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**THE SURVIVAL OF GANDA
TRADITIONAL RELIGION BEFORE
AND AFTER THE COMING OF
FOREIGN RELIGIONS**

**AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE
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My late parents: Francis Lule,
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and Dominic Kasule
for their love and care.

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INTRODUCTION

1.1. PURPOSE OF THE ESSAY.

The purpose of this essay is to search into the factors responsible for the survival of the Ganda traditional religion, despite all efforts from external agents to stamp it out. Importantly, among the external agents - enemies of this indigenous religion, we shall consider the influence of the outside missionaries. These may range from western missionaries from Europe to Arabs from the East coast of Africa. The European missionaries are the main agents of both Christianity and western culture or influences. The Arabs are responsible for Islamic influences and the practice of slave trade. The Baganda were confused as to whether the missionaries were agents of Christianity and Islam or western and Arab cultures respectively.

The two above mentioned influences were and still are regarded the traditional enemies of Ganda religion. For these foreign religions have abused Ganda religion as satanic and mere superstition. The missionaries worked hand in hand with the British colonial government in 1929 and passed a law banning all traditional religions in Uganda. Unfortunately, they never succeeded in stamping out the Ganda traditional religion and other respective indigenous religions country wide.

With such concrete manifestations of the strength, presence and influence the Ganda religion has on both the converts and non-converts, one cannot but ask for the reason accounting for its survival to date. For it still plays a strong influence on a sizeable

number of the Ganda population. The questioning mind becomes even determined to search for answers. learning that most foreign religions have celebrated hundred years of their presence in the land. How is such hostility being resisted? Or better, why have the foreign influences of Christianity and Islam remained ineffective in stamping out traditional beliefs and practice and replacing the with new ones?

We need to search for factors accounting for this compound phenomenon, of resistance and survival the Ganda religion has been able to sustain for over one hundred year of open confrontations.

1.2. THE RATIONALE OF THE ESSAY.

We have undertaken to study issues and factors that might be surrounding the survival of Ganda indigenous religion despite created hostile conditions. First, the foreign religions openly preached against Ganda religion and even forbade their converts from associating with those who practised it. Second, the Ganda converts who had traditional temples were asked to demolish / burn them. Third, the converts caught practising traditional religious beliefs could be banned from taking any part in religious exercises of his /her new religion. All such efforts were meant to exterminate the indigenous religion and have it replaced with the new ones. Yet, with all these measures in place still the converts are traditionalists and the Ganda religion is alive and being practised by good number of both the converts and non-converts like. This is defeat on the part of the foreign religions. So reasons must there to explain this situation and its possible causes - the factors.

1.3. CENTRAL QUESTION OF INVESTIGATION.

In this paper, we intend to investigate historical factors concerning the survival of Ganda indigenous religion after one hundred years since the coming of foreign religions and their hostile influences. All of which were manned by both western missionaries and the Arabs from the Middle East.

1.4. WORKING HYPOTHESES.

When all is said and done concerning the factors responsible for the continued survival of Ganda traditional religion after one hundred years of hostile foreign influences brought by the coming of foreign missionaries of both Christianity and Islam. Our hypotheses remain to be the following:

1. That the early missionaries lacked an adequate pedagogical approach in evangelising the Baganda. By this is meant a lack of proper orientation, an **approach** in the act of evangelization. This might have been due to a number of reasons ranging, from lack training or hasty instruction to the feeling of cultural superiority. For example, to be able to teach anyone, you need to first discover how much she/he knows that you can build on what is already there.

2. That the early missionaries failed to create a pedagogical atmosphere. Evangelization, like any process of learning, calls for a sense of security and confidence on the part of the learner. In most cases, the missionaries never tried to win the confidence of their converts / the natives. And as history could reveal, it was

impossible to win their confidence especially in those places where the foreigner acted both as colonisers, slave trader and missionaries. Or at least acted in close collaboration.

3. That the pedagogical intention of the missionaries was highly susceptible. The missionaries were seen or discovered to be close associates of the external colonisers and slave traders. This raised high suspicions among the converts who saw missionaries as double intentioned. The intentions of evangelising were deemed to be one way of trying to tame the people that they may be governable. A way of creating external trade areas and to get slaves by means of native chiefs who were converts by then.

4. That the early missionaries failed to establish a pedagogical relationship in terms of social cultural interaction. The early missionaries did not like to identify themselves with the socio-cultural situation of their converts. They readily condemned the social cultural, religious practices of the natives as satanic, irreligious, mere superstitions and polytheistic. They seemed to be importers of the western culture, Arab culture to Buganda. This lack of respect for the natives social setting, cultural behaviour and religious practice only served to keep the two cultures and peoples apart. Consequently, the missionaries could not penetrate into the Ganda world view so as to evangelise it.

5. The religious wars between Muslims and Christians, Muslims and traditionalists, Protestants and Catholics and even Catholics among themselves, only raised great doubts among the natives about what was behind the so called foreign missionary activities. In such a situation of bloodshed and constant confrontations and apparent disunity, converts

readily stepped backwards and re-embraced their old traditional religion practices that assured them of unity and sense of belonging and solidarity. Such a situation no doubt favoured the survival of Ganda religion.

1.5. SOURCES.

The material for this essay will be drawn from sources that are accessible and available in libraries. We shall collect data from original documents and texts written by scholars of Ganda traditional religion and religious wars. Through oral interviews too, we shall be able to get relevant information appropriate for this work.

1.6. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH.

Our method in this essay will be mainly historical, trying to interpret fact of history and to draw practical conclusions. It will be a search into the historical factors responsible for the survival of Ganda traditional religion.

1.7. DIVISION OF WORK.

This essay will be divided into four chapters. In Chapter one, we will give a descriptive presentation of the Ganda people and their religion. Chapter two shall consider the coming of foreign religions and their impact on the Ganda people and their religion. The third chapter is meant to assess the factors that are deemed and judged responsible for the survival of Ganda traditional religion. The last chapter will focus on some pastoral suggestions in view of the ongoing process of inculturation so as to lay down pertinent strategies in evangelising the Ganda people more effectively.

CHAPTER ONE

THE GANDA PEOPLE AND THEIR RELIGION

1.1. THE GANDA PEOPLE.

Buganda is geographically situated in the Northern Western zone of Lake Nalubaale, the European christened it Lake Victoria, in the southern part of Uganda. Buganda is bordered in the south by Ankole, in the north by Lango, in the east by Busoga and in the west by Toro.¹

When the Arabs and Europeans came to Buganda, it was an independent native kingdom governed by hereditary kings called *Kabaka*. Buganda kingdom was divided into counties called (*amassaza*). Each county had its chief with the official name. For example, the name of the county chief of Kyaddondo was Kaggo and of Buddu Pokino.² Socially, the Ganda people are divided into totemic clans each under a leader called *Mutaka*.

Ecclesiastically, Buganda is divided into five dioceses : Kampala Archdiocese, Kasala-Luwero, Lugazi, Kiyanda-Mityana and Masaka.

Baganda belong to the Bantu group widely distributed over tropical Africa. As early as 1000, the Baganda were thought to have been in existence as separate clans co-existing around the Western shores of lake Victoria then known as *Nyanja Nalubaale*. There were no original written records of Baganda history before the 19th Century. A fairly accurate account of their history is preserved in their oral tradition, proverbs and folk tales.³

Baganda cultural heritage is kept dynamically alive in songs, myths, legends, symbols, prayers and proverbs. These served as the means by which Baganda developed norms of conduct and on which their philosophy of life is based.⁴

1.2. THE FOUNDATION OF THE GANDA KINGDOM.

Kingship is the unifying and underlying factor of the Baganda society. Kintu is believed to be the founder of the dynasty of the Baganda Kings. Hereditary monarchy lasted four hundred years until the abolition of monarchies in 1967, when Uganda became a republic and was restored by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni in 1993.

John Gorju has it, that Kintu came from Galla - in Ethiopia, and finally settled in Buganda in the 14th Century. Appolo Kaggwa, enormous Luganda writer has it that, Kintu must have come from Bunyoro, neighbouring Kingdom. Kintu met already people organised and independent and autonomous clans occupying the Buganda Territory. Kintu re-organised these clans and united them politically to form a hierarchical kingdom of Buganda.⁵ His successors developed a structure of government.

Kings lived in royal palaces called Lubiri. Members of the household included the kings wives, pages, slaves and musicians. The kings had their personal priests and divines as well as a standing army.⁶

1.3. BAGANDA CLANS.

Baganda have a social structure based on clans.⁷ These are families that share a common totem; an animal or a plant. There are fifty two clans in Buganda. These clans are patrilineal and exogamous, besides one is not allowed to marry any person belonging to the clan of his/her mother. Everyone is expected to marry and get married except the virgin girls dedicated to the Temples.

1.4. MARRIAGE.

Monogamy was practised as well as polygamy but the latter was mainly practised by the kings and chiefs. Women were donated to kings and chiefs as gift by the parents. It was prestigious to have many wives and many children, it was a sign of wealth, source of manpower and furthering the clan. Children were an insurance during old age. Girls were a source of bride-wealth. Marriage was the foundation of family and a means to both extend the family and clan ties and relationships.⁸

1.5. GANDA TRADITIONAL RELIGION.

In this study we confine ourselves to the essential elements of the Ganda traditional religion. By the terms 'Ganda Traditional Religion' we mean the felt practical beliefs prevalent before the arrival of Christianity and Islam and still strongly adhered to by many Baganda.

1.6. GANDA CONCEPT OF GOD.

The Ganda traditional religion had a notion of the 'One God'. This supreme Being is called *Katonda*. The word *Katonda* is derived from the verb *kutonda* meaning to create.⁹ So *Katonda* is that supreme Being that creates all other beings. His temple on earth was built at a village called *Butonda* in Kyaggwe county. This temple stands to this day. His *Mmandwa* (medium) was known by the name of Kifomusana. Offerings of cattle were often made to him. He was being invoked every morning in these words: "*Ayi Katonda Ssewanaku, Kayingo Nnyini ggulu!*" (O God, The ever-present, The maker of miracles, The master of heaven!).¹⁰ The Ganda people know God as the father of all people and the gods. The gods or divinities are best known as the *Balubaale*.¹¹

The Ganda gave *Katonda* various attributes: *Kagingo* (moulder-creator), *Mukama* (Lord and Master), *Nnyini ggulu* (Lord of heaven), *Liisoddene* (Big-eyed), *Kawamigero* (Who arranges the times), *Lugaba* (Giver), *Namugereka* (One who arranges or orders things the way they are), *Ddunda* (One who cares, one with kindness) and one who is everywhere, omnipresent (*ali buli wantu wonna*).¹² Prayers were addressed to him and proverbial saying to express his omnipresence, providence, benevolence and mercy. Some of these proverbs are the following:

Onwaniridde, Katonda alwanira omunafu gy'asaka. (You have fought for me as God helps the weak man in search for food.)¹³

Abamannyo amabi, Katonda bawa enyama. (Those with no teeth God gives them meat.)¹⁴

Katonda ky'aterekera omulamuru tekivunda. (What God preserves for the living does not get rotten.)¹⁵

Ezinunula omunaku Katonda azitunga kiro. (What rescues a poor man, God prepares it at night.)¹⁶

The name *Katonda* was adopted by the missionaries to designate God the Creator. John Gorju, a missionary in Buganda confirmed it that the name was compatible with the Christian God the creator.¹⁷

In a nutshell, *Katonda* is one, almighty, creator of mankind and everything in this universe. He is omnipresent, giver, provider, protector, omniscient and above in heavens.

1.7. BALUBAALE AND EMIZIMU.

In addition to *Katonda* there were small deities called *Balubaale*.¹⁸ Most of them were once human beings, they were either male or female. Some were named after natural phenomenon for example, *Lubaale* Musisi (earthquake) and *Lubaale* Kiwanuka (thunder). There were two groups of *Balubaale*: National and Private. The national ones were known and venerated by all the people. The private ones were for a particular clan or a family alone.

The Ganda people believed that these *Balubaale* had supernatural powers they could use to help people. They could punish when angered by the living people. Punishments included death, getting mad, killing ones animals or causing ones business not to go on well. That the Ganda believed in the *balubaale* can be justified by the many expressions they have about them in their “bank of wisdom”, the proverbs.

Lubaale yambikako akasubi : nga ne we yeekweka wali wagumu. (The spirit covered me with little grass: if he also had taken refuge in a strong place.)”

Lubaale w’omulamu: tasamirirwa. (The *Lubaale* of a living person is not overpowered.)²⁰

Lubaale maliba: buli afuluma alyambala bubwe. (The idea of God - religion - is like a skin : each one will adopt it his own way.)²¹

Each *Lubaale* had a specific function. They were functionaries of the supreme Deity. *Lubaale* Kibuuka was a war god. At times demanded human sacrifices. In his temple only the kings and chiefs were permitted to enter. He fought and won the battle between Buganda and Bunyoro. He was fighting from the clouds. His wife from

Bunyoro betrayed him and Kibuuka was seriously wounded and later died in tree at Mbale north-east of Buganda.²²

Lubaale Mukasa was a brother of Kibuuka (the war god) His name Mukasa is derived from the island Bukasa where he was born. He had three priests and a female medium (Mmandwa) in Mukasa's main temples only kings and chiefs were allowed to enter. The common people had to go to minor temples. Mukasa had many temples scattered all over Buganda. The persons who wanted to pray to Mukasa had to abstain from sexual intercourse.

Lubaale Mukasa was a kind god. He never killed people. He never wished to see blood or smell it, he hated thieves. Mukasa's main function was to cure people. He gave people fertility and food, and rescued prisoners.

Lubaale Muwanga was a son of Wanga, his main temple was in Kyaggwe county. He ruled all things and believed to be the most powerful deity of the Ganda. His power is expressed in the following:

Muwanga awerekere!(Let Muwanga escort/accompany you).
Muwanga akubeere!(Let Muwanga help you)
Akusindika okuwoza : akuwerekeza Muwanga.
(One who consigns to court, wishes you Muwanga's help)²³

1.8. EMIZIMU (SPIRITS)

The Ganda believed and still believe that the personality of the living, after death, will be transformed into a spirit (Muzimu). They believe the spirit is like wind and invisible.

The spirits (Mizimu pl.) retain all their personal characters both physical and moral. They have the same personal wants as the living, they feel cold, hunger, and thirsty. They become angry, and express their anger by inflicting disease and death upon those who annoyed or angered them; especially when the spirit was neglected during the sickness or failure to carry out the funeral rites properly or when their graves are left bushy.²⁴

The Baganda believed that the *muzimu* had powers to effect the welfare of the family or its relatives. It is believed that some *mizimu* are baleful and others benign. The spirit of the dead used to appear to the living in form of a dream, human being, or

in form of an animal. The spirit of a close relative is feared than of a neighbour, which the people think it can not harm anyone outside the family. The spirit of paternal aunt was thought to be the most respected and feared. It could effectively punish any wrong in the family. The spirits of the parents are their to guide the children on the right path, in terms of morals, wisdom and virtues.

In summary, spirits are responsible for the welfare of the family. The care for the maintenance of their health, by curing of their diseases. The spirits are responsible for the moral behaviour of the members of their respective families and clans. They promote morality by correcting the wrong and advising the young in virtues and wisdom.

1.9. EMISAMBWA (TUTELARY SPIRITS).

These are spirits of the ancestors which manifest themselves in animals, forest, trees, hills, reptiles, snakes and other objects of nature. The objects in which the spirits manifest themselves are called *misambwa*.²⁵ They are associates with *Lubaale* and are treated with respect. Ganda believe they could cure diseases, grant fertility, richness and protect one against enemies.

The most known *musambwa* among the Ganda people is called Ddungu. He is invoked mainly by hunters to get their prey. Before going to hunt, the hunters offer Ddungu a bundle of firewood and some meat. When they get something good they say in appreciation: *Ddungu ayizze* (Ddungu has granted).

It is good to clarify the difference between *musambwa* and *Lubaale*. *Musambwa* was once a human being but this is not necessarily the case for the *Lubaale*. The *Musambwa* needs a material object through which to reveal himself or herself. The *Lubaale* needs only a human person as the spokesperson - medium (*mandwa*) to communicate with the living.

1.10. KABONA (PRIEST).

Kabona is the traditional name for the priest among the Ganda. He is the person in charge of the estate (*ekiggwa*) and the temple (*essabo*) which are dedicated to a *Lubaale*. These are places of worship, of prayers and of offerings to the deity. Each

Lubaale has a priest or priests (*Bakabona*). The chief duty of the *Kabona* was to receive all the people who came to pray or to offer something to the *Lubaale*. He took the offerings and announced it to the *Lubaale*. He presented the inquiries to the medium. He looked for the grass which was used as a carpet in the temple and saw to it that the fire was kept burning before the *Lubaale*. He looked after the animals and persons offered to the deity.

The *Kabona* is a sacred person plus all that he used. All offence against the priest deserved death. Ganda priesthood was not hereditary. Priests were chosen by the people and later approved or accepted by the concerned deity.

1.11. EMMANDWA (INTERMEDIARY).

An intermediary (*emmandwa*) was a person who performed the duty of being a spokesperson of the deity whom he / she presented. A medium is directly chosen by the *Lubaale*. There are several signs associated with the chosen individual: being possessed by the *Lubaale* and utterance of prophecies. He / she listens to the people and answers supplications in the name of the deity. He / she answers through the priest or priestess who alone understands his/her language.²⁶ *Balubaale*, *Kibuuka*, *Mukasa* and *Nende* have several mediums. They are the mouthpiece of *Lubaale*. The mediums have supernatural knowledge of things revealed to them by the deity.

The people express their belief in the *mmandwa*'s powers abilities and works in proverbs. Let us cite a few:

Mmandwa mbi: evumaganya agisamirira. (A bad medium brings abuse upon himself/herself by the person who comes to consult it).²⁷

Emmandwa lwe bagisingira: tesula. (When they have given the medium his/her fee: he/she does not stay).²⁸

Segulira emmandwa etuule: nga bye yamulagula bya tuukirira. (Let the medium have a seat : when what it professed came true).²⁹

Besides, the *Kabona* and the *mmandwa*, in the Ganda traditional temple we find another group of people, the vestal virgins. These are girls dedicated to the *Lubaale* for service in the temple. Parents dedicated to the deity these girls for a score of reasons: an act of thanksgiving for favours granted, offering in view of specific

petitions and so on. They took care of cleanliness of the place, fetch firewood and water, look after the sacred pipe and tobacco for the medium. They left the temple the moment they experienced their first menstruation. They were married off by the priest or the medium to a person of his/her choice.³⁰

1.12. RELIGIOUS OBJECTS.

Among the Ganda, there specifically two main religious objects: fetishes(amayembe) and amulets (ensiriba).

1.13. FETICHES.

The Ganda believed that fetishes had supernatural powers of sending away evils and bringing good luck to the possessors. They were made out of horns of animals like, cattle, buffalo, rhinoceros. The hollow was filled with herbs and medicine only known to the possessor and person who made it. Fetishes are widely used as means of protection from evil, causes of good luck, fertility, protection on a journey. They are worn around the neck, waist and on the upper arm.³¹

1.14. AMULETS.

Amulets are made by medicine people out of wood, roots, herbs strewn in a piece of skin, cloth and are normally worn around the waists. The Ganda used them for medicinal purposes and prevention of diseases. Amulets, unlike fetishes do not have supernatural powers, they are just a pack of medicine.

1.15. MEDICINE PERSON.

A traditional medicine man / woman (omusawo omunansi) was partly a religious person and partly a physician. His / her duties were to exorcise annoying spirits which were suspected of causing illness. The sick person was treated with different types of herbs, made to inhale some smoke of burnt medicine supposedly to dislodge the spirit or smeared with herbs mixed with clay(emumbwa).³²

The medicine person could treat both biological and psychological disorders. He / she could amputate limbs of those seriously wounded. They also assisted women in labour pain to deliver.

1.16. GANDA AND RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTIONS.

How was the Ganda traditional religion passed on from generation to generation? The traditional system of instructing the young in religious matters was greatly informal. It basically used the method of imitation and observation without prescribed forms of religious education. Only in some rare cases were the children formally instructed about a religious practice and give necessary knowledge.

Religious knowledge was passed on the next generation orally. Parents used wise sayings, proverbs, tales, legends, songs, stories and maxims to instruct the children in view of their age. Certain taboos were mentioned to them and requested to keep and observe them.

1.17. CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The Ganda culture and religion are inseparable. Every muganda is born in a Ganda cultural-religious milieu and remains in that very cultural-religious setting. It is this that gives him / her an identity as a muganda. Hence to effectively evangelise him or her is first and foremost to evangelise his / her culture.

Before the coming of foreign religions: Christianity and Islam, the Ganda knew that there are one God (Katonda). They believed him as the creator of everything including the human persons. It is through this traditional religion that they carried out God's will for them. The main components of this religion was belief in the One God (Katonda) in the deities (Lubaale) and in the spirits (mizimu). The purposes for worshipping were : to give praise, to give thanks and to pray to God. Religion included healing. The medicine man or woman is regarded a religious person. He / she is expected to have knowledge about medicine from the spiritual world.

As an organised religion, the Ganda indigenous religion has specific place for worship - temple(esabo) and a specific person in charge of worship and other related religious exercises- a priest (kabona). The supreme deity is reached through intermediaries - *Lubaale*.

At the moment, this indigenous religion is taking different forms and practices, all this basically due to the coming of foreign religions that saw their way in the land.

At the same time, it is surprising to note that despite all attacks made against this traditional religion it is still surviving to date. It is practised by both the converts and non-converts alike. It is still the religion of the poor and the rich. Its survival has depended, though not solely, on the fact that it is firmly rooted in the people's culture and cultural practices. Other reasons for its survival will be discussed in the following chapters. Let us now, beginning with the consideration of the coming of the foreign religions.

¹ John M. Lukwata, The First Hundred Years of Bugandan Church and her Worship, (Rome: Pontificum Athenaeum Anselmianum, 1990), p.13.

² Ibid., p.14.

³ H.P. Gale, Uganda and the Mill Hill Fathers, (London: Macmillan,Co. Ltd, 1959),p.5ff.

⁴ John M.Lukwata, p.16.

⁵ John Roscoe, The Baganda : their Customs and beliefs, (London: Macmillan, Co.Ltd., 1911),pp.7,12f.

⁶ Bukadde Magezi , a traditional priest, Kyebando, interviewed on 7th August 1997.

⁷ In Buganda today there are 52 clans.

⁸ Cf. M. B. Nsimbi, Ndikuma Okulya, (Kisubi: Marianum Press, 1971),pp.120f.

⁹ John Roscoe, The Baganda : their Customs and Beliefs, pp.120f

¹⁰ Francis Xavier Kyewalyanga, Traditional Religion, Custom and Christianity in East Africa in Uganda, (Freburg Im Breisgau, 1976),p.98.

¹¹ The term "Lubaale" is used by the Baganda to designate a diety. Cf. A.Musaazi, "Traditional Divination", in Ocassional Papers 1(1971) 8, pp.3-6. (Makerere University).

¹² John S. Mbiti, Concepts of God in Africa, (London: SPCK,1970),p.4.

¹³ Ferdinand Walser, Luganda Proverbs, (Kampala: Mill Hill Missionaries,1984),p.403.

¹⁴ Ibid., p.4.

¹⁵ Ibid., p.226.

¹⁶ Ibid., p.100.

¹⁷ Cf. John M. Lukwata, The First Hundred Years of Bugandan Church and her Worship, p. 27.

¹⁸ Ibid., p.119.

¹⁹ Ferdinand Walser, Luganda Proverbs, p. 236.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Francis Xavier Kyewalyanga, Traditional Religion, Customs and Christianity in East Africa, pp.104 - 5.

²³ Micheal B. Nsimbi, Amaanya Amaganda N'emmonu Zaago, (Kampala: Longman Uganda Ltd.,1980). p.124

²⁴ John C. Sekaniwa, Professor at Makerere University, interviewed on 6th August 1997.

²⁵ The terms "Musambwa" (singl.) and "Misanbwa" (pl.) are used to designate tutelary spirits. Cf. Apollo Kagwa, Empisa za Baganda, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934) pp.228-229.

²⁶ Joseph Kato Ssempungu, Ganda sacrifice and the Catechesis of Eucharistic Sacrifice, Ph. D. Thesis, (Rome: Urbaniana University, 1985) p.33.

²⁷ Ferdinand Walser, Luganda Proverbs, p.250.

²⁸ Ibid., p.249.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 426.

³⁰ Francis Xavier Kyewalyanga, p. 120.

³¹ Mrs. Lwabuyiudo, a Medicine woman, Nansana, interviewed on 4th August 1997.

³² "Emumbwa" is medicine mixed with clay and formed in corn-like bar, dried under the sun to solidify. This is one way local medicine is preserved among the traditional people.

CHAPTER TWO

THE COMING OF FOREIGN RELIGIONS IN BUGANDA

2.1. ISLAM.

It was during the reign of Ssekabaka Suuna II in 1844 when the first Arab, Ahmed bin Abraham arrived in Buganda from Zanzibar. He did not come to do missionary work or Islamization but was in search of Ivory and slaves.¹

After a decade, he was followed by other Arab merchants whose arrival in Buganda was due to the decrease in the supply of slaves in Tanzania. These Arabs were responsible for the spread of Islam in Buganda.²

The Arab called Amin Mulezu during the reign of Muteesa I 1856-1884 played a great role in spreading of Islam in the whole of Buganda. He won the Kabaka on his side, and urged him to order all his subjects to follow the Islamic religion. The Baganda hated Mutilation, for that reason they did not accept circumcision which is one of the requirements for becoming a Muslim.

In 1867, Muteesa observed the first ten days of Ramadhan as a devout Muslim and later declared Islam a state religion.³ However, when Islamic power in Buganda was on shrink, some Muslims who had adopted Islamic names rejected Islam and were attracted to Christianity. For example Jamari Muzeyi was at first a Muslim, and then died as a Christian martyr in 1886.⁴

Soon Muteesa I stated disliking Islam for some particular reasons. First, according to Islamic traditions a Muslim male should be circumcised. He refused to submit to

the rite of circumcision for fear of dishonouring a Baganda tradition which forbids shedding the royal blood.⁵

Second, in 1876, some of his Muslim officials renounced the eating of meat slaughtered through pagan rites. This renunciation infuriated the Kabaka and he ordered the execution of seventy Muslims and while country wide thousands of Muslims were killed and one hundred fled to the East African Coast.⁶

This turn of events, paralysed Islam in Buganda. Muslims were executed not only as a matter of insubordination, but a confirmation of years that Islam was becoming politically a subversive creed.

At the death of Muteesa I in 1884, Mwanga came to the throne and found that the Muslims were insufficient in number to represent a strong political faction. Muslims in loyal court detected that Mwanga might favour the Christians. Hence, they decided to remove him from the throne and enthroned his brother Kiweewa instead. He was a staunch and pro-Muslim Kabaka. His first move was to expel all Christian Mission from Buganda with instructions not to return for two years. For he expected that it was enough period to islamize Buganda.

Kiweewa continued to receive Islamic instructions and appeared ready for full acceptance, but when the question of circumcision arose, he showed reluctance, and the strong Muslims removed him from the throne and replaced him with Kalema who had Kiweewa slain in order to ensure that his position is unchallenged.

The Islamic rigidity on the question of circumcision, made many shun Islam in the Buganda Kingdom.

In 1890, the Christians were again strong enough to expel Kalema and the Muslims from the controlling key positions of the kingdom. The Christians placed Mwanga who was considered pro-Christian to the throne. The return of Mwanga coincided

with the arrival of Captain Lugard and Williams with a Military strong force. This ensured the end of a political coup such as had taken place many times since 1844.

In Buganda, on accession to the throne, a new (Kabaka) king had to slaughter all his sons, but this time Mbogo the son of Suuna and brother of Muteesa I survived. Mbogo is responsible for the continued influence of Islam in Baganda and Uganda. He held all the Muslims together.

Mbogo died in 1929, his heir Badru was only 14 years. Badru's guardian Kisasa attempted to fill in the role of leadership in Muslim community, but he was unsuccessful. The Muslim community was leaderless until 1928 when Badru reached 21 years of age. At this time he was confirmed by Kabaka Daudi Chwa. As a spiritual leader of the Muslims but his authority in secular matters was totally excluded,⁷ so that Kabaka Daudi Chwa could Jealously guard his political control.

Badru Kakungulu's election as a Muslim leader led to a split within the Muslim group that has not been mended to this day. Two prominent factions emerged. The Kibuli sect which supported Badru Kakungulu and the Butambala sect under the spiritual guidance of Sheikh Sekwanyi. Reasons for the break were two fold. First, Butambala group said, Badru lacked the religious qualifications and that Kabaka Daudi Chwa appointed him because he was a prince. Second, there was a doctrinal disputes regarding the saying of noon prayers (zuhuli) at the mosque. Butambala sect insisted that the prayers were not necessary, while Kibuli sect brought forth "*shaffi* books" to support their claim that strict conditions were laid down for the commission of the noon prayers. No agreement was reached.⁸

Haji Mohammed Ibrahim, an African Kadi from Tanzania, as adviser to the government for Muhammadan affairs, ruled that Muslim Baganda were not yet ready to omit noon prayers. The Butambala sect rejected the ruling and went their way.

2.2 MODE OF ISLAMIZATION:

2.2.1 Account for failure

As we had mentioned above that the main purpose of Arabs in Buganda was not Islamization but trade; though some Arabs did interest themselves in propagating Islam. Arabs set up trading posts at various places in order to arrange for supplies of food and merchandise. As time passed by, settlements grew up, in some of these places. The Baganda and Arab Muslim settlers developed mutual contact and there were some intermarriages. Conversion to Islam took place voluntarily on account of such man-to-man relations. It was without any real propagation work. There were no missionary expeditions sent out by Muslim leader to Buganda as was the case with the Christian movements from Europe. The Baganda embraced Islam on their own accord. They did it because they were impressed by the religious life of those persons who were devout Muslims.⁹

Islam did not arrive in Buganda as a missionary religion. There were no steady efforts organised to convert Baganda to Islam. Personal contacts between Arabs and Baganda were the cause of some to embrace Islam. Muslims did not provide social services to attract the Baganda to Islam as it was done by the Christians.

The Muslims had no catechetical classes as the Christians. The simple requirement of becoming a Muslim was: Belief in the only One Almighty Allah and his prophet Mohammed. One was circumcised, then taught how to recite the Qur'an and the five pillar of Islam.

The Muslims to some Baganda were called in human group of people. This was as a result of their great involvement in slave trade. To others this did not discourage them. They admired the way Muslims were praying, their habits and dealing with fellow Muslims. Simplicity and readiness to help fellow Muslims, integrated by marrying with local people became a factor that led to some conversions.

These practices on part of Muslims led some Baganda to decide to leave their traditional religion and embraced Islam without active persuasion.

The failure to some Baganda not to embrace Islam was attributed to some reasons: First, the fear of circumcision. Second, the inhuman practice of slave trade which depopulated Buganda and deprived Buganda of her energetic young men. Third, the Muslims had no clear pedagogical approach, which could have helped the Baganda to understand well the Islamic faith. Fourth, the recitation and sheer memorising of some Arabic words in their prayers only created Muslim parrots who did not know or understand Islamic theology and doctrines. Fifth, the Muslims' refusal to translate the Qur'an to local languages attributed to the failure and slow conversion to Islam. Some Baganda found Arabic a difficult language to learn. For that reason many became reluctant to embrace Islam.

2.2.2. ACCOUNT FOR SUCCESS

Now let us consider the factors that led to the success of Islam in Buganda. First, the simple pedagogical approach to Islam attracted the Baganda to Islam. It was a simple formula which one had to profess, "that there is no God but God and his prophet Mohammed." This was enough for one to become a Muslim. Second, the Muslim parents were the immediate teachers of Islam to their children in their homes. This was a good method because children learn more from their parents than from anyone else. Third, the muslim's method of spreading Islam was by itinerant traders. They never demanded a break from the Ganda traditional religion. They won converts gradually by first enlisting the interest of the king and chiefs of Buganda and in turn the king and his chiefs influenced their subjects and encouraged them to say the Islamic confession of faith. "I believe there is no god but Allah, and Muhammed is the prophet of Allah." So, those who became Muslims practised their Ganda traditional religion alongside Islam. Islam became successful because the Baganda looked at it as an additional religious knowledge to the Ganda traditional religion. Fourth, a lot of similarities also led Islam's success among the Ganda. For example, the custom of marrying many wives (polygamy), dissolution of marriage especially when love is lacking.

2.3 CONCLUDING REMARKS.

In conclusion, the result of the friction between the Kibuli and Butambala Muslims was schism which is existing up to now. Some Baganda Muslims left Islam because they could not imagine the prayer issue to be a source of division instead of unity. Though the Muslims had no intention of islamising the Ganda people, their way of life attracted some Ganda and they became Muslims. However, their connection to slave trade discouraged some who looked at Islam as a religion that favours some in human practices. We extol Islam for it prepared the ground for Christianity. The first literate group in Buganda were taught by Arabs. They were first, among foreign religions, to emphasise the idea of One God, Resurrection, prayer life, fasting, alms giving, eternal life.

2.4 THE ARRIVAL OF EUROPEAN MISSIONARIES: CHRISTIANITY

The European who penetrated the interior of East Africa can be grouped in three classes: First, the traveller or explorers whose interest was to collect scientific knowledge in Africa which was a dark continent. Some were out to get fortunes for themselves or for their sponsors - trading companies.¹⁰

The second, was the Christian missionaries whose avowed aim was to extend the benefit of their faith to the "heathen" world of Africa, till then untouched by the Lord's blessing and western civilisation or culture.¹¹

The third class, were the agents of imperial rule who came to establish administrative control over the Africans on behalf of their respective home governments. In East Africa these were the Germans and the British.¹²

John H. Speke was in the first class, that is, of travellers or explorers. He reached Buganda in 1862. He conceived the idea of making Buganda a base for missionary enterprise in Africa. His idea was not considered immediately. He later died in 1864.

In 1875, Henry Morton Stanley arrived at the court of Muteesa I king of Buganda. He was on expedition across Africa. He was sponsored by two Newspapers: The New York Herald and London Daily Telegraph. In his conversation with Muteesa I, some rudiments of Christianity were given to Muteesa I. Stanley concluded that Muteesa I was interested in Christianity.

Muteesa I called his chiefs to decide whether they are for the Bible or Qur'an. Like the temple prophets, they gave the king the answer he had wanted to hear. The chief opted for the Bible. Stanley sent a letter to the Daily telegraph appealing for missionaries that the Kabaka was ready for the gospel. De Bellefonds took this letter to Gordon who forwarded it to England.¹³

Henry M. Stanley left behind him a Malawian freed slave, Dallington Mfta. who translated into Luganda a shortened Bible and the Gospel of Luke in full. He did much to prepare the way to Christianity, but he never became a Christian himself.¹⁴

The Church Missionary society answered Stanley's letter by sending Shergold Smith and C.T. Wilson who came to Buganda by the end of 1877. The following year they were joined by Alexander Mackay a professional engineer and staunch Calvinist.

Muteesa I agreed to the Bible lessons and in turn asked the Church Missionary society to make gunpowder. He welcomed the British Missionaries because he thought they were to help him to balance the Arabs power. After two years the white fathers arrived.¹⁵ Their arrival disappointed the Anglicans because they were going to face competition.

The white Fathers arrived on 17th February 1879. In fact the white Fathers were not just Protestants competitors but they were sent by Cardinal Lavigerie to fulfil his over ambitious plan of a Central African Christian Kingdom. Father Lourdel and Brother Amans came to the Kabaka's court and asked him to stay in his kingdom. Mackay introduced them to the Kabaka but Mackay was an irreconcilable enemy of the Catholics. He introduced the Catholic Missionaries as idolatrous, marolatrous and

papist. Above all coming from a country notorious for killing its kings- France.¹⁶ Such statements renewed the battle of reformation.

The Anglicans presented themselves as good and ready to stop the Anglo-Egyptian advance to Uganda. They wrote a letter to Muteesa I demanding the expulsion of the Catholics, otherwise the king would lose Queen Victoria's friendship for good.¹⁷

These two actions made the Kabaka to lose confidence in the British Missionary and put it in the Catholics who represented France, another political power that could be useful to him.

Muteesa I was described as a man at cross roads that is lacking which direction to take. In September 1879, Muteesa I approached Mackay and asked Baptism for himself and for his chiefs. Again he asked for Baptism from Fr. Lourdel. In November he joined Islam; in December he returned to Ganda traditional religion in order to be cured of his sickness. One hundred people were killed as human sacrifice to the Lubaale.¹⁸ Muteesa I viewed foreign religion as political weapons, that came in to help him against his political attempts; thus he refused to accept any new faith.

Can we blame Muteesa I for undecidedness to embrace any one foreign religion? My answer is no. Because Muteesa I had no serious intention of abandoning his traditional religion and customs. For political reasons only was he prepared to become a convert to any of these foreign religions. Next, Stanley and Christian Missionary society had unwittingly given Muteesa I cause to believe, that Christianity has similar political affiliations. For example, Henry Stanley by talking in the same breath about the might of England and England's rise to greatness that was a result of her adoption of Protestantism, made a promise to Muteesa I to help him against Anglo-Egyptian advances. Kabaka Muteesa I by that time was seeking a political alliance which would safeguard his independence from Egypt, could not but accept that religion was a bargaining factor in securing such an alliance.

2.5 RELIGIOUS WARS IN BUGANDA (1882 - 5)

By the year 1882 the King of Buganda had become unfriendly to the new religions. When the Roman Catholic Fathers saw such signs, decided to withdraw their mission from Buganda to the south of lake Victoria.

In 1884 Muteesa I died and was succeeded by his son Mwanga. Missions had expected a great improvement from the new King; especially Mackay because the new King was his "reader." Instead, Mwanga supported the Arab party and became a Muhamadan. He started persecuting the Christian pages who opposed his immorality. January 1885, Mwanga seized, mutilated and then burnt three boys who were helpers of Mackay and Ashe.¹⁹

In the same year the newly appointed Bishop of Eastern Equatorial Africa, James Hannington was murdered on Mwanga's order, fulfilling the legend told by Muslims that the one to topple Mwanga was to come from the East. The Bishop was taken to be the suspected person and was murdered.²⁰

In 1885-6 Many young men who were lay evangelizers and Mwanga's pages were put to death. Among those we get the twenty-two Uganda martyrs. Why did Mwanga decide to kill his pages? Two major reasons: First, their opposition to the king's immorality of Homo-sexuality he had learnt from Arabs. Second, the growing disobedience of the pages, resisting his prohibition against visiting the missions. This was interpreted as a challenge to the king's absolutely authority.

2.5.1 PROTESTANT - CATHOLIC WARS:-

The reformation became a real issue at this time. Two clear parties were formed each party using the doctrines of the missionary to attack the other. A religious sectarianism was born out of a naked struggle for political power. Thus, the real purpose of Christianity which is to preach love, salvation, and reconciliation became distorted. For the Baganda could not think of a kingdom with more than one religious belief.

In 1892, armed Catholics attacked the Protestants - English party (Bangereza) at Namirembe Hill. Lugard turned his machine gun on the attackers and they fled.²¹ Now, Mwanga became a Protestant sympathiser. In 1893 and 1900, political division

was made between Catholics, Protestants and Muslims. Catholic chiefs were concentrated in western Buganda. Protestant chiefs in eastern Buganda and the Muslims placed in between. For a long time, chiefs played a role in the christianization of their areas.²²

The following are the consequences that emerged from such divisions:-

First, there was an organised Christian revolution of society in Buganda which Baganda promoted even in other corners of Uganda. Second, dominance of the Protestants in politics of Uganda to date, including Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. Third, importance of chiefs and leaders of society as christianizers but which soon died out. Fourth, the strong sectarian spirit between Catholics and Protestants.

- ¹ I.F. Faupel, African Holocaust , (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1962), p. 9.
- ² Francis-xavier Kyewalyanga, Traditional Religion Customs and Christianity in East Africa , (Hohenshaftlarn: Klaus Renner Verlag. 1976), p. 10.
- ³ Joseph Ddiba, Eddini mu Uganda . vol.1, (Masaka: St. Joseph Printery, 1955), pp. 43-52.
- ⁴ Quraishy M. A. , Islamic Foundation: Text Book of Islam , Book 1 , (Nairobi: 1987), p. 196.
- ⁵ Ibid.
- ⁶ Tom Tuma and Phares Mutibwa, A Century of Christianity in Uganda (1877-1977) , (Nairobi: Uzima Press Ltd., 1987), p. 5.
- ⁷ Hashifa Nnakabiri, Princess , Wamala, Interviewed on 2nd August 1997.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Quraishy M. A., Islamic Foundation , pp. 145ff.
- ¹⁰ Tom Tuma and Phares Mutibwa, A Century of Christianity in Uganda , p.1.
- ¹¹ Ibid.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ John Baur, 2000 Years of Christianity in Africa , (Nairobi: Paulines Publications - Africa, 1994),p.234. _
- ¹⁴ Ibid., Here we see some attempts of inculturation by the Anglican Missionaries.
- ¹⁵White Fathers were formed by Cardinal Charles Lavigerie and were the first Catholic group to evangelise Buganda. Today they are known as the Missionaries of Africa.
- ¹⁶ John M.Lukwata, The First Hundred Years of the Bugandan Church and her worship , p.44.
- ¹⁷ John Baur, 2000 Years of Christianity in Africa , p.235.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Ibid., p. 236.
- ²¹ Anderson W.B., The Church in East Africa . (Dodoma: , 1977), p. 36.
- ²² Ibid.

CHAPTER THREE

FACTORS FOR THE SURVIVAL OF GANDA RELIGION

3.1. HISTORICAL FACTORS.

When one attends the Uganda Martyrs Day on 3rd June every year at Namugongo Martyrs Shrine, Easter and Christmas celebrations, Sunday masses, Ijuma prayers, Idi-al-Fitr, and Id-al-adha, one can come to a conclusion that foreign religions have taken deep roots among the Baganda. However, it is appalling when you get into research of the phenomenon, it comes out clearly that the foreign religions have not taken deep roots among the Ganda people's lives. Christianity and Islam are still looked at as foreign religions; they are overlays of Ganda traditional religion which is surviving and growing steadily within the Ganda people. Why this survival of Ganda traditional religion?

History has it that, the deportation of Kabaka Muteesa II in 1953-5 helped Ganda traditional religion to survive. There was a disagreement between the people of Buganda and the British administration in Uganda. The Baganda felt that the Christian leaders had betrayed and conspired with Governor Cohen to exile the King.

3.2. RETURN TO GANDA RELIGION

Many Baganda who had embraced Christianity turned away from their Christian religious leaders. They stopped attending church services even on Sundays and feasts. A move to return to Ganda traditional practices was staged. Lubaale cult was revisited! Traditional sacrifices were offered in broad day light, prayers to the gods were said to intercede for the return of the king. Such prayers were focused on Lubaale Kibuka,¹ the patron of those engaged in a patriotic war for the good of the country.

A man by the name Matia Kiganira became the priest representative of Lubaale Kibuka at Mutundwe hill, near Kampala. Many Ganda went to him to listen to words of encouragement from the medium of god Kibuka. When the king returned it was believed that it was only possible through the intercessory powers of Lubaale Kibuka.

The Baganda started seeking for independence (okwefuga). Many were heard intimidating and swearing that after the achieving of independence foreign religions especially Christian religion would have to go with the white men and only the traditional religion would triumph in the country. Throughout Uganda, political campaigns, prayers and litanies were addressed to traditional gods by both the baptised Christians and the unbelievers alike.

During the time of independence some Ganda nationalists associated foreign religions with imperialism and colonialism and loved much to do away with Christianity, Islam, and replace them with Ganda traditional religion. But this did not take place as most chiefs in Buganda were strong Christians or Moslems.

The independence was not only a political but also a spiritual one. The Ganda rediscovered their lost spiritual heritage by that turn of events. Traditional rituals were performed in public without hiding, the traditionalists clients started visiting the temple and shrines during the day without fear, the hidden temples and shrines were brought near their houses in the courtyard. Thus, the Luganda proverb:-

Akatali kabbe, bwolya eggumba
osuula mu mulyango.²
(What is not stolen: its bone you throw through the doorway)

The religious wars in Buganda between Ganda converts to Catholicism and Protestantism, Christians and Muslims.³ gave traditional religions a chance to revive and later to survive. The Baganda first of all had never imagined a kingdom with more than one religion. As a matter of fact, these foreign religions caused divisions among the Baganda, and caused wars among themselves. They caused the Kabaka's subjects to disobey him.⁴ The Ganda many traditional cultural-religious values and practices were dismissed as heathen. This led to a struggle to maintain and revive the Ganda traditional cultural-religion which the foreign religions wanted to stamp out. Ganda traditional

religion survived because by that time of history it was the only religion that fostered love, peace and security and deemed capable of serving as means to unity and preservation of self-identity.

3.3. METHOD OF EVANGELIZATION.

The method of evangelization was by giving to the king and chiefs occasional gifts and to the commoners religious articles like medals and Rosaries. Their assimilation into society by eating the same food, building the same houses like their chiefs, using the same social manners, adopting a dress acceptable to the people and spending only the necessary minimum.⁵

First, the evangelisation done by distributing or dishing out goods is always short-lived. Immediately the goods for dishing out are finished it is also deserted. Such a religion, moreover, will be embraced without conviction but because of material gain. This is exactly what most Ganda people did. After getting the material things, they went back to their traditional religion almost as quickly as they had come.

Second, the external identification, for example dress, eats and drinks, living in the same house structures, did not touch the inner levels of the Ganda people's cultural values or religious core. That is why Ganda traditional religion is surviving up to now. The image some of the Bishops gave during the African Synod to describe some African Christians is most telling: "They behave like frogs who have two legs on land and the other in water."⁶ This is, no doubt, the appropriate way to describe some Ganda people.

Ganda traditional religion survives because all methods used for evangelization lacked religious dialogue and inculturation which alone could afford a the best ground for intermarriage between religions.

There was a poor and inadequate catechesis which resulted into a poor liturgy and poor growth in the way Ganda people express their faith. Consequently some Christians take some period off and return to their nature religion in search of missed spiritual satisfaction and fulfilment.

3.4 FORMAL EDUCATION:

Ganda traditional religion has survived because of enormous studies and research done in Ganda traditional religion have greatly helped to bring to the surface Ganda traditional religious values now in writing. This has enabled Ganda traditional religion to survive as people are also tempted to live these rediscovered values now.

3.5 RESTORATION OF THE MONARCHY.

In 1993, it was a year of jubilation in Buganda; simply because the abolished Buganda monarch was restored. Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II was enthroned as a king of Buganda. This restoration and enthronement of the king has helped all Ganda traditional religious practices to survive because the Ganda king is the head of traditional religion in Buganda. His post is also a religious post. Every year, there is a commemoration of this enthronement and many Ganda religious rituals and practices are carried out.

Then, what will prevent Ganda traditional religion to survive? What is surprising, on such occasions, Christians, Muslims, educated and not educated all forget their foreign religious differences, social status and come together and get involved in the Ganda traditional cultural religious practices, songs, dances and art. All participate actively well in ceremonies.

You hear in Buganda, people saying “Batudiza ebyaffe” (They have returned our things) They don’t mean material things only but also the return to traditional religious practices and cultural values. As tribal festivals continue to take place. they only serve the Ganda young generation to sharpen their knowledge about their Ganda religion to ensure its continuity and survival.

3.6 TECHNOLOGICAL FACTOR.

The mass media productions, has helped Ganda traditional religion to survive because nowadays there are Ganda traditional religious programmes on Radio every Sunday. The foreign religious priest (catholic priest) shares his faith with the Ganda traditional priest and their audience. Also the local News paper called *Bukedde* has a column for a

Protestant pastor and the Ganda traditional priest, sharing their religious experiences with the Ganda population.

Baganda people have taken yet, another giant step in media production. They have secured their own Radio station. It is known as *Central Broadcasting Service* (CBS). It is located exactly within the enclosure of the Kabaka - Bulange, Mengo - Kampala. This is not small step in bringing to the people some degree of awareness of their cultural values, customs and traditions that are tied up with their religious world view and practices. It is, at the final analysis, the one way of promoting of the Ganda religion.

3.7. ECONOMIC, CULTURAL - RELIGIOUS FACTORS.

The “inborn” strong belief in ancestral spirits as the guardians, protectors of life, health, peace, harmony and order in society accounts for the survival of Ganda Religion despite all hostilities from within and without. The Baganda know it by heart that their prosperity depends on the respect they have for their ancestors. Any form of neglect and disrespect results automatically in disharmony and loses. Hence, any effort to break this relationship, among the Ganda, met with open resistance or it fell on a deaf ear. For the ancestors are not only the founders of the current families, but are believed to still exercise a powerful influence on the living. They could punish their offspring effectively. This strong belief is hard to stamp out of the life of a Muganda and there is no justification for such a move.

Traditional religious practices have continued also because the expectations people had about these outside religions have failed. They expected security, but got religious wars. They expected material wealth but ended up being bought and sold. They expected to be cured of their diseases, protection from enemies and evil forces only to be told to reject and never to turn to their traditional medicine healer since they were called the very agents of evil and bad spirits. Yet, the foreign religions and their fellow colonial leaders did not remove the feeling and causes of insecurity in their midst. For example, plagues of Small Pox occurred in 1883, 1891-3 witnessed a civil war between Buganda and her celebrated enemy, Bunyoro. People have bitter wounds caused by massacres that took place at Nsimbe and Luwero Triangle basically due to dictatorial powers of the time. These self-styled dictators are at one time or the other been in close company with one of these foreign religions or have been or still are church goers. Today we have the

plague of AIDS and all the disasters associated to it. Now in search for a lasting solution to their problems, most Ganda people have found themselves at the feet of their ancestors and ancestral temples.

The great influx into the urban areas by the young and old people in search of white colour jobs is rampant. Many have been unlucky and have never secured a job, yet, the cost of living is very high. This has created a feeling of insecurity to the majority of the people who are not ready to go back to the village. Many to fight this unemployment problem have taken to use of charms in search for a solution. Traditional sorcerers and diviners started giving the charms, amulets to those in need of them so that they secure jobs or any form of employment. Hence, cities have become a home for traditional medicine men and women. You find them in all corners of the city or towns laying out their traps to catch those in despair.

Now, in the day light you find the medicine women and men selling medicine for good luck, to find a lover, to finding a job, for protection from witches and witchcraft. Medicine to pass examinations, to find a house, to get a promotion at job and so on and so forth. What is surprising is to see someone selling medicine for riches, when he himself is in rags. One day, I asked the medicine man who was selling charms for riches why he was poor himself, he smartly answered me that a doctor does not cure himself. "*Omuganga teyeganga.*"⁷ All these are clear indicators that Ganda traditional religion is going to use these venues to revive. For the moment people experience some forms of insecurity and troubles only run back to their old practices for solutions that seem to work and closer to them.

3.8. THE ROLE OF GANDA MEDICINE MAN AND WOMAN.

Let us now consider another important factor which is in one way contributing to the survival of Ganda traditional religion. The role played by the Ganda medicine man and woman. In Buganda traditional society a medicine person had and still has an important role to play. He / she is considered to have a very deep relationship with the Ganda sacred world because he / she is the mediator between the profane world and the sacred one. Because of this role, the Baganda society owes him / her a great respect. He / she intercedes for the society in times of crisis, renders sacrifices on behalf of the society and is considered to have the power to appease the gods on behalf of the society. He /

she can heal the diseases that are considered to have been caused by ones bad relation with the gods or ones fellow men and women in the society.

The medicine persons carry out several rituals. Some of these rituals are meant to bring harmony between this world with the world of the spirits or the spiritual world. Once this is realised a Muganda will feel at peace and everything will be seen going on well. So the medicine men and women have these duties and responsibilities to carry out on behalf of all the members in the society. He/she is obliged to perform purification rituals and ceremonies in order to cleanse away taboos brought about by contact with prohibited situations.⁸ Unless a Muganda undergoes such, however, Christian he/she may be, he/she will be psychologically haunted.

Baganda Christians still feel that there is something missing in Christianity that does not touch their practical life and as such in order to be psychologically healed, they still have to run to the Ganda traditional medicine men or women who seem to touch their psycho-spiritual life problem and heal them effectively.

Since the Ganda traditional approach is more appealing than the foreign religion ones, due to its practicality, Ganda traditional religion will continue to survive and its practical approach to the needs of the Ganda people the *raison d'être* of its survival. The foreign religions have suffered lack of popular commitment, hence, remains at the superficial level.

My informants in the suburbs of Kampala attributes the survival of Ganda traditional religion to the following points: Every human being has an obligation to take care of one's health and of others entrusted to him or members of the family. When one of them becomes sick, he/she looks for the healer and those who can do the healing holistically are the Ganda medicine men or women. They take the sufferers' well-being in generally: physical, emotional, spiritual, psychological, and all his surroundings plus the social part of it.⁹ Then going to priests who spiritualize problems and giving easy answers to profound problems with the promises of rewards of life after here is just waste of time.

Second, that the foreign religious leaders are only available for the people who need them once a week and people have burning problems, so many resort to traditional diviners and sorcerers who are always available all the time to serve their clients. They know them by name and visits them in their homes.¹⁰ It is that availability, concern and knowledge of their clients physical and spiritual needs that has given advantage to Ganda traditional religion to survive.

Third, the foreign missionaries as well as the indigenous missionaries are reluctant to use Ganda traditional religion as a foundation for the Christian faith and most of them are ignorant of what it is. They only sing that it is heathen or satanic (*kusinza_bitalimu*). They came with a presumption that outside their foreign religions there was no God but the devil. Such a conclusion shows a lack of serious study of Ganda traditional religion. With such ignorance Ganda traditional religion has survived.

Fourth, Ganda traditional religion has survived because, the present major religion leadership is less effective in dealing with their followers who carry out incompatible traditional practices with major religions. My informant, told me that in the past church leaders warned, and gave strict punishment to the backsliders. Backsliders were banned from sacraments. Again, the power of the catechist has declined, they used to go around the villages pulling down temples and shrines, but now if such is done the catechist is sued to court, charged of violation of human right of worship.¹¹

Fifth, Ganda traditional religion has survived because of the Ganda's strong remembrance of the dead. There are several religious rituals the Ganda used to do, and are still doing to show that the dead are still living and close to their families and the foreign religions lack these fulfilling rituals. Through these religious rituals and practices, Ganda traditional religion survives.

Now that we have pointed out and at length discussed some of the factors responsible for the survival the Ganda indigenous religion, in our next chapter we shall focus on some practical pastoral actions to redress the situation.

¹ Lubaale Kibuuka was the god of war. He also had his prison called Namirembe. Cf. Micheal B. Nsimbi, Amanya Amaganda N'emmono Zaago, pp. 121 - 122.

² Ferdinand Walsher, Luganda Proverbs , p. 21.

³ John Baur, 2000 Years of Christianity in Africa . pp. 236 - 8.

⁴ Ibid., p. 237.

⁵ John Mary Waliggo, The Catholic Church in Buddu Province of Buganda, 1879 - 1925, (Ph.D. Thesis) , Cambridge 1976. P. 17.

⁶ African Bishops, The African Synod Comes Home, (Nairobi: Paulines, 1995),p. 25.

⁷ Ferdinand Walsher, Luganda Proverbs , p. 336.

⁸ There are so many prohibited situations in Buganda, taboos: tabooed people, places and acts or behaviour. For example, sexual intercourse between a breast-feeding mother and a man who is not the father of the child. The husband, too, should not sleep with another woman who is not his wife during this period. If this strict behaviour was not observed, the child could be affected or even could die, (Obusobe). Practically this was a measure to ensure that love and fidelity are protected in a family. See Willy Mpuuga, Amagezi G'abedda , (Kisubi: Marium Press, 19- -), p. 65.

⁹ Kandida Nabukalu, retired teacher, interviewed on 4th August,1997.

¹⁰ Kintu Musoke, Kyebando, interviewed on 7th August, 1997.

¹¹ Najjalwambi, Busabala, interviewed on 22nd August, 1997.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE IMPACT OF FOREIGN RELIGIONS ON THE GANDA

4.1. REMARKS

The encounter of foreign religions with the Ganda people did not leave the latter's culture and religion intact. There were changes witnessed in respect to each foreign religion. In this chapter, we shall be considering three specific issues. First, the impact of foreign religions on the Ganda people and their religion. Second, suggested pastoral strategies. Third, a brief general conclusion will serve to close this paper.

4.2. ISLAM.

The coming of Islam Buganda marked a religious change from traditional religious practices to Islam. Many Baganda embraced Islam as an additional religion to their traditional one. Second, Islam marked a transition away from Baganda oral culture to a culture of writing and reading. This was first introduced to the Baganda particularly to those who lived in the king's court.

Third, as the Ganda people's literacy rate increased, the oral culture started to diminish. As writing began, Sir Appolo Kagawa wrote the history of the kings of Buganda. Christian missionaries also used Arabic words in their literature for example *nabi* for prophet, *mneema* for grace, *eldini* for religion (*ddiini*). Fourth, this increased literacy rate displaced "mythic" mentality and led to the development of a historical consciousness.

The Ganda people were introduced to trade outside their cultural boundaries and outside traditions. For example, trade with the East African coast and dressing in long robes called *kanzu* respectively. All these marked new beginnings in Buganda.

The acceptance of new faith made Kabaka Muteesa I to reject some traditional practices for example, he put an end to the practice of hunting with dogs previously an important ceremonial occasion. He abolished a tradition whereby the king ate alone, arguing that worship of One God implied that his creatures should sit and eat together.

Islam preached brotherhood and the peace of Allah but unfortunately their words did not match their actions. Always like Christianity, both played divisive roles all along. This encounter injured the internal harmony whose basis was culture and religion. People had to make a choice either to remain traditional or to embrace the new ways of doing things.

4.3. THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIANITY.

There was growth of the Christian communities. Many churches were built to replace the Ganda traditional shrines and temples and many Ganda people embraced Christianity. Second, there was reduction of the Ganda language to writing and this led to the translation of the Bible into vernacular and preparation of other literature.

Building of formal schools in Buganda was championed by the missionaries. For example, Mwiri (Busoga), Nyakasura (Toro), Nabumali (Bugisu), Gayaza girls, Kings College (Buddo). All these schools were run by the Church Missionary Society (CMS). St. Mary's Kisubi was run by the White Fathers, whereas Namilyango was run by the Mill Hill Fathers. However, these mission schools have been agents of Imperialism, that is, training Baganda youth to have the same ideologies and policies as those of their colonisers. For example, many graduates from these schools hated their language (Luganda) and cultural customs and they became agents of missionaries to exterminate the Ganda culture which they called an uncivilised.

The academic curriculum stressed Western cultural civilisation. Subjects like Western History, Geography, Mathematics were emphasised at the expense of the History or

Geography of the local which would have helped the Baganda to know how they have developed and how to improve their crude agricultural practices and so forth.

Before the arrival of Christianity children were educated in their homes by their parents. As the missionaries started boarding schools children were isolated from their families and were not allowed to go back to their social communities lest slide back into paganism. This form of education led to a contradiction between what the students learnt in schools and their existential social - cultural environment. A study in Western History could not help the student to solve his/her local historical problems. This caused a discontinuity between school education and the student's economic, social and cultural religious background.

In practice, most missionaries undermined the Ganda traditional and socio-cultural religious practices: beliefs in and respect for the ancestors, the tribal gods, and the local medicines which was equated with the practice of magic and witchcraft. Also a number of local practices were not properly handled by giving the people relevant reasons for discontinuing them. Hence, practices like polygamy still continued even among the so called baptised Christians.

The Christian missionaries preached universal love, but this was just in theory, on a negative account, they brought divisions among the Baganda. Catholics were called the French or just Romans (*Abaroma*) with their headquarters at Rubaga. The Protestants with their headquarters at Namirembe were simply referred as *Abangereza* Britons. Each religion was busy asserting itself at the expense of the other: with much pride in its own teaching jealousies, guarding its traditions and regarding its self superior to all others. Up to now, divisions and mistrust between the three major religions and their followers never stopped and the effects of religious wars never healed.

The impact of Christianity on the Ganda people was the demystification of Ganda taboos which kept the moral code of the Baganda. Ganda taboos were very effective in controlling against bad practices like incest, adultery, premarital sex, keeping fidelity

in various aspects of life. They were used as protective measures. They aided moral education.

4.4. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISLAM AND CHRISTIANITY.

Islam prepared the way for Christianity. It was the first to awaken among the Baganda, certain needs and aspirations: The thirst to read and write especially among the young pages at Kabaka's court. When the Christians arrived they built on this literacy and started printing books. Islam introduced to the Baganda the idea of a holy book, holy day of a God above all gods, who was interested, in the affairs of this life and in the moral life of the individual, expectation of the resurrection of the body and judgement after death. Such concepts were started by Islam and later on stressed by the Christian missionaries.

Ganda traditional religion had also the idea of a supreme Being the Creator of all things, a belief in life after death and moral code which foreign religions despised especially Christianity. Let us now look at the pedagogical approach of the missionaries.

4.5. PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH.

Oral method: The transmission of faith and preaching was all done orally. As the Baganda were used to oral transmission. The Baganda customs, traditions and other beliefs were handed over from generation to generation by word of mouth. Knowledge and moral wisdom was given by way of tales, stories, chants, recitals, proverbs and legends. However, formal education at the mission schools tended to uproot the children from their families at a tender age. This practice deprived them of the parental socialisation, cultural values and religious knowledge provided at home. Parents were to forget their first obligation of educating their children. For education was left in the hands of teachers who formed the children with a Western form. This led to a decline of the oral method and its means of transmitting knowledge and moral wisdom, thus creating a gap between the educated and the uneducated on a cultural level. So, the missionaries pedagogical approach of using books and writing on the

blackboard was for a few since not many people especially the old knew how to read and write. So, it was not the best approach for the Ganda people.

The pedagogical approach of the Catechism, of questions and answers which were crammed and recited without proper explanation and meaning failed to meet with the problems and spiritual yearning of the Ganda. Also there was lack of intelligible words to the catechumens during that time as most words they used to teach the Ganda people were either in Latin, Arabic or Swahili. For instance, names of six out of the seven sacraments are in Latin even up to now.

The missionaries could not know that the Luganda language was more practical to concrete reality than speculative abstract terms which dominated the catholic doctrines. The explanations of these speculative abstract terms only passed from one ear to another and evaporated in the air. This is still a problem.

The pedagogical approach of the catechism was also dogmatic and the emphasis was laid on imparting a certain amount of doctrinal truth to the catechumens. Thus creating a great risk in presenting the faith as a matter of acquiring knowledge and committing it to memory with little relevance to concrete life of the people. The Ganda people found relevance in their traditional religion which was concerned with the concrete life they lived.

It was again a great mistake to think that the Ganda had little knowledge of a God. Yet, they had a strong belief in the supreme Being. So, the pedagogical approach which did not start from what the Baganda knew to the unknown as an addition and appraisal to the known was bound to fail and could yield little or no success.

What the Ganda knew about the supreme being was part of their lives and could not be uprooted easily. That is why the new teaching just became a jacket or an overlay which can be removed whenever it could not serve the purpose.

In conclusion, the missionaries would have been more effective if they had used the already existing religious experience of the Ganda people. They would have used and maintained the Ganda oral method in their pedagogical approach, using their symbols, language and teaching from what the Ganda knew already to the unknown. They would have started from the similarities to the differences that existed between the two religious traditions and world views. Let us now look at the possible pastoral recommendations in following section.

4.6. PASTORAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Form the above observed we have concluded to factors responsible for the survival of the Ganda religion to date. Some of these factors need to be counteracted by a designed pastoral strategies. Let us here consider some of these required pastoral actions.

4.7. HISTORIC FACTORS (F) AND PASTORAL STRATEGIES (P).

F1. Missionaries were associated with the colonial administrators. This situation greatly compromised their mission or evangelization.

P1. Evangelization to produce fruits must first aim at securing an atmosphere of security and confidence on the part of the converts.

F2. Since missionaries were connected with their fellow colonisers, independence from foreign political power meant independence from their corresponding religious allegiances.

P2. Christianity to be rooted in the Ganda people must take keen interest in their cultural values and practices. For some of these values provide rich grounds for evangelization. Some values need to be respected and promoted lest the missionary is considered to be a coloniser or an agent of imperialism only interested in promoting his culture by exterminating the indigenous one. Peoples' spiritual heritage must be closely examined and integrated.

F3. Foreign religions got involved very much in religious wars. Muslims fought the Christians. Christians fought among themselves (1884). These phenomena caused disunity, hatred and suspicion among the Baganda. The Baganda became anti-foreign religions. They capitalised on such wars to discredit their work. They reminded their fellow Baganda of one kingdom one Kabaka and one religion. They started calling back their people to traditional religion and unity. Never to join (join) religions bent on disuniting people.

P3. Any religion whether foreign or indigenous must foster unity and love, foster mutual understanding between other religions. Respect of others beliefs, encouraging ecumenism because without religious ecumenism and sincere religious dialogue no unity can be achieved. This unity will help the Baganda to work together in political, economic and cultural development of Baganda people irrespective of their denomination.

F4. Missionaries used gifts to attract the Baganda to Christianity and this was a weak evangelization method. When the missionaries had to leave, the local clergy had nothing to give the people in return to accept the new religion. People started backsliding because there was no gain in embracing Christianity and many thought the local clergy were eating their money or were misers.

P4. Good evangelization should help people to know why they have embraced a certain belief not for material gains. The faith embraced to help them change their lives. By fighting against diseases, poverty and ignorance by themselves so that even when the missionary leaves the people can live without him and no vacuum is created.

F5. The missionaries had done little or no adaptation, or to inculturate the Gospel in Ganda culture, They feared that inculturation could end up into schism and syncretism. Moreover Ganda traditional religion was called polytheistic, superstition and pagan. So no dialogue was encouraged. Their principle of new wine new skins governed the day, though it did not work.

P5. Modern missionary must first identify the seeds of faith and water them because all people have one Creator, the origin, and the end of everything. He /she must take all good values from Ganda traditional religion and build the Christian preaching and faith on it.

F6. Before the coming of Christianity the Ganda people,used taboos to keep the a people on a safe moral path. However, the missionaries condemned them as being without foundation and fear of nothingness. Yet, taboos were very effective in promoting the morals and as a means of moral education of the time.

P6. There is a need to respect the mysteries in other people's religions because they have a great role in guarding and protecting the belief of other people. Ones religious heritage must be approached with respect if one is later to seek a dialogue between his /her religion and the other.

F7. The pedagogical approach of the catechism which was dogmatic and with an emphasis put on imparting a certain amount of doctrinal truth was not effective because it lacked the Ganda world view.

P7. In the presentation of dogmatic teaching one must be equipped with knowledge of the Ganda world view their spetic beliefs, and key religious elements: the deity, spirits and ancestors. It is knowledge which is need in formulating a Ganda theology that is understandable to the Ganda.

4.7. GENERAL CONCLUSION.

The purpose of this study has been to investigate into factors responsible for the survival of Ganda traditional religion despite efforts stepped up the foreign religious to stamp it out. The historical study has helped us to see what happened when the foreign religions encountered the Ganda traditional religion. Again what happened when Islam encountered with Christianity. We have shown the scandalous religious wars and the

impact they had on the Baganda. Religious conflicts and confrontations only served to keep indigenous religion in place.

Before the arrival of Christianity and Islam, the Baganda had a strong notion of one God (*Katonda omu*) the Creator of everything. He is given so many attributes to express his intervention, and manifestations in the world and in people's daily life. For example *Katonda omutonzi* - (God the Creator) *Lugaba* - (Giver) etc.....

Below him are the *balubaale* (deities) *Emizimu* - (spirits), *Emisambwa* - (tutelary deities). There were also practitioners and medium of the cult: *Kabona* (priests) and *mmandwa* (medium) The Baganda culture and their religion are inseparable. It is from their cultural - religious heritage that they derived their identity as Baganda.

The foreign religions have not been able to influence the Baganda to ascertainable degree could match the pressure the indigenous religion. The Baganda sought fame, wealth, good health, security, children, protection from bad spirits. These foreign religions have not delivered anything to the Baganda's expectations in religion. To a Muganda religion must help to prevent all problems, he/she faces. That is why they don't have a problem of adapting several deities to help them in a given situation where one deity is impotent another may be potent.

As foreign religions came to Buganda with cultural superiority. Colonial mentality, poor pedagogical approach, of starting from the unknown, failure to establish pedagogical report in form of social cultural interaction, this failure destroyed a sense of security and confidence on the part of the learner, above all failure to use Ganda religious sensibilities, symbols, rituals and ceremonies. This has made foreign religions to remain foreign and strange. The foreign religions have not influenced them as Ganda traditional religion has continued to influence them. They don't see foreign religions in their struggles of life.

However, foreign religions have had a lot done to the Baganda. This is not a condemnation but a positive criticism to encourage more dialogue and adaptation to modern missionaries. Otherwise, Ganda traditional religion be used as an added

religion to the Christian or Islamic religion. We have not exhausted all about foreign religions and Ganda traditional religion in such a short essay. But to show that with a well designed pedagogical approach one can profitably evangelise the Ganda people. However, he / she must pay attention to the already existing religious knowledge and experiences in the place. There is more than cases one where you only need to use the concepts these people have and give them new contents.

We hope that this study has contributed in some small measures to bring to light the factors which are responsible for the survival of Ganda traditional religion as a religion worshipped alongside Christianity and Islam. With such given pastoral suggestions we call for genuine inculturation process to start.

‘Will the word become flesh among the Baganda?’

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NAMES OF PEOPLE WHO RESPONDED.

<u>DATE</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>STATUS</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
6th Aug. 1997	Sekamwa C. J.	Professor	Makerere Univ.
7th Aug. 1997	Bukadde Magezi	Traditional Priest	Kyebando-Kampala
9th Aug. 1997	Namazzi Maria	Retired teacher	Kalelwe-Mulago
4th Aug. 1997	Lwabuyindo	Medicine woman	Nansana
2nd Aug. 1997	Hashifa Nnakabiri	Princess	Wamala
4th Aug. 1997	Nabukalu Kandida	Retired teacher	Masaka
6th Aug. 1997	Kintu Musoke	Herbalist	Kyebando
22nd Dec. 1997	Najjalwambi	Medicine woman	Busabala

APPENDIX

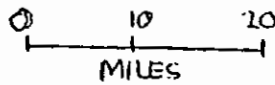
QUESTIONNAIRE

To supplement our library sources, we sent out written questionnaires to some Native Baganda: Lay people, some retired teachers, Medicinemen, and Catechists to get some information concerning the survival of Ganda traditional Religion. The responses are incorporated in the work.

Sample:

1. Who are in the Kabaka's Household?
2. How did the Baganda demonstrate communitarian life and reconciliation?
3. What are the functions of a fitch?
4. What is a Nsiriba (Amulet)?
5. How was the state of Islam after the death of Prince Nuhu Kyabasinga Mbogo?
6. What caused conflicts among muslims in Buganda?
7. Why Ganda traditional religion has survived?
8. What do you have to say about present foreign religious leadership?
9. Which rituals are still practiced?

THE MAP OF BUGANDA



THE MAP OF UGANDA

