CHAPTER 40

Colonialism and Civil War: Religion and Violence in East Africa
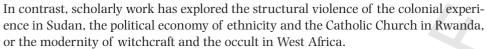
Ben Jones

> How could those "big men" survive in the villages? The rebels did not want them. If the rebels saw the village council chairman he would be dead soon after. They would take him to "dig his potatoes" (*aibok acok*) in the swamp. Within a short time they would cover his eyes and face with his shirt and they would move him to the swamp, while singing: "mam idaete eong ne, koyangarai eong da ore neja ikatunga" (don't bury me here, take my body home to my people). That was their song, their song for killing.[1]

Between 1986 and 1993, a violent insurgency raged in the Teso region of eastern Uganda (Jones 2009).[2] The above commentary remembers that time and refers to the way rebels targeted and killed people, in certain instances forcing the victim to dig the hole that would later serve as grave. This sort of killing was intended to deny the person – typically a chief or village elder – the funeral that would allow the spirit to rest and the family to mourn. Through a focus on the Teso case, this chapter looks at the violence of the colonial experience in Africa, how that violence has helped to pattern postcolonial developments, and how the experience of violence and postviolence are mediated through religious ideas.

This chapter represents a departure from the more usual story of violence and religion on the continent, a story that uses religion to explain why people kill each other. A stock set of images characterizes the relationship between religion and violence (Brookes 1995). The standoff in Sudan's long-running civil war has been explained through the opposition of Muslims and Christians, Arabs and black Africans. The exorcism of child "witches" by Pentecostal preachers in southeastern Nigeria, or stories of child sacrifice in northern Uganda, are held up as examples of broken or corrupted religious identities.[3] They are ways in which the popular media think about religion and violence, and are something close to Erving Goffman's concept of a frame or script.

In contrast, scholarly work has explored the structural violence of the colonial experience in Sudan, the political economy of ethnicity and the Catholic Church in Rwanda, or the modernity of witchcraft and the occult in West Africa.

Instead, the more usual image of the continent is one of senseless acts of violence fueled by old hatreds.[4] It is a picture that struggles to manage the complexities and contradictions of Africa's colonial and postcolonial experience; the historicity of African societies; and the organization of power through state bureaucracies, international organizations or transnational religious organizations. It is a picture that also fails to think about violence and religion as open-ended concepts, where, for example, the interpersonal violence of the Rwandan genocide can also be approached through the structural violence of Rwanda's experience of the twentieth century, where religious identities offered the space for healing and reconciliation in the postgenocide period, and one where the organizational structures of the Catholic Church offered part of the structures and discourses that fueled genocide (Longman 2009). In understanding how violence and religion are located within the history of African societies, one must also consider international circuits of money, commodities, and ideas.

An example of something of this complexity can be found in the growth of Pentecostal or "born again" Christianity across much of sub-Saharan Africa through the 1980s and 1990s. Pentecostalism has made enormous inroads into public life in Africa, as in much of the developing world, over the past 20 years, and has transformed the continent's political and social landscapes (Gifford 1998; Kalu 2008). It links up not only to the particular experience of individual Christians, but also to a much larger global conversation. It argues for salvation through a second baptism in the Holy Spirit and joins together urban congregations of Lagos, Johannesburg, and Nairobi where the "prosperity Gospel" is preached, and the grass-thatched churches of Africa's countryside. Pentecostal discourse is also increasingly coming to define the terms on which new Islamic movements are organized and made sense of across the continent. In eastern Uganda, a relatively poor part of the continent, Pentecostalism focuses on the gifts of healing and spiritual transformation. Those who become "born again" are expected to adopt new rules and behaviors, including prohibitions on drinking alcohol, polygynous marriages, and smoking. There is an emphasis on showing inner conversion through outward acts, of making a break with the past (cf. Meyer 1998: 317–18). Also apparent is the interweaving of different levels of society, local, national, and international.

The particular point of the chapter is to explain the interweaving of religious change and the experience of violence in part of eastern Uganda. The violence of the insurgency in Teso (1986–93) shadowed not only life at the time of war: it explains the particular trajectory of Pentecostal Christianity in the region, and why that "Born again" trajectory was accompanied by a more general commitment to making new rules and adhering to them in the work of nonreligious institutions such as the local courts and customary organizations, orderly public rituals, and the enforcement of new codes of personal behavior. (In emphasizing orderliness, propriety, and commensality, there was an attempt to show that things had moved on.) These expressions of propriety made a purposeful contrast with the disorder of the insurgency, and link Teso

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to a more general concern with public morality that has become increasingly prevalent as a political discourse across the continent. In a particular context in eastern Uganda, Pentecostal churches drew significance from their relationship to the violence of the recent past, while at the same time linking up to a much broader structural shift in the religious life of the continent.

After a sketch of the history of the region, which looks at the structural violence of the colonial encounter, I offer a more detailed account of the insurgency in Teso, where the focus is on the patterning of violence and its religious significance. Following this, I discuss the role of churches in rural communities, whose work has been greatly influenced by the memory of the insurgency. Especially apparent is the growing importance of religiously inspired notions of propriety and respectability, and a certain ambivalence toward the relationship between violence and social order. While violence can be seen as destructive and disturbing, it is also possible to see how acts of violence oppose the structural violence of dominant hierarchies.
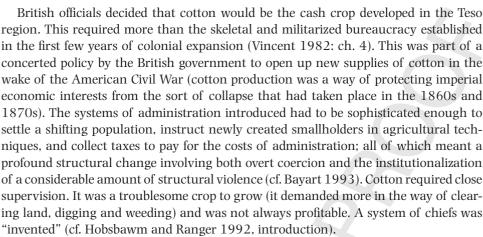
The Violence of Colonialism in Eastern Uganda

As in much of sub-Saharan Africa there was a considerable disjuncture between the pattern of precolonial society and the type of society that developed as British colonial administration expanded in east Africa in the early years of the twentieth century. Teso, like many societies in Africa, was acephalous or "stateless," with a pattern of social organization small in scale and contingent in form (Vincent 1968; 1982). Political authority was not ordered in the manner of more hierarchical or centralized societies, nor did it appear to be organized into well-structured age-sets. In this relatively egalitarian society the marker of social and political status was cattle. A mobile population mixed pastoralism with crop cultivation, well suited to the acephalous pattern of political and social authority and signally unsuited to the needs of colonial administration. There were none of the indigenous forms of chiefly authority that would have melded with colonial bureaucratic institutions, and in the religious sphere there was nothing to compare to those societies that already believed in a creator-god. Instead belief systems focused more on the individual, the homestead, or the neighborhood.

Something of the violence of the disjuncture of the colonial experience is captured in *Citizen and Subject*, Mamdani's account of colonial administration in Africa (1996). In Mamdani's formulation the colonial state was organized around a divided logic. The continent was split into citizens, typically whites, who lived in urban centers governed by constitutional law with the outward signs of "civil society," and a countryside of subjects managed through indigenous institutions via a system of chiefs. Mamdani terms the form of government in the countryside "decentralized despotism," a form of administration that cemented ethnic identities (1996: 52–4). Power was legitimated through the codification of "customary" laws, a codification that promoted the idea of homogeneous ethnic groups. Where, in the past, a plurality of social structures and institutions, and negotiable forms of custom and convention, could be observed, colonial administration required more organized and bureaucratically rational systems.

British officials decided that cotton would be the cash crop developed in the Teso region. This required more than the skeletal and militarized bureaucracy established in the first few years of colonial expansion (Vincent 1982: ch. 4). This was part of a concerted policy by the British government to open up new supplies of cotton in the wake of the American Civil War (cotton production was a way of protecting imperial economic interests from the sort of collapse that had taken place in the 1860s and 1870s). The systems of administration introduced had to be sophisticated enough to settle a shifting population, instruct newly created smallholders in agricultural techniques, and collect taxes to pay for the costs of administration; all of which meant a profound structural change involving both overt coercion and the institutionalization of a considerable amount of structural violence (cf. Bayart 1993). Cotton required close supervision. It was a troublesome crop to grow (it demanded more in the way of clearing land, digging and weeding) and was not always profitable. A system of chiefs was "invented" (cf. Hobsbawm and Ranger 1992, introduction).

In a pattern common to the continent, the expansion of colonial administration was accompanied by the first attempts at Christian missionary work. Colonialism was as much an ideological project as an administrative one. Teso, which was developed as a cotton producing region, was also part of a campaign led by the Church Missionary Society to open up the more "backward" parts of east Africa to the gifts of Christianity. In a very obvious sense, Teso links in to the narrative of colonialism as an ideological and economic project. At the same time, however, as Robin Horton suggests, the appeal of Christianity in many African societies in the first part of the twentieth century may also link in to the need to find larger cosmologies. Horton (1971) suggests that the reason Christianity was appropriated and made a part of the cultural life of the continent was that it helped make sense of the dislocation brought about by the colonialism. The sorts of atomization and violence that came with migrant labor, or new disciplines of science, education, and Western medicine, also required new systems of understanding. In Horton's view, the advance of Christianity coincided with the complex incorporation of Africa into a colonial and capitalist system.

As part of the process of incorporation, the Catholic Mill Hill missionaries and the Anglican Church Missionary Society established sites on the edge of the administrative center of Ngora in 1908. Though late to enter the area, these mission societies were, in many respects, the most important catalysts for change. Mission schools provided a way of acculturating newly appointed "chiefs" in the business of government administration and cotton production. They were places where the economic and political practices required of a "progressive" society could be given religious narratives: the seven-day week, the special status of the Sabbath, new modes of dress and conduct, the value of literacy and numeracy, and so on.

Although the experience of colonial government would appear to be a story of the complete subjugation of one society by another, there were limits to the reach of the transformation brought about by the colonial state. As Sara Berry suggests, colonialism in Africa was in many instances "hegemony on a shoestring," a form of domination strongly influenced by local forms (1993: ch. 2). In Teso the number of Europeans in the district totaled three in 1911, and 66 in 1921. This can be compared to an indigenous population totaling 270,211. So although the deployment of client chiefs

produced a coercive system, it was a system that had to find an accommodation with the preexisting logics of the society. At an intermediary level, there were those willing to engage in the educational and religious structures as a way of gaining some advantage over their neighbors. There were also those who accepted positions of authority, and used the limited capacity of the colonial state to build up alternative structures of power. What came to be established was, by necessity, a version of colonialism refracted through existing social and political patterns.

Colonial administration also produced a significant, religiously inspired resistance movement across east Africa. The Society of the One Almighty God (popularly known as the Bamalaki) sought to challenge the ideological authority of colonialism. Established as early as 1915, Malakites drew strength from a reading of the Bible which offered a vernacular response to the visible catastrophes – including rinderpest in 1914, three years of crop failure in 1916, 1917, and 1918, instances of smallpox, Spanish flu, and the plague, and a famine in 1919 which resulted in 2,067 (recorded) deaths – of the first decades of the century. The growth of the Bamalaki signaled that there was room for the early fragmentation of mission theology in newly administered populations. Teachings from the Bible were used to draw the support of those who opposed colonialism. Mugema, the main proponent of the movement, suggested Europeans were weaker Christians than their African counterparts, because their attitude to medicine and health had returned Europeans "to the paganism of [their] forefathers" (Welbourn 1961: 41–2). In an echo of more recent versions of Pentecostal Christianity, Malakites saw their reading of the Bible as situating themselves at the forefront of change, far from any nativistic or authentic strands of "African religion" (Vincent 1982: 244–7).

Above the level of the village, local government structures related to the countryside through a series of coercive relationships. In a pattern common to much of colonial Africa, administrative "chiefs" were appointed away from their home areas. Positions of authority were gifts of the colonial administration, and chiefly office depended on good relations with one's superiors. Chiefs had to prove themselves capable of contributing to the costs of running district administration and the export economy. This made for a particular form of politics organized around the tension between the hierarchies of the colonial state and the pattern and logic of precolonial societies. The ambivalent position of Christianity was apparent with a tenuous relationship between the hierarchical structures found in mission centers and the loose and weakly institutionalized Christianity found in rural areas.

As Richard Werbner suggests, there was, amidst the story of violent colonial expansion across Africa, a certain resilience to existing social forms and logics (1984: 170). Rather contradictory ways of doing things had to muddle together, coinciding at certain points, pulling away at others. There were competing forms of political authority and styles of thought. While certain societies had an easier time eliding existing institutions with the needs of colonial administration, this elision was contingent and uneven. Those who served at higher government levels grew away from their own society, and this division made for a politics at odds with what had been there before. If Arendt speaks of power ruling absolutely as the opposite of violence, this sort of opposition was impossible in the practice of colonial administration in Africa (Arendt 1970). Instead the system, as Saul suggests in his writings on Uganda under Amin, was

authoritarian without being particularly authoritative (Saul 1976). Uganda in the 1970s never found a middle ground between too little state power – anarchy – and too much – tyranny. Violence, or the use of force, struggled to stabilize itself into a form that appeared legitimate.

Politics, Religion, and Insurgency

For Ellis and ter Haar, politics in Africa is articulated through religious idioms: "the classical Western separation of religion and politics into distinct systems of thought and action" does not necessarily apply (1998: 191). Instead power in Africa, and the violence intrinsic to organizing power, is mediated through religious idioms and the spiritual realm. This means that the authority of the state, its capacity for the legitimate use of force or for the prosecution of violence, is understood as part of a broader cosmology of power where the visible can only be made sense of through the invisible.

The state in Africa is a source of patronage and an object of intense competition (Bayart 1993). The profusion of military coups in Africa in the years after independence are an expression of this fact, as are the long-running civil wars in Mozambique, Angola, Liberia, Sudan, and Congo. At the same time, the violence that accompanies elections in contemporary democratic Africa is an expression of the belief that control over the state is an economic imperative and worth fighting for. Politics is typically organized around "big men" or patrons who sustain support through a series of clientelistic relationships. It is a version of politics that, even at the state level, appears highly personalized: political discourse focuses on uncertainty, suspicion, rumor, agitation, and fear. Or in Schatzberg's formulation, politics can be best expressed as "father, family, and food" (2001). Politics achieves some sort of predictability or logic by being organized by patrons (fathers) who channel patronage (food) through networks (family).

This pattern of violent conflict over control of the state has been part of Uganda's story since independence in 1962: the two governments of Milton Obote (1960–71, 1980–5) ended in military takeovers, and also the murderous, idiosyncratic rule of Idi Amin in the 1970s. Obote's overthrow in the mid-1980s was a particular problem for those living in the east of the country. Many had served in the army or the police force of the defeated government and worried that the new regime, with its power based in the west of the country, would persecute them. Their fears were realized when the new government of Yoweri Museveni and his National Resistance Army imposed a dishonorable discharge on roughly three-quarters of the national police force in July 1986, denying them the right to severance pay and pension (much of the police force came from the east). Museveni's accession to power coincided with a deteriorating security situation.

Early in 1986 Karamojong warriors entered the eastern parts of Teso, and a series of spectacular raids destroyed the region's cattle stocks (Jones 2009). Each raid produced a new group of cattle-less men, and by the time raiding reached western and southern parts of Teso in 1988, the raiding parties comprised Itesot as well as Karamojong warriors. Estimates put the number of cattle lost at 500,000, though numbers were of less importance than the overwhelming nature of the raiding. This
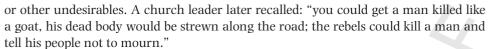
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involved not only the stealing of cattle, but also the burning of huts, the theft of ploughs and hand hoes, and the looting of stores of grain and flour. The cattle raiding and Museveni's accession to power were bound together in the popular imagination – an eliding of ideas of the state and ethnic politics – and many felt that a rebellion offered the best chance of restoring order. Rebel leaders argued that their movement would recover the wealth and political power that had been lost, and would also improve conditions in the countryside. Given the cattle raiding and growing insecurity in the region, their arguments found a receptive audience. The economic collapse and the arrival of the new government were bound together in the memory of villagers when I interviewed people in the region a decade on: "The people say that it was Museveni who stole the cattle … If Museveni had wanted to, he could have stopped the raids. The government could have stopped the Karamojongs from reaching Teso. We asked for security, but Museveni refused to bring soldiers in. We believe that Museveni sent the Karamojong to steal the cattle."[5]

Above all, what was remembered of the insurgency was the very particular experience of violence, and the way that that violence was refracted through a religious lens. Any veneer of military management by the rebel leadership bore little relationship to the lived experience of the insurgency on the ground. Within a subparish of little more than a hundred homes, villagers could recall at least four different rebel groups (Jones 2009: 50). As Kalyvas (2006) suggests, the logic of violence in civil war is one shaped as much by local conflicts as by the narrative of opposing sides or competing parties. In Teso the insurgency was experienced as a highly localized sort of civil war. Much of the violence was directed inward toward village politicians, and was, in part, a reaction to the hierarchies and ordering that had been institutionalized during the colonial and postcolonial period.

The loss of cattle signaled not only the collapse of the region's economy, but also a crisis of social, religious, and cultural identities. The giving of cattle, from father to son, demonstrated a son's graduation into manhood, and cattle form the major part of the brideprice a man needs in order to marry in Iteso society (Karp 1978). The slaughtering of a cow or bull was a celebrated part of funeral ceremonies. With the loss of cattle the culture of the Iteso became practically impossible, and this placed considerable stress on relationships between younger and older men. The process through which youths became men was closed off because there was nothing left to inherit. Cattle raiding and general impoverishment also meant that it was harder for people to maintain social relationships in the usual way. Acts of commensality proved impossible, because they could no longer be paid for, and the disappearance of public ceremonies encapsulated a sense of isolation and decline.

Most striking of all was the way rebels – typically younger men – chose to kill "big men." Rebels went out of their way to attack the idea that a "big man," such as a village chief or clan head, should be buried in a respectful way, and rebel groups made a point of denying the rites to the family of the deceased. The most remembered way of killing was referred to as "digging potatoes" (see epigraph). In other cases, bodies were dumped in the swamp, itself a sacrilegious act as swamps were regarded as dangerous places where transgressions such as incest and adultery were punished. Big men were buried in the late afternoon, the time of day typically reserved for the internment of thieves

or other undesirables. A church leader later recalled: "you could get a man killed like a goat, his dead body would be strewn along the road; the rebels could kill a man and tell his people not to mourn."

It is possible to see in this violence a conflict that expressed, albeit in fairly desperate ways, the competition between hierarchical and nonhierarchical forms that colonialism had institutionalized in the region. There was – amidst the apparent chaos – a certain logic. "Big men," the target of rebel actions, were also part of a system that was not an entirely legitimate form of authority, a recurrent theme in literature on colonial and postcolonial violence on the continent. The taunting song in the epigraph shows the mocking nature of rebel violence. The insurgency was also defined in terms of signs and symbols. "Big men" were killed in ways that attacked their claim to political authority and social status, and in ways that denied them and their families the possibility of peace. Those institutions that had entrenched authority and hierarchy were challenged both in ideological terms and in terms of acts of violence (Gluckman 1952).

The violence of the insurgency was accompanied by a rapid growth in Pentecostal or "born again" forms of Christianity. Pentecostalism, with its emphasis on rebirth, personal transformation and leaving the past behind, held considerable appeal. It offered one way of making sense, at a spiritual level at least, of the place of the individual at a time of social and economic collapse. As such, it was a religious form that linked into a prevailing sense of withdrawal and isolation. The idea of "salvation," a way of leading a better life (and afterlife), was seen as something personal.

Others joined Pentecostal churches because they were less likely to be conscripted into rebel groups, and less likely to be harassed by government soldiers. The differentness of Pentecostalism – with its opposition to "tradition" and its newness – placed Pentecostal churches outside the social and political conflicts that drove the rebellion. Rebels were in the business of targeting local "big men," who were rarely Pentecostal. As such, Pentecostalism linked its religious narrative of the individual to a practical desire to withdraw from the violence of the insurgency.

The growth of Pentecostalism was particularly strong during the period of internment. Starting in early 1991 the National Resistance Army forcibly resettled the rural population into camps. This had profound consequences. Internment, it was felt, would make the prosecution of the war more straightforward. The camps, which were placed on the outskirts of major towns, represented a way of emptying the countryside of people; cutting off support, either voluntary or coerced, for the rebellion. There were inadequate supplies of food, shelter and water, and a lack of overall organization: dysentery was endemic. Most of the considerable number of people who died were buried in communal pits.

The camps provided a place where people began to consider radical changes in their religious lives. Life was reduced to a pattern of sitting and waiting, and the relationships involved in conversion had time to evolve. As Kevin Ward suggests, there were "stories of a revival of religious commitment in some of the camps" (1995: 102). It was also a moment of religious innovation. In most instances the Pentecostal church prayed in the same building as the Catholic and Anglican congregations, meaning that people had the possibility of comparing Pentecostalism to other more established churches

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within a familiar setting. The social and psychological dynamics of the insurgency also did much to make the message of Pentecostal Christianity persuasive. The millennial elements of Pentecostalism, the belief that the "born again" Christian should prepare for the life to come, and that the world itself might come to an end, made sense to many at that time.

There was a further aspect to the religious experience of civil war: the relationship between the violence of rebel actions and religious thought. As Behrend shows in her work on the Lord's Resistance Army, rebel movements often frame their work through relating political or economic grievance to religious discourses (1999). The Holy Spirit Movement, for example, was led by a "prophet," Alice Lakwena, who articulated a belief in violence and warfare as a way of cleansing society of past sins. The Movement spoke of nature, in a very open-ended sense, as an ally. Nature countered the corruption of the world, and the military campaign waged by the Holy Spirit Movement spoke of a sort of purification, a millenarian response. A successor movement, Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army, used biblical imagery as it prosecuted a war against people living in northern Uganda in the early 1990s (Finnström 2008). In the case of Teso what emerged was the shifting set of images, ideas, and practices that related magic or spirit forces to beliefs in protection and invincibility. Whether it was rituals of purification that preceded military maneuvers, or the ritualized way in which big men were killed, violence related itself to spiritual concerns.
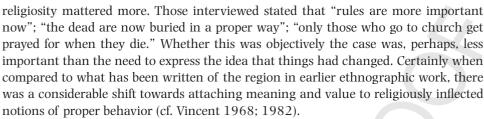
In this the particular history of Teso society, its acephalous inheritance and the sense that this produced weak hierarchies is significant. It helps explain both the pattern of the violence – personalized and politicized – and the response to violence. In this there is a marked contrast to contexts such as Rwanda, where stronger hierarchies and church bureaucracies helped shape violence. As Longman (2009) has shown, the emphasis of the Catholic Church in Rwanda on obedience to power and authority, as well as the blurred boundaries between church and state, helped integrate religious structures within the overall story of state-sanctioned killing. In other words there is an apparent relationship between organizational identities, religious systems, and the patterning of violence. Churches served not only as places of refuge but also as spaces where people organize. As such, religion not only offers the language of forgiveness and remission, but also the structures and logics that help organize and make sense of violence.

The Ambivalence of Peace

If religious ideas and structures shape violence, they also help to shape peace. By the time I conducted research in the region a decade after the insurgency's end, there was an understanding that there was a correct way of doing things, which needed to be demonstrated through public displays in formal settings: in church, at court, during a burial service. In the particular context of Teso the growth of Pentecostalism was accompanied by a more general emphasis on "proper" behavior, the sort of moral campaigning that often characterizes societies emerging from violent conflict. The value attached to attending church, or to demonstrating other outward signs of

religiosity mattered more. Those interviewed stated that "rules are more important now"; "the dead are now buried in a proper way"; "only those who go to church get prayed for when they die." Whether this was objectively the case was, perhaps, less important than the need to express the idea that things had changed. Certainly when compared to what has been written of the region in earlier ethnographic work, there was a considerable shift towards attaching meaning and value to religiously inflected notions of proper behavior (cf. Vincent 1968; 1982).

The increasing concern with proper behavior is attributable partly to the growth of Pentecostal forms of Christianity. As argued earlier, those attending Pentecostal churches accepted new rules and new behaviors which marked them out from others, and this marking out was done in public, as well as at home. The prohibitions on drinking beer, on smoking, or on taking more than one wife had implications for how one behaved on public occasions such as at weddings and burial ceremonies (spaces less overly Christian than the Sunday service). These new ways of doing things mattered because they were a way of demonstrating how much things had moved on. Becoming a "born again" Christian or joining a group of charismatic Catholics meant converting to a new way of life. Pentecostalism made a demonstrable break with the past.

Birgit Meyer writes of Pentecostal discourse and practice in Ghana as something that offers the individual Christian the chance to "break with the past" (1998: 317; see also Engelke 2004; van Dijk 1998). Prohibitions on alcohol, traditional medicine, and polygamy serve as outward signs of this inward rupture. In a not dissimilar way, life in Teso was organized around the desire to draw a line between the present and past. This was achieved in a much more open-ended way than allowed for in Meyer's study. In Teso, "rupture" – a term suggestive of the violence of moving on from violence – was seen in the way community life was organized. The sorts of orderly funerals, or the pattern of a court case, made a purposeful contrast from the actions of rebels.

Village courts mattered because they offered a way of dealing with the memory of the insurgency. In looking at the particular pattern of arguments and judgments in court a decade on from the end of the insurgency, what emerged was the way cases were framed by political debates around violence and indiscipline. Young men who were felt to be stubborn or willful found decisions going against them, even if the evidence went in their favor. In a case I have documented elsewhere, a young man, Akol Stanislas, was punished not for any crime (he was trying to lay a charge against a brother-in-law for having attacked his sister), but rather because he did not follow the correct procedures in lodging the case (Jones 2009: 84–5). This was seen as an attack on institutions that were the best hope of restoring peaceable relations in the years after the insurgency's end. Courts not only settled private disputes, but also articulated public, moral concerns.

There is, in Teso, an ambivalent relationship between structural and interpersonal violence. Older people try to revive the "big man" politics of the past – part of what could be regarded as a form of structural violence – while also reflecting on the inter-personal violence of the insurgency. One way of shoring up their authority was to have a more explicit discourse concerning their own authority. As we have seen, court cases ostensibly centered on other topics could migrate to a discussion on the attitude of the young man involved. On one level there was a political discourse that

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disadvantaged younger men and promoted the idea that older men were authoritative and pacific.

At the same time, the memory of the insurgency often worked in the opposite direction. Court cases had to recognize the potential violence of younger men. Those in authority had to be more careful when delivering judgments than before. Many of the "big men" I spoke to suggested that they were happy to deflect conflicts. There was a pattern of moving disputes from court to clan and from clan back to court, and many of the more difficult cases were concluded through exhaustion rather than the imposition of one man's judgment. In a place emerging from a recent history of explicit violence, there was considerable difficulty in reorganizing the structural violence intrinsic to public institutions and public life.

A central concern, not only of this chapter, but also of the entire *Companion* is the way that religion and violence intersect. We can generalize the *particular* way ideas, practices, and organizations shape intersections of religion and violence in Africa. At the same time, it is possible to see, from the Teso example, a more general statement about the ambivalence of violence and religion: religious ideas help shape violence, they also help shape peace. It follows that the way violence is ordered in a society during times of peace also contains within it the logic of violence during war. For the past century Africans have lived with the radical experience of colonialism and violent reformation of the postcolonial period. It is a time when the world religions of Christianity and Islam increasingly came to inform the way people made sense of violence and social change. The present-day patterning of order and disorder suggests the need to understand how memories of interpersonal violence, and histories of structural violence continue to inform what people think, what they say, and what they do.

Notes

1   From a discussion with Angejet Jennifer Loy, a widow from the subparish of Agolitom; interviewed Nov. 7, 2002.
2   The "Iteso" are one of the largest "tribes" in Uganda, numbering close to a million. They share a linguistic base with the Jie, Dodoth, Toposa, Karamojong, Turkana, Murle, and Suk, all living to the north or east of the region.
3   These images can be seen in the award-winning documentary *Saving Africa's Witch Children* (Channel 4, UK) or a recent piece on child "sacrifice" on the BBC's *Newsnight* programme: at http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/newsnight/8441813.stm (accessed Nov. 2010).
4   On the civil war in Sudan see Madut Jok, chapter 33 in this volume; on the politics of the church in Rwanda see Longman (2009). The modernity of witchcraft is discussed in Geschiere (1997).
5   This point was put forward by Tukei Gerald in a discussion with older men in the subparish of Oledai, Dec. 11, 2002. The other men present agreed with Tukei's assertion that the new government failed to protect the Iteso, and that this failure was one of malign intent, rather than benign neglect.

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