Rwanda, focusing in particular on Perraudin's and Bigirumwami's differing views of the Hutu-Tutsi question and Bigirumwami's efforts to distance himself from Rwanda's increasingly poisonous political atmosphere.

Officially, Catholic leaders' understanding of the relationship between religion and politics did not undergo a marked change after the November 1959 uprisings. Politics remained the proper domain of the laity, while clergy were responsible for forming the laity to make political decisions in light of the church's social and ethical teachings. But where episcopal teachings in the late 1950s stressed the duty of lay participation, the emphasis in 1960 fell more on clerical abstention. Thus Leon Volker instructed Perraudin in January 1960 that "priests and religious should be men of God, and politics is not their domain," adding in

a coterminous letter to Pierre Cattin that “it does not suffice to avoid being political in the proper sense of the word, but it seems necessary that our priests abstain absolutely from referencing politics in their conversations.”¹⁰⁴ Meanwhile Cardinal Agagianian, the head of the Vatican congregation Propaganda Fide, reiterated in June that “clergy abstain from immersing themselves in purely political quarrels and fights.”¹⁰⁵ Perraudin echoed this guidance, writing in July that priests should avoid “purely political fights,” reminding clergy that “political meetings are not your affair, but that of the laity,” and responding to Agagianian that Rwanda must “avoid all confusion between the civil and the ecclesiastic.”¹⁰⁶ Perraudin also intervened to remove an indigenous priest from his posting at a Belgian academic center due to suspicions that he was organizing meetings with UNAR agents.¹⁰⁷

Nor were such sentiments limited to Rwanda’s missionary leaders. Bigirumwami echoed the White Fathers’ cautions, arguing that the priest’s mission to be “*omnia omnibus*” precluded political involvement. However, Bigirumwami struggled with how to keep priests out of politics while still ensuring that politics mirrored a Catholic vision of society. He therefore instructed his clergy to avoid partisanship while continuing to teach Catholic social doctrine to lay Christians. Such teachings included reminding laity of the preeminence of the natural law, the fundamental dignity due to the human person, and the rights of parents to

¹⁰⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°738099, Volker to Perraudin, 30 Jan. 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°739456, Volker to Cattin, 12 Jan. 1960.

¹⁰⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°727171, Van Hoof to Volker, 24 July 1960.

¹⁰⁶ André Perraudin, “Circulaire réservée aux prêtres : la charité, » 6 July 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=47 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); Perraudin to Agagianian, 9 Aug. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=50 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

¹⁰⁷ A.D.K., Joseph Tenret to Perraudin, 1 Feb. 1960; A.D.K., Perraudin to Tenret, 19 Feb. 1960. This priest, Abbé Godefroid Sumbili, may not have given up his political pursuits; he died in a mysterious car accident in November 1961 (A.D.K., Perraudin, Circ. n°30, 28 Nov. 1961).

educate their children in Catholic schools. Volker agreed with Bigirumwami's commitment to maintaining the church's cultural influence, writing in a circular to White Father missionaries that "the enemies of Christ are trying to eliminate the influence of the Church in society."¹⁰⁸

Rwanda's Catholic leaders also agreed that the church hierarchy should maintain cordial relations with state leaders, reflecting the continued salience of the Christendom vision of church-state partnership. In Perraudin's words, the church should oppose either a "confusion" or "separation" between church and state, seeing the "Christian solution in collaboration, safeguarding and respecting the diversity of goals and respective means."¹⁰⁹ Thus Perraudin sent Mwami Kigeli New Year's 1960 greetings, while the Mwami in turn congratulated Perraudin on his elevation as archbishop and visited Bigirumwami in Nyundo on at least two separate occasions.¹¹⁰ In addition, Perraudin maintained friendly relations with Rwanda's major political leaders, exchanging correspondence with Rader's Lazare Ndazaro and receiving an honorary membership card from Aprosuma's Joseph Gitera.¹¹¹

The seeming unanimity of this vision of church-state relations, however, masked underlying tensions. For example, the bishops' tidy lay-clerical split was complicated by the

¹⁰⁸ Aloys Bigirumwami, "Echo á un pressant appel de Rome, » 10 June 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=46 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). See also Aloys Bigirumwami, "Voir, juger, agir, » 22 Jan. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=36 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010); C.M.L., Leo Volker, "Fidélité à notre vocation," 7 Sept. 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°740386, Van Hoof, "Carte de visite de Kibungo," 3 April 1960.

¹⁰⁹ André Perraudin, "Circulaire réservée aux prêtres : la charité, » 6 July 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=47 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

¹¹⁰ A.D.K., Perraudin to Kigeli V Ndahindurwa, 1 Jan. 1960; A.D.K., Kigeli V Ndahindurwa to Perraudin, 1 May 1960; *Civitas Mariae* 24 (Feb. 1960): 2.

¹¹¹ A.D.K., Ndazaro to Perraudin, 3 May 1960; A.D.K., Perraudin to Ndazaro, 9 May 1960; A.D.K., "Carte de Membre du Parti Aprosuma, » July 1960. This latter card was personally addressed to Perraudin and signed by Joseph Gitera.

sizeable subset of laity who served the Catholic Church as catechists, teachers, and Catholic Action leaders. Here Van Hoof counseled that such lay workers should “abstain from politics in their function of serving the Church” while maintaining their political obligations outside of the parish. Such a teaching essentially bifurcated the Christian lay leader, assuming for example that the Rwandan people could distinguish Kayibanda the Legion of Mary leader from Kayibanda the Parmehutu chief. Nor did Van Hoof and other Catholic leaders resolve the issue of whether Catholic lay leaders should resign their ecclesial roles if elected to public office. This was not just a theoretical issue, as evidenced by the election of three Legion of Mary leaders as burgomasters in Kanyanza mission.¹¹² This underlined perhaps the greatest tension in the Catholic approach to national politics in Rwanda: a rhetorical obsession with retaining official neutrality awkwardly juxtaposed with an equally vociferous commitment to maintaining the church’s traditional role as arbiter of the moral and cultural order. One wonders if it is possible to be both neutral and influential, especially if a nation’s political parties no longer concur on the proper relationship between church and society.

Since Rwanda’s Catholic leaders agreed that the church retained an important voice in the public square, arguments inevitably arose over the extent to which silence itself contained an implicit political message. For example, Bigirumwami complained privately in August 1960 about the church’s failure to establish a clerical colloquy on Rwanda’s political developments, thereby allowing secular politicians to determine Rwanda’s political

¹¹² A.G.M.Afr.N°741124, Van Hoof, « Carte de visite de Ruhengeri, » 21 March 1960 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°740386, Van Hoof, Carte de visite de Kibingo, 3 April 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°727171, Van Hoof to Volker, 24 July 1960.

discourse.¹¹³ Publicly Bigirumwami voiced his frustration with clergy and laity who urged the Catholic hierarchy to exercise prudent silence, arguing that the church leadership could not stand silent in the face of withering internal and external attacks.¹¹⁴ Some saw Perraudin's silence on Parmehutu as a tacit endorsement, others as an effort to stay out of politics.

This in turn reflected a deeper hierarchical division on whether ethnicism or communism posed the greatest ideological threat to Rwanda – and whether Parmehutu or UNAR was the anti-Catholic party. For missionary leaders like Leo Volker, the church's primary enemies were communists, French-masons, and free thinkers who were trying to divide Christians of diverse races and social classes.¹¹⁵ At an episcopal conference in Bujumbura in February 1960, Perraudin spoke passionately about the risks of communism to Africa and Rwanda. Privately, he remonstrated with Bigirumwami in an effort to convince him of UNAR's communist influences. Six months later, Perraudin reiterated to his priests the urgent necessity of fighting communism in Africa.¹¹⁶ While critical of UNAR's tactics, Bigirumwami remained unconvinced of the party's supposed communist leanings. Rather, Bigirumwami saw the greatest ideological threat facing Rwanda as ethnicism. In January he warned the Nyundo faithful against parties based on ethnicity. "The political party that advocates for the interests of the Bahutu exclusively, refuse it; the one which advocates for

¹¹³ A.G.M.Afr.N°740240, Bigirumwami to Volker, 30 Aug. 1960.

¹¹⁴ Aloys Bigirumwami, « Etre prudents et nous taire, ou parler á temps et á contretemps ? » 27 Jan. 1959. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=38 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

¹¹⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°740212, Volker to Bigirumwami, 19 Dec. 1959.

¹¹⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°727127, Van Hoof to Volker, 19 Jan. 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°727140, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 2 Feb. 1960; A.D.K., André Perraudin, Circ. N°24, 21 Sept. 1960.

the Tutsi exclusively, keep equal distance.”¹¹⁷ In the run-up to the summer elections, he continued to publicly exhort the Rwandan people to “cease to divide ourselves in parties based on Hutu and Tutsi ethnicity.”¹¹⁸ While Bigirumwami’s comments could only be construed as an attack on Parmehutu, Perraudin remained conspicuously silent on the risk of ethnicism.¹¹⁹ Van Hoof was even less circumspect, writing in late 1960 that “all the members of the [Parmehutu-dominated] provisional government are good Catholics and good family fathers...[they are] not contrary to the doctrine of Jesus Christ.”¹²⁰

Both commonalities and tensions merged in “*Vérité, Justice, Charité*,” the bishops of Rwanda and Burundi’s October 1960 pastoral letter on politics.¹²¹ This was the only such letter jointly issued by the Rwandan and Burundian bishops during the revolutionary period of 1959-1962; it also represented one of the few statements signed by both Perraudin and Bigirumwami. The document was released after Rwanda’s communal elections of June and July 1960 but before anticipated legislative elections in January 1961. It included the voices of Burundi’s Archbishop Grauls, Bishop Martin, and Bishop Ntuyahaga, churchmen more closely associated with Bigirumwami’s moderate social conservatism than Perraudin’s pro-

¹¹⁷ Aloys Bigirumwami, “La pire des calamités: persévéré dans le mal, » 25 Jan. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=37 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

¹¹⁸ Aloys Bigirumwami, “Echo à un pressant appel de Rome, » 10 June 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=46 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

¹¹⁹ The White Father Jean Massion even claimed that Perraudin approved such parties, although I have not found any explicit directives to this regard. “This [Bigirumwami’s position] is in opposition to the directives of Mgr. Perraudin who has approved parties with a racial base, so long as they are not founded on racism” (A.G.M.Afr.N°720305, Jean Massion, “Note sur la situation de l’église au Ruanda, » May 1960).

¹²⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°727183, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 13 Dec. 1960.

¹²¹ Catholic Bishops of Rwanda and Burundi, “*Vérité, Justice, Charité*,” October 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=49 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). All subsequent quotations in this section are taken from this document.

Hutu social democracy.¹²² Recognizing its status as the preeminent Catholic statement on politics during the revolutionary period, I will consider *Vérité, Justice, Charité* in depth, focusing on the document's descriptive judgment of Christian justice and prescriptive recommendations for the Rwandan and Burundian political contexts of 1960. I argue that while the document broke new ground in distancing the church from the state and critiquing ethnicism, it fell short in not exploring political alternatives to those offered by the nation's rival political parties.

Perhaps recognizing the extent to which the concept of justice had been manipulated by all sides in Rwanda's political disputes, the bishops dedicated the longest section of *Vérité, Justice, Charité* to describing a Christian vision of justice. Here the bishops advocated the restitution of goods and property to refugees, condemned social vengeance and popular tribunals, and proclaimed their support for liberty of conscience. Following Perraudin's anti-UNAR spirit, the bishops prohibited Christians from voting for any candidate whose party program "is not inspired by a Christian spirit," such as parties who favored state schools over Catholic schools, supported irregular marriages, or opposed the Catholic Church. On the other hand, trademark Bigirumwami emphases emerged as well, such as the document's insistent calls for reparations for refugees, unqualified condemnation of social vengeance,

¹²² Burundian White Fathers generally adopted a more conservative approach to political change than their Rwandan counterparts. For example, the White Fathers offered a glowing tribute to the Burundian prince Louis Rwagasore after his assassination in October 1961, describing him as the "true liberator of their country" and praising him for surrounding himself with a "ministerial team of remarkable Catholics" (A.G.M.Afr.N°720670-71, J. Keuppens, "L'Urundi en Deuil, » 19 Oct. 1961; see also "Tragique assassinat du Premier Ministre du Burundi" and "Allocution de S. Exc. Mgr Grauls Archevêque de Kitega," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 22 Oct. 1961). This was despite the fact that Rwagasore led UPRONA (*Union du Progrès National*), an anti-colonial nationalist party who shared a similar ideology to Rwanda's UNAR. UPRONA's biggest ideological difference with UNAR also explained the Burundian White Fathers' support for the party. Unlike UNAR, UPRONA's party motto placed the party and nation under God, and its manifestoes strongly supported a central role for the Catholic Church in post-colonial Burundian society.

and excoriation of popular tribunals whose leaders were “gravely culpable” and “do not merit the name of Christians.”

The document also dealt with the justice an individual owed to society as a whole. Here the bishops highlighted the Christian duty to respect the divine law in areas of family life, marriage, Christian schools and Catholic associations. They also supported a multi-party democracy, arguing that the parties’ complementary emphases would together build up the common good. Finally, they condemned parties which claimed a political monopoly or utilized propaganda to incite political violence. Christians of good faith could differ in their political preferences, but all must oppose the dissemination of “lies and calumnies in propaganda and electoral campaigns,” unfounded calumnies against Catholic bishops, and the elevation of group interests over the common good. Significantly, despite their cautions against political abuses of all types, the bishops never offered Christians the option to opt out. “To refuse to vote – to refuse to acquit oneself of the obligations of justice towards society – would be to sin by omitting an important duty.”

The bishops then addressed the justice society should ensure for each of its citizens. Again Bigirumwami’s voice emerged in the bishops’ questioning of the state’s commitment to social order and peace. Highlighting the fires, ethnic cleansing, and deaths that marked the past year of Rwandan history, the bishops asked “how the campaign of peace can succeed if the constituted authorities continue to show such deficiencies in their exercise of power?” The bishops also called for the state to exercise neutrality towards political parties except in the case of subversive activity, noting the state’s obligation to guard against racism which “constitutes a very great danger to the Christian spirit.” In addition, the state had a particular

obligation to care for the “hundreds of families brutally chased from their homes who had their goods expropriated from them.”

The bishops of Rwanda and Burundi concluded this joint pastoral by addressing “charity.” Perhaps reflecting Perraudin’s own longstanding embrace of charity as an episcopal motto, this section bore the imprint of the Archbishop of Kabgayi. Calling on Twa, Hutu, Tutsi and Europeans to live “side by side in the country, respecting each other and loving each other,” the document lambasted the Communist and French-Mason agents dividing Catholic clergy, religious, and laity. While resisting the temptation to “identify communism or the danger of communism with existing political parties, as has happened too often,” the document noted the propensity for communism to transform nationalism into xenophobia and concluded by recalling the Virgin Mary’s promise of “victory over the forces of atheism and notably of communism.”

“*Vérité, Justice, Charité*” represented the most comprehensive political statement from the Catholic hierarchy of Rwanda-Burundi since the regional bishops’ August 1959 statement “*Le chrétien et la politique*.” The bishops’ tone in this October 1960 document was much more critical of Belgium and the emerging post-colonial state, reflecting the episcopal majority’s pessimism towards recent political developments in Rwanda. In addition, the broad platitudes of 1959 gave way to precise injunctions in 1960, from detailing refugee suffering to offering specific criteria for voting. Above all, “*Vérité, Justice, Charité*” symbolized the advantage of having Perraudin and Bigirumwami in the same episcopal conference. For example, its alternating emphases on anti-communism and anti-ethnicism come across here as more complementary than conflictual. Similarly, Bigirumwami’s

critiques of state power balanced Perraudin's typical calls for political obedience.¹²³ Yet while the document challenged the long colonial tradition of church-state collaboration, the bishops' vision of Christian politics still seemed limited by the conventions of modern democracy. For example, while the bishops' condemnations of local political behavior would seem to open up the possibility of voter abstention or even the necessity of a voter boycott, *Vérité, Justice, Charité* continued to describe non-voting as a sin of omission.

It was alleged sins of clerical commission, however, that were garnering the most public attention in 1960. This was especially the case for Perraudin, the churchman most closely associated with the Hutu emancipation movement and most virulently opposed by UNAR. The allegations against Perraudin and the Kabgayi church were wide-ranging. According to its critics, the Catholic press had incited the Hutu rebellion by propagating irresponsible, racist and revolutionary propaganda. The White Fathers had supported this campaign in the spirit of colonial divide-and-rule, recognizing that they needed to win over the Hutu masses to ensure their future as a popular church. Towards this end, Catholic leaders had acquiesced in Kayibanda's vision of dividing Rwanda into ethnic zones.¹²⁴ Other allegations targeted Perraudin more personally: the Archbishop of Kabgayi conspired in the death of Mwami Mutara in July 1959 and opposed the Rwandan monarchy; Perraudin served

¹²³ The influence of Bigirumwami and the Burundian bishops may explain why Perraudin never mentioned this document in his 2003 autobiography, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*. In addition, while Perraudin retained draft versions of nearly every other pastoral letter issued during his episcopate, I found scant references to this document in his personal dossiers at the Diocese of Kabgayi archives in Rwanda. To his credit, he did instruct his priests to read this letter to all parishes and Catholic institutions "on reception, without commentary" (A.D.K., André Perraudin, Circ. N°24, 21 Sept. 1960).

¹²⁴ Kayibanda voiced this proposal almost as soon as the violence had subsided. "La situation reste sérieuse au Ruanda," *Courrier d'Afrique*, 14-15 Nov. 1959 ; « Ruanda : Calme apparent dans tout le pays, » In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/06_Courrier_d_Afrique_14-15.11.1959.pdf; http://www.cier-be.info/IMG/pdf/56_Temps_nouveaux_d_Afrique_22.11.1959.pdf (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

as a patron for Hutu leaders like Kayibanda, Bicomumpaka, and Gitera and provided material support to Hutu parties; Perraudin falsely connected UNAR with communism and Islam in his clerical directive of September 1959.¹²⁵

At first, Perraudin tried to ignore these diatribes and refused to comment publicly. By early 1960, however, Perraudin's fellow White Fathers were pressuring him to defend himself, fearing that the negative publicity could jeopardize the future of the Catholic Church in Rwanda. Thus Leo Volker urged Perraudin to submit a formal defense to the United Nations General Assembly in New York, while behind the scenes Volker advocated for the appointment of a new Hutu bishop in Kigali to offset Perraudin's tarnished reputation.¹²⁶ Perraudin acquiesced, testifying to the U.N. Visiting Commission when the commission visited him in Kabgayi on March 13. In late April he sent a copy of this defense to the United Nations General Assembly in New York.¹²⁷

While expressing his personal distaste for having to defend himself, Perraudin began his defense to the U.N. Visiting Commission by stating the Catholic Church's obligation to "redress errors and proclaim the truth" so as to protect its credibility in Rwanda and the wider world. After outlining the above accusations, Perraudin quoted his *Letter on Charity* from February 1959, noting that this document critiqued Rwanda's social structures but rejected class warfare and resisted the temptation to offer technical political prescriptions best left to

¹²⁵ A good summary of these allegations can be reviewed in A.G.M.Afr.N°720667-68, "Griefs formulées contre les Missions Catholiques, auprès de l'ONU, à l'occasion des récents événements du Ruanda, » 1960. Most of these accusations were included in official UNAR protest letters sent to the United Nations in late 1959.

¹²⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°738107, Volker to Perraudin, 26 March 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°739036, Volker to Sigismondi, 3 Jan. 1960.

¹²⁷ "Démenti aux représentants de l'ONU, » 1 March 1960, in *Théologie et Pastorale au Rwanda* VI, 2 (1960) : 31-54. This document is also transcribed in Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 340-50.

Catholic laity. Perraudin also argued that Catholic newspapers like *Kinyamateka* and *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* “denounced a unity based on multiple injustices” but denied that they incited ethnic division or political upheaval. On the issue of his alleged involvement in Mwami Mutara’s July 1959 death, Perraudin noted that he was closing a clerical synod in Nyakibanda when Mutara died 200 kilometers away in Bujumbura. Concerning his alleged support for Hutu political leaders, Perraudin admitted that Gregoire Kayibanda resided near Kabgayi yet noted that the Queen Mother and her UNAR supporters lived in the area as well. In other words, physical proximity did not point to a political alliance. And while recognizing that Kayibanda once served as *Kinyamateka* editor, Perraudin claimed that he forced Kayibanda to resign as soon as the MSM (*Mouvement Social Muhutu*) undertook political activity. Perraudin posited that he always opposed the ethnic zoning of Rwanda and claimed that “the Catholic White Fathers and Bishop Perraudin remain open to all political leaders, Hutu and Tutsi.”¹²⁸ As arbiters of the moral order, however, the bishops had the right to issue moral judgments on problematic political doctrines and behavior.

Perraudin also requested that the Hutu seminary professor Bernard Manyurane speak to the U.N. Visiting Commission. In his March 10 testimony, Manyurane noted that the Catholic media employed both Hutu and Tutsi and claimed that journalists were groping towards a disinterested solution to the problem of customary authority. Rwanda’s bishops had not attacked an ethnic group but simply “preached justice without equivocation, defending the rights of the poor and the oppressed.” In an unguarded moment, however,

¹²⁸ André Perraudin, « Démenti aux représentants de l’ONU, » *Théologie et Pastorale au Rwanda* VI, 2 (1960) : 53.

Manyurane spoke of the Hutu need to “liberate themselves from despotism and Tutsi monopoly.”¹²⁹ In betraying his Hutu nationalist sympathies, Manyurane made it necessary for Perraudin to enlist the support of other indigenous clergy.

Here Perraudin turned to Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, the superior of Nyanza parish. Gahamanyi was the ideal Rwandan priest to defend Perraudin against UNAR’s charges. A Tutsi member of Rwanda’s elite Abanyiginya clan and brother of the UNAR leader Michel Kayihura, Gahamanyi had cultivated a strong relationship with Mwami Mutara in the final months of Mutara’s life. In his April 1960 letter to the U.N. Trusteeship Council in New York, Gahamanyi argued that there was no documentary evidence that Perraudin ever opposed the Mwami or other Rwandan authorities; the archbishop simply spoke out on the imperatives of justice and the rights of man. Gahamanyi defended Perraudin against the accusation that he helped assassinate Mwami Mutara, reiterating that Perraudin was closing a priest retreat in Nyakibanda when the Mwami died in Bujumbura. Gahamanyi also claimed that Perraudin condemned problematic political positions in all parties, from UNAR’s xenophobic nationalism to Aprosoma’s anti-Tutsi racism. Finally, Gahamanyi admitted that the missionary press took a strong position on social justice but argued that their writings did not in fact encourage revolution.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°731570, Manyurane to U.N. Visiting Commission, 10 March 1960.

¹³⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°738148, Gahamanyi to President of U.N. Trusteeship Council, 22 April 1960. Perraudin clearly prized this defense, including it as an annex in his autobiography (cf. Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 351-54). While some have speculated that Gahamanyi gave this testimony in exchange for a promised episcopal appointment, it appears that Perraudin did not initially recommend him to the Holy See in October 1960. As discussed below, Perraudin’s two initial episcopal nominations were both Hutu (cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°738375, Perraudin to Sigismondi, 24 Oct. 1960).

How convincing are these testimonies? Clearly some of UNAR's most extreme accusations are easier to parry. For example, there is little to no evidence that Perraudin ever advocated the ethnic zoning of the country; the White Fathers almost universally opposed such a plan. Likewise, UNAR documents themselves do not concur on the alleged conspiracy surrounding the Mwami's death; only one actually implicates Perraudin himself. And yet while little evidence exists to convict Perraudin of regicide, his defense is not exactly foolproof: Perraudin could have conspired in the Mwami's death without being physically present in Bujumbura. In addition, Perraudin's claims to have fired Kayibanda from Kinyamateka "as soon as the MSM undertook political activity" seem disingenuous, as the MSM was already organizing party meetings, building up local councils, and issuing manifestoes in 1957 and 1958. And yet Perraudin did not ask Kayibanda to step down until October 1959 when MSM reinvented itself as the Parmehutu party.¹³¹ Finally, it is perhaps unsurprising that Gahamanyi never addressed the accusation that Perraudin provided protection for Hutu political leaders. As noted above, even Adriaenssens and *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* thought as much.

While Perraudin defended himself in early 1960, he and other White Father leaders escalated their rhetorical attacks on UNAR, furthering the perception that UNAR stood at the root of all of Rwanda's political problems. This tone was set by Leo Volker, the superior general of the White Fathers. After saying relatively little in his late 1959 correspondence with Bigirumwami, Perraudin, and Van Hoof, Volker revealed his own views in a blistering

¹³¹ Even in a retrospective account delivered to his fellow White Fathers in 1989, Perraudin still implied that he made Kayibanda and Calliope Mulindahabi (who served as Perraudin's personal secretary in the late 1950s) choose between "their employment or politics." He does not specify when these conversations happened, however (A.D.K., André Perraudin, "Je rends grâce à Dieu" (25 Aug. 1989): 2).

January letter to Pierre Sigismondi, former apostolic nuncio to Belgian Congo and secretary for the Vatican congregation for the *Propagation of the Faith*.¹³² Here Volker accused UNAR of imagining that a few great families in Rwanda had a “divine right” to rule the country and that “racial superiority is inscribed by nature by the Creator.” He warned Sigismondi that UNAR would fight all who threatened its agenda, including the popular masses who had “become conscious of the abnormal state of inferiority in which they were maintained,” the Church whose social justice doctrines preached the “functional equality of all men,” and the Belgian Administration in whom the Hutu placed their hope. For Volker, UNAR’s means of lies, calumnies, and premeditated assassinations recalled the Nazi ideology attacked by Pius XI in his famous 1937 encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*.

Clearly UNAR deserved criticism. Party cadres launched premeditated assassinations of Hutu political leaders in November, and UNAR’s political rhetoric could rival Aprosoma in its unsubstantiated extremism. As we will see later in this chapter, UNAR’s armed incursions into Rwanda precipitated most of the worst ethnic violence in Rwanda in the early 1960s. In the words of one contemporary White Father familiar with Rwandan history, “UNAR were no angels.”¹³³ But again, what stands out here is the one-sided nature of Volker’s interpretation of Rwandan politics. For example, he did not criticize the Hutu rioters; rather he credited them with preventing a Nazi-style takeover by UNAR. “The riots, which have their origins in the provocations and cruelties exercised by this party in regard to the popular masses, have not given UNAR the time to realize its plan.” Even more

¹³² A.G.M.Afr.N°739034-36, Volker to Sigismondi, 3 Jan. 1960.

¹³³ [Anon], May 2009.

dangerously, Volker's hatred for UNAR led him to denigrate Rwanda's broader Tutsi refugee population. "These Batutsi, as we have seen in different camps of refugees organized by the Missions during the civil war, are devoid of all sensibilities or marks of Christian charity." And while commending Perraudin for his bravery, commitment to social justice, and unwavering defense of the church's spiritual mission, Volker painted Bigirumwami as an ideological sympathizer of UNAR. "The anti-Christian racism of UNAR (born of communism and benefitting from the sympathies of French-Masonry in the person of the high agents of the Administration) is assured of the sympathy and favor of Mgr. Bigirumwami who, blinded by the interests of his race, does not see the deeper tendencies of this party."¹³⁴ While Bigirumwami's critiques of UNAR were not as strident as his missionary colleagues, it would be difficult to paint him as a UNAR ideologue. Even the local Belgian Administrator in Nyundo did not suspect Bigirumwami of political partisanship, informing Van Hoof in March 1960 that "he was certain that (Bigirumwami) was not for anything."¹³⁵ Van Hoof himself told Volker later in 1960 that he retained "full confidence in Mgr. Bigirumwami, who is certainly a 'true Catholic man,' although he doesn't seem to understand anything about politics."¹³⁶

Volker's anti-UNAR sentiments reflected the convictions of Van Hoof and Perraudin, the two White Fathers who communicated most regularly with Rome. Van Hoof wrote in January 1960 that UNAR adherents were staying away from church and claimed that "the

¹³⁴ All of the above quotations are taken from A.G.M.Afr.N°739034, Volker to Sigismondi, 3 Jan. 1960.

¹³⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°727173, Van Hoof to Volker, 25 March 1960.

¹³⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°727177, Van Hoof to Volker, 14 April 1960.

facts that prove that UNAR is a subversive party multiply every day.”¹³⁷ As discussed above, Perraudin in February banned priests from supporting UNAR due to its *laïcist* program, communist sympathies, and attacks on the Catholic hierarchy.¹³⁸ The Diocese of Kabgayi’s annual report of June 1960 attributed the onset of violence in November to UNAR’s determination to “suppress the political leaders of the opposition.”¹³⁹ Perraudin went further in October, arguing that UNAR’s two principle foundations were communist-inspired “non-collaboration” and “a sort of Nazi racism” based on the alleged superiority of the Tutsi race over Hutu and Twa alike.¹⁴⁰ *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* shared this critique, highlighting UNAR’s alleged anti-clericalism and fascist methods.¹⁴¹

In contrast to their repeated diatribes against UNAR, the White Father leadership offered few critiques of Parmehutu. If anything, the scale of Parmehutu’s electoral victory in the summer of 1960 took the missionaries by surprise. Van Hoof claimed to be “stupefied” at Parmehutu’s rapid rise to political dominance, claiming that the church would be in deep pastoral trouble “if she had the evil of having the Hutu against her.”¹⁴² While expressing some concerns over the impact of Rwanda’s transformation into a one-party state, Van Hoof

¹³⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°727127, Van Hoof to Volker, 19 Jan. 1960.

¹³⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°720303, Abbé Massion, « Note sur la situation de l’église au Ruanda, » May 1960. “Laicism” referred to a government policy of disestablishing Catholic schools. Perhaps reflecting a sense that its anticlerical rhetoric risked losing popular support, a UNAR party congress in Uganda voted to continue a government partnership with Catholic schools in April 1960 (A.D.K., Joseph Rutsindintwarane to André Makarakiza (Bishop of Ngozi), 15 May 1960; A.D.K., UNAR, “Discours d’introduction au Congrès,” 17-18 April 1960).

¹³⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°738389, *Rapport Annuel 1959-1960*, Archdiocese of Kabgayi, 30 June 1960. While this Kabgayi annual report appears to reverse the order of events (implying that the Tutsi counter-revolution preceded the revolution), the document at least acknowledges other dimensions of the crisis, recognizing that in some areas the struggle was “purely racial, the Hutu driving out the Tutsi.”

¹⁴⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°738375, Perraudin to Sigismondi, 24 Oct. 1960.

¹⁴¹ “L’UNAR est-elle un danger ? » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 3 April 1960.

¹⁴² A.G.M.Afr.N°727169, Van Hoof to Volker, 15 July 1960.

never implicated Parmehutu in the mass ethnic cleansing going on in Rwanda during the spring and summer of 1960.¹⁴³ Perraudin expressed no reservations as the Parmehutu-dominated provisional government took office in October 1960. Even as he predicted that UNAR would form a government in exile, Perraudin confidently stated that “the movement of democratization should be irreversible, and the return to the political and social situation of another time should be unthinkable.”¹⁴⁴ By the end of the year, an increasingly optimistic Van Hoof wrote that the new regime’s commitment to social justice pointed to the “blossoming of a more authentic Christianity than that which we have ever known here in Rwanda.”¹⁴⁵

Again, Bigirumwami offered an important contrary voice. While the White Fathers were attacking UNAR and acquiescing to one-party Parmehutu rule as the manifest will of the people, Bigirumwami was publicly distancing himself from all parties. As early as March 1960, Bigirumwami castigated Rwanda’s political parties for dividing the country into partisan factions and inciting racial hate. “One searches in vain for a political party who, for love of their country, takes a categorical and true position for the pacification of its country.”¹⁴⁶ Unlike many of the White Fathers and his fellow indigenous clergy, Bigirumwami recognized the inherent risks that political affiliation posed to Catholic

¹⁴³ For example, Van Hoof had asked himself in March “if all of this were to come about and if the Hutu of all of Rwanda will not in the end chase the Tutsi from their homes” (A.G.M.Afr.N°727173, Van Hoof to Volker, 25 March 1960). He never attributes any blame here to the Hutu parties, even those like Parmehutu who advocated the ethnic zoning of the country.

¹⁴⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°738374, Perraudin to Sigismondi, 24 Oct. 1960.

¹⁴⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°727184, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 28 Dec. 1960.

¹⁴⁶ Aloys Bigirumwami, “Quel avenir?” In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=44 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

identity. His comments in a pastoral letter from June 1960 reflected Bigirumwami's growing skepticism concerning party politics.

The height of calamities is that parties are introduced into our communities. We should not be for one or the other. The political parties have intruded in our words, in our walking, in our visits, in our agitations, and even in our sermons in which we name the gospel....In this we give the impression of having joined the parties of Hutu and Tutsi, abandoning that which is of Jesus.¹⁴⁷

Bigirumwami never fully developed this inchoate vision of alternative Christian politics. This should not surprise us. As noted above, he was known for "not knowing anything about politics." But perhaps it was only a churchman who stood aloof from democratic politics who could see its inherent illusions and shadows. Bigirumwami recognized the risks that political and ethnic identities could pose to Christian solidarity. One looks in vain for similar warnings in the writings of Perraudin and other Catholic leaders of the time.

Bigirumwami's skepticism about national politics also stemmed from Rwanda's growing association of violence with democratic elections. Rwanda continued to suffer paroxysms of anti-Tutsi violence throughout 1960. These included the mass ethnic cleansings at Byumba and Nyundo during the U.N. Visiting Commission mission of March 1960, riots near Astrida in April 1960, and the reciprocal political violence of the electoral season of summer 1960.¹⁴⁸ The violence was increasingly dividing Catholic parishes along ethnic lines. During the weeks of violence in Byumba, for example, the parish's Hutu superiors refused to take in Tutsi refugees.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ The Belgian Administration's official mouthpiece, *Rudipresse*, noted that 500 Tutsi homes were burnt during the week of April 15, leading 3,000 to take refuge in at the missions of Gisagara and Mugombwa. They traced the causes of the violence not to Hutu agitation, but rather to Tutsi refusal to accept a Belgian DDT program (A.D.K., *Rudipresse* n°166, 23 April 1960).

¹⁴⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°727173, Van Hoof to Volker, 25 March 1960.

To their credit, Bigirumwami, Perraudin and even Van Hoof all spoke out against the pillaging, arson, and murder that afflicted Rwanda in 1960. Perraudin went further in March 1960 than he had in November 1959, calling for more refugee aid and stating that the guilty faced a “grave duty” to “make reparation for the injustices that they have committed.”¹⁵⁰ His actions also supported the rhetoric, as Perraudin paid multiple visits to refugee populations in Janja, Nemba, Runaba, Rwambuba and Nyamata while also establishing a new bureau of assistance for refugees.¹⁵¹ For a period, he even appeared to recognize the risk of conflating “UNAR” with “Tutsi” in the popular mind.¹⁵² For his part, Van Hoof described the violence of March 1960 as “nasty Hutu riots against the Tutsi,” expressing empathy for the “poor Batutsi” who comprised the vast majority of the victims. And yet even here Van Hoof cast more blame on Tutsi intransigence rather than the Hutu perpetrators themselves. “These poor Batutsi, betrayed by blind leaders who cannot accept the new situation created by the revolt of the Bahutu, are in the end going to be expelled from all the corners of Rwanda”¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ André Perraudin, “Appel pressant et angoissé, » 14 March 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=42 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010). See also the accompanying “Prayer for Rwanda” that Perraudin asked to be recited in all parishes (André Perraudin, “Prière pour le Rwanda,” 15 March 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=43 (accessed 11 Nov. 2010).

¹⁵¹ The Diocese of Kabgayi archives contains the meeting minutes from the first gathering of *Secours catholique ruandais*, Rwanda’s new refugee outreach ministry. Later in the 1960s this operation merged with Caritas, the Catholic Church’s international relief agency, and partnered with the U.S. Bishops’ aid group Catholic Relief Services (cf. A.D.K., « Secours Catholique Ruandais, » 22 April 1960 ; A.D.K., Depienne, “Secours catholique ruandais, » 2 May 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°738390, *Rapport Annuel 1959-60*, Archdiocese of Kabgayi, 30 June 1960).

¹⁵² “He (Perraudin) has more than one time insisted that his warning against UNAR was not a warning against the Tutsi but that it was since he loved the Tutsi that he issued the warning against the party, who pretended to be their guardians...In the face of all these facts, the accusation made against Perraudin as a man of the Hutu and enemy of the Tutsi is much too simplistic.” (A.G.M.Afr.N°720307, Jean Massion, « Note sur la situation de l’église au Ruanda, » May 1960)

¹⁵³ A.G.M.Afr.N°727177, Van Hoof to Volker, 14 April 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°727142, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 20 March 1960.

But while all of Rwanda's church leaders expressed regret at Rwanda's ethnic violence, Bigirumwami probed further in exploring the deeper reasons for the violence. Rather than just blame one factor like UNAR provocation or communist propaganda, Bigirumwami cast a wide net, citing the abuses of customary chiefs, Hutu provocateurs "looking to oppose Hutu and Tutsi and to separate them," years of destructive media propaganda, and ignorant arsonists claiming to act on the Mwami's orders.¹⁵⁴ Bigirumwami also turned the critique on himself and the church, questioning the seeming failure of Christian discipleship in Rwanda. While the writings of Perraudin and other White Father leaders offered little in the way of self-critical introspection, Bigirumwami saw Rwanda's violence as a direct contradiction of the nation's supposed consecration to Christ the King. Thus Bigirumwami wrote in January 1960 that the "worst calamity" in Rwanda's recent history was that "the propagators of evils of which I have spoken, were not pagans, nor notorious apostates who had abandoned Christianity, but rather Christians who were known as good models among others."¹⁵⁵ Bigirumwami rejected the commonplace notion that Rwanda's violence was inevitable in light of its stratified political history, that the "irresistible will" of the "unchained masses" produced at worst a "necessary evil" and at best a "just social vengeance."¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Bigirumwami, "La pire des calamités: persévéré dans le mal, » 25 Jan. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=37 (accessed 13 Nov. 2010); Bigirumwami, "Etre prudent et nous taire, ou parler à temps et à contretemps ? » 27 Jan. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=38, (accessed 13 Nov. 1960).

¹⁵⁵ Aloys Bigirumwami, "La pire des calamités: persévéré dans le mal, » 25 Jan. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=37 (accessed 13 Nov. 2010).

¹⁵⁶ Aloys Bigirumwami, "Quel avenir?" 25 March 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=44 (accessed 13 Nov. 2010). See also Bigirumwami, « Voir, juger, agir," 22 Jan. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=36 (accessed 13 Nov. 2010).

While Perraudin tended to focus on clerical behavior, Bigirumwami saw Rwanda's violence as a challenge to the very identity of the church. Perraudin could be quite eloquent in his calls on clergy to live into their vocations. "Open your eyes, do not make concession to error or lies, fight against false rumors and calumnies, practice and preach justice and charity. We are the Church, that is to say ministers of God who are all for all, marking only our predilection for the poorest and most suffering. *Beati pacifici!*"¹⁵⁷ Yet his writings rarely hold lay Christians accountable for their sins, particularly in political life. In contrast, for Bigirumwami the church consisted of not just clerical elites but the whole community of the baptized. "You are children of Rwanda and children of the Church...you have always been brothers...you are more than brothers since you have received baptism which has made you children of God and of the Church."¹⁵⁸ In this sense, I would argue that Bigirumwami the supposed Tutsi paternalist was in fact the least paternalistic of all of Rwanda's Catholic leaders in 1960. Bigirumwami would not excuse his fellow Rwandans as illiterate peasants when they asked priests in the confessional "if killing or wounding a Tutsi is a sin." Rather, he questioned how they had learned to think that way – and why church leaders had not already corrected such misperceptions. In summary, Bigirumwami's ecclesiology envisioned the church as "perfect people faithful to the commandments of God and the Church" rather than "one who calls himself Tutsi" or "one who calls himself Hutu."¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ A.D.K., Perraudin, Circ. N°24, 21 Sept. 1960.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Aloys Bigirumwami, "Echo à un pressant appel de Rome, » 10 June 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=46 (accessed 13 Nov. 2010).

Unfortunately for Bigirumwami, the Rwandan Catholic Church itself was breaking up over these very terms. The Hutu-Tutsi cleavage that had already divided Rwandan politics and society threatened those entrusted to lead the post-colonial church – Rwanda’s priests and seminarians. It is to this story that we now turn.

E. An epicenter radiating tensions: The Hutu-Tutsi division splits the church

While the hierarchy maintained a unified public voice and the institutions of the church held together through 1959, ethnic and political pressures exerted a more visible toll on Catholic unity during 1960. This was particularly evident in the areas of seminary life and episcopal appointments. If not accurate in the late 1950s, Mamdani’s description of the Rwandan Catholic Church as not just a “passive mirror reflecting tensions...(but) more of an epicenter radiating tensions” aptly described the Catholic Church of 1960.¹⁶⁰

On the surface, one could have concluded that the Catholic Church was moving from strength to strength. Its numbers remained robust as the Catholic population of Kabgayi diocese grew from 560,000 to over 600,000 between 1959 and 1960. Rwanda had a record 600 minor seminarians and over 100 major seminarians, including 38 new Nyakibanda students for the 1959-60 academic year. Easter communion rates continued to surpass 80%. In 1960 Perraudin and Bigirumwami both received the bishop’s *pallium*, signifying the transformation of these mission territories into local churches. As Perraudin wrote in January 1960, Rwanda was witnessing a “magnificent hour” in its religious history.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 226.

¹⁶¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°739393, *Rapport Annuel 1959-60*, Archdiocese of Kabgayi, 30 June 1960 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°731388-89, *Rapport Annuel de Nyakibanda*, 21 Sept. 1960 ; André Perraudin, “Consigne

This “magnificent hour” had its shadows, however. First, priestly vocations were struggling to keep up with the growing Catholic population. Only two priests were ordained in 1960 while an additional 16 either left Rwanda or left the priesthood.¹⁶² Second, many Tutsi seminarians were struggling with the impact of the revolution, having seen family members and teachers exiled because of their Tutsi identity. Third, while lay sacramental practice remained strong, confessions and baptisms had declined since the late 1950s in large part due to political tensions. In the words of the Kabgayi annual report, “many believe that their political options stop them from communing, and they do not dare to confess.” The decline was especially notable among Tutsi elites, the population that had initiated the famous 1930s *tornado*. “Many of our Tutsi Christians have not practiced since the events of November,” reflecting a “mistrust for religion, the Church, priests, and a penchant towards Protestantism which supports UNAR.”¹⁶³ While Perraudin would become notable for his ecumenical outreach, the colonial association between Protestantism and political dissent remained strong, especially during the revolutionary years when the Anglican Church embraced UNAR’s social analysis.

After a brief decline in late 1959 and early 1960, Hutu pastoral practice began to revive in Rwanda’s Catholic parishes. In order to keep these Hutu coming to church, the White Fathers saw the appointment of a Hutu bishop as a pastoral imperative. As the nation’s political and business capital, Kigali remained the likeliest center for Rwanda’s third diocese,

d’union,” *Trait d’Union*, Jan. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=35 (accessed 13 Nov. 2010).

¹⁶² A.G.M.Afr.N°739393, *Rapport Annuel 1959-60*, Archdiocese of Kabgayi, 30 June 1960. The subsequent material is also drawn from this annual report (pp. 393-403).

¹⁶³ A.G.M.Afr.N°738395-97, Diocese of Kabgayi, *Rapport Annuel 1959-60*.

and since 1957 the White Fathers had been working with the Holy See to draft plans for an Archdiocese of Kigali. There were several potential roadblocks, however. First, since Tutsi elites had dominated the priesthood since the 1930s, Rwanda lacked credible Hutu candidates for the episcopate. Second, Kigali was home to a large concentration of Tutsi economic and political leaders and displaced Tutsi from other parts of Rwanda, making the imposition of a Hutu bishop politically difficult. Perhaps reflecting these concerns, the Holy See took the Kigali option off the table in February 1960. Three months later, the Vatican released revised plans to establish two new dioceses in Rwanda – one based at Ruhengeri in the northern mountains, the other in Astrida (Butare), the nation’s intellectual center in southern Rwanda. Perraudin admitted that these plans modified the 1957 vision in light of “recent events” and “factors of religious sociology,” including the newfound importance of “confiding an ecclesiastical jurisdiction to a bishop of the Hutu race.”¹⁶⁴

Perraudin himself continually pushed for the appointment of a Hutu bishop. Before departing for his 1960 *ad limina* visit to Rome, Perraudin sent a letter to *Propaganda Fide* nominating two Hutu priests to fill the new positions. Perraudin expected the nominations to provoke some discontent among the Tutsi-dominated clergy but argued that Hutu appointments were imperative in light of rising Hutu political power.

One must not forget...that there is already a Tutsi Bishop in the person of His Excellence Mgr. Bigirumwami, that the population of Rwanda is 85% Hutu, and that the Hutu parties are practically in power. I fear strongly that a Tutsi Bishop would be poorly accepted, and he could find himself in an extremely pitiful situation...I think, on the contrary, that the Hutu Bishops could have much influence in the years to come.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°738102, Cauwe to Perraudin, 9 Feb. 1960 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°739015-032, “Renseignements concernant Erection d’une nouvelle juridiction ecclésiastique dite Diocèse de Ruhengeri, Diocèse d’Astrida, et Diocèse de Nyundo, » 19 May 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°739007-08, Perraudin to Propaganda Fide, 20 May 1960.

¹⁶⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°738375, Perraudin to Sigismondi, 24 Oct. 1960.

Neither the racist instigator of UNAR mythology nor the disinterested churchman committed solely to “charity above all things,” Perraudin emerges here as a consummate ecclesial politician, positioning the church for future growth by ensuring that its leadership reflected Rwanda’s shifting political and ethnic tides. In this regard Perraudin carried forward the legacy of León Classe; Rwanda’s ethnic political equation had simply changed between 1930 and 1960.

Rising mistrust between Bigirumwami and White Father missionaries contributed to these tensions over future episcopal appointments. Bigirumwami brought this issue into the public eye with a July 1960 pastoral letter to clergy in Nyundo diocese.¹⁶⁶ Calling the missionaries our “fathers in the faith,” Bigirumwami reminded missionaries that priests should never separate means from ends. Namely, democracy and social justice should not arrive via “hate, division, fire, deaths, or pillaging.” Nor should missionaries speak ill of local priests or favor one ethnic group over another. Standing above Rwanda’s ethnic divides, missionaries should rather serve as “our advocates, our arbiters, our judges, and our liberators” while fighting against ethnicism, communism, materialism, paganism, and anarchy. Bigirumwami’s letter served as an unusually public rebuke to the White Fathers in Rwanda. It seems that Perraudin took note, reminding his priests in an early September circular that they “do not have the right to demolish the reputation of a neighbor especially when that neighbor is a brother in the priesthood” and that a priest can fall into mortal sin

¹⁶⁶ Aloys Bigirumwami, “Soyez missionnaires, » 24 July 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=48 (accessed 15 Nov. 2010).

through unholy conversation marked by lies, mistrust, and criticism.¹⁶⁷ Even the Holy See stepped into the fray, reminding both indigenous and foreign clergy of their duties to maintain fraternal unity and direct their mission towards the “glory of God and the salvation of souls.”¹⁶⁸

Bigirumwami followed this public critique with a stinging private censure of the White Fathers in August 1960. After recounting Rwanda’s months of fire, expulsions, massacres, and surveillance, Bigirumwami wondered how so many missionaries could support such things in the name of “normal evolution,” “justice,” or “social vengeance.” “I am suffering cruelly when I think that many Europeans and missionaries find this normal, indifferent, or perfectly good. I am more and more convinced that certain European and African conceptions are not the same, and I do not admit that evil means justify the end.”¹⁶⁹ When the White Fathers failed to respond to Bigirumwami, he requested a neutral arbiter from the Holy See to combat what he termed a “conspiracy of inaction.”¹⁷⁰ This dialogue reminds us that while most White Fathers did not explicitly sanction anti-Tutsi violence, they all too often tolerated it, particularly since Hutu elites were notable for their opposition to communism, support for Catholic privileges, and commitment to democracy and social justice. While still embracing the political changes offered by the Hutu social revolution,

¹⁶⁷ André Perraudin, “Surveillez votre Cœur et votre langue, » 8 Sept. 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=50 (accessed 15 Nov. 2010).

¹⁶⁸ Cardinal Sigismondi and Cardinal Agagianian, secretary and prefect of *Propaganda Fide*, signed the 10 June 1960 letter, addressing this to both Perraudin and Bigirumwami. Cf. Aloys Bigirumwami, “Echo à un pressant appel de Rome, » 10 June 1960. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=46 (accessed 15 Nov. 2010).

¹⁶⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°740239-41, Bigirumwami to Volker, 30 Aug. 1960.

¹⁷⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°740244, Volker to Bigirumwami, 29 Nov. 1960.

even Alphonse Van Hoof admitted that some White Fathers had “not always been sufficiently understanding...in regards to those who have suffered from the revolution.”¹⁷¹

If the analytical divisions between Bigirumwami and the White Fathers became increasingly apparent in 1960, this is in part because Rwanda's ethnic tensions were undermining Nyakibanda major seminary. While Nyakibanda remained tense if relatively calm during the November 1959 troubles,¹⁷² student relations at the seminary deteriorated during 1960, and this was taking a toll on vocations. 85 students – 55 Tutsi and 30 Hutu – started the 1959-60 academic year. Over the next twelve months, 29 seminarians departed Nyakibanda. An additional 16 seminarians quit during the first three months of the 1960-61 year. Many of these seminarians were Tutsi who accused their White Father professors of favoring Nyakibanda's Hutu students. Other leavers came from the seminary's Hutu minority, claiming they had no place in a seminary dominated by Tutsi ideology.¹⁷³

In light of this crisis of both vocations and perceptions, Nyakibanda's rector, Fr. Paul Baers, prepared a special report on “the state of the spirit of the seminary.” In drafting his report, Baers solicited input from professors and seminarians alike. What followed was a deluge of complaints, diatribes, and testimonies centering on the Hutu-Tutsi cleavage at Nyakibanda. Three major themes emerge in this literature: 1) the presence in the seminary of a virulent form of Hutu nationalism marked by zero-sum ethnic stereotyping; 2) missionary concerns for preserving Hutu vocations in light of Rwanda's shifting political terrain; and 3)

¹⁷¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°727180, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 1 Sept. 1960.

¹⁷² Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°731351-58, *Rapport de la Réunion annuelle des Ordinaires ayant des Séminaristes à Nyakibanda*, 6 Nov. 1959 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°741103, Manyurane to Parents, 8 Dec. 1959; A.G.M.Afr.N°731139-40, Nothomb to Volker, 23 Dec. 1959.

¹⁷³ A.G.M.Afr.N°731163, Baers to Volker, 3 April 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°731485, Baers, “D'état d'Esprit du Séminaire, » 12 Nov. 1960.

a major divergence between Bishop Bigirumwami and Rector Baers on how to resolve the seminary's ethnic problems.

First, this correspondence is marked by an especially strong strand of ethnic nationalism. On one level, this reflected the continuation of the longtime Nyakibanda current of Rwandan nationalism, primarily supported by Tutsi seminarians who favored Rwanda's traditional institutions and suspected all outside influence. One recalls here the successful purge of Burundian and Congolese seminarians in the early 1950s. The new current in 1960 was provided by a growing population of Hutu seminarians from northern Rwanda. Reflecting the historic independence of their region, these northern Hutu were much less inclined to adapt to what they called the "fully Tutsified" culture of Nyakibanda. In the words of one seminarian, "it is impossible to change what to us is essential; it would seem to us a betrayal....there is a logical impossibility of sincere entente between Tutsi and *true Hutu*."¹⁷⁴ This rhetoric of "true Hutu" helped the northern seminarians explain why all Hutu seminarians did not yet share their views: their minds had not yet been illuminated to see the reality of their oppression. In this spirit, these seminarians rejected missionary calls for fraternal unity, arguing that this would only lead to the "depersonalization" of the Hutu seminarian as he acquiesced to Tutsi cultural norms. Rather than fraternal unity, these Hutu seminarians called on the church to encourage peaceful coexistence between Hutu and Tutsi based on mutual respect. In the words of one Hutu seminarian, the Tutsi needed to recognize

¹⁷⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°731460, 463, Gabriel Serugendo to Baers, 4 Nov. 1960 (emphases in text).

that “the Hutu are men, that they have personalities.”¹⁷⁵ The more measured words of Hutu professor Bernard Manyurane captured the same sentiment. “The Hutu wants also to be himself; he no longer wants to be dominated, nor to be influenced by his Tutsi brother; he wants to be his equal.”¹⁷⁶ This process entailed recognizing what one White Father professor termed the “instinctual differences” between Hutu and Tutsi, rejecting the perceived Tutsi predilection towards flattery, egoism and insincerity.¹⁷⁷

As ethnic nationalism became a dominant ideological presence in the seminary, Rector Baers and his allies grew increasingly concerned about the potential loss of Hutu vocations.¹⁷⁸ This reflected a growing pastoral concern that the Tutsi-dominated Rwandan church would be disadvantaged and even persecuted in a Hutu-dominated state. In the face of this prospect, one author went so far as to encourage Tutsi seminarians to “present themselves in the manner of Hutu so that they will be received by the population of that race.”¹⁷⁹ So while Baers explained the departure of Tutsi seminarians as a necessary evil to forestall the ordination of “political priests,” he described the departure of one-third of the

¹⁷⁵ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°731466, Denis Nbabagi to Baers, “La formation du clergé indigène au Rwanda, » 6 Nov. 1960. For similar sentiments, see A.G.M.Afr.N°731453, Claude Bahistan to Baers, 8 Nov. 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°731468, Jean Mwambari to Baers, 14 Nov. 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°731457, Beluhungiseh to Baers, Nov. 1960. In this correspondence, these seminarians express continual frustrations over the Tutsi’s failure to recognize Hutu agency; Tutsi even attribute Hutu insurrections to European manipulation.

¹⁷⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°731500, Bernard Manyurane, “L’Esprit Actuel du Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda, » 12 Nov. 1960.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°731470, Paul Feys to Baers, “Rapport sur la tension existant au Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda, » Nov. 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°731460-61, Gabriel Serugendo to Baers, 4 Nov. 1960; A.G.M.Afr.N°731458, Beluhungiseh to Baers, Nov. 1960.

¹⁷⁸ Baers’s allies at the seminary included Paul Feys, Bernard Manyurane, and Leopold Vermeersch. Perraudin refused to take sides in November 1960 but came out in favor of Baers in early 1961. The Burundian André Makarakiza, Tutsi professor Deogratias Mbandiwimfura, and the two new Sulpicians, Frs. Renier and Müller, were more sympathetic to the Tutsi seminarians and could count on the strong support of Bigirumwami.

¹⁷⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°731381, [Anon.], “Le problème de la formation sacerdotale au Séminaire de Nyakibanda, » Nov. 1960.

Hutu seminarians as a “pastoral crisis.” He also worried about the “danger of a future violent anti-clericalism” if Tutsi priests did not adapt to the new social and political reality facing them in Rwanda. “Without Hutu priests, what is the future of the Church in Rwanda?”¹⁸⁰

Finally, while Catholic leaders nearly all concurred that there was a crisis at Nyakibanda,¹⁸¹ they differed on how to resolve it. Possible solutions included dividing the students into separate classes according to ethnicity, establishing a new seminary for each diocese, separating philosophy and theology students, or closing the seminary for an interim period. Led by Baers, a slim majority of Nyakibanda professors advocated for closing the seminary “to bring about important purifications in the ranks of Tutsi seminarians.” The White Fathers would then reopen the seminary later in 1961 with a more equitable ethnic balance.¹⁸²

This debate in turn reflected Catholic leaders’ contrasting analyses of Rwandan society. For Paul Baers, the Hutu seminarians had realized that Rwanda’s traditional society offered a “fallacious regime of unity and concord which required the Hutu to sacrifice his rights.” Thanks to the “social doctrine of the Church based on the rights of the human person,” the Hutu were now rightfully demanding that Tutsi respect Hutu “valor and

¹⁸⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°731481, Paul Baers, « D’état d’Esprit du Séminaire, » 12 Nov. 1960 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°731611, Baers to Bigirumwami, 14 Nov. 1960. For similar sentiments, cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°731522, Donat Murego, “La vie du Séminaire Vue et Vécue par les Séminaristes, » Dec. 1960.

¹⁸¹ The Nyundo priest and professor Deogratias Mbandiwimfura was an important exception. In an early November letter to Baers, he claimed that “the spirit of paternalism on the part of Tutsi seminarians towards the Hutu seminarians for me does not exist here in the major seminary.” He attributed the controversy to the intrusion of national politics into the seminary (A.G.M.Afr.N°731610, Deogratias Mbandiwimfura, « Conseil du Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda, » 9 Nov. 1960).

¹⁸² A.G.M.Afr.N°731398, Paul Baers, “L’évolution de l’état d’esprit des Séminaristes depuis la visite du T.R. Père General, » 17 April 1961.

respectability.”¹⁸³ Bernard Manyurane agreed, claiming that thanks to Catholic social teaching, the Muhutu was no longer satisfied with “serving others” and had “become conscious of his human personality” and “right to full participation in public life.”¹⁸⁴ In contrast, Bigirumwami saw the crisis as stemming from the “virus” of ethnicism introduced by scheming politicians and their missionary allies. Closing the seminary would only sacrifice the church to the “demons” which had already divided the Rwandan polity, obliterating a church that had been the “the pearl of Africa” and the “joy and the glory of the White Fathers.”¹⁸⁵ Unable to agree on a future course in November 1960, Catholic leaders postponed a final decision on Nyakibanda’s future until January 1961.

In essence, the divisions at Nyakibanda reflected a deeper crisis of trust inside the Rwandan church. Tutsi seminarians spoke openly about the “incompetent” and “inopportune” nature of Perraudin’s *Letter on Charity*, suspecting that missionaries had “created a problem that did not exist” to curry favor with the new government.¹⁸⁶ For their part, Hutu students claimed that their professors looked down on them and ignored their presence. A Nyakibanda professor traced the crisis to the age-old problems of disobedience and “incomprehension” between black and white priests.¹⁸⁷ Bigirumwami himself no longer trusted the seminary’s White Father leadership, calling in November 1960 for Baers’s

¹⁸³ A.G.M.Afr.N°731478, Paul Baers, « D’état d’Esprit du Séminaire, » 12 Nov. 1960.

¹⁸⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°731498-99, Bernard Manyurane, « L’Esprit Actuel du Grand Séminaire de Nyakibanda, » 12 Nov. 1960.

¹⁸⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°731502-03, Bigirumwami to Baers, 14 Nov. 1960.

¹⁸⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°731381, [Anon.], “Le problème de la formation sacerdotale au Séminaire de Nyakibanda, » Nov. 1960. Baers admitted that Perraudin’s application of Catholic social doctrine to Rwanda’s social context had “hardened” many Tutsi priests, undermining the “cordial and sincere attachment to their bishop” essential to the Catholic priesthood (A.G.M.Afr.N°731482, Baers, “D’état d’Esprit du Séminaire,” 12 Nov. 1960).

¹⁸⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°731473, L. Vermeersch, “Réflexions au sujet du rapport fait par le R.P. Baers, » Nov. 1960.

resignation.¹⁸⁸ As Baers himself recognized, most Tutsi clergy and seminarians no longer believed that the White Fathers “could comprehend what is truly good and opportune for the Banyarwanda.”¹⁸⁹ Reflecting the deep mistrust that pervaded Rwandan society at the end of 1960, the crisis of Nyakibanda seminary would continue through 1961 and beyond.

While 1959 appears at first glance as the chronological turning point in Rwandan church politics, I would argue that 1960 established the long-term pattern of Catholic engagement with Rwandan political and ethnic questions. 1959 garnered more headlines, beginning with Perraudin’s February *Letter on Charity* and ending with the mass ethnic cleansing of November. But Catholic leaders maintained broad unity throughout all of these events, gathering at the August 1959 Nyakibanda synod, issuing joint condemnations of UNAR and Aprosoma in September and October, and quickly denouncing the violence of November 1959. Mission stations served as places of sanctuary during the November revolution, and Nyakibanda seminary did not yet show signs of serious ethnic strife.

The real cleavages emerged, then, in 1960. It was in this year that Bigirumwami broke privately and publicly with the White Fathers. It was also in 1960 that Perraudin adopted a unilateral opposition to UNAR while accepting Parmehutu’s rise to power. It was in 1960 that Catholic parishes became contested sites of ethnic violence and that Nyakibanda seminary divided along a Hutu-Tutsi axis. 1960 saw Bigirumwami’s more prophetic stance against the Rwandan state emerge in contrast to Perraudin’s renewed emphasis on church-

¹⁸⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°731615-16, Bigirumwami, “Réflexions et commentaires de S.E. Mgr. Bigirumwami sur la situation du Grand Séminaire et la solution proposée, » Nov. 1960.

¹⁸⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°731483, Baers, “D’état d’Esprit du Séminaire,” 12 Nov. 1960.

state collaboration. Historians have argued that 1960 marked a decisive transition in Rwanda's secular politics – a year which began with Mwami Kigeli still in power ended with Gregoire Kayibanda leading a Parmehutu-dominated government. The transformation was no less radical for Catholic politics in Rwanda. In turn, the patterns established in 1960 continued through independence in 1962, as we will see in the final section of this chapter.

F. From Gitarama to Independence: Rwandan politics in 1961 & 1962

As discussed above, the United Nations and Belgium agreed at the beginning of January 1961 to a political compromise in which Belgium would delay legislative elections until June, offer separate referendums on the monarchy and Rwandan independence, and institute a more inclusive transitional government in Rwanda. A power-sharing government including the Mwami and UNAR exiles seemed possible. Hopes were such that Mwami Kigeli began preparations to return to Rwanda in February.¹⁹⁰

On January 28, however, Hutu elites took matters into their own hands. Kayibanda, Gitera and Bicomumpaka gathered over 2,800 of Rwanda's 3,125 burgomasters for an impromptu national assembly at Gitarama, Parmehutu's political base in central Rwanda which lay a mere three kilometers from Perraudin's see at Kabgayi. 25,000 Rwandans rallied outside the convention hall in support. Inspired by Gitera's rousing oratory, the assembly abolished the monarchy, replaced the Kalinga drums with a new national flag, and unilaterally declared Rwanda to be a democratic republic. Since the assembly split regionally

¹⁹⁰ The following political history is drawn from Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 289-310; Kalibwami, *Le Catholicisme*, 494-505; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 188-94; Murego, *La Révolution Rwandaise*, 959-65. Specific primary sources are listed in the subsequent footnotes.

on whether to elect Kayibanda, Gitera, or Bicamumpaka as president, the delegates settled on Dominique Mbonyumutwa, the symbolic victim of the November 1959 violence. Belgian para-commandos stood guard outside the assembly. While he initially denied Belgian involvement in the coup, Logiest later admitted that Kayibanda approached him on January 25 to gain his approval.¹⁹¹ The declaration of Rwanda as a republic met with rejoicing across the country, especially in Parmehutu strongholds like Ruhengeri where the massive crowds included a substantial number of missionaries and religious sisters.¹⁹²

What came to be known as the “*coup d’état de Gitarama*” ratified the Parmehutu-dominated political order which emerged from the November 1959 violence. It took Brussels only four days to offer official recognition to Rwanda’s *de facto* authorities, and in early February Mbonyumutwa embarked on a three-week goodwill tour of Rwanda in an effort to take the symbolic place of the Mwami. Notwithstanding a U.N. commission declaration in March that “one racist dictatorship had been replaced by another” and an overwhelming U.N. General Assembly condemnation of the Gitarama coup in April,¹⁹³ the U.N. agreed to move forward with expected referendums on the republic and the monarchy in September 1961. Further marginalized by the Gitarama events, UNAR suffered from internal divisions, split between a Kigali wing which agreed to contest the forthcoming elections and an exile community which wholly rejected Rwanda’s new political institutions. Facilitated in part by a Belgian decision in July to release over 3,000 political prisoners, violence increased in the run-up to the September elections. Summer clashes between Parmehutu, Aprosoya and

¹⁹¹ Logiest, *Mission au Rwanda*, 189-90.

¹⁹² A.G.M.Afr.N°720315, *IMVAHO – Bulletin d’information bi-mensuel* 33 (28 Feb. 1961).

¹⁹³ Belgium was the only dissenting vote against U.N. Resolution 1605 declaring the Gitarama coup as an illegal transfer of power (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 297).

UNAR partisans in southern Rwanda killed hundreds, destroyed over 3,000 homes and produced over 22,000 refugees. Political overtones marked the seemingly ethnic violence, from UNAR voter intimidation in the east to Parmehutu clashes with Aprosuma supporters in the south. In the meantime, increasing numbers of Rwandan Tutsi fled the country all together. By the end of 1961, 18,000 had taken refuge in Burundi and 20,000 in Uganda. Even *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* published an article on the refugee crisis, its first on the topic since November 1959.¹⁹⁴

The September 25 legislative elections ratified Parmehutu's political mandate. In fact, Parmehutu's share of the vote rose from 70% in the July 1960 elections to nearly 80% in September 1961. Rejecting the advice of its external wing, the internal UNAR party contested the elections and came second with 17% of the vote. In turn, the elections eliminated Aprosuma and Rader as significant political movements. In a concurrent referendum on the Mwami, the Rwandan people rejected the institution of the monarchy by a 4 to 1 ratio, showing just how much ideological development Rwanda had undergone from the November 1959 days when Hutu incendiaries claimed to be acting at the behest of Mwami Kigeli. In late October the Parmehutu-dominated national assembly replaced President Mbonyumutwa with Gregoire Kayibanda. Belgium approved Rwanda's new political institutions in December 1961. In February 1962, UNAR agreed to recognize the new government in exchange for two cabinet positions. Shortly thereafter, the U.N. finally

¹⁹⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°727244, Van Hoof to Volker, 15 Nov. 1961; A.D.K., Dejemeppe to Moeremans d'Emaus, 22 Feb. 1961; "17,234 réfugiés Rwandais arrivent en Uganda," *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, 26 Nov. 1961. The summer 1961 violence produced much higher refugee numbers than the disturbances of 1959 and 1960.

recognized Rwanda's new government while still calling for greater political reconciliation and reintegration of refugees.

While Rwanda was achieving a measure of institutional stability in early 1962, it was also developing the trappings of a police state. Belgian and Rwandan troops patrolled nearly every road and park in the country, imposing a night curfew on travel. Prominent personalities like Fr. Alexis Kagame and Joseph Gitera remained under house arrest – Kagame for his alleged association with UNAR, Gitera for his December 1961 decision to join a common front against Parmehutu.¹⁹⁵ Despite these security efforts, UNAR commando raids in early 1962 led to the deaths of several Belgian tourists and local government officials in the northern town of Byumba. In response, Byumba Hutu unleashed a genocidal massacre at the end of March 1962. Over the course of three nights, local Hutu militias killed between 1,000 and 3,000 mostly male Tutsi in Byumba and the surrounding hills. Belgian paratroopers and Rwandan soldiers restored order after several days, but Rwanda's political violence had taken a foreboding turn. Forced displacement had given way to ethnic massacre.¹⁹⁶

Despite the terror of Byumba, preparations for independence continued apace.

Republican Rwanda and monarchical Burundi agreed to part ways in the months preceding

¹⁹⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°727263, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 20 Feb. 1962. Kagame had nationalist sympathies and is rightly seen as the godfather of the 1930s-40s school of Rwandan Christian nationalism. He also had problems, however, with some of UNAR's tactics. In March 1960 testimony to the U.N. Visiting Commission, Kagame described Rwanda's major parties as "more or less totalitarian" and claimed that "forms of European democracy do not have any basis in our culture" (A. Kagame, "Point de vue d'abbé Kagame, Astrida, 13 March 1960)," *Dialogue* 183 (Dec. 2007): 56).

¹⁹⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°727292, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 3 April 1962; A.G.M.Afr.N°738254, Boutry to Volker, 5 April 1962; A.G.M.Afr.N°727276, Van Hoof to Tiquet, 14 May 1962. The final death total remains uncertain; sources cite between 500 and 3,000 dead. The militia targeted men and mostly spared women and children. I would agree with Mamdani that it was not the November revolution but the violence of 1962 which "opened the gateway to a blood-soaked political future for Rwanda" (Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers*, 130).

independence, breaking the European amalgamation of “Ruanda-Urundi” which the Germans had first initiated at the beginning of the century. On July 1, 1962, Rwanda formally declared its independence from Belgium. Flanked by Archbishop Perraudin and Belgium’s first ambassador, Guy Logiest, Kayibanda offered an inaugural address in which he thanked the Catholic missions for their “civilizing influence,” praised Belgium’s four decades of political stewardship, and trumpeted Rwanda’s new credo of “liberty, cooperation, and progress.” With Bigirumwami at his side, Perraudin thanked God for the “gift of independence” and proclaimed that “on this memorable day, the Church rejoices with the entire country.”¹⁹⁷ Whatever its outward display of rhetorical unity, however, Rwanda’s Catholic leadership did not yet share a common vision on how to respond to Rwanda’s emerging post-colonial paradigm.

G. Catholic reactions to Rwandan political developments, 1961-1962

While Rwanda moved ever closer towards independence in a political climate of rising inter-ethnic violence, the Catholic hierarchy continued to exercise its political voice. In their public speeches and private correspondence, Perraudin and Bigirumwami spoke out on the ideological risks facing Rwanda, the appropriate posture which the church should adopt towards the post-colonial Rwandan state, and the root causes of the nation’s growing violence. While both lamented Rwanda’s growing cultural of political violence, Perraudin and Bigirumwami continued to disagree on what precipitated the violence and the extent to

¹⁹⁷ « Message de Monsieur Kayibanda, Président de la République Rwandaise à l’occasion des fêtes de l’indépendance du Rwanda, » *Trait d’Union* 22 (July 1962) : 155-65 ; Perraudin, « Sermon à la fête de l’indépendance, » *Trait d’Union* 22 (July 1962) : 153-55.

which the church should continue to cultivate the state as a partner in the construction of Christian civilization.

As intimated above, Rwanda suffered from a growing climate of political intimidation and violence in 1961 and 1962.¹⁹⁸ As had been the case in November 1959, March 1960 and July 1960, the violence grew out of a combustible mixture of electoral politics and ethno-political mobilization. After a brief period of relative stability in late 1960 and early 1961, the summer electoral season of 1961 saw Rwanda's worst violence since November 1959. Parmehutu and UNAR factions clashed in four separate incidents in July, culminating with a major battle east of Kigali which left 130 dead and nearly 10,000 displaced. Whereas much of the 1959-60 violence had been concentrated in northern Rwanda, anti-Tutsi violence shifted in 1961 to southern Rwanda. The territory of Astrida alone produced 15,000 refugees by mid-August, including nearly 5,000 at Nyakibanda. By this point even the typically circumspect Perraudin described Rwanda as "full of deaths, destructions, fires and pillaging," noting that nearly all the displaced had taken refuge at Catholic missions. What Perraudin failed to note, however, is that he had tried to force these refugees out of Kabgayi mission in June 1961 due to his worries about refugee alliances with nationalist clergy.¹⁹⁹

Characteristically, Perraudin continued to see communism as the major underlying factor in Rwanda's political violence. Placing Catholic Action leaders on guard "before the

¹⁹⁸ This narrative is drawn from A.G.M.Afr.N°727216, Van Hoof to Volker, 14 July 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727229, Alphonse van Hoof, "Nouvelles bagarres au Ruanda," 28 Aug. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738237, Perraudin to Mondor, 16 Aug. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738234, Perraudin to Agagianian, 22 Aug. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738233, Perraudin to Volker, 24 Aug. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°731184, Matthieu Ntahoruburiye to Volker, 17 Oct. 1961.

¹⁹⁹ A.D.K., Pierre Boutry, "Décisions de S.E. Monseigneur Perraudin concernant certaines mesures de prudence à prendre à Kabgayi, prises en Conseil de l'Archidiocèse, » 13 June 1961.

Communist danger” while warning his diocese that “there was no compromise possible” with atheistic and immoral communism,²⁰⁰ Perraudin used his first national radio address in April 1961 to inform Rwandans that international communism was the greatest enemy of the church and “authentic human values.”²⁰¹ In an April letter to donors, Perraudin expanded his critique to include other ideologies, noting that “our masses are strongly worked up by news of disastrous ideologies: communism, neo-paganism, a return to ancient customs, *laïcité*.” Notably missing here was the ideology of racism or ethnicism.²⁰² Perraudin remained silent on the risk of ethnicism in November 1961, writing in a circular to priests that Africa was “menaced and already strongly attacked by materialistic communism and atheism; Islam remains here also very active as well as the forces of laicizing French-Masonry.”²⁰³ At the same time, Perraudin continued to advocate political participation, instructing clergy to “give an example” by going to the polls and voting according to their consciences.²⁰⁴ Since UNAR was the only party associated with international communism, *laïcité* or a “return to ancient customs,” the underlying political message was clear: lay Catholics should vote, so long as they did not vote for UNAR. For Perraudin, UNAR’s alleged communist influences loomed as a much larger ideological threat than Parmehutu ethnicism.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°720076, “Rapport de la Réunion des aumôniers diocésains d’action Catholique, » 26-27 Jan. 1961 ; A. Perraudin, « Partie Officielle : Lettre de Monseigneur l’Archevêque, » *Trait d’Union* 9 (Jan-Feb. 1961), 4-5. Perraudin continued his anti-communist theme in subsequent issues of *Trait d’Union* (cf. “Lettre de Monseigneur Perraudin,” *Trait d’Union* 14 (Oct. 1961), 126-28 ; « Lettre de Monseigneur, » *Trait d’Union* 18 (March 1962), 34-35).

²⁰¹ A.D.K., André Perraudin, « Message Pascal 1961 à Radio-Rwanda, » April 1961.

²⁰² A.D.K., André Perraudin, « A propos de l’aide en personnel à trouver, » 5 June 1961.

²⁰³ A.D.K., André Perraudin, Circ. N°29, 19 Nov. 1961.

²⁰⁴ *Trait d’Union* 13 (Aug.-Sept. 1961): 111.

²⁰⁵ For example, Perraudin described the *coup d’état* of Gitarama as a necessary step against U.N. efforts to delay elections (A.G.M.Afr.N°738265, André Perraudin, « Note rectificative à propos d’un document de Monseigneur Gasore, Vicaire Général du diocèse de Nyundo, » 18 May 1962).

Publicly, Bigirumwami pulled back from national politics in 1961, issuing few circular letters and keeping the focus of *Civitas Mariae* on strictly pastoral concerns. Privately, however, he continued to emphasize the divisive role that ethnic discourse had played in Rwanda's recent history. In a passionate January 1961 letter to Volker which Bigirumwami claimed to write "for the archives," he defended himself against missionary accusations while offering his own interpretation of Rwanda's recent history.²⁰⁶ According to Bigirumwami, White Fathers in Rwanda had accused him of being a "communist, schismatic and nationalist." In response, Bigirumwami claimed that he had always "stood with the masses" and spoken out against political abuses. At the same time, he had staunchly opposed the ethnic ideology and violence that marked the November 1959 revolution. For Bigirumwami, the November 1959 revolutions stemmed from the formation of ethnically-based parties aided and abetted by sympathetic Catholic missionaries and a strident Catholic media which "incited hatred and division" in the pages of *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* and *Kinyamateka*. "In effect, shortly after Parmehutu and Aprosoma were started, we knew that the origin of these parties was in the clergy." While rejecting the theory that Catholic missionaries helped kill Mwami Rudahigwa, Bigirumwami accused the White Fathers of acquiescing to social vengeance in the name of social justice, lamenting that the laudable goal of democracy had degenerated into anarchy and violence. He also raised uncomfortable historical parallels, arguing that missionaries had sided with the Hutu so as not to repeat the 19th-century European church's loss of the working classes.

²⁰⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°740290-99, Bigirumwami to Volker, 23 Jan. 1961. Subsequent quotations are taken from this letter.

While Bigirumwami mourned Rwanda's decline, Perraudin emphasized the necessity of church-state cooperation to promote the common good. After the *coup d'état* of Gitarama, he promised President Mbonyumutwa in February 1961 that "the true Christians will always be the best citizens."²⁰⁷ As independence approached in 1962, Perraudin instructed Kabgayi Catholics that "the only reasonable and Christian attitude in the face of the Government is loyalty and collaboration."²⁰⁸ The collaboration of church and state also emerged as a predominant theme in the bishops' pastoral letter on independence in June 1962 and Perraudin's inauguration sermon in July 1962. Echoing Romans 13, the bishops' statement reiterated the citizenry's obligation to obey state authorities, noting that "all power emanates from God: family power, political power, social power, spiritual power...the authorities of the Republic, from the most elevated to the most humble, must be considered always as the providential instruments of the supreme Authority of God."²⁰⁹ In his inauguration sermon, Perraudin expressed his "great hope for a sincere and generous collaboration, respectful of the sovereign rights of each of the two societies," challenging the new government to resist the temptation to hide behind a false screen of neutrality in its attitudes towards the Catholic Church.²¹⁰

In celebrating the prospects for church-state collaboration in post-colonial Rwanda, Perraudin found common cause with his fellow White Fathers as well as Hutu politicians. Advocating for the continued centrality of Catholic schools, Kabgayi's superior Jean

²⁰⁷ A.D.K., André Perraudin, « Visite M. Mbonyumutwa, » 14 Feb. 1961.

²⁰⁸ *Trait d'Union* 18 (March 1962): 42.

²⁰⁹ « Lettre Pastorale des Evêques du Rwanda, » *Trait d'Union* 21 (June 1962) : 126-27.

²¹⁰ Perraudin, « Sermon á la fête de l'indépendance, » *Trait d'Union* 22 (July 1962) : 153-55.

Permentier wrote to the Belgian Ministry of African Affairs of the “long tradition of sincere collaboration between State and Church.”²¹¹ For his part, Van Hoof continued to see the new Rwandan political leaders as “excellent Christians” and “good fathers of Christian families,” calling on reluctant clergy to “convert sincerely to the new regime.”²¹² Such sentiments were repeated by Rwanda’s new political leaders, from Gregoire Kayibanda’s promise to follow the dictates of John XXIII’s encyclical *Mater et Magistra* to Rwanda’s burgomasters kneeling before Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi at his episcopal consecration in January 1962.²¹³

Bigirumwami, on the other hand, worried about the enthusiasm with which church leaders were embracing Rwanda’s new state. While he recognized that missionaries thought they were acting in the church’s interests, Bigirumwami warned his colleagues about becoming too close to the emerging Rwandan government. “I believe that the missions should no longer follow the trail of the Government; this could cost them dearly. Priests should remain on guard against involving themselves in political parties.”²¹⁴ In public, though, Bigirumwami’s posture did not consist of Oscar Romero-like condemnations of the regime. Rather like Thomas More, he fell silent, refusing to either endorse or condemn the new government.²¹⁵ While Perraudin gave the official independence-day sermon,

²¹¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°720112, Conférences des Ordinaires du Rwanda-Burundi (COREB), « Conférence Extraordinaire, » Feb. 1961.

²¹² A.G.M.Afr.N°727235, Van Hoof, “Évènements du Ruanda, » 6 Oct. 1961; N°727244, Van Hoof to Volker, 15 Nov. 1961; N°727275, Van Hoof to Tiquet, 4 March 1962; N°727301, Van Hoof to Volker, 6 July 1962.

²¹³ A.G.M.Afr.N°741170, [Anon.], “Consécration de Gahamanyi, » 6 Jan. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727244, Van Hoof to Volker, 15 Nov. 1961; “Astrida en fête: Le sacre de Mgr. Gahamanyi,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 14 Jan. 1962. Kayibanda allegedly told Perraudin and the assembled church that “the day we deviate from this (*Mater et Magistra*), I counsel you to no longer vote for us.”

²¹⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°740295, Bigirumwami to Volker, 23 Jan. 1961.

²¹⁵ I refer here to two famous examples from past church-state disputes. Chancellor under King Henry VIII in the early 1530s, More resigned his position after Henry rejected papal authority. More, however, did not publicly critique the king until he was put on trial for charges of treason. Romero, the Archbishop of San

Bigirumwami sat on a side *dais* and made no public comments. *Civitas Mariae* ignored political issues all together, choosing instead to focus on the upcoming Second Vatican Council. Bigirumwami did not issue a circular letter between August 1960 and July 1962, and even his limited 1962 correspondence with the White Fathers avoided political issues.²¹⁶

However, as with Thomas More in 16th-century England, Bigirumwami's silence was interpreted as malfeasance by his nation's ruling authorities. This reflected the growing sense among Hutu politicians that the Catholic Church's Tutsi-dominated clergy included a large number of UNAR sympathizers. Several Tutsi clergy had been involved in the production of *Rwanda Nziza*, UNAR's monthly magazine, and the government viewed Nyundo's Young Christian Worker (*Jeunesse Ouvrier Chrétien* or JOC) movement as both a UNAR front and a rival to Parmehutu's own youth wing. The suspicions of the Kayibanda government included Bigirumwami himself, as evidenced in an October 1962 dialogue between Armand Vandeplass, the Belgian magistrate who served as Rwanda's state prosecutor in Kayibanda's first government, and Cardinal Sigismondi, the former apostolic nuncio in Central Africa and secretary for *Propaganda Fide*. In a private conversation with Sigismondi during an official diplomatic visit to Rome in October 1962, Vandeplass accused the diocese of Nyundo of playing a "very important role in this terrorist activity" and issued a not-so-subtle threat of violence against Bigirumwami and his associates. "The government fears that it cannot keep the situation in hand, if the Diocese of Nyundo continues to systematically oppose legal power." Sigismondi reacted with indignation, promising to publicly break with Rwanda's

Salvador between 1977 and 1980, used his public addresses and sermons to criticize state-sponsored violence, leading El Salvador's government to arrange his assassination in March 1980.

²¹⁶ See here A.G.M.Afr.N°740301-03, Bigirumwami to Volker, 18 July 1962; A.G.M.Afr.N°740305, Bigirumwami to Volker, 27 Dec. 1962; *Civitas Mariae* 49-54 (April-September 1962).

government if it harmed a Catholic bishop. The Holy See's robust support for Bigirumwami appeared to make a difference, as Bigirumwami was not seriously threatened during the remaining decade of his episcopate.²¹⁷

Catholic parishes also became centers of political and ethnic conflict in 1961 and 1962.²¹⁸ In late April 1961 Hutu and Tutsi students fought each other at a Catholic teacher school in Nyundo diocese. Several weeks later UNAR commandos attacked the pro-Hutu editor of Kabgayi press as he left his office. Hutu militia in July stormed the mission of Mururu in southwestern Rwanda, binding the hands of the mission's two Tutsi priests and locking them in a room. In August Perraudin had to reassign an anti-Parmehutu priest to Nyakibanda in the face of mounting threats from the Hutu population around his parish. In September a Hutu mob lynched four Tutsi who had taken refuge in a religious school run by the Benebikira sisters. December saw UNAR commandos raid the residence of Joseph Sibomana, the newly-appointed Hutu bishop of Ruhengeri, leading to the murder of the lay director of the local mission school. During the Byumba massacre in March 1962, Hutu militia entered the house of the local Legion of Mary president. He in turn pulled out a Bible, read the story of Judas's betrayal of Jesus, and ordered his sons to line up since they were "certainly in a state of grace." The militia killed the father and his sons. If the principle of

²¹⁷ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°739071-72, Armand Vandeplas, « Rapport sur le premier entretien avec son excellence Mgr. P. Sigismondi, » 5 Oct. 1962. Not surprisingly, this document was marked "strictly confidential for 50 years" in the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa.

²¹⁸ The following narrative is drawn from A.G.M.Afr.N°727197, Van Hoof to Volker, 2 May 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°722214, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 3 July 1961; A.G.M.Afr. N°727223, Van Hoof to Mondor, 30 July 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727227, Van Hoof to Mondor, 23 Aug. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727235, Van Hoof, "Événements du Ruanda, » 6 Oct. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727274, Van Hoof to Tiquet, 20 Dec. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727295, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 15 May 1962: *Civitas Mariae* 42 (September 1961).

sanctuary had applied in the November 1959 days when Mgr. Cattin could hold off Hutu incendiaries by planting a papal flag, those days were now over.

The violence reached the point that Perraudin and Bigirumwami stepped into the breach, issuing their first joint circular since November 1959.²¹⁹ Their August 1961 “anguished appeal” came closest to a whole-scale denunciation of the political process itself. Recognizing that “many of the disorders stem from the divergences of the political parties,” the bishops condemned any partisans who would force Rwandans to vote for a certain candidate or party. What stands out in this letter is the force of the bishops’ language: “death and fire” reign in Rwanda; such political violence is “evil and criminal and plunges the country into misery and disaster”; the destruction of property, pillaging of goods, and occupation of land can never be justified. The bishops also adopted a non-partisan approach. Rather than couch their recommendations in anti-communist or anti-ethnicist language that would signal UNAR or Parmehutu as the primary culprit, Perraudin and Bigirumwami wrote that “the political parties oppose each other by violence in lieu of working together to construct the Country.” Even the Belgians came under critique as Rwanda’s bishops exhorted the colonial administration to guard the “public order without compromise or partisanship” and improve their prosecution of arsonists. Following this statement, Bigirumwami commissioned Dominic Nothomb to offer a detailed canonical analysis of homicide, theft, restitution and reconciliation in the pages of *Civitas Mariae*.²²⁰ Perraudin also continued this

²¹⁹ André Perraudin and Aloys Bigirumwami, “Lettre de l’Episcopat du Rwanda sur l’attitude des chrétiens face aux événements actuels, » 24 Aug. 1961. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php3?id_article=53 (accessed 15 Nov. 2010). They both signed the October 1960 *Vérité, Justice, Charité*, but this was a regional statement rather than a joint letter from Rwanda’s two bishops.

²²⁰ *Civitas Mariae* 43 (Oct. 1961) : 1-4.

critique in the subsequent issue of *Trait d'Union*, condemning as “not Christian” acts of stealing, burning, killing, discrediting the Church, denying people the sacraments, and “exciting hate and vengeance between groups, parties or races.” Perraudin also reminded his readers that they did not have the right to hurt others even if they belonged to a “bad party.”²²¹ For once in Perraudin’s writings, the reality of ethnic violence overshadowed the specter of communism.

In turn, the March-April 1962 massacre at Byumba led the Catholic bishops to issue both a radio address and a pastoral letter. Since the violence happened in his diocese of Ruhengeri, Mgr. Joseph Sibomana gave the radio address.²²² Reflecting Rwanda’s decades-old intertwining of Christianity and the civilizing mission, Sibomana’s condemnation of the “terrible and inhumane reactions” emphasized the incompatibility of popular violence with modern civilization. “In a civilized country, the simple citizens cannot arrogate to themselves the right to make justice and to avenge themselves as they will...What civilized people can pardon the massacring of men, women and children without judgment?” The bishops’ subsequent episcopal letter traced the violence to the destabilizing raids of the “criminal bands of terrorists” while also “condemning with the same severity the bloody reactions of those who kill their fellow man without being in a state of legitimate defense.” To their credit, the bishops also condemned any recourse to collective ethnic retribution. “Bloodily massacring the people of a race or a social group, because some among them are responsible

²²¹ *Trait d'Union* 13 (Aug.-Sept. 1961): 111.

²²² Joseph Sibomana, « Condamnation des attentats et des réactions, » April 1962. In C.I.E.R., http://www.cier-be.info/article.php?id_article=57 (accessed 15 Nov. 2010).

for terrorist assassinations, is not permitted... It is never permitted to kill innocents.”²²³ As will be discussed in the conclusion, notably missing in these discourses was any sustained appeal to Christian nonviolence. If anything, the bishops’ tolerance of violence in the name of state security or self-defense left room for perpetrators to justify their actions under the broad rubric of civil defense. The bishops’ analysis also acknowledged the missionary right to self-defense, a prospect that seemed more imminent in light of the January 1962 massacre of White Father missionaries in the Katanga province of Congo.²²⁴

While these public statements retain an admirable analytical balance, behind the scenes missionaries were again tracing all of Rwanda’s violence to UNAR. Perraudin blamed the Byumba tragedy on political reactionaries “who could not accept the new order” and wished to restore the former regime.²²⁵ Pierre Boutry, the former rector of Nyakibanda, agreed, claiming that the Byumba violence was “terrible, but the former leaders do not want to admit the new state of affairs.”²²⁶ Van Hoof posited that he had anticipated the Byumba massacre in light of the ongoing raids by the “irregular and despicable Unarists,” hoping that these “extremists would understand this terrible lesson” – namely that their raids were precipitating massacres of the local Tutsi population. In a worrying rhetorical turn, Van Hoof also mixed ethnic and political language, describing the UNAR raid on Sibomana’s residence

²²³ « Message pascal des Ordinaires du Rwanda, » *Trait d’Union* 20 (May 1962) : 94-98. See also « Message des Evêques du Rwanda, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 29 April 1962.

²²⁴ C.M.L., Leo Volker, “L’esprit surnaturel dans les épreuves, » 2 Feb. 1962. Church-state tensions were higher in Congo than in Rwanda and Burundi during the 1959-62 period. Nearly a year before this incident, followers of the late Congolese prime minister Patrice Lumumba accused the Catholic bishops of complicity in his death. (Cf. “Déclaration de l’Episcopat du Congo,” *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 19 March 1961).

²²⁵ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°738258, Perraudin to Volker, 11 April 1962; A.G.M.Afr.N°738267, Perraudin, “Note rectificative á propos d’un document de Monseigneur Gasore,” 18 May 1962.

²²⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°738254, Boutry to Volker, 5 April 1962.

as the work of a “band of Tutsi scum” and noting that the Byumba victims included many “guilty” Tutsi. “The guilty by complicity or calculated silence were many, but others, God only knows the number, were certainly innocent.”²²⁷ Missionaries also failed to apportion moral responsibility to the Hutu killers themselves, attributing the violence instead to irresistible popular passions. For example, while recounting the summer 1961 electoral violence in Kigali and its environs, Van Hoof described the Hutu reactions in terms of “anger” and “liberation from social inhibitions.”²²⁸ Perraudin used similar language in retrospectively describing the April 1961 violence at Byumba, arguing that UNAR assassinations of two local burgomasters “unleashed the anger of the population.”²²⁹

The 1961-1962 refugee flows also sparked further tensions between Kabgayi and Nyundo dioceses. In response to the ongoing refugee crisis, Bigirumwami ordered Louis Gasore, Nyundo’s vicar delegate, to initiate a large fundraising effort on behalf of displaced Tutsi in Congo, Uganda, and Tanzania. In correspondence sent to the Dutch and Swiss press, Gasore claimed that upwards of 500,000 Rwandans fled the country between November 1959 and April 1962, including over 100,000 refugees under the age of two. White Fathers like Alphonse Van Hoof had long suspected Gasore and his fellow Nyundo clergy of funneling money to UNAR,²³⁰ and the publicity surrounding Gasore’s trip pushed Perraudin

²²⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°727274, Van Hoof to Tiquet, 20 Dec. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727292, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 3 April 1962.

²²⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°727229, Van Hoof, “Nouvelles bagarres au Ruanda, » 28 Aug. 1961.

²²⁹ C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Je rends grâce à Dieu » 25 Aug. 1989 : 3.

²³⁰ Shortly before the publication of this document, Van Hoof alleged that Gasore transmitted three million francs to UNAR through a Belgian intermediary (A.G.M.Afr.N°727297, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 15 May 1962). In March 1962, the bishops of Rwanda and Burundi had condemned the practice of priests diverting aid money or accepting third party deposits (A.D.K., Les Archevêques et Evêques du Rwanda et du Burundi, « Au clergé du Rwanda et du Burundi, » 17 March 1962).

to issue an internal protest letter in May 1962.²³¹ While reiterating his commitment to helping Rwanda's refugees, Perraudin contested Gasore's social analysis and his statistics. After repeating his own views that social injustice in pre-revolutionary Rwanda fell exclusively along a Hutu-Tutsi axis, Perraudin questioned how 500,000 Rwandans could have fled the country if the total 1959 Tutsi population numbered only 350,000. Perraudin also repeated his fears that refugee donations were benefiting terrorists, implying a link between Nyundo's vicar delegate and UNAR exiles. The private war of words continued through the rest of 1962 with Gasore accusing Kabgayi officials of "defamation" in a terse October letter to Pierre Boutry.²³²

Overall, the 1961-1962 period saw the institution of several important political narratives in Catholic hierarchical circles. First, missionary leaders publicly lamented ethnic violence while privately placing the lion's share of blame on UNAR insurgents rather than the Hutu militias who were actually conducting the massacres. Second, the Parmehutu government increasingly saw the Catholic Church as a Tutsi-dominated institution that needed to be ethnically cleansed, and Catholic parishes themselves became sites of ethnic and political violence. Third, after criticizing state authorities in late 1959 and early 1960, Bigirumwami ceased his public critiques as Rwandan politics shifted in a decidedly Hutu nationalist direction. His silence still contrasted with Perraudin's and the White Fathers' vociferous support for the new political regime. Finally, Perraudin and his allies increasingly

²³¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°738264-67, André Perraudin, "Note rectificative á propos d'un document de Monseigneur Gasore, » 18 May 1962.

²³² A.D.K., Gasore to Boutry, 11 Oct. 1962.

spoke of the state as a close partner in the construction of Christian civilization, failing to consider how the state itself could become the enemy of the common good.

H. “But it shall not be so among you”: The death of a bishop and the Nyakibanda crisis, 1961-1962²³³

While Rwanda hurtled towards independence in 1961 and 1962, the Catholic hierarchy struggled to manage its own transition from mission territory to local church. This included internal struggles over new episcopal appointments, a process complicated by the suspicious May 1961 death of Mgr. Bernard Manyurane, the first bishop of Ruhengeri and the most widely-respected Hutu churchman of his generation. In the meantime, ethnic tensions and seminarian withdrawals continued at Nyakibanda major seminary, precipitating unprecedented changes in the seminary’s leadership.

As discussed earlier, in May 1960 the Holy See jettisoned the original 1957 arrangement to create a diocese of Kigali, drafting alternative plans to establish two new dioceses in northern Rwanda (Ruhengeri) and southern Rwanda (Butare/Astrida). Despite pleadings from Perraudin, Volker and Van Hoof, the Vatican did not follow up on these plans during the rest of 1960. Finally, at the end of January 1961, the Holy See named Bernard Manyurane as the first bishop of Ruhengeri.²³⁴ The appointment made sense on many levels. The recipient of a doctorate in canon law from the College of St. Peter in Rome, Manyurane possessed an impressive academic record. He also possessed over a decade of

²³³ Cf. Mark 10:42-45: “You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But it shall not be so among you. Rather, whoever wishes to be great among you will be your servant, whoever wishes to be first among you will be the slave of all. For the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

²³⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°738182, Casier to Boutry, 28 Jan. 1961.

pastoral experience as the superior of Nemba and Rulindo missions.²³⁵ His Hutu family hailed from Rwaza in northern Rwanda, giving him immediate credibility in a region that had purged over 90% of the local Tutsi population. While far more sympathetic to the emerging Parmehutu government than a churchman like Bigirumwami, Manyurane had cultivated a public reputation of spiritual depth and political moderation. He had also developed a close friendship with Perraudin and positive relations with the White Fathers.²³⁶ Ruhengeri would give him a safe see in which to develop his leadership skills, preparing him to step into the anticipated future metropolitan see of Kigali.

Before Manyurane could even travel from Nyakibanda to Ruhengeri, however, he fell gravely ill.²³⁷ After resting in Nyakibanda for nearly a week, Manyurane moved to Kabgayi on February 11. Here he was diagnosed with arterial hypertension and possible kidney failure. After convalescing in Kabgayi through the end of February, Perraudin arranged for the White Fathers to fly Manyurane to Belgium for more specialized care on March 3. His condition initially improved in mid-March before regressing in April. Even then, Manyurane expressed hopes that he could return to Rwanda for his scheduled May 21 consecration to the

²³⁵ A.D.K., André Perraudin, Circ. N°28, 9 May 1961.

²³⁶ This is reflected in one of Manyurane's only episcopal requests – a letter to Volker requesting the services of ten additional White Fathers to staff three new parishes in his diocese so as to “promote a fraternal and confident collaboration with the Society of the White Fathers” (A.G.M.Afr.N°741028, Manyurane to Volker, 18 Feb. 1961).

²³⁷ Oddly, Manyurane's death goes unmentioned in most English-language secondary literature on Catholic Church history during the Rwandan revolution. This narrative is adapted from the following sources in the White Fathers' Rome archives: A.G.M.Afr.N°741104, Alphonse Ntezimana to [anon.], 6 March 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738281, Perraudin to Volker, 10 March 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738291, Perraudin to Volker, 11 March 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°741006, Bernard Hoste to Volker, 25 March 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°741025, Hoste to Volker, 12 April 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°741024, Hoste to Volker, 19 April 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°741012-014, De Moor to Van der Rick, 25 April 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°741020, [anon.], 25 April 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738201, Volker to Perraudin, 13 May 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738201, Volker to Perraudin, 13 May 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°741008-10, [Anon.], May 1961; A.D.K., André Perraudin, Circ. N°29, 24 May 1961 ; A.D.K., Circ. N°28, 9 May 1961; *Civitas Mariae* 39 (June 1961): 2.

episcopate, and he moved to Rome in late April to prepare for his final journey to Rwanda. He never made the final leg, however, “offering his life for the peace of Rwanda” as he died on May 8, 1961 in the company of a retinue of White Fathers and African seminarians. He was buried in Ruhengeri one week later in the presence of Perraudin, Bigirumwami, and President Mbonyumutwa.

The cause of Manyurane’s death was never officially announced. It seems likely that he was poisoned. While he had suffered from periodic insomnia, angina, and fatigue during his years as a canon law student in Rome, nothing in Manyurane’s health profile suggested a natural cause for the rapid and precipitous decline he underwent between February and May 1961. More convincingly, toxicology reports showed the presence of antinomies associated with arsenic poisoning. The list of potential assassins would be even more speculative, although the expectation that this Hutu churchman would become the future leader of the Rwandan church suggests a plot among UNAR sympathizers either inside or outside the church. Contemporary Rwandan historians have even implicated Perraudin and his White Father allies, although this seems highly unlikely in light of the White Fathers’ vociferous support for Manyurane between 1958 and 1961.²³⁸

²³⁸ The Rwandan Dominican scholar Bernardin Muzungu has been the foremost proponent of the thesis that Perraudin and the White Fathers conspired in the poisoning of Manyurane. Not only is Muzungu’s argument based largely on hearsay, but his presentation of Manyurane as a pan-ethnic nationalist should be corrected in light of archival evidence which demonstrates that Manyurane supported the Hutu social revolution (cf. Bernardin Muzungu (ed.), “Eglise Catholique: Pendant le Génocide,” *Cahiers Lumière et Société* 43 (March 2010) : 62-63; C.M.L., Bernardin Muzungu, “Le rôle des responsables des religions reconnues au Rwanda, pendant le génocide, » 6, 9 [n.d.]).

A “dear friend” whose death represented a great personal loss to Perraudin,²³⁹ Manyurane also served as a key ally in Perraudin’s ongoing struggles with Bigirumwami over the future of Nyakibanda seminary. Perraudin had also seen Manyurane as the linchpin in the post-colonial indigenization of the church. Given Perraudin’s commitment to promoting Hutu clergy and the dearth of qualified Hutu candidates for the episcopate, Manyurane’s death left no obvious successors for the see of Ruhengeri. Rwanda’s political instability and the suspicious manner of Manyurane’s death also made the Vatican even more cautious about naming a new bishop. Despite Perraudin’s increasingly strident pleas for a “more representative episcopal body,”²⁴⁰ the Holy See did not announce Manyurane’s successor until October 1961. Even then the Vatican resisted Perraudin’s calls for a Hutu-led church, trying to ensure ethnic and ideological balance by appointing the Hutu priest Joseph Sibomana to replace Manyurane and naming the Tutsi priest Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi as the first bishop of Astrida.

At first glance, Sibomana and Gahamanyi appeared to come from different worlds.²⁴¹ A member of the elite Abanyiginya clan, Gahamanyi joined the church as a twelve-year-old during the height of the Tutsi *tornado* in the early 1930s. Sibomana, in contrast, hailed from Save mission in southern Rwanda, representing a minority Hutu clergy that traced its roots to the earliest days of Rwandan Catholicism. In other ways, though, the two churchmen had

²³⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°738205, Perraudin to Volker, 9 May 1961.

²⁴⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°738234, Perraudin to Agagianian, 22 Aug. 1961. Perraudin added here that “further delay, considering the social and political orientations which are taking place, not only would settle nothing, but could be very damaging.” In a rare departure from his typical diplomatic decorum, Perraudin included no fraternal greetings at the end of this letter.

²⁴¹ Biographical information is drawn from “Deux nouveaux évêques pour le Rwanda, » *Trait d’Union* 15 (Nov. 1961): 146-49.

similar profiles. Both studied at Kabgayi minor seminary and Nyakibanda major seminary and later served as professors at Kabgayi minor seminary. Both were also familiar with Rwandan church-state relations from their time serving as vicars at Nyanza mission. Perhaps most importantly for the White Fathers, both were seen as allies of Perraudin rather than Bigirumwami. Gahamanyi had famously defended Perraudin before the U.N. Commission in April 1960; Sibomana was working in Perraudin's shadow at Kabgayi minor seminary when he received the call to the episcopate. On hearing news of their episcopal appointments, Gahamanyi and Sibomana expressed their commitment to working cordially with the White Fathers as "their true brothers in Christ."²⁴² Both quickly acted on these words by requesting White Father missionaries to serve in prominent positions in their chanceries.²⁴³

The need for European-Rwandan cooperation was evident in light of the ongoing crisis at Nyakibanda seminary. Following the seminary council debates of November 1960 in which Bigirumwami requested a leadership change at Nyakibanda, Perraudin and Baers visited Rome and Brussels in late 1960 to explore possible solutions to the seminary stalemate. They convinced Leo Volker, the White Fathers' superior general, to return with them to Rwanda in January 1961 to help determine a final resolution. In the meantime Bigirumwami remained in Rwanda, pleased with the Sulpician serving in Baers's absence yet still suspicious of White Father intentions.

²⁴² A.G.M.Afr.N°741167, Gahamanyi to Volker, 23 Oct. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727238, Van Hoof to Volker, 28 Oct. 1961.

²⁴³ Both were also controversial White Fathers. Sibomana requested the deposed rector of Nyakibanda, Paul Baers, as his new chancellor. Gahamanyi solicited the help of Fr. Cogniaux, the former Nyakibanda professor who had been dismissed in 1958 (A.G.M.Afr.N°727238, 28 Oct. 1961, Van Hoof to Volker).

Gathering at Nyakibanda a day after the *coup d'état* of Gitarama, Volker, Bigirumwami, Manyurane, Van Hoof and Perraudin attempted to reach a compromise over two days of intense meetings on January 29-30, 1961. As the superior general of the White Fathers, Volker had the most influential voice in the gathering. In some ways his analysis echoed previous critiques of Nyakibanda in the 1950s: the seminarians lacked a “supernatural spirit,” they resisted authority, and their worldviews were marked by rationalism. But while Volker attributed much of the blame here to external political causes, he also cited the presence of troublemakers inside the seminary as well as Bigirumwami’s lack of confidence in the professorial staff. Bigirumwami thought the crisis could be resolved by replacing Nyakibanda’s White Father leadership with Sulpicians or indigenous Rwandan clergy, arguing that Baers should be dismissed since he had lost the confidence of a majority of the seminarians. The other prelates pushed back, positing that further leadership changes would only destabilize the seminary.²⁴⁴

While disagreeing on the key question of seminary leadership, Perraudin, Volker, Baers, Manyurane and Bigirumwami concurred on a range of other actions designed to improve Nyakibanda’s atmosphere. First, major seminarians would all undertake a mandatory 30-day retreat between their philosophy and theology studies; retention had proven most difficult during this transition. Second, the admission of minor seminary candidates to the major seminary would depend on the approval of the local bishop rather than the seminary faculty. Third, Nyakibanda’s Seminary Council would secretly vote on whether to retain or dismiss any current seminarian. Fourth, seminarians departing

²⁴⁴ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°731540-45, “Rapport sur les problèmes à Nyakibanda, » 30 Jan. 1961.

Nyakibanda would be polled on their reasons for leaving. Finally, the bishops would separate philosophy and theology students into different seminaries beginning in September 1961. The White Fathers would run the philosophy school, and diocesan priests would take over Nyakibanda.²⁴⁵

Oddly missing in these plans were the Sulpicians, the French priests who the White Fathers had invited to Rwanda in 1959 with the expectation that they would eventually take over Nyakibanda's leadership. After acclimating to their new country during a year in Rwanda's mission stations, the two Sulpicians, Fr. Cavolleau and Fr. Forissier, joined the Nyakibanda faculty for the 1960-61 academic year. After only a semester, however, major tensions emerged between Nyakibanda's White Father professors and the two Sulpicians. While agreeing that Nyakibanda faced an unprecedented vocational crisis, the Sulpician professors adopted a position of neutrality in the ongoing Hutu-Tutsi disputes. They also refused to help compile lists of suspect Tutsi seminarians for the Nyakibanda Seminary Council. The White Father professors were furious, complaining to their superiors that the Sulpicians had come under "Tutsi influence" and were giving the seminarians the opportunity to play their European professors off each other. The Tutsi seminarians in turn began to look to the Sulpicians as the "liberators of the Seminary," especially after Cavolleau took over as interim rector in Baers's absence in December 1960.²⁴⁶

Despite these tensions, the Sulpicians later claimed that Perraudin reiterated his support for them in November 1960, alleging that Perraudin "could not have been more

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ A.G.M.Afr.N°731178, Lanfry to Garitan, 29 April 1961 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°731298, Paul Baers, "L'évolution de l'état d'esprit des Séminaristes depuis la visite du T.R. Père General, » 17 April 1961 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°731432, « Pourquoi la compagnie de St. Sulpice quitte le séminaire de Nyakibanda, » Jan.-Feb. 1961.

explicit” in stating that “Cavolleau will take direction of the seminary next October” during a meeting in Paris. But in a rapid *volte-face* that left the Sulpicians “surprised, humiliated, and sadly deceived,” Perraudin and Volker announced at the January 29 meeting that Cavolleau would not be named rector for the 1961-62 academic year.²⁴⁷ They also requested that the Sulpicians withdraw their members from Rwanda. Volker justified this decision by alleging that the White Fathers and the Sulpicians had “two different conceptions of the seminary,” thereby giving the seminarians the opportunity to “serve St. Sulpice by opposing the White Fathers.” A subsequent White Father report to Propaganda Fide accused the Sulpician professors of “moral deficiency, psychological problems, character incompatibility, and doctrinal incompetence.” It appears that the Holy See largely accepted the Sulpician version of the story, however, attributing the White Fathers’ reactions to Rwanda’s escalating political tensions.²⁴⁸

The Sulpician episode is important in that it inserts a new voice into the debate between White Fathers, Hutu seminarians, and Tutsi clergy. The Sulpicians arrived in Rwanda before the November revolution and departed after the *coup d’état* of Gitarama; they therefore witnessed the revolutionary changes that swept Rwandan society between 1959 and 1961. Yet while recognizing the gravity of what they described as Rwanda’s “tribal revolution,” the Sulpicians did not follow the White Fathers in ascribing sole blame to UNAR and its ideological allies within the Tutsi nationalist clergy. Most of all, they refused to reduce Nyakibanda’s many problems to a binary ethnic logic. The dismissal of the

²⁴⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°731429-38, « Pourquoi la compagnie de St. Sulpice quitte le séminaire de Nyakibanda, » Jan.-Feb. 1961.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

Sulpicians in turn reflected the increasingly zero-sum nature of the power struggle between Tutsi indigenous clergy and the White Father missionaries. This debate also shows that the White Fathers were only willing to cede ecclesial power in Rwanda if they could assure the ideological sympathy of their successors.

As the Sulpicians departed Rwanda in February 1961, Bigirumwami refused to comply with the directives to which he had agreed at the late January meeting. His intransigence may have stemmed from perceived marginalization. According to the Sulpicians, Perraudin, Volker and Manyurane met early on January 29 to compile a list of suspect Tutsi seminarians hours before Bigirumwami arrived; they then demanded that he acquiesce to this *fait accompli*.²⁴⁹ Bigirumwami's opposition also arose from his continuing mistrust of Baers and suspicions that the Nyakibanda rector was using the Seminary Council to eliminate all of the rector's ideological opponents. The case of Eustache Rutabingwa emerged as a particular flash point. Although Rutabingwa had never broken seminary rules, the Seminary Council voted in early February to remove him because of his "cast of mind" and "deviating restlessness."²⁵⁰ Bigirumwami sent official protests to Perraudin, Volker, and Propaganda Fide, arguing that the bishops had agreed to dismiss politicized troublemakers, not "undesirable" seminarians who had never transgressed the rules. For Bigirumwami, it was not the Tutsi seminarians but Baers and his fellow White Fathers who threatened to undermine the very mission of the seminary. "You [Baers] and your [White Father] brothers make much evil in mistreating the young men that God has confided to you...Why should

²⁴⁹ Ibid. Their rapid gathering may have also stemmed from Manyurane's imminent appointment to the episcopate and the White Fathers' desire to insure that his vote was included in the Seminary Council decisions.

²⁵⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°731617, Baers to Bigirumwami, 19 Feb. 1961.

your Hutu and Tutsi seminarians regard themselves as dogs before a bone? Why have you not built unity between Hutu and Tutsi? Why do you not have peace in your seminary?”²⁵¹

Ignoring Bigirumwami’s appeal to Perraudin to intervene on his behalf, Perraudin sided with Baers and wrote two scathing replies to Propaganda Fide and Bigirumwami. Attributing the “deplorable spirit” at the seminary to Bigirumwami’s opposition to Baers, Perraudin called on the Holy See to intervene to “stop this situation from becoming catastrophic not only for the seminary, but also for the exterior.” In his letter to Bigirumwami, Perraudin chastised the Bishop of Nyundo for “gravely troubling ecclesiastical discipline,” accusing Bigirumwami of making seminary education impossible through his attitude of “open mistrust and near systematic opposition to the Seminary directors.” Unfortunately, Perraudin never addressed Bigirumwami’s reasons for mistrusting Baers and his colleagues. Instead, Perraudin appealed to authority (in this case his status as Rwanda’s metropolitan archbishop) and demanded that Bigirumwami change his mind for the sake of public perception. Even as Perraudin professed continued respect for Bigirumwami’s “holy person,” Perraudin came close to pinning all of Nyakibanda’s problems on him, promising to “save my own seminarians against the spirit that your attitude provokes in this house.” Volker also stood by Baers and issued a stinging rebuke of Bigirumwami.²⁵²

Despite the White Fathers’ accusations, the Holy See sided with Bigirumwami, reflecting the Vatican’s general tilt towards Bigirumwami and Rwanda’s indigenous clergy

²⁵¹ A.G.M.Afr.N°731618, Bigirumwami to Baers, 28 Feb. 1961.

²⁵² A.G.M.Afr.N°731618, Bigirumwami to Perraudin, 28 Feb. 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°731622-23, Perraudin to Agagianian, 7 March 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°731624-25, Perraudin to Bigirumwami, 7 March 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°731628, Volker to Bigirumwami, 10 March 1961.

in the early 1960s.²⁵³ Propaganda Fide announced in April that Nyundo's Matthieu Ndahoruburiye would be named the first indigenous rector of Nyakibanda major seminary. In turn, the White Fathers recalled Paul Baers to Belgium for a "well-merited rest." Nyakibanda's new rector arrived in triumph on May 1, accompanied by Bigirumwami and twelve Nyundo clergy. Maintaining public appearances, Perraudin welcomed him at the doors of the seminary.²⁵⁴

While Catholic leaders battled over the seminary's future direction, Nyakibanda itself continued to decline.²⁵⁵ Far from defusing the situation, the dismissal of the Sulpicians was decried by the majority Tutsi seminarian population. In an effort to mitigate the damage, Volker gave a series of lectures to the seminarians in early February, but his emphasis on fraternal unity annoyed the Hutu students while his insistence on hierarchical obedience alienated most Tutsi seminarians. Led by a White Father noted for his sympathies for the Burundian monarchy, the subsequent mandatory retreat for theology students precipitated further departures in the ranks of the advanced seminarians.²⁵⁶ The losses were especially high among the minority of Hutu seminarians. Nor did the faculty retreat for the troublesome second-year philosophy students bear much fruit. 18 of these students left the seminary between February and May 1961, including nearly all of the Hutu seminarians from the

²⁵³ Van Hoof complained about this perceived Vatican bias in 1961, wondering how long Rome would continue to support the local *abbés* when so many possessed Unarist sympathies (A.G.M.Afr.N°727223, Van Hoof to Mondor, 30 July 1961).

²⁵⁴ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°731176, Volker to Perraudin, 22 April 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°727197, Van Hoof to Volker, 2 May 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738203, Perraudin to Volker, 10 May 1961; *Civitas Mariae* 38 (May 1961): 2-6.

²⁵⁵ The following narrative is drawn from A.G.M.Afr.N°731398-404, Paul Baers, "L'évolution de l'état des Séminaristes depuis la visite du T.R. Père General, » 17 April 1961 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°731175, Perraudin to Volker, 15 April 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°740276-77, Bigirumwami to Volker, 15 May 1961.

²⁵⁶ Cf. A.G.M.Afr.N°720670-71, J. Keuppens, "L'Urundi en Deuil, » 19 Oct. 1961.

diocese of Ruhengeri. Altogether, 29 of Nyakibanda's 108 seminarians quit between October 1960 and May 1961. An additional 22 seminarians were placed on probation or sent to study in Europe, leaving only 57 seminarians in residence. As in 1960, the Hutu departures bothered the White Fathers the most. Van Hoof described them as "very sad" and "humanly speaking a catastrophe," noting that Hutu students were now pulling out *en masse* from the minor seminaries as well.²⁵⁷ Just as Rwanda's national politics were turning in their favor, the White Fathers faced the risk of losing their standing among the Hutu masses, particularly in northern Rwanda which had the lowest percentage of baptized Catholics.²⁵⁸

In an effort to retain these Hutu students, the White Fathers continued advocating for the immediate construction of a separate major seminary for philosophy students. In late June 1961 Perraudin requested that the Holy See authorize the construction of a Kigali-based regional seminary which would open its doors in September 1961. Facing Bigirumwami's steadfast opposition to this rapid timetable, Perraudin presented the request on his individual authority as "metropolitan archbishop." Again the Holy See disappointed him, announcing in July that time and logistics would not allow for the construction of a new seminary and hinting that Perraudin's plan might not go over well in newly-independent Africa.²⁵⁹

²⁵⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°727200-01, Van Hoof to Volker, 10 May 1961. For similar sentiments, see also A.G.M.Afr.N°738203, Perraudin to Volker, 10 May 1961.

²⁵⁸ Only 18% of Ruhengeri's population had received Catholic baptism by the end of 1962, versus 36% in Astrida, 29% in Kabgayi and 26% in Nyundo ("Statistiques comparées des Diocèses du Rwanda," *Trait d'Union* 19 (April 1962): 75-83).

²⁵⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°740277, Bigirumwami to Volker, 15 May 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738223-24, Lanfry to Perraudin, 11 July 1961; A.G.M.Afr.N°738231-32, Perraudin to Sigismondi, 25 July 1961. In Lanfry's second-hand account, Sigismondi commented that "making a separate seminary would surprise many Africans and could give rise to grave critiques against the Church." Vatican archival sources for this period will not be released for another 25 years, making it difficult to corroborate such comments.

The rest of 1961 played out as a sort of stalemate at Nyakibanda.²⁶⁰ With Mbandiwimfura and Ndahoruburiye installed as spiritual director and rector, respectively, Bigirumwami temporarily had the upper hand in his ongoing confrontation with Perraudin over the direction of the seminary. In the meantime, Hutu seminarians continued to depart in large numbers after Ndahoruburiye's appointment as rector. At one point in 1961 only two Hutu students remained in the entire seminary. The lack of Hutu seminarians posed in Perraudin's words a "very grave problem for the future" in an 80% Hutu country. Nor were Nyakibanda's problems limited to Hutu-Tutsi tensions. In July 1961 Nyakibanda's White Father professors, Feys, Biname and Vermeersch, resigned from the Seminary Council and from their respective roles in spiritual direction and admissions decisions, reflecting ongoing tensions between the White Fathers and Nyakibanda's new Tutsi leadership.

If not reconciliation, the final months of 1961 and the early months of 1962 offered an easing in tensions at Nyakibanda.²⁶¹ Gahamanyi announced in February 1962 that Astrida would build a new minor seminary based at Save. In turn, minor seminarians from other dioceses would now be required to attend their local seminaries in Kabgayi, Ruhengeri, or Nyundo. While not yet reconciled to the idea of two major seminaries, Bigirumwami himself was attempting to rebuild fences with the White Fathers, meeting regularly with Rwanda's other bishops, distancing himself from some of Nyundo's nationalist clergy, and showing, in Van Hoof's words, "great confidence in regard to members of the Society." Ndahoruburiye

²⁶⁰ The following narrative is drawn from A.G.M.Afr.N°738231-32, Perraudin to Sigismondi, 25 July 1961; N°731181-83, Feys, Biname & Vermeersch to Volker, 26 July 1961; N°731184, Matthieu Ndahoruburiye to Volker, 17 Oct. 1961; N°731194-95, Feys to Volker, 22 Dec. 1961.

²⁶¹ This section draws on A.G.M.Afr.N°727260, Van Hoof to Volker, 25 Feb. 1962; N°727244, Van Hoof to Volker, 15 Nov. 1961; N°727299, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 20 Feb. 1962; N°731200-03, Paul Feys, « Conseil du 28 Février 1962, » March 1962.

called together Nyakibanda's African and European clergy for a special February 1962 council in which both sides aired their grievances. Rwanda celebrated 12 new ordinations in 1962, far surpassing its annual totals since the late 1950s.

The continuing crisis of Hutu vocations, however, pushed Perraudin to attempt a backroom coup in June 1962. The September 1961 total of 79 major seminarians had fallen to 46 by June 1962. Only 28 of these students actually resided at Nyakibanda, and over half came solely from Nyundo diocese. Writing to Propaganda Fide in June, Perraudin and Gahamanyi described Nyakibanda as a "sort of scarecrow," noting that the vast majority of Hutu minor seminarians from northern Rwanda refused to enter the major seminary. The two bishops proposed naming Michel Ntamakero, the Hutu vicar general of Ruhengeri, to replace Ndahoruburiye as rector, and they requested the removal of Ndahoruburiye and Mbandiwimfura from the seminary faculty. Perraudin's and Gahamanyi's claims to have "unanimously arrived at this conclusion" were undermined by the fact that the document failed to include the signatures of either Bigirumwami or Sibomana. Bigirumwami learned of the plan belatedly and protested accordingly. This may help explain why the Holy See again rejected Perraudin's request. Ultimately Rwanda's bishops resolved the stalemate by agreeing to the construction of separate diocesan seminaries. Nyakibanda remained the primary major seminary for Kabgayi, while St. Joseph's Seminary in Nyundo opened its doors in October 1963. For their part, Fr. Deogratias Mbandiwimfura remained on the Nyakibanda faculty throughout 1962-63, while Fr. Matthieu Ndahoruburiye became rector of

the new St. Joseph seminary in 1963, serving in this role until the 1973 uprisings discussed in chapter five.²⁶²

Ecclesial politics in 1961-62 reveal a Catholic Church increasingly divided by ethnic and political factors. The death of Manyurane eliminated the most promising Hutu churchman of his generation. If the subsequent appointments of Sibomana and Gahamanyi strengthened Perraudin's position in Rwanda, developments at Nyakibanda seminary seemed to favor Bigirumwami while revealing the extent to which the church's major seminary had become a political and ethnic battleground. As even apologists for the Catholic Church have noted, the "virus of ethnicism" dominated the Catholic seminary, reflecting "an evil conception of power in the church."²⁶³ And if Bigirumwami and Perraudin remained cordial on a personal level, their vastly different visions of ethnic politics made it increasingly difficult for them to retain the fraternal unity that both cherished.

I. Conclusion: The limitations of Catholic politics between 1959 and 1962

This chapter on Catholic ecclesial politics during the revolutionary period points to five major conclusions. First, Catholic leaders across the ideological spectrum supported the political objective of majority-rule democracy while opposing violence and clerical involvement in politics. If Perraudin and the White Fathers offered more robust rhetorical support, Bigirumwami never fundamentally questioned the goal of political democracy,

²⁶² A.G.M.Afr.N°731418-21, "Rapport de la réunion annuelle des Ordinaires avant des séminaristes à Nyakibanda, 1961-62, » 30 June 1962 ; N°738272-73, Perraudin to Agagianian, 8 June 1962 ; N°40301, Bigirumwami to Volker, 18 July 1962 ; N°731209-10, Feys to Perraudin, 25 Nov. 1962.

²⁶³ Venuste Linguyenzea and Smaragde Mbonyinge quoted in C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, "Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 9. Linguyenzea has undertaken the task of handing down Perraudin's papers to an international reading public through the C.I.E.R. (*Centre d'Information et d'Etude sur le Rwanda*) website; Mbonyinge is a former rector of Nyakibanda seminary and current bishop of Kabgayi.

whatever his hesitations about the means of the revolution itself. In turn, Perraudin and Bigirumwami repeatedly denounced political and ethnic violence between November 1959 and April 1962 and offered extensive pastoral support for refugee communities both inside and outside Rwanda. Both encouraged lay political leadership while exhorting their clergy to abstain from politics.

Second, if Rwanda's two Catholic prelates shared a broad theoretical commitment to democratization, Bigirumwami and Perraudin parted ways in how they applied these principles to the Rwandan context. In post-Vatican II terms, we could say that Perraudin saw Rwanda's traditional Tutsi-dominated oligarchy as a "structure of sin." While open to political evolution, Bigirumwami did not see Rwanda's monarchy or traditional hierarchy as inherently flawed, much less sinful. This might explain why Perraudin voiced fewer qualms about the revolutionary nature of Rwandan politics between 1959 and 1962; Bigirumwami would have preferred a more gradualist approach.

This difference also helps us to understand Perraudin's and Bigirumwami's argument over the Catholic media. Perraudin and the White Fathers credited the Catholic media for raising consciousness of a long-existing social cleavage; Bigirumwami and his supporters castigated the media for fomenting a fabricated social problem. Both implicitly agreed, however, that the Catholic media adopted an editorial policy favoring Hutu emancipation. In this sense, if *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* had really wanted to maintain a perception of analytical balance, they should not have employed Aloys Munyangaju, one of the leading

Hutu propagandists, as one of their chief columnists and editors.²⁶⁴ And while Catholic newspapers had the right to propagate their vision of Catholic social teaching, they should have warned of the potential risks of their continual calls for Hutu empowerment, social justice and democracy. By 1962 even Leo Volker admitted that *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique* needed to adopt a more constructive tone while distinguishing between editorial opinions and Catholic social doctrine. The White Fathers finally cancelled the newspaper in May 1962.²⁶⁵

Third, Bigirumwami and Perraudin fundamentally differed on their understanding of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction and the extent to which social justice and democracy could be mapped onto an ethnic axis.²⁶⁶ There is a common narrative in Rwandan historiography that local actors were imprisoned by the Hamitic thesis, locked into the binary categories of Hutu and Tutsi. In the words of Philip Gourevitch, “nobody in Rwanda in the late 1950s had offered an alternative to a tribal construction of politics. The colonial state and the colonial church had made that almost inconceivable.”²⁶⁷ But as the preceding narrative has demonstrated, the racial description of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction was already a contested point in 1960, along with the “tribal construction of politics” offered by Parmehutu. To be sure, Perraudin continued to present Hutu and Tutsi as distinct racial categories, writing in 1962 that Rwanda’s “traditional political organization had its origin in the distinction of

²⁶⁴ For an example of Munyangaju’s polemical writings, see « Le fin tragique d’une époque féodale, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique* (24 April 1960) : 1-2.

²⁶⁵ A.G.M.Afr.N°720144-46, “Extrait du rapport de la réunion des ordinaires,” 20 Feb. 1962. « Ceci est notre dernier numéro, » *Temps Nouveaux d’Afrique*, 27 May 1962.

²⁶⁶ In this sense, I would disagree with Joseph Ngomazungu who posits in his study of the 1956-1962 period that “there were no major philosophical differences between Bigirumwami and Perraudin” (Joseph Ngomanzungu, “L’attitude de l’église catholique au Rwanda face aux problèmes sociopolitiques des années 1956-1962 : Une pastorale de prévention, de médiation, et d’accompagnement, » Pontifical Gregorian, Ecclesiastical History, Mémoire le License (Jan. 2000): 105).

²⁶⁷ Gourevitch, *We Wish to Inform You*, 61.

races.”²⁶⁸ But Perraudin’s was not the only voice in the conversation. Outside observers like the Sulpicians discussed Hutu and Tutsi as “two social classes” and described the Hutu as “proletariat if not slaves.”²⁶⁹ Bigirumwami questioned the very demarcations between “those who look like Hutu” and “those who look like Tutsi,” arguing that “we cannot consider in the Church Hutu or Tutsi races or clans, but see only souls all equal before God.”²⁷⁰ If anything, the political arguments in revolutionary Rwanda grew out of this fundamental analytical division over the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi description. This reminds us that social description can be far more divisive than ethical prescription. Shared rhetorical support for democracy, social justice, and law and order do not in themselves guarantee a united ecclesial voice in political ethics or church-state relations, particularly if church leaders disagree in how to apply these ideals in a contested social context.

Fourth, the church focused on defending its own institutional interests, reestablishing the traditional Catholic vision of church-state cohabitation in service of the common good.²⁷¹ One can understand their reasons. Namely, the White Fathers feared the institutional future of the Catholic Church if UNAR should take power or if Parmehutu should turn against them. In contrast to its alleged communist ties, UNAR’s anti-clericalism was real – at least to the extent of rejecting missionary influence in Rwanda and pushing towards a more national

²⁶⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°738264, André Perraudin, « Note rectificative a propos d’un document de Mgr. Gasore, » 18 May 1962.

²⁶⁹ A.G.M.Afr.N°731178, Lanfry to Garitan, 29 Apr. 1961 ; A.G.M.Afr.N°731431, « Pourquoi la compagnie de St. Sulpice..., » Jan.-Feb. 1961.

²⁷⁰ A.G.M.Afr.N°731616, Bigirumwami, “Réflexions et commentaires de S.E. Mgr. Bigirumwami sur la situation du Grand Séminaire et la solution proposée, » Nov. 1960.

²⁷¹ Nor was this tendency limited to Rwanda. For a similar narrative of prioritizing institutional self-interest in 20th-century European Catholic politics, see Carolyn M. Warner, *Confessions of an Interest Group: The Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000).

church. What surprised missionaries in 1961 and 1962, however, was the extent to which their former Hutu acolytes would turn against them if Catholic clergy did not embrace Rwanda's new political reality. To quote Van Hoof, "the Hutu have said that they do not see how [the Church] can purify itself of these elements opposed to the new regime and that perhaps they have a duty to follow their path without any longer including the Church in Rwanda."²⁷² But if one can understand the political reasons for the White Fathers' tacit pact with Parmehutu, this alliance jeopardized the church's prophetic voice, leaving it impotent in the face of the growing violence committed by its state partner. In this sense, Catholic leaders confused the common good with the church's institutional prerogatives and the interests of the Hutu majority.²⁷³ Most of the White Fathers supported Parmehutu because their leaders worshiped regularly at church and offered rhetorical commitment to Catholic doctrine, Catholic schools, and Catholic social teaching. Missionary affection for this apparent Catholic party of the people contributed to their silence in the face of Parmehutu's ethnicist foundations and abetting of political violence.²⁷⁴

Fifth, this narrative points to the importance of social analysis over and against ethnic prescription. On one level, the church's embrace of Hutu democracy contributed to what I have termed an "analytical partisanship" on the part of Perraudin and his allies and a concomitant failure to critique the link between ethnicism and political violence. Most White Fathers in turn demonized UNAR as anti-clerical communists and terrorists and attributed to

²⁷² A.G.M.Afr.N°727223, Van Hoof to Mondor, 30 July 1961.

²⁷³ One sees this in subtle ways, such as Van Hoof's statement in late 1960 that the Rwandan political situation was "not bad for us" – "us" clearly meaning the White Fathers and not the thousands of Tutsi exiles forced out of their parishes (A.G.M.Afr.N°727181, Van Hoof to Cauwe, 1 Sept. 1960).

²⁷⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°740296, Bigirumwami to Volker, 23 Jan. 1961.

them all responsibility for Rwanda's growing culture of political violence. The rhetorical linking of "Tutsi" and "UNAR" further politicized ethnicity and contributed to two dangerous tendencies in post-colonial Rwandan politics – the tendency to blame the victim's perceived intransigence for his or her suffering and the notion of collective ethnic retribution. It is not so much that the White Fathers were out to destroy the local church, as Bigirumwami claimed in several heated exchanges during the Nyakibanda crisis of 1960-61. Rather, they applied modern Catholic ideals – defending the poor, propagating social justice, supporting democratization – without properly analyzing the context in which they worked. Bigirumwami noted as much in his January 1961 manifesto to Leo Volker, writing that clerical disunity had resulted in part from the missionary tendency to uncritically apply the church's social encyclicals in a non-European socio-cultural context.

Sixth, Perraudin's analytical shortcomings stemmed in part from his failure to explore how Catholic politics could transcend the alternatives offered by democratization and the modern nation-state. Perraudin vacillated between placing the church above politics (for example, asserting ecclesial neutrality before the U.N. commission) and inserting the church on what he perceived to be the right side of late colonial politics (i.e., favoring decolonization, social democracy and Hutu uplift while opposing Tutsi nationalism, feudalism and communism). Notably missing in Perraudin's thought, though, was any consideration of how what Bigirumwami termed the "politics of Jesus" challenged the politics of UNAR and Parmehutu alike. In fairness to Perraudin, this was not his mistake alone. If the European Catholic Church had struggled to retain an independent voice during the inter-war period of fascism and totalitarianism, the challenge became all the more

daunting during the 1950s and 1960s when the politics of democracy, decolonization and social justice offered a new generation of missionaries a chance to break with their checkered past. Rare indeed was the post-war churchman who could see the potential shadows in Catholic social teaching's vociferous commitments to social justice and racial equality, shadows which Mahmood Mamdani has aptly described as "when victims become killers." Rare as well was the church leader who recognized the necessity of nonviolence to forestall abuses committed in the names of justice and collective security.

To borrow Enrique Dussel's phrase, it is perhaps only those on the "underside of history" who can see both the shadows of secular politics and the necessity of a distinctively Christian alternative.²⁷⁵ In this sense Aloys Bigirumwami emerges as an unlikely prophet. It is not so much that Bigirumwami himself was a virtuous saint. For all of his deserved rehabilitation in contemporary Rwanda,²⁷⁶ Bigirumwami's writings reflect a man who could be alternatively obsequious, paranoid, and judgmental. Rather, Bigirumwami's prophetic voice can be traced to his painful pilgrimage from a celebrated indigenous bishop to a suspected Tutsi churchman. While Perraudin *responded* to ethnic violence and subsequent refugee needs, Bigirumwami *experienced* these issues from the side of the victim. In November 1959 he was threatened at multiple roadblocks; in March 1960 Hutu militia attacked his church at Nyundo. And unlike the threats against Perraudin which subsided quickly after the November 1959 disturbances, Bigirumwami continued to face a hostile political climate until the end of his episcopate in the early 1970s. It is not surprising, then,

²⁷⁵ Cf. Linda Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta, eds., *Thinking from the Underside of History: Enrique's Dussel's Philosophy of Liberation* (London: Roman and Littlefield, 2000).

²⁷⁶ See for example the 2009 Rwandan church document, *Hommage à Mgr. Aloys Bigirumwami: Premier Evêque rwandais* (Editions du Secrétariat General de la C.E.P.R.: Kigali, 2009).

that Bigirumwami saw Rwanda's revolutionary violence not just as a regrettable but inevitable political evil but as a sign of the deeper failure of Christian mission itself.

The true fires are not those of the thousands and thousands of burned huts and homes, but the true fires are those in the souls killed and scandalized by those who should console and love them. The true expulsions of Tutsi are not those who are confined to the interior of Rwanda and outside but those who are expelled from the chancel and nave of our churches.²⁷⁷

The concluding chapter will examine how these “true fires” and “true expulsions” developed in the immediate post-colonial period, focusing on the anti-Tutsi massacres in Gikongoro in 1964 and the mass expulsion of Tutsi students from Catholic schools in 1973. In a brief epilogue, I will briefly trace Rwanda's ecclesial and political history through the war and genocide of the 1990s, the period most familiar to the contemporary public. Finally, I will conclude this dissertation by outlining several principles for an alternative Christian politics which emerge from this study of Rwandan church history.

²⁷⁷ A.G.M.Afr.N°740270, Bigirumwami to Volker, 6 Dec. 1960.

Ch. 5. Codas: 1964, 1973, 1994 and the Road not Taken

I begin this final chapter by considering the evolving Catholic philosophy of church-state relations that developed in Rwanda during and after the Second Vatican Council of 1962-65. Here I focus on two pastoral letters from the Rwandan bishops – André Perraudin's February 1963 statement on the mission of the church in the world and the Rwandan and Burundian bishops' 1967 statement on ecclesiology. While these writings highlighted characteristic Vatican II themes such as the empowerment of the laity and the priority of the church-world relationship, they still envisioned the relationship between church and state as a partnership, closely collaborating to consecrate the world to God. While such a vision avoided the modern danger of privatizing the church, it left little room for the church to critique its state partner. Such statements also failed to transcend the limitations of the modern nation-state in imagining the horizons of Christian politics.

I then turn to the Catholic hierarchy's responses to the UNAR invasions and subsequent government massacres of Tutsi in December 1963 and January 1964, the worst episodes of ethnic violence in Rwanda until 1994. Here I argue that church leaders largely maintained the political paradigm outlined in chapter four. First, while Rwanda's bishops offered early and strong condemnations of the 1963-64 violence and provided extensive support for the resulting refugees, their statements continued to reflect a mix of institutional defensiveness, analytical partisanship, and paternalism which failed to hold accountable the Parmehutu government or the Hutu peasants responsible for the anti-Tutsi massacres. Rather, church authorities apportioned nearly all blame on the provocations of UNAR terrorists and internal Tutsi intransigence towards Rwanda's new government. In turn, Catholic leaders

appeared far more concerned with defending the international reputations of the Catholic Church and the Rwandan state than with ensuring that Hutu never again massacred Tutsi on account of their ethnic identity and political views.¹

I next consider the Catholic hierarchy's reactions to the anti-Tutsi purges which erupted in Catholic schools and seminaries in early 1973. I begin by placing these events in the overall political and ecclesial contexts of the late 1960s and early 1970s – contexts of *de facto* Parmehutu dictatorship, muted church-state strains over political corruption and education, ongoing intra-clerical tensions, a burgeoning Catholic population, and a growing crisis of priestly vocations. I then analyze the Catholic hierarchy's official responses to the anti-Tutsi violence of February and March 1973. While these statements offered an admirable (and controversial) bluntness on the explicitly ethnic nature of the violence, they did not critique the government of Gregoire Kayibanda or take concrete pastoral steps to hold Hutu Christians responsible for their crimes. Still enamored with the pro-clerical, democratic and social justice vision of Rwanda's First Republic, Perraudin and his fellow bishops failed to assume critical distance from their former acolytes in the Parmehutu government.

In the final section of this chapter, I briefly consider the development of church, state, and ethnic questions in the 1980s and 1990s, highlighting André Perraudin's analysis of the contentious political developments of the 1990s and the outbreak of the 1994 genocide. Far from moderating his views, Perraudin appeared to develop an even stronger pro-Hutu analytical partisanship in his final years.

¹ For all of its politicization, the current Rwandan government's post-1994 "never again" credo and network of national memorial sites have kept the risk of ethnic violence in both local and global view.

I conclude this thesis by outlining five principles for an alternative Catholic politics in light of the historical narrative I have traced. Here I highlight the necessity of ecclesial repentance, reiterate the need for the church to maintain prophetic distance from the state, and argue for the centrality of nonviolence for Christian politics. I also argue that while Christian ethics tends to occupy itself with the prescriptive question of “what should we do,” the Rwandan case reminds us of the importance of social description and theological imagination – namely the question of “who are we.” In this sense, one of the church’s most important tasks in social ethics is to strengthen the social and communal dimensions of Christian identity in the face of rival national and ethnic allegiances.

This chapter is intended as a coda for the primary body of research presented in chapters two through four. The General Archives for the Missionaries of Africa in Rome restricted my archival access after 1962, limiting my ability to engage new material for the 1963 to 1973 period. And while the Diocese of Kabgayi archives included major pastoral statements, homilies and limited correspondence from the 1960s and early 1970s, the Diocese of Nyundo archives were wholly disrupted by the genocide and war of the 1990s, explaining the relative disappearance of Aloys Bigirumwami from this final chapter. These lacunae also explain why I have dated the dissertation from 1950 to 1962. My hope is that this brief narrative will reveal lines for further research; the history of the Catholic Church under Rwanda’s First Republic deserves its own study. In turn, I also hope to develop the concluding theopolitical principles in a separate work.²

² Over the past decade, the term “theopolitical” has become a buzzword in Christian theological circles. The term intentionally blurs the modern distinctions between theology and politics, recognizing the relatively recent separation of church and state and theology and political science in post-Enlightenment Europe. Examples of theopolitics can range from Iranian theocracy to American civil religion to non-statist Anabaptist communities.

A. From church & state to church & world: Catholic ecclesiology in Rwanda in the wake of Vatican II

Called by Pope John XXIII in 1959, the Second Vatican Council opened in October 1962 with the goal of recasting the church's relationship with the modern world. Over the course of four sessions in 1962, 1963, 1964 and 1965, more than 2,000 Catholic bishops debated and drafted statements on issues ranging from liturgical reform and ecclesiology to inter-religious relations and missionary work.³ Rwanda's four bishops – André Perraudin of Kabgayi, Aloys Bigirumwami of Nyundo, Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi of Butare, and Joseph Sibomana of Ruhengeri – attended Vatican II's four sessions. While none of these bishops were major players at a Council preoccupied with intra-European issues, the Rwandan delegation offered particular input on the issue of liturgical reform. In turn, Vatican II influenced the Rwandan hierarchy's ecclesial visions, especially in areas of church-state relations, ecumenism, religious freedom, and the relationship between the church and the modern world.

While André Perraudin's late 1950s emphases on liturgical reform, lay empowerment and Catholic social teaching predated Vatican II, one can see new emphases emerging in

Constructive theopolitics has focused in recent years on the political implications of Christian practices, particularly the sacrament of the Eucharist. On theopolitics and political theology, see William T. Cavanaugh, *Theopolitical Imagination: Christian Practices of Space and Time* (London/New York: T&T Clark: 2003); C.C. Pecknold, *Christianity and Politics: A Brief Guide to the History* (Eugene: Cascade, 2010); Michael Kirwan, *Political Theology: An Introduction* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2009); Graham Ward, *The Politics of Discipleship: Becoming Postmaterial Citizens* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2009); Peter Scott and William T. Cavanaugh, eds., *The Blackwell Companion to Political Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) and Hent de Vries and Lawrence E. Sullivan, eds., *Political Theologies: Public Religions in a Post-Secular World* (New York: Fordham, 2006).

³ The literature on Vatican II is voluminous. The conciliar documents themselves can be accessed in Austin Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II. Vol. I: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents* (New York: Costello, 1996). For the most thorough historical study of the Second Vatican Council, see Giuseppe Alberigo's and Joseph Komonchak's five-volume *History of Vatican II* (Maryknoll: Orbis & Leuven: Peeters, 1996-2006). The best recent one-volume history is likely John W. O'Malley, *What Happened at Vatican II* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard/Belknap, 2010). On Vatican II's impact on former mission countries, see Adrian Hastings, ed., *Modern Catholicism: Vatican II and After* (New York: Oxford, 1991).

Perraudin's February 1963 pastoral letter on "the mission of the Church in regards to temporal society."⁴ The title of the document itself reflected Vatican II's shift from an earlier concentration on church-state relations to a broader focus on the relationship between the church and the modern world. In Perraudin's words, temporal society included not just the state government but all of the natural order, including cultural and economic associations, art and literature, science and philosophy, modern communications like television and radio, and even atomic power. The church in turn possessed a prophetic mission towards temporal society, condemning "false doctrines and false mysticisms" from ancient Manichaeism to modern Communism while striving to transform society to better reflect its authentic identity as God's graced creation. While respecting the relative autonomy of the temporal order, the church remained the "incontestable guardian" of the moral law, a law with particular applicability in areas of family life, schools, medicine, media, politics, economics, culture, and law. While admitting that laity had particular competence in many of these areas, Perraudin also reasserted the clergy's right to speak to the underlying moral principles, positing that "it is rare to find purely technical things" lying outside of the church's direct purview.⁵

For Perraudin, the task of returning the world to its Creator belonged to the Catholic laity. But this task was not limited to electing more Catholics to higher office. Rather, it required the transformation of what he termed "Sunday Catholics" into committed Christian

⁴ A.D.K., André Perraudin, "Le Mission de l'Eglise à l'égard de la société temporelle," 2 Feb. 1963.

⁵ Ibid., 7-11. His subsequent Easter pastoral offered a corrective, however, arguing that clergy had an obligation to reveal God's holy laws and speak out on issues of industry, law, and politics while recognizing that "in practice their zone of action is very reduced" (A.D.K., André Perraudin, "Lettre pastorale du Carême 1963", 15 March 1963).

apostles who would not recoil in the face of unbelievers, agnostics, and communists.⁶ After studying both the principles of Catholic social doctrine and local magisterial teachings on ecclesiology, Rwandan Catholic lay leaders could discern how to apply these principles to the immediate political and social challenges presented by independence. In this vision, the church's task was not to dictate legislation to political leaders but rather to form consciences and embody its identity as the "vital principle of human society," offering a Catholic social doctrine that served as a "projection on the economic and social order of the great [Catholic] vision of the world and of life."⁷

In summary, Perraudin's 1963 statement on ecclesiology represented a broader Vatican II shift from ensuring Catholic institutional privileges to Christianizing society through the formation of committed lay disciples. At the same time, Perraudin never questioned the vision of church and state as close partners in service to the common good. He set this tone at the beginning of his letter, quoting Pope Leo XIII's 1885 *Immortale Dei* to support his argument that ecclesiastical and civil powers shared responsibility for human government.⁸ On one level, then, Perraudin did not seem to share his predecessors' fixation with maintaining church control of areas like education or medicine. As we will see below, Perraudin would soon capitulate to the Rwandan state over the long-contested question of state control of primary schooling. But if Perraudin no longer worried about maintaining the church's institutional privileges, it was only because he trusted that Rwanda's leaders were

⁶ A.D.K., Perraudin, "Le Mission de l'Eglise," 17-21.

⁷ Ibid., 35-36.

⁸ Ibid., 2. This encyclical on the "Christian constitution of states" expounds at length on the origin of the state, the proper relationship between church and state, and their respective spheres of power (cf. Pope Leo XIII, *Immortale Dei: On the Christian Constitution of States*, 1 Nov. 1885 (http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/leo_xiii/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_01111885_immortale-dei_en.html) (accessed 21 Feb. 2011)).

faithful Catholics ready to “render testimony of their faith in fulfilling their duties in perfect harmony with the teachings of the Gospel and the magisterium of Rome.”⁹ Whatever his language of the “autonomy of the temporal order” or the church’s lack of “technical expertise,” the traditional vision of church-state cooperation remained alive and well under André Perraudin. But rather than take the form of the state subsidizing the church, this vision consisted of clergy forming lay disciples and then stepping back as the laity restored society’s underlying divine and moral order.

The bishops of Rwanda and Burundi further developed Perraudin’s 1963 vision in their 1967 pastoral letter on ecclesiology. Writing over a year after Vatican II’s final session, the bishops began by sharing the vision of church expressed in *Lumen Gentium*, Vatican II’s dogmatic constitution on the church: the church was a mystery born of the love of God in Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Invisible and visible, the church included all of the people of God, not just the hierarchy or clergy.¹⁰

For our purposes, the most applicable sections of the letter concerned the church’s evangelizing mission and the relationship between church and state. For the bishops, the church’s mission was to recapitulate the world for God, making of humanity a “family of God” and incarnating the Kingdom of God in personal and social life. The call to holiness was not reserved to clergy, and lay Christians in fact had particular responsibilities for building a kingdom of holiness, justice and peace and for fighting against injustice and discrimination. Significantly, the bishops here defined peace as a “work of justice,” not just an “absence of war.” And while offering an unprecedented critique of the legacy of colonial

⁹ A.D.K., Perraudin, « Le Mission de l’Eglise, » 14.

¹⁰ A.D.K., “Lettre pastorale des Evêques du Burundi et du Rwanda sur l’Eglise,” 18 Feb. 1967, 4-7.

missions, the bishops borrowed John XXIII's language of *aggiornamento* (opening) in calling for a re-visioning rather than abandonment of the church's call to evangelization.¹¹

In terms of church-state relations, the bishops cited the "God and Caesar" text of Matthew 22:21 in arguing that Christ introduced a heretofore unknown distinction between the two powers of church and state.¹² While these lines blurred over the course of church history, the modern church had embraced its original spiritual mission. In turn, the state existed to serve the common good, and state power stemmed directly from God (rather than through the mediation of the church). For the bishops, the state should also recognize the religious freedom of its subjects as well as the Catholic Church's unmatched contributions to social development in areas like education and medicine. Both church and state thus contributed to the building up of the "total good of man." As in Perraudin's 1963 statement, the bishops affirmed the church's mission of supplying the moral and religious principles which should guide society.¹³

The post-Vatican II developments came in two key areas – recognizing the inherent tensions between church and state and affirming individual religious liberty. While rejecting the idea that church and state were inherently opposed, the bishops affirmed the existence of inherent tensions between the two powers. The state faced the temptation to assume control of the whole man, while the church could easily forget the state's independent value in the temporal order. But rather than call for a posture of critical distance between church and state, the bishops envisioned reconciliation in partnership. "It is in reciprocal fidelity and

¹¹ Ibid., 8-9, 14-17.

¹² Cf. Matthew 22:21 and Luke 20:25: "Then repay to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God."

¹³ Ibid., 10-13, 19.

frank collaboration that this natural tension is purified of all animosity and can become fruitful.”¹⁴ At the same time, the document contained none of the Rwandan hierarchy’s pre-Vatican II insistence on establishing or favoring Catholic institutions.¹⁵ Following *Dignitatis Humanae*, the Council’s constitution on religious freedom, the bishops’ statement merely affirmed that the state should respect the religious liberty of its citizens who in turn should recognize their duty to seek truth and follow the moral law.¹⁶

As with Perraudin’s 1963 statement, this 1967 letter remained on the level of general principles, and it can be difficult to see the immediate applications to the Rwandan context. Four important lessons emerge for our study, however. First, the statement reinforced the longstanding Catholic commitment to laity constructing the temporal order while sharing Vatican II’s optimistic vision of the world as a place where laity could construct a kingdom of holiness, justice and peace. While this avoided the risk of the church becoming a sectarian ghetto, it also undermined the church’s potential to develop an alternative social community to that of the world; rather the Catholic task was no less than to evangelize the world. Second, this pastoral letter recognized not just the possibility but the inevitability of tension between church and state. But rather than reinforce the church’s duty to remain a prophetic watchdog *vis à vis* the state, the statement called for “reciprocal fidelity and frank collaboration,” reinforcing the traditional sense of church and state as partners in service to

¹⁴ In a different context, such sentiments were repeated to me by the Anglican Bishop John Rucyahana in a June 2010 interview in Rwanda. Best known for his book *The Bishop of Rwanda* (Nashville: Thomas Crown, 2006), Rucyahana has initiated a network of prison-based reconciliation ministries and now heads Rwanda’s national commission on reconciliation. When I asked him if the church risked losing its prophetic voice in working so closely with the state, Rucyahana chastised me as a typical American whose commitment to the separation of church and state leads to the inevitable marginalization and irrelevance of the church.

¹⁵ Even as late as his independence day sermon in July 1962, Perraudin was still warning the new government of the risk of hiding behind a “false neutrality” and failing to direct the citizenry towards the “holy Church of God” (André Perraudin, “Sermon à la fête de l’indépendance,” *Trait d’Union* 20 (July-August 1962): 153-55).

¹⁶ A.D.K., « Lettre pastorale des Evêques du Burundi et du Rwanda sur l’Eglise,” 11-12, 20.

the common good. This helps explain the bishops' continuing reluctance to openly critique state authorities, whether during the state-sponsored Burundian genocide of 1972 or the state-initiated Rwandan schools expulsions of 1973 that we will discuss below. Third, the statement shifted from a pre-conciliar focus on ecclesial establishment to a post-conciliar focus on individual religious freedom. While this teaching avoided an unhealthy clericalism and recognized the modern separation of church and state, it sacrificed the communal sense of distinctively Catholic social groups like Catholic Action.¹⁷ Rather, Christians were enlisted as individual construction workers in building up the world's economic, social and political structures. Fourth, in line with the spirit of Vatican II, all of these teachings assumed an optimistic vision of the world, the state, and the depth of Catholic lay formation. Rwanda's ethnic violence of 1963-64 and 1973 would challenge such optimism.

B. The UNAR invasions and Gikongoro massacres of 1963-1964

Rwanda's declaration of independence on July 1, 1962 did not stop its opponents from challenging the legitimacy of the new Parmehutu-dominated state.¹⁸ While the internal UNAR party made its peace with the government by accepting two cabinet positions in February 1962, UNAR exiles increased their raids into Rwandan territory over the next 18 months. Convinced that Rwanda's Parmehutu government was an illegal regime on the road towards becoming a one-party dictatorship – a sentiment only reinforced by Parmehutu's February 1963 decision to suspend the two Tutsi cabinet positions and by the party's August

¹⁷ Perhaps not surprisingly, outside commentators in the mid-1960s connected Rwanda's decline in priestly vocations and Catholic Action cadres to lay elites' embracing of public rather than ecclesial service ("En pleine épreuve racial: Le Rwanda," *Informations Catholiques Internationales* 212 (1964): 24).

¹⁸ The following narrative is drawn from René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Anchor, 1970), 220-24; Filip Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit au Rwanda: Droit public et évolution politique, 1916-1973* (Tervuren, Belgium: Musée Royal de l'Afrique Centrale, 1985), 456-71; "En pleine épreuve racial: Le Rwanda," *Informations Catholiques Internationales* 212 (1964): 15-25.

1963 triumph in parliamentary elections – UNAR exiles shifted from a strategy of destabilization to one of invasion in the fall of 1963.¹⁹

UNAR's first plan mobilized 1,500 exiles to cross Burundi's northern border with Rwanda on November 25, 1963. The Burundian government refused to allow this militia to reach the border, however, and UNAR abandoned the plan. In subsequent weeks relations further soured between Rwanda and Burundi, and Burundi broke off economic and diplomatic relations with Rwanda in mid-December 1963. Despite Mwami Kigeli's opposition, François Rukeba and other UNAR hardliners expanded their invasion plans to include coordinated attacks across the Tanzanian, Ugandan, Congolese, and Burundian borders.²⁰

This complex plan spun into motion on Saturday, December 21 as several hundred UNAR exiles successfully crossed the Burundian border with Rwanda. These exiles quickly overwhelmed a military outpost and arms depot at Gako in southern Rwanda. The exiles then moved through the internal refugee camps at Nyamata south of Kigali, successfully recruiting hundreds of sympathetic Tutsi who had been displaced during the violence of 1959 to 1962. The expanded UNAR militia continued its northern march and reached the outskirts of Kigali. Ably assisted by several Belgian military officers, the Rwandan army finally stopped the invading UNAR exiles 20 kilometers from Rwanda's capital, and most of the exiles were killed, arrested, or chased back across the border. Expected reinforcements from

¹⁹ Only 26 of Rwanda's 1,138 communal councilors did not belong to the Parmehutu party after the August 1963 parliamentary elections ("En pleine épreuve raciale: Le Rwanda," *ICI* 212 (1964): 22).

²⁰ The fact that the UNAR exiles proceeded over the Mwami's opposition demonstrated the exiles' increasing distance from Kigeli during 1963-64 (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 457-59). Kigeli also opposed the Rwanda Patriotic Front's plans to invade Rwanda in the fall of 1990 (Unattributable interview in Rwanda, 5 June 2010).

Congo, Uganda and Tanzania never materialized, as governments in all three countries prevented the exile militias from crossing their borders into Rwanda.

While the exile invasion proceeded on December 21-22, the Rwandan government rounded up suspected UNAR sympathizers across the country. Claiming to have discovered plans for a new cabinet on the body of a dead Congolese soldier, the government arrested all of those named in this document, including internal UNAR leaders like Jean-Baptiste Rutsindintwarane and Etienne Rwagasana and former Rader leaders like Prosper Bwanakweri and Lazare Ndazaro. The government then transported these leaders to Ruhengeri in northern Rwanda on December 21, convicted them of treason in a secret overnight trial, and executed them on December 22 under the alleged orders of a Belgian military attaché. Most lower-level UNAR sympathizers were incarcerated but not executed; the Apostolic Nuncio even intervened to stop the planned execution of several Bugesera Tutsi who had collaborated with the UNAR exiles. Significantly, the government also arrested four Tutsi priests for their alleged sympathies with the exiles.

Controversy remains over whether the Rwandan government planted the alleged cabinet document on the dead Congolese soldier or whether the documents reflected the actual plans of the UNAR exiles. It seems more likely that Parmehutu created the document and used it as a pretext to eliminate any conceivable political rivals. As Reyntjens notes, there was no love lost between UNAR exiles and internal UNAR leaders. The former tended to view the latter as traitors and collaborators, especially after the internal UNAR party disavowed violence and broke off relations with the exiles in 1962-63. In addition, the

National Guard arrested hundreds of Tutsi leaders on the initial day of the invasion, reflecting the premeditated nature of government action.²¹

In the meantime, massacres occurred across Rwanda beginning on December 23. Hutu militia killed 98 Tutsi in Cyangugu in southwestern Rwanda and 100 in Kibungo in eastern Rwanda.²² The worst violence occurred in the prefecture of Gikongoro in southern Rwanda. This region had a high concentration of internally-displaced Tutsi and bordered the vast Nyungwe forest on the Rwanda-Burundi border, raising Hutu fears that the region might contain a fifth column. Local Tutsi had also raised tensions by boasting of the impending restoration of the monarchy in the weeks preceding the invasion. Finally, the area around Gikongoro had elected one of the nation's few UNAR burgomasters in the August 1963 elections, reflecting the continuing salience of electoral politics beneath the veneer of ethnic violence.²³

Initiated on Christmas Day by André Nkeramugaba, the local Parmehutu burgomaster in Gikongoro town, and executed by local self-defense units, a veritable reign of terror ensued over the next four days. Hutu militia killed anywhere from 5,000 to 14,000 Tutsi while thousands more took refuge at local Catholic missions in Kaduha and Cyanika.²⁴

Despite missionary appeals on Christmas Day, government authorities did not arrive until

²¹ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 462-63.

²² Henri Bazot, et. al., "Un appel à la Chrétienté Européenne, par un groupe de Missionnaires au Rwanda le 15 janvier 1964, » in Henri Bazot, *Ma vie de Missionnaire au Liban, au Rwanda, au Burundi, au Zaïre, en France* (Rome : 2006), 21. I located this copy in the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome.

²³ "En pleine épreuve raciale: Le Rwanda," *Informations Catholiques Internationales* 212 (15 March 1964): 22.

²⁴ A.G.M.Afr., Henri Bazot, et. al., "Un appel à la Chrétienté Européenne," 22. As with the 1994 genocide, the statistics themselves became the subject of intense political wrangling. The Rwandan government's subsequent white paper investigation estimated 400 deaths, while some Tutsi exiles alleged 25,000 deaths. Independent Red Cross and United Nations reports placed the range at 5,000-10,000. Reyntjens estimates 10,000 to 14,000 deaths (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 467). The Rwandan scholar J.D. Bizimana has estimated 20,000 deaths (J.D. Bizimana, *L'église et le génocide au Rwanda : Les Peres Blancs et le Négationnisme* (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2004) : 26).

December 29.²⁵ The major massacres ceased by New Year's Day, although more sporadic killings continued through the first two weeks of January 1964.²⁶

The Catholic hierarchy did not delay in addressing the violence. Archbishop Perraudin condemned the invasions and counter-reactions in his Christmas sermon.²⁷ Here Perraudin "implored God for peace in our dear country," writing that the "sad events that have happened over the past week... afflict us profoundly [and] sadden much more the Good God who is a God of Peace and not of war." In a veiled critique of the government's executions of the political opposition, Perraudin continued by arguing that "the measures of justice and legitimate defense which should be taken by those who retain power can only be approved by God if we make a generous effort of perfect fidelity to his holy laws." Perraudin also addressed the growing risk of popular retribution, noting that "certain people can be tempted, in the midst of the current difficulties, to want to harm others and even kill innocents. My dear Brothers, these thoughts are not Christian and can only draw divine condemnation on our Country." Writing in the heat of the moment, Perraudin issued one of his most forceful statements, committing the church to peace, opposing government repression, and condemning popular retribution.

A more authoritative episcopal statement came in the form of a joint letter from Rwanda's four bishops issued on January 1, 1964.²⁸ Perraudin and Sibomana had traveled to Nyundo in late December to consult directly with Bigirumwami, likely to ensure that the

²⁵ A.G.M.Afr., Henri Bazot, et. al., "Un appel à la Chrétienté Européenne," 22.

²⁶ In the words of René Lemarchand, "the impression from various eyewitness reports is one of unspeakable brutality. Popular participation in violence created a kind of collective catharsis through which years of pent-up hatred suddenly seemed to find an outlet" (Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 224).

²⁷ A.D.K., Perraudin, "Message de Noël 1963," 25 Dec. 1963.

²⁸ "Message des Evêques du Rwanda à la occasion de la nouvelle année, 1 janvier 1964" *Trait d'Union* 36 (1964): 12-16. Aloys Bigirumwami issued a separate condemnation of the violence on 29 December 1963, but I have not been able to locate this document. Bigirumwami did sign the joint January 1 statement.

subsequent statement reflected the views of all four bishops.²⁹ Unlike Perraudin's impassioned Christmas sermon, however, the bishops' emphases in their New Year's Day address fell more heavily on the "armed incursions of terrorists" and on the UNAR exiles who were described as "criminals, above all those knowing very well the incalculable evils resulting from their machinations." While admitting the intractable problem of the Tutsi refugee crisis, the bishops posited that "when the country has pronounced itself more than 80% for the regime, and that under the watchful eyes of the U.N., it is not through means of terrorist attacks of a minority that the situation will improve." The bishops' subsequent language on the refugee crisis exhorted the international community to resolve the problem but said nothing about the Rwandan government's responsibility to reincorporate refugees.

The bishops did, however, critique Rwanda's government for what they termed the "repression" which followed the UNAR attacks. Even in the face of an "extremely difficult situation" with "limited means of police," the government "who in the exercise of their powers are representatives of God should scrupulously respect His holy Law," ensuring that arrested persons were not tortured or killed prior to legal judgment. The bishops stopped there, however, confessing that they "do not know the dossiers of those who were victims of the condemnations." Turning to the popular violence in Gikongoro, the bishops condemned the "rage (*colère*) of violent reactions which have not always spared the innocent," describing these as "undignified for Christians but also as simply disgraceful and degrading."

²⁹ *Civitas Mariae* 70 (1964): 2.

They attributed much of the violence to popular passions, noting that even if such passions could “attenuate guilt,” they made the violence “no less condemnable.”³⁰

Reviewing this statement, several important themes emerge. Continuing the pattern of “analytical partisanship” that we noted in the 1959-1962 period, Perraudin and his associates saw the UNAR terrorists as primarily responsible for Rwanda’s violence even if the vast majority of killers were Hutu militia members executing innocent Tutsi civilians. As in 1959 and 1962, massacres organized by local Parmehutu cadres were described as “popular rage” and “violent reactions of the population.” In other words, the bishops condemned the violence but did not hold anyone responsible for it; even the guilty masses were partially excused by their irrational passions. Likewise, condemning a “rage of reactions which have not always spared the innocent” tacitly implied the moral legitimacy of killing the guilty.³¹ A more consistent nonviolent ethic would recognize that retribution typically furthers a cycle of self-destructive violence, no matter the alleged guilt of the accused party.³² In turn, such language reflected a deeper ambiguity in the bishops’ attitudes towards state-sanctioned violence. The bishops did critique government detentions of the political opposition, claiming that they “cannot remain silent any longer on their repression.” But when one considers the Catholic reputations of leaders like Bwanakweri and Ndazaro, the bishops’ subsequent caveats that “they do not know the dossiers of the victims” and “do not want to

³⁰ « Message des Evêques du Rwanda à la occasion de la nouvelle année, 1 janvier 1964 » *Trait d’Union* 36 (1964): 15-16.

³¹ Perraudin echoed this language in a corresponding commentary in the January 1964 issue of *Trait d’Union*, expressing his regret that “even innocents have paid for the madness of the assailants.” Again, one could be forgiven for thinking that it was the UNAR “assailants” who committed the Gikongoro massacres rather than Hutu self-defense units directed by local Parmehutu government officials (“Lettre de S.E. Monseigneur Perraudin Archevêque de Kabgayi, 1 Jan. 1964,” *Trait d’Union* (January 1964): 6).

³² The Apostolic Nuncio to Rwanda seemed to recognize this in convincing the government to commute the death sentences of the Bugesera Tutsi who had joined in the invasion.

judge” undermined the force of their argument and seemed to give the benefit of the doubt to the government.

In turn, Perraudin’s accompanying *Trait d’Union* commentary reinforced the Rwandan hierarchy’s tendency to blame Tutsi victims for their own sufferings. While reminding the Catholic faithful of their “sacred duty to respect the life, honor and goods of the neighbor and the duty of making reparations for injustices committed,” Perraudin also implied that the root of the problem lay with recalcitrant Tutsis’ failure to embrace the new Parmehutu government.

If there is not in all the inhabitants of the country a loyalty and good respect in regard to the institutions put in place by the referendum of 1961 – which does not stop the existence of a healthy and constructive opposition – there will never be serious peace. Without mixing ourselves in one or another partisan politics, we should be realistic about the choices facing us. We do not have the right, by an equivocal attitude, of exposing the country to much greater evils than those we have known.³³

For a political realist, Perraudin made a valid point: people living under a dictatorship may need to mute their opposition to preserve social peace. But for a bishop who claimed elsewhere that “peace is not just the absence of war but a work of justice,” such a statement looks in retrospect like a capitulation.³⁴ And even if the average peasant did not have the freedom to voice his or her views, a missionary Catholic bishop should surely serve as a voice for the voiceless. Perraudin’s Christmas Day 1963 sermon came close, as did his Lenten 1964 pastoral in which he offered an extended commentary on the nature of sin, writing that “some however, profiting from the trouble caused by perfidious terrorist attacks, are sadly allowing themselves to commit abominable crimes.”³⁵ Yet one never really senses that Rwanda’s ongoing ethnic violence is altering Perraudin’s pastoral vision. If anything,

³³ Ibid., 7.

³⁴ A.D.K., “Lettre Pastorale des Evêques du Burundi et du Rwanda sur l’Eglise, » 18 Feb. 1967, 17.

³⁵ A.D.K., André Perraudin, *Lettre Pastorale, Carême 1964* (15 Feb. 1964): 12. Here at least Perraudin names the sin – if not the sinners.

subsequent statements only reinforced his tendency to blame UNAR for all of Rwanda's ills and to focus more on alleged Tutsi complicity with UNAR than on Hutu complicity with ethnic massacres. As Perraudin wrote in a March 1964 issue of *Trait d'Union*, "All collaboration with terrorists in the interior or the exterior of the country is a gravely guilty disorder...It is, in effect, the terrorist actions which are at the origin of the miseries that we deplore."³⁶ So rather than cause the church to pause and reconsider its mission, Gikongoro appeared as a regrettable interruption of the church's inexorable evangelical march. As Perraudin commented in a February 1964 letter to a Spanish missionary organization, Rwanda had been at peace for four weeks, and "missionary work has resumed as before."³⁷ In response to such language, one can understand the frustrations of White Fathers like Henri Bazot, the missionary superior at Cyangugu who witnessed so much of the Gikongoro violence. "Where is the cry of indignation, of horror on the part of our pastors?"³⁸

Yet even as they tried to move on from Gikongoro, Perraudin and his fellow missionaries found themselves facing an increasingly hostile media. While local newspapers like *Kinyamateka* took a strong pro-government line in December and January,³⁹ a series of critical articles appeared in the European press. On February 4, *Le Monde* claimed the ongoing massacres of "tens of thousands of Tutsi" through the end of January and alleged a "véritable génocide" at Gikongoro, positing that while certain priests had "taken with courage the party of the victims, the high authorities above all seem to desire to not deny the

³⁶ *Trait d'Union* 38 (1964): 65-66. Nor did Perraudin's analysis fundamentally change over the subsequent 40 years. Writing in his 2003 autobiography, he still blamed UNAR insurgents for intentionally precipitating an ethnic bloodbath and claimed that the 1963-64 massacres occurred outside of government control, making no mention of the involvement of local Parmehutu officials (André Perraudin, *Un Evêque au Rwanda: Les six premières années de mon épiscopat (1956-1962)* (Paris: Editions Saint-Augustin, 2003): 275-77).

³⁷ A.D.K., Perraudin to José Zunzunegui, 23 Feb. 1964.

³⁸ A.G.M.Afr., Henri Bazot, et. al., "Un appel à la Chrétienté Européenne," 23.

³⁹ Antoine Mugesera, « *Kinyamateka* contre les *inyenzi* et leurs complices, » *Dialogue* 189 (2009) : 43-47.

reputation of a government attached to church institutions.⁴⁰ Soon the Catholic press joined in. The February 6 issue of *Témoignage Chrétien* lamented that a majority of the killers were Christians, while the February 15 edition of *Informations Catholiques Internationales* cited 15,000 deaths and 135,000 exiles produced by a “Christmas Day plan of repression” hatched by the Rwandan government.⁴¹ One Rwandan exile attributed the violence to the “triumph of a Perraudinesque Catholicism” – namely Perraudin’s efforts to ally the church with the Hutu emancipation movements.⁴² Most seriously, Vatican Radio’s February 10 broadcast called the Gikongoro massacres “the most terrible, systematic genocide since the genocide of the Jews by Hitler.”⁴³

Perraudin and the White Fathers immediately launched a vociferous defense of themselves and Kayibanda’s government. On the same day as the Vatican Radio broadcast, Perraudin sent a protest telegram to the Vatican disputing the broadcast’s usage of the term “genocide,” noting that the massacre was limited to Gikongoro and did not represent a systematic government plot to eliminate the Tutsi. “To speak of genocide without having proof in hand is a gravely reckless judgment... The comparison with Hitler is monstrous and gravely offensive for the head of a Catholic state.”⁴⁴ Perhaps in response, Pope Paul VI sent a softer personal message to the Rwandan bishops on February 14 expressing how “profoundly saddened” he was by the violence and addressing a “fervent appeal for appeasement of

⁴⁰ Denis-Gilles Vuillemin, « L’Extermination des Tutsis : Les massacres du Ruanda sont le manifestation d’une haine raciale soigneusement entretenue, » *Le Monde*, 4 Feb. 1964, 16. Vuillemin had worked as an advisor for the Rwandan government at Butare’s Groupe Scolaire before resigning in protest over the Gikongoro massacres.

⁴¹ Cf. “Le massacre des Tutsis,” *Informations Catholiques Internationales* 211 (1964): 7-8.

⁴² Audax Hodari, “La Confession de Monseigneur Perraudin,” *Remarques congolaises et africaines* VI, 11 (1964): 260-64.

⁴³ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 224.

⁴⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°721014, « Brève réponse à quelques grossières calomnies que l’on a lancées contre l’Eglise au Rwanda, » 1.

spirits, respect of persons, and peaceful cohabitation in fraternal charity.”⁴⁵ In the meantime, the White Fathers ensured that their own international periodical, *Vivante Afrique*, offered a more sympathetic analysis. In an early 1964 issue, *Vivante Afrique* described Rwanda as an “oasis of peace, work and efforts for all the people,” expressed relief at the limited nature of the 1963-64 massacres, and praised Kayibanda for his “politics of austerity” and success in “remain[ing] integrally faithful to the Christian ideal of his youth.”⁴⁶ A less effusive White Father account came from Dominic Nothomb who admitted that “manifest injustices were perpetrated by official persons exercising recognized authority” even as he resisted implicating the entire Kayibanda government in the Gikongoro violence.⁴⁷

These media battles were followed by a far longer 1964 defense of Perraudin and the Rwandan Catholic Church against “gross calumnies which have been launched against the Church in Rwanda.”⁴⁸ In this document sent to the Holy See, the anonymous White Father authors began by dismissing the Radio Vatican allegations as “most incredible” and “gravely injurious for Rwanda and the government of the country whose leaders have consistently

⁴⁵ *Civitas Mariae* 72 (1964): 2. The Holy See established diplomatic relations with Rwanda less than six months later, demonstrating that the Vatican Radio fracas of February 1964 did not mark a permanent diplomatic break between Vatican City and Kigali (« Echoes et nouvelles, » *Revue du Clergé Africain* 19, 4 (1964) : 409).

⁴⁶ S. Thomas, « Au Rwanda : pour le peuple, par le peuple, » *Vivante Afrique* 230 (1964) : 47-48. The Congo-based *Revue du Clergé Africain* offered a similarly sanguine analysis, noting that the Rwandan population reacted violently against those “estimated as accomplices of the enemy” (*Revue du Clergé Africain* 19, 1 (1964): 122-23). A special 1965 issue of the Belgian Catholic journal *Pro Mundi Vita* also reinforced this one-sided analysis (“Le Rwanda: Force et Faiblesse du Centre Chrétien de l’Afrique,” *Pro Mundi Vita* VI (1965): 1-35). In 1971 *Vivante Afrique* still described the 1964 events in terms of a “vast terrorist attack launched from abroad by Tutsi exiles” which precipitated lamentable violence in which “once again Tutsi and Hutu killed each other without pity” (« Au carrefour de deux ères, » *Vivante Afrique* 271 (1970) : 3).

⁴⁷ Dominic Nothomb, “Le Rwanda est-il Chrétien?” *Etudes CCCXX* (1964): 700-705.

⁴⁸ A.G.M.Afr.N°721014, « Brève réponse à quelques grossières calomnies que l’on a lancées contre l’Eglise au Rwanda, » 1964, 54 pp. The authors remain anonymous but claim to be “missionaries in Rwanda.” I obtained a copy of this document from the Missionaries of Africa General Archives’ annex library (housed under file folder 0345). Copies are also available in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives, the archives of the Missionaries of Africa in Kigali, and the library of Nyakibanda Major Seminary, Rwanda. The Vatican Radio statement and *Témoignage Chrétien* article mentioned above are transcribed and discussed in this document as well.

given unequivocal signs of their profound and respectful adherence to the Church.”⁴⁹ The authors attributed the Vatican Radio critiques to the machinations of Michel Kayihura and Fr. Jean Bosco Kayonga. Kayihura, discussed in chapter four, was a leader of the UNAR exiles and a brother of Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi, the bishop of Butare. Kayonga had served as a Josephite priest and then as a Benedictine monk before fleeing Rwanda in 1959. The two had traveled to Rome in early 1964 to present the Vatican with a detailed list of accusations against Perraudin and the White Fathers. Many of these accusations concerned missionaries’ alleged efforts in the 1950s to “sow discord between Rwandans” in a craven political ploy to help ensure the Catholic Church’s post-colonial future.⁵⁰

Concerning the 1963-64 violence, Kayihura and Kayonga alleged that the Catholic hierarchy remained silent so as not to jeopardize their privileged relationship with the Kayibanda government. Rather than combat this charge, the missionary authors of the “Brève réponse” adopted an apolitical posture, arguing that the political assassinations of December 1963 “do not concern the Church” and claiming that “we do not want to pass judgment on the motives for arresting certain Rwandan priests.”⁵¹ The missionaries also tried to undermine Kayihura’s and Kayonga’s credibility by challenging their statistics. Here they took issue with Kayihura and Kayonga’s estimates of 25,000 to 50,000 deaths in Gikongoro, claiming that this far surpassed the Red Cross and U.N. estimates of 5,000 to 8,000 dead. They accused their Tutsi critics of “desiring to overthrow the post-revolutionary order by

⁴⁹ Ibid., 1.

⁵⁰ I have not located Kayihura’s and Kayonga’s original document, but much of their text is transcribed verbatim in the missionaries’ “Brève réponse” document.

⁵¹ Ibid., 14.

blaming all troubles on the Hutu leaders.”⁵² Far from an anti-Tutsi zealot, Perraudin had publicly denounced revolutionary violence between 1959 and 1962. In Perraudin’s defense, the missionaries also noted how the Archbishop of Kabgayi had recently founded *Secours Catholique Rwandaise*, a diocesan ministry for refugee relief, and requested the services of Catholic Relief Services and Caritas-Belgium in assisting displaced Tutsi.⁵³

In summarizing the UNAR critique of Perraudin and the defense offered by his missionary allies, this “Brève réponse” document offers an insightful synopsis of a polemic that began in 1959 and has raged off and on for fifty years. Several consistent themes emerge. One, “polemic” is the right word to describe this argument. Whatever the sufferings of Rwanda’s Tutsi in the early 1960s, UNAR activists consistently exaggerated their case, thereby undermining the credibility of their argument. Examples included Kayihura’s and Kayonga’s unsubstantiated allegation of a massacre of 7,000 in Nyamata refugee camp, their claims that the government killed 25,000 Tutsi during January 1964, and their positing that the White Fathers had “oriented and supported the politics of extermination of an ethnic group” since the 1950s.⁵⁴ For their part, the White Fathers continued their pattern of giving Kayibanda’s government the benefit of the doubt, blaming Tutsi exiles for all of Rwanda’s internal problems, and defending their own international reputation. In this vein, rather than

⁵² Ibid., 31.

⁵³ Ibid., 40. Correspondence in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives supports the contention that the Rwandan Catholic Church made a concerted effort to support Tutsi refugees in 1963-64 (cf. A.D.K., Perraudin to Ballen, 2 April 1964; Comité de Caritas de Nyamirambo à Kigali, 15 March 1964; Octave Hakiba to Perraudin, 15 April 1964; Delpienne to Perraudin, 21 June 1964; Arthur Dejemeppe, “Rapport du Secrétaire-Général sur les activités de Caritas-Rwanda durant l’exercice 1963-1964,” 1 July 1963 to 30 June 1964). Perhaps reflecting Dejemeppe’s own politics, however, this last document devoted more attention to victims of a 1963 flood than those who suffered in the “events of December 1963” which Dejemeppe described as “a phase of the revolution... more deadly than the preceding ones but happily also more localized” (Dejemeppe, “Rapport du Secrétaire Général,” 7).

⁵⁴ A.G.M.Afr.N°721014, « Brève réponse..., » 30, 33, 42. I make this argument with a degree of ambiguity given my lack of access to the original Kayihura/Kayonda document.

reflect a calculated political move by a local Parmehutu prefect, the 1963-64 violence stemmed from “racial opposition [that grew] out of a violent explosion, a social struggle provoked by the prospect of returning to the former regime.” For the missionaries, Rwanda’s bloodshed also reflected the inevitable violence of “all revolutions, civil wars, and movements of liberation and resistance.”⁵⁵ If this was the case, however, one wonders why revolutionary violence did not engulf the entire country, especially since the authors elsewhere emphasize the weakness of government police. In addition, the authors seem more concerned with European press descriptions of the massacres than with the massacres themselves. “Speaking of a systematic genocide of thousands of men killed each day in Rwanda is a monstrous and undignified calumny. There had been, in reality, an explosion of rage of a peaceful people perfidiously attacked from the exterior. Since the second week of January, the country has been at peace.”⁵⁶ Somewhat flippantly, the White Fathers concluded by arguing that the only “veritable genocide” would result if the international community suspended development assistance for the Rwandan people.⁵⁷ Perraudin himself echoed this argument in a June 1964 press conference in Switzerland in which he claimed that his opponents’ attacks aimed to convince the Swiss to suspend critical development assistance.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Ibid., 43.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 49. Here the missionaries quote Perraudin in his 21 February 1964 protest to *Le Monde* – a protest that was never actually published in the newspaper.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 53. As this commentary demonstrates, the term “genocide” was already fraught with political tension thirty years before the U.N. Security Council labored over how to designate the far greater massacres of Spring 1994. As in the early weeks of the 1994 genocide, the United Nations rejected applying the genocide label to the Gikongoro massacres in the official Dorsainville report of March 5, 1964 (“Church and Revolution in Rwanda,” *Herder Correspondence*, Sept-Oct. 1964; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 467). On the May 1994 U.N. debates over whether to invoke the term “genocide,” see Samantha Power, “Bystanders to Genocide: Why the United States Let the Rwandan Tragedy Happen,” *Atlantic Monthly* 288, 2 (2001): 84-108.

⁵⁸ Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 278-79.

In summary, the 1963-1964 Gikongoro massacres and subsequent church reactions carried forward several of the patterns that we noted in chapter four. First, the Catholic hierarchy offered early opposition to ethnic violence, condemning the massacres in their first days. Just as Perraudin's and Bigirumwami's November 6, 1959 statement predated the Belgian government's official condemnations of the November revolution, so Perraudin's Christmas 1963 sermon and the bishops' January 1 pastoral letter preceded Kayibanda's own halting denunciations on January 10, 1964. Second, while Perraudin later claimed to have remonstrated with Kayibanda behind the scenes, he and his fellow bishops failed to hold the Parmehutu government accountable in their official statements on the violence, describing the violence instead as an uncontrollable and popular rage triggered by UNAR exiles.⁵⁹ Third, while church leaders should be credited with reaching out to refugees, there was little reflection on the lessons of Gikongoro for the church's mission. The focus lay rather on defending the hierarchy and disputing international press accounts that jeopardized Rwanda's supply of international funds and missionaries alike.⁶⁰ Even Dominic Nothomb's more balanced analysis resisted any categorical judgments.

If in 1964 the fervent Christians go astray, we should suffer on this account and experience, as we do for our personal failings, an extreme sadness. All the more so since racial hatred is in absolute opposition to Christian charity. But we do not have

⁵⁹ C.M.L., André Perraudin, "Je rends grâce à Dieu» (25 Aug. 1989) : 3. A quarter-century after the events, Perraudin claimed that in the days following the Gikongoro massacres, he "had gone many times to the house of President Kayibanda to ask him to stop all this." This implies that Perraudin thought that Kayibanda *could* stop the violence, granting the government a level of agency that Perraudin was reluctant to acknowledge publicly in 1964.

⁶⁰ Correspondence I reviewed in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives focused almost solely on the statistical and etymological questions. In addition to the Perraudin/Zunzunegui letter cited above, the founder of TRAFIPRO, Louis Pien, wrote that the European media statistics should be "cut by a factor of ten," while a European friend of Perraudin lamented that "certain publications have continued to make believe that this was a genocide pure and simple" (A.D.K., Pien to Perraudin, 18 March 1964; A.D.K., Counachamps to Perraudin, 2 March 1964). Notably missing here were any notes of empathy for the Tutsi victims themselves.

the right to prejudge divine action by concluding that what happened represents the defeat of a great missionary hope.⁶¹

So if UNAR accusations that the White Fathers plotted the extermination of the Tutsi seem far-fetched – especially when one considers how White Fathers at Cyanika and Kaduha parishes took in thousands of Tutsi – one wishes in retrospect that Perraudin and his allies had used the Gikongoro tragedy to distance themselves from a corrupt government and to apply a more self-critical eye to their own pastoral work. After all, even outsiders could recognize that “Christian life in Rwanda has often been influenced by its attitude towards political power” and could express concerns over the extent to which devoutly religious believers were transfixed by “political passions.”⁶² As we will see, the events of 1973 demonstrated that the hierarchy struggled to heed these lessons.

C. Church as ethnic cauldron: The 1973 Tutsi schools expulsions

The final paroxysm of ethnic violence during Rwanda’s First Republic occurred in early 1973. Unlike previous episodes of ethnic violence, church institutions served not as refuges but as centers of the conflict: the anti-Tutsi purges began in secondary schools and minor seminaries in Kabgayi, the Dominican-run National University of Rwanda in Butare, and the Catholic major and minor seminaries in Nyundo. After offering a brief overview of ecclesial and political developments in late 1960s Rwanda, I address the events of 1973 and the Catholic hierarchy’s official responses to the violence. As it did in the early 1960s, the Catholic hierarchy mitigated their rhetorical denunciations of popular violence through their uncritical loyalty to the Rwandan state. Ironically, the Rwandan military would break with

⁶¹ Dominic Nothomb, “Le Rwanda est-il Chrétien ? » *Etudes CCCXX* (1964): 705.

⁶² “En pleine épreuve racial : Le Rwanda,” *Informations Catholiques Internationales* 212 (15 March 1964): 24.

the Kayibanda regime before the Catholic Church, toppling Rwanda's "father of the nation" in a bloodless coup on the evening of July 5, 1973.

The disenchantment with Kayibanda began long before the 1973 events, however. While a full study of Rwanda's political history under the First Republic lies outside the scope of this project, a few important themes emerge from the secondary literature.⁶³ First, the end of the external UNAR threat and the elimination of Parmehutu's internal political rivals represented the apex of Parmehutu rule. The 1965 elections were the first in Rwanda in which only one party – Parmehutu – proposed candidates for office.⁶⁴ Even former Aprosoma stalwarts like Aloys Munyangaju and Joseph Gitera acquired Parmehutu cards. At the same time, UNAR exiles' December 1963 incursion proved to be their Waterloo. While conducting sporadic raids until 1967, the party's organization withered. UNAR unofficially gave up its stated goal of toppling the Parmehutu regime even as it kept the door open to potential internal coups.⁶⁵

Even as Parmehutu eliminated its external rivals, however, internal tensions simmered. If anything, these only worsened in the absence of the rallying points of national security and contested elections. When a 1968 government commission on corruption returned with a damning indictment of what it termed Kayibanda's "Gitarama clique,"

⁶³ Reyntjens's *Pouvoir et Droit* offers the most thorough secondary account of political history during Rwanda's First Republic. Lemarchand's *Rwanda and Burundi* (1970) remains the best study in English. Post-genocide studies tend to skip from the revolutionary period to Juvenal Habyarimana's Second Republic (1973-1994). Gerard Prunier's *The Rwanda Genocide: History of a Crisis* (New York: Columbia, 1995) and Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001) are good examples of this tendency.

⁶⁴ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 366. Lemarchand notes the similarities between Parmehutu cadres in the 1960s and French Jacobins in the 1790s: a reign of terror gave way to an embracing of public virtue. In Lemarchand's words, this facilitated a shift from a Catholic-clericalist vision to a nationalist-secularist alternative, culminating with political centralization and dictatorship (Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 258-59).

⁶⁵ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 470-71; 494-98.

Kayibanda and his allies suppressed the report and sacked Parmehutu members suspected of conspiring against the president. Several of the luminaries of the 1959 revolution – including Dominique Mbonyumutwa, Bathazar Bicomupaka, and Aloys Munyangaju – were cast out of government office and into political exile. Even the Catholic media, the great allies of the Hutu emancipation movement in the late 1950s, found themselves under attack. After publishing a thinly-veiled political fable about government corruption, Félicien Semusambi, the Rwandan editor of *Kinyamateka*, was imprisoned, and the government subsequently deported the newspaper's Italian general editor. Kayibanda then temporarily banned production of the Catholic newspaper that he had utilized to facilitate Parmehutu's rise in the late 1950s.⁶⁶

While *Kinyamateka* rediscovered its journalistic edge in the late 1960s, broader relations between church and state remained amicable.⁶⁷ In a sign that Gikongoro had not strained relations between church and state leaders, Kayibanda and his entire cabinet attended the 25th jubilee of Perraudin's priestly ordination in July 1964.⁶⁸ And in a remarkable *volte-face* from the hierarchy's attitudes in the mid-1950s, Perraudin agreed in 1966 to a new statute that transferred authority over primary schooling from the church to the state. While defenders justified this decision as a further step in the indigenization of the

⁶⁶ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 395-98, 401-02, 471; Ian Linden, *Christianisme et Pouvoirs au Rwanda (1900-1990)*. Trans. Paulette Géraud (Paris : Karthala, 1999) : 369-70; .C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, "Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 4.

⁶⁷ International Catholic newspapers continued to adopt a sanguine view of Kayibanda. The British Catholic *Herder Correspondence* wrote in 1964 that "Kayibanda's regime was distinguished from the first by the seriousness of its efforts to develop the country and promote education as well as by the personal austerity of the political leaders who have not used their positions to amass spoils" ("Church and Revolution in Rwanda," *Herder Correspondence*, Sept.-Oct. 1964, 292). The Belgian Catholic journal *Pro Mundi Vita* also supported the Rwandan church's pro-revolutionary stance by arguing that "it is unworthy of man to perpetuate a state of unjust affairs for love of peace."

⁶⁸ A.D.K., "Jubilé au Rwanda," 29 June 1964; "Le Jubile sacerdotal de S.E. Mgr. Perraudin," *Trait d'Union* 42 (1964): 139-51.

church, experienced observers questioned whether the church was sacrificing its independent voice in the name of political expediency. In the words of Perraudin's erstwhile ally Jan Adriaenssens, "I have the impression...that we are in a 'conspiracy of silence' that suppresses personal reflection and personal judgment. I am certain, for example, that I could not write a true article today on the situation in the schools or on the future of the schools in Rwanda."⁶⁹

Looking at the Rwandan constitution, however, one could argue that Perraudin no longer saw the need to protect Catholic schools from state influence. After all, the 1962 constitution had followed church teaching closely on its near-prohibition of divorce, emphasis on the family, banning of communist parties, and subsidies for Catholic schools.⁷⁰ As Perraudin himself wrote in a 1966 pastoral letter on Christian education, "the church trusts that state schools will educate children in a Christian manner conforming to the convictions of their parents" and hire "good Christians" to serve as teachers in public schools.⁷¹ He even helped convince state primary schools to include Catholic social teaching in their official curriculum. Perraudin may have also trusted his Hutu allies in government as much or more than he trusted the Tutsi priests running many of the church's schools. In a 1968 interview, he attributed Rwanda's social and political development to the fact that Rwanda's political leaders were "truly convinced Christians" whose only lingering vice was a tendency to "separate Christianity and politics."⁷² Finally, the rapid growth of the Rwandan

⁶⁹ A.D.K., Adriaenssens to Perraudin, 16 June 1963.

⁷⁰ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 341-43.

⁷¹ A.D.K., "Lettre Pastorale sur L'Education Chrétienne," 15 March 1966.

⁷² « Rwanda et Burundi: cas unique dans le monde missionnaire, » *Vivante Afrique* 254 (Jan.-Feb. 1968): 14-15.

population and concomitant crisis of religious vocations made it nearly impossible for the church to maintain its traditional dominance of education.⁷³

Beyond the schools debate, three other pastoral issues marked Rwandan Catholic life in the 1960s. Demographically, the Catholic population was exploding.⁷⁴ Even during the difficult years of 1961 to 1963, the Catholic population grew from 744,000 to over 809,000, a growth rate of nearly 9%. More tellingly, catechumen numbers grew by nearly one-third during the same period after years of stagnant growth in the 1950s, and the number of adult baptisms doubled between 1955 and 1963 from 16,000 per annum to over 33,000 per year. These numbers continued to grow during the rest of the decade. Perraudin claimed in 1969 that Rwanda celebrated “56,600 baptisms per week” and posited in 1971 that over 56% of Kabgayi’s population had become Catholic. The Rwandan church founded 36 new missions between 1961 and 1970, matching its total in the entire 1900-1945 period. The growth was especially notable in Ruhengeri diocese, the heart of the Hutu uprising in November 1959. In the course of the 1960s, Ruhengeri rose from the least populous to the most populous Catholic diocese in Rwanda, counting 900,000 Catholics and catechumens in 1969. As in the Tutsi *tornado* of the 1930s, it appears that the Catholic Church’s “opportunistic politics” facilitated a remarkable growth in its own numbers.⁷⁵ By 1970 one in eight African Catholics

⁷³ Walter Aelvot, “Le cercle vicieux de sous-développement,” *Vivante Afrique* 240 (1965): 48-50. This article notes that only 55% of the population aged 5-14 attended school in 1965.

⁷⁴ This section draws on “Le Rwanda: Force et Faiblesse du centre Chrétien de l’Afrique,” *Pro Mundi Vita* VI (1965): 24-34 ; “Rwanda et Burundi: cas unique dans le monde missionnaire,” *Vivante Afrique* 254 (1968): 13; A.D.K., Perraudin to Michellod, 5 June 1969; A.D.K., Perraudin to Benefactors, 30 July 1971; A. Sosson, “Bientôt 100% de Baptisés,” *Vivant Univers* 271 (1970): 33-42 ; Ian Linden, et al, *Christianisme et pouvoirs au Rwanda, 1900-1990* (Paris: Karthala, 1999) : 368.

⁷⁵ The phrase is borrowed from Justin Kalibwami, “Le Rwanda en question,” *Remarques Africaines* 291 (1967): 302.

lived in Rwanda and Burundi, two of the continent's smallest countries. Not coincidentally, both hierarchies had embraced their nations' contrasting post-colonial politics.

At the same time, Rwanda's population of seminarians, priests and religious continued to atrophy. Despite efforts to establish separate major seminaries in each Rwandan diocese, the church struggled to foster new vocations. As discussed in chapter four, the major seminary at Nyakibanda counted only 18 theology students and 27 philosophy students in 1962. After Bigirumwami opened St. Joseph's major seminary in Nyundo in November 1963, the discrepancy between Nyundo and Rwanda's other three dioceses became even more pronounced. Bigirumwami's diocese had 25 seminarians in 1963; Butare, Kabgayi and Ruhengeri had 24 combined. And while Nyundo had 56 indigenous priests in 1970, Butare counted only 35 while Kabgayi's and Ruhengeri's seminarian populations hovered around 20 each. Priest-faithful ratios were approaching 10,000 to 1 in parts of Rwanda. Nor were the numbers any better for male and female religious. During the course of the 1960s, the number of religious brothers declined from 170 to 149, and the number of religious sisters fell from 425 to 420. If there was one consistent theme in Perraudin's missionary appeals in the late 1960s, it was the urgent necessity of priests to meet the burgeoning needs of Rwanda's growing Catholic population.⁷⁶

Even as the number of Rwandan priests continued to decline throughout the 1960s, the smaller clerical population struggled to achieve the oft-touted ideal of clerical unity. After the 50th anniversary jubilee of the indigenous priesthood in December 1967, predominantly Tutsi priests founded the *Union Fraternelle Clergé Rwandaise* (UFCR). For its supporters,

⁷⁶ C.M.L., Perraudin to Jean Germanier, 8 Oct. 1966; Perraudin to Joseph Balet, 9 Oct. 1966; Perraudin to Amélie and Henry Sillion, 28 Feb. 1968.

the UFCR strengthened clerical unity while embodying the Vatican II spirit of building collegiality between bishops and priests. For its detractors, the organization represented a clique of Tutsi priests who undermined the authority of Archbishop Perraudin and divided black and white priests. Perraudin banned his diocesan clergy from participating in UFCR gatherings, launching a rival clerical network in February 1968. In contrast, Bigirumwami, Sibomana, and Wenceslas Kalibushi, the new bishop of the Diocese of Kibungo, not only gave their blessing to UFCR but joined the organization themselves. The Hutu Sibomana noted the bishops' "quasi-unanimous approval" for UFCR; Bigirumwami described UFCR as a sign of the "coming of age" of the Rwandan clergy. Some Kabgayi clergy – including Perraudin's longtime vicar general Innocent Gasabwoya – were so frustrated at their exclusion from UFCR that they published a protest letter in *Cum Paraclito*, a journal published out of Nyundo diocese. UFCR continued to meet periodically over the next three years until Perraudin convinced his colleagues to disband the organization in November 1970.⁷⁷

The tensions over the UFCR also reflected the Hutu perception that Tutsi continued to dominate the Catholic Church – and Rwandan social life more broadly – ten years after the Hutu social revolution. In truth, Tutsi retained disproportionate representation in business, secondary schools, and university faculties despite a decade of government efforts to enforce Hutu ethnic quotas.⁷⁸ While Ian Linden exaggerated in claiming that "[the church] had come to epitomize for young Rwandans the wily retention of power by their former [Tutsi]

⁷⁷ Cf. "Union fraternelle du clergé rwandais (U.F.C.R.)," *Cum Paraclito* 25 (1969): 95-99; "Assemblée générale du clergé rwandaise à Nyundo," *Cum Paraclito* 26 (1969): 152-59; Aloys Bigirumwami, "L'Union Fraternelle du Clergé Rwandais," *Cum Paraclito* 27 (1969): 79-81 ; « L'U.F.C.R., » *Foi et Culture* 7, 34 (1971) : 88-95; Linden, *Christianisme et Pouvoirs*, 370-71.

⁷⁸ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 260 ; Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et Droit*, 501-02. In 1972, 120 of the *Groupe Scolaire's* 260 students and 200 of the National University's 500 students were Tutsi.

overlords, now disguised in *soutanes*,”⁷⁹ the church remained a sanctuary for Tutsi locked out of Parmehutu’s post-colonial politics (just as the church had served as a path of advancement for Hutu excluded from the colonial Belgian administration). Due in part to these Hutu-Tutsi tensions, the Vatican bucked the continental trend towards the Africanization of the episcopate. Perraudin became archbishop of the newly-founded Archdiocese of Kigali, created in 1968 after more than a decade of planning. At the same time, Perraudin retained his titular see in Kabgayi. In the meantime, Sibomana was transferred to the new eastern diocese of Kibungu, replaced in Ruhengeri by Phocas Nikwigize, a far more doctrinaire Hutu churchman.⁸⁰

Before turning to the 1973 events themselves, one other crucial background event must be mentioned – the Burundian genocide of 1972.⁸¹ While Burundi’s post-colonial politics reversed the Rwandan paradigm by establishing a minority Tutsi-dominated constitutional monarchy, the nation’s initial post-colonial stability did not last. Resentment grew in the late 1960s following the 1966 death of Burundi’s widely-revered Mwami Mwambutsa and the contemporaneous rise of Colonel Michel Micombero’s military

⁷⁹ Ian Linden, “The Roman Catholic Church in Social Crisis: The Case of Rwanda,” in *Christianity in Independent Africa*, eds. E. Fasholé Luke, R. Gray, A. Hastings, G. Tasie (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1978), 249. Linden’s pro-Hutu rhetoric emerged several times in this narrative. “The culturally conditioned disdain for *le petit Hutu* meant that Hutu pupils in the minor and major seminaries experienced the humiliating contempt of their superiors, and this acted as a brake on their attainment. They were expected to be inferior to Tutsi pupils, and such predictions tended to be self-fulfilling” (247). In light of this, Linden called on the African church to develop a new “theology of revolution” (244), arguing that inculturation in and of itself could not resolve the church’s political quandary. “In other words, what was the church: a custodian of ruling class interests and culture, an embodiment of social inequality, or an agency for the transformation of society, a generator of social justice?” (253). In light of the amount of Rwandan violence committed in the name of social justice and revolution, the implied answer to Linden’s rhetorical question seems problematic to say the least.

⁸⁰ Linden, *Christianisme et Pouvoirs*, 370-72.

⁸¹ On the 1972 genocide in Burundi, see Leo Kuper, *The Pity of It All: Polarization of Racial and Ethnic Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1977); René Lemarchand, *Burundi: Ethnocide as Discourse and Practice* (Cambridge: Woodrow Wilson Center/University of Cambridge, 1994); Jean-Pierre Chrétien & Jean-François Dupaquier, *Burundi 1972: au bord des génocides* (Paris: Karthala, 2007).

dictatorship. Mindful of the Rwandan case, Micombero would not tolerate any threats to his own precarious power base. In late April 1972, a group of low-ranking Hutu military officers and bureaucrats launched an attempted *coup d'état* against the Tutsi-dominated military regime. The uprising took the lives of several thousand Tutsi but collapsed during the first week of May. After suppressing the coup, Micombero and his military unleashed the first genocide in post-colonial Africa. More than 200,000 Burundians – nearly all educated Hutu elites – died over the course of the repression. 17 Hutu priests were killed, and two bishops were placed under house arrest. Tens of thousands of Hutu fled across Burundi's border with Rwanda, further adding to the Hutu resentment and Tutsi fear that marked Rwandan society at the beginning of 1973.

In contrast to his more circumspect language after Gikongoro as well as to the halting statements of the Burundian hierarchy, Perraudin did not hesitate to name the Burundian massacres as genocide.⁸² After publicly critiquing the Burundian authorities for their “perversion of the word” and “lies” in November 1972, Perraudin wrote an impassioned December 1972 letter to his donor base.⁸³ Here he utilized the uncompromising language that was missing in his commentaries on Rwanda in 1959, 1962, 1964, or even 1994. “This perversion of a government which should protect its citizens instead exterminates them.” For Perraudin, the 1972 events in Burundi demonstrated the difference between revolutionary

⁸² The Burundian bishops also exonerated their government in the massacres of 1972, instead blaming foreign provocateurs. “It would be wrong to see the problem as a classical instance of internal politics, a conflict between Hutu and Tutsi. It is rather a diabolical plot to deceive the people in order to foster racial hatred...there are those who, under the pretext of protecting the little people, are grossly biased in favor of one tribe” (quoted in Adrian Hastings, *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 201). Linden notes that two of Burundi's Tutsi prelates – Bishop Ntuyahaga and Bishop Makarakiza, former professor at Nyakibanda – initially described the violence as “resulting from the attack of a foreign power” (Linden, “The Roman Catholic Church in Social Crisis,” 252). These examples demonstrate that Rwandan bishops did not have a monopoly on slanted, pro-government political analysis.

⁸³ C.M.L., Perraudin to Benefactors, 16 Dec. 1972.

and genocidal violence. “A revolution is a revolution. There are deaths for sure and many injustices, but in Burundi they have committed an extermination – genocide by the Government.” In addition to the unprecedented scale of the Burundian massacres, the fact that Perraudin could critique the state without facing its wrath – and the fact that Burundi’s Tutsi-dominated military dictatorship was the antithesis of Perraudin’s pro-Hutu democratic leanings – may explain the force of his language here. Perraudin never traveled to Burundi for regional bishops’ meetings after 1967 due to the antipathy in which he was held by both the Burundian government and Rwandan exiles.⁸⁴

Even as Perraudin described the Burundian massacres as “genocide,” anti-Tutsi purges were breaking out in Catholic schools in and around Perraudin’s see of Kabgayi. Beginning in Catholic schools in Byimana, Save and Nyamasheke in late 1972, the forced removal of Tutsi students spread in January and February 1973 to the National University (UNR) in Butare and eventually to Nyundo’s Catholic schools and seminaries in northwestern Rwanda. 190 students were forced out of UNR on the evening of February 15-16, 1973.⁸⁵ After students divided along ethnic lines at Nyundo’s St. Pius X minor seminary on February 25, 12 major seminarians and an equal number of Tutsi professors fled Nyundo’s St. Joseph major seminary for the Congolese border. Meanwhile, the violence spread to banks, commercial centers, and other Rwandan civil institutions seen as havens of Tutsi influence. While the bloodshed never approached the level of Gikongoro in 1963-64,

⁸⁴ Vincent Linguyeneza, « Mgr. André Perraudin : L’homme de la justice, » *Dialogue* 234 (2004) : 101.

⁸⁵ Sylvestre Nsanzimana, “Rapport sur les événements qui se sont produits à l’UNR à partir de la nuit du 15 au 16 février 1973, » *Dialogue* 183 (2007) : 65. Kayibanda’s influence in the Kabgayi-Gitarama area has led commentators like Filip Reyntjens to conclude that the president himself initiated the expulsions (Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 502-03). Such suspicions were shared even by a White Father otherwise sympathetic to Kayibanda’s vision. Having witnessed the 1973 uprisings, this missionary confessed that Kayibanda’s “racist” ideology overcame his social justice ideals. “Kayibanda had lost his head.” (Unattributable interview with author, May 2010).

several hundred Tutsi died between February and April, including two Josephite brothers dragged out of their home by a Hutu mob. Northern Hutu also chased southern and central Hutu from their homes in Kibuye and Gisenyi provinces, reflecting ongoing regional and political tensions among Parmehutu's disparate factions. After maintaining a conspicuous silence until late March, the Kayibanda government gradually restored order across the country, appointing Gen. Alexis Kanyarengwe, the military's second-ranking officer, to take over St. Joseph seminary on March 26 and condemning the "judgment of people by reason of their racial origin" on April 4. Sporadic outbursts of violence continued, however, such as a student attack on the parish of Nyamasheke on April 12 which left three priests wounded.⁸⁶

In May 1973, Kayibanda used the pretext of Rwanda's national crisis to convince the National Assembly to end presidential term limits. In light of Parmehutu's consolidation of power over the preceding decade, even Kayibanda's ideological supporters began to fear that the republican dream was turning into a dictatorial nightmare. After hearing word of a threat to his own life, Juvenal Habyarimana – the head of national defense, old Kayibanda ally, and native of Gisenyi in northwestern Rwanda – turned on the president and removed him from office on the night of July 4-5, 1973. Rwanda's new leader then put Rwanda under an officially nonpartisan military government, placed Kayibanda under house arrest, and promised to work towards the reconciliation of Rwanda across ethnic and regional lines. Whatever his stirring rhetoric, Habyarimana continued some of Kayibanda's political

⁸⁶ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 502-04; Linden, "The Roman Catholic Church in Social Crisis," 249-51; Linden, *Christianisme et pouvoirs*, 372-75. As Reyntjens notes, Kanyarengwe was also seen as Kayibanda's greatest rival in the military. In addition to infringing on the autonomy of the church, appointing him to take over Nyundo seminary served Kayibanda's political purposes of isolating a potential leader of a *coup d'état*. As it turned out, Kayibanda's days as president were in fact numbered.

practices. 30 former Parmehutu leaders died in prison between 1973 and 1976, and Kayibanda himself died under house arrest in December 1976.⁸⁷

How did the Catholic hierarchy react to the 1973 violence? According to one missionary account, Perraudin himself stood between a Hutu mob and Tutsi students at Kabgayi minor seminary, shouting “I am in charge” until the Hutu dispersed.⁸⁸ Whatever the veracity of the anecdote, church leaders did not wait to speak out on the situation. On February 23 – more than a month before any official government commentary – the bishops issued a joint statement on the violence. In this statement, the bishops condemned the schools disturbances which “looked to eliminate the students of an ethnicity” and lamented that “the men of one race want to dominate those of another race, to humiliate them and make them disappear.” Such crimes contradicted the “law of God,” the 1948 U.N. Human Rights Declaration, and the 1962 Rwandan constitution, dividing neighbors and contravening Christ’s evangelical command to love one’s enemies. “Because of this not only does [Christ] ask that we not do evil to others, but he orders you to love your neighbor, even if he is an enemy.” Rwandans should also resist “temptations of hate and racial fights” so as not to jeopardize Rwanda’s estimable international reputation. “Thanks to the wisdom and moderation of your governing authorities, the country has known ten years of peace during which it has developed and has acquired the esteem and friendship of other nations. Do not dishonor it in the face of the world.”⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Reyntjens, *Pouvoir et droit*, 505-08.

⁸⁸ Unattributable interview with author, May 2010.

⁸⁹ All quotations are taken from “Lettre Pastorale des Evêques du Rwanda à l’ occasion du Carême 1973,” 23 Feb. 1973, 1-8.

This statement reflected patterns noted in previous hierarchical commentaries on ethnic violence in Rwanda. First, church leaders were the first recognized authorities to condemn the violence, speaking weeks before their government counterparts. This raised the ire of some Hutu students studying in Belgium who claimed in an April 1973 protest letter that Perraudin and the bishops were now favoring the Tutsi.⁹⁰ Second, the bishops condemned the explicitly ethnic nature of the violence. Their strong condemnations may have reflected the fact that the 1973 violence did not arise from an external security threat as in 1962 or 1964. At the same time, their analysis continued to betray a fundamentally divisive vision of Rwandan society. Asking Rwandans to love their neighbor “even if he is an enemy” did little to promote a vision of pan-ethnic national harmony, particularly in the absence of any subsequent reflections on the shared aspects of Banyarwanda culture. And perhaps most tellingly, the concluding lines praising the Kayibanda government’s legacy reflected the bishops’ continuing struggles to distance themselves from the state. Missing here was the type of categorical denunciation we saw in Perraudin’s late 1972 condemnations of the Burundian regime.

The bishops’ subsequent March 23, 1973 pastoral letter further nuanced several of these emphases. For example, the bishops continued to condemn the ethnic exclusion of students in schools and rejected “scornful attitudes” and “violence” as “contrary to the Gospel.” At the same time, they dedicated far more text to expressing their empathy for the demands of the Hutu students. In this regard, the bishops claimed to share Hutu students’ frustrations with the problem of “socio-ethnic equilibrium” in Rwanda “of which it would be

⁹⁰ A.D.K., “Réunion du Conseil Presbytéral de l’Archidiocèse de Kabgayi,” 7-8 May 1973 ; Ian Linden, *Church and Revolution in Rwanda* (Manchester : Manchester University Press, 1977), 285.

vain and dangerous to dissimulate.” So while the “solution does not lie in disorder and violence,” the “sudden explosion of demands is not only negative” in that it reflects the “profound aspirations of the young.” Conveniently overlooking the Kayibanda regime’s weeks of inaction, the bishops also praised “the Authorities of the County and the army for rapidly stopping this outrage.” And while the bishops demanded accountability for perpetrators – calling for “penitence, reparation and Charity” and requesting that “those who have killed, burnt or pillaged should repent” – they did not offer concrete pastoral guidance. If anything, the bishops rejected public actions – such as suspending sacraments in a particular region – that might have signaled their commitment to address ethnic violence as a serious pastoral problem for the church.⁹¹

Not all Rwandan missionaries shared the bishops’ cautions. In a passionate March 4 letter to Perraudin, Fr. Francesco Cerri, an Italian missionary recently arrived in Rwanda, described the scene at his Mushishiro parish as a “spectacle of blood, fighting, pillaging, and fires above all.”⁹² While some Hutu “risked their lives for their brothers, 98% of the catechists and laity have done nothing to avoid what has happened.” According to Cerri, many Christian leaders even participated in the violence. In this context, Cerri wondered whether typical Catholic sacramental practice could and should continue.

Above all I have been concerned by the fact that Christians pillage and sack their brothers, only because they are Tutsi....How can I celebrate Mass in a community divided by hate? How can I give the sacraments to a community in which the majority have been complicit in these events, led by politicians with a diabolical plan to eliminate the Tutsi?⁹³

⁹¹ The above quotations are all taken from « Lettre des évêques du Rwanda a leurs prêtres, religieux, religieuses, et aides laïcs, 23 March 1973, » *Trait d’Union* 123 (March-April 1973): 30-32.

⁹² A.D.K., Cerri to Perraudin, 4 March 1973. For another critical perspective on the ecclesial response to the events of 1973, see the April 1973 letter from exiled Tutsi priests in Burundi. “La mort des séminaires au Rwanda par les prêtres de Nyundo réfugiés au Burundi, » *Dialogue* 183 (2007) : 80- 89.

⁹³ A.D.K., Cerri to Perraudin, 4 March 1973.

Accusing Perraudin of a “fear of clearly speaking the truth,” Cerri requested that the bishops publicly withhold the sacraments from all responsible parties, beginning with Kayibanda and the other politicians responsible for the massacres. He also called on the bishops to work harder on refugee reintegration, seeing this as the key to long-term peace in Rwanda. Perhaps anticipating that his appeal would fall on deaf ears, Cerri concluded by announcing his impending departure from Rwanda, claiming he could no longer exercise his ministry. In leaving, he hoped that Rwandan Christians would see that “we [missionaries] are not here for the Hutu only, we are here for all.”⁹⁴ Like the Sulpicians at Nyakibanda in 1960-61, Cerri offered a far stronger critique of ethnicism in the church than the veteran White Fathers around him.

Cerri’s departure did have short-term ramifications. Just weeks after the Italian missionary left Rwanda for what was termed officially as a “holiday,” Kabgayi’s presbyteral council took up such previously taboo subjects as sacramental practice after periods of communal violence, the nature of the church’s “prophetic role” towards civil institutions, and the relationship between Catholic schools and the government. Such issues had never been publicly aired, even after Gikongoro. At the same time, Kabgayi’s presbyteral council also included a provision calling for an improved “initiation” of new missionaries into Rwanda’s political and social context. This may have reflected a concern with preventing future Francesco Cerris from disrupting Rwanda’s pastoral life.⁹⁵

⁹⁴ Ibid. Perraudin granted Cerri’s leave request but described this as a “holiday” in a letter to Cerri’s superior. Cerri never returned to Rwanda (cf. A.D.K., Perraudin to Bartoletti (Secretary General of Italian Episcopal Conference), 17 March 1973).

⁹⁵ A.D.K., Bureau presbytéral de l’Archidiocèse de Kabgayi, “Compte-rendu de la rencontre du mardi 27 mars 1973,” 27 March 1973.

Judging from Perraudin's subsequent 1973 statements, it does not seem that the Catholic Church actually altered its long-term pastoral or political vision in light of the schools expulsions. Even as Perraudin's Easter 1973 homily challenged Christians to embody their baptismal promises, it included no specific vision for ethnic reconciliation.⁹⁶ Rather Perraudin continued to present Rwanda's ethnic problem as an extra-ecclesial challenge best addressed by Rwanda's governing authorities. Not only did Perraudin ignore the extent of state complicity in Rwanda's 1973 violence, but he missed an opportunity to consider these events as a distinct challenge for the church itself. Individual Christians were called to repent, but Catholic institutions themselves were not critiqued. Likewise, later 1973 statements showed no hint of critical distance from the state. Perraudin never spoke publicly against the government takeover of St. Joseph's Seminary in Nyundo despite the fact that this government act clearly transgressed church-state boundaries.⁹⁷ And far from critiquing the *coup d'état* which ushered in the Second Republic, Perraudin commended Habyarimana in late July as a "Christian and an apostle, a disciple of the Prince of Peace." At Christmas Perraudin called on Christians to listen to the "appeals of religious and civil authorities" to reconcile across ethnic lines. Even the traumas of 1973 could not shake Perraudin's commitment to the partnership of church and state in service to the common good.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ A.D.K., Perraudin, "Homelie de Paques," 1973.

⁹⁷ Ironically, the government succeeded here in accomplishing what many White Fathers had desired back in 1961-62 – sacking Fr. Mathieu Ntahoruburiye, the first indigenous rector of Nyakibanda who had been appointed in the heat of the 1960-62 crisis. Fr. Mathieu moved over to lead St. Joseph's when Bigirumwami opened the new Nyundo major seminary in November 1963. After the government transferred the seminary back over to church control in August 1973, Perraudin and Vincent Nsengiyumva, Nyundo's new bishop, reunited the two seminaries in October 1974 and deposed Ntahoruburiye (Linden, *Christianisme et Pouvoirs*, 377).

⁹⁸ Cf. "Lettre de Monseigneur l'Archevêque, 28 July 1973" *Trait d'Union* (Aug.-Sept. 1973): 82-83; A.D.K., Perraudin, "Noel 1973 – Ouverture de l'année sainte," 25 December 1973.

D. From 1973 to 1994

The mid-1970s saw major changes in Rwanda's Catholic leadership. Less than a year after the schools disturbances of 1973, Aloys Bigirumwami stepped down as Bishop of Nyundo. Since he was just shy of the mandatory retirement age of 70, some have attributed his early retirement to political pressure following the 1973 events.⁹⁹ Bigirumwami immersed himself in studying Rwanda's traditional culture and religions and wrote frequently in the White Fathers' journal *Dialogue* as well as *Foi et Culture*, the Catholic theological journal which he started in the late 1960s. He also continued to serve in pastoral ministry in a parish near Nyundo until his death in 1986. His passing ushered Bigirumwami into the pantheon of national Rwandan heroes, saluted by fellow churchmen, President Juvenal Habyarimana, and ideological allies and opponents alike.¹⁰⁰

Bigirumwami's successor as Bishop of Nyundo was Vincent Nsengiyumva, a Hutu native of northern Rwanda. Two years after his appointment to Nyundo, Rome named Nsengiyumva to replace Perraudin as Archbishop of Kigali. Only 40 at the time of his appointment to the Kigali see, Nsengiyumva cultivated close relations with Habyarimana, Habyarimana's wife Agathe, and a coterie of Hutu political leaders from Gisenyi known as the *akazu* (or "little house"). Nsengiyumva even served on the central committee of Habyarimana's *Mouvement Révolutionnaire Nationale Développement* (MRND) until stepping down in 1985 under heavy Vatican pressure. Nsengiyumva remained a close associate of Habyarimana and a personal confessor to his wife until 1994.

⁹⁹ Bernardin Muzungu, *Histoire du Rwanda sous la colonisation* (Kigali : Edition Cahiers Lumière et Société, 2009), 100.

¹⁰⁰ See here the special June 1986 issue of *Civitas Mariae*, n°343, « En hommage a son Excellence Monseigneur Aloys Bigirumwami, premier évêque de Nyundo, que Dieu a rappelé à lui le 3 juin 1986.»

While handing over the Kigali see to Nsengiyumva in 1974, Perraudin continued to lead the Diocese of Kabgayi for another fifteen years before giving way to Mgr. Thadée Nsengiyumva (no relation to Vincent) in 1989. In his final decade as bishop, Perraudin received two major national honors, including a Commander of the Revolution award in 1981.¹⁰¹ Looking back over his three decades in the episcopate, Perraudin in 1989 expressed satisfaction at the depth of Christian evangelization in Rwanda. “Despite its many problems, Rwanda is, with Burundi, a country profoundly marked by the Gospel.”¹⁰² Perraudin remained an active member of Rwanda’s episcopal commission until 1993, collaborating in the bishops’ early 1990s pastoral statements on justice and peace. When Pope John Paul II visited Rwanda in 1990, he celebrated mass at Kabgayi cathedral and saluted Perraudin as the “model missionary bishop.” Perraudin’s left Rwanda in December 1993 for a medical visit to Switzerland, anticipating a return later in 1994. He would never see his adopted country again.¹⁰³

The events which prevented Perraudin’s return, of course, were Rwanda’s genocidal massacres of April-June 1994.¹⁰⁴ A detailed study of these events lies outside the scope of

¹⁰¹ Antoine Mugesera, Review of André Perraudin, “Un Évêque au Rwanda, » *Dialogue* 183 (2007) : 142.

¹⁰² C.M.L., André Perraudin, « Je rends grâce à Dieu » (25 Aug. 1989) : 4.

¹⁰³ Pères Blancs de Suisse, “Vie et œuvre de Mgr Perraudin,” *Dialogue* 234 (2004) : 84-85.

¹⁰⁴ The literature on the 1994 Rwanda genocide is voluminous. The most exhaustive study is found in Alison Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell The Story: Genocide in Rwanda* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999; this can also be found online at <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda> (accessed 21 Feb. 2011)). Gérard Prunier offers a balanced overview in *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995). Philip Gourevitch’s *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Picador, 1998) and African Rights’ *Rwanda: Death, Despair, and Defiance* (London: African Rights, 1994) offer powerful first-person testimonies but are shaped strongly by RPF ideology. Mamdani’s *When Victims Become Killers* offers one of the more probing analytical studies of what made the genocide thinkable. Scot Straus’s *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006) provides detailed insight into the motivations of individual killers. The late Catholic priest and human rights advocate André Sibomana provides an important ecclesial perspective in *Hope for Rwanda: Conversations with Laure Guilbert and Herve Deguine*. Trans. Carina Tertsakian (Sterling, VA:

this dissertation, but I will highlight several key points. First, the genocide grew out of a particular economic, political and military context. The decade-long decline of Rwanda's export-oriented economy culminated with the collapse of the coffee market in 1989. This economic malaise combined with military conflict after the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) – composed of many of the descendants of UNAR leaders and Tutsi refugees who had settled in Uganda in the 1960s – crossed the Ugandan border into northern Rwanda in October 1990. The Rwandan government quickly repulsed the RPF, but the exiles regrouped and settled into a long-term insurgency campaign that lasted into 1993, profoundly destabilizing northern Rwanda. In addition, the democratization movement which swept Eastern Europe and other parts of Africa in the early 1990s also had an effect in Rwanda as political opponents rallied for an end to the MRND's single-party rule. Habyarimana's government reacted publicly by agreeing in 1991 to the introduction of multiparty politics. The Catholic hierarchy attempted to play the role of mediator and democracy advocate, writing several pastoral statements in favor of multi-party politics while attempting to broker talks between the MRND government and the RPF.

Second, even as Rwanda's government conducted public negotiations with the RPF, it was also trying to rally Hutu political support by scapegoating the Tutsi. As the military tide turned towards the RPF in 1992 and 1993, the government agreed to U.N.-brokered peace negotiations, leading to the Arusha Accords of August 1993 which called for the re-integration of Rwanda's thousands of Tutsi exiles and the involvement of the RPF in the Rwandan military and a government of national unity. A U.N. peacekeeping force arrived in

Pluto Press, 1999). For critical perspectives on church involvement in the genocide, see Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) and Collette Braeckman, *Terreur africaine: Burundi, Rwanda, Zaïre, les racines de la violence* (Paris: Fayard, 1996).

Rwanda in late 1993 to help secure the peace. Behind the scenes, however, Habyarimana and hardliners in his cabinet armed Hutu youth militias who carried out targeted massacres of Tutsi in 1992 and 1993. Meanwhile the government compiled death lists of prominent Tutsi, Hutu political opponents, and other intellectuals. By February 1994 large shipments of machetes were arriving in Rwanda, causing Gen. Romeo Dallaire, the Canadian leader of the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Rwanda, to send alarmed cables to New York that were effectively ignored by his U.N. superiors.

Third, the assassination of Rwanda's president triggered the massacres. In early April Habyarimana and the Burundian president Cyprian Ntaryamira traveled to Arusha, Tanzania for another round of peace talks and power-sharing negotiations with the RPF. As the presidential plane descended into Kigali's airport on the evening of Thursday, April 6, 1994, a surface-to-air missile destroyed the plane, killing all on board. Within an hour, the Rwandan military and Hutu militias established roadblocks across Kigali and began rounding up Rwanda's political opposition leaders and other Hutu and Tutsi opponents of the regime. This political repression grew into ethnocide as Hutu militias executed thousands of Tutsi (or those who appeared to be Tutsi) in and around Kigali. In subsequent days, government-ordered massacres spread across Rwanda, consuming northwestern Rwanda and reaching the last holdout of Butare in southern Rwanda in late April 1994. By the time the RPF captured Kigali and stopped the genocide in July, between 500,000 and 800,000 Tutsi and Hutu opponents of the regime had been killed. The RPF also killed tens of thousands as they advanced across Rwanda between April and July 1994.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ The initial U.N. investigative team stated a figure of 800,000. Alison Des Forges and her research team calculated a figure closer to 500,000, or approximately 75% of Rwanda's Tutsi population in 1994. Des

What was the relationship between the Catholic Church and the genocide? While Catholic parishes served as asylums during the anti-Tutsi violence of 1959 to 1964, they became mortuaries in 1994. In fact, more Tutsi died in churches than anywhere else, including as estimated 65,000-75,000 in and around Kabgayi parish. Tutsi priests were particularly victimized. Nearly 200 priests and religious were killed, including Innocent Gasabwoya, the former vicar general of Kabgayi, and Felicien Muvura, the Tutsi priest and scholar whose aborted 1988 promotion to the episcopate had been scuttled by a resentful Vincent Nsengiyumva. Even as Pope John Paul II denounced the massacres as “genocide” on April 10, Rwanda’s bishops did not address the violence until May 13. In the meantime, the bishops accompanied the interim government when it moved from Kigali to Gitarama in May.¹⁰⁶ RPF snipers assassinated Vincent Nsengiyumva, Thadée Nsengiyumva, and Joseph Ruzindanda, the Bishop of Byumba, on June 6, further poisoning relations between the RPF and the Catholic hierarchy. Many Hutu priests and Mgr. Phocas Nikwigize, the bishop of Ruhengeri, migrated with over two million Hutu refugees into eastern Congo after the RPF took over Kigali in July 1994. Supported by Nikwigize, a group of Hutu priests in a Goma refugee camp wrote an August 1994 letter to John Paul II alleging a “double genocide” of Tutsi and Hutu alike and pleading for international intervention to prevent the Tutsi minority

Forges’s team estimated that the RPF killed around 60,000 people between April 1994 and August 1995 (cf. Des Forges, *Leave None to Tell the Story*, http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/rwanda/Geno1-3-04.htm#P95_39230 (accessed 21 Feb. 2011)).

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Carol Rittner, et. al., *Genocide in Rwanda: Complicity of the Churches?* (St. Paul, MN: Paragon Press, 2004), 13; C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, “Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 10. While defending the church response, Ntamahungiro notes that church leaders did not issue an official pastoral letter condemning the massacres until March 1995, nearly a year after the beginning of the genocide.

from restoring feudalist rule over the Hutu majority.¹⁰⁷ 34 Catholic clergy and religious were charged with abetting genocide during the 1990s, including Augustin Misago, the Bishop of Gikongoro. Many of these charges were politically motivated, but it seems evident that a minority (if not majority) of clergy were either actively or tacitly involved in the killings.¹⁰⁸

From Switzerland, Perraudin watched in dismay as the genocidal massacres of April 1994 unfolded. A mid-April interview in a local Swiss newspaper provides important insight into Perraudin's analytical framework in the midst of the worst ethnic violence in Rwanda's tortured post-colonial history.¹⁰⁹ Here we see that Perraudin's basic conceptual paradigms from the early 1960s remained in place in the early 1990s – namely his lamenting of violence, dualistic and racist vision of Rwandan society, and pro-Hutu analytical partisanship. For example, Perraudin offered an unqualified condemnation of the massacres, exhorting Rwandans to “stop, stop this escalation of horror! No more war between you, nor ever more. Reconcile yourselves, love one another!” Yet while denouncing the recent massacres committed by Hutu extremists, Perraudin also expressed his empathy for the Hutu killers. “I condemn them but I try to understand. They act out of anger and fear. By anger against the death of their president, Juvenal Habyarimana...and by fear of returning to slavery.” For Perraudin, international media had misrepresented the Rwanda story since

¹⁰⁷ According to Bernardin Muzungu, Nikwigize claimed in a 1995 newspaper interview that “the Tutsi are evil by nature...if we did not kill them, they would kill us.” Perhaps in response to such inflammatory statements, Nikwigize disappeared at the end of 1996 near the Congo border; his body has never been located. The RPF is strongly suspected in his presumed death (C.M.L., Bernard Muzungu, “Le rôle des responsables des religions reconnues au Rwanda, pendant le génocide,” [n.d., late 1990s]. See also Ntamahungiro, “Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme,” » 12-13.

¹⁰⁸ Ntamahungiro, « Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme, » 11. See also Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 191-97.

¹⁰⁹ Roger de Diesbach, « L'ancien archevêque Suisse du Rwanda crie son angoisse, » *Journal de Genève*, 18 April 1994. Further quotations in this paragraph are taken from this article which I located in the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome.

journalists did not understand the ideologies that gave rise to the genocide, particularly the Tutsi's sense of his own "natural right to command and dominate" and Rwandan society's pre-colonial history as a "system of slavery, an institution of pride and of domination by one race over the other." Betraying the extent to which he retained a Hamitic vision of Rwandan society, Perraudin also claimed that the Tutsi were "smarter, shrewder and have a European appearance," comparing the Hutu-Tutsi relationship to that between the peasants of his home region of Bagnes and the urbane city-dwellers of the Swiss city of Sion. And as in the 1960s, Perraudin still saw Tutsi exiles rather than Hutu militias as primarily responsible for instigating the Hutu massacres of the Tutsi – first by invading Rwanda in 1990 and second by shooting down Habyarimana's plane in April 1994. "It is a suicidal act that the FPR [RPF] has committed."¹¹⁰ Nor did Perraudin express any ambiguity about the wisdom of his own pastoral decisions in the late 1950s or early 1960s. Positing that he stood "in favor of justice, liberation and human dignity for all the children of God," Perraudin claimed that "I am ulcered by all the sufferings, but I do not regret having spoken."¹¹¹

This air of self-righteousness remains in Perraudin's 2003 memoir. Even after the 1994 genocide, Perraudin never questions his own pastoral decisions. Nor can he accept that Rwanda's unparalleled ethnic violence offered a stinging indictment of a century of Catholic evangelization. Perraudin spills much ink describing the false "calumnies" to which he had

¹¹⁰ « Mgr. Perraudin répond, » *Journal de Genève*, 23 June 1994. Perraudin reiterated such sentiments in his 2003 memoir. "Without hesitation, one should affirm that the first and principal cause of the Tutsi genocide of April 1994 is the attack on the country by the Tutsi themselves." One should note here Perraudin's tendency to substitute ethnic for political language (i.e., "Tutsi" rather than "RPF") (Perraudin, *Un Évêque au Rwanda*, 277).

¹¹¹ Roger de Diesbach, « L'ancien archevêque Suisse du Rwanda crie son angoisse, » *Journal de Genève*, 18 April 1994.

been subjected, and many of his criticisms have merit. It is regrettable, however, that Perraudin could never admit any fault, either on his part or on the part of his church.

E. Reimagining Catholic politics after Rwanda

I have concluded this brief historical survey of the post-1973 period in Rwandan history by admitting my own frustrations with Perraudin's air of self-righteousness. It is therefore in the area of repentance that I would pose the first principle of an alternative Catholic politics. The admission of sin, necessity of repentance and promise of redemption stand at the heart of Christian teaching. Rwandan leaders have advocated such a vision for individual Christians implicated in killings during the genocide and its aftermath. However, with the notable exception of Smaragde Mbonkitege, the current bishop of Kabgayi, the hierarchy has resisted offering a confession of corporate sin similar to the 1997 statement issued by the Protestant Council of Rwanda.¹¹² Part of this reluctance has stemmed from tensions between the contemporary Catholic Church and the Rwandan government as well as the church's fears that a corporate confession would be manipulated by its political enemies. The church is also not a monolithic institution, and there were a minority of heroic martyrs and resisters in every period of violence since 1959.

Embodying a politics of repentance, however, means resisting the omnipresent temptation to defensiveness that marked so many Catholic episcopal statements in the 1950s and 1960s. Such a politics recognizes that there will be "gross calumnies" against the church,

¹¹² Mbonkitege has called for the drafting of a general confession of sin similar to the German bishops after World War II, noting that this could serve as a first step in Rwanda's "true reconciliation with ourselves." Tried and later acquitted of genocide charges, the Bishop of Gikongoro, Augustin Misago, has been the strongest opponent of the Catholic Church issuing a collective statement of repentance, arguing that Rwanda's sins were individual rather than collective. Misago gained important support for his views when Pope John Paul II wrote in a March 1996 letter to the Rwandan hierarchy that individual Christians but not church institutions bore responsibility for the 1994 genocide (cf. C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, "Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme," 14-15; Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 5-7).

but it also recognizes the church's higher calling to embody the gospel of Jesus Christ. Church leaders should therefore be their own toughest critics, recognizing in the words of Vatican II's *Lumen Gentium* that the church stands "always in need of purification, following constantly the path of penance and renewal."¹¹³ Far from a *societas perfecta* marching unscathed through history, the church is deeply immersed in both the shadows and lights of human history. As Pope Benedict XVI has said in the context of recent European Catholic sex abuse scandals, "we see in a truly terrifying way that the greatest persecution of the Church does not come from outside enemies but is born of sin within the Church."¹¹⁴

The second principle I would highlight is one of prophetic distance: Catholic politics should offer a visible alternative to the mainstream secular political options of the day. First, this principle entails admitting that the church does in fact have a politics, a claim that Perraudin and his allies liked to deny in the late 1950s. Catholic social teaching touches on a range of political issues from abortion to labor relations to the environment to nuclear arms and war; claiming these are social or moral but not political issues is nonsensical. But in embodying a prophetic alternative, the church recognizes that its primary political task is not to run the state, lobby the state, partner with the state, or even advocate for the triumph of Christian civilization. This does not mean that the church withdraws into a ghetto; this would be impossible anyway given the nature of the church as a global communion immersed in local communities. But like the prophets Samuel and Amos or the saints Thomas More or Oscar Romero, the church's posture *vis à vis* the state should be one of maintaining what Desmond Tutu has called a "fierce independence" while offering what the former White

¹¹³ Second Vatican Council, *Lumen Gentium* (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church), par. 8.

¹¹⁴ Philip Pullella, "'Sin within the Church' threat to Catholicism," *Reuters*, 11 May 2010. <http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSTRE64A1W220100511> (accessed 15 Nov. 2010).

Father provincial Guy Theunis has termed a “prophetic charism in service to the gospel of peace.”¹¹⁵ What the prophetic mission does not entail is advocating for the political party which appears to favor the church’s institutional interests – what Antoine Mugesera has termed offering a partisan rather than prophetic message.¹¹⁶ Rather, the church’s mission is to embrace the self-sacrificing politics of the cross, forming beatitudinal communities of mercy, justice, righteousness, and peace who understand that they may be “persecuted for the sake of righteousness” (Matthew 5:10).

The challenge, of course, is that sin runs through the church. The history of the church – and especially the history of the church in Rwanda – makes this abundantly clear. As Timothy Longman has demonstrated in his recent study of Christian politics in the years leading up to the 1994 genocide, the churches can embody the worst tendencies in ethnic chauvinism, power politics, and silent complicity.¹¹⁷ For Bishop Smaradze Mbonyinge, the greatest problem in Rwandan Catholic history was not even ethnicism but rather an “evil conception of power in the church.”¹¹⁸ A perfectionist ethic is doomed to failure, for whatever its claims to a divine mission or Spirit-led guidance, the church is comprised of fallen human beings. So the key difference between the church and the state is not one of morality but rather one of vision: the church looks to the crucified Christ as its exemplar and animating principle. And, as discussed above, the church should recognize the constant need

¹¹⁵ A.G.M.Afr., Guy Theunis, “Le présence des Missionnaires d’Afrique (Pères Blancs) parmi les Rwandais, aujourd’hui, » 12 Sept. 1994 (loose). A White Father and former editor of *Dialogue*, the leading Catholic intellectual journal in Rwanda, Theunis was tried on “genocide ideology” charges in 2005 and forced out of the country. He now works in Israel.

¹¹⁶ Cf. Antoine Mugesera, Review of “Un Évêque au Rwanda, » by André Perraudin, *Dialogue* 183 (2007) : 139.

¹¹⁷ Longman, *Christianity and Genocide*, 304-23.

¹¹⁸ C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, “Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 9.

for repentance, renewal and reconciliation – traits not always associated with nation-state politics.

This in turn points to the third principle of an alternative Catholic politics – the embodiment of nonviolence. The violence of Rwandan history demonstrates the inadequacy of all slogans, be they for social justice, democracy, national unity, or liberation of the poor. Whether in the form of Parmehutu mobs expropriating Tutsi land in the name of social justice or UNAR assassins killing Parmehutu leaders in the name of national unity, Catholic social teaching was twisted to serve a political agenda counter to the gospel. So while contemporary critics have pointed to the manipulation of ethnicity as the greatest problem in recent Rwandan history, what emerges for me is the persistence of violence. From Rwabugiri's territorial expansions in the late 1800s to German and Belgian colonial pacification in the early 1900s, modern Rwanda has been molded in a crucible of bloodshed. This was only exacerbated by the revolutionary violence of Hutu uprisings in 1959, UNAR incursions in the early 1960s, and above all the genocidal anti-Tutsi reprisals of 1963, 1973 and 1994. An alternative Catholic politics thus recognizes the necessity of embodying a nonviolent ethic, recognizing in the words of Desmond Tutu that "true security will never be won through the barrel of a gun."¹¹⁹ While they often lamented violence, Perraudin and even Bigirumwami rarely preached on the necessity of Christian nonviolence, preferring instead to focus on themes of justice, truth, charity, or national unity. Again, though, such ideals could be easily manipulated by both state and local actors, whether in the name of national and communal defense or social justice. Even if just war versus pacifism debates will surely continue, Christian leaders should seek to establish a new norm of nonviolence, recognizing

¹¹⁹ Tutu, Desmond. *No Future without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999): 268.

with Martin Luther King that “nonviolence is the answer to the crucial political and moral questions of our time: the need for man to overcome oppression and violence without resorting to oppression and violence.”¹²⁰ In this sense, the founding of *Pax Christi Rwanda* in 1992 and its subsequent marches for peace offer hopeful signs of the emergence of a nonviolent voice in the Rwandan church.¹²¹

This inchoate vision of alternative Catholic politics also emphasizes the importance of social description over ethical prescription. The Rwandan church did not split over doctrinal issues or over the theoretical importance of social justice, the desirability of democracy, or the necessity of aiding the poor. Rather, the church divided over how to apply these principles in Rwanda’s social, cultural, and ethnic context. I am not naïve enough to think that all parties could have somehow agreed on the nature of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction or the extent to which Rwanda’s social problems could be mapped on a Hutu-Tutsi axis. But what often seemed missing in Rwandan church history was a concerted effort to openly discuss, debate, and reach a modicum of consensus (or friendly divergence) on the social descriptions that should underlie Catholic social teaching. Perraudin and Bigirimwami spoke often of the exigency of unity, but they offered vastly different descriptions of Rwanda’s social reality. Unity was lost in the very terms they used to describe the problem.

I admit that this may be the most difficult principle to embody; one can imagine the challenge of trying to get liberal and conservative Catholics in the U.S.A. to agree on their

¹²⁰ The quotation is taken from King’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech in December 1964, http://nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/king-acceptance.html (accessed 15 March 2011).

¹²¹ C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, “Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme, » 20; A.G.M.Afr., [Anon.], 5 Jan. 1993. This latter document was issued by the regional White Fathers house in Kigali and offered a summary of the local church’s recent work for peace in late 1992; I located this article in a binder of news articles in the White Fathers’ archives in Rome.

visions of American society. But I do not see a way to avoid the challenge, especially as Catholic social teaching presents itself as a vision of the common good, and the common good is not self-explanatory. Rather than offer a blueprint, then, this principle simply reinforces the importance of analysis and the shortcomings of sloganeering. Quoting Paul VI's counsel that "if you want peace work for justice" neither explains the nature of justice nor how to envision such justice in a particular society. If it did, André Perraudin, the "Valasian rock who spoke openly of justice," would not be as controversial as he is.¹²² Nor does recognizing that the Belgians inappropriately racialized Tutsi and Hutu categories wholly explain the violence that dominated Rwandan society after 1959. In fact, overemphasizing this point can itself reveal a problematic analytical argument – i.e., the idea that racial groups are more prone to conflict than social groups.

Finally, an alternative Catholic politics after Rwanda would point to the risks posed by all competing identities – national, ethnic, racial, social or otherwise – to the Christian's fundamental identity as a brother or sister in the Body of Christ. During a 1996 visit to Rwanda, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray famously commented how the genocide revealed that "the blood of tribalism goes deeper than the waters of baptism."¹²³ Gerard Prunier has underlined how only the minority Muslim community placed its religious convictions and identity ahead of the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic.¹²⁴ And from a Christian perspective, the problem with the Rwandan government's current efforts to subsume ethnic under national identity is

¹²² This title is given to Perraudin by Roger de Diesbach, « L'ancien archevêque Suisse du Rwanda crie son angoisse, » *Journal de Genève*, 18 April 1994.

¹²³ Quoted in J.J. Kritzinger, "The Rwandan Tragedy as Public Indictment of Christian Mission," *Missionalia* 24:3 (1996), 345.

¹²⁴ "Being Muslim is not simply a choice dictated by religion; it is a global identity choice. [Rwandan] Muslims are often socially marginal people, and this reinforces a strong sense of community identification that supersedes ethnic tags, something the majority Christians have not been able to achieve" (Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis*, 253).

that this rhetoric fails to name the oppression propagated in the name of the nation-state. One thinks here of Banyarwanda seminarians forcing out their Burundian and Congolese confreres from Nyakibanda seminary in 1952 or, decades later, the Rwandan army committing massive atrocities in eastern Congo in the name of national defense. Nor does it explain the extent to which nationalism itself was embedded in Rwanda's late colonial political conflicts, from UNAR's accusing its opponents of treason to Parmehutu's demand that Belgium "give the country to its true inhabitants, the Hutu."¹²⁵ To embody an alternative Catholic politics is thus to relativize identities that threaten to become idolatrous (including at times religious ones), recognizing that identity politics always poses a risk to the Christian's two-fold command to love God and to love one's neighbor. It is to remember with Aloys Bigirumwami that each Christian is called ultimately to embody the "politics of Jesus," not the politics of Parmehutu or UNAR – and to recognize in an Augustinian sense the inherent fallenness of state politics.¹²⁶ And it is to recognize that in sharing the Eucharist, Christians embrace their deepest identity as members of the Body of Christ. To share in the Eucharist while committing violence against one's Catholic brothers or sisters thus profanes the very essence of the sacrament. To this extent, one must credit the Rwandan Jesuit Octave Ugirashebuja's catechetical initiative to re-teach the Mass to emphasize the complementarity of reconciliation with God and reconciliation with neighbor.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ Paul Rutayisire, « Le Tutsi étranger dans le pays de ses aïeux, » *Cahiers Evangile et Société* 4 (1996) : 52.

¹²⁶ Cf. Gabriel Santos, *Redeeming the Broken Body: Church and State after Disaster* (Eugene, OR : Cascade, 2009): 236. While based on the recent American context, Santos's conclusions would be applicable to ecclesiology in the Rwandan context, particularly his sense that the church must break the friend-foe dynamic that builds love of "my own" by fostering hatred towards "the other." For Santos, the church is a "transnational body and not simply Americans" which calls "peoples and nations (including the nations of those who carried out the (9/11) attacks) to be brothers and sisters in the household of God" (126).

¹²⁷ This proposal is discussed in C.M.L., Joseph Ntamahungiro, "Eglise Catholique du Rwanda: De la Spiritualité au Prophétisme» (2000) : 21.

This thesis is primarily a historical work, and the theological points I raise in this brief conclusion could and should be further developed. That is the task of another project. What I hope this work has achieved, however, is to demonstrate to theologians the importance of in-depth historical analysis. Theological reflection on Rwanda is full of unexamined mythologies, trite assumptions, and simplistic analysis. Claiming, for example, that liberation theology would have saved Rwanda from its violent post-colonial history overlooks the extent to which proto-liberationist dialogues informed the very movements that precipitated the worst violence in Rwanda's history. I am reminded here of the epitaph on Gregoire Kayibanda's tomb in Gitarama describing him as "the liberator of the children of God."¹²⁸ And arguing that poisonous Hutu-Tutsi relations can be attributed solely to Belgian manipulation betrays an overly optimistic anthropology that fails to recognize the importance of local agency.¹²⁹ It may be, in fact, that Rwanda's historical complexity itself contains implicit theological lessons – namely, the importance of humility and the risks of polemic. As on the annual commemoration of the beginning of the genocide in April, one is reminded of the inadequacy of words, the necessity of lament, and the importance of silence.

¹²⁸ Roger de Diesbach, "L'ancien archevêque Suisse du Rwanda crie son angoisse, » *Journal de Genève*, 18 April 1994. This view that liberation theology and/or genuine democratization would have saved the Rwandan church is found throughout recent literature on Rwanda. See in particular Timothy Longman, *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*, 303-23; Mario Aguilar, *Theology, Liberation and Genocide: A Theology of the Periphery* (London: SCM, 2009).

¹²⁹ This would be my critique of Emmanuel Katongole's otherwise excellent *Mirror to the Church: Restoring Faith after Genocide* (Zondervan, 2009). Katongole fails to sufficiently analyze the complexities of Rwandan history and offers a thin reading of the Hutu-Tutsi dynamic that attributes nearly all blame to the Belgian colonialist.

Appendix I: Timeline

1880s:

- Congress of Berlin divides Africa between European powers; Rwanda, Burundi, and Tanganyika are given to Germans; Uganda to British; Congo to Belgians (1885).
- Anti-Christian persecution in Uganda (1885-86) leads to cult of Uganda Martyrs.
- Protestant and Catholic missions flourish, becoming some of the most successful Christian missions in late 19th century Africa.

1890s:

- Anglicans favored in Uganda after sectarian war with Catholic elites (1891).
- Charles Cardinal Lavignerie dies in Algiers (1892); his founding of the Missionaries of Africa symbolized the resurgence of Catholic mission in 19th century Europe.
- Mwami Rwabugiri dies in battle (1895); his 34-year reign was notable for hardening of Hutu-Tutsi identities and regional military expansion.
- Belgian/Congolese force defeats Rwandan army at Shangi, demonstrating importance of European firepower (1896).
- Brief reign of Mwami Rutarindwa (1895-97) ends with *coup d'état* which brings Mwami Musinga to throne.
- Germans arrive at Musinga's court and establish protectorate over Rwanda (1897).

1900s:

- Led by Jean-Joseph Hirth, first White Father caravan arrives at Rwandan court; Catholics establish Save mission in southern Rwanda (1900).
- White Fathers establish missions at Zaza (east), Nyundo (northwest), Rwaza (north), and Mibirizi (south) (1902-04); Musinga does not allow missionaries to establish posts near royal capital at Nyanza, preferring that they help pacify outlying territories and work among more marginalized poor Hutu and *petit* Tutsi populations.
- Violence erupts around mission stations due in part to missionary exactions on local populations (1904).
- Musinga allows missionaries to establish Kabgayi mission near Nyanza; Alphonse Brard exiled (1906).
- Léon Classe becomes vicar general under Hirth; first signs of rapprochement between royal elites and Rwandan Christians (1907-08).
- Richard Kandt named German resident; Kandt strengthens colonial presence and invites Lutherans to enter Rwanda (1908).

1910s:

- Paulin Loupias, M.Afr., is killed in dispute with Hutu chief in northern Rwanda, leading to fierce German pacification campaign against Hutu lineages in north (1910-11).
- Creation of Vicariate of Kivu including Burundi, Rwanda, eastern Congo (1911); Hirth continues to serve as Vicar Apostolic.
- Hirth starts Kabgayi seminary and Benebikira sisters (1913).
- World War I has major effect in region as Belgians, British and Germans struggle for control; war precipitates famine (1914-16).
- 10,000 baptized Catholics in Rwanda (1914).
- Germans withdraw from Rwanda; Belgians establish new colonial protectorate (1916).
- Musinga issues decree on religious freedom, precipitating growth in Christian missions (1917).
- First Rwandans are ordained to Catholic priesthood (1917).

1920s:

- Classe recalled to Europe for consultations; Hirth resigns as Vicar Apostolic (1920).
- British briefly take Gisaka in eastern Rwanda (1922-24).
- Classe rehabilitated, returning as Vicar Apostolic of new vicariate of Rwanda (1922).
- League of Nations gives Belgium official trusteeship of Rwanda and Burundi (1924).
- 40,000 baptized Catholics in Rwanda (1925).
- Belgium centralizes Rwandan chiefdoms and reserves leadership and higher education to Tutsi (1926-32).
- *Rwakayihura* famine kills upwards of 35,000 (1928-29).
- Aloys Bigirumwami ordained priest (1929); he goes on to serve in pastoral missions for over 20 years.

1930s:

- Classe and Belgians conspire to depose Musinga, replacing him with one of his sons, the Christian catechumen Rudahigwa (1931).
- 70,000 baptized Catholics in Rwanda (1931).
- Ethnic identity cards classify Rwandans as Hutu, Tutsi and Twa (1932-33).
- Tutsi *tornado* brings thousands of Tutsi elites and their Hutu clients into church.
- *Kinyamateka* Catholic newspaper launched (1933).
- *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida* opens for Tutsi nobles training for colonial service (1935).

- Nyakibanda major seminary opens (1936).
- World War II begins; 300,000 baptized Catholics in Rwanda (1939).
- André Perraudin ordained priest in Carthage (1939).

1940s:

- Classe suffers stroke; Laurent Déprimoz becomes co-adjudicator of vicariate (1941).
- Mwami Mutara Rudahigwa receives Catholic baptism in national celebration (1943).
- Famine again wracks Rwanda, leading to deaths of 300,000 (1943-44).
- Classe dies; Déprimoz named Vicar Apostolic of Rwanda (1945).
- Mutara dedicates Rwanda to Christ the King (1946).
- U.N. *tutelle* established to oversee Belgian rule in Rwanda and Burundi (1946).
- Mutara enrolled in papal order of St. Gregory the Great (1947).
- Catholic population growth flattens, leading to renewed focus on Christian formation.
- Tensions emerge between Mutara and graduates of *Groupe Scolaire d'Astrida*.
- Mutara officially abolishes *uburetwa* (1949).

1950-1952:

- Rwanda counts 400,000 baptized Catholics (1950).
- Save mission celebrates 50th anniversary (1950).
- André Perraudin arrives in Rwanda as professor at Nyakibanda (1950).
- First tensions between White Fathers and Mutara over Catholic schools (1950-51).
- Nationalist rivalries at Nyakibanda lead to expulsion of Congolese and Burundian students (1951-52).
- Founding of *L'Association des Amitiés Belge-Rwandaises* to strengthen relationships between Europeans and Rwandan elites (1951).
- Déprimoz expands Catholic Action by introducing League of Sacred Heart, Legion of Mary, and Eucharistic Crusade (1952)
- Vatican establishes new Vicariate of Nyundo in northwestern Rwanda; Aloys Bigirumwami named as Vicar Apostolic of Nyundo, becoming first indigenous bishop in Belgian Africa (1952).
- Belgians introduce ten-year development plan and announce intentions to hold local elections in 1953 and 1956 (1952).
- Perraudin appointed as rector of Nyakibanda seminary (1952).
- Mutara abolishes *ubuhake* (1952)

1953-1955:

- Elections for *chefferies* and *sous-chefferies* leave most Tutsi notables in place (1953).
- Alexis Kagame sent to Rome; Gregoire Kayibanda named editor of *L'Ami*; Arthur Dejemeppe named editor of *Kinyamateka* (1953).
- Bwanakweri challenges Mutara, leading to his exile to frontier territory (1954).
- *Conseil Supérieur du Pays* (CSP) meets for first time (1954).
- Lay schools debate splits Mutara and his allies from White Fathers and other Catholic chiefs (1954-55).
- Déprimoz breaks leg in accident and resigns as Vicar Apostolic; Dejemeppe takes over as temporary administrator (1955).
- Kayibanda named editor of *Kinyamateka* (1955).
- Founding of *Mouvement Politique Progressiste* (MPP) by progressive Tutsi chiefs and Hutu elites (1955).
- Perraudin named as Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi (1955).

1956:

- Perraudin organizes two priestly retreats on the social question (February, July).
- Bigirumwami consecrates Perraudin to episcopate (March).
- Hutu-Tutsi question emerges in political and media discourse (February-September).
- Regional bishops release pastoral letter on social question (June).
- Expanded elections bring new cadre of Hutu sub-chiefs into government, but Tutsi continue to dominate upper tiers (September).
- Founding of TRAFIPRO cooperative (September).

1957:

- CSP releases *Mise au point*, demanding independence and downplaying Hutu-Tutsi question (February).
- Hutu elites release *Bahutu Manifesto*, emphasizing indigenous ethnic problem and Tutsi monopoly of political power (March).
- Bishops of Rwanda-Burundi publish letter on justice (April).
- Kayibanda starts *Mouvement Social Muhutu* in Kabgayi (June).
- U.N. Visiting Commission recognizes Hutu-Tutsi problem and calls for democratization and decolonization (September).
- White Fathers send Kayibanda and Hutu journalist Aloys Munyangaju to intern for Belgian Catholic newspapers (November).
- Joseph Gitara starts *Aprosoma* at Save (November).

1958:

- Mwami creates special commission to study Hutu-Tutsi question; commission agrees on Hutu-Tutsi discrepancies but deadlocks on how to resolve them (April-June).
- Tutsi “Great Servants of the Court” deny shared brotherhood with Hutu (May).
- Mutara and Superior Council reject recommendations of Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission and vote to ban ethnic identity cards; Hutu elites radicalize argument in media (June).
- Perraudin leads 2 clerical study days to enhance clerical unity and study socioeconomic questions (July).
- Bigirumwami downplays Hutu-Tutsi distinction in widely-read *Témoignage Chrétien* article (September).
- Gitera requests that Perraudin condemn *Karinga* drums, the symbol of the monarchy (October).
- Mutara visits Belgium; perceived snub furthers tensions with Belgians (November).
- Jean-Paul Harroy, colonial governor, publicly declares Hutu-Tutsi problem (December).

1959:

- Perraudin’s *Letter on Charity* reads Rwanda’s socioeconomic problems through Hutu-Tutsi lens; letter marks *volte-face* in missionary approach to Rwanda’s traditional authorities (February).
- Gitera establishes Aprosoma as political party (February).
- Belgian Working Group visits Rwanda to draft plan for future political development (April).
- Mutara dies unexpectedly in Bujumbura; rumors circulate claiming that Perraudin and Belgian colonial officials were complicit in his death (July).
- Rwandan *biru* name Mutara’s half-brother, Kigeri V Ndahindurwa, as new Mwami over Belgian opposition; Kigeli pays first official visit to Perraudin (July).
- Rwandan political parties mobilize to contest upcoming 1960 elections, including new nationalist party UNAR and moderate Tutsi party Rader (August-October).
- Synod at Nyakibanda studies political questions and clerical unity; bishops release two statements on Christian politics (August).
- Perraudin and Bigirumwami condemn UNAR and Aprosoma for extremist rhetoric (September-October).
- Kayibanda transforms MSM into Parmehutu party (October).

- Hutu *jacquerie* erupts on November 1, precipitating limited counter-revolution from Mwami; thousands of Tutsi are exiled and hundreds killed (November).
- Holy See establishes local hierarchy in Rwanda (November).
- Col. Guy Logiest pacifies country but appoints hundreds of new Hutu chiefs to replace exiled Tutsi; Perraudin and Bigirumwami condemn violence but differ on causes (November).
- Christmas decree establishes new intermediary government hostile to Mwami Kigeli (December).

1960:

- 650,000 baptized Catholics in Rwanda.
- U.N. Visiting Commission visits Rwanda to investigate November violence and determine future electoral course, sparking renewal of ethnic and political violence; Perraudin defends himself before commission (March).
- Rader, Parmehutu and Aprosoma form common front against Kigeli and UNAR (April).
- UNAR decides to boycott communal elections (May).
- Kigeli leaves Rwanda, taking up residence in Tanzania and then Congo (June-August).
- Parmehutu wins 70% majority in summer elections; other political parties form common front against Parmehutu (June-July).
- Regional bishops issue *Vérité, Justice, Charité* on sociopolitical developments in region (October).
- Growing tensions and student withdrawals at Nyakibanda seminary; Perraudin lobbies for appointment of Hutu bishop.

1961:

- U.N. delays anticipated legislative elections until summer (January).
- Hutu elites organize *coup d'état* of Gitarama, abolishing monarchy and unilaterally declaring Rwanda as a Hutu republic (January).
- Hutu Bernard Manyurane named first bishop of Ruhengeri before falling sick and dying of apparent poisoning (January-May).
- Vatican appoints first indigenous rector at Nyakibanda in effort to quell ongoing tensions and student withdrawals (April-May).
- Growing tensions between U.N./Belgium and Perraudin/Bigirumwami over political developments in Rwanda and comparative risks of communism vs. ethnicism.
- Electoral season sparks new violence between political parties, leading to joint Bigirumwami-Perraudin condemnation (July-August).

- Legislative elections give Parmehutu 80% majority; referendum overwhelmingly rejects monarchy; Kayibanda named president (September-October).
- Aprosoma joins common front with Rader and Unar against Parmehutu (December).

1962:

- Joseph Sibomana and Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi consecrated as bishops of Ruhengeri and Astrida (January).
- U.N. recognizes Rwandan government after Parmehutu agrees to seat two UNAR reps in cabinet (February).
- Increasing UNAR exile raids into Rwanda; Hutu militias massacre 3,000-5,000 Tutsi at Byumba in retaliation (March-April).
- Rwanda celebrates independence; Perraudin delivers inauguration sermon (July).
- Second Vatican Council opens with all 4 Rwanda bishops in attendance (October).

1963-1969:

- Over 800,000 baptized Catholics in Rwanda.
- Parmehutu sacks Tutsi cabinet members and establishes political monopoly after August 1963 elections.
- UNAR exiles launch major invasion and nearly reach Kigali, leading to massive government crackdown of political opposition and massacres of 8,000-10,000 Tutsi in Gikongoro (Dec. 1963- Jan. 1964).
- Catholic hierarchy condemns violence but downplays government role (Jan. 1964).
- Vatican Radio describes Gikongoro violence as “genocide,” sparking angry protests from Perraudin and White Fathers (Feb. 1964).
- UNAR raids decline and ultimately cease; Tutsi exile community continues to oppose both Perraudin and Rwanda’s Hutu-dominated government.
- Parmehutu rules as one-party dictatorship but experiences more internal and intra-regional tensions as decade progresses.
- Rwandan bishops release major statement on ecclesiology, showing the influence of Vatican II (1967).
- Founding of *Union Fraternelle Clergé Rwandaise* (UFCR) sparks further tensions between Perraudin and indigenous clergy (1967-68).
- *Kinyamateka* editors sacked and exiled for critiquing government (1968).

1970s:

- Rwandan Catholic population tops 2 million.
- UFCR disbanded under pressure from Perraudin (1970).
- Burundian genocide begins after failed *coup d'état* by Hutu military officers, leading to deaths of over 200,000 Hutu at hands of Tutsi-dominated military dictatorship; thousands of Hutu exiles stream into Rwanda (1972).
- Government-instigated Hutu student groups force Tutsi students and professors out of Rwandan seminaries, universities, and secondary schools; hundreds killed in violence; bishops condemn violence but fail to critique Kayibanda regime (1973).
- Juvenal Habyarimana leads bloodless *coup d'état* against Kayibanda, establishing Rwanda's Second Republic; promises to move beyond past ethnic and regional tensions, focusing on national unity and economic development (1973).
- Vincent Nsengiyumva replaces Aloys Bigirumwami as Bishop of Nyundo (1974).
- Nsengiyumva is named Archbishop of Kigali, replacing Perraudin (1976); Nsengiyumva later named to serve on central committee of Habyarimana's *Mouvement Révolutionnaire Nationale Défense* (MRND).
- Perraudin continues to serve as Bishop of Kabgayi.

1980s:

- Vatican pressure leads Nsengiyumva to resign his position on central committee of MRND (1985).
- Bigirumwami dies in Nyundo; celebrated as national hero (1986).
- Felicien Muvira resigns episcopal appointment on eve of consecration; allegations swirl that Nsengiyumva pressured him to resign because of his Tutsi identity (1988).
- *Kinyamateka* editorials take stronger line against Habyarimana regime, leading to mysterious death of editor and arrests of Catholic journalists (1989).
- Perraudin retires as active bishop of Kabgayi; replaced by Thadée Nsengiyumva, a moderate Hutu who will take a stronger line on ethnicism (1989).

1990s:

- Pope John Paul II visits Rwanda (1990).
- Rwanda Patriotic Front invades northern Rwanda with stated aim of repatriating Tutsi exiles and toppling Habyarimana regime (1990); war will continue for next 3 years in northern Rwanda.
- Habyarimana announces that he will introduce multiparty elections (1991).
- Rwandan bishops advocate for elections and attempt to mediate between RPF and government (1991-93).

- Local anti-Tutsi massacres perpetrated by youth militias affiliated with government (1992-93).
- Arusha peace accords establish power-sharing agreement between RPF, Rwandan government and other parties; U.N. peacekeeping force arrives in Rwanda (1993).
- Massive shipments of machetes and other weapons raise fears of impending massacres (January-March 1994).
- Habyarimana's plane is shot out of sky as he returns from peace talks in Arusha; both Hutu and Tutsi political opponents are rounded up and executed; political persecution transforms into ethnic genocide as thousands of Tutsi are killed in and around Kigali (April 1994).
- Perraudin offers newspaper interview in which he condemns violence but defends Hutu grievances against RPF (April 1994).
- Genocide spreads across Rwanda, killing an estimated 500,000-800,000 Tutsi, Hutu political opponents, and Hutu who appeared to be Tutsi; 75% of Rwanda's Tutsi population is killed before RPF captures Kigali and ends genocide; victims include 200 priests and religious, including Innocent Gasabwoya, Louis Gasore, and Felicien Muvura (April-July 1994).
- 2 million Rwandans flee across Congolese border; RPF establishes power-sharing government but also engages in counter-reprisals in Rwanda and Congo; Hutu militias continue to organize anti-Tutsi massacres in region (1994-95).
- International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) established at Arusha to try genocide suspects (1995).
- 100,000 Rwandans arrested on suspicion of genocide involvement, including Bishop Augustin Misago and several Catholic priests and sisters (1995-99).
- Rwandan military participates in "Africa's World War," claiming to act in self-defense in pursuing Hutu militants and other refugees across Congo; estimated 4 million die from war-related causes between 1996 and 2002.
- Rwanda's Protestant Council issues apology for Christian complicity in genocide; Catholic Church continues to deny any institutional responsibility (1997).
- Jean-Baptiste Gahamanyi and Joseph Sibomana die in Rwanda (1999).

2000s

- Bishop Misago acquitted on genocide charges, symbolizing the controversy over Catholic hierarchical role in the Rwandan genocide and its aftermath (1999-2000).
- Catholic Church celebrates 100th anniversary of Save mission (2000).
- Community *gacaca* courts established to help resolve thousands of lower-level genocide cases languishing in Rwandan prison system (2001-2006).

- Paul Kagame named president after serving as vice-president and head of military defense (2003).
- Perraudin publishes autobiography and dies in Switzerland at 89 (2003).
- White Father Guy Theunis arrested on genocide denial charges, symbolizing the continuing controversies over history and rhetoric in Rwanda (2005).
- Kagame reelected for second seven-year term as president, reflecting the dominance of RPF in Rwandan political life; four White Fathers remain in active ministry in Rwanda (2010).

Abbreviations

A.D.K.: Archives of the Diocese of Kabgayi, Rwanda

A.G.M.Afr.: General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa, Rome

C.I.E.R.: *Centre d'Information et d'Étude sur le Rwanda*

C.M.L. : *Bibliothèque du Centre Missionnaire Lavigerie*, Kigali, Rwanda

Glossary

Key Terms

Abakaraani: the Kinyarwanda nickname given to European-trained Tutsi chiefs in the 1920s and 1930s, reflecting the perception that they served as “clerks” for the Europeans; reflected growing tensions between Tutsi chiefs and predominantly Hutu peasantry under Belgian colonial rule.

Abanyiginya: elite clan which traditionally supplied Rwanda’s kings; engaged in ongoing rivalry with Abega clan; Tutsi elites from Abanyiginya and Abega clans controlled the vast majority of Rwandan chiefdoms until 1959.

Abbé: French term for diocesan priest; common term for Rwandan secular clergy during the 1950s.

Abega: rival clan to the *Abanyiginya*; implicated in coup to overthrow Mwami Rwabugiri’s chosen successor in 1897; traditionally supplied Queen Mother who exercised great influence on Mwami; along with *Abanyiginya* controlled half of sub-chiefdoms and four-fifths of chiefdoms in late 1950s.

Aprosoma (Association pour le promotion des masses bahutu): Hutu populist movement founded by Joseph Gitera in 1957; became a political party in February 1959; rotated between virulent pro-Hutu ethnicism and populist pan-ethnic rhetoric; ultimately marginalized and incorporated into Parmehutu in the 1960s.

Bahutu-Batutsi-Batwa: conventional terms for describing Rwanda's three major social/ethnic groups; reflect a highly complex political, social, economic, ethnic and linguistic history; most post-colonial violence in Rwanda and Burundi centered around the political manipulation of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction.

Bakura b'inama: the local branch of Catholic Action in Rwanda, started by Léon Classe in the 1920s; particularly influential among local chiefs.

Banyarwanda: Kinyarwanda name for the Rwandan people, reflecting Rwanda's historic sense of nationhood and shared religious, cultural and linguistic traditions.

Benebikira: congregation for women religious started in Rwanda in 1913; later spread to Uganda and other areas of east and central Africa; dominated by Tutsi between 1920s and 1950s.

Biru: keepers of Rwandan custom and royal advisors who played an especially important role in consecrating the Mwami's successor; Fr. Alexis Kagame served as a *biru* and advisor to Mwami Mutara during the 1950s; *Biru* appointed Kigeli V Ndahindurwa as Mwami in July 1959.

Burgomasters: local government officials who served at Rwanda's commune/district level after 1959; replaced sub-chiefs as primary local political leaders.

Chefferies and Sous-Chefferies: "chiefdoms" and "sub-chiefdoms" established by Belgians in 1920s; Belgians limited these positions almost exclusively to Tutsi until late 1950s; represented a marked centralization of power in comparison to pre-colonial Rwandan traditions.

Conseil Supérieur du Pays (CSP): Rwanda's highest national advisory council in the late 1950s; Tutsi filled 31 of the CSP's 32 seats after 1956 elections, precipitating tensions with Hutu elites who demanded more representation in the corridors of power; CSP released *Mise au point* in February 1957 which established principles of Tutsi nationalism in late colonial period.

Évolué: French term describing the rising African elites of the 1940s and 1950s; trained in European schools and Catholic seminaries but began advocating for more autonomy from colonial rule in the 1950s; garnered more Catholic attention during the early 1950s than Hutu and Tutsi categories.

Groupe de Travail: Belgian working group which conducted official visit to Rwanda and Burundi in April-May 1959; subsequent report favored land reform, democratization, and Hutu empowerment and shaped the Belgian government's own devolution plan announced in November 1959.

Hamitic Thesis: propagated by John Hanning Speke and other 19th century explorers and scholars, the Hamitic thesis held that a North African/Ethiopian mixed race (traditionally descended from Noah's son Ham (cf. Gen. 9:18-29)) had migrated, conquered, and civilized the Bantu African peoples of central and eastern Africa, thereby explaining the physical differences between African peoples and the signs of Western civilization present in these cultures; colonial officials and Catholic missionaries applied this theory to Tutsi and Hutu in Rwanda, transforming them into racial categories.

Inyangarwanda: early Kinyarwanda name given to Christian converts in the first years of the 20th century; literally meant "haters or repudiators of Rwanda."

Irivuze umwami: "the word pronounced by the king" or "what the king has said you must follow"; symbolized the nature of elite Christian conversion as an act of social and political obedience in the 1930s.

Jacquerie: "uprising"; originally applied to peasant revolts in 1350s France; widely used to describe Hutu revolts and anti-Tutsi violence of November 1959.

Karinga drums: traditional symbol and repository of power for Abanyiginya monarchy; in late 1950s Hutu leaders increasingly criticized this as a pagan symbol reinforcing traditional Tutsi dominance in Rwanda; Catholic bishops condemned Karinga superstitions while respecting its status as national symbol in Aug. 1959; replaced by new Hutu national flag in January 1961.

Mouvement Politique Progressiste: broad, pan-ethnic political reform movement that briefly gained traction in Rwanda and Burundi during the mid-1950s; early leaders included Kayibanda, Bwanakweri, and the Burundian prince Louis Rwagasore; movement eventually splintered into rival Tutsi and Hutu-dominated political factions.

Mwami: Kinyarwanda name meaning "king"; semi-divine claims to authority, but *de facto* power was mitigated by intra-court and intra-clan rivalries.

Nyakibanda Major Seminary: founded in 1936 in southern Rwanda west of Butare; offered final years of formation for Rwandan seminarians training for Catholic priesthood; became contested site for nationalist and then ethnicist tensions in 1951-52 and 1960-62; tensions led to establishment of new diocesan major seminaries after 1963.

Parmehutu (Parti du Mouvement de l'Emancipation Hutu): Hutu nationalist party launched in October 1959 which grew out of Kayibanda's *Mouvement Social Muhutu* (MSM); built extensive grassroots networks across Rwanda's hills through church organizations and cooperatives; developed increasingly ethnicist vision after 1959; won large majorities in legislative elections in 1960 and 1961, establishing itself as Rwanda's dominant political party in 1960s.

Propaganda Fide: Vatican congregation responsible for Catholic missions; appointed Vicars Apostolic in Rwanda until 1959; leaders in *Propaganda Fide* often adopted contrasting social and political analyses of Rwanda than Catholic missionaries inside the country.

Rader (Rassemblement Démocratique Rwandais): moderate, elite Tutsi party launched with Belgian encouragement in October 1959; led by reformist Tutsi elites like Bwanakweri and Ndazaro; opposed both UNAR authoritarianism and Parmehutu ethnicism; never succeeded in mobilizing popular support, in part due to its image as a pro-European, pro-missionary party for Tutsi elites.

Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF): predominantly Tutsi army which invaded Rwanda in October 1990 with the stated aim of repatriating Tutsi exiles; 1990-93 war with Rwandan government led to deaths of thousands and destabilized Rwandan politics, especially in northern Rwanda; ended Tutsi genocide in July 1994 after marching on Kigali; continues to rule Rwanda under leadership of President Paul Kagame.

"Sindi umuhutu wawe": Kinyarwanda phrase meaning "I am not his servant"; reflected the increasingly political overtones of Hutu and Tutsi categories in the late 19th century prior to the colonial encounter.

Sulpicians: French congregation which directed many of France's seminaries in the 19th and 20th centuries; recruited in 1959 to take over interim leadership of Nyakibanda seminary and help prepare seminary for indigenous leadership; White Fathers expelled Sulpicians after two Sulpician professors sided with Tutsi seminarians in 1960-61.

"Super omnia caritas": Latin phrase meaning "charity above all"; Perraudin adopted this as his episcopal motto and invoked this phrase to title his famous 1959 pastoral letter.

Tornado: name used in a 1935 issue of the White Fathers journal *Grands Lacs* to describe the mass conversions happening in Rwanda; symbolized the adherence of the Tutsi elite class to Catholicism after the catechumen Mutara Rudahigwa's 1931 accession to the throne.

TRAFIPRO: acronym for "*travail, fidélité, progrès*" ("work, faith, progress"); Rwanda's most important worker cooperative in late 1950s and early 1960s; launched in 1956 by Fr. Louis Pien with Perraudin's approval; Kayibanda served as first director and utilized TRAFIPRO networks to build his own political movement in 1958-59.

Tutelle: trusteeship; refers to U.N. council entrusted with overall supervision of Rwanda-Burundi after World War II; Belgium served on council with a rotating group of 3-5 nations; U.N. tutelle visits in 1948, 1951, 1954, 1957 and 1960 precipitated major political reforms and power struggles inside Rwanda.

Ubugake : patron-client system that played a major role in traditional Rwandan society; clients (*garagu*) offered their services (fieldwork, nightwatch, etc.) to patrons (*shebuja*) in exchange for the patron's protection and usage of patron's land and cattle; patron provided for the client's family after death, and the patron could choose to extend the *ubuhake* relationship to a deceased client's heirs; *Ubugake* existed between Tutsi patrons and Hutu clients and exclusively between Tutsi; it was rare for a Tutsi *garagu* to enter into such a relationship with a Hutu *shebuja*.

Uburetwa: stemming from the late 19th century reign of Mwami Rwabugiri, *uburetwa* required Hutu clients to devote two of every five days to working his Tutsi patron's land; during the 1920s, the Belgians reduced this rate to two days per week and made further exceptions for government and mission workers; the work itself became more onerous as Belgians enlisted peasants for colonial projects; unlike *ubuhake*, *uburetwa* was imposed exclusively on Hutu.

Ubwoko: Kinyarwanda term loosely translated as "race" or "classification" (literally a "specific nature that can reproduce itself"); this term was never used to describe Hutu and Tutsi but rather those descended from a particular patrilineal clan (clans included both Hutu and Tutsi).

Union Fraternelle Clergé Rwandaise (UFCR): association of mostly Tutsi priests which organized after the 50th anniversary of the Rwandan priesthood in 1967; while Bigirumwami and Sibomana allowed their priests to participate in UFCR, Perraudin established a rival network and banned his clergy from UFCR participation; dispute revealed ongoing ethnic and racial tensions in Rwandan church.

Union Nationale Rwandaise (UNAR): predominantly Tutsi nationalist party which formed in August 1959 to contest upcoming legislative elections in Rwanda; noted for its anti-colonial and anti-missionary rhetoric and demands for immediate independence; staunchly opposed Hutu emancipation movements as divisionist and ethnicist; marginalized after November 1959 uprising; split into internal and external wings after 1962.

Key Historical Figures

Adriaenssens, Jan: Belgian White Father missionary, seminary professor, and political commentator during 1950s-60s; Perraudin credited Adriaenssens with influencing his early social and political views; generally sympathetic if not uncritical of emerging Hutu social movements.

Baers, Paul: White Father who served as seminary rector at Nyakibanda between 1958 and 1961; his tenure was marked by unprecedented seminarian withdrawals and rising Hutu-Tutsi tensions after 1959; lost trust of Bigirumwami during bitter 1960-61 disputes over how to resolve seminary crisis; replaced by indigenous rector in the spring of 1961 and later served as diocesan chancellor under Bishop Joseph Sibomana in Ruhengeri.

Bicamumpaka, Balthazar: dominant Hutu leader in northern Rwanda during the late 1950s and early 1960s; served on Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission and assumed prominent positions in Kayibanda's post-colonial government before falling out with Kayibanda at end of 1960s.

Bigirumwami, Aloys: indigenous priest, Vicar Apostolic and then Bishop of Nyundo between 1952-1973; first African bishop in Belgian Africa; notable for his opposition to ethnic discourse in Rwandan politics and commitment to a "third way" between nationalism and ethnicism; dedicated later years to exploring Rwanda's traditional culture and religion.

Boutry, Pierre: White Father who served as rector of Nyakibanda Seminary between 1956 and 1958; later served as advisor to Perraudin in Kabgayi; dismissed as rector in part for his failure to resolve growing intra-ethnic disputes and seminarian withdrawals at Nyakibanda.

Bwanakweri, Prosper: Tutsi chief and Abega clan member who broke with Mwami Mutara in the early 1950s; favored Catholic influence in Rwandan society but opposed Hutu movements as divisionist; helped found RADER, a moderate, pan-ethnic political party, in 1959; executed during anti-Tutsi purges in December 1963.

Bushayija, Stanislas: Tutsi priest, scholar and Superior Council member in the 1950s; known for his sympathies for White Fathers and opposition to Mwami Mutara and traditional Rwandan nobility.

Cerri, Francesco: Italian missionary who arrived in Rwanda in early 1970s; left country in protest over anti-Tutsi violence in his parish during 1973 schools expulsions.

Classe, Léon: French Vicar Apostolic of Rwanda between 1922 and 1945; notable for his efforts to cultivate close ties with Rwanda's monarchy, his racialization of the Hutu-Tutsi distinction, and his stewardship of the Rwandan Catholic Church during its period of fastest growth.

Dejemeppe, Arthur: served as editor of *Kinyamateka*, vicar general and administrator of Kabgayi vicariate in early 1950s; notable for his political advocacy for Mutara's rivals like Kayibanda and Bwanakweri; White Fathers decided in 1955 to appoint Perraudin rather than Dejemeppe as Vicar Apostolic in part due to the latter's reputation as a political partisan.

Déprimoz, Laurent: French Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi between 1945 and 1955; focused on strengthening pastoral formation after the mass conversions of the 1930s; political moderate who did not share Classe's close relations with Mwami Mutara but also did not advocate on social justice questions like Perraudin; strong supporter of indigenous clergy.

Durrieu, Louis: Superior General of the White Fathers in the late 1940s and early 1950s; notable for his paternalist attitudes towards Africans and relatively conservative politics.

Gahamanyi, Jean-Baptiste: Tutsi priest and later bishop of Astrida/Butare between 1962 and 1999; defended Perraudin before U.N. Commission in 1960; known for his uncritical support for post-colonial government and strong opposition to UNAR exiles (which included his brother Kayihura).

Gasabwoya, Innocent: Tutsi vicar general of Kabgayi under Perraudin throughout 1950s and 1960s; maintained good working relationships with both Perraudin and Bigirumwami; killed during 1994 genocide.

Gashugi, Justin: conservative Tutsi chief who served on Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission in the spring of 1958; opposed idea of appointing Hutu representatives to the Superior Council and dismissed Hutu reps as machinating divisionists.

Gasore, Louis: Tutsi vicar general of Nyundo under Bigirumwami throughout 1950s and 1960s; prominent writer who propagated Tutsi nationalist vision; later accused by some missionaries of funneling money to UNAR exiles; fell out with Perraudin and Kabgayi missionaries over these accusations in 1962.

Gitera, Joseph: devout Catholic leader of *Aprosoma* (*L'association pour le promotion des masses bahutu*), one of the early Hutu political movements; his incendiary political and ethnicist rhetoric helped lay the ideological groundwork for the Hutu uprisings which broke out in November 1959; split with Kayibanda and Parmehutu in the 1960s and retired from politics.

Habyarimana, Juvenal: Hutu native of Gisenyi in northwestern Rwanda who served as head of military defense under Kayibanda; overthrew Kayibanda in bloodless *coup d'état* in July 1973, becoming president of Rwanda's Second Republic; initially adopted pan-ethnic rhetoric before scapegoating Tutsi in early 1990s to rally flagging political support; the shooting down of his plane in April 1994 triggered the genocide.

Harroy, Jean-Paul: Belgian colonial governor of Rwanda-Burundi between 1955 and 1962; initially suspected by many missionaries for his leftist political leanings; possessed complex views of Hutu-Tutsi question, but found common ground with Perraudin and others after he came out in favor of Hutu social movement in late 1958; retired from Rwanda after independence in 1962 but remained a hero for post-colonial Hutu leaders.

Hirth, Jean-Joseph: White Father who led first missionary caravan to Rwanda in 1899-1900 and served as region's Vicar Apostolic until 1920; notable for his concern with avoiding political entanglements of all kinds, respecting Rwanda's traditional leaders while also building a church among the marginalized masses.

Kagame, Alexis: Tutsi priest, scholar, and close advisor to Mwami Mutara Rudahigwa; one of the great 20th century African intellectuals notable for his contributions to African philosophy & theology; served as editor of *Kinyamateka* during 1940s and early 1950s; historical works propagated Tutsi nationalism and reinforced Abanyiginya clan's claims to royal authority.

Kayibanda, Gregoire: Hutu *évolué*, journalist, and later leader of the *Mouvement Social Muhutu*, a political party dedicated to the uplift of Hutu in Rwandan schools and government; served as president of Rwanda between independence in 1962 and his toppling in a 1973 *coup d'état*; died under house arrest in 1976.

Kayihura, Michel: Tutsi chief and vice-president of the Superior Council during late 1950s; exile leader of UNAR during 1960s; brother of Gahamanyi; lobbied Vatican against Perraudin and White Fathers in 1960s.

Kigeli V (Jean-Baptiste) Ndahindurwa: half-brother of Mutara appointed Mwami by royal *biru* after Mutara's death in July 1959; arrived in office with reputation as youthful, devout Catholic and moderate Tutsi chief; closely associated with UNAR by end of 1959; accused of torturing some Hutu leaders during November 1959 uprisings; fell out with Belgians after appointment of Guy Logiest as colonial resident; fled Rwanda in June 1960 after electoral victories of Parmehutu; deposed in popular referendum in September 1961; continues to live in exile in USA.

Lavigerie, Charles: French archbishop of Algiers/Carthage in North Africa and 19th century founder of the Missionaries of Africa or White Fathers; his commitments to top-down evangelization, cultural indigenization, and Christian civilization would leave lasting marks on White Father pastoral strategy.

Logiest, Guy: military and then civil resident of Rwanda between 1959 and 1962; helped quell November 1959 uprisings; his decision to replace exiled Tutsi chiefs with hundreds of Hutu chiefs and sub-chiefs was one of the most important political decisions of the period; strong partisan for Catholic civilization and Hutu democracy; helped facilitate the *coup d'état* of Gitarama in January 1961.

Makarakiza, André: appointed as first African (Burundian) professor at Nyakibanda Major Seminary in 1958; resented at various times by both Rwandan Hutu and Rwandan Tutsi; appointed bishop of Gitega (Burundi) in 1961.

Manyurane, Bernard: first Hutu priest to study abroad in Rome; named as first Rwandan seminary professor at Nyakibanda in 1959; named first bishop of Ruhengeri in January 1961; fell suddenly ill in February 1961 after apparent poisoning; died in Rome in May 1961.

Mbandiwimfura, Deogratias: first Tutsi priest to study in Europe in late 1940s and early 1950s; later named professor and spiritual director at Nyakibanda; independent figure, but generally seen as ideological ally of Tutsi nationalism and UNAR.

Mbonyumutwa, Dominique: rare Hutu sub-chief during the 1950s; served in leadership of Kayibanda's Parmehutu party; his beating by UNAR youths on Nov. 1, 1959 helped precipitate the Hutu uprisings of November 1959; went on to serve as Rwanda's first president during 1961 and in Parmehutu government until his expulsion from party in 1968.

Mosmans, Guy: Belgian provincial for the White Fathers in the late 1950s; exercised significant political influence on Belgian colonial policy in Rwanda and Burundi; favored establishment of Hutu democracy after 1958.

Mulindahabi, Calliope: Gitarama native who played major role in Hutu social movement of late 1950s; former Catholic seminarian who also served as Perraudin's personal secretary in the mid-1950s; served on Hutu-Tutsi Study Commission in 1958; key political advisor to Gregoire Kayibanda in 1960s.

Munyangaju, Aloys: Hutu journalist and later minister in post-colonial government; major propagandist for Hutu social movement in late 1950s as editorial writer for the White Fathers' newspaper *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*; leader of Aprosuma party; remained close ally of Kayibanda until fallout over government corruption in 1968-69.

Musinga: king (*mwami*) of Rwanda between 1897 and 1931; came to power in an intra-clan *coup d'état* and deposed by the Belgians in a similar coup in 1931; utilized Catholic missionaries to pacify outlying regions but always viewed them with suspicion; never showed serious interest in the Christian faith.

Mutara Rudahigwa: son of Mwami Musinga, Mutara was appointed Mwami after a 1931 *coup d'état* against his pagan father initiated by Mgr. Classe and Belgian colonial officials; a devout Catholic, he dedicated his country to Christ the King in 1946 before falling out with Belgian and missionary leaders in the 1950s; died under suspicious circumstances in July 1959.

Ndazaro, Lazare: ally of Bwanakweri who supported missionary influence in Rwandan society and helped start Rader in 1959; became increasingly disenchanted with Parmehutu politics in the early 1960s; executed during anti-Tutsi purges in December 1963.

Ndahoruburiye, Matthieu: Tutsi priest named as first indigenous rector of Nyakibanda major seminary in April 1961; later served as rector of St. Joseph Major Seminary in Nyundo between 1963 and 1973; forced out during Tutsi seminary and schools expulsions of 1973.

Nikwigize, Phocas: Hutu priest named bishop of Ruhengeri in 1968, replacing Joseph Sibomana; known for his strong anti-Tutsi views and denial of 1994 genocide; exiled in Congo between 1994 and 1996 before disappearing near the Rwandan border in November 1996, allegedly the victim of an RPF assassination.

Nothomb, Dominic: influential White Father writer and spiritual director who served as a liaison between Perraudin and Bigirumwami; penned influential political analysis in 1958 which claimed that Hutu and Tutsi were distinct racial categories.

Nsengiyumva, Vincent: Hutu priest from northern Rwanda who replaced Bigirumwami as Bishop of Nyundo in 1974; succeeded Perraudin as Archbishop of Kigali in 1976; notable for his close relations with President Habyarimana and his wife, serving on the central committee for the ruling party until 1985; killed in June 1994 by RPF snipers.

Perraudin, André: Swiss native and White Father born in 1914 and ordained priest in 1939; served as Nyakibanda professor and rector between 1950 and 1956; served as Vicar Apostolic and then Archbishop of Kabgayi between 1956 and 1989; controversial for his vociferous support for social justice and Hutu emancipation movements in the late 1950s and 1960s.

Preud'homme, André: Belgian resident in Rwanda in late 1950s; known for his sympathy for Catholic missions and moderate political views; replaced by Logiest in December 1959, precipitating further divisions between Belgium and local Rwandan elites.

Rwabugiri: ruled as Rwanda's Mwami between early 1860s and death in battle in 1895; notable for propagating major expansion of Rwandan kingdom through military conquests; Hutu-Tutsi identities hardened during the final years of his rule due to increasing association of Tutsi with political power.

Seumois, Xavier: Belgian White Father who served as rector of Nyakibanda seminary in late 1940s and early 1950s; failed to manage the nationalist tensions that enveloped Nyakibanda in 1951-52; his 1952 reassignment led to the appointment of André Perraudin as rector.

Sibomana, Joseph: Hutu priest who served as superior of Save mission during the November 1959 uprisings; named Bishop of Ruhengeri in October 1961; issued episcopal condemnation of Byumba massacres in April 1962; transferred to Kibungu in eastern Rwanda in late 1960s, in part due to his opposition to ethnicism.

Sigismondi, Pierre: apostolic delegate to Belgian Congo, Rwanda and Burundi who later served as secretary for *Propaganda Fide* during the years of Rwanda's social revolution; limited correspondence reveals Sigismondi's skepticism towards the White Fathers' political and ethnic analysis of Rwanda.

Van Hoof, Alphonse: regional superior for the White Fathers in late 1950s and early 1960s, overseeing missions in Rwanda and Burundi; briefly considered for position of Vicar Apostolic of Kabgayi in 1955; Van Hoof's voluminous correspondence is notable for its detailed descriptions of Rwanda's violence and pro-Parmehutu social analysis.

Volker, Leo: Superior General of the White Fathers in the late 1950s and early 1960s; adapted an increasingly anti-Tutsi and anti-UNAR position as the Rwandan revolution progressed between 1959 and 1962; notable for his staunch opposition to communism.

Bibliography

Archival and Primary Sources

I conducted my primary archival work at the General Archives of the Missionaries of Africa in Rome (abbreviated A.G.M.Afr. in footnotes). In Rwanda, I undertook research in the archives of the Diocese of Kabgayi (abbreviated A.D.K. in footnotes); the *Bibliothèque du Centre Missionnaire Lavigerie* (abbreviated C.M.L.), the White Fathers' local archives in Kigali, Rwanda; and the library of Nyakibanda major seminary in Rwanda. These archives provided the vast majority of diocesan reports, missionary correspondence, political analyses, United Nations reports, and other key Belgian colonial documents. In addition, I consulted many pastoral letters, newspaper articles, and other primary sources through the Belgium-based online archive, www.cier-be.info. I corroborated most of these sources in the Diocese of Kabgayi archives in Rwanda.

Newspaper and media sources included the Bujumbura-based *Temps Nouveaux d'Afrique*, the White Fathers' biweekly newspaper for Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern Congo between 1954 and 1962; *L'Ami: La revue des elites de l'Est de la Colonie*, an influential White Father monthly for Catholic lay elites in the early 1950s; *Grands Lacs*, the White Fathers' international journal between the 1930s and the mid-1950s; and *Vivant Univers*, the White Fathers' successor to *Grands Lacs* in the late 1950s and 1960s. I reviewed late 1950s issues of the Catholic Kinyarwanda weekly *Kinyamateka*, but my limited knowledge of Kinyarwanda prevented a more detailed analysis of this important Catholic newspaper. Several diocesan journals proved invaluable, such as the academic journals *Théologie et Pastorale au Rwanda* and its successor *Théologie et Pastorale au Rwanda et Burundi*; Kabgayi's diocesan newspaper *Trait d'Union*; and Nyundo's diocesan newspaper *Civitas Mariae*. On the 1963-64 Gikongoro massacres, I located a range of contemporary articles from the international Catholic press in the University of Notre Dame's Hesburgh library.

Finally, Fidele Nkundabagenzi's *Rwanda Politique 1958-1960* (Brussels: Centre de Recherche et d'Information Sociopolitique (CRISP): 1962) collects over 400 pages of primary sources from the period, focusing mostly on political documents from colonial officials and indigenous political leaders.

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