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# THE CHALLENGES OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CONGOLESE FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

A thesis by

Simon TUKUMU NSIELANGA

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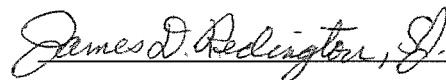requirements for the degree of

S.T.L.

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Committee Signatures

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# DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my fellow Congolese citizens
Who hope to be guided by conscientious leaders,
Who will sacrifice their entire lives to serve the Democratic Republic of Congo, our
country,
To promote peace, justice, and unity and to uplift the country to development.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# GENERAL INTRODUCTION

The theological enterprise of African theologians and the feasibility of an authentic African Christian theology are no longer subject to question.[1] The *raison d'être* of this African theology, as Valentin Dedji put it, lies in the search for new patterns of thought and new theological approaches that will enable African Christians to understand African realities in African ways, to overcome the crises of African societies and to transcend the barriers that divide Africans.[2] The reconstruction and social transformation of African political and economic structures is the current paradigm advocated by some African theologians, since the symposium convened in Mombasa, Kenya (9th-16th November, 1991) by the All Africa Conferences of Churches (AACC) on the 'Problems and Promises of the Church in Africa in the 1990s and Beyond.'[3]

The Kenyan scholar Jesse Mugambi, champion of this 'new' paradigm, defines this new theological project of reconstruction as a "re-mythologilization in which the theologian engaged discerns new symbols and metaphors in which to recast the central Message of the Gospel."[4]As such, Mugambi advocates for a revitalization of African traditional values, myths and symbols shaped by the light of the biblical message, in order to meet the needs of African churches and societies. According to the Kenyan scholar, the method of theology within the reconstruction is necessarily multi-disciplinary, ecumenical, and inclusive. It embraces both the social and the natural

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[1]Valentin Dedji, *Reconstruction &Renewal In African Christian Theology* (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 1.
[2]Ibid., 1-2.
[3]Ibid., 36.
[4]Ibid., 45.

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sciences; both the humanities and the creative arts.[5] As an introspective enterprise which is built up from the foundations laid by those who struggled for liberation in the preceding generation, it helps to build a consciousness that looks to the future with hope while taking into consideration all resources at the disposal of the present undertaking.[6] Seeing itself also as an ethical enterprise, it helps to inaugurate an era based on the unalienable respect of rights and duties of the human person in Africa. In a continent where the African traditional forms of social and political organizations were undermined by European colonialists, and where wars, conflicts, tribalism and frauds in the electoral processes affect men, women and children, there is an imperative to revitalize the notion of reconstruction in contemporary Africa. This notion of reconstruction has not been emphasized enough, even in those countries where wars of national liberation have been waged. In many African countries this notion also has not been popularized enough after conflicts that have occurred in the aftermath of the presidential elections. Among African countries only South Africa, after the abolition of apartheid, declared reconstruction a national motto in 1994, to guide national policy and planning. The reconciliation and forgiveness process held within the setting of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa has been an important experience for South Africa and an illuminating example for other countries in the world.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), however, the work done by the Sovereign National Conference (SNC) held in Kinshasa from August 7, 1991 to December 6, 1992 was an attempt to discuss all the questions of national interest in order to determine the fundamental options for the third Republic. The aim of the Sovereign

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[5]J.N.K. Mugambi, Christian Theology & Social Reconstruction (Nairobi: Acton Publishers, 2003), 30.
[6] Ibid.

National Conference was to reconcile the Congolese and to reconstruct all the broken institutions and corrupted values and violations of human rights that occurred under Mobutu's reign in the second Republic. Unfortunately, all the results of the Sovereign National Conference were undermined by Mobutu, because he felt that he was losing power. The degradation of living conditions that continued to happen under Mobutu's governance and after the closing of the Sovereign National Conference affected all Congolese.

Coming to power in May 1997 when he seized power from Mobutu, President Desiré Kabila did not solve the problems of the degradation of living conditions, insecurity, and conflict between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Instead, during his reign he brought the problems of child soldiers and insecurity in the country. The problem of insecurity grew, especially in towns and cities because of the presence of Mobutu's soldiers, who refused to join the government army and hid among the population and in the neighboring countries, mainly Congo Brazzaville and the Central Africa Republic. Under Joseph Kabila, the current President, people have raised voices within and outside of the country to acknowledge the violation of human rights and the impunity of those responsible for mass killing of the population in the eastern part of the country. Many Congolese are still wounded and affected by the consequences of the conflict that occurred in the aftermath of the presidential elections between the Government troops and the militia of Jean Pierre Bemba, the losing candidate. This painful picture of the political and social history of the DRC invites Congolese to respond to the challenges of wars, the abuses of human rights, the degradation of social, political

and economical structures, the problem of ethnicity and tribalism, and the worsened living conditions in the whole country.

As citizens of a nation, all Congolese are called to reconcile themselves and to engage in the social transformation and reconstruction of their country. The destiny of Congo lies in their capacity to come together as people of one nation. This presupposes courage and determination to revitalize and valorize their common values and interests for the good of each Congolese. Fundamentally, this implies that all have responsible and obligations to fulfill towards the common good. The language of justice, rights and duties has to be instilled in each Congolese, because it is foundational for the reconstruction of the country.

Faithful citizens fulfill their duties and obligations to the nation. Forming Congolese consciences for faithful citizenship remains a challenge for social actors, especially the churches. I believe that peace in the Democratic Republic of Congo lies in the Congolese capacity to become faithful citizens. But what does it really mean to become faithful citizens? In order words, in what respect is Congolese citizenship properly understood as "faithful"?

Today, peace and unity are foundations for social, political and economic development of the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, how is it possible to keep peace and bring the Congolese together as citizens of one nation, when they are constantly challenged by the threats of regionalism, tribalism, and ethnicism as evident from plebiscites in the DRC, especially in the recent presidential election? This is the fundamental problem my thesis will address. In order to promote the culture of peace and unity in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I think that there is a need to engage towards

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a theology of reconciliation that will deal with the problems of regionalism and tribalism. It is also necessary to promote the theology of reconstruction. By reconstruction, I intend the appropriation and the right exercise by Congolese citizens of the democratic values of justice, rights and duties in light of the African traditional values of social order, togetherness, solidarity and reconciliation, and in light of the scriptural value of faithfulness. When I call for the right exercise of the democratic values of justice, rights and duties, I think about the obligation of any Congolese citizen to acquire these virtues and to use them appropriately when voting for leaders.

I intend to respond to the fundamental problem I raise in two major parts, each divided into three chapters. In the first part, which I consider to be mainly historical, I will highlight the political history of the Democratic Republic of Congo. The first chapter of the first part will pinpoint the political organization of the kingdom of Kongo. I will analyze the type of political governance the Europeans found in the kingdom when they came into contact with the inhabitants of Kongo. Chapter two will mainly deal with the Belgian legacy and show how its colonial power distorted the political organization of Kongo and its value systems. The conclusion of this second chapter will analyze the implications of this distortion for subsequent hegemonic uses of power by President Mobutu. In promoting the ideology of *authenticité*, President Mobutu, like some African leaders[7] in the 1960s, wanted to distinguish himself from the colonial political system and the Western dominant capitalist and socialist antagonists. As a political ideology based on African virtues and values, authenticity had the merit of promoting and revalorizing African culture, and particularly Congolese culture. Unfortunately, the misuse of this

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[7]Léopold Sedar Senghor promoted the ideology of African Personality in Senegal; In Tanzania Julius Nyerere promoted *Ujamaa*; In Kenya Jomo Kenyatta promoted African Socialism; and in Zambia, Kenneth Kaunda promoted African Humanism. Cf. J.N.K. Mugambi, 2003, 39.

ideological power by Mobutu and his supporters strengthened Mobutu's dictatorship and led the country to crisis of citizenship, which is evident in the social factors of regionalism, linguistic affiliation, tribalism and ethnicism. Chapter three will argue that the crisis of Congolese faithful citizenship, which originated in Mobutu's era, continued up through President Joseph Kabila's reign. I will explain what the crisis of faithful citizenship means and how it affects Congolese. In addition, I will pinpoint the challenges of citizenship as seen in the last presidential election, held on July 2006. In order to suggest how Congolese can vote more appropriately, I will reject the unfortunate criteria based on regionalism, linguistic affiliation and tribalism and will suggest the democratic criteria of judgment, competence, credibility, vision and love. I will advocate for the holding of public debates between the candidates so that people may come to be informed about the projects of the candidates who run for presidency.

Part two of the thesis is theological, ethical and pastoral. Chapter four, which begins this second part, will attempt to rediscover the theological meaning of faithful citizenship. The rediscovering of this meaning and its re-appropriation can help Congolese to understand what God is asking citizens of the nation to understand about citizenship and the responsibility that each citizen has towards the State. Chapter five will highlight the ethical meaning of citizenship by stressing the language of rights and duties. To acquire this language is important. The pastoral aspect of this thesis will be handled in chapter six. I will reflect on the role of civil actors and the Catholic Church in the reconstruction of the meaning of citizenship and the reconciliation of Congolese. Concretely, I will show the results and limitations of social actors' work, especially in relation to the reconstruction of Congolese faithful citizenship at the time of the last presidential

election. The results and limitations of their work will allow me to propose what I consider as the basis of an appropriate Congolese leadership. I will consider the democratic criteria for electing a presidential candidate, the promotion of peace and justice, and the traditional values of togetherness as means that can help Congolese make an appropriate choice for a candidate for Presidency. My conclusion will open to the coming presidential election, in which, I believe, civil actors have a tremendous role to play in forming consciences for faithful citizenship.

## PART ONE: THE HISTORICAL REFLECTION

## CHAPTER 1: THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO'S POLITICAL HISTORY BEFORE THE COLONIAL PERIOD

In his book *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire: D'Hier à Demain*, the Burkinabe Historian, Joseph Ki-Zerbo, writes: "In the central Africa, the political organization best known in reason of its earlier contact with the Portuguese is the Kingdom of Kongo."[8] It is best known, principally, because of the abundant documents and publications referring to Kongo. Anne Hilton also acknowledges this when she indicates in the preface of her book, *the Kingdom of Kongo,* different names of scholars who have published on the history of the kingdom of Kongo. In this respect, the first section of the thesis will show how the kingdom of Kongo was organized politically, and what forms of governance this kingdom had before the colonial period. It is necessary to mention that, in central Africa, the kingdom of Kongo was not the only kingdom. There were many kingdoms and principalities. In the central region of Kongo, emerged the principalities of Kouba, Louba and Lounda.[9] Like the kingdom of Kongo, these principalities had their political, social, economic and cultural organizations. In the following pages, I will focus on the political organization of the kingdom of Kongo in order to show how the Bantu ethnic group of this kingdom was organized politically.

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[8]Joseph Ki-Zerbo, *Histoire de l'Afrique Noire: D'hier à Demain* (Paris: Hatier, 1972), 182.
[9]Ibid.

## 1. Political Organization in the Kingdom of Kongo

When the Portuguese arrived in 1482 on the coasts of Kongo, the kingdom of Kongo had already been established for almost one century and half.[10] The name of the founding ancestor has not yet been clearly established, but the Twa autochthon ethnic group acknowledges Nimi a Lukeni as the founder ancestor. More probably, as Ki-Zerbo writes, the founder was Ntinu Wene. Leaving the north of Mayombe, he settled in the village Kongo, located in Nsudi's province. From this village, he conquered the people of the south and established his hegemonic power over the province of Mbata. Ntinu Wene took the title of *mani Kongo*, meaning the king of Kongo. He located the capital city of the Kingdom in Mbanza Kongo.

In the late fifteenth and throughout the sixteenth centuries the future kingdom of Kongo expanded further. It was bound by the Rivers Kwilu and Niari to the north, Malebo Pool and the River Kwango to the east, the Dande to the south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west.[11] It definitively emerged in the region south of the river Congo and east of the River Nkisi.[12] The kingdom of Kongo had six main provinces: Mbemba, Mbata, Mbamba, Sonyo, Nsundi and Mpangu. The territories outside these provinces to the east, south-east and south were considered vassal provinces. Their chiefs acknowledged the power of the king of Kongo as did chiefs of the principalities of Dembo, Matamba and Okango.[13] The small chieftaincies of Ngoyo, Kakongo, Loango and Bungu, in the north of Kongo, also acknowledged the hegemony of the *mani* Kongo. The kingdom of Kongo was socially and politically well-organized. Socially, the

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[10]Ibid.
[11]Anne Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 1.
[12]Ibid.
[13]J. Vansina, *Les Anciens Royaumes de la Savane,* 2$^e$ ed. (Kinshasa: Presses Universitaires du Zaïre, 1976), 32.

population had a matriarchal lineage structure. The clan, the preferential marriage, polygamy, and the succession to power from uncle to nephew were social expressions of the matriarchal lineage. In the highest level of stratification was the king. He was followed by the nobles, mainly the chiefs of the provinces, and then by the free people or subjects and the slaves. The free people could acquire nobility by money, by loyalty or by doing some good service for the king. This implies that there were two types of nobility: nobility acquired by birth and nobility gained by cooptation. The nobles were called *Mwissikongo*. Actually the political title of *mani* Kongo belonged to the *Mwissikongo* ruling elite. He fulfilled a representative role within the *Mwissikongo* group. In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the *Mwissikongo* could be defined as members of the *kanda* (clans) of the central region.[14] According to Anne Hilton, there were said to be twelve of these, but this may have been a conventional rather than an actual number. For her, it is possible that the clans included the Nimi, Kitima, Nlaza, Lukeni, and perhaps Nsudi and Nkusu.[15] The *Mwissikongo kanda* constituted a corporate group with a clear identity and closed membership. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the king and the *Mwissikongo kanda* assured the governance of the kingdom. The king distributed offices to the *Mwissikongo* and received tribute. He was helped by the *Mwissikongo* in his task of governing. They, not the king, 'owned' the land of Kongo. This privilege allowed them to be appointed by the king to the strategic offices, for example those of governors of the provinces. According to Isidore Ndaywel, the *Mwissikongo* held three principal

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[14]Hilton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, 35.
[15]Ibid.

functions: the election of the king, the management of the provinces, and the restoration of justice.[16]

The king was also helped by the state council. It consisted of twelve members who may originally or symbolically have represented the twelve real or conventional *Mwissikongo kanda.*[17] The councilors were divided into two groups of four. In the mid-seventeenth century, the four principal male councilors were the principal judge, the principal secretary, the major-domo, (*mani lumbo*, who was responsible for the king's household), and another individual whose responsibility was unknown.[18] There were four lesser male councilors and four women councilors. The latter were usually widowed queens and the aunts and sisters of the reigning king. The state council had a big influence during the election of the king and on the important decisions the king could make.

The king was further supported by the administrative body, which was composed of functionaries. Isidore Ndaywel mentions three categories of functionaries: the governors of provinces and the chefs of villages; the royal court's functionaries; and the priests, who had the responsibility of ministering at the cult ceremonies.[19] For the *mani Kongo*'s point of view, the governors of provinces had three related functions: military, fiscal, and administrative.[20] They mobilized and led the army to war. They collected the king's tribute from the subject groups and delivered a proportion of it on their triennial visits to the capital, Mbanza Kongo. They assured the administration of the provinces in

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[16]Isidore Ndaywel, *Histoire générale du Congo: De l'héritage ancien à la République Démocratique* (Paris: De Boeck & Larcier s.a., 1998), 96.
[17]Ibid., 38.
[18]Ibid.
[19]Ndaywel, *Histoire générale du Congo,* 95-96.
[20]Hilton, 42.

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the king's name, dispensed justice, and provided a court of appeal for the subordinate groups. Besides, they maintained the communications system within the province, opened or closed the roads on the *mani Kongo*'s orders, and intercepted messages of the *mani Kongo*'s enemies or potential enemies.[21]

The royal court's functionaries were composed of king's relatives, the sons and nephews of provincial governors, the religious ministers, and the slaves. The most important official in the royal court was the head of the household, the *mani* lumbo, who in the early seventeenth century was also a member of the council. As the head of the household, he was the first dignitary after the king. The royal guards were composed of slaves who supported the king by helping him to execute his decisions. In the sixteenth century, the *mani Kongo* Alvaro II held some 16,000- 2000 Tio slave guards.[22] They were commanded by four *Mwissikongo* title-holders and garrisoned in Mbanza Kongo and other strategic places. What is striking in the organization of the kingdom of Kongo is the fact that the owner of the land of the kingdom was not the king, but the *Mwissikongo*. To own the land meant to have the control of the economy and politics of the kingdom. This gave the *Mwissikongo* important power in the administration of the kingdom. The task of electing the king lay in their hands.

## 2. The Election of the King

The aristocratic power in the kingdom of Kongo was elective. The king was elected not by the population as in the democratic system, but by three 'great' electors: the *mani* Soyo, the *mani* Mbata and the *mani* Vunda. The *mani* Soyo was the uncle of the king.

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[21]Ibid., 43.
[22]Ibid., 85.

Both the *mani* Mbata and the *mani* Vunda belonged to the Nsaku Lau *kanda* (clan). They were the grandfathers of the King. *Mani* Vunda was "the most highly regarded personage in the entire kingdom."[23] According to Father Cherubino da Savona, *mani* Vunda was called the "Lord of the earth and grandfather of the king."[24] This appellation of the *mani* Vunda recalled symbolically the origins of the kingdom and the beginning of the Kongo. These three 'great' electors supervised the process of the election, which had three parts: the competition for power, the investiture and the ritual seclusion, and the acclamation.

The potential candidates for kingship started their campaign when the king was known to have weak health and to be close to death. The lack of hereditary succession to the title and king's office reduced the primacy of kin relations and opened options for alliances and opposition. Because of this openness the brother potential candidates could not rely on kinsmen for support, but only on their clients. Giving the example of the eleventh king of Kongo, Alvaro III (Muzinga a Mpanzu Ndo Luvwalu), John Thornton writes:

> Alvaro III, for example, obtained considerable assistance from the House of da Silva, hereditary rulers of Nsoyo, as well as from the House of Jordão; and eventually, when he found the da Silvas proving difficult, he promoted the House of Kinkanga a Mwika.[25]

Those competing for power in the Kingdom of Kongo campaigned by seeking the support of different houses. Before the vote, it was customary for the campaigners to fight. The fighting was supervised by the Mwissikongo. The candidate who won the combat was elected king by the 'great electors.' The main criterion for being elected king

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[23]Georges Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo: From the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century.* (London: Georg Alien & Unwin Ltd, 1968), 199.
[24]Ibid.
[25]John Thornton, The Kingdom of Kongo: Civil War and Transition 1641-1718 (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, Ltd., 1983), 51.

was force. The kingdom needed a strong king who could bring safety to the population and fight the enemies of the kingdom. The kingdom also needed a strong king who could lead successfully. The population saw this necessity of having a strong leader because, when the king was weak, he was often manipulated by the state council.[26] In order to avoid that, the kingdom needed a strong leader.

As it appears, the period of succession to power in the kingdom of Kongo was characterized by conflicts between the campaigners. In the sixteenth century, for example, rivalries arose between Don Afonso I (Mpanzu a Muzinga) and Mpanza a Nzinga over the succession of João I (Nzinga a Nkuwu). Balandier portrays this episode nicely, when he writes:

> Dom Afonso, supporter of the missionaries, member of an older family, and candidate chosen by João I, is opposed by Mpanza a Nzinga, member of a younger family and able defender of the threatened traditions. Both had a 'clientele' and an army at their disposal: one ruled at Nsundi, the other at Mpangu...With the death of João I in 1506, the military confrontation could not be avoided: one again, power was conquered rather inherited. Dom Afonso surrounded the capital with an army composed of 'thirty-seven chiefs and their men'. He was victorious in spite of the number and nature of his adversaries: 'almost all the people and members of his own family'.[27]

This example helps us to understand that the power was not inherited, but rather conquered. By triumphing over his rival, Dom Afonso demonstrated that he was fit to lead the kingdom. It is important to mention that although there were struggles and rivalries between the candidates over the control of power, these conflicts were resolved by the inherently centralized political structure of the kingdom. The crucial issues of a struggle were often decided quickly by the *Mwissikongo*, within a year or two of the death of a king. According to Thornton, warfare was normally brief and decisive. This

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[26]Ndaywel, 96.
[27]Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo*, 49-50.

calendar of the campaign shows us that the candidates had a period of time to find their allies and to make their campaign. The *Mwissinkongo* carefully supervised this period of violence and tensions and performed certain ceremonies in order to restore peace and solidarity in the kingdom. They pe rformed religious roles as well as purely secular ones.[28] The Prince of Nsoyo in the 1670s and 1680s was responsible for the rain and was also engaged in a number of ceremonies, opening agricultural season, fishing season, and hunting activities.[29] The *mani* Vunda and *mani* Mbata held the function of traditional 'high' priests. During the violent periods of succession, they performed certain ceremonies to the ancestors in order to keep alive the unity of the kingdom, and to restore social order.

In the specific case of the battle in which Dom Afonso opposed Mpanza a Nzinga, Balandier mentioned that the partisans of Mpanza a Nzinga were obliged to leave the capital and go into exile. Mpanza a Nzinga was put to death because he had an obstinate hostility towards Christianity. Reflecting on the exile of the partisans of Mpanza a Nzinga, I can say that this exile of Mpanza's partisans was encouraged because Kongo custom allowed the leader to rule with peace of mind. Mpanza a Nzinga represented a serious threat for Dom Afonso's power and for Christianity. Putting him to death was a way of enabling the king to rule peacefully. It was also a way to allow Christianity to prosper peacefully in the kingdom. Peace and the unity of the kingdom were important factors for social and political order in the kingdom.

After the stage of competition and conflicts, the name of the elected candidate was announced to the assembled *Mwissikongo* by the *mani* Vunda who thereby endorsed the

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[28]Thornton, *The Kingdom of Kongo*, 63.
[29]Ibid.

decision in terms of the *mbumba* dimension.[30] Then the *mani* Kongo was invested publicly. The coronation was performed immediately. After Christianity became the state religion, the king was invited to place his hands upon the book of the Holy Bible. He swore on the altar to perform faithfully the duties of a Christian king. Then, a priest blessed him together with certain symbols of his responsibility.[31] The slow and majestic tradition ceremony then came. It had three phases: the presentation of the regalia, the homage and the return to the palace, and the oath of fidelity. The king was presented the regalia of office by *mani* Vunda.

These regalia included the headdress, called *mpu;* the *samba*, which was 'a very well made iron chain with many pendants,' a shoulder belt, which was worn over the right shoulder and fell below the left arm; then, the *mani* Vunda and the *mani* Mbata placed around the neck of the king 'a brocade purse bound in silk' containing a papal bull, which according to Balandier was called *sanctissimo sacramento* from the reign of Diogo I (sixteenth century).[32] Together with all other insignia, this document became the object of keen competition during the period of the rival kings. In the early sixteenth century, the major emblems were the bracelet of iron, which the king worn on his right arm, a lance, the flag bearing the coat of arms of the Kongo, a throne of ivory, and a sculpted wooden staff.

The ritual of presentation was followed by the homage. All the twelve *Mwissikongo* passed before the king and kissed his hand, as a sign of respect. Then they formed a procession behind the king and accompanied him to the palace for a seclusion of eight

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[30]The *mbumba* dimension was a function of *Kitome,* the initiated Mwissikongo. He had to bring the people into harmony with the natural world and thereby to secure the fertility of man, animals and plants. Cf. Hilton, The Kingdom of Kongo, 24.
[31]Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo*, 202.
[32]Ibid., 203.

days. During this period of seclusion, he broke the bonds of kin. According to the later accounts collected by Hilton, the former *mani kongo* killed a junior member of their *kanda* and had intercourse with a female member.[33] This seclusion time ended with the *mani Kongo*'s appearance in the public square, called *mbasi a Kongo* or royal square, at which point the dignitaries and the *Mwissikongo* title-holders swore obedience and loyal service.

In summary, I can underline that to become a king in the kingdom of Kongo, the candidate had to pass through different stages and show to the 'great' electors that he had the ability to lead the kingdom. He principally had to demonstrate the ability to win over his opponent. The criterion of force was an important element for the election of the king. When the king was elected and installed, he had to exercise sacral and temporal power.

## 3. The Functions of the King in the Kingdom of Kongo

According to the data collected by Father Proyart, in Loango people were convinced that the power of the king was not limited to the earth. He had enough influence to make rain fall from the sky.[34] This meant that the king of Kongo had spiritual power, which enabled him to call down rain. So the sacred character of the king's power enabled him to perform certain spiritual ceremonies. These ceremonies were made possible when he was in perfect agreement with the ancestors, in whom his power was grounded. The king's power to act resulted from divine favor. He received this divine favor through the constant intervention of the *mani* Vunda and the ritual functions performed by the queen.

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[33]Hilton, 37.
[34]Balandier, 205.

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It was through their agency that he was able to be in contact with the ancestors and the spiritual powers, and to act for the good of his people.

The temporal power of the king, however, was seen in certain functions. The king was the holder of the supreme power, the guardian of the unity of the kingdom. The great annual demonstration, in which the royalty was exalted and a presentation of the taxes was made by the governors of the provinces, was a concrete element that demonstrated the preservation of the kingdom's unity. The king was the supreme judge of the kingdom. According to Olifert Drapper, the king had the prerogative to render justice in the last analysis when the provincial judges were not able to make judgment in certain difficult affairs.[35]

In Mbanza Kongo, the king possessed a judicial administration. It was composed of a chief justice in the capital and district judges whose duty was to publish the law in the market places, to punish infractions, and to settle disputes. The king's army in Mbanza Kongo was a dissuasive force for the security of the entire kingdom. When the kingdom was threatened by the enemies, he took the lead of the army. All these functions gave him great power, which was honored and even sanctified.

## 4. The Type of Governance in the Kingdom of Kongo

As it appears above, the administrative authority system was the type of socio-political organization that was in vigor in the kingdom of Kongo. Politically, it was an aristocratic system stren gthened by the delegation of power and the combination of relations based on clan affinities and on vassalage.

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[35]Ibid., 204.

The *mani* Kongo did not concentrate all the power in his own hands. The governors, vassals and the chiefs of villages handled power in their respective territories in the name of the *mani* Kongo. The coexistence of two organizations – one of the State, the other of the clan – appears also in the social and political organization of the kingdom. I should say here that the coexistence between the State and the clan did not reduce the authority of the elders, who acted within the clans and lineages. The relation of the king with the *Mwissikongo* was based on clan affinities. The *mani* Kongo respected these affinities, because they stemmed from the ancestors. This explains why the king did not interfere directly in the policy of governance in certain provinces. Georges Balandier writes:

> In Mbata, the king had virtually no voice when it came to the appointment of the governor; the power belonged to the Nsaku Lau lineage. In Soyo, the lineage of the first Christian chief had acquired 'ownership' of the local government. In Nsudi, the sovereign established one of his potential successors, thus indicating his preference; a proverb stated moreover that the chief of Nsudi was 'like the hummingbird, who hovers near the opening from which the palm wine tricklets'. Finally, the province of Mpemba was 'the center of the state of the Kongo'; here, according to Pigafetta, were 'the seat and the capital of the other principalities. The King lived here and a number of the nobles who attended him had 'their possessions and their estates' here. In all cases, however, the sovereign intervened in the appointment of provincial governors, either to make the choice or to confirm it.[36]

Although the king had supremacy of power, he did not often intervene in the internal policy and affairs of the provinces. Ndaywel observes that some governors were designated by him, others were not.[37] There were some functions associated with particular provinces. Traditionally, the *mani* Nsudi was the presumed successor of the *mani* Kongo. The *mani* Mbamba was essentially the chief of the army. The *mani* Mpangu was known to be the minister of information. The title of *Kitome* was held by the land

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[36]Ibid., 206.
[37]Ndaywel, 97.

Lords. Laman notes that only those who had enough wealth had to be called *Mfumu.*[38]

According to the *História*, the term *Mani* was applied to those who had some authority. The captain of the armies was a *mani* as well as the governor of a province or the chief of a vassal territory.[39] The title held by the king only was Ntinu.[40]

The function of justice was exercised by the chiefs of villages and the governors of provinces. The king intervened in the judiciary affairs of the provinces only when the provincial judges and the governors taught that the king could speak as a last resort in order to handle the problem. Otherwise, all the legislations and judgments were made by the chiefs of villages and the provincial judges. However, about the relation of vassalage, Georges Balandier acknowledges that

> certain districts had the quality of precarious fiefs (contributing merely income) and where allotted to members of the royal family, including former queens and 'princesses'; in others, the choice of chiefs depended on the *mani* of the province. In addition there were enclaves or marginal territories similar to protectorates which had retained a kind of autonomy, where the royal family merely or confirmed the authorities chosen according to local custom.[41]

In the sixteenth century, the outlying territories of Loango to the north and Ndongo (Angola) to the south were connected to the central power by relations of vassalage. As in the Middle Ages in Europe, the vassal chiefs of these two territories acknowledged the overlordship of the sovereign *mani Kongo* in return for the Sovereign's protection.

## 5. The Moral Pillars of Aristocratic Governance in the Kingdom of Kongo

From what I have highlighted above, one can discern and say that dignity, social order and conflict resolution, the redressing of wrongs and the community of goods were

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[38]Ibid., 97.
[39]Balandier, 205-206.
[40]Ndaywel, 97.
[41]Balandier, 207.

the moral pillars on which the Kongolese aristocratic system of governance was based. As I underlined above, the king was elected on the basis of certain qualities. The candidate to kingship had to demonstrate that he was strong and was capable of performing heroic actions. The king was highly respected when he showed that no man could challenge his power by attacking his kingdom. The authority and dignity of his power lay in his ability to serve and defend his people. This implies that he was able to guide people, solve their dissensions, and build a peaceful kingdom.

The dignity of the king's personality lay also in his abundanc e of wealth. This included not only things (crops, animals, mines, and money) but also the number of children and slaves he had in his household. What was striking in the king Ntinu Wene's attitude was his ability to control wealth (notably mines and metalwork,) and assure its distribution to the population. Balandier observes that Ntinu Wene provided his people with the arms of war and the tools of agriculture, in the manner of several sovereigns of Bantu origin, among them the Ngola of Ndongo who founded the kingdom of Angola.[42] By this gesture, I understand that what were at one time the king and nobles' privileges now benefited the population in the entire kingdom.

Further, the dignity of King Ntinu Wene's power lay in his wisdom, knowledge, and ability to listen. Although his power was violent and in certain respects 'magical', it was at the same time based upon the wisdom and knowledge of a man who loved justice.[43] About the capacity to listen, Uzukwu and Magesa are right when they allude to the ears of the elders in Africa. Juvenalis Baitu writes:

> Uzukwu has used the image of "large ears" to characterize this underlying motif of African systems of governance. Magesa notes that the moral legitimation of

[42]Ibid., 128.
[43]Ibid., 37.

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governance depends largely on the capacity of the leaders to listen. The maintenance of social order is an exercise in listening.[44]

It is through the exercise of listening that justice, social order, and the resolution of conflicts are assured. In the kingdom of Kongo, the legitimation of the aristocratic system of governance lay in the capacity of the leaders to assure justice and social order and to resolve conflicts. "One tradition mentions that Ntinu Wene was summoned by several tribes because of his sagacity as arbiter of differences. During his early residence in the first conquered region (Mpemba Kazi), he founded a court of justice – *mbasi a nkanu* – which was both respected and feared."[45] This court was respected because it helped to resolve differences between people and restore order in the Kingdom. So the legal system of court and the moral system of customs and taboos were inseparable in the exercise of power in the kingdom of Kongo. Their purpose was the same: to protect, resolve and restore harmony in society. According to Magesa, the resolution of conflicts in African traditional governance was connected to the religious system and inseparable from it.[46] In the kingdom of Kongo, reconciliation had an important place. It was a process in which the elders restored through dialogue and rituals the wrongdoing or broken relationships between individuals in the community.

The process of reconciliation focused on the supreme value that individuals or communities should remain united and in solidarity. Juvenalis Baitu mentions that in traditional African society, the process of reconciliation tried to prevent the breaking up

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[44]Juvenalis Baitu, "A Survey of Traditional African Systems of Governance." *African Christian Studies*, no. 2 (June 2007): 62.

[45]Balandier, *Daily Life in the Kingdom of the Kongo*, 36.

[46]L. Magesa, *African Religion: The Moral Tradition of Abundant Life* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1998), 237.

of relationships and to enable the litigant parties to live together amicably in the future.[47] In this sense, it had both conciliatory and healing aspects. In this process, the standards of right behavior were based on the society's customs. Punishment of guilty parties was not completely ignored. Material compensation to the harmed party and to the elders was not ignored. This might have been an animal, beer, food or cola to be partaken by the litigants and the elders together as sign of restored harmony and order. Justice and order were restored in the community through dialogue and through this ritual of consuming food or drinking palm wine together with the elders.

Furthermore, the credibility of the aristocratic form of governance in Kongo was based on the duty of guarding and allocating the community of goods justly. Ntinu Wene, the founder of the kingdom of Kongo, was said to be both a brutal and a justice-loving king. His justice-loving side consisted in his ability to render justice, to care for people, and to distribute taxes and tributes justly as well in time of need. This showed that he was not a selfish king who amassed wealth for himself and for the class of nobility to which he belonged. He used wisely the resources of the kingdom in order to help people in need. In order to avoid offending Nzambi Mpungu and the ancestors, he lived in communion and harmony with the nobility and the population. He could not reject the mediation of the first occupants and solicited the ritual cooperation of their representative, Nsaku Vunda, who served as an intermediary between the living and the ancestors. Nsaku Vunda controlled the rain and the crops, regulated sowing and reaping, and governed the hunt. The sovereign Ntinu Wene was doomed to fail if he

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[47]Baitu, "A Survey of Traditional African Systems of Governance," 63.

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misunderstood or rejected this sacred relationship with the Prince of the earth, Nsaku Vunda.

I should emphasize here that the kingdom of Kongo had an aristocratic system of governance which effectively served the purposes of its population before the arrival of the Portuguese and Belgians in Kongo. Unfortunately, they did not understand the political organization of the people in Kongo and the values of the aristocratic form of governance in Kongo's social context. They dismissed the aristocratic governance of Kongo as being autocratic and barbarous, and replaced it, unfortunately, with tyranny, a form of governance which centralized all power in the hands of the colonizers.

# CHAPTER 2: THE DESTRUCTION OF KONGO'S POLITICAL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS UNDER THE PORTUGUESE AND THE BELGIAN COLONIZERS

When the Portuguese entered into contact with the kingdom at the end of the fifteenth century, the political structure they founded closely resembled the feudal organization of Europe during the Middle Ages. The kingdom was divided into villages, provinces and districts. The king's delegates headed these political entities. At the start, the relations established by Portugal with the kingdom of Kongo were based on alliance. The two kings, on an equal footing of formality, exchanged ambassadors from their first contacts and these diplomatic relations continued for many years.[48] Under the reign of Don Afonso I (Mpanzu a Nzinga), son of king Nzinga a Kuwu, many Europeans and especially Portuguese arrived in every-growing numbers. Caravans of merchants, masons, carpenters, agricultural laborers and missionaries kept following each other. Churches were built, people were baptized, and fetishes were burned.[49] Foreign commerce was established and trading posts covered the entire kingdom.

However, in this alliance, Portugal's aim was to establish for her benefit a monopoly on commerce and evangelization.[50] In the mid-sixteenth century, the Portuguese language was introduced into the kingdom together with commerce, alcoholism, extortion, and the slave trade. The Portuguese carpenters, masons and teachers became slave merchants instead of performing their initial tasks.[51] The number of slaves who embarked from Kongo's port of Mpinda to Portugal increased every year.

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[48]The Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi Information and Public Relations Office, *Belgian Congo*, Vol. 1 (Brussels: J.-E. Buschmann, 1959), 70.
[49]Ibid.
[50]Ibid.
[51]Ndaywel, 98.

From 1436 on, four to five thousand Negro slaves were captured and sent to Portugal each year. Due to these exactions and abuses, the indignation of the king of Kongo increased; and consequently this situation led Portugal to engage in an open battle with Kongo. In 1665 Don Antonio, the king of Kongo, was crushed in the battle of Ambuila. The data collected by the information and public relations office of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi indicates that after being crushed by the Portuguese military force and weakened by slave traffic, the kingdom of Kongo became a phantom state, which was finally dismembered definitively at the Berlin conference in 1885. At that time the European imperial powers formally agreed among themselves on the physical delineations of their African possessions.[52] King Leopold II of Belgium claimed sovereignty over the region around the Congo basin, in which he successively established the Committee for the Study of the Upper Congo in 1878 and the International Association of the Congo in 1879. He directed Henry Morton Stanley, a young American newspaper reporter turned explorer, to sign treaties with local chiefs in the name of the Belgium Sovereign.

On February 23, 1885, the status of sovereign State was unanimously accorded by the fourteen countries present in the Berlin Conference to the International Association of the Congo. Three days later, the latter signed the "General Act of Berlin" with the other countries. This Act of Berlin established the formal rules and procedures for the realization of territorial claims and for the exploitation of the Congo basin, which was

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[52]Kevin C. Dunn, *Imagining the Congo: The International Relations of Identity* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 8.

occupied by the International Association of the Congo, the French, the Portuguese, the English, the Germans, and the Italians.[53]

## 1. The Creation of the Congo Free State

In April 1885, the Belgian Parliament authorized Leopold II to be the head of the new State founded in Africa. The Parliament also stipulated that the union between Belgium and that State should be governed exclusively by the person of the Sovereign. On the 29th of May, a decree changed the name of the "International Association of the Congo" to "Congo Free State". On July 19, 1885, a solemn proclamation of the accession to the throne of Leopold II as sovereign of the Congo Free State was made at Banana, a town located in western Congo. On August 1, 1885 official notification of the proclamation was given to all the powers. This new State lasted twenty-three years. In 1908, it became a Belgian colonial possession.

Analyzing the causes of the annexation of the Congo Free State by Belgium, the office of information and public relations of the Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi wrote:

> As a matter of fact, the annexation of the Congo by Belgium came as a result of a long period of preparation. It was brought about by the wishes of the Sovereign, the great financial aid that Belgium had given the Congo Free State at a difficult moment, and the ever-growing consciousness that the Belgian people felt, at the beginning of this century, of their responsibilities in regard to this African achievement.[54]

According to the office of information and public relations of the Belgium Congo and Ruanda-Urundi, the Belgian government lent the sum of 25, 000, 000.00 francs to the

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[53]The Belgian Congo and Ruanda-Urundi Information and Public Relations Office, *Belgian Congo,* 96.
[54]Ibid., 105.

Congo Free State.[55] As a guarantee for this loan, the Sovereign assured the Belgium government that it could annex the Free Congo State at the end of ten years. In 1891, the year the agreement came into effect, Leopold II asked the Belgian Parliament to postpone the annexation until the moment when the Congo Free State would be truly productive. As one can see, the Congo Free State was Leopold II's personal and financial enterprise. He enriched himself by means of rubber, ivory and mineral resources produced in Congo. What counted for the monarch was Congo's wealth. The abuses of Congolese rights and especially the lack of living conditions for workers came to the awareness of the international community. The report published by the International commission in November 1905 was striking. Ndaywel notes that

> people in Belgium were frightened when they learned about the conditions of workers' lives in Congo Free State. The report says that "the Congo Free State was neither a colonizer State, nor a State as such, but rather a financial enterprise in which the Sovereign only saw the lands but not the people who lived in."[56]

Shocked by the insight of this report, the Belgians would now work towards the annexation of the Congo. On August 20, 1908 the Belgian Parliament passed a law providing for the annexation of the Congo. The Congo Free State ceased to exist and became the "Belgian Congo" on November 15, 1908. [57]

## 2. The Belgian Congo and its Legacies

Belgium was now in possession of a territory eighty times as large as herself, a territory which, even since the Berlin Conference, had not been governed by a constitutional regime but rather by decrees and ordinances. The Belgians ruled Congo by

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[55]Ibid., 106.
[56] F. Cattier, 1906: 341 quoted by Ndaywel, 360.
[57] Ibid., 107.

a constitution. This constitution gave the minister of the colony a stronger power to govern and implement the policy of exploitation and civilization in Congo. In order to exploit the resources of Congo, the Belgium State sent almost 10,000 Belgian functionaries and experts. They successfully created a colony with exemplary infrastructures and economy compared with ot her colonies in Africa. Theodor Hanf indicates that in 1950, the Congo had nice infrastructures of heath care under the tropics; in 1960, Elisabethville (Lumbubashi) town had as exemplary conditions of living as Johannesburg in South Africa. In the same year, 70 % of the children were 'scholarized'. This percentage surpassed that of other African colonies.[58]

The enterprise of education, health care and infrastructures were considered by Belgians to be a positive way of civilizing the Congolese. The objective of the enterprise of civilization was to enlighten the indigenous peoples of Congo. Evangelization and instruction were principally two important networks set by the colonizers to spread the ideology of 'civilization'. Since the beginning of the colonization, the Catholic Church set missions with the aim of pursuing the evangelization of the indigenous. Itinerant priests 'persecuted' pagans in order to convert them to Christianity. The crafted statues called *jujus* were taken from polygamists' compounds and burned. Polygamy was considered a sin. By burning *jujus* and removing all statues from the polygamist houses, the Catholic missionaries believed that they were saving people from paganism. People were baptized. For the missionaries, baptism meant that the baptized were saved from sin. Baptism also meant that the baptized had acquired a new status in life. They were no longer pagans, but Christians. Becoming a Christian meant acquiring a new identity, that

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[58] Theodor Hanf, « Un Pays Destiné au Pillage ? Essai de Situer la Crise Congolaise, » Mabiala and al., eds. *La République Démocratique du Congo: Une Démocratisation au Bout du Fusil* (Kinshasa: Publications de la Fondation Konrad Adenauer, 2006), 10.

of a civilized person. A bad Christian was one who went back to ancient practices of paganism and consulted wish men, *jujus* and traditional medicines. The colonizers used Christianity as a means for the diffusion of European culture and civilization.

Education in European style became the means of transmitting the European culture to Congo's '*indigènes.*' Missionaries and Belgian officials played a tremendous role in education. For missionaries, education was a means by which they could get more people to be baptized and become Christians. Education was given in the local languages and done at the elementary level. Basically, during that period the elementary schools, called "*écoles normales,*" were opened in order to form more '*indigènes*' teachers who would teach more Congolese children. Teachers were the closed collaborators of the colonizers. They were called "*évolués,*" "elites" or civilized persons.[59] To become a close collaborator of the white, one had to show that he/she was a virtuous person and had intellectual qualities.

The enterprise of civilization was fundamentally based on Christian education. This is because the Belgian colonizers believed that moral education of the '*indigènes*' could only be a success when it was done through Christian education. As Ndaywel puts it, this conviction was based on the following observation:

> Religiosity and mystery were characteristic in the indigene life. Only Christianity and evangelization could uprooted indigenes from their traditional religious sentiment and uplift it to a superior level. This enterprise of uprooting indigenes from their traditional belief systems received the encouragement of the Belgian officials. The missionary schools received many subventions from the Belgian officials with the objective to uplift Congolese '*indigenes*' from the traditional beliefs, considered as barbarous and savages.[60]

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[59] The *évolués or* "the evolved" meant someone who had evolved "toward" being civilized, although it was not thought that they would ever completely achieve a "civilized" status. Cf. Robert B. Edgerton, *The Troubled Heart of Africa: A History of the Congo* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2002), 179.

[60] Kita K.M., 1982: 166-167, quoted by Ndaywel, 403.

With this system of subventions, the Catholic Church had the monopoly on education until 1946, the year of the establishment of the first public schools, which were reserved for white children. However, the Catholic Church developed the primary schools and took the initiative of forming collaborators for the whites, mainly '*indigènes*' teachers and priests. During that period the primary schools had two different levels. The first level had a general program of education, which focused on catechism, hygiene, manual work (especially agriculture) and instruction based principally on reading, writing and arithmetic. The second level formed the selected children and prepared them for special schools, which comprised the professional and normal sections. The high level of the special school was reserved for candidates to the priesthood. In 1948, the Belgian Congo had twenty four minor seminaries, which had a complete cycle of the 'humanity programme'. In spite of this high level, education in the Belgian Congo remained mainly elementary. The statistics of that period testify: 318 certificates of the post primary of both official and subsidized schools were delivered in 1929, 605 in 1939, and 645 in 1944.[61] British, Swedish and American Protestant missionaries also collaborated in this project of the civilization of '*indigènes*' in Congo. After World War II, their schools were subsidized by the Belgian government, because the American and British allies played an important role in the liberation of Belgium from Nazi power in World War II.

The colonizers also introduced into Congo the European products and technology unknown by the Congolese '*indigènes*'. The introduction of European medicines and technical assistance were an important contribution for the *indigènes*. Many tropical diseases were combated by Europeans. In order to fight tropical diseases, they established some institutions and organizations, notably the medical formation of the University of

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[61]Ibid.

Louvain in Congo, called la FOMULAC, the scientific medical center of the Free University of Brussels in Congo, CEMUBAC, the Foundation of Queen Elisabeth for Medical Assistance of the *Indigènes* in the Belgian Congo, FOREAMI, the Red-Cross of Congo and the social funds of Kivu.[62] All these institutions and foundations contributed to help and sustain human lives in Congo.

As we have seen the colonizers used evangelization, education and medical assistance as means to expand the ideology of European civilization. This ideology was founded on how the colonizers represented the Congolese *indigènes*. Kevin Dunn acknowledges this conceptualization when he writes:

> At the outset the colonial invention and conquest of the Congo was built upon the foundation of a longer history of constructing the African Other within European knowledge. As such, the colonial authors of Congolese identity operating at the end of the nineteenth century were drawing upon discursive trends and rhetoric already in circulation. At the time of Portugal's "discovery" of the Congo River in 1482, the Christian/European view of nonbelievers was that they were savage idolaters, sinners untouched by God's redeeming love. The dominant belief was that salvation could only come about through increased, and controlled, contact with Europeans. Thus slavery was defended as being not only justifiable but desirable, since it would be the means of salvation for the Africans, introducing them to Christianity and (Western) civilization.[63]

As it appears in Dunn's writings, the enterprise of colonization was rooted in the representation of others. Alterity was the basis of the definition of Congolese social identity within the colonial project. In order to secure their own identity, the colonizers drew differences by representing Congolese '*indigènes*' as savages, barbarous, and uncivilized. Ki-Zerbo qualified all these representations as "barrier of myths".[64] These myths have contributed to damaging the image of Africans and to denying their cultural

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[62]Ibid., 404.
[63]Dunn, *Imagining the Congo*, 27-28.
[64] Ki-Zerbo, 10.

values and their political and social organizations, in brief, their social identity. Denying

identity to someone means showing that the other does not exist.

## 3. Reaction of the Autochthones to the Belgian Colonizers' Legacies

However, how did the Congolese perceive and react to the colonial project of

civilization? They had different reactions. Curiosity and admiration for European

technologies, which the Congolese continue to cherish today, was the first reaction. This

reaction was soon forgotten, because of the losses and suffering the Congolese underwent

during the colonial period. In order to recruit workers, the colonizers captured children by

force. The account of an old retired worker of the *Gécamines* Company helps us to

understand how the phenomenon of the recruitment of workers occurred. Muteba K.N.

writes:

> Nobody easily accepted to be recruited and work in Lubumbashi. A family accepted
> painfully to give their child. When people heard that the colonial recruiter arrived,
> nobody remained in the village. People abandoned all their goods, chicken, goats,
> sheep, and fled to the bush. Sometimes it happened that the recruiter captured a
> woman or a child and held her/him in hostage in order to oblige the family of the
> woman or of the child to give someone under the age of working. If people still
> refused to come back from the bushes, the chief of the village would send his
> messengers to arrest people by force. Those who were arrested were enchained and
> taken to the recruiter. If they resisted, they were strongly beaten. Often the youth
> made juju in order to help themselves to hide from the recruiter or to be invisible in
> the time of the recruitment. When a young man was recruited and forced to go to
> Lubumbashi, his family cried because they believed that he would die. His father
> would convoke the members of the family to gather in order to do the ceremonies of
> "*mapiku*". He called uncles, aunts, grandparents and cousins. He told them about the
> misfortune of the recruitment of his son. He finally asked them to reconcile with his
> son, saying: 'Anyone who keeps in his heart something bad against my son should
> tell us. Anyone who thinks that my son will die should avoid that idea. If there is
> someone who asks something from my son, he should speak publicly so that my son
> goes and stays alive until he will come back.[65]

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[65] Muteba K.N., 1976,148 quoted by Ndaywel, 407. All translations from French sources are mine unless
otherwise noted.

In this case, the man recruited had the time to say farewell to his family and relatives. Unfortunately, in various cases, those arrested were captured without saying a last word to their family and relatives. The workers' living conditions raised many reactions. These phenomena were seen in many places in the country with different levels of violence. The revolts which occurred in the Sankuru region in 1904 and 1921 were violently suppressed by the colonizers. In towns and rural areas, the population reacted against the assassinations of Congolese leaders who had instigated revolts and had counteracted the authority of the whites in Congo. Ndaywel mentions that between 1933 and 1935, twenty-two people were murdered in the region of Bali in the upper-Aruwimi.[66] People reacted by using different means, notably strikes and revolts. In November 1941, in the town of Manono, in the Katanga region, people went on strike because of the dismissal of workers by mining companies. Other strikes were held in Matadi, Leopoldville and other towns in the country due to salary problems.[67] The revolt of the Congolese ex-combatants who came back from military campaigns in Ethiopia, Egypt and the Middle East was repressed by the colonial power. These ex-combatants revolted because they felt that colonial officials did not sufficiently assure their conditions of living in the garrisons of Luluabourg.

There were also reactions against the colonial power by the messianic religions, like Kimbaguisme and Kitawala. Simon Kimbangu, the founder of the Kimbaguisme, was arrested by the colonial power because he preached against it. The Kimbaguisme, which started as a movement, was recognized in Geneva one decade after Congo's independence in 1960 as a member of the World Council of Churches. Born in Nkamba

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[66] Ibid., 412.
[67] Ibid.

in the Lower Congo province in 1889, Simon Kimbangu died in Elizabeth's prison in 1951. He was seen by the Belgian colonizers as a dangerous man because he preached against the policies of the colonizers in Congo. For the Congolese, he was a black prophet, who they believed had come to deliver them from the oppression of the colonial power. Kimbangu's adepts believed that when all blacks had joined the movement, white men would be crushed; there would be no taxes and all the resources of Congo would be handled by Congolese themselves.[68]

Introduced into Congo in 1925 by Tomo Nyrenda, known by the name Mwana Lesa, the Kitawala sect was also seen as an anti-colonialist movement. The adherents held three major tenets. They first asserted the equality of both races, white and black. Second, they preached the dissolution of the colonial power and the submission of the white to the blacks. Third, they asked people not to listen to the colonizers' orders and await the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The awareness raised by Kimbaguisme and Kitawala shaped Congolese consciences. The slogan of the Jamaican Marcus-Garvey who claimed that "Africa must be governed by Africans themselves" had an impact on Africans and raised more awareness of the suffering of blacks.

World War II was a turning point for many African leaders. The fact of African combatants fighting on the side of the allied countries was an important contribution. During World War II, African soldiers discovered the truth in what David Livingstone wrote: "Blacks are neither better nor worse than other peoples who live in other continents in the world."[69] This revolutionary insight awakened African soldiers when

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[68] Ibid., 419.
[69] Ki-Zerbo, 470.

they returned to Africa at the end of the war. They were astonished at the fact that the whites, who revealed themselves as the great colonial masters and superiors to blacks, were seen during World War II, as killers of their own brothers. The mass killing of World War II awakened African soldiers to believe that there is no race which is superior to another. The value of human dignity had to be kept and protected.

When African soldiers returned to Africa, they formed together with African *évolués* various associations and political parties and claimed the independence of Africa. The move towards independence started in Ghana, in West Africa, and spread into the Francophone countries, the Belgian Congo and the British territories of West and Central Africa. On March 1957, Ghana was proclaimed by the British colonizers an independent State. Through election, Dr. Nkwame Nkrumath became the first Ghanaian President. Three years later, on June 30, 1960, the Belgian government granted the Congo its independence as a sovereign State.

## 4. From the Preparation for Independence to President Mobutu's Reign

The event of the independence of Congo was dominated by the political actions of many actors, associations and political parties. The President of the National Movement of Congo (MNC) Patrice Eméry Lumumba and Joseph Kasavubu, the leader of the Association of *Bakongo* ethnic group (ABAKO), were seen as the main figures in the preparation of independence. On December 28, 1958, after Lumumba attended the first All-Africa's People's Conference organized by the Ghanaian President Kwame Nkrumath, he gave an important speech which loudly demanded immediate and complete

independence for Congo. In this speech, Lumumba stressed that "independence was not a 'gift' but a 'fundamental right of the Congolese.'"[70]

On January 4, 1959, Kasavubu organized a large political rally in Leopoldville for claiming independence. But fearing violence, the Belgian Congo government canceled the event. Rejecting the concealment of this meeting, Kasavubu's supporters reacted by sacking schools, missions, social centers and shops in Leopoldville. Robert Edgerton notes that European men were beaten, and many white women, including nuns, were raped. When police and troops were finally called, they opened fire, killing 49 people and wounding another 258, according to the government.[71] In the history of Congo this event of January 1959 remained the most decisive event in the rising surge to independence.

However, because of the incendiary speech he had given a week earlier, Lumumba was arrested. The colonial power also imprisoned Kasavubu, the leader of ABAKO. Despite the lack of any evidence, they were convicted of inciting riot. But both Lumumba and Kasavubu were released from prison and joined 200 Congolese who attended a month long roundtable negotiation with Belgian officials in Brussels about the Congo's future. By February 20, 1960, the Belgians agreed to do virtually everything the Congolese demanded, including grant them independence. On June 24, 1960, the Congolese Parliament was voted in. On the same day, Lumumba was elected Prime Minister and Kasavubu President. It was on June 30 that King Baudouin of Belgium granted independence to Congo.

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[70]Edgerton, *The Troubled Heart of Africa*, 182.
[71]Ibid., 183.

However, when one analyzes the speeches given by King Baudouin and the Prime Minister Lumumba at the Independence ceremony in Leopoldville, they encapsulate two different visions of the Belgian colonial project in the Congo. King Baudouin said:

*The independence of Congo constitutes the culmination of the work conceived by the genius of King Leopold II, undertaken by Him with a tenacious courage and continued with perseverance by Belgium. It marks a decisive hour in the destiny not only of Congo itself, but I don't hesitate to state, of the whole of Africa. For 80 years, Belgium sent to your soil her best sons, first in order to rescue the Congo basin from the odious slave trade that decimated its populations; afterwards in order to bring together the different tribes who, previously hostile, together will constitute the greatest of the independent States of Africa; finally, in order to call forth a happier life for the various regions of the Congo that are represented here, united in one Parliament.*[72]

Patrice Lumumba said:

*Our lot was eighty years of colonial rule; our wounds are still too fresh and painful to be driven from our memory. We have known tiring labor exacted in exchange for salary which did not allow us to satisfy our hunger, to clothe and lodge ourselves decently or to raise our children like loved beings. We have known ironies, insults, blows which we had to endure morning, noon, and night because we were "Negroes."*[73]

According to Kevin Dunn, the Belgians king's speech illustrates that Belgian colonial policies continued to be informed by the rhetoric of salvation and civilization established by Stanley, Leopold II, and the earlier colonial agents. The newly-elected Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba's speech, however, articulated a very different interpretation of the previous eighty years; one which focused on the collective suffering and abuse of the Congolese by a harshly repressive regime.[74]

These two narratives indeed give two different ways of interpreting the colonial history in Congo. However, five days after independence was granted, Lumumba's government faced the revolt of the army reacting against its all-white office corps. The

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[72]King Boudouin's Independence Day Speech quoted in Kevin Dunn, 66.
[73]Patrice Lumumba's Independence Day Speech quoted in Kevin Dunn, 66.
[74]Ibid.

men of the Gendarmerie did the same a few days later. Robert Edgerton indicates that men of both forces revolted because Lieutenant General Émile Janssens, commander of the Force, had called a meeting of the Leopoldville garrison at Camp Hardy to tell soldiers that there would be no changes in the Force, writing on a blackboard the confrontational message: "After independence equals before independence."[75] Besides this harsh decision, they became more furious when the country's new Prime Minister, Lumumba, announced that he would retain the army's white officers and appoint them to key national defense posts.[76]

When white officers of the army attempted to break up this increasingly vociferous and unruly debate, the soldiers from the *Force Publique* disarmed them and locked them up. As Lumumba persisted in retaining white officers in important defense posts, the soldiers besieged Lumumba's residence. On July 7, 1960, Lumumba suddenly did a complete about-face. In order to defuse the explosive tension in the capital city, he removed the commander of the Force, Lieutenant General Janssens, along with all his white officers and appointed two of his political followers, who had prior military experience as commanders of the army: Victor Lundula and Joseph-Désiré Mobutu. Lundula, a member of Lumumba's tribal ethnic group had little interest in calming the *Force Publique*'s soldiers.[77] The army was now controlled by Joseph Desiré Mobutu, who had been named colonel and chief of staff. Despite Lumumba's and Mobutu's attempts to appease soldiers, violence broke out in Leopoldville and in the garrison of Matadi. Violence was also exacerbated due to the fact that there was a dislocation of the

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[75]Edgerton, 186.
[76]Ibid.
[77]Ibid., 187.

logistical infrastructure for provision, payment, and supply indispensable to the operation of military units.[78]

The army mutiny panicked the European community. The intervention of the Belgian army to protect the European residents inflamed the situation. At the same time, on July 11, 1960, Moise Tshombe proclaimed the independence of Katanga, the richest province.[79] Although Belgium declined to grant diplomatic recognition to the new state, it supplied military assistance to expel the national army mutineers and to provide cover while a Katanga gendarmerie was organized. What was so disturbing when Katanga declared secession was the fact that the Belgian government and functionaries in Katanga supported Katanga's independence, because of their interests in that province. In order to protect the Belgians living in Katanga and in different parts of the country, the Belgian government sent the Belgian paratroopers to Katanga, where most Europeans lived. Crawford Young mentions that in Katanga, the Belgian functionaries remained at their posts, and the potent European corporate sector – especially the copper giant UMHK – lent crucial support to Tshombe's army.[80]

When the Belgian paratroopers arrived in Congo, tension increased within the Congolese new government and rebels. Lumumba's government and mutineers were convinced that Belgium had sent troops in order to take back Congo and re-colonize it. Urged on by Kwame Nkrumah, July 12, Lumumba sought military assistance from the United Nations secretary general, Dag Hammarskjöld. Edgerton notes that three days later sever al thousand UN troops from Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Morocco, and Tunisia

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[78]Crawford Young, "Zaire and Cameroon" Peter Duignan and Robert H. Jackson, *Politics & Government in African States 1960-1985* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1986), 130.
[79]Ibid.
[80]Ibid., 130.

arrived in Leopoldville. Liberian, Irish and Swedish soldiers joined later.[81] When the UN

troops landed in Congo, Lumumba requested that they serve under the Congolese army's

command.

The UN chief of operations in Congo, Ralph Bunche, rejected Lumumba's request.

This rejection led Lumumba to seek another strategy to crush the rebellion. He sought the

assistance of the Soviet Union government. Fearing that Congo would become a

communist country, the U.S. ambassador to the Congo and CIA director Allen Dulles

announced that Lumumba's government had to go.[82]

On July 29, under growing UN pressure, Belgium agreed to withdraw its troops from

Congo. The secretary of the United Nations announced that UN troops from Ireland,

Tunisia, and Ethiopia would enter Katanga to take control from the Belgians. UN troops

succeeded in taking control of Katanga. At the same time, in the southern Kasai region

the Congolese military force, led by Colonel Joseph-Desiré Mobutu, crushed Kalondji's

rebellion, which had joined Katanga's secession, by killing many innocent women and

children. Horrified by this massacre, Lumumba stripped Mobutu of his command.

Mobutu responded by splitting with Lumumba. He was now able to influence

successfully the selection of unit commanders in key locations near Leopoldville. By

August 1960, the new State had lost Katanga and Kasai, the two richest provinces that

produced over half its revenue and foreign exchange. The country faced at that time a

serious threat of disintegration. Crawford Young mentions that on September 5, 1960, the

constitutional system reached an impasse when President Kasavubu abruptly removed

Prime Minister Lumumba. Lumumba responded angrily by securing a parliamentary vote

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[81]Edgerton, 191.
[82]Ibid.

of support. The stalemate was broken ten days later by Colonel Joseph-Desiré Mobutu.[83] Claiming to speak as commander of the armed forces, Mobutu neutralized the President and the Prime Minister. With the complicity of Kasavubu and Katanga's authorities, and indirectly with the help of American intelligence,[84] Mobutu arrested Lumumba and sent him to Elisabethville in Katanga, where he was assassinated on January 17, 1961.

With Lumumba's murder, constitutionally, the government could no longer exercise its power. Mobutu was now in control of the army. In August 1961, Cyrille Adoula was appointed by Kasavubu as Prime Minister. However, in 1964, Adoula's government collapsed because of a wave of rebellions that broke out. Moise Tshombe succeeded Adoula as Prime minister. By early 1965, the rebellions had broken up into many incidents. There was, for example, one insurgent pocket in the Kwilu district in southern Congo and in the Fizi district in eastern Congo.[85] In conformity with the 1964 constitution, national elections were organized in 1965 in the Parliament. The National Convention of Congo party (CONACO) won 133 of 137 seats. The election of the President by the members of Parliament reached an impasse. This provided a pretext for the army to make a coup. Mobutu then seized power from Kasavubu on November 24, 1965 and became President until May 1997.

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[83]Young, "Zaire and Cameroon,"131.
[84]Young writes that by mid-August 1960 the Central Intelligence Agency had become persuaded that Lumumba was working in alliance with the Soviet Union to bring about a communist takeover in Zaire. The CIA participated in his overthrow in September 1960 and dispatched an agent to Kinshasa with a vial of poison to organize his assassination. No way was found to carry out the poison plot, and by November 1960 this scheme was abandoned. At the time of the actual assassination in January 1961, CIA representatives were in close touch with those involved; they knew about (and in all likelihood encouraged) the plans for his transfer to Katanga (although they did not direct or participate in the action). Cf. Young's article, 158.
[85] Ibid., 135.

## CHAPTER 3: FROM THE DEPRECIATION OF THE MEANING OF THE ZAIRIAN STATE TO THE RISING CRISIS OF CITIZENSHIP IN THE TIME OF VOTING IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

When one analyzes the thirty-two years of Mobutu's reign, it was particularly characterized by three interwoven elements: first, the resurrection of a bureaucratic structure and the ideology of the absolutist colonial State; second, the adoption of African nationalism; and third, the State system of patrimonialism and personalism. With regard to the first element, I can say that in a number of respects, Zaire was governed like the Congo Free State of King Leopold II. The principles of the centralization of power, the unity of command, and the hierarchy of the State apparatus provided a basis for the reconstruction of the autocratic State Mobutu established. He dismantled the parliament and centralized power in his hands. In order to control the country, he reduced the twenty-one provinces to nine. Their chief officers, actually posted outside their regions of origin, became simply the delegated agents of the central authority. After pacifying the country and bringing discipline to the national army force, Mobutu strongly established his power. I should acknowledge that by pacifying the country and bringing discipline to the army, Mobutu made an important contribution to the resurrection of the country. This contribution, however, has to be balanced with Mobutu's dictatorship. This dictatorship was manifested first in the banishment of all political parties except one, his political party, the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR); second, in the exaltation of African nationalism; and third, in the decades-long pursuit of absolute power.

Founded by Mobutu in April 17, 1967, the Popular Movement of the Revolution party projected itself as "the Nation politically organized."[86] It claimed to be the supreme

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[86]Young, "Zaire and Cameroon," 137.

institution of the land through which popular sovereignty was exercised. The party assimilated all recognized associations into its framework. Trade unions, youth, students, women, merchants, and others were required to unify their corporate bodies into a single organization. All Zairians, by reason of birth, were automatically members.[87] In 1971, Mobutu founded the ideology of "authenticity." For him, it meant to have awareness of Zairian identity and valorizing the traditional values of the ancestors. In Mobutu's views, authenticity also meant the Zairians' way of not espousing foreign ideologies blindly.[88] Theoretically well-articulated by Mobutu, authenticity was practically debatable. The renaming of Congo as Zaire, the Congo River as the Zaire River, and the Congo currency as the Zaire currency, as well as the prohibition of Christian names in favor of traditional names aroused many reactions, especially from Catholic Church leaders. On January 12, 1972 Mobutu himself changed his Christian name Joseph-Désiré to Mobutu Sese Seko Kuku Ngbedu Wa Za Banga, which loosely translated "the all-conquering powerful warrior who triumphs over all obstacles."[89] In the same frame of ideas, the green color of the MPR's flag replaced the blue color of Zaire's flag. The anthem *La Zairoise*, composed by Congolese historian Lutumba and Jesuit priest Father Boka di Mpasi Londi, took the place of *Debout Congolais*, composed by the same authors. The names of the colonial companies were removed and replaced by national names. Air-Congo for instance became Air-Zaire; ONATRA (National Office of Transportation) took the name of OTRACO (Congolese Office of Transportation), GECOMIN (Congolese General

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[87]Ibid.

[88]Ndaywel, 676.

[89]Crawford Young and Thomas Turner, *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 153.

Mining) became GECAMINES (General Carriers and Mining).[90] All these changes

destroyed the colonial heritage somewhat.

However, when I analyze the idea of authenticity, in a number of respects, this idea

had the merit of laying down the foundations of the idea of Christianity's inculturation in

Congo and in Africa in general. During the third general assembly of the Zairian

Bishops' Synod, held in Kinshasa in 1977, the Episcopal Conference acknowledged the

importance of the idea of authenticity. It said that "people in Zaire will become Christians

only when Christianity will be expressed in African language, meaning in authentic

Zairian language."[91] According to Ndaywel, the Zairian Bishops actually were not

against the idea of authenticity itself but were against the political campaign of the idea

of authenticity conducted by the adherents of MPR.[92] When in 1974, the national

ideology of authenticity was personalized and, redefined as "Mobutism," it corroded the

meaning of the State.

## 1. The Depreciation of the Zairian State's Meaning

Basically, the State is understood as a complex reality which can be defined in terms

of its essential, irreducible attributes, its behavioral regularities, and its relationships with

both the civil society over which it exercises its rule and the international environment

which conditions its existence.[93] As such, Kenneth Dyson is right when he includes in his

definition of the state many relations. According to him,

> besides referring to an entity or actor in the arena of international politics, state is a
> highly generalizing, integrating and legitimating concept that identifies the leading
> values of the political community with reference to which authority is to be exercised;

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[90]Ndaywel, 677.
[91]Ibid., 680.
[92]Ibid.
[93]Young and Turner, *The Rise and Decline of the Zairian State,* 12.

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emphasizes the distinctive character and unity of the 'public power' compared with civil society; focuses on the need for the depersonalization of the exercise of that power; finds its embodiment in one or more public purposes which thereby acquire a special ethos and prestige and an association with the public interest or general welfare; and produces a socio-cultural awareness of (and sometimes disassociation from) the unique and superior nature of the state itself.[94]

This framework of the nature of the State allows me to understand the State as a demarcated and absolute territory, whose sovereignty gives power to authority and constitutes the citizenry as a community of a nation, guided by institutions of governance, whose finality is the good of all citizens.

When I analyze the Zairian State in light of this definition, I can say that Mobutu's dictatorship and personal rule corroded the meaning of State as enlightened by Dyson's definition. Crawford Young mentions that Mobutu's regime incarnated patrimonialism and personal rule.[95] Max Weber describes patrimonialism as a system in which high office is bestowed in return for personal service to the ruler. The political elite are tied to the ruler by links of individual clientage.[96] This meant that dependence and loyalty in service were characteristic elements in the alliance with the President. The reality of clientage can clearly be discerned in what Nguza Karl-i-Bond, a prominent Zairian politician, wrote in *Mobutu, Incarnation du Mal Zairois*. He said:

> It was Mobutu who named me Ambassador at Geneva, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Political Director of the Party...Nobody imposed these decisions upon him. He, therefore, chose the person whom he judged could render the best service in a specific domain of national life. The fact that this person had spent six years at his side, in filling ever more important positions of confidence, demonstrates that he merited this confidence.[97]

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[94]Kenneth H.F. Dyson, *The State Tradition in Western Europe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), 2006 quoted by Young and Turner, 12.

[95]Young, "Zaire and Cameroon," 138.

[96]Reinhard Bendix, *Max Weber: An Intellectual Portrait* (New York: Doubleday & Co., 1962), 334-360 quoted by Young and Turner, 165.

[97]Ngunza Karl-i-Bond, *Mobutu ou l'incarnation du mal zairois* (London: Rex Collings, 1982), 18 quoted by Young and Turner, 167.

As it appears in Nguza's narrative, Mobutu appointed whomever he wanted to a high post. Basing the governance of the country on relations of clientage was unjust, and it led to the depreciation of the meaning of the State and the task of the head of State. The slogans of the Popular Movement of the Revolution party clearly expressed the reality of personal rule incarnated by Mobutu.

> "A village has only one chief," "our ancestors were ruled by an unchallenged and unchallengeable chief," "an organism with two heads is a monster."[98]

As it appears, Mobutu ruled the State as an African chief, whose death alone can remove him from power. The high offices in the country were held by people who served with loyalty. The MPR Political Bureau elites manifested their loyalty to Mobutu by praising him. The declaration of the Interior Minister Engulu in 1975 was an excessive exaltation of Mobutu's personal cult. The Interior Minister announced:

> In our religion, we have our own theologians. In all religions, and at all times, there are prophets. Why not today? God has sent a great prophet, our prestigious Guide Mobutu - this prophet is our liberator, our Messiah. Our Church is the MPR. Its Chief is Mobutu, we respect him like one respects a Pope. Our gospel is Mobutism. This is why the crucifix must be replaced by the image of our Messiah. And party militants will want to place at its side his glorious mother, Mama Yemo, who gave birth to such a son. [99]

In addition to this excessive exaltation of Mobutu's personal cult, the country's media portrayed him as the Guide of the Zairian revolution, the Helmsman, Father of the Nation, Founding President. These extravagancies were the symptoms of the crisis of citizenship in the Zairian State.

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[98] Ibid., 165.
[99] *Zaire-Afrique* (Kinshasa-Gombe), no. 91 (January 1975) quoted by Young and Turner, 169.

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## 2. Crisis of Citizenship in the Zairian State

In its sociological meaning, a crisis, from Creek *Krisis*, refers to a stage in which a decisive change for worse occurs in the life of an individual or a society. This change is caused by sociological factors. In its conceptual form, the word citizenship is derived from the word citizen. A citizen is a member of State who not only has freedom and rights to claim, but also obligations towards his fellow citizens. However, citizenship refers to the status of being a citizen, with its rights and privileges. Engin Isin and Patricia Wood describe citizenship as both a set of practices (cultural, symbolic and economic) and as a bundle of rights and duties (civil, political and social) that define an individual's membership in a polity.[100] Sociological and political-legal dimensions have to be tied together if one wants to understand the concept of citizenship. So practices, rights and duties are constitutive elements which express the meaning of citizenship.

The crisis of citizenship refers therefore to defects in the exercise of rights and duties of the State towards citizens, and vice-versa. In other words, it is the failure of the State to exercise justice towards citizens, and the failure of citizens to exercise justice towards State. The exercise of rights and obligations by the State and citizens is imperative for the realization of the well being of a nation. In this sense, the good for all lies in the right exercise of justice, handled by the head of State and by all citizens. By personalizing and partimonializing the State, Mobutu depreciated the meaning of citizenship. Besides, by enshrining the State in the game of clientage, he devaluated the significance of his responsibility. The responsibility of the head of State is to lead and serve the nation by protecting rightly the institutions of the State and ensuring that they

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[100]Engin F. Isin and Patricia K. Wood, *Citizenship & Identity* (London: SAGE Publications, 1999), 4.

work justly and rightly. The decline of Zaire in 1971 was caused by the failure of Mobutu to make the Zairian institutions work in accordance with justice. This failure led the country to decline. This decline become critical and obvious when, in 1971, the world cooper prices broke. "By 1977 Mobutu himself spoke of the State as "one vast marketplace" whose authority was monetized by an "invisible tax" levied by the State's agents on all its daily transactions."[101] "In an anguished and angry pastoral letter in 1981, the permanent commission of Zairian bishops portrayed the State as "organized pillage for the profit of the foreigner and his intermediaries."[102]

In addition, the decline of Zaire was due to intensive politicization of ethnicity and tribalism. The phenomena of ethnicity and tribalism were visible at the communal and legislative elections held in the country. They saturated colonial politics and were exacerbated during the First Republic of Congo years and during Mobutu's reign. After Mobutu's reign, the Congolese politicians continued to manipulate the population by politicizing ethnic groups. The recent presidential election illustrates well the politicization of ethnic groups. In order to understand this politicization in the last presidential election, let us highlight succinctly the way the phenomenon of tribalism occurred in the colonial period, during the First Republic, and during Mobutu's reign. Young and Turner have observed that during the colonial period there was segregation between Europeans and Zairians. The former lived in wealthy residential areas, while the latter dwelt in poor areas.

During communal elections, Europeans voted in their own communes, while the Zairian populace was able to compete electorally only for limited authority within the

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[101]Ibid.
[102]Ibid., 43-44.

African quarters. As it appears, at that time race divided people. Even though the term ethnicity was not explicitly expressed, the concept of race encapsulated this reality somewhat. If both concepts are used to express identity, the nuance of both lies in the fact that ethnic consciousness is founded upon a set of cultural traits, integrated into a collective representation of the group. "It rests upon shared symbolic meanings, emotionally laden and deeply rooted, which can trigger fears, anxieties, and animosities."[103] Race, however, is based on the color of skin and racial stereotypes. In the colonial period, whites and blacks lived separately and voted in their living areas. In spite of this, many Europeans applied ethnic stereotyping in hiring or in the attribution of favor. They stereotyped and categorized people. For them, some were "industrious," others "open to civilization," "intelligent," "faithful collaborators," or "deserved special consideration."[104] In the late colonial period and the First Republic of Congo, the variable patterns of ethnic politics illuminated crucial aspects of ethnicity in Zaire. Among these aspects, I can cite the change of choices concerning coalitions of interests and affinity, the calculus of the possible combinations, and the reorientation of the policy of the affiliated parties. At the first nationwide legislative elections of May 1960, which resulted in the election of the Parliament that would elect Kasavubu President and Lumumba Prime Minister, a monumental redefinition of power relationships among political parties occurred.[105] With respect to coalitions and relationships between political parties, Crawford Young observed that,

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[103]Ibid., 140.
[104]Ibid., 143.
[105]Léon de Saint Moulin, "Analyse par territoire et ville des résultats de l'enrôlement des électeurs et dur referendum sur le projet de Constitution," *Congo-Afrique* (Kinshasa-Gombe), no.402-403 (Février-Mars 2006): 9.

The battlelines were formed around the slogans of "unitarism" and "federalism." A passionate commitment to the unitary state was particularly associated with the parties loosely allied with Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba and his Mouvement National Congolais (MNC)...The most important partisans of federalism were the Alliance des Bakongo (ABAKO), led by President Joseph Kasavubu, and the Confederation of the Tribal Associations of Katanga (CONAKAT) led by Moise Tshombe.[106]

In 1960, the politicization of tribes was visible in the competition to power. This politicization occurred also during Mobutu's reign, even though he established a program for de-ethnicizing Zairian politics in his first five years in power. This program had three major goals: first, suppressing institutional arenas in which ethnicity could be mobilized; second, excluding an overt ethnic patronage within the State; third, prohibiting an articulation of cultural ideologies.[107] In order to implement this program, he swept away the 250 tribal political parties that participated in the 1960 national elections and the 233 in the 1965 balloting. In April 17, 1967, he replaced them by the Popular Movement of the Revolution (MPR), constitutionally defined in 1974 as the sole and "national politically organized" party. However, while the strategy of demobilizing ethnicity and depriving it of institutional channels for political articulation has been successful in reducing the saliency of cultural pluralism in the formal realm, it has failed to remove ethnic connotations from mass perceptions of the exercise of power.[108] The ethnic connotations were vividly present in the way Mobutu governed after the first five years of power. After 1970, there was a heightened consciousness of Mobutu's inclination to promote for high posts mainly people from Equateur, his region. The saliency of ethno-regional cues in mass cognition of Mobutu's regime action escalated after 1970, when his personality cult was imposed by the MPR's doctrine of Mobutism.

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[106]Young, "Zaire and Cameroon," 126.
[107]Young and Turner, 149.
[108]Ibid., 152.

In 1977, when the country organized the elections of the political commissaries, each region was the electoral constituency. Kabamba Nkamany observed that the Political commissary candidates elaborated their political strategies in order to be elected in their own native district or in the districts where they ran their businesses. During the legislative elections of 1982, the district became the electoral constituency. As a result, the candidates designated their programs so that they could be elected in their respective counties or tribes. In the legislative elections of 1987, candidates were voted in their respective departments.[109] In fact, when I analyze the observation of Kabamba Nkamany, I can say that in order to be elected as commissary or deputy each candidate had to go to his/her own electoral constituency, by seeking the votes of people in his/her district or tribe. In spite of Mobutu's efforts to sweep away tribalism, it remained a visible reality during his reign. The behavior of defining one's identity in terms of region, tribe or ethnicity was obvious during the recent presidential election of July 2006, although the election was portrayed as free and democratic by local and foreign media. The context of this election helps us to understand why the media emphasized the democratic character of the July vote.

## 3. Context of the Last Presidential Election in the Democratic Republic of Congo

The recent presidential election held on July 30, 2006, with a run-off on October 29, 2006, took place after a long period of turbulence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In May 1997, after Mobutu's government was toppled by a rebellion led by Laurent-Desiré Kabila with the support of Rwanda and Uganda, the new government of Kabila

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[109] Kabamba Nkamany A Baleme, *Pouvoirs et Idéologies Tribales au Zaïre* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1997), 76-77.

was challenged by the second Congo war unclenched by Rwanda and Uganda in August 1998. After the assassination of Kabila on January 16, 2001, his son Joseph Kabila was named head of State ten days later. Kabila Jr. continued with his father's Transition Parliament. However, he overhauled his entire cabinet, replacing it with a group of technocrats, with the stated aim of coming to a decisive end of the second Congo war. In October 2002, Rwandan forces withdrew from eastern Congo after the cease-fire agreement signed by Rwanda and Congo in Lusaka, Zambia, on July 1999. In December 17, 2002 an agreement was signed in Pretoria by all warring parties to end the fighting and set up a Transition Government, the make-up of which would allow representation for all negotiating parties. This agreement was a result of the Inter-Congolese dialogue held in Sun City, South Africa, from February 25 to April 25, 2002. The presidential election of July 2006 was a plan set up by the document that emerged from the Global and Inclusive agreement of the Inter-Congolese dialogue in Sun City and the transitional constitution of 2003. The new constitution, adopted by referendum in 2005, and promulgated by President Joseph Kabila on February 18 set the presidential election for July 30, 2006. According to Father Léon de Saint Moulin's social analyses, a total of 25, 021, 703 Congolese adopted the new constitution and 25,420, 199 voters were registered for the presidential and legislative elections. [110] The first round of the presidential election occurred on July 30, 2006. The run-off was scheduled on October 2006.

The results of the first round showed Kabila with 44.81% of the votes and Bemba with 20.03%. Antoine Gizenga was the third with 13.6% of votes. The fourth was Francois Joseph Nzanga Mobutu with 4.77 % and the fifth Oscar Kashala with 3.46%.

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[110]Léon de Saint Moulin, "Les Leçons du premier tour de l'élection présidentielle en RDC,» *Congo-Afrique* (Kinshasa-Gombe), no.408 (Octobre 2006): 335.

None of them gained the 50% needed to secure victory. This allowed for a run-off between Kabila and Bemba, the two first candidates. The results of the run-off showed Kabila with 58.05% and Bemba with 41.95%.[111] The losing candidate and his supporters rejected the results of the election by claiming irregularities and fraud. Bemba said that he "could not accept the results, which are far from reflecting the truth of the election results" and that he would "use all the legal channels to respect the will of people."[112] On November, he filed a complaint to the Supreme Court over his claims of electoral irregularities. While the Court was reviewing Bemba's electoral fraud complaint, on November 21, 2006 the Supreme Court building was burned amid gunfire. According to Interior Minister Denis Kalume, "armed men who infiltrated the demonstrators opened fire on the police and from then everything went haywire."[113] The United Nations Peacekeeping Operation in Congo (MONUC) that worked for the stability of the elections attributed the incident to uncontrolled elements. Three days after the fire, the Supreme Court resumed its activities in a heavily-guarded room in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On November 27, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) proclaimed the results of the presidential election, by giving the lead to Kabila. The Supreme Court dismissed Bemba's challenge as "unfounded" and confirmed that Kabila had won the election, and therefore was the elected President of the Democratic Republic of Congo. Although Kabila won the elections, some social factors seen during the recent election challenged the nature of citizenship.

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[111]Pamphile Mabiala Mantuba-Ngoma, "La longue transition politique en RDC (1990-2006): Aspects positifs et vicissitudes,» *La République Démocratique Du Congo: Une Démocratisation Au Bout du Fusil* (Kinshasa: Publications de la Fondation Konrad Adenauer, 2006), 51.
[112]Available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Republic_of_the_Congo_general_election, 2006; Internet; accessed 5 November 2008.
[113]Ibid.

## 4. Challenges of Citizenship in the Last Presidential Election

In a democratic system, voting constitutes a right and an effective duty of a citizen. Voting for a president or representatives of the nation is an act of civility. A primary obligation of the State is to extend the franchise to all citizens and to ensure that all citizens participate in voting. In newer democracies, voting serves, in part, to constitute the people (*the demos*). However, when it fails to fulfill this goal, the very sense of democratic citizenship is imperiled. When I analyze how people voted in the last presidential election in the Democratic Republic of Congo, I notice that two major social factors challenged the sense of democracy and Congolese faithful citizenship.

Tribalism is the first factor. It is understood as a mark of peoples' differentiation based on language, dialect, cosmology, culture and historical traditions. In modern African politics, politicians have often exploited their linguistic affiliation, historical traditions, culture and religion to attract members to support their causes. During the last presidential campaign in the Democratic Republic of Congo, candidates frequently exploited their linguistic and regional affiliation in order to seek people's votes. Bemba often exploited concerns about Joseph Kabila's origins by using the slogan "Bemba: One Hundred Percent Congolese." This slogan was stressed because he believed, as most of his supporters did, that Joseph Kabila was not one hundred percent Congolese. BBC News reported that Joseph Kabila was "born to a Tutsi woman while his father was in exile." [114] Keith Harmon Snow writes:

> "Most people believe his name is neither Joseph nor Kabila. Britain's Telegraph newspaper, and others, reported that Joseph Kabila was a taxi driver in Tanzania, but others say he came from Rwanda, and Kabila's supporters say he was born in Congo.

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[114] "Profile: Joseph Kabila," BBC News, Wednesday, 17 January 2001. 22:32 GMT, [article on-line] available from http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1123006.stm; Internet; accessed 6 December 2008.

According to some reliable sources, the real name of Joseph Kabila is Hippolyte Kanambe. Asked where Joseph Kabila is from, Janet Kabila refused to answer."[115]

During his campaign Jean Pierre Bemba made speeches of nationalistic self-righteousness in order to attack frontrunner President Joseph Kabila and seek supporters. Joseph Kabila was seen by Bemba and his supporters as an invader of Congolese politics. Bemba also relied upon his linguistic affiliation. He received substantial support from people in the Western, *Lingala*-speaking portion of the country, including the capital Kinshasa. Without profound and critical analysis of Bemba's speeches of nationalistic self-righteousness and his slogans, many supporters in the Western part of the country voted for him. Can a man such as Bemba, who in 2002 supported President Ange Félix Pattassé of the Central Africa Republic when he put down a coup attempt and committed atrocities against civilians in that country with his own army, be elected President in the Democratic Republic of Congo? Joseph Kabila also exploited his linguistic affiliation. He identified his place of origin as the Southeast part of the country, where *Kiswahili* is the vernacular language. "He communicates more easily in the English and Swahili spoken in much of East Africa than in the French and *Lingala* spoken in Kinshasa."[116] During the campaign, Bemba denied allegations of cannibalism, after Joseph Kabila and his supporters claimed that he had eaten pygmies in 2002.

*"These are lies which have come from the highest levels of government...The pygmies are alive and well,"* Bemba responded.[117]

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[115]Keith Harmon Snow, "Congo's President Joseph Kabila: Dynasty or Travesty?" 13 November 2007 [article on-line]; available from http:// www.towardfreedom.com/home/content/view/1171/1/; Internet; accessed 11 December 2008.

[116]"Profile: Joseph Kabila," BBC News, Wednesday, 17 January 2001. 22:32 GMT [article on-line]; available from http://www.news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/1123006.stm; Internet; accessed 6 December 2008.

[117]"JeanPierre Bemba," [article on-line]; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean Pierre_Bemba; Internet; 6 December 2008.

People in the Eastern part of the country believed in these allegations advanced by Bemba's opponents. They supported Joseph Kabila because he spoke *Kiswahili* and was the son of Laurent Desiré Kabila, a member of the *Luba* tribe in Likasi, Katanga Province (Southeastern Congo), where *Kiswahili* is a main spoken language. Many people in the Southeast also voted for Kabila because they believed that he had established peace in the country and had succeeded under the transitional government in bringing the country towards elections. Furthermore, people believed that the time had come to elect a Congolese President whose origin was in the Southern or Eastern part of the country because the former Presidents of Congo, Kasavubu and Mobutu, were from the Western part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It seems to me that many people voted by relying on the candidates' linguistic affiliations and regional origins, and believed in the speeches of their leaders. I think that many Congolese did not analyze these speeches critically. To consider linguistic affiliation and regional origin as criteria in elections is to fail to understand the criteria that govern the democratic system of election, and it is also to fail to behave as a responsible citizen.

During the Democratic Republic of Congo's presidential election, regionalism and tribalism issues divided the Congolese among themselves and incited fighting mainly between Bemba's and Kabila's supporters. On the day of the election three Vice-Presidents and candidates complained of vote rigging. Bemba, Ruberwa and Z'Ahidi Ngoma said, "Perhaps we are heading for a masquerade or a parody of elections."[118] Although South African observers approved the impartial preliminary results of the election, other monitors expressed concern, including ones from the Carter Center.

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[118]"Democratic Republic of the Congo General Election 2006," [article on-line]; available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Democratic Republic of the Congo General Election 2006; Internet; accessed 5 November 2008.

On September 1, the Carter Center released its report on the election's first round, finding it 'credible,' without 'evidence of widespread or systematic manipulation.' Still, it pointed to 'important procedural flaws that weakened the transparency of the process.[119]

Based on this report, one can say that the procedural flaws revealed irregularities in the election's first round. The riots that occurred in the aftermath of the Congolese presidential election allow me to say that this unfortunate situation could have been avoided if Congolese leaders had known clearly enough the requirements of democracy. Though ballot votes are not perfect criteria in a democratic system, they nevertheless are a democratic means which help people to choose their representatives. To accept the verdict of votes is part of democracy and a value for a faithful citizen. Having acknowledged this, I must also say that the Electoral Commission must play a fair role in the supervision of the elections. This means that it should be impartial in monitoring the votes and fair at the publication of the results. If the use of the criteria of tribalism and linguistic affinity has depreciated people's sense of responsibility, there is need to reconstruct the meaning of Congolese citizenship during the elections. The second part of the thesis will deal with this issue. In order to rediscover the meaning of faithful citizenship, we need a theology of reconstruction which helps us to understand what faithful citizenship means. St. Augustine's *City of God* and Vatican II teachings on human rights and the dignity of the human person help us to reconstruct theologically and ethically the real meaning of the faithful citizenship.

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[119]"Carter Center Finds DRC Elections Credible, But Warns of Important procedural Flaws, "Voice of America, September 1, 2006 quoted in footnote 11 of "Democratic Republic of the Congo General Election 2006."

# PART TWO: THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL REFLECTION ON THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CONGOLESE CITIZENSHIP

## CHAPTER 4: THE THEOLOGICAL MEANING OF FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

The Democratic Republic of Congo's presidential election of July 30, 2006 was an important move towards democracy after the long period of Mobutu's dictatorship and turbulent wars. As we have seen, this important move was strongly challenged by the social factors of tribalism and regionalism during the voting. These factors were obstacles to the realization of faithful citizenship and democracy in the Democratic Republic of Congo. However, what should people of a nation such as the Democratic Republic of Congo learn when they vote for an important leader such as the President? In other words, what should citizens of a nation, bound by a common destiny, know when they come as one people to decide and choose the leader of the country? The rediscovery of the right meaning of faithful citizenship seems to be the appropriate answer to this question. Saint Augustine's inspirational insight in the *City of God,* the Second Vatican Council's documents *Gaudium et Spes* and *Dignitatis Humanae*, and the document of the United States Catholic Bishops, *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*, help us to understand what it means to be a faithful citizen.

### 1. The Meaning of Faithful Citizenship in Augustine's *City of God*

According to Etienne Gilson, among St. Augustine's writings, the *City of God* is the work which Augustine considered as his masterpiece.[120] Many scholars have studied this monumental work and have tried to understand Augustine's inspiration and ideas. The *City of God* remains for Christians an inspirational work which continues to shape

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[120]Augustine, Saint. *The City of God* (Etienne Gilson's introduction) (New York: Image Book edition, Double bay, 1958), 10.

their knowledge and deepen their faith. In this sense, it enlightens the understanding of faithful citizenship. In this masterpiece, St. Augustine invites Christians to live not as citizens of the city of this world, but rather as citizens of the city of God. In fact, the citizens of the city of God are people who assure justice to every citizen. For Augustine, justice determines the identity of every person who is faithful to God. Justice assures equity and fairness in the distribution of wealth among people. This is why he says "where there is no justice there is no commonwealth."[121]

However, in Augustine's understanding the two cities of God did not exist in two different worlds rather, the y existed side by side in this world, but intertwined and confused with each other.[122] Here we understand that those two cities are two realities which portray two different ways of being a citizen in the world. Righteous people live in the city of God, while unfaithful people live in the city of men. When Augustine analyzed the history of Rome, he noticed that the fall of Rome in 410 was due to the worship of the divinities. For pagans, the fall of Rome was related to two major facts: the Christian teaching of the renunciation of the world and the reign of the Christian emperor. Pagans firmly believed that the teaching of the renunciation of the world turned citizens away from the service of the State and led to the betrayal of Rome's gods by Christians. For St. Augustine, it was unwise to entrust Rome to the protection of the gods. In this respect, he writes: "If, then, Virgil describes such gods as vanquished, needing a man's help even to escape, surely it is folly to believe that it was wise to entrust Rome to the safe-keeping of

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[121]City of God, quoted by James Dougherty, "The Sacred City and the City of God" Augustinian Studies (Villanova), vol. 10, 1979, 85.

[122]*De Civitate Dei* (ed. Dombart-Kalb, *Corpus Christianorum* 47-48), 1.35.15-16: " *Perplexae quippe sunt istae duae civitates in hoc saeculo invicemque permixtae, donec ultimo iudicio dirimantur.* » De civ. Dei 15.22.1-3: " *Hoc itaque libero voluntatis arbitrio genere humano progrediente atque crescente facta est permixitio et iniquitate participata quaedam utriusque confusio civitatis.* » quoted by J.J. O'Donnell, « The Inspiration For Augustine's *DE CIVITATE DEI* » Augustinian Studies (Villanova), vol. 10, 1979, 76.

such divinities, and to believe that Rome could never be destroyed unless it lost its gods."[123]

Sallust, the Roman writer, had also "considered Rome to be in ruins because of its own vices."[124] The fall of Rome, in St. Augustine's view, occurred even before the advent of Christianity in Rome. Fundamentally, Augustine believed that "Rome had ceased to exist at the moment when, according to one historian, Rome had lost all justice."[125] In Augustine's view, since true justice had never reigned in Rome, there had never been a true Roman society. A true society is one which observes the laws of true justice; in short, a city whose head is Christ. But a society in which injustice reigns is not a city headed by Christ.

Augustine read the history of the fall of Rome in connection with the fall of Adam and Eve. The first parents' fall was caused by their disobedience to God's commandments. Quoting St. Paul and the book of Genesis, Augustine writes: "By one man sin entered into the world," and immediately after more distinctly, "in the likeness of Adam's transgression."[126] "Although they were not both deceived by credulity, yet both were entangled in the snares of the devil, and taken by sin."[127] After the fall of the first parents, the transgression of God's alliance continued through the lethal action of Cain towards his brother Abel. This transgression, however, reached a higher level with the Assyrian King Ninus I and the formal emergence of Babylon. Ninus's reign began in 1032 or 1033 after the Flood and was characterized by war and robbery. In book IV,

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[123]*City of God,* I, 3, 43.
[124]Augustine, Saint. *The City of God* (Etienne Gilson's introduction), 22.
[125]Ibid., 23.
[126]Augustine, Saint. *City of God,* XIV, 11 (Introduction by Thomas Merton) (New York: The Modern Library, 2000), 459.
[127]Ibid.

Augustine showed that Ninus was an archetype of the worldly ruler who symbolized the earthly city's power. "Having mastered his nearest neighbors, Ninus King of Assyrians went on to others, strengthened by the accession of forces, and by making each fresh victory the instrument of that which followed, subdued the nations of the whole East."[128] To make war on your neighbors, and thence to proceed to others, and through mere lust of dominion to crush and subdue people who do you no harm, was a great robbery in Augustine's sight.

However, in stark contrast to the pride, ruthlessness and cruelty of Ninus stood the man chosen by God to establish a new people – the chosen people of God - Abraham, the man of faith, prayer and obedience to Divine commands. With the selection of Abraham as patriarch of a new people, the unity destroyed by the fall of the first parents, the lethal action of Cain, the cruelty of Ninus, and the rise of Babylon were partially restored. " Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness."[129] Righteousness characterized his life and relationship with God. With Jesus, however, this unity was restored in its fullness, as St. Paul indicates in his epistle to the Colossians:

> He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.[130]

Through the portrayal of the *City of God*, St. Augustine helps us to understand that righteousness is a fundamental element that constitutes the identity of a faithful citizen. Rome collapsed because its leaders worshiped gods and did not assure their fidelity to God. The fidelity, obedience, and righteousness of Abraham towards Yahweh shed light

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[128]Ibid., 114.
[129]Rom. 4:3.
[130]Col. 1: 17-19.

on how to be faithful citizens in the nation. The life of Abraham, as portrayed by Augustine in the *City of God,* shapes our imagination and attitudes about the way of being citizens.

In contrast, the life of King Ninus and the Roman rulers tell us that we should not be self-centered, greedy, and unfaithful to God's commandments, because unfaithful people perish before God. In this sense the *City of God* helps us to rediscover here the theology of fidelity to God's primordial law, the love of God and neighbor. To care for others and render rightful justice to all is an expression of God's love.

## 2. *Gaudium et Spes's* Light on the Significance of Faithful Citizenship

The Second Vatican Council document, *Gaudium et Spes,* written in 1965, is known as the *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World.* In this document, the Church attempts to read the signs of the times and articulate its best hopes for humanity.[131] The social nature of the person is among the five elements which characterize this document.[132] The citizens of a nation constitute a social body. As such, they are bound by their national identity, which they carry on and fulfill by means of mutual obligations and rights. The purpose of rights and obligations is the realization of the common good. The good for all is fundamentally grounded in Scripture, which stresses love and care of others. *Gaudium et Spes's* theology of caring illuminates our understanding of what it means to be a faithful citizen. The Church, in *Gaudium et Spes,* believes that:

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[131]David J. O'Brien and Thomas A. Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought: The Documentary Heritage* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1992), 164.
[132]The five elements are: personalism, the social nature of the person, the relation between the church and the world, justice, and development.

In his fatherly care for all of us, God desired that all men should for one family and deal with each other in a spirit of brotherhood. All, in fact, are destined to the very same end, namely God himself, since they have been created in the likeness of God who "made from one every nation of men who live on all the face of the earth (Acts 17: 26), all men are called to one and the same goal, namely, God himself.[133]

God wills that all people live together in a spirit of brotherhood and sisterhood. In a nation-state, brotherhood and sisterhood relationships are sustained through the respect of mutual obligations and rights. The brotherhood relationship, however, is endangered and threatened when mutual obligations and rights are not respected. The respect of the citizen's rights by the State and the citizen's obligations towards the State and neighbors are cardinal elements for the survival of the society. By bringing forth the language of rights and obligations, the *Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World* helps us actually to rediscover that a faithful citizen is one who works for the rightful betterment of the nation and the world by fulfilling his/her rights and obligations towards the State and neighbors.

This realization of obligations and rights is founded on the scriptural theology of love. A country cannot be at peace and develop harmoniously without the commitment of its citizens to respect their obligations and rights. The faithful commitment of every citizen is an expression of love of God and neighbor. About God's great commandment, the Church is clear: "If there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself...Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law" (Rom. 13:9-10; cf. 1John 4:20).[134] This truth proves to be of paramount importance, because it constitutes the foundation of the cohesion of any community of individuals.

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[133]*Vatican Council II,* Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes,* ch. 2, no. 24: 925.
[134]Ibid.

## 3. Dignitatis Humanae's Light

By the same token, the Second Vatican Council document *Dignitatis Humanae* throws light on the significance of faithful citizenship when it declares: "The protection of the right to religious freedom is the common responsibility of individual citizens, social groups, civil authorities, the Church and other religious communities. Each of these has its own special responsibility in the matter according to its particular duty to promote the common good."[135] Every citizen has a right to adhere to any religion of his/her choice. This right has to be protected by all citizens, especially civil and religious authorities. The commitment to the protection of this right makes individual citizens, social groups, civil authorities and leaders of the churches into responsible citizens. So responsibility and commitment give to citizenship its faithful character and identity.

This faithful character of citizenship is also acknowledged when individual citizen and civil authorities treat all with justice and humanity. But when authorities treat others arbitrarily, their identity as responsible citizens loses its meaning. This fairness in the manner of treating others is rooted in divine revelation. In their document *Justice in the Word*, the Synod of Bishops in 1971 pinpointed this theological foundation of justice by referring to scripture. They wrote:

> In the Old Testament, God reveals himself to us as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor, demanding from man faith in him and justice toward man's neighbor. It is only in the observance of the duties of justice that God is truly recognized as the liberator of the oppressed... [In the New Testament,] Jesus proclaimed the fatherhood of God toward all men and the intervention of God's justice on behalf of the needy and the oppressed (Luke 6:21-23). In this way he identified himself with his "least brethren," as he stated: "As you did it to one of the least of my brethren, you did it to me" (Mt. 25:40).[136]

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[135]Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, ch.I., no.6.
[136]Synod of Bishops, "Justice in the World,"ch. 2. Cf. O'Brien and Shannon, *Catholic Social Thought,* 293.

For this divine reason, all Christians are bound to respect and practice justice all the more conscientiously. Through the practice of fair justice, Christians become in Christ heirs of God's Kingdom of justice on earth.

## 4. *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*: Light from the Catholic Bishops of the United States

Approved by the body of the United States Catholic Bishops on November 2007 and published the same year by the General Secretary, Msgr. David J. Malloy, the document *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship: A Call to Political Responsibility from the Catholic Bishops of the United States* shapes further our understanding of faithful citizenship. In this document, first of all, the United States Bishops apply the grammar of Social teaching to shape Christian consciences for faithful citizenship. Here, faithful citizenship is understood as a political responsibility each citizen has in his/her public life. As citizens of the Unites States and leaders of the Church, the Catholic Bishops saw the need to address the challenges of the right to life, war, race, immigration, poverty, terrorism, marriage and family life, which the Unites States of America and the world face today. The Bishops ground their reflection in the Catholic social teaching documents of Vatican II. They believe that justice and peace, stressed by the Second Vatican Council Declaration on Religious Liberty, *Dignitatis Humanae*, are important for the growth of the United States. This is because justice and peace are rooted in God's holy will for humanity. They result from people's faithfulness to God's will. *Dignitatis Humanae* points this out clearly. It says:

> Society itself may enjoy the benefits of justice and peace, which result from
> [people's] faithfulness to God and his holy will" (no. 6). The work for justice requires

that the mind and the heart of Catholics be educated and formed to know and practice the whole faith.[137]

In this sense, Christian faith teaches each Christian to do justice and work for peace in the world. The United States Catholic bishops' reflections together with Augustine's insightful ideas in the *City of God* help us to understand the theological foundation of faithful citizenship. The faithful attitude of Abraham towards Yahweh and his righteousness are theological grounds for our way of being responsible citizen today. Jesus' life of obedience to the Father and his cardinal teachings on love of God and neighbor shape our life and call us to do likewise.

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[137]Vatican Council II, *Dignitatis Humanae*, ch.I, no. 6.

# CHAPTER 5: THE ETHICAL MEANING OF FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

If the Catholic social teaching finds its grounding in Christian theology, one must

then ask, what makes citizenship faithful, according to Catholic social teaching? Human

rights seem to be the first answer. As an illuminating example of human rights abuses, I

will highlight and analyze the case of the Banyamulenge, a Congolese people of

Rwandese origin, who were denied by Congolese authorities the right to have Congolese

citizenship and nationality.

## 1. The Right to Have Congolese Nationality

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights reminds us that every citizen of a nation

has the right to a nationality.[138] With respect to Congolese nationality, the right of each

individual to be a Congolese citizen must be respected. Article 10 of the new

Constitution[139] of the Democratic Republic of Congo is clear about Congolese

nationality. It states:

> The Congolese nationality is one and exclusive. The nationality should not be
> obtained by competing with another. A Congolese citizen is any person who belongs
> to an ethnic group whose people and territories have been part of Congo (actually the
> Democratic Republic of Congo) since its Independence.[140]

If the Banyamulenge were part of Congo's ethnic groups since Independence, I think

there is need to acknowledge that they have Congolese nationality. In 1991, the political

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[138]Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 15. Cf. http:// www.un.org/Overview/rights.html, [available on-line]; Internet; accessed 11/26/2008.

[139]The New Constitution of the Democratic Republic of Congo was promulgated by President Joseph Kabila on February 18, 2006. Cf. *La Constitution de la République Démocratique du Congo* (Kinshasa: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung Publications, 2007).

[140]*La Constitution De La République Démocratique Du Congo*, 10.

sub-commission of the Sovereign National Conference (SNC), which dealt with the question of nationality, classified into four categories the populations of Rwandese origin that are established in Zaire: 1. the autochthones, 2. the relocated, 3. the refugees, and 4. those who entered illegally.[141] In his book *Les Banyamulenge (Congo-Zaire) entre deux guerres*, Manassé Ruhimbika has tried to pinpoint two arguments based on oral and written sources in order to show that a group of Banyamulenge had settled in Congo long before Independence.

> According to Banyamulenge oral tradition, the Rwandese autochthones originate from a region shared by Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania. This tradition teaches that it was under the Rwandese king Yuhi IV GAHINDIRO's (1746-1802) reign that they crossed Ruzizi River. They first lived at KaKamba, in the northern part of the Ruzizi plain. Because of malaria, bovine trypanosome disease, and the rude dry climate, they left and settled on the Mounts of Ruzizi plain in the regions of Lemera and Mulenge. In this epoch, Kahamba-Kalingishi, the founding ancestor of the Bami Fulero ethnic group who came from Lwindi, lived in the savannah of Lemera.[142]

Referring to written sources, he writes:

> Like all migrations, that of Banyamulenge did not occur once in a year or decade. It happened during the 18th and 19th centuries. Only Alexis-Kagame talks about the first one. Referring to Vansina and Kajiga, the report of the Special Commission of the Central Comity of the late State Party notes that the Banyamulenge came in Congo at the end of 17th century. The first wave of people was directed to Bukumu and Bwisha villages. The second was located in 18th century in the Ruzizi valley and at Mulenge's Mounts of southern Kivu.[143]

With regard to the Banyamulenge who relocated to Congo before Independence, Pamphile Mabiala writes:

> Between 1937 and 1945, and 1949 and 1951, 23,111 and 9, 337 Rwandese respectively were relocated in Congo. Almost a total of 41,700 people were installed in Gishari, Mokoto and Bwito regions and Masisi and Rutshuru's territories.[144]

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[141]Manassé, Ruhimbika, *Les Banyamulenge (Congo-Zaïre) Entre Deux Guerres* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2001), 29.
[142]Ibid., 192.
[143]Ibid., 192-193.
[144]Mabiala , «La question de la nationalité congolaise,» 80.

Paul Matthieu and A. Mafikiri Tsongo have estimated that 6,000 Rwandese families were relocated to the mountains of Masisi in 1950 and 85,000 people between 1937 and 1955.[145] Adding the number of people who infiltrated illegally Masisi, there were at least 200,000 Rwandese between 1920 and 1960. Jean Mpisi mentions that they were principally installed in the territories of Masisi, Walikale and Rutshuru, and between 1960 and 1970, 100,000 more people came from Rwanda to live in these territories.[146] According to Spitaels, the Belgium District Commissar and chief of the Immigration Mission of Banyarwanda in Congo, the reason for the relocation was the overpopulation of Ruanda-Urundi and bad living conditions. In order to exploit certain uninhabited regions in Kivu, the Belgian colonial administration offered to Banyarwanda families an opportunity to settle in a region not far from Rwanda, where they could find fertile lands and appropriate climatic conditions similar to those of Rwanda. Article 3 of the decree creating the Kivu national committee shows that in 1927, the Belgian colonial administration proposed to give Banyarwanda families a territory with 1,250,000 ha in order to solve the problem of the overpopulation of Banyarwanda in the Belgian colony.[147]

The Rwandese refugees, however, were those who fled to Congo in 1959 when the Hutu revolution occurred, which overthrew King Kageri V from power and established the Republic of Rwanda with Grégoire Kayibanda as Prime Minister, (then President from 1962 to 1973). When I reflect on the two first categories of Banyarwanda who

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[145]Jean Mpisi, *Kivu, RDC: La Paix à Tout Prix ! : La Conférence de Goma (6-23 Janvier 2008)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 45.
[146]Ibid.
[147]Conseil Colonial, Examen du projet de décret portant création du Comité National du Kivu, art. 3, B.O., 1928, 85 quoted by Mabiala, «La question de la nationalité congolaise,» 79.

settled in Congo, it appears to me that at the time of Independence some Rwandese lived already in Congo. They coexisted with their Congolese neighbors the Babembe, Bafulero and Bayindu. However, nationality became a serious issue when it was contested by their neighbors and then by the Zairian State. In his book *Les Banyamulenge (Congo-Zaire), entre deux guerres*, Manassé Ruhimbika likewise notes the arguments brought forward by the neighbors of the Banyamulenge in favor of rejection of Banyamulenge citizenship. They were accused on account of Banyamulenge youth enrolled in the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) army, which fought President Juvénal Habyarimana's regime and unleashed the Rwandese genocide after the assassination of the President on 6 April 1994. Beside, Banyamulenge were assimilated to Tutsis of Rwanda and Burundi.[148] According to Mahmood Mamdani, Mobutu manipulated the question of Banyamulenge citizenship for the purpose of keeping himself in power during a period in which there were rebellions in the country.[149] In January 1972, Mobutu gave the Zairian nationality to all Rwandese and Burundian refugees and immigrants, to those who entered illegally, and to those who were relocated to Congo by the colonizers. In June 1995, the Constitutional act of the Parliament of Transition abrogated the law of 1972 and affirmed the law of June 1981. The report of the High Council of the Republic-Parliament of Transition asserts:

Gathered in the plenary session on 24, 25, 27, and 28 April 1995, and in conformity with the act of the Constitution and the interior rules of the country;
After examining and adopting the reports of the commission that analyzed the problems of the displaced peoples, the Rwandese and Burundian refugees;
With regard to the characteristic elements which show an imminent and highly risky explosive situation in North Kivu and South Kivu;
In order to prevent the same effects that occurred in the territory of Moba in Shaba, with regards to the report of March 31, 1995 enlightened by the Councilors of the Republic from Moba;

[148]Ruhimbika, *Les Banyamulenge,* 12 and 22.
[149]Mwesiga Baregu, ed., "Reflections on the Crisis in the Great Lakes Region,"*Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo,* ser. 3 (Harare: Sapes Books, 1999), 27.

Reaffirming that the Zairian nationality is one and exclusive and cannot compete with another nationality;

Considering that the Zairian nationality can only be acquired in conformity with the law no. 81-002 of June 1981, which abrogates the law no. 72-002 of January 5, 1972, which under the instigation and complicity of Mr. Bisengimana Barthélemy, a Rwandese Refugee from 1959-1960, gave the Congolese nationality to all the Rwandese and Burundian Refugees, immigrated, relocated and those who entered illegally;

Considering the hostile behavior of these populations, who became Congolese simply by obtaining by fraud the Zairian identity card, and actually are combating the Zairian local administrative and political authorities who, they want to replace...

Considering that the nationality must not be confused with xenophobia,

In order to prevent the imminent and explosive situation,

We affirm the application of the law no. 81-002 of June 29 relative to the Zairian nationality.[150]

Reflecting on this law, Mabiala clearly asserted that it was what had raised tensions and excluded the Congolese Tutsis from the Zairian community. This report notably asked for the repatriation without condition of all the Rwandese and Burundian refugees, the concealment of the decision by the Minister of the Homeland to appoint Rwandese immigrants and refugees to govern the territories of Rutshuru, Masisi and Walikale, and the concealment of the President of the Republic's decision to appoint Rwandese and Burundian immigrants and refugees to hold high offices, own land, or hold titles and be representatives of Zaire in diplomatic affairs.[151]

With this, one understands that Banyamulenge citizenship was manipulated in favor of political power. The question of their nationality was not properly and fairly addressed by the Zairian authorities. The work done by the Sovereign National Conference in 1991 is illuminating here. The survey of the sub-commission of political affairs directed by Joseph Lutundula in the Sovereign National Conference showed that, among the Banyamulenge, some were established in Congo before the Independence and were

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[150]Ruhimbika, *Les Banyamulenge,* 204.
[151]Mabiala , «La question de la nationalité congolaise,» 84-85.

present during Congo's Independence. Based on this, I think it is fair and just to give these people, their children and grand children an opportunity to choose their citizenship.

Article 10 of the new Constitution is clear regarding citizenship. It states that "a Congolese citizen is any person who belongs to an ethnic group whose people and territories have been part of Congo (actually the Democratic Republic of Congo) since its Independence." In the same article, it is also stated that "the Congolese nationality is acquired either by birth or by an individual acquisition."[152] In fact, these laws of the new Constitution give to the Banyamulenge the rights to claim their citizenship. Their right to have Congolese citizenship should be acknowledged by the Congolese authorities. The inalienability of this right also implies the right to equal treatment. This implies that their right to the land they occupied before Independence should be recognized. Disappointed by the failure of the Sovereign National Conference to resolve the question and to give to the Banyamulenge their right to Zairian citizenship, Professor Nzongola Ntalaja said:

> Stripped of their citizenship, Banyarwanda peasants are also denied land rights, as the land they occupy and use is claimed as ancestral land by the indigenous groups among whom they live. [153]

Equal treatment also implies equal opportunity, which is tied to the right to life and the right to be protected by the government.

> In September 1996, South Kivu Deputy Governor stated in radio broadcast that if the Tutsi Banyamulenge did not leave Zaire within a week, they would be interned in camps and exterminated.[154]

Jean Mpisi mentions that at end of December 1996, between 600,000 and 800,000 Rwandese refugees who had fled Rwanda in 1994 left the country and went back to

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[152]*La Constitution de la République Démocratique du Congo*, Article 10.
[153]Professor Nzongola Ntalaja quoted by Mwesiga Baregu, " Reflections on the Crisis in the Great Lakes Region," *Crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, 27.
[154]Ibid.

Rwanda. The Banyamulenge and some Hutus, however, refused to go back to Rwanda. Many of them joined the Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo party (AFDL) that fought and overthrew Mobutu's regime on May17, 1997.

In fact, everyone has a right to enjoy his/her citizenship. The government has an obligation to protect the nationality of its citizens. The denial of this right is a threat to all human rights. Life comes from God. It is sacred. Everyone must enjoy the right to life, liberty and security, as stated in article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In the same sense, article 16 of the new Constitution of Congo declares that the human person is sacred. The State has an obligation to respect and protect human life.

Before the Rwandese genocide in 1994, the State in Congo failed to protect the right of life of the Banyamulenge. "Thousands of people died in inter-ethnic violence in 1992-1993 in North Kivu."[155] It is also the government's duty to sustain the life of all Congolese with food, shelter, heath care, and education. All Congolese have the right to these basic rights together with the right to citizenship. Yet, it is not possible to enjoy the right to citizenship, security or subsistence without having also the right to participate effectively in the control of security and subsistence. Through its political and social institutions, notably the ministries of justice, interior affairs, and security, the current government of Congo has the duty to prevent and resist all violations of the rights to enjoy citizenship.

The effective participation of citizens is necessary for the development of the country. When citizens' nationality and subsistence rights are protected and secured, they have peace of mind and energy, which helps them to think and work for the growth of the country. This effective participation allows for the fulfillment of other human rights.

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[155]Ibid.

Henry Shue puts it correctly when he writes that participation is necessary for the fulfillment of the duties of protection correlative to every right and for the fulfillment of the correlative duty of every government not to deprive people of the substance of their rights.[156] When Shue acknowledges the character of necessity of participation, he is in fact helping us to understand that the exercise of the basic right of participation is not sufficient for the exercise of other rights, but it is still necessary. This means that participation is essential for retaining security, subsistence, and other rights. This understanding of participation helps us to say that any government has a duty to guarantee the basic rights of its citizens, because they help for the enjoyment of life. Guaranteeing the rights of Congolese is a challenge for the current Government of President Kabila. In the Eastern Congo, and other parts of the country, security is not yet assured to the people. There is a need for the current government to provide food, healthcare, habitations, and education to the Congolese.

Fathers Didier de Failly and Martin Ekwa bis Isal in their respective articles, "L'économie de la RDC en phase de post-conflict," and "Le système éducatif de la RDC: défis et enjeux" highlight the causes of the deterioration of the economy and the educational system of Congo, and suggest some ways to uplift Congo's economy and educational system.

According to Fr. Didier de Failly, the market of energy, the formation of workers and more jobs can contribute to the growth of Congolese industries.[157] This solution, fundamentally, implies a deep formation of conscience, which tries to shape Congolese

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[156]Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, And U.S. Foreign Policy,* 2nd ed., (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 85.

[157] Didier de Failly, «L'Economie de la République Démocratique du Congo en Phase de Post-Conflit,» Mabiala and al., eds. *La République Démocratique Du Congo,* 148.

minds by letting them know that the colonial epoch is over. There is a need today to leave

behind nostalgic ideas of the colonial era, and to have a mentality which raises new ideas,

and thinks how to get out from poverty and improve peoples' lives today and tomorrow.

Fr. Ekwa, however, advocates for social justice for teachers whose conditions of

living have deteriorated considerably since the Zairianisation. According to Fr. Ekwa,

there is a need to improve their salaries and their formation, and to rehabilitate the

deteriorated infrastructures of education in the country. Teachers must be motivated in

their work by receiving appropriate salaries that help them to ameliorate their living

conditions. Beside, the observation of Fr. Ekwa is that youth do not find many virtuous

people who can shape their lives. The lack of finding these virtuous people is a hindrance

for the motivation and progress of youth. The concluding insight of Fr. Ekwa's article

must be stressed because it is enlightening for the leaders of our generation and the

generation to come:

> In a world in which solidarity is underlined, and cultural differences and singular
> identities are promoted, the future leaders of the Democratic Congolese of Congo
> must promote the culture of social justice, equality, liberty, solidarity, co-
> responsibility and pay more attention on the common good and peace for all.[158]

The development of a nation is related to the promotion of these social values. Insofar as

public or religious authorities do not pay attention to these values, the conditions of life

will continue to decline.

## 2. The Right to Vote

The right to vote is a civil right. It is fundamental for every citizen. The exercise

of voting help people participate in the social, political, and economic ordering of the

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[158] Martin Ekwa bis Isal, "Le système éducatif de la RDC: défis et enjeux,» Mabiala and al., eds. *La
République Démocratique Du Congo*, 133.

country. At this point, I should acknowledge that the right to vote is bestowed on all Congolese citizens not by the State, but by their Congolese identity and citizenship. The duty of the State is to acknowledge and protect it. In the case of the presidential election in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it was the State's duty to protect voters and to avoid intimidation, fraud and delays in the counting of votes.

Though people appreciated the work done by the United Nations Peacekeeping force operating in Congo (MONUC) to make the presidential election safe, I think that in elections to come, the State has to take its responsibility by training either soldiers or civilians to guard and protect voters. The State also has an obligation to provide enough of the right information to people so that they can elect the best candidate. In the last presidential elections, people did not thoroughly analyze the social programs proposed by the candidates. This is because people did not have sufficient information about the candidates, and because they were not helped and encouraged by the State to know who exactly the 33 presidential candidates were. This means they had little information about the candidates' lives, intellectual formation and projects for the country.

## 3. Duties to Vote

Not only does the State have the right and duty to protect all voters, but Congolese voters also have duties to participate in voting and to elect a good candidate. For a Congolese who is not Christian, his duty to vote is grounded in his/her right to Congolese citizenship and identity. For a Christian, the right to vote is not only grounded in her/his Congolese citizenship and identity, but also in his/her participation in the fulfillment of God's kingdom on earth. To human beings, the Creator has given life and the power to be

his stewards in the world. Christians believe that in creating, God wanted creation to be good in his likeness, with fulfilling relationships and nurturing interdependencies. This cosmic sense of goodness is known in Hebrew as *shalom* and in English as peace. In fulfilling God's purpose for creation and in caring for God's creation, human beings realize what is sacred. The common good is also another source of the right and duty to vote for Christians.

In analyzing how people voted at the last presidential election, it appears to me that all Congolese believers and unbelievers wanted to end the long political transition[159] the country had gone through and establish democratic institutions. The transitional government, set up after the Sun City accords in 2002, which gave Joseph Kabila four Vice-Presidents,[160] did not please people because of tensions and conflicts based on power-sharing. With respect to electing the right Candidate from among the 33 candidates, there is need to emphasize that people voted, as I mentioned previously, more on the basis of linguistic or regional affiliations, than according to the criteria of good leadership, competence, credibility, and vision. In fact, what does it mean to speak of good leadership and call forth the qualities of competence, credibility and vision? The leadership skill of a candidate is seen in his/her ability to bring people together. Besides this, the leadership of a candidate is seen in his/her capacity to make right judgments,

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[159]According to some Congolese scholars, notably Mabiala Mantuba-Ngomba, Pierre Akele Adau, and Jean Michel Kumbu Ki Ngimbi the transition of Politics in the Democratic Republic of Congo has lasted twelve years, from April 24, 1994, a year Mobutu allowed multiparty in Zaire until 2006, a year of the presidential election in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Cf. Mabiala and al., ed. *La République Démocratique Du Congo.*

[160]The Vice-Presidents were Azarias Ruberwa, Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma, Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi and Jean Pierre Bemba. Each of them coordinated a Governmental Commission, regrouping a numbers of ministries. Azarias Ruberwa coordinated policy, defense and security commission; Arthur Z'ahidi Ngoma represented the political opposition; Abdoulaye Yerodia Ndombasi coordinated the reconstruction and development commission; Jean Pierre Bemba took economic and financial commission. The 'pentarchy' was as 1+4.

which means using the faculty of intellect adequately. When I say adequately, I mean appropriately, rightly and prudently. Prudence shapes and informs the ability to deliberate over available alternatives, to determine what is most fitting to a specific context, and to act. It must be accompanied by courage, which calls the candidate to act at the fitting time.

A competent candidate lets voters know which skills he/she has for resolving problems. Voters have to know how a candidate will implement the Constitution. Significantly, this is the ability to handle with enough care and intelligence the present and future life of people without overlooking the historical past realities of the nation. This capacity guides people with sufficient care, intelligence and wisdom.

One can object that such a description is a kind of idealistic or theoretical portrayal. It is rare to find candidates who have all these qualities. To this objection, one can answer by saying that the election of the head of State is an exercise that the entire country has to perform with care and seriousness. This is why candidates must be scrutinized and appreciated with fairness for the good of the entire country. Appreciating candidates with fairness is not merely an exercise of patriotism, but an exercise of faithful citizenship. The nation's destiny depends not absolutely but essentially on the seriousness and fairness with which people elect the head of State and public authorities. A responsible citizen is one who decides to cast his/her vote for a candidate after analyzing with care the social programs the candidate proposes to the country and his/her performance during public debates. When this is done, a citizen has to scrutinize, in light of the criteria mentioned, whether a candidate can receive his/her vote or not. In order to come to this final step of making a choice, there is previously a step of forming people's consciences.

In the formation of people's consciences, the government and civil society have an important role to play.

# CHAPTER 6: THE ROLE OF CIVIL ACTORS AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF CONGOLESE FAITHFUL CITIZENSHIP

Civil society encompasses all formal or informal associative groups in a country and continents, whose goal is to mobilize citizens at the local, national and international levels to participate actively in the amelioration of the quality of life and the promotion of democracy, human rights, equitable development and a healthy environment. Like many other countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo has civil society activists. I must admit here that in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it took a long time for the civil society to be acknowledged as a useful institution for the good governance of the country. This delay was caused by the restriction of associations' liberties during the era of Mobutu's dictatorship. Baudouin Hamuli Kabarhuza observes that in the 80s and 90s Congolese civil society rapidly expanded.[161] It is comprised of churches, NGOs of development and human rights, syndicates, actors of non-governmental mass media and women associations, and so on.[162] In 1991, the Sovereign National Conference acknowledged the importance of these associations for the good governance of the country, especially because of their role in counteracting the State's hegemonic ambitions of power.

## 1. The Contribution of Congolese Civil Actors during the Last Presidential Election

At the recent presidential election, the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) coordinated the electoral processes. Congolese civil society and international

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[161]Baudouin Hamuli Kabarhuza, " La contribution de la société civile à la construction de la démocratie en R.D.C.,» Mabiala and al., eds. *La République Démocratique Du Congo*, 226.
[162]Ibid.

organizations collaborated with the IEC in order to educate the population about the electoral processes and ethical responsibility. Non-political international institutions, such as the Electoral Institute for Southern Africa (EISA) and the International Foundation for Systems Elections (IFES) assured the formation of Congolese observers of the elections. Religious Confessions and Organizations, civic and electoral education NGOs, Trade unions, Human Rights NGOs, women's associations, youth, academic and cultural associations assured ethical responsibility. Among the national organizations that participated in the process of elections, the International observer Handbook D.R. Congo 2006 mentions the following:

> "Coordination des Actions pour la Réussite de la Transition au Congo" (CARTEC);[163]
> - Centre Pour Action Sociale (CEPAS);
> - Comité National Femme et Développement (CONAFED);
> - Cause Commune(CC);
> - L'Institut pour la Démocratie et le Leadership Politique (IDLP);
> - La Ligue Nationale pour des Elections Libres et Transparentes (LINELIT);
> - La Ligue des Electeurs (LE);
> - L'Unité de Production des Programmes d'Education Civique (UPPEC);
> - le Réseau National de l'Observation et de la Surveillance des Elections au Congo (RENOSEC);
> - le Réseau d'Organisations Partenaires de l'IFES (ROPI);
> - le Réseau d'Education Civique au Congo (RESIC);
> - le Réseau d'Organisation des Droits Humains et Education Civique d'Inspiration Chrétienne (RHODESIC);
> - le Réseau Action Femme (RAF);
> - l'Union Nationale des Femmes (UNAF);
> - Union des Spécialistes et Professionnels des élections (USPE), etc.[164]

The national networks of observers, like the RENOSEC and the ROPI, trained Congolese observers to monitor the evolution of the electoral process, during and after the elections.

In addition to these national organizations, one can also mention the Congolese media.

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[163]*CARTEC* was created by the Congolese Catholic Church leaders. Cf. International Observer Handbook Presidential and Legislative Elections DR Congo UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services) / PACO (Project for Assistance to the Coordination of the Observers of elections) July 2006, 19.
[164]Ibid.

Through the diffusion of information, they sensitized the population regarding the electoral processes. The 35 TV channels located in Kinshasa out of the 65 channels existing in the country, the 220 radio stations established in the country, and various national newspapers also contributed to informing people about the electoral processes. The national organizations used channels like public awareness campaigns, workshops, seminars, and theatres to participate in the civic and electoral education of the population.

Among the international organizations working for the formation of national observers and for civic and electoral education, the international Handbook D.R. Congo 2006 lists:

- *EISA (Electoral Institute for Southern Africa*
- *FKA (Foundation Konrad Adenauer)*
- *NDI (National Democratic Institute)*
- *IFES (International Foundation for Systems Elections*
- *PNUD/AIT (United Nations Development Programme/ Agency for Instructional Technology)*
- *UNIFEM (United Nations Funds for Women)*
- *CORDAID (Coordination Internationale Catholique de l'Aide contre le Sida)*
- *The German, American, Belgian, British and Canadian, co-operation bodies.*[165]

The support and aid of these organizations contributed to the holding of the free and democratic elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Electoral Institute for Southern Africa (EISA), for instance, supported the training of the activists of the Congolese civil society and the activities of political institutions, parties, the IEC's members, especially the observers of the elections. The Foundation Konrad Adenauer (FKA) was involved in the sensitization of the population by popularizing the texts related to the electoral process. It organized public debates on radio and TV programs and in theatres in order to encourage national reconciliation. The National Democratic Institute (NDI) focused its activit ies on capacity building of the political parties by

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[165]Ibid.

training women candidates and other candidates in the development of electoral messages and programs. The International Foundation for Systems Elections (IFES) provided training courses to the actors of Congolese civil society by using handbooks and other audio-visual systems. IFES also managed six Democracy Resources Centers located in Kinshasa, Kikwit, Lubumbashi, Kisangani, Goma and Mbuji-May by helping civil society organizations to actively engage in the DRC's transition process, and in civic and electoral education. In both urban and remote areas, IFES provided interactive discussion tools based on images, accompanying animators' guide and tutorials, and training on the elections, good governance, the rule of law, civic society development, and human rights.

The United Nations Development Programme, through its Agency for Instructional Technology (AIT), sensitized the political parties about the procedures and democratic rules. United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) undertook capacity building and empowerment activities for the political women. CORDAID supported the activities of the Catholic Church. The German, American, Belgian, British and Canadian cooperation bodies helped the activities of the Congolese civil society.

## 2. Evaluation of the Work done by the National and International Organizations

Although both national and international organizations did a tremendous work of training observers and sensitizing the population mainly in the urban areas, it is still true that in the rural areas many people were not sensitized enough, due to the logistical constraints linked to the size of the country (2, 345, 409 Km²) and the lack of good road and fluvial infrastructures. The lack of good infrastructure prevented national and international organizations to reach people in remote areas and to train them to vote

accordingly. In addition to the difficulties of infrastructure, I should mention that many

people in rural areas are still illiterate. They needed civic education and enough training

to enable them to vote appropriately. Unfortunately many did not undergo the democratic

electoral training. This also is why many people in the rural areas voted according to

linguistic and regional affiliation. I am not naïve to believe that all people who were

sensitized in the urban centers voted according to the democratic criteria. Many voted

according to linguistic and regional affiliation. This is because they did not understand

what the democratic election is about and what must be the behavior of a responsible

citizen in voting. An evaluation made by a Congolese organization, member of civil

society, DECIDI (Démocratie et Civisme pour le Développement Integral) after the July

2006 presidential election acknowledged infrastructure and illiteracy problems.

> After examining what happened during the last Congolese democratic elections, the
> DECICI observed a number of behaviors. It pinpoints them out and presents them to
> the public for an appreciation and debates so that Congolese may come to correct
> attitudes towards voting. If this unfortunate behavior is not corrected, one could not
> speak about the democratic elections in the country. The first observation is that,
> geographically, there are still many enclave areas in the country. Roads do not exist;
> railways and fluvial ways of communication are damaged and cannot properly
> function to reach those enclave areas. The air is the only way the country still has
> now. It has unfortunately many aircrafts, which are damaged and not well
> maintained...Another unfortunate observation is the high rate of illiteracy. Illiterate
> people were unable to vote appropriately based on the analysis of the projects
> presented by political parties. By not knowing what a project of society is, many of
> them voted according to tribal, clan, ethnic affiliation, and to promises made by the
> presidential candidates...[166]

As it appears in this evaluation, many people were not trained enough, due to logistical

constraints linked to the size of the country and to the lack of good road and fluvial

infrastructures. Due to these constraints, the national and international organizations were

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[166]Bha-Avira Mbiya, Michel-Casimir, «RD Congo: Que nous ont révélé les dernières élections
démocratiques à la congolais ?» http://www.societecivile.cd/node/3263 [article on-line]; Internet;
accessed 18 March 2009.

not able to reach many people in rural areas and give them training in the electoral process. This lack of training and information contributed to the fact they voted according to linguistic and regional affiliation. Many also used these undemocratic criteria because they received gifts or money from a presidential candidate, who in so doing bribed people's consciences. Besides the difficulty of communication and illiteracy of many people in remote areas, I should stress here that some activists of the civil society lost their credibility in the eyes of the population because they turned to play the role of politicians.

In 2006 elections many civil society activists stood as candidates. Under the banner of civil society, a political party, the MSR, was formed and won the third largest number of seats in Parliament. It joined the incumbent president's AMP [Presidential Majority Alliance] and its leader, Pierre Lumbi, was appointed senior minister in the post-election government.[167]

The idea behind this illustration is that there is a danger that a civil society activist might no longer play properly an independent watchdog role if he becomes a politician, as he could not be both judge and party member. Civil society actors must limit their role to analyzing politicians' leadership and helping them to rule accordingly, and by promoting and spreading the culture of democracy.

In spite of the logistic and illiteracy constraints, let me mention that national and international organizations used different means in order to sensitize people in urban areas. Publications were among the major means. Among the publications which dealt with civic and electoral education, the major ones, according to Rigobert Minani, were the Booklets' collection published by CEPAS (Centre Pour Action Sociale) and Epiphanie editions, the publications of CARTE C (Coordination des Actions pour la

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[167]http://www.iss.co.za/index.php?link_id=23&slink_id=6829&link_type=12&slink_type=12 [on-line]; Internet; accessed 18 March 2009.

Réussite de la Transition et Election au Congo), and those of RODHECIC (Réseau d'Organisations des Droits de l'Homme et d'Education Civique d'Inspiration Chrétienne).[168]

In addition to these publications, one also can mention articles published by Congo-Afrique revue[169] and Congolese newspapers. Security provided by MONUC's troops (The United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo) persuaded the population to vote in peace and serenity. I believe that without the financial support provided by the international community and donors, the DRC government would not have been able to hold the recent elections.[170] In the effort of promoting democracy in the DRC, there is a need for civil society actors and churches' leaders to advocate and shape Congolese with the culture of democracy.

## 3. Promoting the Culture of Democracy

The effort of Congolese citizens to request accountability from their leaders is, in fact, a quest for democracy. As such, democracy refers to a regime whose legitimacy derives from the principle of popular sovereignty: namely that, ordinary citizens are endowed with the right and ability to govern themselves through designated representatives. As such, democracy is considered as a set of political procedures, or rule

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[168]Rigobert Minani Bihuzo, «Education civique et électoral en RDC: Enjeux et pistes d'actions,» *Congo-Afrique* (Kinshasa-Gombe), no. 402-403, (Février-Mars 2006), 145.
[169]Ibid.
[170]The APEC project which managed the fund entrusted to UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) by donors, mainly European countries: European Union, received a total amount of 272 million (96, 15% of the election budget). Out of the total amount of US$ 283 million budget forecast, donors have signed contributions agreements for USD 279 million. The DRC government made a contribution of 38, 040, 130 USD. Certain countries like USA, France and Canada made a bilateral support to the DRC government. USA gave 3, 132, 911 USD; France provided 6, 000, 000.00 Euro and Canada 2, 500, 000.00 $ CAD. Cf. http://www.undp.org.cd/Downloads/projetapec.pdf; [Project on-line]; Internet; accessed 03/20/2009.

by the people and for the people. The election of representatives is a fundamental requirement for a representative democracy. Thus, I understand democracy in this study as a form of political regime in which citizens choose, in competitive elections, appropriate representatives of the people who will minister the high political offices of the State. Another fundamental requirement of democracy is that elections have to be conducted within a matrix of civil liberties, fairness and fair play. With respect to fairness, candidates are elected according to certain qualifications. The basic ones, as I mentioned above, are those related to candidates' competency, credibility, good leadership, vision, and love of the nation.

For the good of the country, the rule of democracy requires people to elect candidates who are competent. This means that they have to vote for candidates who show judgment and who are virtuous in the way they behave and live with others in society, and who, through their leadership, are able to innovate. To choose the representatives of a nation is not a formalistic exercise. It is rather an exercise which has to be done with consciousness and seriousness. To vote occupants of the top political offices of the State with fairness must be a concern to every citizen. Why should it be so? Because of the common good of the nation. During the recent president election, many Congolese, as I highlighted, voted according to their linguistic and regional affiliations. With these undemocratic criteria, one can discern four major disadvantages. The first, as we saw, is that the country was split into two linguistic regions: the eastern *swahilophone* region, which supported the incumbent President Joseph Kabila, and the western *lingalophone,* which supported Jean Pierre Bemba, his opponent. Second, the unfortunate split completely overshadowed people's efforts to think and analyze the plans proposed by

presidential candidates other than Joseph Kabila and Jean Pierre Bemba. Third, the

criteria of regionalism and linguistic affiliation actually decreased the Congolese capacity

to come as one people to elect a credible candidate. Many people did not reflect enough

or analyze the speeches given by the candidates and politicians. Fourth, the division of

the country into two blocs according to political tendency caused hatred and fighting

between the supporters of Joseph Kabila and Jean Pierre Bemba. Consequently, many

people lost their lives on July 27 and from August 20 to 22, 2006. Although the

Congolese Catholic Bishops' Conference condemned these unfortunate events in its

message to Catholics and all people of good will, [171] it is still true that those sad events

created panic and anxiety during the electoral process. In order to uplift the DRC, I think

that there is a need to rediscover and reshape Congolese society using the values of

democracy, which stress appropriate criteria for elections. The appropriate criteria of

competence, credibility, vision and love have the merit of fitting the rules of democracy.

Electing a candidate who is competent and has a sense of leadership is more valuable

than electing a candidate on the basis of regional or linguistic affiliations. This is because

the candidate elected on the basis of competence and good leadership has a chance to use

his skill and knowledge to serve the nation. A nation should not be considered to be like a

household or an extended family, in which family members and relatives receive more

care than outsiders. A nation is a community regulated by a constitutional law. To choose

to be a democratic nation is in fact to choose to be regulated by the constitutional law

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[171]In their message delivered on October 5, 2006, Congolese Catholic Bishops said: "We condemned all
violence wherever it comes from and all declarations calling to hatred, division, and exclusion. We express
our indignation and firmly condemn the events of July 27 as well as those of August 20 to 22, 2006 that
occurred in Kinshasa. They caused death of many people and occasioned much destruction..." Cf.
Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo, " La vérité Vous Rendra Libres » (John 8, 32) : Le Verdict des
Urnes dans la Transparence. http://ww.cenco.cd/presidencenco/messageOct2006.htm [on-line]; Internet;
accessed 4/3/2009.

which sets democratic procedures and rules that citizens have to obey. Voting on the basis of regional and linguistic affiliations is antithetic to the democratic rules of election.

Electing the State's top representatives according to appropriate democratic criteria also has the advantage of distancing Congolese from individualism. A distance from individualism helps them consciously participate in the establishment of common ideals and projects for the betterment of the nation. However, without being naïve, I must say here that when mistakes occur in the exercise of power entrusted to the elected candidates, they must be accountable for their actions. Being accountable to the population has the merit of showing transparency in the exercise of power.

## 4. Fashioning Congolese Consciences in View of a Culture of Peace and Justice

By creating the universe, God's desire was that creation would exist to fulfill his desire to establish goodness.[172] This cosmic sense of goodness is known as *shalom,* peace. In other words, peace is the way things in the universe ought to be, because God is the peacemaker. What has happened ever since the fall of Adam and Eve is that human beings continue to pull themselves away from God's goodness and topple the way things are supposed to be. Wars, conflicts and violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo and other places in the world threaten peace and order. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Catholic Church has the task to help Congolese rediscover the value of peace, willed by God since creation. The Bishops' Conference condemnation of the war that resumed in August 2009 between General Laurent Nkunda's army against the Government and the allies groups' armies in eastern and northeastern Congo was well-

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[172]Genesis 1: 31.

received by the population. In their message, the Bishops asked Prime Minister Adolphe

Muzito and his newly appointed government to deal with this issue of war with

seriousness and to find appropriate solutions. They exhorted the government to consider

the reestablishment of peace and unity in the country as a priority task of its mission.

They also exhorted the international community to put pressure on rebel group armies to

respect the agreement of peace that was signed at the Goma conference, held from 8 to 23

January, 2008.[173] In their February 12, 2009 message, the Bishops asked all Congolese,

and particularly the organizations of civil society, to be vigilant regarding operations of

pacification,[174] which engaged the Rwandan and Congolese armies to disarm the

Rwandan Hutu FDLR rebels and to end the CNDP (National Congress for the Defense of

the People) rebellion in eastern Congo. Solutions to conflicts between Rwanda and DRC

have to be sought. In meantime, the Catholic Church in both countries has to help

Christians acquire the culture of peace and involve themselves in peace building in the

Great Lakes Region. However, we should acknowledge that peace in the Great Lakes

Region will be an empty-sounding word unless it is founded on justice. Justice must be

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[173]"Encore le sang des innocents en RD Congo ! (cf. Jr.
19,4)"http://www.aefjn.be/index.php?id=29&option=com_
content&task=view [on-line]; Internet; accessed 4/3/2009.
[174]On January 2009, the Rwandan and Congolese armies jointed together in an operation in order to
disarm Rwandan Hutu FDLR (Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda) rebels and pull them out of
the DRC. More than 3, 500 Rwandan troops crossed the border into the DRC to join Congolese
government forces. Cf. "Rwanda Arrests Gen. Laurent Nkunda" The New Vision.
http://www.newvision.co.ug/detail.php? newsCategoryI=12&
newsId=669071 [on-line]; Internet; accessed 4/4/2009. Due to the fact that many Congolese were
unhappy with this operation, the Congolese Bishops in their message asked the international community
to be involved in monitoring this operation so that Rwandan army and Combatants of the Lord's
Resistance Army (LRA) of Joseph Kony may return to their respective countries (Rwanda and Uganda) by
following and respecting the international laws. Cf. "Soyez Vigilants (cf. 1P5, 8): La Paix dans la Justice et la
Vérité. » Message du Comité Permanent de la Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo (CENCO) aux
fidèles catholiques, aux hommes et aux femmes de bonne volonté.
http://www.cenco.cd/presidencenco/messageFev 2009.htm [on-line]; Internet; accessed 4/3/2009.

done here by extraditing General Nkunda[175] to DRC so that he can respond to the accusations against him, such as killing the Congolese population in eastern Congo and forcing more than 250,000 to be internally displaced persons. Justice must also be done so that Congolese soldiers and politicians involved in the killing of Congolese in eastern Congo can be arrested and judged. The Church has to promote the value of justice. To transform Congolese consciences to acquire virtues of truth and justice is a challenge the Catholic Church has to face in her mission of evangelization in DRC. Another challenge that the Church has to face is the education of Congolese who live in rural and remote areas.

In their message, the Congolese Catholic Bishops' Conference reminded the Congolese authorities of the promises they had made to ameliorate the living conditions of the population during the electoral campaign. The Bishops said:

> From an ethical point of view, the new Congolese authorities must achieve what they promised during the electoral campaigns. They should restore peace and security, rehabilitate road infrastructures, fluvial and air means of transportation, and ameliorate Congolese system of education and health care conditions. They should also manage economy with transparency, provide to the population clean water and electricity, and assure harmonious relationships with neighboring states.[176]

The Congolese population is impatient to see and witness the beginning of this project. If the government does not ameliorate the living conditions of Congolese and solve the problem of the means of communication in DRC, Congolese will not received appropriate information which can help them to vote consciously their representatives.

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[175]General Nkunda was arrested in Rwanda on January 22, 2009 by Rwandan army. Cf. http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7846339.stm [on-line]; Internet; accessed 4/4/2009.

[176]"A Vin Nouveau, Outres Neuves » (Mc 2, 22) : Ne Pas Décevoir Les Attentes de la Nation » Message de la Conférence Episcopale Nationale du Congo aux Fidèles Catholiques et aux Hommes de bonne volonté à l'occasion du 47ème anniversaire de l'Indépendance. Cf. http:// www.cenco.cd/presidencenco/messageJuil07.htm [on-line]; accessed 4/3/2009.

Besides, there is a need for Catholic Church leaders and civil actors to advocate for the holding of public debates between candidates for the presidency on TV or through other means of communication. The Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) must consider public debates between candidates as an exercise of democracy which invites candidates to defend their projects before the nation. The population has the right to know the candidates' plans, and analyze their effectiveness and credibility.

## 5. Re-shaping Congolese Consciences with the Value of the African Tradition of Togetherness

Further, the re is a ne ed to re -shape Con golese with African traditional value of togetherness, because in it lies an important dimension of life which founded African traditional society. The harmonious relationship of the members of the society characterized life in African traditional community. When conflicts and rivalries occurred in African society, they were solved by the elders. In the kingdom of Kongo, for example, rivalries that occurred between the candidates to kingship were solved by the college of the 'great' electors, and those that occurred among the population were solved under the palavers' tree by the elders. In order to heal broken relationships and restore harmony and peace, the elders initiated talks between the parties in conflict. The attitude of togetherness in the spirit of humanhood (*ubuntu*) promoted by the former President of South Africa, Nelson Mandela and the former Archbishop of Cape Town, Desmond Tutu during the reconciliation process of South Africans in the post-apartheid era is an excellent model used by African elders. African elders understood that "every single human being only becomes a truly human being by means of relationships with other

human beings."[177] According to Archbishop Desmond Tutu, in the Nguni group of languages, this wisdom of togetherness means that

> "a person is a person through other persons." It is not, "I think therefore I am." It says rather: "I am human because I belong. I participate, I share." A person with *ubuntu* is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, for he or she has a proper self-assurance that come from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed, or treated as if they were less than who they are.[178]

To all of us human beings *ubuntu* signifies being as human and humane as can be, being as humanity-oriented as can be, living in genuine humanness, and humane-ness, together with fellow human beings.[179] With this light, I believe that the theology of *ubuntu* must be promoted by the churches' leaders in order to help Congolese rediscover the value of togetherness, because it is an essential wisdom which gives us enough strength to be responsible citizens, capable of rebuilding broken institutions and structures of the country. When I analyze *ubuntu* wisdom, it first has first the merit of helping Congolese to consider themselves as brothers and sisters who have an obligation through their various actions to uplift the country from division to unity and from poverty to development. Second, it has the advantage of promoting peaceful co-existence, a fraternal attitude which bonds Congolese as one nation, one people, in spite of their differences of origin, character, or religion. Third, it has the merit of shaping Congolese to assure their common destiny, which *Debout Congolais,* their anthem, constantly reminds them when it states: "*Unis par le sort, unis dans l'effort pour l'indépendance...*" (United by fate, united in the struggle for Independence...). All Congolese are called to be united in order

[177]Jannie Malan, *Conflict Resolution Wisdom from Africa* (Durban: Accord, 1997), 88.
[178]Desmond Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1997), 31.
[179]Ibid.

to rebuild all infrastructures destroyed under Mobutu's and Laurent Desiré Kabila' s reign.

## 6. Forming Congolese Consciences towards Reconciliation and Forgiveness

The harmonious and peaceful co-existence between Congolese implies mutual acceptance, tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation. In order to heal the pain, anger, frustration and division that people underwent during the wars and the recent presidential election, Congolese Catholic Bishops must look forward and advocate for reconciliation and forgiveness. The Catholic Church and other Churches have to play their prophetic role by reconciling people and bringing them together.

In the whole country, people are still shocked by the killing of innocent people that occurred after the armed clashes between forces loyal to Joseph Kabila and Jean Pierre Bemba. In the week leading up to the polls, Etienne Tshisekedi, the veteran opponent to Mobutu's regime and to the transitional government, and his militants protested against the polls by taking down and destroying all electoral banners they could find in Kinshasa and other cities. The reaction of Tshisekedi's militants was due to the refusal of the Independent Electoral Commission to reopen the registration operation stations to Tshisekedi's militants – who had boycotted the registration on his orders – to get a chance to receive election ID cards, and vote. The riot that resulted caused many damages. Like Jean Pierre Bemba, Tshisekedi complained of electoral fraud. Although this complaint is still debatable, one can mention that during the recent presidential election, many people were angry and protested violently against the polls, because they were denied their right to vote. Besides all the pain and suffering people went through

during the presidential election, more than 5.4 million Congolese have been killed since the beginning of the war. Thousands of people were displaced. In Jean Mpisi's book, *Kivu, RDC: la paix à tout prix*, one notices that there have been in the Democratic Republic of Congo three wars waged in Kivu since 1996: "Kivu's first war," called the "liberation war that drove Laurent Desiré Kabila to power" (1996-1997); " Kivu's second war," named the "rebellion against Laurent Désiré Kabila (1998-2003); and the third "Kivu's war" or "General Laurent Nkunda's war" (2004-2009).[180]

All these wars and their humanitarian consequences impel Congolese to reflect on the future of the country. The prophetic ministry of the Church invites Christians to advocate for social coexistence, peace, reconciliation and forgiveness. Desmond Tutu was right when he encapsulated his experience of the TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission) in his book entitled *No Future Without Forgiveness*. Although South Africa's context of apartheid was different from the social and political context of the DRC, reconciliation and forgiveness are relevant for the Democratic Republic of Congo in order to bring Congolese together as one people.

The Democratic Republic of Congo's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), established during the Inter-Congolese dialogue in Sun City (South Africa) in 2003, has not yet properly functioned as expected by the population. Ngoma-Binda and Muanda Vuidi mention that this commission did not properly function because it did not have enough financial support, time or competent human resources to carry out the task.[181] The two authors think that the commission of Truth and Reconciliation must be recreated and

[180]Jean Mpisi, *Kivu, RDC: La Paix à Tout Prix ! : La Conférence de Goma (6-23 Janvier 2008)* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2008), 52-72.
[181]Ngoma-Binda and Muanda Vuidi, "Justice transitionnelle en R.D.Congo: L'expérience de la Commission Vérité et Réconciliation » *Congo-Afrique* (Kinshasa-Gombe), no. 416 (Juin-Juillet-Août 2007), 454.

given more competent personnel with more realistic mandates. In this way, it could play an important role in the restitution of memory and the consolidation of the Congolese engagement towards the future than the past.[182]

This Commission must be supported and encouraged by the international community, the DRC government, the actors of civil society, and Church leaders because it can render an important service to the nation by establishing truth for all the cases of impunity. It especially needs to examine "*les biens mal acquis*" (things improperly acquired) since Independence in 1960, and the assassinations that have occurred in the country since that time. In addition, there is also a need to establish the truth about all the massacres of the population that have happened in eastern and northeastern Congo during the three Kivu wars. The Commission must deal with the cases of killing of innocent people by the forces loyal to Joseph Kabila and Jean Pierre Bemba, and by the adepts of Bundu dia Kongo (BDK), a politico-cultural movement founded in 1969 by Ne Mwanda Nsemi.[183] Truth has to be established so that reconciliation and forgiveness can be effective. But this presupposes a deep political willingness and determination on the part of Congolese leaders, who can provide financial support to the Commission and designate competent and credible people to do the work with honesty, justice and love.

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[182]Ibid.

[183]Bundu dia Kongo (BDK) is mainly based in Bas-Congo province in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The movement focuses on defending, protecting and promoting the values, rights, and interests of Kongo people. In January and February 2007, the followers of BDK demonstrated against the election of the provincial governor of Bas-Congo. This demonstration led to violent clashes with the police and the military in Matadi, Muanda, Boma and Songolo. The clashes resulted in the death of 134 people, mostly civilians but also several policemen. On March 2008, the government banned BDK. The United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC) carried out a special inquiry into these clashes in and around the cities of Luozi and Seke-Banza on February and March 2008. The report concludes that at least 100 people, members of DDK, were killed in the police operations in Bas-Congo. Cf. http://www.radiookapi.net/files/file_file_183.pdf

## GENERAL CONCLUSION

Participating in public debates that attempt to highlight the problem of the destiny and common good of a nation is a valuable intellectual exercise for a citizen. Electing the head of State and the representatives who will preside over the destiny of a country should be an important concern for conscientious citizens, because the management of the country by the head of State has a tremendous impact on the living conditions of the population. The July 30, 2006 presidential election has been a concern for all Congolese and for the international community, because it was the first time in DRC political history that a democratic election had been held since Independence in 1960. After twenty-two years of Mobutu's dictatorship (1965-1997) and sixteen years of long Transitional governments (1990-2006), Congolese were ready to vote in new leaders who could put an end to interminable conflicts of power sharing between politicians and rule according to the new constitution. With the financial help of the International Community, the presidential, legislative and communal elections were held. The presidential election which took place on July 30, 2006, with a run-off on October 31, 2006, elected Joseph Kabila as President which 58.05% of votes and established a Parliament composed of 500 members.

Many Congolese, however, voted according to their linguistic and regional affiliations. These criteria were undemocratic because they divided Congolese among themselves, incited violence and fighting between Bemba's and Kabila's supporters, and wounded the unity of the country. The wounds caused by the unfortunate realities of linguistic and regional affiliations have to be resolved. For the sake of the unity, peace, and common good of the country, civil society organizations and churches have to bring

people together through reconciliation. The *Amani* (peace) conference of Goma,[184] initiated in January 2008 by President Joseph Kabila, had the purpose of resolving differences between members involved directly (the government, emissaries of rebel groups, and representatives of ethnic group communities) and indirectly (members of the civil society, clerics and intellectuals...) in the Kivu wars. Although peace is not yet a reality in eastern Congo, the Amani conference had the merit of clarifying differences between armed groups. In ord er to prepare people for the next coming presidential election, I suggest two ideas. The first is the formation of consciences for faithful citizenship. Congolese must acquire the virtue of fairness and must exercise their rights and duties responsibly. Electing a new president demands a significant formation of conscience. Second, there is need to shape Congolese with the values of togetherness and hope. When one observes living conditions, one notices that people still experience much poverty and suffering. In August 2008, fighting resumed between General Laurent Nkunda's army and the Government army. More than 30,000[185] people were displaced and fled from their villages and lands. Many people have lost their lives. Here, the question is: How can we end war and give people hope for a peaceful life? Does the agreement signed by the government and the CNDP (National Congress for the Defense of People) party on March 2009 definitively put an end to war in eastern Congo? Has the joint pacification operation initiated by Rwandan and Congolese armies in January 2009 sealed peace between Rwanda and DRC and restored the relationship between both countries? Events in the future will tell. However, what Rwandese and Congolese leaders

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[184]Goma's conference of peace was held from 6 to 23 January 2008.

[185]Lydia Polgreen, "Congo Massacre Unfurls, Despite nearby U.N. Aid," *The New York Times*, 11 December 2008, International ed., A11.

need is a determination to work for peace and for the development of our respective countries in the Great Lakes Region.

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