SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY STAVANGER NORWAY

DIALOGUE BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN UGANDA
A CASE STUDY OF KAMPALA DISTRICT

BY

SERUNJOGI UMAR

SUPERVISOR: PROFESSOR GERD MARIE ÅDNA

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents Haji Abdul-Fattah Katende, and Hajat Jalia Katende, my brother Abdu-Nasser Mutyaba, my sisters Mayi Nakitende and Asia Namakula and to all individuals and groups working for peace among religions in the world.

My thoughts go to my late grandparents Sheikh Nassir Mutyaba, Hajat Mayi Nantege Mutyaba and Haji Musa Buule who have not lived to celebrate this achievement with me. You will always be in my prayers and may Allah accept all the good you did, forgive you your shortcomings and admit you to paradise.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

C.O.U   -   Church of Uganda

I.R.C.U   -   Inter religious Council of Uganda

L.G   -   Lumen Gentium

N.A   -   Nostra Aetate

P.C.I.D   -   Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue

U.M.S.C   -   Uganda Muslim Supreme Council

W.C.C   -   World Council of Churches

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

This study is about a very important subject namely; 'dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda' and forms a very interesting reading. Uganda is located at the heart of Africa between latitude 1º.29 South to 4º.12 North and longitude 29º.34 East to 35º.00 West. It covers a total area of approximately 241, 550 Square Kilometres.[1] It shares international boundaries with Kenya to the East, South Sudan to the North, Democratic Republic of Congo to the West and Tanzania and Rwanda to the South. It is estimated to have a population of 32,369,558 today. More than 50% of the population is under the age of 15 and the majority of Ugandans live in rural areas.[2] Ugandan culture is heterogeneous. The country has over 50 tribes of African origin falling in 4 major ethnic groups namely; Bantu, Nilotes, Nilo-hamites and Sudanic.[3] Uganda also has a small population of Europeans, Arabs and Asians (mostly Indians, Chinese and Pakistanis). Religiously, Ugandans are very religious and this is even reflected in the nation's Motto which says; "For God and My Country". Religion plays a significant role in the lives of the people and has a very huge influence over them.

Uganda is multi-religious though it is a predominantly Christian country. According to 2002 National census, Christians make up 85.1% of the total population of the country, The Catholic church has the largest number of adherents and make up 41.9% of the total population followed by the Anglicans (Church of Uganda) who make up 35.9%, the Pentecostal Church 4.6%, Seventh day Adventist 1.5%, while 1% is grouped as other Christians. Muslims are a significant minority and make up about 12% of the total population.[4]

African Traditional beliefs and customs are often practiced by the people side by side with other established faiths. So it is very common to find a Christian or a Muslim but also having strong beliefs in African Traditional Religion. Freedom of worship is guaranteed by the country's constitution and there is no state religion.

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[1] Uganda Atlas of our Changing Environment, 2009, .3
[2] 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census, Uganda Bureau of Statistics October 2006.
[3] Langlands B.W, 1975, 1
[4] 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census, Uganda Bureau of Statistics October 2006

Politically, Uganda was declared a British Protectorate in 1894. Since then, it has experienced a lot of political instability, military coups, dictatorships and civil wars. Prior to the arrival of foreign religions, Ugandans practiced their African Traditional Religions. Islam was the first foreign religion to arrive in Uganda. It was brought by Arab traders in 1844. It was followed by The Anglican Church in 1877 and the Catholic Church arrived in 1879[5]. Today, the country has more than 30 religious groupings.

Right from the start, the relations among these different religious groups have not been cordial. There has been a lot of mistrust and misunderstanding among them resulting into intolerance, prejudice and fights which have, at times, resulted into deaths and destruction of property. Today, Muslims and Christians in Uganda are being challenged to re-examine their relationship and to move beyond the narrow misconceptions of the other, breakdown the walls of fear and anger and instead move to love, friendship, trust and a better understanding of the other. This will only be possible if the two communities begin to engage in serious dialogue between them.

The researcher was partly motivated to carry out this study after realising that because of the absence of dialogue among religions in Uganda, religion which was supposed to be a resource for peace had instead been turned into a source of conflict. The trend of affairs in Uganda today makes dialogue between Muslims and Christians and among all religions in general not only a necessity but a must.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Uganda especially in Kampala district there are many conflicts between Muslims and Christians arising out of lack of dialogue between them. Even the little dialogue existing between them is faced with very many challenges. Islam and Christianity which are supposed to be sources of love; peace and unity have now been turned into weapons of hatred, conflict and destruction. The conflicts between these two religions have fuelled divisions in the Ugandan society which is already too much divided by other factors like tribes, politics and economics. If this situation is left to continue unchecked, the conflicts between the followers of these two religions will destroy peace and security in Uganda.

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[5] Kakungulu Badru and Kasozi Abdu, 1997, 3

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study is intended to achieve the following objectives.

1. To investigate the challenges facing dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda.
2. To find out the effects arising out of lack of dialogue between Muslims and Christian in Uganda on their peaceful co-existence.
3. To show how the challenges to dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda can be resolved leading to a peaceful co-existence.
4. To promote inter-religious dialogue as an alternative conflict resolution mechanism among Muslims and Christians in Uganda, and especially in Kampala district.

1.4 Research Questions

The data for this study has been collected using the following research questions.

1. Of what relevance is dialogue between Muslims and Christians?
2. What are the opportunities for dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda?
3. What are the challenges facing dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda?
4. What should be done to improve dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda?

1.5 Definition of Key Terms

Below the researcher defines some of the key terms utilised in this study

Allah: the name given to God in Islam

Bible: the holy book for Christians; it contains the Old and New Testament, and consists of many different books and letters.

Christian: a follower of the Christian religion

Christianity: is the religion of the Christians. It is based upon the teachings and miracles of Jesus Christ

Church: the holy place of worship for Christians.

Dialogue: is the conversation on a common subject between one or more persons or groups with differing views the primary purpose of which is for each participant to learn from the other so that he or she or it can change and grow.

Globalisation: is the process of interaction and integration among the world's peoples, religions, cultures and world's views through current systems of economics, migration, media and technology leading to a compression of the world into 'a single place'.

Iftar: meal served at the time of breaking the fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadhan.

Inter-religious Dialogue: is a meeting of people of different religions in an atmosphere of freedom and openness in order to listen to the other to try to understand that person's religion and hopefully to seek possibilities of collaboration and harmonious co-existence.

Islam: is the religious faith believed by its followers to have been revealed by God through His last prophet Muhammad. The word Islam is derived from the Arabic word 'salaam' meaning peace, purity, submission and obedience. It also means submission to the will of God and obedience to His law.

Mosque: the holy place of worship for Muslims

Muslim: a follower of the religion of Islam

Peaceful co-existence; is peace among people or groups with widely differing ideologies

Qur'an: this is a holy book for Muslims. Muslims believe that it contains Allah's words revealed through Prophet Muhammad for the guidance of mankind.

Religious conflict: is a conflict caused or justified by religious differences.

Sunnah: these are the sayings, actions, approvals and disapprovals of Prophet Muhammad.

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Religious Scope

Much as Uganda has very many religions (more than 30), this study is about dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. The researcher has chosen these two religious communities because together they make up more than 97% of the Ugandan population and therefore the relationships between them is one of the most important factors for meaningful peace in Uganda.

1.6.2 Geographical Scope

Conflicts between Muslims and Christians exist throughout the whole of Uganda; however because of the limited resources at the researcher's disposal, he could not cover the whole country. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the researcher chose Kampala District as a case study.

Kampala District provides a very good case study because it is a true reflection of the whole country. It contains Kampala City which is the Capital City of Uganda. Being the Capital City, it houses all the major national and international administrative units. Also, all the religions of Uganda are represented and headquartered in Kampala and therefore information on what is going on throughout the country easily filters into here. It is also the commercial capital of Uganda and as a result, you also find here people from all over the country and the world at large. It is the most densely populated, ethnically and religiously diverse district of Uganda and therefore all the religious conflicts taking place in the whole country are somehow reflected here. It is also centrally located within the country. Therefore, it is the best place in Uganda for one to know what is happening all over the country.

Information about Kampala District

Kampala district is one of the 112 districts of Uganda. It is coterminous with the country's capital city Kampala, after which it is named. It is located in central Uganda and is the political, economic and cultural centre of Uganda. It is bordered by Mukono district in the East and by Wakiso district to the South, North and West. It covers an area of about 197 square kilometers. It is divided into 5 main administrative divisions namely, Kampala Central, Kawempe, Makindye, Nakawa and Rubaga divisions and according to the 2002 National Census figures, it had a population of about 1,180,000.

1.6.3 Time Scope

The study has covered the period from 2006 up to 2013 .The researcher has chosen this period because he has observed and heard about many conflicts between Muslims and Christians in this period not only in Uganda but also in other countries like Nigeria, Sudan, Central African Republic and Kenya to mention but a few. The researcher has

mostly used secondary literature and information from respondents to cover the period of this study outside the field study.

1.7 Justification

Conflicts between Muslims and Christians are one of the biggest causes of fights, hatred, disunity and confrontation in Uganda today, and the researcher believes that this is so because of lack of dialogue between these two communities. The researcher therefore feels that everything possible must be done to encourage dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda for this is very crucial for peace in Uganda since the two communities make up over 97% of the country's population. The researcher believes that dialogue will help the two communities to overcome fear, prejudice, mistrust, hatred and heal the wounds of past divisions and help to build new bridges of reconciliation, love, peace and cooperation. Prof. Hans Küng a Swiss Catholic theologian once said: "There will be no peace among nations and peoples until there is peace among religions and there will be no peace among religions until there is dialogue among them."[6]

1.8 Significance of the Study

This study unearths the challenges to dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda and the resultant consequences with a view of making recommendations on how these can be overcome. This study makes a contribution to peace in Uganda and the world at large. It will help to inform the government, religious leaders, civil society organisations and the whole Ugandan population on the challenges to dialogue between Muslims and Christians in the country and the resultant consequences and also avail them with possible solutions. This study will also be useful to other countries like Nigeria, Kenya and Central African Republic which face similar challenges of conflicts between Muslims and Christians.

This study has also been submitted by the researcher as a partial requirement for the award of the Master's degree in Global Studies at the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway.

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[6] Kung, 2007, 23

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher describes the methods he used and the major activities he undertook in the process of carrying out this study. He also addresses the data collection methods and tools, the respondents sample size and biographical data and how data was managed, analysed and its quality controlled. In this chapter, the researcher also addresses the ethical as well as the general challenges he faced during this study.

2.2 Data Collection Methods and Tools

Since this study is mostly descriptive in nature, the researcher mostly used qualitative methods of data collection from both the primary and secondary sources.

2.2.1 Library Research

Not much has been written about dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. However, the researcher made efforts to find any written sources of information relevant to his field of study. He for example looked at literature written in other contexts and tried to get out information which he thought would also be of some use in his area of study. He visited several libraries around Kampala and these included Makerere University main Library, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council Library and the Inter-religious Council of Uganda Library. The researcher also made maximum use of the Library at the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway (MHS). He also looked at magazines, newspapers and Internet sources which have information relevant to the area of study and also extensively used both the Qur'an and the Bible which are the Holy Scriptures for the Muslims and the Christians respectively. The researcher got a lot of useful information from this broad diversity of sources concerning dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

2.2.2 Interviews

The researcher carried out in depth interviews with several key informants like religious leaders (both Muslims and Christians), dialogue groups and participants, members of

civil society organizations, community leaders and academicians involved in inter-religious dialogue studies. He formulated an interview guide which he used during these interviews (see appendix 3). In most cases, the researcher interviewed the respondents from their own territory for he realised that they felt free and more relaxed in their more familiar environment. On this point, Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson write:

> With many people, interviewing them on their own territory, allowing them to organise the content the way they wish, is the best strategy. It allows them to relax much more than they would in less familiar surroundings.[7]

On top of the above formal interviews, the researcher also during the field study had several informal interactive interviews with several people he considered knowledgeable in the field of study. These interviews being informal and personal, the respondents spoke their minds freely without feeling the necessity to guard their responses and this helped the researcher to get their real feelings regarding dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general.

As Hammersley and Atkinson recommend, during these interviews, in order to prompt the respondents to say more, the researcher would even ask them questions whose answers he already knew.[8] On top of this, the researcher also prompted the respondents to speak more by asking them follow-up questions like 'really?', 'is it true?', 'are you sure?' and so on. This proved very useful as these questions prompted the respondents to divulge more information. Also during these interviews, the researcher jotted down notes in order to capture the important points expressed by the respondents. The researcher collected a lot of relevant information from these interviews.

2.2.3 Questionnaires

The researcher designed a questionnaire almost similar to the interview guide which he dispatched to several people knowledgeable in the area of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda who did not have time to be interviewed but found it easier to answer the questionnaire during their convenient time. The researcher made efforts to distribute these questionnaires and collected them after they had been responded to. However, since most of the respondents to the questionnaire where very busy people, the

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[7] Hammersley Martyn and Paul Atkinson, 2007, 116.
[8] Ibid, 119.

researcher encountered challenges in collecting these questionnaires from them. He had on average to make about 3 visits to each respondent before he could get back the filled questionnaire. He had to exercise maximum patience.

The respondents answered most of the questions very well which showed that they found them clear and understood them well. However, many of them found the question which required them to give the teachings of their religions about inter-religious dialogue the most difficult to answer. This is because many of them were not aware of any teachings in their religions concerning dialogue between Muslims and Christians while those who had some knowledge about it, did not have the information off-hand and required time to consult the scriptures.

2.2.4 Personal Observation and Participation

The researcher is a Ugandan born in Kampala District. He has lived in this area all his life and has observed opportunities and hindrances to dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. Being a member of the community under study, during the process of carrying out research, he continued to personally observe and participate in the interactions between Muslims and Christians and collected useful information from his personal observation and participation.

The researcher also had the privilege of attending a 5 day residential 'International Training on Inter-religious Dialogue' organised by the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (from 23rd to 27th June 2014). This training brought together over 30 participants from Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania and from different religions including Muslims, Catholics, Anglicans, Pentecostals and the Bahai. The training being residential, the researcher had a lot of time to interact with all the participants and the facilitators and gathered a lot of useful information from them on the state of inter-religious dialogue in the whole East African region. This training was very important and timely for the researcher and it could not have come at a better time.

Photo 1: The researcher attending a session during the International Training on Inter-religious Dialogue organised by the IRCU.[9]

However, the researcher's lowest point during this training came on the last day of the training. On this day, the participants were taken to visit places of worship of different religions including Namirembe Cathedral (Anglican), Old Kampala Mosque (Islam), the Bahai Temple (Bahai) and Namugongo Martyrs Shrine (Catholic). At Old Kampala Mosque, all female participants were required to veil themselves according to the Islamic tradition before entering the mosque. All female participants obliged and veiled themselves except one who refused arguinng that for her as a Christian, to accept to veil herself would be like accepting to obey the commands of the Muslim God which she could not. She therefore refused to veil herself and consquently did not enter the mosque and chose to stay out as other participants toured the mosque. This incident disappointed the researcher who had thought that after such a resourceful training, the participants had become more tolerant to other religions and were going back home to

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[9] The researcher obtained permission of all the subjects in the photos used in this study.

spread a message of love, telerance and peaceful co-existence among their co-religionists. This incident proved to the researcher that inter-religiuos dialogue is a difficult undertaking that requires a lot of patience and that changing the attitudes of some people is not easy. However, what consoled the researcher is that apart from this lady, all the other participants seemed to have grasped the message and the spirit of the training.

Photo 2: The researcher in a group photo with other participants of the International Training Workshop on Inter-religious Dialogue at the Bahai Temple.

Also during the field study, the researcher attended many inter-religious functions including an 'Inter-religious Iftar dinner' organised by The Nile Dialogue Platform[10] during the Muslim holy month of Ramadhan which was attended by people from different religions. The researcher at this function also had an opportunity to interact with adherents and religious leaders from different religions and gathered a lot of information from them.

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[10] Nile Dialogue Platform is a civil society organisation working in the area of inter-religious dialogue in Uganda.

Photo 3: The researcher in a group photo with other guests at the Inter-religious Iftar Dinner organised by The Nile Dialogue Platform on 10th July 2014.

2.2.5 Focus Group Discussions

The researcher conducted four focus group discussions composed of people considered to be very knowledgeable on matters of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. The participants in these focus group discussions were carefully chosen. The first group composed of six academicians (3 Muslims and 3 Christians). Of these 2 were women and 4 men. The second group comprised of 8 participants drawn from different civil society organisations (4 Muslims and 4 Christians). Of these, 5 were men and 3 women. The third focus group comprised of 5 religious leaders (3 Christians and 2 Muslims). Of these, 3 were men and 2 women. The fourth group comprised of 15 youths (7 Christians and 8 Muslims) of which 9 were male and six female. All these focus group

discussions were moderated by the researcher who made sure that all the participants had time to air out their views. In all these focus group discussions, the participants openly discussed the challenges and opportunities to dialogue between Muslims and Christians and also reflected on the way forward (recommendations) together. These discussions proved very successful and the researcher got a lot of useful information from them which he uses in the latter chapters of this study.

2.3 Respondents Sample Size

During the field study, the population targeted included religious leaders, community leaders, members of the civil society organizations, academicians and the general public. From all these categories, the researcher interviewed and collected questionnaires from 28 people. Most of the respondents were identified through purposeful sampling. This involved identifying key knowledgeable people of different religions, gender, age groups and education backgrounds among the categories of religious leaders, community leaders, academicians and members of the civil society organisations. The researcher was helped in this process of purposeful sampling by members of staff of the Department of Religion and Peace Studies, Makerere University, who teach in the field of Inter-religious dialogue. The letter of introduction from the Department of Religion and Peace Studies, Makerere University, helped to introduce the researcher to these respondents with whom he eventually scheduled the interviews while others preferred to give their responses through responding to the questionnaire.

2.4 The Respondents Biographical Data

This involves the general characteristics of the respondents which include gender, educational level and religious affiliation.

2.4.1 Gender and Education levels

The researcher tried to balance the gender of the respondents. He made sure that both male and female were fairly represented in the sample size of the respondents. Also during the field study, the researcher interacted with respondents of different educational

levels including the unschooled, semi-educated, graduates and post-graduates of all age groups.

2.4.2 Religious Affiliations

During the field study, the researcher tried to balance the religious affiliations of the respondents. The study is about dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda, so the researcher tried to balance the respondents between Muslims and Christians.

It is also worth noting that the Muslims and Christians of Uganda belong to different denominations for example among the Muslims, there are the *Sunni,* the *Shia* and *Tabliq* while among the Christians, there are the Catholics, the Anglicans, the Orthodox, the Pentecostals, and the Seventh Day Adventists among others. The researcher looked out to respondents from at least two denominations in each religion in order to arrive at a more representative picture.

2.5 Data Analysis

For proper analysis of the data collected during the field study, both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis were employed. However, since the study was mostly descriptive in nature, the researcher mostly employed the qualitative method.

A comparative analysis was also used to develop a contexture meaning because of the varying viewpoints of the different informants. Furthermore, the researcher used a thematic approach to analyse his data where he used the major themes of this study which included the teachings of both Islam and Christianity in dialogue, challenges facing dialogue between Muslims and Christians on Kampala district and the recommendations on how to overcome these challenges.

2.6 Data Quality Control

The Quality of the data gathered was controlled through regular consultation with knowledgeable people in the area of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda such as religious leaders, academicians, community leaders and members of the civil society organizations involved in inter-religious dialogue. On top of this, the researcher

compared the information he obtained from these respondents with information he gathered from written sources to find out if they correlate.

2.7 Ethical Challenges

The study faced the following ethical challenges:

1. This study was about a very sensitive matter which could easily arouse people's emotions. The researcher had to deal with this challenge by trying not to ask questions that would arouse people's emotions and religious sensitivities and also had to request participants in the focus group discussions to exercise maximum restraint and to be sensitive to the religious sentiments of others.

2. The researcher had to steer clear of religious controversies. He avoided being drawn into religious arguments with the respondents which would not yield any positive result. He achieved this by appealing to the respondents to stick to the objectives of the study. For example, during one interview, a respondent asked the researcher why Muslims find it difficult to believe that Jesus was God. The researcher politely reminded this respondent that it was not part of the objectives of this study to find out why Muslims believe this way and Christians that way.

3. The researcher had to make sure that all respondents avoid hate speech and disrespect of other people's beliefs and practices.

4. The study was registered by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD), Bergen, to ensure that the required ethical standards for academic research are kept to their maximum.

5. In the process of the study, the researcher encountered religious extremists in both religions but had to exercise maximum restraint because these were totally opposed to inter-religious dialogue. At one point, the researcher interviewed a Muslim extremist who was totally opposed to the idea of dialogue between Muslims and Christians and who even referred to the researcher as a spy of America who had been sent to entice Muslims to become friendly to Christians

so that the Christians can learn more about Muslims and then know how to fight them better. He even quoted Qur'an 5:51 which he said refused Muslims to take Jews and Christians as friends. On another occasion, the researcher interviewed a Christian extremist who was totally opposed to the idea of dialogue with Muslims because to him Muslims do not believe in the doctrine of Christ and yet the Bible in 2 John 1:9-10, refuses Christians to even greet such people. The researcher handled such extremists with a lot of care pointing out other passages in both the Qur'an and the Bible that encouraged dialogue (for example Qur'an 2:62, 3:64, 5:82 and Bible Mark 12: 28-31, 1 John 4: 20-21). These were convinced by the researcher's explanations and they promised to change their attitudes towards people of other religions.

2.8 Challenges of the Study

The researcher encountered several challenges in the process of carrying out the study which included the following:

1. Many respondents at first tried to withhold useful information because they doubted the researcher's intentions for carrying out this study. However, the researcher assured them that he had no hidden intentions in carrying out this study and that the purpose was purely academic. The introductory letters from the school of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway and from the Department of Religion and Peace Studies, Makerere University, helped to reassure these respondents.

2. There was a wrong perception among many respondents that since the researcher was coming from an overseas university, he must have come with a lot of money and so when called for interviews, they came with a lot of monetary expectations. The researcher convinced them that he was just a student carrying out research for academic purposes and did not have a lot of money.

3. This study being very sensitive since it deals with relations among followers of different religions, many respondents requested the researcher not to mention their names for fear that some of their comments and views about other religions

may offend the followers of those religions and end up jeopardizing their relations with them. The researcher accepted their request and assured them of maximum protection and has consequently kept the names of all respondents anonymous.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL PRESPECTIVES

3.1 Introduction

Today, there exist many conflicts between Muslims and Christians in Uganda which have resulted into disastrous consequences in the country. The researcher believes that dialogue can play a very big role in resolving the conflicts between these two communities. Unfortunately, not much has been written about dialogue between these two communities in Uganda and this is partly what motivated this researcher to undertake this study. The few that have written, have concentrated their energies on writing about religion in Uganda in general without necessarily addressing dialogue between Muslims and Christians. However, many writers have written about inter-religious dialogue in other contexts similar to the Ugandan context. The researcher has had a look at these, made use of them and tried to locate their relevance to the Ugandan context and here below he presents some of them in four sub-sections for purposes of clarity namely: justification for inter-religious dialogue, challenges facing inter-religious dialogue, methodology of inter-religious dialogue and how to improve inter-religious dialogue.

3.2 Justification for Inter-religious Dialogue

On the whole, the need for inter-religious dialogue is created by a number of factors including the desire to bring about peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions. In this section, the researcher analyses the various justifications for inter-religious dialogue pointed out in some of the available academic literature.

Azhar Niaz (2010), a writer and poet, in his article "Muslim-Christian Dialogue" notes that Muslim-Christian dialogical encounter dates back to the rise of Islam in the 7th century and includes periods of great tension, hostility and open war as well as times of uneasy toleration, peaceful co-existence and cooperation.[11] Niaz points out that dialogue between these two communities has been motivated by several factors among which are the desire to foster understanding, to stimulate communication, to correct stereotypes, to work on specific problems of mutual concern, to explore similarities and differences and to facilitate means of witness and cooperation. He adds that dialogue between these two

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[11] Azhar Niaz, 2010, 1

communities is very necessary because they both comprise approximately half of the world's population and therefore the way in which they relate is bound to have profound consequences for both communities and for the whole world.[12]

The researcher agrees with Niaz noting that all the factors he points out are also true motivations for dialogue in Uganda. The researcher observes that for example, in Uganda both Muslims and Christians make up more than 97% of the population and therefore dialogue between them is a must for peace to prevail in Uganda.

The necessity of inter-religious dialogue in our contemporary times also manifests itself in the need to address pressing issues of interfaith concern and universally applicable value questions in society among others. Olugbenga Olagunju (2013), a lecturer in Religious Studies, places the necessity for inter-religious dialogue on globalisation due to its tendency to identify itself with the aspects of integration and cooperation among others. He argues that these two aspects, by nature, presuppose a consensus of some sort, a round table upon which each person's or group's beliefs, assumptions and values are consumed into togetherness. To him, this totally blends with the ideology behind inter-religious dialogue which is to build positive interaction between people of different religious traditions. He further notes that if we are to respect global neighborliness and interdependence, the practice of inter-religious dialogue becomes difficult to avoid and that recognition of our global interdependence in spiritual matters sets us the challenging task of how we can meaningfully learn from each other in mutuality and trust and this challenge can be best addressed through inter-religious dialogue.[13]

Olagunju further points out that the nature of the African society values tend towards relationships, solidarity, hospitality and tolerance of all religious ideas and worldviews. Traditionally, he contends, the African society is both inclusive and pluralistic in nature and in its orientations and worldviews. He points out that the co-existence of Muslims alongside Christians stems from the recognition that they both worship 'the same God' and that this should make dialogue and tolerance between them

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[12] Ibid, 1
[13] Olugbenga Olagunju, 2013, 31-32

much easier. He concludes by noting that the accommodative and tolerant nature of the African society provides a good environment for inter-religious dialogue.[14]

The researcher appreciates the views of Olugunju noting that what he says is also true for Uganda since it is part of the globalized world and its society is pluralistic in nature and as such, it requires inter-religious dialogue to promote peaceful co-existence among its citizens

Jørgen S. Nielsen (2000), a professor of Islamic Studies, attributes the necessity of inter-religious dialogue to the pressures of the contemporary times and exposes the reader to the prevalence of conflict on both the local and international fronts. He grounds inter-religious dialogue on the urgent need to rise to the challenge of our time to eradicate conflict and disunity that have led to global disasters. Employing evident occurrences like regional tragedies, resurgence, religious antagonism among others, he builds the case for inter-religious dialogue as a must for our times.[15] He premises his justification for inter-religious dialogue on the demands of our contemporary times that are faced with pressures that, hitherto, seemed not to matter. With these pressures now magnified, he argues that the need to mobilise for inter-religious dialogue has become even more evident. He affirms that the need for peaceful co-existence in this conflict-smitten society has dictated that religions in our day, work together to create positive interaction among their followers.[16]

From the above assertion, it is evident that Nielsen attributes prevalent conflict to the unhealthy religious relations among people across the globe and therefore, for harmony and peace to be restored, there is need for religions to work together through constructive dialogue.

Among other contemporary pressures that Nielsen identifies as necessitating inter-religious dialogue is globalisation and migration, which, according to him, have declared an end to the days of the communities living in isolation from others. He further says that with the world now becoming one village, it places a demand on communities to come together to achieve cooperation and that therefore, this builds a strong justification for inter-religious dialogue across the world. He writes: "Globalisation and migration

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[14] Ibid, 34
[15] Jørgen S. Nielsen, 2000, 103
[16] Ibid,103

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mean that communities can no longer leave in isolation from others, even in countries where there is only one religion, religious pluralism enters via migration, travel, trade, the media and the internet."[17]

The researcher finds the views of Nielsen very relevant for Uganda whose society is also filled with conflicts and disunity arising partly out of religious differences. The researcher believes that as Nielsen says also the different religions in Uganda (Islam and Christianity inclusive) need to work together through inter-religious dialogue to eradicate conflicts and divisions in the Ugandan society. Also as already stated, Uganda is part of the globalised world and the researcher agrees with Nielsen that every country (Uganda inclusive) has to respond to the demands of the new globalised world and one way of doing this is by encouraging inter-religious dialogue among followers of different religions which makes such a dialogue not only a necessity but a must. Furthermore, followers of different religions in Uganda and beyond now more than ever before, need to engage in collaborative actions for the common good; for example advocating for peace, justice, good governance and respect for human rights.

In the preceding section, the researcher has analysed different literature that attempt to justify the need for inter-religious dialogue. From this section, it is very evident that today in our globalised world, dialogue among followers of different religions is very necessary for harmony and world peace. It is also likely to assume that such a dialogue might eradicate conflicts, mistrust, suspicion and prejudice and instead create love, harmony and peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions.

3.3 Methodology for Inter-religious Dialogue

In this section, the researcher gives an account of the various scholarly views about the methods and guidelines cited in different literature on how to effectively carry out inter-religious dialogue.

John B. Taylor and Muzammil H. Siddiq (1971), professors of Economics and Islamic Studies respectively suggest that the best methodology of carrying out inter-religious dialogue is giving consideration to the problems and opportunities of religious diversity. They suggest that this be done by drawing on both the practical and theoretical

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[17] Ibid, 104

experiences of different religious traditions which will result into all sorts of enrichments and contributions from the different religious adherents. This involvement with each other's traditions, they suggest, will also eventually make the inter-religious dialogue advocates aware of differences as well as common grounds. They advise the participants in interfaith dialogue to aim at mutually cogent and respected theological principles for dialogue with each other and at suggesting areas in which dialogue can be implemented.[18]

The other methodology for inter-religious dialogue they suggest is to courageously face our differences and strip away pretense. They argue that dialogue is not meant to be an analysis of the other's religious tradition but rather to be undertaken by the advocates with a remorseful attitude for having turned their backs on past and present prejudice.[19]

Gerald Hall (2005), a lecturer in Religious Pluralism, in his article "The Call to Interfaith Dialogue" sees inter-religious dialogue as a human communication that seeks to establish (or develop) a world of shared meaning (and possibly shared action) among the dialogue partners. Hall asserts that the practice of inter-religious dialogue requires people of diverse religious backgrounds to meet in a spirit of mutual openness, honesty and trust. He is of the view that the procedure and methodology for inter-religious dialogue should include the following: sincerity and honesty on both sides; willingness to listen and learn as well as to speak and correct; presumed equality of dignity; a spirit of mutual trust; ability to be self-critical regarding one's own religious tradition as well as questioning of the other; being prepared to explore new manifestations of the divine mystery at work in the world; allowing discussion and debate as clarifying moments within a larger conversation; recognising that symbol and ritual mediate the divine mystery more powerfully than doctrines or beliefs, respecting the place of silence in the religious experience and inter-religious dialogue and allowing time for the fruits of dialogue to grow.[20]

The researcher agrees with Hall for proper methodology is a very important component of inter-religious dialogue. To the researcher, one of the biggest challenges facing dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda is the poor methodology

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[18]John B. Taylor and Muzammil H. Siddiq, 1971, 59
[19] Ibid, 60
[20] Gerald Hall, 2005, 6

employed by participants. The researcher finds the procedure and methodology suggested by Hall very fitting for the Ugandan context and this will be further discussed in chapters six and seven.

Catherine Cornille (2013), a professor of Comparative Theology, in her book "Inter-religious Dialogue" observes that inter-religious dialogue involves demanding sets of conditions among which are recognition that there is still room for growth in one's understanding of the truth, recognition of the limited way in which the ultimate truth is grasped or expressed in one's religion, commitment to a particular religion, recognition that religions actually do have something to do with one another and the possibility of understanding one another across religious traditions.[21]

Swidler Leonard (1987), a professor of Catholic Thought and Inter-religious Dialogue, in his book "Toward a Universal Theology of Religion" lays down ground rules for dialogue and these include; willingness on the part of the participants to learn, change and grow, dialogue must be two-sided, and must be carried out with honesty and sincerity, participants must not compare their ideas with their partners' practices but rather their ideas with their partners' ideas, participants must be ready to listen with openness and sympathy and to agree with dialogue partners as far as possible, they must define themselves and should not come to dialogue with hard and fast assumptions.[22]

The researcher agrees with the conditions and guidelines suggested by all the authors discussed in this section. He finds them very relevant for a successful dialogue to take place and believes that these conditions and guidelines when followed, can greatly enhance dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. The guidelines suggested by the different authors in this section, are similar to the guidelines suggested to the researcher by different respondents during the field study and these are further discussed in chapter four of this study.

3.4 Challenges facing Inter-religious Dialogue

Being a relatively recent development, inter-religious dialogue is not without any challenges. It is faced with institutional, geographical, historical, and intellectual

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[21] Catherine Cornille, 2013, 21-24
[22] Swidler Leonard, 1987, 14-15

challenges, among others. In this section, the researcher gives an account of the views various scholars hold about some of the challenges facing inter-religious dialogue.

Idleman Jane Smith (2007) a professor of Islamic Studies specifically addressing Muslim-Christian dialogue, admits that inter-religious dialogue faces very many serious challenges. She writes: "Not all interfaith experiences turn out well. Those who have lengthy experience in dialogue understand that there are traps into which even the most ardent advocates of interfaith exchange may fall and problems that must be addressed".[23]

Smith goes ahead to examine some of these challenges which include both religions suspecting each other of having a hidden agenda behind dialogue and inter-religious dialogue resulting into relativism and syncretism. She further points out the challenge of the tendency of the participants to talk about their own faiths in their ideal form and talking about the faith of others in terms of the way it is seen to be manifested in everyday life.[24]

The other challenge Smith brings out is the issue of representation. She points out that because there are different sects within these religions, there is always a challenge of which sect represents either Islam or Christianity. She gives an example of Islam where the Shia complain of being dominated by the Sunni at dialogue sessions involving Muslims and others, rendering their voice insignificant.[25]

The researcher finds the challenges pointed out by Smith as also being true about dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. For example, there is a lot of mistrust between the two communities to the extent that many times, when one community invites the other for dialogue, the invited group suspects the other of having a hidden agenda and desiring to use dialogue for other purposes like proselytisation. More to this, there is also a tendency of each group talking about its faith in its ideal form while talking about the faith of the other in terms of the way it is seen to be manifested in the practices of its adherents. These pose a serious challenge to dialogue between the two communities.

Ursula King (2007), a professor emerita of Theology reveals another challenging aspect to inter-religious dialogue. Approaching the theme of inter-religious dialogue from

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[23] Idleman Jane Smith, 2007, 83
[24] Ibid, 85
[25] Ibid, 88

a gender perspective, she observes that women are often invisible in the inter-religious dialogue discourse and that gender issues are seldom accorded the centrality they deserve.[26] She further observes that the process of inter-religious dialogue is still very gender specific and restricted where the marginalisation of women still takes centre stage. She asserts that today, inter-religious dialogue as promoted in many parts of the world, is strongly marked by the absence of women and that women remain unheard and presumed to be included under whatever men have to say. She says that evidence of this becomes very clear when one examines current inter-religious activities, personnel and publications from a critical gender perspective. She adds:

> As much dialogue at the official level is carried out between religious leaders; and such leaders are still by and large only male; it follows that women are excluded on the grounds of their sex. The official, visible representatives or "spokesmen" of dialogue are literally always men, and thus, men find it often difficult to listen to women in this context.[27]

King further notes that from a critical gender perspective, inter-religious dialogue resembles what the French call "Un dialogue des Sourds" meaning "Dialogue of the Deaf". She asks: "Can these religious leaders today still legitimately voice the concerns of women and speak on their behalf as if women could not speak for themselves?"[28] She adds that inter-religious dialogue as currently conducted is irrelevant to women and that much of its language, representation and activity excludes women and that in the inter-religious discourse, women are more noted for their absence than their presence.[29]

The researcher fully agrees with King and contends that what she says is also true for Uganda where women account for more than 50% of the country's population but are always oppressed, sidelined, considered subordinate and looked at as the 'other' in the inter-religious dialogue discourse. The researcher also agrees that there is need to address divisive barriers (including gender barriers) if the inter-religious dialogue discourse is to foster mutuality, respect and solidarity.

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[26] Ursula King, 2007, 2
[27] Ibid, 4
[28] Ibid, 3
[29] Ibid, 4-5

Jørgen S. Nielsen (2000) also identifies some challenges for inter-religious dialogue among which is the fact that it is often regarded as a threat.[30] He describes the threat factor of inter-religious dialogue as emanating from the insecurities traditional religious authorities feel once the foundations and major tenets of their teachings and practice are put to challenge. He argues that both Islam and Christianity are endowed with inherited truths that are considered inherent until the dialogue round table and that adherents of these two religions undergo insecurity when these hitherto inherited certainties are often taken away by the scrutiny that sometimes comes with inter-religious dialogue.[31]

The other challenge Nielsen thinks there is to inter-religious dialogue is globalisation which because of the inter-connectedness, inclusion and a borderless world it has created, local clashes between religions now have global repercussions and this poses a critical challenge to the interfaith discourse.[32]

The researcher agrees with the observations of Nielsen. It is true that some people also in Uganda fear to take part in inter-religious dialogue because they feel that in the process, some core teachings of their religions get challenged. It also true that because of globalisation, what happens somewhere in the world also affects relations between Muslims and Christians elsewhere. For example, the atrocities of Boko Haram against Christians in Nigeria have created a negative impact on dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda.

The other challenge confronting inter-religious dialogue is its inability to transcend the extrinsic motivations on which inter-religious solidarity is sought. Rashied Omar (2010), a scholar of Islamic Studies and Peace Building, notes that the foundation upon which inter-religious solidarity is built is so shaky because it is based on very external factors like the need to end conflict, to overcome global challenges and the need to bring about reconciliation after conflict among others. He cites examples among which is the historical 9/11 event. He contends that much as these external motivations may be helpful in getting inter-religious cooperation started, sustaining the movement in the long run requires more intrinsic, self-propelling motivations from within faith commitments

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[30] Jørgen S. Nielsen, 2000, 105
[31] Ibid, 105
[32] Ibid, 105

for promoting good relations with people of other religions.[33] As a matter of fact, the intrinsic motivations should, according to him, precede the external ones. He states: "Why do we always need to wait for conflict and violence to overwhelm us before we feel the need to develop healthy interreligious and intercultural relationships?"[34]

Omar is of the view that if intrinsic motivations to inter-religious solidarity were to precede the external ones, we would create a preventative, instead of a curative approach to conflict. So, he observes that inter-religious advocates are faced with the challenge to recover intrinsic motivations for living in harmony and cooperation with each other. He rightly asserts that intrinsic motivations deal with questions of intentionality that cannot be concealed. This quotation rightly captures his idea:

> These difficult questions cannot simply be swept under the carpet. They are of primary importance because, unless they are clearly and unequivocally answered, we run the risk of having an outwardly agreeable dialogue that does not dispose of the mistrust and suspicion and in the end is superficial and does not lead us to the goal of peace building. Building inter-religious trust should be one of the most important goals of inter-religious movements.[35]

Another challenge facing the inter-religious movement Omar points out is how to bring other members of the clergy into the inter-religious dialogue spirit. He notes that often, inter-religious dialogue takes place at the level of the top leadership. The challenge for inter-religious activists, therefore, according to him, continues to be how to bring ordinary people along in this inter-religious culture. He rightly argues that there is a real risk that the wonderful benefits that accrue from inter-religious dialogue may not filter down to the ordinary members of society.[36]

The researcher agrees with the views advanced by Omar. He observes that also in Uganda, inter-religious dialogue operates more like a fire brigade than a health care system and that inter-religious dialogue activists always wait for problems to occur and respond to them rather than putting into place preventive mechanisms before problems occur. Furthermore, the researcher also observes that in Uganda, inter-religious dialogue

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[33] Rashied Omar, 2010, 2
[34] Ibid, 2
[35] Ibid, 2
[36] Ibid, 3

is mostly carried out among the elite and does not filter down among the local people and yet it is among these where mistrust and conflicts mostly occur.

Jay Moses (2010), a pastor of the Presbyterian Church in his article 'Inter-religious Dialogue; the Difficult issue of Conversion', identifies a critical challenge for inter-religious dialogue and that is the desire to use inter-religious dialogue for conversion purposes. Drawing on the Christian ideology of the great commission of sharing the good news with all, he argues that many a time, people have attempted to convert others using inter-religious dialogue as the pretext. For dialogue to flourish, therefore, Jay suggests that one must discard any possibilities of changing another's religious commitments. He emphasizes that in the inter-religious enterprise, agreeing to disagree is a manifestation for the respect of the other's inherent dignity and religious freedom.[37] He therefore poses a challenge to inter-religious dialogue advocates to harmonise their obsession to convert others (missionary zeal) with the important aspect of respecting the other's religious identity and freedom.

The researcher agrees with the observations of Jay and notes that also in Uganda many inter-religious dialogue advocates misuse the opportunity of such a dialogue and turn it into an occasion to convert others which has forced many people to stay away from inter-religious dialogue activities.

Douglas Pratt (2009), a professor of Inter-religious Studies, in his article "The World Council of Churches in Dialogue with Muslims: Retrospect and Prospect", acknowledges the complexity of interaction between Muslims and Christians noting that the road of interaction between these two communities has been chequered, filled with negative stereotyping and mutually hostile prejudices.[38] Quoting the World Council of Churches document (number WCC 2008b, para 7, sec.1, The History of Dialogue), he enumerates some of the challenges facing dialogue between Muslims and Christians which have led to some people hesitating from taking part in inter-religious dialogue. These include some people who insist that the local context of communal relations in a given society often makes broader dialogue irrelevant; others see dialogue as a cover for unequal power relations concealing purposes different from those stated; others who are

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[37] Jay Moses, 2010, 3
[38] Douglas Pratt, 2009, 32

weary of controversy and tend to be apprehensive of any mutual inquiry and questioning and others who see dialogue as compromising the truth and a betrayal of the divine call to mission or da'wa.[39] The other challenges to inter-religious dialogue Pratt notes include; representative disparity, elitism, globalization and the interaction of local and global events.[40]

In general, the researcher agrees with almost all the challenges facing inter-religious dialogue pointed out by the different writers in this section and has related these views to the Ugandan context and has discussed them further in chapter six of this study.

3.5 How to Improve Inter-religious Dialogue

Throughout literature, suggestions have been made on how to improve inter-religious dialogue. In this section, the researcher looks at some of the recommendations suggested in these literatures.

Ursula King (2007) recommends for unhampered feminine participation in inter-religious dialogue. She suggests that for a more positive inter-religious dialogue, there is need for a reconstruction of new forms of thought and new institutional structures which are more inclusive, relational, integral, flexible and more empowering in order to transform patriarchal religions.[41] She recommends a far more perceptive and detailed gender analysis of the religious norms and practices to ensure that religions cease to be oppressive structures for, especially women and other subjected peoples.

King also recommends that women writers need to recover women's own voices and contributions, their ultimate reality and women's heritage in spirituality and mysticism. In conclusion, she writes:

> It is evident that inter-religious dialogue remains part of patriarchy. To envision and develop a post-patriarchal dialogue it will be necessary to do away with all exclusionary practices and hierarchies, especially the hierarchy of gender, which is so pervasive in religions. Radical institutional and doctrinal transformations are needed to respond to the need of women for equal participation and dignity, and to condemn all prejudice and violence against women, especially those done in the name of religion.[42]

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[39] Ibid, 35
[40] Ibid, 35
[41] Ursula King, 2007, 9
[42] Ibid, 10

In his analysis of peace as an essential necessity for inter-religious dialogue, Jørgen S. Nielsen (2000) suggests that to be able to improve inter-religious dialogue in contemporary times, we ought to cease to see religion through the conflict lens and instead reinsert it as a factor of reconciliation and communal development.[43] Even though, for a long time religion has always been seen as a tool that promotes conflict, he recommends that we start looking for the peace-building side of religion so that it now becomes a cornerstone for harmony in our society. To help achieve this, he recommends the effective use of the academia to rediscover and re-interpret the histories of the various religious institutions to identify the shared history that can help build constructive points of reference that breed solidarity and cooperation.[44]

Nielsen further recommends that the interfaith dialogue advocates engage the media to rise to the challenge of the contemporary times and help in the transformation of inter-religious solidarity into a global undertaking. He recognizes that media houses have the potential to voice the urgent need to reposition inter-religious dialogue.[45] He further notes that because of globalisation coupled with the clash of civilizations that come with it, religious exclusiveness is no longer a local undertaking but rather one that now creates global repercussions. He therefore suggests that we take on approaches that are more appropriate for modern times.[46]

Paul Charles Randall (2011), an author in and an advocate of Inter-religious Dialogue and Diplomacy, in his article "Inter-religious Diplomacy: Trustworthy Opponents Engaging in Respectful Contestation" makes very essential suggestions for improvement of inter-religious dialogue in our times. He recommends diplomacy based on the recognition that the ultimate objective for interfaith dialogue is not to end tensions over differences, for differences will always be there; rather, an engagement in a respected contest over the truth. Randall suggests that the goal for inter-religious dialogue should not be traditional conflict resolution, but peacefully sustaining an irresolvable contest.[47]

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[43] Jørgen S. Nielsen, 2000, 105
[44] Ibid, 107
[45] Ibid, 106
[46] Ibid, 105
[47] Charles Randall Paul, 2011, 2

Randall therefore suggests that we all accept our irreconcilable differences and forge out means of cooperation and diplomacy. He advocates for a framework in which our irreconcilable differences can be acknowledged, accepted and peacefully sustained. Trying to resolve these differences and clashes, he argues, may not avail much. He says that instead, what is needed is a more realistic approach that is tolerant and accommodative, for when people gain the assurance that they can participate in interfaith dialogue without being ridiculed or misrepresented, they will find it less threatening. According to him, we need a new approach as he rightly asserts: "In trying to evade conflicts over deep differences, we only increase frustration and hidden resentment. It is time to try a better way to face our irresolvable differences over ideology and religion."[48]

Stephen Goodwin (2009), a lecturer in Comparative Religions, makes some interesting recommendations on how to improve dialogue between Muslims and Christians. He recommends that both must educate themselves about each other's' religion if they are to overcome fears, prejudices, mistrust and fears between them. He writes:

> Divisions run deep, communities are separated, and feelings of fear and suspicion dominate relationships with the other group. Christians and Muslims often refuse to eat meat slaughtered by the other group or enter the others' restaurants or shops. Villages may be divided along religious lines or else inhabited by one group with clear message that the other group is not welcome. Much of this ill feeling is based on lack of knowledge about what the other believes and how they live out their faith and must engage in self-education about actual religious life.[49]

Stuart Brown (1994), a professor of Philosophy and a former secretary for Christian-Muslim relations in the World Council of Churches, in his book titled "The Nearest in Affection: Towards a Christian Understanding of Islam" notes that today Muslims and Christians live side by side in almost all parts of the world. He continues to note that much of the history of Muslim and Christian contact has been marked by political and economic rivalry, armed conflict and occupation, suspicion and fear arising from ignorance of each other's history, beliefs and practices which have often led to tensions and open conflict. He observes that this should not be the case because both religions call for love, tolerance and respect of others. He makes recommendations which he believes

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[48] Ibid, 4
[49] Stephen Goodwin, 2009, 64

that when implemented, will lead to greater affection between Muslims and Christians. These recommendations include discussion on the application of law especially Shariah law, inter-marriage, collaborations in relief work and in the fight for justice and human rights, discussions about relationships at the work place, discussions about common problems like disease, hunger, unemployment, debt burden, participation in common projects e.g. digging a well, encouraging and intensifying dialogue at individual, local national and international levels. By way of conclusion, Brown writes:

> To have any real possibility of ending the vicious cycle of suspicion and hostility which has poisoned relations between the Christian and Muslim communities for so long, individuals of good will must take an active part in removing obstacles and building relationships wherever they live.[50]

Akintunde Akinade (2013), a professor of Theology, recommends that for a more positive dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Africa, there is need for the two communities to create more avenues and resources for dialogue and that there is need for both communities to come together to discuss many issues that are germane to their understanding and engagement in Africa. In conclusion, he writes:

> The way forward in Christian-Muslim relations in Africa is to develop the capacity for dialogue that can mobilise Christians and Muslims to see beyond the manipulations of the nation-state and the vicious agenda of some self-proclaimed religious demagogues…… It (dialogue) must be deeply rooted in the social, political, economic, and cultural realities of specific societies. This makes the theme of contextualization very relevant to any discourse in Christian-Muslim relations. Dialogue can only be meaningful when the whole range of the human experience, context, and circumstances are taken into consideration.[51]

The researcher finds all the recommendations of how to improve inter-religious dialogue discussed in this section very relevant for the Ugandan context under this study and has made use of them in chapter 7 of this study.

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[50] Stuart Brown, 1994, 123
[51] Akintunde E. Akinade, 2013, 137

CHAPTER FOUR: UNDERSTANDING INTER-RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher looks at the meaning of inter-religious dialogue, its different forms, its benefits, the guidelines for meaningful inter-religious dialogue and the teachings of both Islam and Christianity on inter-religious dialogue.

4.2 The Meaning of Inter-religious Dialogue

Different writers have given different meanings to inter-religious dialogue. According to Olugbenga Olagunju (2013), inter-religious dialogue is an encounter between people who live by different faith traditions in an atmosphere of mutual trust and acceptance.[52]

Gerard Forde (2013) says inter-religious dialogue is about people of different faiths coming to a mutual understanding and respect that allows them to live and cooperate with each other in spite of their differences. He adds that inter-religious dialogue is not just words but also includes human interaction and relationships.[53]

The Catholic Church document titled "Dialogue and Proclamation 1991" defines inter-religious dialogue as all positive and constructive inter-religious relations with individuals and communities of other faiths which are directed at mutual understanding and enrichment; in obedience to truth and respect for freedom.[54]

Francis Arinze (1997) defines inter-religious dialogue as a meeting of people of differing religions, in an atmosphere of freedom and openness, in order to listen to the other, to try to understand that person's religion, and hopefully to seek possibilities of collaboration.[55]

Ocita Moses (2008) refers to inter-religious dialogue as living our religion in the presence of people of other religions in a spirit of love, peace, tolerance and harmonious co-existence.[56]

The researcher agrees with all the above definitions of inter-religious dialogue and to him inter-religious dialogue is a positive and challenging interaction among people of different religions at both the individual and community levels.

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[52] Olugbenga Olagunju, 2013, 36
[53] Gerard Forde, 2013, 7
[54] Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue, Paragraph 9, 124
[55] Francis Arinze 1997, 5
[56] Ocita Moses, 2008, 2

4.3 The Different Forms of Inter-religious Dialogue

Most of the literature the researcher read[57], and many of the experts in inter-religious dialogue he interviewed, talked of four different forms of dialogue and these are presented here below.

4.3.1 Dialogue of Life

This is when people of different religions meet to discuss or experience different aspects of life. It takes place in all ordinary interactions and inter-relations between people of different religions without a premeditated plan or structure for example at burials, marriages, markets, workplaces etc. It is sometimes called the unarticulated dialogue. It is a form of collaboration among people of different religions living together. In this form of dialogue, people endeavour to live in an open and neighboring spirit of love, sharing their sorrows and joy, attending to their human problems and pre- occupations without necessarily talking about their religions though they may at times borrow on the values of their different beliefs and traditions. This form of dialogue is the most common and is within the reach of any one who lives or interacts with believers of different religions.

Photo 4 (taken by the researcher) showing a Muslim customer buying onions from a Christian vendor at Owino Market in Kampala Central (Dialogue of Life).

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[57] This literature include: Kalafa Kefa Allan and Ombuge.M.Moses, 2012, 15-25 and Francis Arinze, 1997, 5-7

4.3.2 Dialogue of Action

This refers to the people of different religions cooperating for the promotion of human development and liberation in all its forms. This happens when people of different religions cooperate and involve themselves in joint projects for a common good or common concern. For example, they can cooperate to build a school, hospital, a road, fight HIV, poverty, injustice, accidents etc. In this form of dialogue, followers of different religions collaborate for the promotion of a common good.

Photo 5 (taken by the researcher) showing Muslims and Christians participating in a tree planting campaign (Dialogue of Action)

4.3.3 Dialogue of Religious Experience

In this form of dialogue, people rooted in their own religious traditions share their spiritual riches with followers of other religions. There are a lot of experiences to share in different religions for example praying together or meditating together. Many times people find need to pray together in times of crisis or when faced with natural or man-made disasters or on national days. This type of dialogue leads to mutual enrichment, respect, and fruitful cooperation. However in this form of dialogue there should be no compromise with regard to one's own religious convictions. Secondly, respect should be

accorded; colleagues from other religions should not be embarrassed by inviting them to say words or perform acts which they are not comfortable with (e.g. forcing a Muslim guest in the church to bow before the picture of the Virgin Mary). Also the guests should show respect to their hosts (where possible) by not doing acts or say things that may offend their hosts (e.g. Christians should remove their shoes while entering a mosque).

4.3.4 Dialogue of Theological Exchange

This is basically academic and some people refer to it as the Dialogue of Experts. Here experts and theologians from different religions come together to exchange ideas and information on their respective religious beliefs and heritages. They listen to one another in an effort to understand the religion of the other at a deep level and as articulated by qualified representatives of the other religious traditions. They try to see what beliefs and practices they share and where they differ. They appreciate their similarities and tolerate their differences in a respectful manner. Here these experts and theologians from the different religions may find a consensus where they can meet in order to face the challenges of the modern world and together they may devise ways of how best to deal with the challenges facing them.

Photo 6 showing experts from different religions listening to one of them (Source: IRCU)

4.4 The Benefits of Inter-religious Dialogue

There are several benefits accruing from inter-religious dialogue. The researcher has formulated these benefits using the knowledge he has acquired from the literature he has read, information from the respondents interviewed, the International Inter-religious Dialogue Training Workshop he attended and the lecture notes he took while an undergraduate student at Makerere University. These guidelines include the following:

Inter-religious dialogue enables people to see plurality not as a threat but as a blessing. It enables people to look at religious differences not as insurmountable barriers to peaceful co-existence but as an opportunity to reciprocal understanding and working together. It also enables people of different religions to work together in mutual respect, promoting together peace, justice and the common good.

Inter-religious dialogue encourages people to be mutually engaged without denying or belittling the otherness of the other. It enables participants to remain faithful to their beliefs and values while seeking to understand those of others and to discover and underline the values they share.

Inter-religious dialogue increases the participants' understanding of the beliefs, practices and values of others. This enhanced understanding leads to more peaceful co-existence in our pluralistic world. As people of different religions encounter each other as neighbours, in schools, work places, markets etc, the foundations laid through dialogue enables them to know the areas in which mutual activity can enhance peaceful co-existence as well as to know in advance the areas in which religious differences can make peaceful co-existence difficult.

Inter-religious dialogue leads participants to a deeper understanding of their own religion as a result of being asked new questions and/or viewing their own religion from the others' perspective. It also forces participants to better the understanding of their religions because they have to present them to others. Supporting this point, a Muslim respondent said: "The many questions people ask me during dialogue sessions have enabled me to learn more about my religion."[58]

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[58] Respondent interviewed on 20th July 2014

Inter-religious dialogue helps participants to appreciate their differences and to learn to live and deal with them. It also helps them to identify their similarities and to learn to use them to better their co-existence.

Inter-religious dialogue helps participants to fight misuse and abuse of religion. During times when the motivating power of religion has been misused to fuel conflicts between people of different religions, inter-religious dialogue helps to recover the authentic teachings and practices of the affected religions, heal the hearts that have been afflicted and promote reconciliation.

Through inter-religious dialogue, seeds of hatred and division that lead to conflict and animosity are removed and instead seeds of love, justice, respect, peace, forgiveness and reconciliation are sown.

Inter-religious dialogue enables followers of different religions explore together solutions to all kinds of shared problems. Today the world is facing challenges such as moral degeneration, disease, poverty, collapse of family values, religious intolerance, environmental pollution, terrorism and so on. These are challenges facing all humanity and no religion can solve them on its own, however, together they can. They require a combined effort of all humanity.

Inter-religious dialogue helps participants to appreciate the truth in other religions. It helps them to acknowledge that God manifests Himself in some way to the followers of different religions and that there is some truth in every religion. Supporting this point, a Christian respondent said: "Through dialogue with Muslims, I came to discover that Islam contains a lot of truth."[59]

Inter-religious dialogue helps people of different religions to understand and appreciate the fears others have of them and the vice versa. It also helps people to identify causes of conflicts and tensions among followers of different religions.

Inter-religious dialogue leads to mutual enrichment. Every participant has something to contribute and everyone gains through the contribution of the other. There is much that can be learned, shared and achieved when people of different religions engage in dialogue. Through inter-religious dialogue, participants learn and receive from and through others the positive values of their religions.

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[59] Respondent interviewed on 7th July 2014

Inter-religious dialogue helps followers of different religions to work together for the common good for example building hospitals, schools and promoting peace. It also enables religious leaders of different religions to work together to create the conditions necessary for bringing about peaceful solutions to ongoing conflicts.

Inter-religious dialogue promotes understanding among followers of different religions thereby increasing acceptance of others. It helps to break down prejudices, suspicions and misunderstandings and clears the way to better relationships and better understanding.

Inter-religious dialogue leads to both better horizontal relationships with others and also better vertical relationships with God knowing well that a better relationship with fellow human beings leads to a better relationship with God.

Inter-religious dialogue leads to solidarity, all recognising that despite their religious differences, they all belong to the same human family and all come from the same God whom they are all trying to reach through their different religions. Agreeing to this view, one Muslim respondent said: "Through dialogue with Christians, I have come to realise that we worship the same God with them though our understanding of Him differs."[60]

4.5 Guidelines for Inter-Religious Dialogue

The researcher believes that for fruitful and meaningful inter-religious dialogue, the following guidelines must be respected and followed. Like in 4.4 above, the researcher has formulated these guidelines using the knowledge from the literature he has read, information from the respondents interviewed, the International Inter-religious Dialogue Training Workshop he attended and his lecture notes he took while an undergraduate student at Makerere University.

All parties must have a genuine desire for fruitful engagement and cooperation. It would be impossible to have meaningful dialogue with partners who are disinterested, closed off and harbouring hidden or selfish motives.

For meaningful dialogue, it is important for the participants to have some preliminary knowledge about the other for example their beliefs and practices. This helps

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[60] Respondent interviewed on 2nd August 2014

them to easily identify their similarities and differences and also to be aware of the sensitivities of the other.

Each participant must have a clear understanding of his/her faith. Inter-religious dialogue requires a participant to be well grounded in his/her faith in order to present it to others correctly.

All participants must strive to understand and to interpret their partners' views in the best way. They must strive to present the religious teachings and traditions of others in an objective manner so that the individuals who belong to those religions can recognise themselves in those representations. Each partner must enter into the experience of the other and strive to grasp the experience from within. One Muslim respondent said: "Inter-religious dialogue involves getting inside the other's sense of being a Muslim, Christian, Jew, Budhist and so on."[61]

Participants require a lot of patience and perseverance: There are a number of obstacles to inter-religious dialogue for example ignorance, prejudice and suspicion. All these require time to change. One Christian respondent said: "People require time to change their accumulated ignorance, prejudices and mistrust."[62]

Participants must make sure that circumstances, place and time favour meaningful dialogue. Mutual respect must also be accorded.

Participants in inter-religious dialogue must be ready to face frankly areas of disagreement. Acceptance of honest disagreements is essential to fruitful Inter-religious Dialogue. For example there are irreconcilable differences between Muslims and Christians on matters central to both faiths like the status of Jesus Christ whom Muslims consider as a prophet of God while Christians consider him a son of God. Such differences must be discussed in an atmosphere of friendship and respect rather than in a negative and violent manner. Participants must accept their differences and seek to understand them and these should not be a reason for animosity among them.

Pre-conceived ideas must be avoided if participants are to engage in fruitful dialogue. Many times participants go for inter-religious dialogue with pre-conceived

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[61] Respondent interviewed on 29th June 2014
[62] Respondent interviewed on 1st July 2014

ideas which are often a result of ignorance, biases, prejudices and misrepresentation of the other.

Participants must avoid controversies or arguments which yield nothing except conflicts, exchanges and fights. One Muslim respondent said: "It serves no purpose for Muslims and Christians to dialogue over the authenticity of the Qur'an for this will yield more controversies and divisions between them."[63]

For meaningful inter-religious dialogue, use of rough and abusive language, ridiculing ideas and beliefs of others and sentiments which may make other participants uncomfortable must be avoided. The integrity of ideas and belief systems of every religion should not be undermined. One Christian respondent said:

> There are some who look at inter-religious dialogue as an opportunity to abuse, mock and insult people of other religions and also to pour out all the anger they have towards others. This does not help the cause of inter-religious dialogue. Participants in inter-religious dialogue must speak with respect and must also control their emotions.[64]

Misuse of scripture must be avoided and participants must not apply their own scripture to explain other people's beliefs. One Christian respondent said: "Many times Muslims and Christians cause chaos during the dialogue session by attempting to interpret the teachings of the other using their own scriptures as the basis of that interpretation."[65]

Generalisations must also be avoided. For example, it may be true that there are many terrorists who call themselves Muslims but it is not fair to call all Muslims terrorists.

Inter-religious dialogue should not be used for conversion purposes. It should not be used as a forum to persuade others to convert for doing so would be dishonesty. Every party must remain true to its beliefs while respecting the right of others to practice their religion freely.

Judging other peoples' religions must be avoided. Inter-religious dialogue is not about judging, attacking or disproving the religions of others. It is about increased understanding and trust among followers of different religions.

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[63] Respondent interviewed on 7th July 2014
[64] Respondent interviewed on 24th June 2014
[65] Respondent interviewed on 18th July 2014

Participants must not compromise the doctrines and practices of their religions. They should remain faithful to their own beliefs, practices and values while working to understand those of others. Inter-religious Dialogue does not require participants to surrender their beliefs, practices and values. It only requires them to respect that others have the right to believe in and practice their religions as they themselves do.

Participants must be willing to apologise to others for the wrongs committed by some members of their religions. This helps to facilitate forgiveness and reconciliation. Participants must also be self-critical and ready to accept positive criticism.

Inter-religious dialogue is not about achieving a consensus and participants should not try to merge distinct religions into one. Inter-religious dialogue is not a search for agreement; it is a search for understanding. To understand the teachings of another religion, one does not have to agree with those teachings.

4.6 The Teachings of Islam on Inter-religious Dialogue

Islam is the second largest universal religion with about 1.2 billion followers all over the world mostly found in Africa and Asia. Its primary sources include the Qur'an and the sunnah of prophet Muhammad. There are many sects in Islam however the Sunni and the Shia are the most dominant.

Dialogue is part of the fabric of Islam and is embedded in its very foundation. Positive engagement with followers of different religious groups in society is a cornerstone teaching of Islam and a religious duty for Muslims. Islam advocates for peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions. In fact, the word "Islam" is derived from an Arabic root word '*salaam*' which means 'peace, peace with self, peace with fellow human beings irrespective of differences in religion, colour, nationality etc., peace with the environment and ultimately peace with the Creator'. The Islamic customary greeting is '*Salaam Alaikum'* meaning "peace to you all"

The Qur'an and Sunnah demand that Muslims must engage in dialogue with people of other religions and must learn to co-exist peacefully with all of those with whom they share the world. Islam considers humanity to be one great family and desires to see humanity united. It considers the origin of all people (despite their differences) to be one. The Qur'an in 49:13 says:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you…

Islam recognises every individual's freedom of religion. It desires a universal liberal society in which everyone enjoys religious freedom in safety and equality. The Qur'an in 2:256 writes: "Let there be no compulsion in religion…"

Islam teaches that diversity of religions must be accepted and respected because it was willed by God and therefore Muslims must learn to live together with others which necessitate dialogue with them. Qur'an 5:48 is clear about God's will about all people. It says: "…To each among you have We prescribed a law and an open way. If Allah had so willed, He would have made you a single people…"

This verse shows that diversity of religion was willed by God and therefore it is not possible that everyone in the world will believe in the same religion and that all people must strive to do their best in their religions, live peacefully with others and leave the final judgement to God. The Qur'an in 22:17 writes: "Those who believe (in the Qur'an), those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Sabians, Christians, Magians, and Polytheists, Allah will judge between them on the day of judgement: for Allah is witness of all things".

Further, Islam recognises and respects all sincere believers in God. Qur'an 2:62 writes:

Those who believe (in the Qur'an) and those who follow the Jewish (scriptures), and the Christians and the Sabians, any who believe in Allah and the last day, and work righteousness, shall have their reward with their Lord on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve.

In essence, Islam teaches that the religion God revealed to Prophet Muhammad is the same religion He revealed to Prophets Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and many others. It therefore calls upon the followers of these prophets to maintain unity among themselves. Qur'an 42:13 writes:

The same religion has He established for you as that which He enjoined on Noah, the which, We have sent by inspiration to thee, and that which We enjoined on Abraham, Moses, and Jesus: namely, that ye should remain steadfast in religion…

Islam encourages Muslims to live peacefully with all people of other religions who choose to live in peace with them. Qur'an 60:8 writes: "Allah forbids you not, with regard to those who fight you not for (your) faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: for Allah loveth those who are just".

Among all religions, Islam gives special preference to Christians and portrays them as being very close to Muslims and that is why dialogue between Muslims and Christians is very important. Qur'an 5:82 writes: "…and nearest among them in love to the believers wilt thou find those who say, "We are Christians…"

Muslims are commanded to establish relations and to enter into sincere dialogue with the people of the book (Jews and Christians) and to unite around common issues such as their common belief in the oneness of God. Qur'an 3:64 writes:

> Say: "O People of the Book! Come to common terms as between us and you: that we worship none but Allah; that we associate no partners with Him; that we erect not, from among ourselves, Lords and patrons other than Allah."

Islam urges Muslims to conduct dialogue with the people of the book (Christians and Jews) in a spirit of respect and gentleness and never with hostility or violence even where there are disagreements with them. Qur'an 29:46 writes:

> And dispute ye not with the People of the Book, except in the best way, unless it be with those of them who do wrong but say, "We believe in the revelation which has come down to us and in that which came down to you; our God and your God is one;…

The Qur'an speaks of Jesus with high esteem. It contains a lot of teachings and miracles of Jesus. He is mentioned in the Qur'an 25 times while Prophet Muhammad is mentioned by name in the same book only 5 times. The Qur'an testifies to the virgin birth of Jesus (Quran 3:45-47, 19:19-21, 21:91), it refers to him as a great prophet and Messiah (Qur'an 19:30, 4:171), it attests to the miracles he performed (Qur'an 5:110, 19:29-30, 2:87, 3:46) and also talks about him as one being held in honour in this world and hereafter and among those nearest to God (Qur'an 3:45).[66]

The Qur'an also speaks with a lot of respect about Mary, the mother of Jesus. It speaks of her as being preferred by Allah above all women of creation (Qur'an 3:42). A whole chapter of the Qur'an (chapter 19) is dedicated to her while another chapter

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[66] Shiraz Marwan, 2002, 92

(chapter 3) is dedicated to her father, Imran. All these are positive signs that encourage dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

Regarding the Sunnah, there are many examples from the life of prophet Muhammad of his courtesy, respect, justice and compassion that he displayed in his dealings with people of other religions. Accounts of his life show that he was a model of positive engagement with those around him throughout his life. He was all the time in dialogue with atheists, idolators, Jews, Christians, all in all, he was always in dialogue with people of different religious backgrounds. He signed treaties and maintained friendly and peaceful relations with them, had commercial dealings with them and always sought to enter into relations with them on the basis of freedom of religion and a search for peaceful co-existence.

The prophet actively protected the rights and freedom of Jews and Christians and treated them with courtesy and respect. He visited their religious schools from time to time to ensure that their freedom to learn and teach their religions was guaranteed. When a Christian delegation from Najran came to visit him at Medina to negotiate a pact with him, he allowed them to say their prayers from inside the mosque.[67]

The prophet on many occasions honoured invitations from non-Muslims. Whenever he visited the sick or whenever he gave material support, he never discriminated between people on grounds of religion. On one occasion, when a funeral procession of a Jew passed by him, he showed respect by standing up. When some of his companions asked him why he had stood up yet the deceased was a Jew, he replied by saying that much as the deceased was a Jew, more importantly, he was a human being[68]. By this act, the prophet demonstrated that Muslims must respect all human beings irrespective of their beliefs.

Emphasizing the importance of loving all human beings without discrimination, Prophet Muhammad once said: "None of you truly believes until he wishes for his brother what he wishes for himself."[69]

On many occasions, Prophet Muhammad encouraged Muslims to live in harmony with people of other religions and among these, he put emphasis on Jews and Christians.

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[67] Kurucan Ahmet and Mustafa Erol Kasim, 2012, 72
[68] Muhsin Khan Muhammad , 1997, Hadith No. 398
[69] An-Nawawi Imaam, 1980, Hadith No.13, 9

He once said: "He who harms a Jew or a Christian will find me his opponent on the day of judgment"[70].

Because of the persecutions the prophet together with his followers were facing in his native town of Mecca, they were forced to migrate to Medina. On arrival at Medina, the first thing the prophet did was to broker an agreement between the Muslims and the various religious and tribal groups found in Medina. This agreement came to be known as 'the Medina Charter'. This charter guaranteed peace, security, freedom, equality and justice to all the various religious and tribal groups of Medina. This charter by which the prophet was accepted by all as the leader, served as the constitution of Medina, safeguarded the rights and freedom of all and cultivated peace, cooperation and mutual trust among all the citizens of Medina.[71] This charter is a very good example of how Muslims must live in diverse religious societies of today. It demonstrates Islam's desire of harmonious inter-religious relations and the possibility of followers of different religions living together in peace and friendship.

Another example of the many agreements which the prophet concluded with people of other religions included an agreement with the Christians of Najran. In this agreement, Christians were guaranteed freedom of worship, sacredness of their places of worship, respect for their priests and clergy and support for their religious needs. This agreement also read in part: "Whoever fails to follow these rules will be violating God's treaty and opposing His messenger."[72]

In one of his last statements, Prophet Muhammad while on his death bed said: "I entrust to you the Jews and Christians who are people of the Book."[73] By this statement, the prophet was urging Muslims to treat Jews and Christians well and justly as he himself had done throughout his life and to maintain friendship, love and peace with them.

The teachings from the Quran and the examples from the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad discussed here show that Islam makes positive, peaceful and respectful engagement with people of other religions a religious duty. There are also very many examples in history of peaceful co-existence between Muslims and followers of different religions all over

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[70] Shiraz Marwan, 2002, 48
[71] Kurucan Ahmet and Mustafa Erol Kasim, 2012, 73
[72] Ibid, 92
[73] Ibid, 73

the world. Islam demands of Muslims to promote and uphold fundamental values such as justice, tolerance, respect, peace and good neighbourliness; which are essential for meaningful dialogue among followers of different religions. All the above demonstrate that dialogue is part of the fabric of Islam embedded in its very foundation and required by Islamic fundamental principles derived from the commands of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Being a Muslim demands responding positively to diversity knowing very well that this diversity was willed by God.

4.7 The Teachings of Christianity on Inter-religious Dialogue

Christianity is the world's largest religion with about 2 billion followers all over the world mostly found in Africa, Europe and the Americas. It is based on the teachings, miracles, crucification and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It has a variety of forms, beliefs and practices but all rotate around faith in Jesus Christ.

Christianity speaks clearly about the need for positive inter-religious dialogue. It sees it as part of the mission of every Christian to respect and to live together in peace with people of other faiths. There are many calls for and examples of peaceful co-existence between Christians and people of other religions in the Bible, in the works and life of Jesus Christ and the Christian community (the Church) in general. Christianity views mankind as one community consisting of people of different religions, tribes, nationalities, cultures etc. and considers the promotion of peace, harmony and unity among all these people as her primary duty. It views humanity as having only one origin and destiny and that is God, whose providence, goodness and plan for salvation extends to all.[74]

The Bible in very many passages emphasizes love for one another. The command to love the other (irrespective of differences) is only second in importance to the command to love God. In Matthew 22:34-40, the Bible says:

> Hearing that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and

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[74] Ocita Moses, 2008, 7

greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' All the law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."[75]

Again in 1 John 4:20-21, the Bible says:

> Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or a sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. And He has given us his command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.

The parable of 'the good Samaritan' (Luke 10:25-37) in which Jesus answers the question on who a neighbour is, renders great support to the cause of inter-religious dialogue. This parable teaches that the call to love the neighbour does not just mean loving the person next door or someone who is similar to you, but every person irrespective of who that person is. This parable teaches three lessons. First, it teaches that a neighbour is any one we encounter and that we are all creatures of the same God and must love all. In this parable, Jesus removes all barriers people build to qualify who a neighbour is. Secondly, it teaches that to love one's neighbour means living one's faith in the service of all without discrimination. Thirdly, it teaches people to set aside their prejudices and show love and compassion to all people they encounter in their lives regardless of their religion, ethnicity and other differences. These 3 lessons are in agreement with the ideals and purpose of inter-religious dialogue.

Peter preaching in the Acts of the Apostles (10:33-35), talks of the universality of God's saving grace and shows that all people are equal before God and that God does not show favouritism and that He welcomes equally all people from every nation in His kingdom and that He accepts without discrimination all good from those who fear Him.

The Bible also calls on people to respect all and not to call anybody impure or unclean. Acts 10:25-28 says:

> As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." While talking with him, Peter went inside and found a large gathering of people. He said to them: "You are well aware that it is against our law for a Jew to associate with or visit a Gentile. But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean.

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[75] Holy Bible, New International Version (NIV) Biblica, 2011
For the sake of consistency, the researcher has used the same version of the Bible throughout this study.

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The official position of the Catholic Church is encouraging its followers to engage in dialogue with members of other religions. It strongly believes that it must enter into dialogue with the world in which it lives and that it has something to say and a message to give and to receive. The Church also wants to build bridges of peace and friendship with the followers of all religions in order to seek the true good of every person and of society as a whole.[76]

In 1964, the second Vatican Council launched a new Catholic commitment to inter-religious dialogue. The Catholic Church has published many official Church documents on inter-religious dialogue during and after the second Vatican Council among which are: Lumen Gentium and Nostra Aetate. In Lumen Gentium (Dogmatic Constitution of the Church) which is one of the principal documents of the second Vatican Council, the Catholic Church breaks away from a tradition it has held for centuries that there is no salvation outside the Church and accepts that there is salvation in other religions including Islam. The document says in LG 16:

> ….. But the plan of salvation also includes those who acknowledge the Creator, in the first place amongst whom are the Moslems, these profess to hold the faith of Abraham, and together with us they adore the one merciful God, mankind's judge on the last day.[77]

Another second Vatican Council document, Nostra Aetate (Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions) published in 1965, initiated a new understanding and a new direction for Catholics in the area of promoting dialogue, peace and reconciliation with followers of other religions. It specifically urges Christians and Muslims to strive sincerely for mutual understanding and to make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom. In NA 1, this document talks of the desire by the Church to foster unity and to emphasise commonalities among all peoples.[78] In NA2, it recognizes the truth found in other religions and urges its faithful ones to enter into dialogue and collaboration with followers of other religions.[79] In NA3, the Church speaks with a lot of respect about Islam pointing out the similarities between Islam and Christianity and appeals to the

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[76] Shiraz Marwan, 2002, 12
[77] Austin Flannery, 1983, 338.
[78] Ibid, 667
[79] Ibid, 668

Muslims to put aside past misunderstandings, open new doors of cooperation and dialogue with Christians for the benefit of all and to work together to preserve and to promote peace, liberty, social justice and moral values.[80]

Again in NA5 of this document, the Church emphasises the necessity for people to love one another and rejects any form of discrimination or harassment against people on the basis of their race, colour, condition in life or religion and appeals to its faithful ones to conduct themselves well among followers of other religions.[81]

In 1964, the Catholic Church established a Secretariat for non-Christians which was later in June 1998 renamed The Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue (PCID). The PCID is the Central office of the Catholic Church for the promotion of Inter-religious dialogue in accordance with the spirit of the second Vatican Council, in particular the declaration of 'Nostra Aetate'. Its major responsibility is to promote mutual understanding, respect and collaboration between Catholics and the followers of other religions. Many local Churches have dialogue commissions at national and regional levels. The PCID works in close collaboration with these. The PCID has a special commission for relations with Muslims whose main duty is to encourage dialogue between the Catholic Church and Muslims.

The Anglican Church considers dialogue with members of the other religions as an essential part of its mission. It views inter-religious dialogue as a spiritual attitude and a practical way of living and working with believers of other religions in harmony with them, as disciples of Christ, acting towards them as he would act.

In 1971, the Anglican Church together with the Lutheran, Baptist and Orthodox Churches through their umbrella organisation, the World Council of Churches (WCC), established an office for dialogue with people of living faiths and in 1979, the WCC, produced a document entitled 'Guidelines with People of Living Faiths' which sought to identify and discuss the major practical and theological issues in inter-faith relations. While this document addressed overall aspects, it also recognized the need for more specific guidelines on Christian relations with each of the major religious communities in

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[80] Ibid, 668
[81] Ibid, 670

the world.[82] Consequently, in 1992, the WCC produced a document entitled 'Issues in Christian-Muslim Relations: Ecumenical Considerations'. This document notes that Christian-Muslim relations have had a complex history but have also been characterised by constructive living together. It continues to note that both communities have always had false images of the other resulting in fear, misunderstandings and negative stereotypes which require a new understanding based on a reciprocal willingness to listen and learn.[83] It points to the similarities between Islam and Christianity which include belief in one God, the prophets they share, the centrality of prayer in both religions, shared common values such as charity, love of neighbour and desire for peace and adds that these can be used to bring the followers of the two religions together.[84]

The document further underlines the necessity for a constructive dialogue between Christians and Muslims around the world noting that the two communities comprise nearly half of the world's population and therefore the nature of the relationship between them is of considerable significance for the welfare of the whole human family.[85] It recommends that for better dialogue between the two communities, there is need for both communities to make an effort to learn about the other, to hold respectful dialogue on the application of Islamic law, the rights of women and inter-religious marriages. It also recommends that the two communities should propagate their religions in a manner that respects the freedom and dignity of persons and maintains harmony between the two communities. The World Council of Churches and the Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue work in close collaboration to promote dialogue between Christians and Muslims and occasionally organise conferences and seminars together.

From all the above, we see that ideally both Islam and Christianity desire for dialogue and peaceful co-existence. However the reality is that there have, on several occasions, been misunderstandings and conflicts between the followers of both religions which have hampered dialogue and peaceful co- existence between them.

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[82] World Council of Churches, 1992,1
[83] Ibid, 3
[84] Ibid, 5
[85] Ibid, 9

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF THE STATE OF DIALOGUE BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN KAMPALA DISTRICT

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher analyses the information he collected during the field study concerning the necessity for dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district, the success story and the problematic cases he encountered and finally he analyses the current state of dialogue between the two communities. The researcher collected this information from the respondents he interviewed, the focus group discussions he conducted, the International Inter-religious Dialogue Training Workshop he attended and the literature he read.

5.2 Necessity for Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala District

During the course of carrying out the field study, the researcher discovered that dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala District and Uganda in general is very important because of the following factors:

5.2.1 Diversity of Religions

Kampala's population is not monolithic; it is multi-religious with Christianity and Islam being the dominant religions. Muslims and Christians live as neighbours, they go to the same markets, schools, hospitals, they are workmates and so on. They share their joys and sorrows. They all attend burials and weddings together irrespective of whether the deceased or the one wedding is a Christian or a Muslim. They all share the same threats for example poverty, unemployment, wars, hunger etc. Almost every family in Kampala district has relatives from another religion. There is a lot of interconnectedness between the two communities. They cannot avoid interaction and are bound together by interdependence and brotherhood. This keeps them in constant communication and co-existence and therefore, dialogue between them is a must. One Christian respondent said: "Kampala is inhabited by people of different religions and more especially Muslims and Christians. Whether they like it or not, they have no option but to engage in dialogue."[86]

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[86] Respondent interviewed on 3rd July 2014

5.2.2 Similarities between Islam and Christianity.

Muslims and Christians have a lot in common and cooperation and relations between them are centuries old. They all believe in the same God to whom they all feel answerable for their intentions and actions. They share a greater part of their history (Islam and Christianity are both Abrahamic Faiths) and a number of prophetic personages. They all believe in holy books and life after death. They share most of their ethical values e.g. honesty, love, peace, respect for others, readiness to help and so on. Very often, they have similar ways of religious expression like for instance regular daily prayers, periods of fasting, pilgrimage to holy places and duty to do acts of charity. Although they differ on the status of Jesus Christ, he is central in both religions. Even in the development of their religious traditions in history, however great the differences may be, they can always find parallels and stimulation. All the above similarities make it necessary for the two communities to be in dialogue all the time. On this point, a Muslim respondent said:

> Islam and Christianity are 90% similar and 10% different. Unfortunately, we tend to ignore the 90% similarities and emphasise the 10% difference. Our similarities far exceed our differences.[87]

During the field study, the researcher noted that many Muslims and Christians in Kampala district are not aware of such facts, and tend to believe that the two religions are very different and have nothing in common. Dialogue between them therefore, is very necessary to make all aware that they have a lot in common.

5.2.3 Globalisation

Because of globalisation, interconnectedness of people and religions have increased in our world and today, as the world is emerging as a global village, people of various religions, meet face to face every day. A previous monolithic understanding of reality is being replaced by a pluralistic outlook to life. As a result, societies are becoming less exclusive and more multi-religious. In the present age, human beings are moving out of the millennia-long "Age of monologue" where humans lived primarily with others who were much like them into a new era, the 'age of dialogue' where in humans are

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[87] Respondent interviewed on 25th June 2014

increasingly learning to live with those who are different from them. In today's increasingly inter-dependent world, all people are compelled to acknowledge the existence of other cultures and different religions.[88]

Kampala District makes up the capital city of Uganda. It is also the commercial and cultural capital of the country and as a result, it is populated by people not only from all over the country but also from all over the world. All foreign embassies and most international organisations and companies are located here. There are also many migrants and refugees residing here. In Kampala therefore, you find there people from different nationalities, cultures and religions. It is a meeting point of many differences. In terms of religious and cultural diversity, Kampala resembles a small world. Being such a place, it therefore requires dialogue between Muslims and Christians in particular and dialogue among all religions in general if the people living here who belong to different religions are to co-exist peacefully. Supporting this point, a Christian respondent interviewed said:

> As citizens of a globalized world, our beliefs may differ but our common wish for peace will always bring us together. We may belong to different religions, but nevertheless, we share the same humanity, the same world, the same threats and the same aspirations.[89]

5.2.4 Cooperation for the Common Good

During the field study, many respondents (both Muslims and Christians) told the researcher that their two communities are so interdependent that they need to cooperate to achieve common good. The Ugandan society is faced with many challenges, for example, corruption in public service, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, unemployment, domestic violence, child sacrifice and so on. These are challenges facing all Ugandans, Muslims and Christians. It is difficult to confront these challenges individually as Muslims or as Christians, but it is easier if done together. Therefore, the two communities require dialogue in order to be able to cooperate for the common good. In support of this point, a Christian respondent said: "We should no longer do separately what we can do better together"[90].

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[88] Shiraz Marwan, 2002, 55
[89] Respondent interviewed on 3rd July 2014
[90] Respondent interviewed on 30th June 2014

5.2.5 Mutual Enrichment

Dialogue between Muslims and Christians is necessary because it leads to mutual enrichment for every community has something to learn from the other. The researcher for example remembers that about 15 years ago, Muslims would go to the mosque five times a day, but Christians would go to Church only once a week, on Sunday. However, as time went by, Christians admired the practice of regular prayers by Muslims and also started going to Church more regularly. Today, Christians in his area go to church for service three times a day, early morning, lunch time and in the evening. On the other hand, in the past, Muslims in the researcher's community did not value secular education but after seeing its benefits from their Christian counter parts, they have now also embraced it wholly. This clearly shows that through dialogue, both communities can learn from each other and become mutually enriched. Supporting this view, one Muslim respondent said: "When religions meet in dialogue, they all give and receive."[91]

5.2.6 To Remove Fears, Prejudices and Suspicions

During the field study, the researcher witnessed a lot of fears, prejudices and suspicions between Muslims and Christians in Kampala District. There is a lot of ignorance about each other which has led to many misunderstandings, intolerance and violence between them. Inter-religious dialogue between the two communities is therefore necessary to educate the followers of both religions about the beliefs, practices and values of the other. This will help to remove ignorance about each other, the fears, prejudices and suspicions among them and instead plant seeds of love, peace and harmony among them. Emphasising this point, One Muslim respondent said:

> We (Muslims and Christians) fear each other because we do not know each other for we have not bothered to educate ourselves about the other. We need to dialogue amongst ourselves to learn about each other which will help us to trust each other and to be able to live together harmoniously.[92]

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[91] Respondent interviewed on 29th June 2014
[92] Respondent interviewed on 15th July 2014.

5.2.7 For peaceful co-existence in families and society

Kampala District in particular and Uganda in general are multi-religious, however both Christians and Muslims make up around 97% of the population of Uganda and therefore, the relationship between these two communities is very important in contributing to peaceful co-existence in Uganda. Without peace between these two communities, there cannot be peace in Uganda and the best way to create peace between these two communities is to keep them permanently engaged in meaningful dialogue. During the field study, the researcher realised that many Ugandan families have mixed religious affiliations. It is common to find followers of Islam, Christianity and African Traditional Religion all in one family. Often, people of different religions inter-marry (especially Muslims and Christians). Therefore, dialogue among them is necessary if they are to accept their differences and live together harmoniously. Furthermore, religion is very influential in the lives of the people of Uganda. It speaks for some of their deepest feelings, carries profound historical memories and often appeals to uncritical confessional solidarities. If not handled well, it can easily cause unending conflicts among people of different religions. The best way to avoid misuse of religion is to keep the followers of the different religions constantly in dialogue. Asked to comment on this point, One Christian responded and said: "Inter-religious dialogue is necessary to build bridges of understanding among different religious communities to avoid tensions and conflicts."[93]

5.2.8 Fulfillment of God's Commands

The very nature of God in both Islam and Christianity is dialogical. On many occasions both in the Qur'an and the Bible, we see God dialoguing. In the Bible in Genesis 1:3-27, we read how God dialogued with the heavenly council about what he wanted to do. Also in Christianity, dialogue is necessary because the Church is born of the dialogue between God and humans through Christ and in the Holy Spirit.

In Qur'an 2:30, we read how God dialogued with His angels before creating man. On many occasions in their lives, we see Jesus and Muhammad dialoging with people of other faiths. The Bible and Qur'an contain many verses encouraging dialogue with 'others'. Therefore in order for Muslims and Christians to be true to the teachings of the

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[93] Respondent interviewed on 1st July 2014

Qur'an and the Bible; and true followers of Muhammad and Jesus respectively, they must engage in dialogue among themselves and with others.

The researcher strongly believes that because of all the above factors, dialogue between Christians and Muslims in Uganda is not only necessary but a must. The two communities make up 97% of the Ugandan population and dialogue between them is necessary for peace and harmony in Uganda.

5.3 Success Story

During the field study, most of the respondents the researcher interacted with pointed to the formation of the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) as the biggest success story of religious dialogue in Uganda especially between Muslims and Christians. They told him that before its formation, religions in Uganda did not have a common platform and interaction between them especially at the leadership level. However in 2001, the five major religious groups in Uganda namely; the Catholic Church in Uganda, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, the Church of Uganda (Anglican), the Uganda Orthodox Church and the Seventh-day Adventist Uganda Union. came together and formed this council. The IRCU is an initiative that brings together these major religions of Uganda to address issues of common interest. Its mission is to promote dialogue and harmonious co-existence among all faith groups and to encourage non-violent resolutions of conflicts through joint prayers, action, exchange visits, sharing of knowledge and resources. Its key programmes include peace, human rights and good governance, HIV/AIDS and gender violence prevention. Also whenever a conflict arises among followers of different religions, the IRCU quickly intervenes to diffuse the tension. An example here is when the Muslims of Uganda were angered by the remarks the former Archbishop of Uganda Luke Orombi made about Islam in Uganda while in America in 2007 when he said that Islam in Uganda is spread through the sword and petro-dollars, the IRCU quickly intervened and diffused the situation. In Northern Uganda at the peak of the Lord's Resistance Army rebellion, the religious leaders from the Acholi sub-region came together and formed the 'Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative'(ARLPI), a branch of IRCU, which played a very big role in ending the conflict in that region and

took care of the displaced persons, orphans, widows and street children. In her PhD dissertation, Mbabazi Mpyangu Christine, a lecturer of religious studies writes:

> This religious body (ARLPI) brings together leaders representing the major faith denominations/affiliations in Uganda, namely; the Orthodox, Anglicans, Catholics and Muslims. Representatives of the group have campaigned for peace talks between the government and the rebel leader....... Not only that, the group has organised prayers for northern Uganda, for the children and has made an effort to help the children reintegrate in the community......[94]

The IRCU works through the local, regional and national structures of its members. Through this council, religious leaders have strengthened their voice and credibility and are now playing a prominent role in promoting peace and dialogue. The council has become a major voice for the voiceless. It is headed by a Council of Presidents comprising of the leaders of the five member religious groups. Commenting on the relevance of this council, one Muslim respondent said: "Since the creation of IRCU, dialogue and cooperation among people of different religions have increased. We have come to realise that what we share is much more than what divides us".[95]

Photo 5: Picture of the members of the Council of Presidents of IRCU as at August 2014. (Source: IRCU library)

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[94] Mbabazi Mpyangu Christine, 2012, 84-85
[95] Respondent interviewed on 21st July 2014

5.4 Problematic Case

During the field study, the researcher came across many problematic cases like the issue of intermarriage between Muslims and Christians and the issue of giving Muslims the exclusive right to animal slaughter. However, the researcher discovered that the hottest problematic issue in the area of dialogue between Muslims and Christians was the government's plan to introduce a single national prayer at all public functions. Currently at all public functions, all the religious leaders of the five major religious grouping namely; Muslims, Catholics, Anglicans, Orthodox and Seventh Day Adventists line up and offer prayers according to their respective religions in turns, one after the other. The government feels that this is divisive and time consuming since sometimes a full hour is taken, keeping all people standing as the five religious leaders say their prayers in turns. Besides, the other religious groupings like the Pentecostals and the Bahai have always complained of marginalisation since for them, they are not offered a chance for their leaders also to say prayers at these functions.

In order to solve all these problems, the government in May 2014 wrote to all leaders of different religions in Uganda informing them of the plan of formulating a single unifying national prayer to be used at all public functions instead of the current system where different religious leaders all come forward and say prayers one after the other. The government also requested these religious leaders to send their contributions towards the development of this national prayer to ensure that feelings and sentiments of all religious groups are covered. The Daily Monitor Newspaper quoted the Director of Ethics and Integrity in the office of the president who said:

> We have written to stakeholders to send their contributions towards to the development of the prayer. We want consultations to help stakeholders discuss the prayer and this will ensure that everyone's feelings and sentiments are captured.[96]

This proposal has aroused a lot of controversy in the country and has polarised the country. While some people especially from the religious groups that are not given chance for their leaders to say prayers at the national celebrations support the idea, others especially those from the 5 religious groups whose leaders always say prayers at these functions are opposed to the idea and demand that the current status quo be maintained.

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[96] The Daily Monitor Newspaper, 14th August 2014, 6

Many of these are accusing the government of having a hidden agenda of trying to create one super religion and force everybody to belong to that religion. This proposal has resulted into accusations, mistrust and insults among the followers of the different religions and is threatening peace and security in the country. Responding to this proposal, one Muslim cleric quoted by the same Daily Monitor Newspaper said: "In Islam, we begin and end our prayers differently from other faiths. How will the prayer accommodate our prayers because there are words we must mention while praying to Allah."[97] Commenting on this proposal, a Christian respondent said: "Jesus said that he is the way, the truth and life and that no one comes to the father except him. How then can we as Christians accept a prayer which is not said through Jesus Christ?"[98]

5.5 The Status of Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala District

During the field study, the researcher discovered that dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general is very necessary because of the factors cited in 5.2 of this study. The researcher also observed that dialogue is already taking place between Muslims and Christians as neighbours, as workmates; they go to the same schools and markets and share their joys and sorrows (Dialogue of Life). Muslims and Christians in Uganda cooperate in the promotion of the Common good for example, in building schools, fighting injustice and other vices in society (Dialogue of Action). They sometimes share their spiritual riches with regard to issues like prayer and fasting (Dialogue of Religious Experience). Also experts from the two communities on some occasions meet and exchange ideas and information on their respective religious beliefs and heritages (Dialogue of Theological Exchange). Because of earlier inter-religious dialogue efforts, much as the Muslims are a minority in Uganda, but out of respect for their religious sensitivity, no pork stall can be located inside any public market anywhere in Uganda. Also all meat sold in public markets throughout the country must be slaughtered only by Muslims. Muslims are also allowed to make adhan (call to prayer) and kadhi courts are enshrined in the country's constitution. All these are signs of positive and constructive dialogue between the two communities.

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[97] Ibid, 6
[98] Respondent interviewed on 15th July 2014

The two communities are already making more effort to improve dialogue between them. Over the past few years, awareness about inter-religious dialogue has increased among both Muslims and Christians especially after the formation of the IRCU in 2001. The Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, the Church of Uganda (Anglican) and the Catholic Church all have established secretariats of inter-religious dialogue at the national, district and provincial levels.

The researcher however, discovered during the field study that dialogue between these two communities is not going on well because it is faced with several challenges and obstacles (The researcher discusses these in chapter 6). These obstacles and challenges have hampered positive, constructive and fruitful dialogue between the two communities leading to several negative consequences. The researcher urges that everything possible should be done to remove these challenges and obstacles in order to lead to positive and constructive dialogue between the two communities. The researcher in chapter 7 makes some recommendations which he believes that when implemented, will remove these challenges and obstacles and lead to positive, constructive and fruitful dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general.

CHAPTER SIX: CHALLENGES TO DIALOGUE BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN KAMPALA DISTRICT

6.1 Introduction

During the field study, the researcher gathered a lot of information about the challenges to dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and the resultant consequences. He gathered this information from the many respondents interviewed, the focus group discussions he conducted, his personal observations, the International Inter-religious Dialogue Training Workshop he attended and the literature he read and in this chapter, the researcher presents these challenges.

6.2 Obstacles to dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala District

There are very many obstacles that have hindered dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general. Here below the researcher explores some of them.

6.2.1 Self-righteousness

During the field study, the researcher discovered that Muslims and Christians in Kampala district each have a conviction that their religion is the only one which possesses all spiritual truth and considers all other religions wrong. This has created a feeling of 'We are right and all others are wrong'. Many followers of each of these religions feel that it is only their religion that has the final word on all divine truth and they do all they can to prove this and many times they do this by portraying other religions negatively. This exclusive truth claim is even supported by the Qur'an and the Bible. The Quran in 3:19 writes: "The religion before Allah is Islam."

In the Bible, in John 14:6, Jesus says: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Such a situation has made meaningful dialogue between the followers of these two religions difficult. One Christian respondent said: "The exclusive truth claim has many times been exploited by both Muslims and Christians to incite religious hatred and violence hampering dialogue between them."[99]

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[99] Respondent interviewed on 3rd July 2014

6.2.2 Stiff competition between Muslims and Christians

During the field study, the researcher observed that there is stiff competition between the two communities. Each group desires to prove that it is superior to the other. They compete for followers, influence, political positions and so on. In many cases, they do not mind about the means they use in this competition and sometimes use unethical means to outcompete the other hindering dialogue. One Muslim respondent told the researcher of a case of a nursery school teacher who wanted to prove to the children that Jesus was better than Muhammad. She went to class and told them that "let us see who between Jesus and Muhammad loves children more". She told the children to sing "Muhammad give us". She went outside the class and threw pebbles through the window. She came back to the class and asked the children "what has Muhammad given you?" They replied, "He has given us pebbles". The teacher said, "oh Muhammad, how can you be so bad to children'. She then told them, "now sing Jesus give us". The children stated singing, and then she went out and threw sweets into the class. She then came back to the class and asked the children, "what has Jesus given you?" They happily replied "Jesus has given us sweets". Then the teacher said "Now I think you know who loves children more".[100]

In this case, this teacher used very unethical means; she poisoned the minds of these young children all in the name of competition for superiority. There are very many such cases and all these have contributed to hindering dialogue between the two communities.

6.2.3 Divisions within the same faith

During the field study, the researcher noticed that there are more quarrels between Christians and Christians and between Muslims and Muslims than between Christians and Muslims. The Muslims of Uganda have for example been divided since the arrival of Islam in Uganda over theology, (Sunni, Shia, Tabligs) and over leadership. At the time of carrying out the study, Muslims had over three rival *muftis* with their followers always fighting each other at times resulting into deaths. Among Christians, there are also many divisions: Catholics, Anglicans, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals etc. and bringing all these together is not easy. Even within the same sect, there is always a lot of

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[100] Respondent interviewed on 28th June 2014

infighting over theology and leadership. For example, in the Anglican Church, the followers are divided over issues like homosexuality and the ordination of women. In February 2002, Christians of Muhabura opposed to the leadership of Bishop Ernest Shalita placed needles in the Bishop's cathedral chair before a church service and when he sat on it, he was pierced by the needles. In fact even his house was set ablaze.[101] These divisions within the same faith have greatly hampered dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district. One Muslim respondent affirmed this point and said:

> How do you talk about dialogue between Muslims and Christians when there are even more conflicts between Muslims and Muslims and between Christians and Christians than between Muslims and Christians. Dialogue among people of the same religion is more urgent than dialogue between Muslims and Christians.[102]

6.2.4 Fear of conversion

The desire by both communities to use dialogue for conversion purposes has greatly hampered dialogue between them. Many Muslims and Christians in Kampala district look at dialogue as an opportunity to convert others. Many respondents told this researcher that they suspect the other of using dialogue as a method to know them better in order to be able to convert them. On this point, one Muslim cleric said: "Many times we turn down invitations for dialogue from Christians because we suspect them of desiring to use dialogue to convert our people."[103] Still on this point, a Christian responded and said: "We are not comfortable with holding dialogue with Muslims because they have on several occasions used it as a pretext to convert our people."[104]

More to this, some religious leaders of the two communities interviewed by this researcher told him that they discourage their followers from taking part in inter-religious dialogue for fear that their followers who are deeply grounded in their religion may go for dialogue and fall in love with the teachings and practices of the other religion, cling to them and remain there. One Muslim respondent said: "Many of us religious leaders fear to expose our followers to inter-religious dialogue because through dialogue, the other

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[101] The Daily Monitor newspaper 27th December 2002
[102] Respondent interviewed on 12th July 2014
[103] Respondent interviewed on 15th June 2014
[104] Respondent interviewed on 15th July 2014

religion may be well explained which may force our followers to be attracted and convert to it."[105]

6.2.5 Abusive preachings

During the field study, the researcher observed that some religious leaders have in many cases hindered dialogue between the two communities. These on many occasions during their public preachings make statements which have stirred up violence and intolerance among their followers. They use hate speech and in some cases, they go to the extent of judging and delegitimising other religions and their prophets. For example, on many occasions, some Christian preachers have publically made very unpleasant remarks about the teachings of Islam and prophet Muhammad. Also many imams have delivered summons calling on Muslims to consider all Christians as enemies and many times refer to them as 'Kaffir' (from Arabic, 'unbelievers') which Christians consider an insult. These religious leaders say whatever they want in whichever way they choose. With little or no censorship of the critical extent of these preachings, some religious leaders have exceeded limits in abusing other religions and their religious figures thus hindering dialogue.

6.2.6 Fear of compromising or betraying the 'truth' in their religions

Many Muslims and Christians in Kampala district interviewed by the researcher expressed fear about dialogue because they feel that it forces them to compromise or betray the truth in their religions and because of that, many feel discouraged to engage in it. Commenting on this point, one Christian respondent said:

> During dialogue with Muslims, we (Christians) are forced to surrender our exclusivist view regarding salvation in Jesus Christ and forced to accept that there is also some truth in Islam. We are forced to acknowledge that there can also be salvation in Islam and yet Muslims do not consider Jesus Christ as God. This is total betrayal of the Christian teaching that salvation lies in accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. I cannot reconcile my faith in Christ as the sole mediator with appreciation for the positive values in other religions.[106]

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[105] Respondent interviewed on 19th June 2014
[106] Respondent interviewed on 15th July 2014

6.2.7 Fear of losing the missionary zeal

Many Muslims and Christians the researcher interacted with during the field study told him that they considered it as a religious duty to spread their religions to others. Many of them expressed to him that they hesitate to engage in inter-religious dialogue because it slows down their missionary vocation. They told him that their religions require them to invite others to the 'truth' yet in inter-religious dialogue; they are compelled not to try to convert others. Many of them said that it is better for them to keep away from inter-religious dialogue than keeping silent about the 'truth'. On this point, a Christian respondent said: "Jesus told us to go and make disciples of all nations (Mathew 28-29). We cannot stop this because of dialogue."[107]

6.2.8 High levels of poverty and unemployment

The high levels of poverty and unemployment especially among the youth has greatly hindered dialogue between the two communities. During the field study, the researcher realised that self-seekers normally take advantage of the redundancy of the unemployed and radicalise them to engage in senseless conflicts which eventually affects dialogue between the two communities.

6.2.9 Ignorance of the other

During the field study, the researcher learnt that there is a lot of ignorance and lack of understanding among Muslims and Christians of the most basic elements of the beliefs and practices of each other. Both view each other often with ignorance leading to suspicion, fear and prejudice. This ignorance has also led most members of the two communities to believe the lies and prejudices told about the other. A Christian respondent confirmed this point and said: "Much as I have many Muslim friends, I know very little about the teachings of their religion."[108]

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[107] Respondent interviewed on 27th June 2014
[108] Respondent interviewed on 18th June 2014

6.2.10 Fear of tolerating the intolerable

The fear of being forced to tolerate 'the intolerable' is one of the factors hindering dialogue between Muslims and Christians. For example, during the field study, the researcher attended an inter-religious dialogue training workshop organised by the IRCU. During this training, participants from every religion were required to explain the major teachings of their religion to others, and if possible, exemplify them. When the turn of the Catholic participants to explain their teachings to others came, they explained the meaning and the significance of the sign of the cross in the Catholic Church and requested other participants to make it after them. One Muslim participant vehemently refused and said: "I cannot make that sign, for me to make that sign is like accepting the doctrine of the trinity and that is a blasphemy in my religion."[109]   The catholic participants felt offended by these remarks but were consoled by the fact that other Muslim participants accepted to make the sign.

On the last day of this training, the participants visited different places of worship in order to get acquainted with what happens at prayer places of different religions. When the participants went to Old Kampala mosque, all female participants were requested to veil themselves in accordance with the Islamic tradition. In fact, the mosque administration provided all females with veils. One Christian female participant refused to put on the veil and subsequently did not enter the mosque and chose to remain outside. She said: "Accepting to put on the veil is to accept the commands of the Muslim God. If the Muslim God demands His followers to veil, my God does not demand so. I cannot serve two Gods."[110]

Like in the earlier case, Muslims were offended by these remarks but were consoled by the fact that apart from this one participant, all the other female participants accepted to veil themselves. These two examples show how some people hesitate to take part in dialogue for fear of being forced to take part in practices they consider intolerable.

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[109] Response of participant during the I.R.C.U Workshop on I.R.D, 25th June 2014
[110] Response of participant during the I.R.C.U Workshop on I.R.D, 27th June 2014

6.2.11 Poor methodology

During the field study, the researcher observed that the dialogue taking place between the two communities is riddled with poor methodology. This is so especially in the dialogue of theological exchange. Many times dialogue sessions turn into debates generating heated arguments leading to more disagreements and consequently fights and violence. In many cases, the topics discussed are provocative and cannot generate meaningful dialogue in that phase of process.

More to that, the discussants in these dialogue sessions are not well trained in skills of dialogue and their main purpose is to win arguments for their side and to show that their religion is better than the other. They misquote scriptures of the other religion, use hate speech, abuse religious figures of the other religion and incite the followers of the two religions against each other. These dialogue sessions eventually end up creating more divisions, confusion and enmity between Muslims and Christians rather than bringing them together.[111]

6.2.12 Historical grievances

Muslim and Christian communities in Kampala district and Uganda in general have a lot of historical grievances among themselves and these have greatly hampered dialogue between the two communities. The long history of misunderstandings, prejudice, mistrust and animosity between these two communities continues to inform the attitudes of many people in both communities and these have been passed on from one generation to another. For example, during one of the focus group discussions conducted by the researcher, Muslim participants complained of the mistreatment meted on them by Christians during the colonial period, marginalisation in the civil service, political appointments and denial of secular education by governments that succeeded the colonial period up to the present. On the other hand, Christian participants also complained about the mistreatment they suffered at the hands of Muslims during the jihads (Muslim holy wars) and also during the time of Idi Amin, the only Muslim to have been President of Uganda.[112] These historical grievances arouse bad memories in the minds of both

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[111] Views expressed by participants in a focus group discussion on 30th June 2014
[112] Views expressed by participants in a focus group discussion on 17th July 2014

Muslims and Christians which in turn affect their present relationships. The researcher noted that IRCU is doing its best to heal these historical memories through dialogue between these two communities.

6.2.13 Disruptive modes of worship

Disruptive modes of worship employed by both Muslims and Christians are one of the factors hindering dialogue between them. For example, both Muslims and Christians have a tradition of erecting large and extremely noisy loud speakers within and outside their worship places which generate serious noise pollution that annoys their neighbours. Christian worshippers use these loud speakers during their 'night prayers' while Muslims also use them especially every *subhi* (early morning) prayers thereby disrupting their neighbours' sleep. With the indiscriminate location of churches and mosques in residential areas, this annoyance of each other has triggered religious conflicts hindering dialogue between them. This is one of the issues that has been discussed many times by the IRCU, but a solution to it has not yet been found.

6.2.14 Some teachings in Islam and Christianity

Much as both Islam and Christianity have many teachings which encourage dialogue with followers of different religions, they also have many teachings which seem to discourage it. During the field study, many respondents pointed out to the researcher many passages in both the Qur'an and the Bible that call for active discrimination and violence against followers of other religions. These scriptural passages (hard texts) have created a situation among both Muslims and Christians where each feels compelled to hate or even kill the other. For example, the Qur'an contains many verses that seem to discourage dialogue with Christians and followers of other religions in general. For example, Qur'an 5:51 writes: "O ye who believe (Muslims), take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends and protectors. They are but friends and protectors to each other. And he among you that turns to them (for friend ship) is of them".

Quran 3:118 writes:

O ye who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks; they will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire for you to suffer. Rant hatred has already

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appeared from their mouths. What their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the signs, if ye have wisdom.

Furthermore, Quran 9:123 writes: "O ye who believe! Fight the unbelievers who are near you and let them find harshness in you…..."

During the field study, some Muslims told this researcher that they hesitate to engage in dialogue with Christians and people of other religions in general because they believe that the above verses together with many others discourage them from having dealings with non-Muslims. The researcher also observed that many Muslim extremists rely on these verses to justify their evil deeds against non-Muslims. On the other hand, some Christian respondents told this researcher that when they read these verses of the Qur'an, they see no point in having dialogue with people whose religion incites its followers against them. All these have worked to hinder dialogue between Muslims and Christians.

More to this, during one focus group discussion, some Christian respondents told this researcher that they are disturbed by the fact that Islam prescribes a punishment of death to a Muslim who reverts from Islam (murtad) to any other religion including Christianity (Quran 4: 89) while it welcomes with very open hands anyone who converts from any other religion to Islam. They also complained about the issue of Muslims refusing to eat meat not slaughtered by them and this has left them wondering why they should eat meat slaughtered by Muslims when Muslims cannot eat meat slaughtered by them.[113] These two issues have greatly hampered dialogue between the two communities. For example, one Muslim respondent told this researcher that in 2011, pastor Umar Mulinde (a convert from Islam to Christianity) caused an uproar when he suggested that Christians should open their animal slaughter houses and stop eating meat slaughtered by non-believers (Muslims).[114]

There is also the issue of Islam refusing Muslim women to marry any body who is not a Muslim (Quran 60: 10) while on the other hand, it permits Muslim men to marry Christian women (Quran 5:5). This issue has caused a lot conflict and controversy between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district. There have been many cases of

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[113] Views expressed by participants in a focus group discussion on 29th July 2014
[114] Respondent interviewed on 3rd July 2014

Muslim families refusing their daughters to marry Christian men but have always been very quick to allow their sons to marry Christian girls. In some cases where Muslim girls have insisted on getting married to Christian men, their families have disowned them. This issue has greatly hampered dialogue between the two communities.

On the other hand, Christianity too has teachings which may tend to discourage dialogue. Some respondents pointed out to the researcher some verses of the Bible which seem to discourage dialogue with people of other religions. For example in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, the Bible writes: "Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? .....or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?"

In 2 John 1:9-10, the Bible writes:

> Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God, whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take them into your house or welcome them. Anyone who welcomes them shares in their wicked work.

In Psalm 79:6, the Bible writes: "Pour out our wrath on the nations that do not know you, and on the kingdoms that do not call your name." Commenting on this point, one Christian respondent said: "Why do religions that teach 'love thy neighbour' also teach hatred for people of other faiths? This is a contradiction."[115]

6.2.15 Religious intolerance

During the field study, many respondents told this researcher about several cases of religious intolerance between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general which are exhibited in many different ways and forms especially in animosity towards people of differing beliefs. For example, some respondents told the researcher about some Muslim founded schools in Uganda which deny Christian students a place for worship while there are also many Christian oriented organisations which refuse their female Muslim employees to wear the head scarf. At the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), non-Muslims are not permitted to stand for guild presidency while also at the Uganda Christian University (UCU), an Anglican founded university, non-Anglicans are

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[115] Respondent interviewed on 1st August 2014

not allowed to stand for the same. Many Christian students in Muslim founded schools are forced to wear head scarfs while many Muslim students in Christian founded schools are forced to carry hymn books and to attend Christian mass. Such examples of religious intolerance have caused a lot of animosity between Muslims and Christians and consequently hindering dialogue between them. The IRCU is doing its best to promote tolerance among the followers of the two communities.

6.2.16 Religious extremism

During the field study, the researcher noticed that religious extremists are present among both communities and pose a big threat to dialogue between them. These push religious intolerance to an unbearable level by unleashing violence against those who hold contrary religious views. They hate to see any religion other than theirs being practiced and desire to impose their religious view point on all others. They see all other religions as devilish and consider themselves as the defenders of 'right' against 'wrong'. They in most cases use violence to defend what they consider to be 'right'. They consider it a divine duty to fight what they perceive as 'wrong' and do not care about losing their own lives in the process because of the great rewards promised to them in the scriptures. The Qur'an for example in 4:74 writes: "Let those fight in the cause of Allah who sell the life of this world for the hereafter. To him who fighteth in the cause of Allah, whether he is slain or gets victory, soon shall We give him a reward of great value".

These extremists hate anything to do with inter-religious dialogue because they feel that all religions other than their own are devilish. They use hate speech, violate the rights of others and incite violence against followers of other religions. For example, one Muslim respondent told this researcher that in 2009, some Muslim youths in Kawempe division, broke down a pork stall because according to them, pork is haram (prohibited).[116] In a multi-religious environment like that of Kampala district, such an extreme action causes a lot of animosity between Muslims and Christians which in turn affects dialogue between these two communities.

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[116] Respondent interviewed on 1st August 2014

These religious extremists do not only target people of other religions but sometimes also target people of their own faith who do not practice their religion the way they do.

6.2.17 Uncalled for provocations

During the field study, many respondents told this researcher how several cases of uncalled for provocations had affected dialogue between the two communities. For example, one Muslim respondent told the researcher of a case in Masaka in 2008 where the already mentioned Pastor Umar Mulinde (a Christian convert from Islam) provoked Muslims by slaughtering a pig while dressed in Islamic attire.[117] A Christian respondent told this researcher of another case in Jinja in 2011 of Muslims who forcefully circumcised a Christian youth simply because he had trespassed in the mosque compound during Juma prayers.[118] Such cases of uncalled for provocations have stirred up conflicts between Muslims and Christians thereby hindering dialogue between these two communities.

6.2.18 Self-seekers

Dialogue between Muslims and Christians has also been hampered by self-seekers and these include the press, politicians, artists, writers, among others. For example during the field study, some respondents told this researcher of some politicians who practice divisive politics by appealing to voters to vote along religious lines. He was also told of some artists who perform plays which demean some religions and also about people who make big religious alarms for selfish ends. Such cases end up causing hostilities between Muslims and Christians and consequently hindering dialogue between them.

6.2.19 Prejudice

There are often lots of prejudice between Muslims and Christians. Prejudice is manifested in different forms e.g. judging or blaming a religion for the acts or utterances of one of or a group of its followers. An entire community who share a religion with the

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[117] Respondent interviewed on 17th June 2014
[118] Respondent interviewed on 20th July 2014

perpetrator is blamed or is retaliated against and this leads to the transferring of sin and punishment from the guilty to the innocent. For example, in 1979 after the fall of Idi Amin (the only Muslim to have been President of Uganda but also who committed many atrocities), many Muslims were killed and their houses burnt down (especially in Mbarara and Arua districts) simply because they belonged to the same religion with Amin. One Muslim respondent said: "Many Muslims in Uganda were killed after the fall of Idi Amin. At that time, every Muslim was blamed for the evils of Amin and forced to share his guilt."[119] Such cases of prejudice have also hindered dialogue between the two communities.

6.2.20 Misuse of the media

Rampant misuse of the media is one of the factors that have hindered dialogue between the two communities. There are normally many cases of sensationalism in media reporting and exaggeration of events about religious issues. These often cause animosity between the two communities without people even taking time to investigate the truthfulness of such reports. Modern technology has made it easy for such sensational reports to be transmitted far and wide in a very short time. Today, the media particularly the electronic media are instrumental in causing and sustaining religious hatred and violence. The researcher observed that many people in Uganda especially the youths use social networks such as twitter and facebook and all these transmit religious hate speech, prejudice and false information about other religions which have all worked to hinder dialogue between the two communities. Most of the radio and television stations in Uganda today are owned by religious organisations which use them primarily to win over converts and these are many times used to insult the religion of the other. With little or no censorship of these media outlets, they have caused a lot of harm to dialogue between the two communities. Agreeing with this point, one Muslim respondent interviewed said: "In Uganda today, the media is the biggest tool used to spread hate speech and to incite violence and intolerance among followers of different religions."[120]

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[119] Respondent interviewed on 20th June 2014
[120] Respondent interviewed on 1st August 2014

6.2.21 Government patronage

Government patronage, religious preferentialism and marginalisation are among the factors that have hindered dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district. Much as the constitution of Uganda guarantees freedom of worship and equality of all religions, many times different religions have been patronised depending on the prominence of particular religious adherents in positions of authority. Different governments have patronised and preferred particular religions at the expense of others. Public funds are used to support activities of a certain religious groups and little or nothing is done for the others. Adherents of the patronised religion are given privileges and prominent positions. This transforms into political and economic preferentialism towards the favoured religious group while marginalising the others. For example in one of the focus group discussions, participants agreed that during the colonial period, Christianity and more especially the Anglican Church was the preferred religion because the colonialists were Anglicans and that all state privileges like top positions in government, land allocations, social services like schools and hospitals were allocated to Christians especially the Anglicans and Muslims got almost nothing. They also noted that during Amin's reign, Islam was the preferred religion because Amin was a Muslim; he greatly favoured Muslims in everything and Christians during those days complained of marginalisation.[121] It has been common in Uganda to hear of different religious groups complaining of marginalisation at different times. All this has hindered dialogue between the two communities.

6.2.22 Abuse of freedom of speech

During the field study, several respondents told the researcher that many people in Kampala district and Uganda in general use freedom of speech in a manner that is insulting, offensive, provocative and without due consideration of other people's religious sentiments and rights. Such people on many occasions abuse this freedom of speech by mocking and insulting religious figures of other religions in a manner that is offensive to the followers of those religious figures. These have ended up causing hatred

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[121] Views expressed by participants in a focus group discussion on 29th June 2014

and violence among Muslims and Christians which has in turn hindered dialogue among them. Commenting on this point, one Christian respondent said:

> There are many people in Uganda (both Muslims and Christians) who believe that freedom of speech gives everyone a right to say anything, anywhere, anyhow and about anyone. This is a total misunderstanding of the concept of freedom of speech.[122]

6.2.23 Marginalization of women and youths

During the field study, the researcher observed that dialogue between the two communities is also faced with the challenge of the exclusion of women and youths who make up almost 70% of the Ugandan population. Inter-religious dialogue in Kampala district is still very gender restricted where women are marginalized, considered subordinate and missing in its activities and personnel. In most cases, dialogue between Muslims and Christians (especially dialogue of theological exchange)   takes place among religious leaders who are mostly men because these two religions are patriarchal which eventually leads to the exclusion of women. Ursula King writes:

> As much dialogue at the official level is carried out between religious leaders and such leaders are still by and large only male; it follows that women are excluded on grounds of their sex. The official visible representatives or 'spokesmen' of dialogue are literally always men, and thus, men find it often difficult to listen to women in this context.[123]

The researcher also observed that the youth like the women, are also always sidelined in the inter-religious discourse and yet these are the ones who are mostly used in religious conflicts. Sidelining both women and youths who account for almost 70% of the population makes dialogue between the two communities resemble what Ursula King calls "Un dialogue des Sourds" meaning dialogue of the deaf since in such a dialogue, old men talk only to themselves leaving out both women and youths who are the majority.[124]

6.2.24 The relation between Religion and the State

The relation between religion and the state has created a lot of controversy and polarisation between the two communities. For example in one focus group discussion,

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[122] Respondent interviewed on 2nd July 2014
[123] Ursula King, 2007, 4
[124] Ibid, 4

participants talked about the many Muslims in Uganda who have for a long time been agitating for sharia law to be introduced in Uganda as the law of the land much as Uganda is predominantly Christian. They said that these Muslims have always argued that for them adherence to sharia is a religious obligation and not a matter of personal preference while the Christians have always viewed this as provocative and divisive and opening the way to conflicts. As a compromise, the government of Uganda in the constitution of 1996 under section 129 gave permission to Muslims to establish *Kadhi* courts which have jurisdiction over matters of marriage, divorce and inheritance among Muslims. This did not go well with many Christians who saw this as a preferential treatment of Muslims in a secular country like Uganda. In April 2011, some Christians led by the aforementioned Pastor Umar Mulinde petitioned the speaker of the parliament of Uganda seeking a deletion of the *Kadhi* courts from the constitution or else allow the Christians also to establish Christian courts. The government has kept quiet about this issue but it continues to raise tensions between Muslims and Christians affecting dialogue between them.[125]

6.2.25 Globalisation

Globalisation has also, in some way affected dialogue between the two communities. The world today, because of modern technology, has become a small village in which swift and effective mechanisms are available to spread information, indoctrinate, cause grievance and therefore the effects of a religious conflict in one part of the world can easily affect relationships among followers of different religions all over the world. For example, in one of the focus group discussions, participants observed that information about the Boko Haram atrocities on Christians in Nigeria also affected relations between Muslims and Christians in Uganda and consequently dialogue among them. They gave an example of Christian youths in Mityana who tried to burn a mosque in retaliation for Boko Haram's burning of churches in Nigeria.[126] It took the intervention of Christian priests who told these youths that the Muslims of Uganda should not be punished for the wrongs of some misguided Muslims elsewhere.

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[125] Views expressed by participants in a focus group discussion on 29th June 2014
[126] Views expressed by participants in a focus group discussion on 17th July 2014

Closely related to globalisation are the world political-religious conflicts, like the Israel-Palestine and Iran-USA conflicts. These have also hindered dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. In many of these conflicts, religion may not be the major cause but has become a major player to the extent that now many people believe that actually it is the only cause of these conflicts. Today in Uganda, religion is a very strong form of identity and so it induces what we call 'group grievance'. For example, in a conflict between the USA and Iran, many Muslims of Uganda are likely to identify themselves with Iran and many Christians with USA. So the conflict between USA and Iran is also replicated in the Ugandan community between Muslims and Christians affecting dialogue between them. Supporting this point, one Muslim respondent said:

> America's conflict with Iran is not about Iran's capability to produce nuclear weapons but about Iran's resolve to defend Muslim interests against Christian evil designs all over the world. If America ever attacks Iran, we the Muslims of Uganda will retaliate against Christians here in Uganda.[127]

6.2.26 Issues of serious religious conviction

Issues of serious religious conviction whereby some people feel that they cannot compromise the teachings of their religions have also hindered dialogue between the two communities. For example, one Christian respondent told the researcher of a case of a Muslim girl working in a supermarket in Kampala who refused to scan pork products saying that it was against her religion to touch pork products. She received a lot of support from fellow Muslims and a lot of condemnation from Christians. This more or less became a Muslim-Christian conflict.[128]

Another respondent (Muslim) told this researcher of a Muslim woman nursery school teacher in Kawempe division who in 2012 was dismissed from her job for insisting on covering her face in class. This lady used to wear full *niqab* even covering the face leaving only holes for the eyes. The school management requested her to uncover her face because her pupils being very young, needed to see her face in order to understand what she was teaching. She refused to comply saying that it was against her religious teachings. When she was dismissed, she complained to the Muslim community

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[127] Respondent interviewed on 28th June 2014
[128] Respondent interviewed on 3rd July 2014

saying that she had been dismissed because of her adherence to Islam.[129] This case polarized the community for many Muslims supported her while many Christians felt that the school management was right.

6.2.27 Lack of seriousness and sincerity

During the field study, the researcher observed that there is lack of seriousness and sincerity among many participants in inter-religious dialogue between Muslims and Christians which has forced many people to lose interest in the same. Many participants see inter-religious dialogue forums as a waste of time where nothing serious happens and where a lot of hypocrisy is exhibited. Many participants feel that those who attend these forums just do so to be seen as desiring to promote peaceful co-existence among followers of different religions when actually, they are not serious about it. Confirming this point, one Christian respondent said:

> I stopped attending inter-religious dialogue sessions because I discovered they were merely time wasting forums. Most participants are not serious and sincere. When together, they pretend to encourage peaceful co-existence and yet when separate, each group is scheming against the other.[130]

6.2.28 Ordinary people left out

One of the challenges facing dialogue between the two communities is that most of the time, inter-religious dialogue workshops are carried out in big hotels among a small elite group mostly consisting of religious leaders, academicians and members of civil society organisations. Hence they leave out the ordinary members of the community and yet these are the majority and it is always among these that most misunderstandings occur. Rashied Omar a scholar of Islamic studies writes:

> Often, inter-religious dialogue takes place at the level of top leadership. The challenge for inter-religious activists continues to be how to bring the proverbial grassroots along in this inter-religious culture. There is a real risk that the wonderful benefits that accrue from inter-religious dialogue may not filter down to the rank and file.[131]

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[129] Respondent interviewed on 7th July 2014
[130] Respondent interviewed on 1st August 2014
[131] Rashied Omar, 2010, 5

6.2.29 Absence of a strategy to sustain dialogue

During the field study, the researcher observed that dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district is hindered by the absence of a long term strategy to sustain dialogue between the two communities. Many times, dialogue between these two communities is reactive, more curative than preventive, uncoordinated and ultimately ineffective. There is no mechanism to detect and control conflicts between the two communities before they occur. Many times, the two communities wait for a problem to occur for them to hold dialogue and after solving that problem, they do not make any effort to sustain that dialogue. Rashied Omar asks: "Why do we always need to wait for conflict and violence to overwhelm us before we feel the need to develop healthy inter-religious relationships?"[132]

Closely related to the above point is the poor response to misunderstandings and conflict situations between the two communities. For example, when Muslims or Christians insult the religion of the other, the followers of the insulted religion respond with more insults causing more divisions and conflicts. There is no clear strategy of responding to such situations and in many cases, the response turns out to be worse than the original problem. Confirming this observation, one Muslim respondent said: "Many times when there is a conflict between Muslims and Christians, the effect of the medicine is more dangerous than the disease."[133]

6.3 Consequences of absence of dialogue between Muslims and Christians

The factors hindering dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general discussed in this chapter have had bad effects and consequences on both the Muslim and Christian communities and the Ugandan society in general. During the field study the researcher noted from the views of the respondents that the little or absence of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district has led to wars, fights, divisions, disunity, violence, fear, intolerance, bloodshed, misunderstandings, hatred, fanatism, extremism, insults, polarisation, mistrust, discrimination, hate speech, tension, demonisation of the other, lack of cooperation, insecurity and human rights

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[132] Ibid, 2
[133] Respondent interviewed on 5th July 2014

violations between and among the two communities. The researcher strongly recommends that everything possible should be done to encourage dialogue between the two communities in order to address the challenges discussed in this chapter and the resultant effects and consequences.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

7.1 Recommendations

This study is about dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general. During the study, the researcher discovered that dialogue between these two communities is very important for peace in this country. However, the study has also revealed that there are many conflicts between these two communities due to absence of dialogue between them and the little dialogue existing between them is faced with very many challenges. This has resulted into many consequences which have affected peaceful co-existence between the two communities. The researcher has analysed these challenges and has come up with the following recommendations which he believes that when implemented, will help to remove the challenges and barriers to dialogue between Muslims and Christians and enhance dialogue between them leading to friendship, mutual trust and peaceful co-existence.

7.1.2 The role of the Inter-religious Council of Uganda (IRCU)

During the field study, the researcher observed that the IRCU can play a very important role in the promotion of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district. The two communities make up 97% of the Uganda population and both are members of the IRCU, it is therefore easy to reach the two communities through the IRCU. The researcher therefore recommends that the IRCU should sensitise the members of the two communities about the need for and benefits of dialogue between them (refer to 4.4). It must also ensure that proper methodology and guidelines are followed (refer to 4.5). It must publish booklets and other materials on the importance of inter-religious dialogue. These can also be used in schools and universities and should also be translated into local languages to enable people who do not understand English to use them. It should also organise workshops for persons in key positions within society like politicians, teachers and religious leaders and sensitise them on the need for religious tolerance and dialogue. It should also lobby government (especially the Ministry of Education) to incorporate inter-religious dialogue into the curricula of primary and secondary schools and

universities. This will help to instill a culture of religious tolerance and co-existence among Ugandans (especially Muslims and Christians) right from their childhood.

The IRCU should also work towards healing the historical memories of the two communities. It should ensure that the two communities free their memories of the negative consequences of the past however painful they may be and work towards mutual forgiveness, true reconciliation and commit themselves to forging a better future. On this point, one Muslim respondent said: "The IRCU should help us to free ourselves of the historical memories".[134] We should not allow ourselves to be ruled by the past." The IRCU should also coordinate the activities of the different stakeholders involved in inter-religious dialogue. Inter-religious dialogue is a holistic approach that requires the involvement of different stakeholders who include individuals, the government, the media, religious leaders and civil society organisations to mention but a few. The IRCU should coordinate their activities for positive results.

During the study, the researcher observed that dialogue between Muslims and Christians is mostly reactive and more curative than preventive. The same view is also shared by Rashied Omar who writes: "Why do we always need to wait for conflict and violence to overwhelm us before we feel the need to develop healthy inter-religious and inter-cultural relationships?"[135] The IRCU must therefore develop early warning mechanisms that can detect religious conflicts and misunderstandings early enough before they escalate into violent confrontations and also ensure that dialogue between these two communities is a permanent undertaking and not temporary.

Furthermore, very often, inter-religious dialogue takes place at the level of top leadership for example among religious leaders, academicians and civil society organisations totally ignoring the grassroots. The IRCU and the religious leaders must bring on board the people at the grass roots because these are the ones who are most affected incase religious conflicts occur. On this point, Rashied Omar again writes:

> Often, inter-religious dialogue takes place at the level of top leadership. The challenge for inter-religious activists continues to be how to bring the proverbial grassroots along in this inter-religious culture. There is a real risk that the

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[134] Respondent interviewed on 21st June 2014
[135] Rashied Omar, 2010, 2

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wonderful benefits that accrue from inter-religious dialogue may not filter down to the rank and file.[136]

7.1.2 The role of religious leaders

Religious leaders of the two communities have a very important role to play in promoting dialogue between the two communities. They should cease being part of the problem and become part of the solution. They must keep their sermons moderate and must stop abusive preachings, hate speeches and criticising the beliefs, practices and figures of other religions. The Qur'an for example (in 6:108) prohibits Muslims from insulting sacred beliefs and values of other religions and warns them that if they do not desist from doing this, the others may also insult their beliefs and values. On this point, one Christian respondent said: "Those who expect respect need to be respectful first. If the principle of respecting others' sacred values is not observed, conflicts and violence arising from such incidents of disrespect will have disastrous consequences".[137]

The religious leaders must also cultivate a culture of tolerance among their followers and appeal to them to respect the teachings and practices of other religions even if they may not agree with them. Aristotle once said: "It is a mark of an educated mind to be able to respect a thought without accepting".[138]

During the field study, the researcher noted that both Muslims and Christians know very little about the religion of the other which has resulted into fears, prejudices and mistrust between the two communities. On this point, one Muslim respondent said: "Demonisation of the other is far easier if people know nothing much about the other's religion".[139] The researcher therefore recommends that religious leaders of the two communities must encourage their followers to educate themselves about the religion of the other. On top of this, the religious leaders must also encourage their followers to educate themselves about their own religions because many times, they have misrepresented them causing a lot of misunderstandings.

These religious leaders must also provide proper interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an and the Bible that are construed as opposing dialogue (for example Qur'an 5:51,

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[136] Ibid, 5
[137] Respondent interviewed on 2nd July 2014
[138] Shiraz Marwan , 2002, 54
[139] Respondent interviewed on 21st July 2014

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9:29 and Bible Psalm 79:6, 2 John 1: 9-10) otherwise extremists will continue to use them to cause conflicts and hatred between the two communities. They must also appeal to their followers to rededicate and renew their faith in God and to live according to the true teachings of their religions. It would be difficult to have genuine dialogue among people who do not have God consciousness in their lives. On this point, one Muslim respondent said: "It is not possible to build bridges with people while forgetting God, likewise it is not possible to establish true links with God while ignoring other human beings".[140]

More to this, both Muslim and Christian leaders must undertake friendly visits to places of worship of the other religion and also organise social events and gatherings for their followers. These visits and events will bring the followers of the two religions closer to each other, remove suspicions, mistrust and prejudices between them and create unity and cooperation between them. They must also ensure that women and youths are included in the dialogue discourse (especially in the dialogue of theological exchange) for these account for 70% of the Ugandan population; unfortunately they feel victimised, sidelined, left out, discriminated and demand that their voices also be heard. For genuine dialogue, such a big percentage of the population cannot be ignored. Ursula King writes:

> It is evident that inter-religious dialogue remains part of patriarchy. To envision and develop a post-patriarchal dialogue, it will be necessary to do away with all exclusionary practices and hierarchies especially the hierarchy of gender, which is so pervasive in religions.[141]

The religious leaders must also appeal to their followers to always exercise restraint, to always respond appropriately and never to become emotionally overblown and act irrationally every time their religions are insulted.

7.1.3 The role of the government

The government of Uganda has a very important role to play in promoting dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district and Uganda in general. It must promote democratic governance because once the government is democratic, it understands that it is accountable to all people of all religions and cannot therefore favour

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[140] Respondent interviewed on 28th July 2014
[141] Ursula King, 2007, 10

or patronise one religion at the expense of others. It must ensure good governance for good governance has the potential to promote social cohesion and tolerance and therefore limit the spread of religious intolerance and discrimination. It must take all appropriate measures to combat religiously motivated hatred, intolerance and intimidation and instead encourage among the people of Uganda understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion. It must ensure that provisions of the country's constitution and other legislations do not promote religious intolerance and discrimination. It must also provide an effective framework of adequate legal remedies to redress violations and grievances of freedom of religion. It must establish and strengthen appropriate reconciliation arrangements that can help to settle disputes resulting from acts of religious intolerance, discrimination and abuse of religion. It should also support other structures, institutions and organs of society which play a role in promoting and safe guarding religious freedoms and tolerance.

The government must also address issues of inequalities and ensure a fair distribution of public resources and jobs so that no religion feels sidelined or marginalized as this may breed discontent among some religions and eventually affect dialogue among Muslims and Christians.

The government must also address poverty and unemployment more especially among the youth who are normally exploited by the extremists and self-seekers who take advantage of them and use them to cause conflicts among Muslims and Christians.

The government must also guarantee freedom of worship. It must ensure that every Ugandan has the right to practice a religion of his/her choice in a way he/she chooses as long as that religion or practice does not infringe on the rights of others. It must sensitise the people of Uganda on the Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which guarantees every one's right to freedom of religion. On this point, the Qur'an states in 2: 256: "There is no compulsion in matters of religion".

7.1.4 The role of community leaders

During the field study, the researcher noted that community leaders in Uganda also have an important role to play in ensuring dialogue between Muslims and Christians. These must sensitise the two communities to understand that the Ugandan society is pluralistic

and composed of many religions and therefore they must accept to live together. Affirming this view, Martin Luther King once said: We must learn to live together as brothers and sisters or we will perish together as fools".[142]

The community leaders must also encourage the members of the two communities to be considerate in whatever they do all the time and not to ignore or forget the feelings of their neighbours who may be followers of other religions. They should for example appeal to them to conduct their religions practices without causing undue disturbances and annoyance to others.

They must also encourage the two communities to work together on issues common to all like building schools, hospitals and advocacy for human rights and justice to mention but a few. In support of this recommendation, one Christian respondent said: "We should no longer do separately what we can do better together"[143].

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[142] Shiraz Marwan, 2002, 76
[143] Respondent interviewed on 30th June 2014

7.2 General Conclusion

This study has been about dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district in particular and Uganda in general. During the study, the researcher discovered that dialogue between these two communities is a must if we are to prevent conflicts and violence between them. The study has unearthed several obstacles hindering dialogue between these two communities and the researcher has made several recommendations which he believes that when implemented, will go a long way to foster dialogue between them.

During this study, the researcher was encouraged by some positive signs he witnessed in the area of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Uganda. Both communities have come to realise that inter-religious dialogue is no longer an option but a must. Inter-religious dialogue is now beginning to take place at all levels though more effort is still needed to bring on board the people at the grassroots. The major religions in the country have come together to form the "Inter-religious Council of Uganda" which has now become a very strong influence in the country. It is the voice of the voiceless. It is spear heading the fight against HIV/AIDS, pornography, child sacrifice, corruption and other vices. By coming together under this council, the religions have managed to become a major influence on the Ugandan society.

This study is not conclusive, it has only dealt with dialogue between Muslims and Christians and yet in Kampala district and Uganda in general, there are other religions like African Traditional Religion, Baha'i, Hinduism to mention but a few. The researcher therefore recommends that other researchers can look at dialogue between Muslims, Christians and followers of other religions.

The researcher could not find better words to end this study with than the words of Mahatma Gandhi, one of the great leaders of India who once said: "The need of the moment is not one religion but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions".[144]

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[144] Shiraz Marwan, 2002, 92

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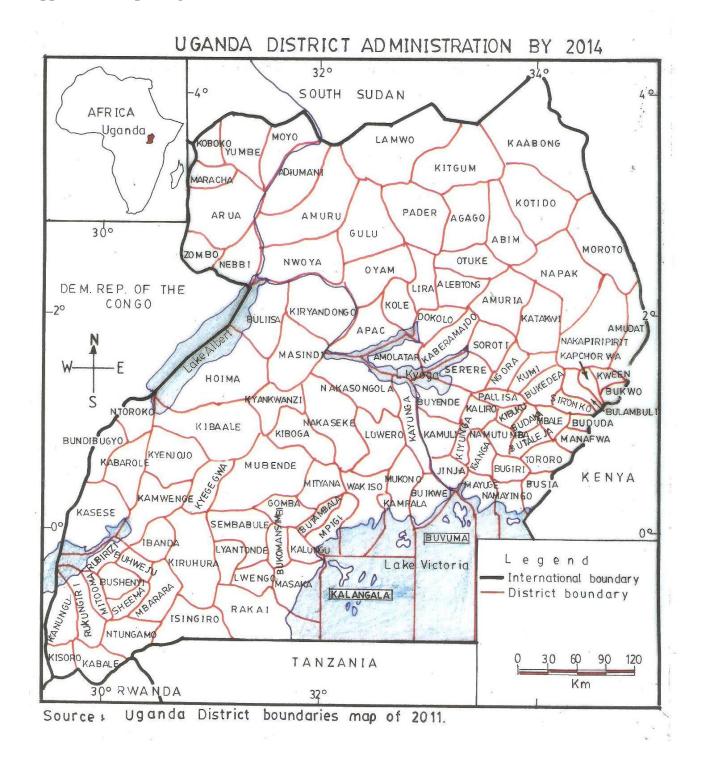
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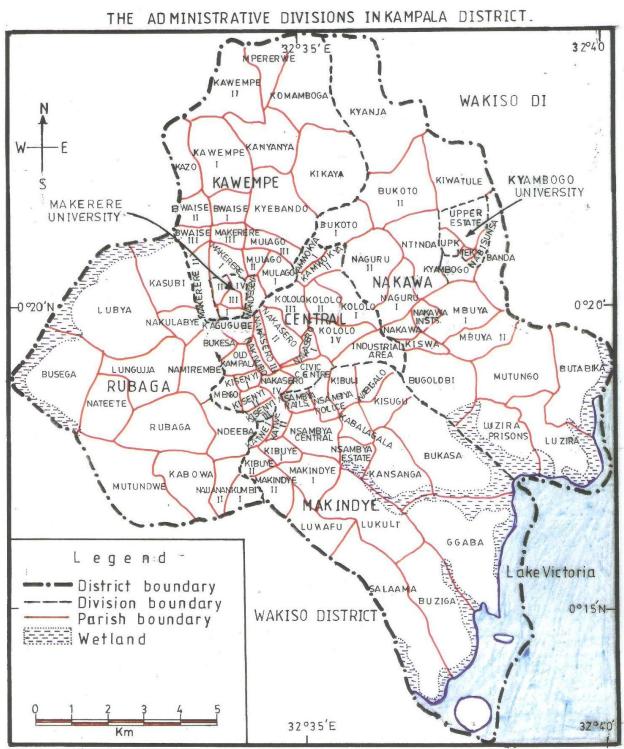
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Map of Uganda District Administration

UGANDA DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION BY 2014

Source: Uganda District boundaries map of 2011.

Appendix II: Map of Kampala district showing division boundaries

THE ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS IN KAMPALA DISTRICT.

Source: (UBOS) Population and Housing Census 2002.

Appendix III: Interview Guide

DIALOGUE BETWEEN MUSLIMS AND CHRISTIANS IN UGANDA
A CASE STUDY OF KAMPALA DISTRICT

Dear sir/madam,

My name is **Serunjogi Umaru**. I am a master of Global Studies student at the School of Mission and Theology, Stavanger, Norway. I am undertaking research on the above topic as a partial requirement for the award of the master's degree in Global studies. I kindly request you to respond to the questions that follow here below. The responses given will be used entirely for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality. If needed, you may at any time withdraw from this research, without giving any reason for doing so.

My supervisor is Associate Professor Dr. Gerd Marie Adna; she might be contacted via e-mail on gerd.marie.aadna@mhs.no in case of any question about my research.

Thank you for participating in this study.

Background Information

1. Name………………………………………………………..
2. Sex:
   (a) Male   (b) Female
3. Age
   (a) 18-30   (b) 31-45   (c) over 45
4. Occupation…………………………………………………
5. Level of Education
   (a) University   (d) O-level
   (b) Tertiary   (e) Primary
   (c) A- level   (f) None
6. How long have you been in Kampala?
7. What is your religion?
8. What is your sect /denomination?
9. Local council area of (a) Residence…………………… (b) Employment………………

QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by the term: Inter-religious dialogue?

2. Are you aware of any existing Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in your area? If yes, in what forms?

3. In your opinion, how would you rate the level of dialogue between Muslims and Christians in your area?

4. Are you aware of any teachings from your religion concerning Dialogue between Muslims and Christians? If yes, which ones?

5. Have you ever participated in any Dialogue between Muslims and Christians? If yes, in what forms?

6. Do you consider Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district necessary? Give reasons for your answer.

7. What do think are the opportunities for Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district?

8. What influences the attitude of members of your religion towards people of other religions?

9. Do you experience Muslim Christian Dialogue in your daily life? If yes, how?

10. Do you have friends/neighbours/workmates/family members who are Muslims/Christian [belonging to a religion different from yours]?If yes,

A] What challenges do you meet in your interaction with them?

   B] How do you cope with these challenges?

11. Have you experienced any dialogues in other areas apart from Kampala? If yes, do you see any differences between the two?

12. Narrate any success stories/events you are aware of arising from dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district; and in other areas (see question 11).

13. Narrate any cases/events in which Dialogue between Muslims and Christians was a failure.

14. Explain any risks or fears expressed by some people regarding Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district.

15. What do you consider to be obstacles to Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district?

16. What do you consider to be the consequences of lack of Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district?

17. Make recommendations that you believe will remove the above obstacles (in question 12) and improve Dialogue between Muslims and Christians in Kampala district?