

## **Religious Missions, Colonial Administration and Their Consequences in North -Congo: 1947-2012**

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**ABSTRACT:** *For several years, the Catholic Church has been confronted with the agitated and ambiguous political evolution of the Mbere of Kelle through territorial, political reorganizations, the establishment of institutions, social violence. He experienced the period of political engagement of his priests and settlers. This article also focuses on the history of this Church in order to better understand its role in Mbere society. It traces its evolution from the mission period to the establishment of the colonial administration, including the end of the Mission. It shows the strengths and limits of its action in a Mbere society itself faced with profound political, social and cultural changes due to colonization and evangelization. The belief Mbere of divine origin of the universe corresponds to that of Christianity: For the Mbéré in particular, the divine energy is present everywhere in creation, so that men and other living creatures and even natural phenomena are penetrated by it and are thereby in communion. This belief could strengthen the Christian doctrine of creation and enrich the thinking of Christians on the ecological problem. The Catholic mission in the western basin had very important repercussions on the Mbere civilization*

**KEYWORDS:** *religious missions, colonial administration, evangelism, impact, Kelle*

Date of Submission: 23-06-2020

Date of Acceptance: 11-07-2020

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The history of evangelization has always aroused the interest of intellectuals and a good number of African historians in general and Congolese in particular, in various aspects. This relationship of religious, cultural and political domination, often diffuse in the eyes of the dominated, is interesting today to analyze because it underlies an ideology of power. The district of Kelle which, at the time included the current sub-prefecture of Etoumbi and that of Mbomo, abounds in enormous natural riches (wood, gold, diamonds, domestic fauna ...). This economic asset shows the importance of the District from the colonial perspective. To bring the gospel to others requires simple words. But the message remains very important, it must be proclaimed to the all humanity. Evangelizing is therefore to obey the order of the mission given by the Lord, Jesus Christ to his disciples. This article first tries to examine first the origin and the purpose of the Catholic missions in the district of Kelle, then to analyze the relations between the Catholic missions and the colonial administration as well as their consequences in the west basin in this case in the district of Kelle.

#### **1 - Colonial administration and traditional powers**

##### **1.1 - Brief historical overview of the Europe-Congo contact**

From 1884-1885, the international conference on the occupation of territories in Africa was held in Berlin. Among the problems to be dealt with was the situation in the Congo Basin, much coveted by the great powers of that time. During this Berlin conference, Africa was shared between the European powers. The great Congo Basin that once formed the Kongo kingdom was divided into three countries which are: the Portuguese Congo (Angola), the Belgian Congo (current Democratic Congo) and the French Congo (Congo- Brazzaville).

The Congo thus became a French protectorate under domination. The Holy See, to avoid other conflicts between states, also had to confirm this division and asked that each colony be evangelized by missionaries who spoke the language of the country which belongs to the colony. Thus in 1886, at the request of the superior of the congregation of the Fathers of the Holy Spirit, the apostolic vicariate of the French-Congo was erected. To this end, Father Carrie, already vice-apostolic prefect, was appointed Apostolic Vicar of this new vicariate. The creation of this vicariate enabled Spiritan missionaries to work in all tranquility without suffering from the troubles of the Portuguese.

It is from this point that the missionaries will work to reach the North Congo. On July 31, 1878, chased by the bapfourou on the Alima, Pierre Savorgnon De Brazza crossed the Ewo region, reached Adinga near the town of Etoumbi where he discovered the upper course of the Lecouona river. From July 12 to December 27, 1885, Jacques De Brazza and A ttili Pecille crossed the territory of Kellé from West to East from Gabon through

the Ndjouono village, to the village of Ilokou in the north of the current District of Mbomo . In this same context, the Tréchet brothers reached Etoumbi where they created the Compagnie Française du Haut et du Bas Congo. The occupation of the territory of Kellé pushed the colonial administration to the reorganization of the whole District.

### **1.2. 1. The reorganization of the District of Kellé by the colonial administration**

After the occupation of the territory, the District of Kelle has reorganized as shown in this organization chart - Judgment supplementing the decree of August 5, 1947 reorganizing the chiefdoms in the territories of the Middle

Congo, appointing the holders of these chiefdoms and fixing their annual allocation; Archive of the district (weapons carry permit registry from 1955 to 1962).

The district of Kellé was subdivided into cantons, burials and villages. It was the canton chiefs, land and villages. The canton is a territorial division comprising a certain number of structures, which reflected a sociological reality characterized by a people united by the same history and tradition. It was made up of several villages headed by a canton chief based in one of these villages. The village which sheltered the chief of canton represents the political and administrative center of the canton. Thus, the canton chief has a mystical power. And around him, he has a group of *Ankani* (notables) who are his advisers whom he consulted to make important decisions. Here, the chief of canton had very broad powers in matters of customary justice. Conflicts between people from different villages are judged by the cantonal court. However, when in a village one of the parties to the conflict did not agree with the judgment rendered by the village court, they could appeal to the cantonal court chaired by the chief of the canton. Nowadays, the administration in place puts a president, a vice-president and a secretary, capable of drafting daily facts, at the helm of the village. The village chief is elected by the inhabitants of the village or appointed by the local authorities. Its mission is, among other things, to enforce administrative laws, to settle social and even inter-village conflicts.

In addition, in traditional *Mbére* societies, the succession to power was family after the death of a chief. To this end, the succession to power was family or bilinear, that is to say after the death of a chief, he was succeeded either by his brother, by his nephew, or by his son <sup>44</sup>[1].

#### **1.1.2 - Administrative posts**

In 1899, the Tréchet brothers in search of raw materials established the factory in Etoumbi. In the middle of this year, they had created another in Odzala in the north of the district of Mbomo. However, this factory was destroyed, burned and pillaged on September 27, 1903 by the populations (Mboko) because of the excitement of the colonial companies. For security reasons in the area, the administrators created the military posts of Etoumbi (July 31, 1905), Abolo (1909) and that of Ololi (1911).

Thus, the decree of December 11, 1920 of the governor of the Middle Congo abolished the posts of Mbomo, Abolo , Odzala and Mbama following the Bakota rebellion . Before 1935, Abolo was part of the district of Oubangui- Alima and its headquarters were successively established in Odzala (in the current district of Mbomo) and then in Ololi (on the Tchere-Tsama agricultural track). In 1931 the Abolo post was rehabilitated to be permanently removed from Likouala- Mossaka by the decree of February 6, 1946. From 1935 to 1947, this administrative post was established in Abolo (on the Kellé- Ndjoukou - Ngoyebouma axis). The district of Oubangui- Alima is then called Likouala- Mossaka

#### **1.2 - Mberé reactions to the colonial administration**

The administrative system set up by colonization had pushed people to revolt. On December 26, 1912 serious incidents broke out in Ndouba . Thus, Peillard , agent for the Compagnie Française du Haut et du Bas-Congo based in Mbomo (west of Kelle) was killed during a brawl with a native named Lomba .

Subsequently, the colonial army in advance of Fort-Rousset, under the leadership of Lieutenant Vidalet had carried out a repression which had caused several victims. It continued until the village Ndjouono on the Congo-Gabon border where the populations were scattered in the forests[2]. After this movement, order was established until the creation of the District of Kellé.

#### **1.2 - The creation of the District of Kellé in 1947**

The creation of the District of Kellé was the indisputable work of French colonization. It was linked to the exploration of the North of the Middle Congo at the end of which the Trechet brothers first settled in Etoumbi, Odzala , Ololi and Mbomo before the colonial administration chose Kellé as a crossroads of their economic interest. Thus, the meetings between the colonists and the populations of Kellé had upset the socio-political organization *Mbere*. We note that in their missions, the colonists had started to set up an administration to subjugate the natives. Before February 6, 1946, the territory of the colony of the Middle Congo was subdivided into subdivisions, cantons, lands and villages. After its secondly to the Ewo subdivision, the

administrative post of Kelle was transferred several times for various reasons from one place to another. From Abolo to Kellé, on February 6, 1947, the Abolo administrative post, rehabilitated in 1931, was erected as a district by colonial law of the same year, was brought back to the crossroads of the three main axes, in a small village called Kelle.

For this purpose, after the definitive suppression of the district of Bakota , the administrator Charles Schmautz was charged cumulatively with his functions of chief of the district of Makoua, to direct the District of Kellé newly created on February 06, 1947 between Ololi , with residence at Tchéré (located 20 km from Etoumbi ) [3]. Thus, on June 25, 1947, the District of Kellé was officially put into function with the appointment of the sub-prefect Guy Ponsaille, administrator of the civil services of the colonies, with residence in subdivisions, lands and villages. After its secondly to the Ewo subdivision, the administrative post of Kelle was transferred several times for various reasons from one place to another. From Abolo to Kellé, on February 6, 1947, the Abolo administrative post, rehabilitated in 1931, was erected as a district by colonial law of the same year, and brought back to the crossroads of the three main axes, in a small village called Kellé. For this purpose, after the definitive suppression of the district of Bakota , the administrator Charles Schmautz was charged cumulatively with his functions of chief of District of Makoua, to direct the District of Kellé newly created on February 06, 1947 between Ololi , with residence at Tchéré (located 20 km from Etoumbi ).

Thus, on June 25, 1947, the District of Kellé was officially put into function with the appointment of the sub-prefect Guy Ponsaille , administrator of the civil services of the colonies, with residence in Kellé [4].

However, the configuration of the district of Kellé was strongly modified in particular with the detachment of Mbomo and Etoumbi , erected in PCA respectively in 1960 and 1966. In the 1970s, several villages were grouped into village centers by the political will of that time [5]. The purpose of this regrouping was to improve the living conditions of the populations thus regrouped by the creation of infrastructures such as: schools, dispensaries... and to bring the administration closer to the administered. Unfortunately, this attempt to regroup the villages had no expected impact. Let us remember that after the missionary passage follows the missionary period. Here we are going to present some Catholic missions in North Congo.

## **II. CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN NORTH CONGO**

Evangelism in Congo has been carried out by Christian denominations (Catholics, Protestants, and Salvationists). It is a religious mission centered on the teaching of Jesus Christ. The expansion of this religion was due to the announcement of the good news (divine news or announcement of the gospel to the natives who were animists or traditionalists) and the education of Blacks [6]. Today, with scientific and technical progress, we have to realize how much these first foundations. Several missionaries worked there in extremely difficult conditions.

Many of these religious died because of the African climate: bilious fever, hematuria and especially the terrible sleeping sickness; most missionaries were quickly killed, their ministry often short-lived. This Evangelization was the work of the Spiritan fathers including Mgr P. Augouard and Father Carrie. Before his arrival in Congo, Bishop P. Augouard was first a missionary in Gabon. On November 4, 1879, he was sent to Landana (the current Portuguese enclave of Cabinda). The borough of Landana was one of the most commercial points of the coast; but "the Europeans who had factories there had behaved with such brutality towards the natives that these latter avenged, on occasion, by terrible reprisals" [7]. Indeed, in 1880 after having signed the treaty with King Makoko , Pierre Savorgnan De Brazza, passing through Landana , was welcomed by the French missionaries of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. He took advantage of his stay to ask Father Carrie, superior of the mission, to go and settle in the Mfoa post he had occupied and leave in the care of Sergeant Malamine "in order to maintain the honor of the French flag, until France officially takes possession of it ".

De Brazza feared that the area would be occupied by Stanley, who worked for King Leopold II. Mgr P. Augouard was designated by Father Carrie to go on a study trip to this still unknown region. Subsequently, many trips were made by the missionaries of the Congregation of the Holy Spirit who created many missions. By decree of the sacred Congregation of Propaganda, of September 9, 1865, the former apostolic prefecture of the Congo abandoned by the Capuchins since 1836 is entrusted to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit. The Reverend Father Carrie, apostolic vice-prefect, whose residence was in Landana , founded a residence in Loango, on August 25, 1883. Taking into account the geographical extent of this vicariate, the sovereign divided the vicariate of the French Congo into two parts, October 14, 1890 [8].

The former took the name of apostolic vicariate of French Bas-Congo, while the second became apostolic vicariate of French Haut-Congo or Oubangui. The first remained under the direction of Monsignor Carrie, while the second was entrusted to Monsignor Augouard

At the request of Brazza, Father Augouard left on July 6, 1881 for his first exploration towards the Pool; relatively quick trip, making contact. The second, in 1883, had a more concrete goal: to found missions. Among these were the missions of Laongo (August 25, 1883), Linzolo (September 20, 1883), the Sacred Heart

Cathedral of Brazzaville (1887) of Liranga (1889), etc. We are trying to present some Catholic missions in Haut-Congo.

On October 14, 1890, the Apostolic Vicariate of the French Congo was divided into two Vicariates, the Vicariate of the Lower Congo (Loango) and the Vicariate of Haut-Congo or l'Oubangui which had its headquarters in Brazzaville. These two vicariates were separated by the Djoué river. At the head of this new vicariate was named Prosper Augouard. This division enabled the two apostolic vicars to advance in the development of their missions because the territories were less immense than before. So Carrie Bishop, labored it much more in the south and Bishop Augouard north. After his coronation in 1890, Archbishop Augouard, an ardent missionary, continued to work hard for the development of his vicariate. Several missions were founded in the Vicariate: Linzolo (1883), Saint Hypolite de Brazzaville (1887), Saint Louis de Liranga (1889), the Catholic Church of B etou in 1893, Sainte Famille de Bessou (1894), Notre Dame de Lékéty (1897), Saint Radegonde de Tsambitso (1899), Saint François Xavier de Boundji (1900), then Saint Philippe de Mbamou (1911). These are missions founded by Mgr Augouard.

Then, in 1922, Mgr Guichard who succeeded Mgr Augouard continued this enterprise with the establishment of the mission in Makoua (1930). Successor of Guichard in 1937, Bishop Biechy based on Set Koukouya the Mission St. Therese of the Child Jesus of Lekana, St. Peter Claver Ouessou on the Sangha (1940). In 1946 Father Raymond Defosse installed the mission at Fort-Rousset (now Owando); Fathers Martin Jooster and Gérard Destombes installed the mission Saint Maria Goretti de Kellé (1952).

To these missions must be added those of Ewo (1956), Souanké (1957), Dongou (1957), Mossaka (1959), Impfondo (1959) and Djambala (1960). It was the action of the Spiritan priests led by Mgr Carrie and Augouard. The first priests of this vicariate left in 1938, namely the abbots: Eugène Nkakou and Auguste Nkoukou. The second promotion was that of 1946 with the abbots: Théophile Mbemba, Louis Loubassou, Benoit Gassongo, Raphaël Dangui, Fulbert Youlou. We will first present the Catholic missions of Lekety, Sainte Radegonde, Boundji and Makoua in order to understand their relationship with the evangelization of the District of Kelle.

### **2.1. The Catholic mission of Lekety (Notre-Dame de Leketi): June 27, 1897**

The Leketi post was founded in 1883 by Charles de Chavannes, at the place where the Alima becomes navigable (about 600 km from its confluence with the Congo)<sup>[9]</sup> but it had been abandoned since the opening of the caravan route, by the Mayombe and the Niari. In fact, Lékéti was a way that had Peter Savorgnon De Brazzaborrowed during his explorations. It was after the evacuation of the posts of Diélé and Lekety by the French administration, (created in 1882 (Diele) and 1883 (Lékéty) on June 27, 1897, that Archbishop Augouard accompanied by brother Eli and his 17 workers left Brazzaville for Lekety. Thus, before its creation, on June 8, 1897, Leon XIII left Brazzaville for Alima and were on board Mgr Augouard, captain of the boat; F. Elié, mechanic; P. Le Gouay, Father Gestin and Brother Henri, two children from Brazzaville, Kouka and Guinaka, intended for us.

Consequently, it was on the ruins of the old Lekety post that Monseigneur Augouard founded the mission of Notre Dame de Lekety. According to our informants, after a few years, the influence of the church was felt by the rapprochement of the indigenous populations. It allowed to train some catechists in order to allow the expansion of the Christian community. Despite the difficulties encountered, the evangelization of Lékéty took shape, as far as the *Mberé* country (Ewo, Kelle, Mbama, Etoumbi). <sup>[10]</sup> From this mission, we arrive at that of Sainte Radegonde or Tsambitso.

### **2.2 -The Catholic mission of Saint Radegonde (Tsambitso): January 15, 1899**

At the end of the 1890s, Archbishop Augouard left Brazzaville to found a second mission on the Alima. Here the missionaries encountered enormous difficulties.

Five months later, Archbishop Augouard returned to Sainte-Radegonde: *the missionaries made of wonders: graceful constructions Bamboo (raffia pedunculated) amounted on the hill overlooking the river, in place of the impenetrable forest in the past.* In 1902, these temporary constructions were replaced by a house, made of local wood, covered in straw. However, in November 1906, a lightning fire, activated by the tornado wind, completely destroyed it. Leon XIII immediately went to help the other missionaries and the populations to help them build.

To this end, among the founders of the Sainte-Radegonde mission, Father Casimir Le Gouguec, who arrived in Congo in 1897, left in 1900 for Senegal, where he stayed only a few months, until his death on September 16 1900. He was succeeded by Father Mathurin Luc, who had spent ten years at Linzolo before arriving at Sainte-Radegonde. Sick, he left the Alima in May 1900 and died in Bordeaux on September 20, 1900. Finally, to make his mission a reality and make it more effective, Archbishop Augouard, like all good missionaries of that time, had first proceeded through the establishment of the structures inherent in his apostolate. This is how schools, dispensaries, or hospitals and training workshops for different trades were built.

These basic structures, which were found in each mission, were part of what was called at that time the *traditional methodology* followed by all missionaries.

Thus, the pastoral method of Archbishop Augouard was not limited to the proclamation of the gospel but it was centered on two sides: predication and work. Indeed, the crux of his missionary method we find in his report of September 11, 1894 where he says:

*Convinced that it is by manual labor and especially by agriculture that we regenerate Africa, we divided the day into two parts. The hottest hours are employed in the Christian education of children in classrooms; the hours when the sun is less fiery are used, for some to work in the fields, for others in carpentry, carpentry, forge, mechanical workshops, shoemaking etc. This method also has the advantage of providing us with resources to decrease our expenses [11].*

### **2.3. The Catholic mission of Boundji (Saint-François-Xavier): January 6, 1900**

After the Lekety mission, the missionaries arrived in the region of Boundji, where the mission installation project had failed on several occasions due to a series of incidents. This had forced Bishop Augouard to set up the mission at Sainte-Radegonde before Boundji. For this new foundation, Archbishop Augouard had received a significant donation from a Canadian benefactor.

The day after Christmas 1899, Léon XIII left Brazzaville again, for the Alima in the company of Mgr Augouard, PP Emmanuel Colombel and François Mauger and Louis-Stanislas Plaine. The latter will soon be replaced by Br. Némésien Martin. On January 6, 1900, the missionaries landed on the left bank of the Alima, near a small village called Otse-Otse, where they founded the mission. This new mission is dedicated to Saint-François Xavier, but from the beginning it was called Boundji, from the name of a set of villages, located nearby [12]. The establishment of these churches, favored the flourishing of evangelization in this locality. This glory of the gospel on these lands was the work of the Catholics, because the other doctrines like Kimbanguisme, Salvationist and Protestantism were confronted with several difficulties and could not reach it.

### **2.4 - The Catholic mission of Makoua**

Evangelization in Makoua began during the colonial period along the Ombondjo axis, precisely in the Okia village where trade took place in the form of barter between the indigenous populations. From the creation of the Makoua post (September 1903) by Bobichon, the missionaries manifested the will to settle there: Father Jean-Jean (1913), the first missionary to settle there in this nascent post. Next came Fathers Paul Fourmont, Emile Verhille and Jean Batiste Schoeffel. But in this District, evangelism was slow. This had been the work of the fathers of the congregation of the holy spirit.

The mission was first installed in Ndzokomata, a peripheral quarter east of Makoua. According to our informants, from Ndzokomata, the mission was transferred to Lengui south of Makoua. In 1928, Father Paul Fourmont left Lengui to settle in Bonga, a new Christian district created to the west of the administrative post.

The mission center of Makoua soon allowed a rap with the populations of Kelle. This is how some *Mberé* from *Kelle* came to take baptism and learn how to supervise in the catechism centers in Makoua. We are going to analyze the Evangelization of the District of Kellé. The study of these missions interests us because several *Mberé* were baptized in Lekety, Boundji, Makoua etc. Indeed, the populations of Kellé had permanent contacts with the Christians of these localities. This is where some *Mberé* began to hear religious instruction before the arrival of the mission in their country [13].

### **1.1 -The arrival of Catholic missions**

Upon their arrival, the missionaries had largely rejected the *Mberé* cultural system, considering that its practices were pagan and contradictory at the same time Christian. For several years, the mission was practically disinterested in the main aspects of the *Mberé* culture. This lack of interest has contributed to delaying the coming together of indigenous cultural elements in the Christian faith.

However, to settle in a territory or to have authorization to open the mission, the missionaries once arrived in a village, first sought to contact the local authorities. The meeting began with dialogue and clarification of the purpose of their presence, that is to say the desire to have land and build the mission.[14]. To be welcomed, or to gain the trust of the authorities, the missionaries brought the gifts. The means adopted to acquire a space to settle in and these gifts were required by the chiefs. They were made up of cloths, salt, rifles and often accompanied by a good sum of money. It was after this stage of negotiation or corruption that the missionaries were authorized to choose land for the location of the mission. This practice was applied by all missionaries in the foundation of the missions.

To this end, the missionaries always had to see good relationships with the local chiefs. There was no choice, because it was the only way they could settle. It is precisely as we can see the only way to settle in a village.

*Missionaries have forced relationships with kings and traditional chiefs and frequent, since it is from them that they obtain the authorization to found them schools, open schools, traveling, etc .[15].*

It is thus after the missionary installation, that evangelization begins.

### 1.2 - Contact Catholic missions-traditional powers

To settle on a territory or to have the authorization to open the mission, the missionaries once arrived in a village, first sought to contact the local authorities. The meeting began with dialogue and clarification of the purpose of their presence, that is to say, the desire to have land and build the mission. To be welcomed, or to gain the trust of the authorities, the missionaries brought the gifts. It was one of the means adopted to acquire a space to settle in and these gifts were required by the chiefs. They were made up of cloths, salt, rifles and often accompanied by a good sum of money. It was after this negotiation or corruption stage that the missionaries were authorized to choose a site for the location of the mission. This practice was applied by all missionaries in the foundation of the missions, starting with Mgr Augouard and Carrie. Mgr Carrie quoted by Abbe A. B Ibombo said:

*often the local chiefs themselves imposed the number of gifts and the amount to be paid without which there was no way to settle in the territory[16].*

Thus, good relationships with local chiefs were a must for missionaries. There was no choice because it was the only way they could settle. It is precisely as we can see the only way to settle in a village. To this, B. Salvaing stated the following:

*the missionaries with kings and traditional leaders of forced relationships and frequent, since it is from them that they Obtain authorization to found their establishments, to open schools, to Traveling, etc .[17]*

This is how, after the missionary installation, evangelization begins.

### 1.3 -The Church and the faith of the ancestors

The local rites and beliefs *Mberé* have known, a form of recognition on the part of the Church. In 1980, Archbishop Basile Mvé declared on this subject that "since the Vatican Council there have been changes in the expression of our faith. We use more of what, yesterday, was condemned as evil[18]. The religious authorities , formerly resistant to local beliefs, called for a better consideration of these beliefs. One of the most specific examples is the revalorization of the *faith of the ancestors* . Thus, the Church admitted that it could, to a certain extent, help the *Mberé* to regain religious sentiment and morals in such a difficult period, culturally and morally. The Catholic Church in the District of Kelle had therefore recognized the benefits of both ancestors, by admitting that *Mberé* lived continuously under the influence of the invisible world. In all his acts, God is present, even if we have recourse to him very rarely. If the *Mberé* does not address a prayer directly to God, it is because he instructed the ancestors to take care of their descendants. The use of ancestors' mans , the equivalent of angels and saints, was therefore continuous[19]. The spirits of the dead depend on God and it is he who gave to each being its properties. Ancestors and healers get their knowledge from God and the events of life are the times of God. Everything that conforms to nature comes from God and he is the judge of everything. For the Church all this becomes a solid basis for the rooting of the Christian faith and has been a reason why Christianity has been successfully established. It considers that, despite the deviations observed here and there,

the faith of the ancestors is something respectable and can help to understand the communion of saints among Catholics. The Church also recognizes that, in the past, the faith of the ancestors conveyed their natural virtues, virtues little known to young people from the 1970s.

The Church had regretted the disappearance of these virtues. The respect for the ancients, the solidarity and hospitality that characterized this faith of the ancestors, had disappeared. there was no talk of abortion or unnatural misconduct.

## **2 - The advantages of Evangelization in the District of Kellé**

### **2.1 -Churches and catechism**

#### **2.1.1 -Churches inside the District of Kellé**

*Mbeti* country , around Kellé, Mbama , Ewo and Etoumbi , had been visited in the past by missionaries from Boundji and, in more recent times, by those from Makoua. In 1946, Fr. Martin Joosten , assigned to Makoua, was specially in charge of this sector, with a view to founding a mission there. It should be noted that the Evangelization of the District of Kellé is linked to the gradual arrival of the first Catholic missionaries. Indeed, on July 8, 1947, the Reverend Father Martin Joosten , founder of the Catholic mission of Kellé arrived in Kellé. In 1948, he returned to Kellé accompanied by Monseigneur Bechy , fathers Raymond Défosse and Jean-Baptiste Chosfell . They discovered, some distance from the administrative post, on the road to Etoumbi , splendid terrain.

Indeed, on December 28, 1952, from Makoua, the PPs Martin Joosten and Gérard Destombe arrived in Kellé and settled in temporary premises. They first built a church, which was ready for worship in September 1953. Their final residence was completed in May 1954. In 1964, for its location at the crossroads of Kellé, Obala and Oyabi , the missionaries saw the importance of implant an annex of their church in Oboko1 The mission of the Church is to intensify evangelization to the faithful of all social strata and of all ages. Because magic mentalities easily take and prosper where men ignore God. The gospel makes known God who, by a sovereignly free act has revealed himself and given himself, for a free love, of which his son Jesus Christ is redeemer of the world, the only mediator between God and men. In Jesus Christ, not only does God speak to man, but he seeks him. Indeed, in Christ, God the Father gave us all eternal life and said to us:

*there is no waiting from God, other extraordinary revelations. The life of the faith is without more or less miraculous jerks and burst of cheap supernatural. Faith is to surrender one's existence to God by welcoming from him this true light which enters our darkness and pushes us to move forward .*

In this context, the Church must make it clear to the faithful that from now on their task is to respond to the call of God by knowing how to read his calls in the events they experience, in the situations they encounter daily for not going anywhere to look for the solution. The installation of the Catholic mission in the District of Kellé in the XXth century, is one of the important events in the relations between Europeans and the *“ Mberé ”* of this District. Because it pits different peoples, cultures and social systems in a logic of Christian expansionism[20].

Thus, the populations of this District will integrate with the Christian mission another systematic logic both in terms of the perception of social and religious phenomena. When it was created, the mission was installed a little away from the administrative post; little by little, the inhabitants of Kelle moved and the space between the post and the mission was filled. Thus, it was ultimately closed to the agglomeration. In this context, after setting up the mission in Kellé, Father Martin invested himself in establishing catechist schools in several villages in the District.

#### **2.1.2 -The catechism in the District of Kellé**

Catechism is a teaching of Christian doctrine and morals. The catechumen indicates the one who is instructed to prepare him for baptism. Here, the catechumens benefited from religious education and Christian ethics. Catechism was first taught in French, then in *Téké* . But the remoteness of catechumens villages of Lekety forced the missionaries to open centers Evangelization center through the *Mbereterritory* to Oboko at Ogomo ( Ntsama ) to Otaba , Ndjouono , Mbomo-Bakota , Etoumbi , Etsiami and Nguouoni 1995 The firsttrained Catechists were: Agnama Denis, Ndjouono (1955), Akomekoli , Mbomo-Bakota (1955), Pascal Oleka in Etoumbi and Nguouoni , Okô Olivier in Etsiami (1955). Catechists are people who teach a religion, a doctrine to neophytes or catechumens.

## **2.2 - Schools**

In view of their economic activities, which required an abundant and dynamic workforce, the missionaries had not made school their priority and those established had barely prepared auxiliaries capable of relaying them. To introduce Western culture into *Mberé* society, the missionaries had adopted several strategies including the creation of schools. They created schools for future converts who came from several localities (from Ewo, Mbama, Etoumbi, Mbomo, Kellé, Makoua and Owando).

For this purpose, religious structures were later relayed by primary schools and public colleges throughout the District. In this perspective, several missionary schools were built in Kellé such as the school of Odzala, Mbomo, Ololi, the current middle school François Oyabi de Kellé, created on October 1, 1965 thanks to the fundraising organized throughout the extent of the territory, the Maria Goretti school, the Yembelengoye school, Kékélé and Ndzokou-Esseba. These schools have made it possible to train managers and educate young people in this District. We can remind that the first *Mbere executives* are the fruits of the Catholic mission.

### **2.3 -The dispensaries**

The dispensary is an establishment where consultations, medical care are given [21]. Thus, concerned about the health of the populations, the missionaries with the contribution of the colonial administrator created several health structures in the district of Kellé. From 1960 to 1961, arrived the white Solexte for the construction of the temples and dispensaries in Theré and Kelle desired by the village chiefs. These structures have enabled people to take emergency care in order to save their lives.

## **III. THE DIFFERENT CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN THE DISTRICT OF KELLÉ**

The District of Kellé has known by following Evangelist missions: Catholic, Protestant missions and Revival churches. Thus, there is the consistory, created in 1953 by Protestant missionaries via Oponga and There. In 1956, Protestant missionaries headed to Kellé as a district, for the signing of an authorization which enabled them to carry out the evangelization campaign along the villages; and in 1960, there was the first baptism.

The District of Kellé has seen the establishment of the mission of Jehovah's Witnesses (1972) and the Pentecostal Church (1974-1976). However, it should be noted that the *Mbere* country has stood somewhat on the margins of the activity and proliferation of Sects. Today, the Catholic churches, Protestant and revivals Churches installed in Kelle early in XX<sup>th</sup> century saw increasing their wither influence, as if *Mberé* reject any religious syncretism, or that these religious movements correspond not to their expectations, nor to their culture[22]

## **IV. CONCLUSION**

In view of all of the above, the district of Kellé has been inhabited by *Mberé* populations since very ancient times, when the first mission was established around 1972. This mission profoundly changed social habits and village behavior. The consequences of religious missions have been very visible in the sense that the local populations are allowed to abandon religious customs and practices in favor of the European religion considered as the way of eternal salvation. Finally, the religious missions helped to organize the villages and to form an important elite which occupied a place of choice in the Congolese administration in the aftermath of independence.

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### **Footnotes**

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