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**Conversions and Transformations:
Missiological Approaches to Religious Change**

The Making of an African Christian Spirituality in the East African Revival

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Abstract

The East African Revival, which emerged from an Anglican mission station in Rwanda in the 1930s, was arguably the most influential renewal movement of Africa in the twentieth century. Particularly notable is the indispensable role of African revivalists in expanding the Revival and applying the European Evangelical tradition in the colonial African context. Scholars have debated the intricate relationship between the Revival movement and African traditional religion; some argue that the two seemingly distinct groups shared important compatible ritual elements, whereas others contend that African converts made a radical break with their traditional religion by destroying their charms and sacred objects in public.

This paper examines the history and development of an African religious cult called *Nyabingi*, which was prominent in Southern Uganda and Northern Rwanda and which embraced an ideology of resistance against foreign intrusion. The paper carefully scrutinizes different understandings of and approaches to the *Nyabingi* cult among colonial administrators, European missionaries, and African revivalists. It focuses on the African revivalists' readjustment of their old customs and worldview as they indigenized new religious teachings from the West. This paper makes the case that the East African Revival should be regarded as a distinctively African renewal movement through which indigenous initiatives shaped an African Christian spirituality that transformed individuals and societies.

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