

**SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY**

**STAVANGER NORWAY**

**INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN UGANDA.  
A CASE STUDY OF  
KAWEMPE SOUTH SUBDIVISION OF KAMPALA.**

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**MASTER THESIS AS A PARTIAL REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD  
OF THE MASTERS DEGREE IN GLOBAL STUDIES AT THE  
SCHOOL OF MISSION AND THEOLOGY**

**MAY 2011**

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my parents; Sheikh Edris Nsereko and Hajjat Jemewo Namubiru Nsereko. My lovely wife Asiah Namuli Senyomo, my daughter Hibah Senyomo and baby Haani Nsereko Senyomo.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this thesis has been hectic and some times frustrating, but I am thankful to God (Allah) that finally I have made it. Texts are not only born out of other texts, but shaped by the circumstances of their production, this makes me greatly acknowledge the following people who are behind the success of this work;

I am sincerely grateful to the guidance of my supervisor Professor Jan Opsal who is really an academic parent.

I appreciate Lanekassen (the Norwegian Government) for providing me with a study opportunity and catering for the basic needs through out the course.

My regards go to the School of Mission and Theology (MHS) in Stavanger for its establishment of the network for tertiary institutions of Theology and Religious Studies, through which I was accorded a scholarship for masters of Global studies at the school.

Special thanks go to the Imams, Pastors, Bishops, Traditionalists, Makerere university students of Kawempe south who provided me with the required data during my fieldwork, thank you for sharing with me your insightful knowledge and experience.

I am indebted to the Department of Religious Studies, Makerere University for the academic foundation laid for me. I extend my gratitude to the entire staff headed by Hajj AbdulFatah Katende for recommending me for the scholarship of masters of Global studies at the School of Mission and Theology. To mention but a few, the Head (Hajj Katende), Sheikh Jemba, Dr. Rev. Ruggyendo, Mrs. Helen Nkabala, Dr. Robert Bakeine, Sheikh Ssali, Mr. Muhammad Kiggundu among others, thank you for the cordial relationship.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my parents; Sheikh Edris Nsereko, Hajat Jemewo and Hamidah Nsereko for your sacrifice to make me reach this education stage. Indeed, I have realized that it was their orally based understanding of the sacredness

of life that continues to aid my journey through life. I also acknowledge the courage and support of my brothers, sisters and the entire family.

To Annet Nalugwa, Helen Nkabala, Christine Mbabazi, Margret Nabukeera, Namaalo Rashidah, Ephraim Zakhary, Elias, Manford, Umar Sendege, Adam Kasule Mayanja, Jamir Ntale Musaazi, DDungu Muhammad, indeed you have been the invisible hand and you mean so much to my life as your company has kept me going while at Stavanger.

Lastly, I would like to thank my wife Asiah senyomo who comforted me in various ways and stayed with my family back home when am in Norway.

**Senyomo Abduwahab**  
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**May 2011**

## **DEFINITION OF THE KEY CONCEPTS**

Some important concepts in the study were identified and defined in order to understand and know what they mean in the study. These include the following:

### **Inter-religious relations**

Refers to the relationships between religions (comparative religion) as a field of religious study that analyzes the similarities and differences of themes, myths, rituals and concepts among world religions.

For the case of this study, it was necessary to find out how Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion relate to each other.

### **Religion**

This is an organized approach to human spirituality which involves beliefs, practices, symbols, narratives and supernatural quality that give meaning to the believer's experiences of life through reference to a higher power. Herbert said,

Religion is cultural systems through various material forms, stones and rituals witness to what is believed to be a transcendent reality. (Herbert 2003, 30)

### **Violence**

The use of physical force to inflict injury on human beings. In the study, several violence attempts are assessed to see how they affect Inter- religious relations.

### **Eschatology**

Religious teachings about the end of the world and the dawn of eternity, including such matters as the second coming of Jesus among others.

### **Sacrifice**

A ritual offering in the form of a presentation to exchange with divine beings, sacred powers or ancestors.

### **Kamunye**

Is a fourteen seater taxi. For the case of the study, the researcher found it as the common means of transport in the area studied.



**Boda boda**

This used to refer to either bicycles or motor cycles engaged in transporting people for payment.

**Culture**

Is the system of interrelated values active enough to influence and condition perception, judgement and behaviors in a given society. In the study, social- cultural practices were analyzed to show how they affect Christian- Muslim and African Traditional religious relations.

**African Traditional Religion (ATR)**

This is the product of the thinking and experiences of our forefathers. They formed religious beliefs, observed religious ceremonies and rituals.

**Islam**

The word Islam literally means “to submit” or “surrender”. However, it’s defined as the total submission and surrender to the will of God (ALLAH).The members of this group are called “Muslims” (the people who submit). Islam is the worldly known as the religion taught by the Islamic prophet Muhammad. Quran as holy book for Muslims assert that Allah says,

“O you who believe! Fear Allah as He should be feared and remember Him always, and die not except in a state of Islam (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allah”. (Quran, 3:102)

**Church**

This is the body of Christ and dwelling place of God for Christian followers.

**Mosque**

This is the Holy place of worship for the followers of Islam.

**Shrine**

This is the Holy place of worship for the followers of African Traditional Religion.

**Bible**

This is the Christian scripture.

**Christianity**

This refers to a monotheistic religion that bases its teachings on the Old Testament and the teachings of Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

It emphasizes the role of Jesus Christ as the savior and believe in one God that exist in three persons; the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Its followers follow the Bible and its teachings as the final authority in all their faith and actions.

The Bible says,

For I deliver to you first of all that Christ died for our sins  
.....And that He was buried and that He rose again the third according to  
scriptures. (Corinthian 15:3-4)

**Fatwa**

This is a legal decision made by an established religious authority in Islam. This term will be employed in the study to show how it affects Christian-Muslim and traditionalist religious relations in the area of study.

## **ABBREVIATIONS**

FBOs : Faith Based Organizations.

IRCU : Inter-religious Council of Uganda.

ACRL : African Council of Religious Leaders.

ATR : African Traditional Religion.

UMSC : Uganda Muslim Supreme Council.

C/U : Church of Uganda.

CMS : Church Missionary Society.

WCC : World Council of Churches.

OIC : Organization of Islamic Conference.

MP : Member of Parliament.

CERAO : The Conference Episcopale Regionale de (Afrique de u Quest Francophone) with a Commission for Islamic-Christian Dialogue.

HDR : Human Development Report.

KCC : Kampala City Council.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

The world today has become a global village. It might be said without exaggeration that humanity has never before in its history experienced such intense interaction. There is no doubt that one of the most demanding subjects in our modern –day global community is the matter of Muslim- Christian relations as well as several religions that are cropping up daily and historical in nature like African Traditional Religion for the case of Africa. These religions have influenced the world for centuries and now attempting to interact with each other more closely than before. Particularly since the second Ecumenical Council in 1962-1964, Christianity has become more involved with world religions in general and with Islam in particular. On other side, Islam since the beginning has been in conversation with Christianity both socially and theologically.

In today’s globalized world, there is interdependency between global and local initiatives and processes. Bradshaw, Healey and Smith said that, all the economic, political, medical and other phenomena alluded to so far are signs of globalization, the process by which people all over the World are exposed to and affected by ideas, issues and cultures from other places.<sup>1</sup> This view is also supported by one of the informant as comments that, there is a tendency for local events to have global implications and global issues can affect the local context especially in matters of faith.<sup>2</sup>

Taking this into account, the researcher was focused on the Inter-religious relations in Kawempe South subdivision of Kampala district, trying to investigate the position of religious leaders such as Imams, Sheiks, Pastors, Bishops, Traditionalists for Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion as well as the university students affiliated to the above religions towards their perception of either religious peaceful coexistence or conflict.

#### **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The focus of this study is to investigate how religious Leaders and University students in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district perceive the contemporary state of Inter-religious relations in the community. Copeland said,

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<sup>1</sup> Bradshaw, Healey and Smith, 2001 pg 6.

<sup>2</sup> Respondent interviewed on 24.July.2010.

Surely, there is place for interreligious cooperation in confronting the grave problems that beset the human race. (Copeland 1999, 106)

The researcher tried to find out the social roles of each religion in the eyes of one another since religious knowledge, according to religious practitioners, may be gained from Religious Leaders or personal revelation. Mc Guire said,

People's relationships with each religion is one of the most powerful, deeply felt and influential forces in human society. It has shaped other, influencing family, community, economic and political life. (McGuire 1997, 2)

To achieve this, the researcher applied several dimensions and theories that shape muslim-christian and African traditional religious relations such as exclusivism, inclusivism, pluralism and henofideism, which helped him to find out the areas of commonalities along with the differences and their effects to one another among these religions in Kawempe south as per the descriptions of the Religious Leaders and University students. The main objectives were;

1. To investigate the events and factors that influence Christian-Muslim and African traditional religious relations in Kawempe south.
2. To assess the social roles of religious institutions in Kawempe south.
3. To establish the causes of tensions and conflicts between Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists as perceived by university students and Religious Leaders in the community.
4. To identify the possible measures that can be put in place to improve Inter-religious relations in the area.

Therefore, these objectives all together addressed the problem of this study.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

The data of the study were collected by use of the following main research questions;

- a) How do the religious leaders and university students describe their own religious group and its social role in kawempe south in relations to other religions?
- b) How do the religious leaders and university students perceive Inter-religious relations in the area?

- c) What are some of the factors and events influencing Muslim, Christian and Traditional religious relationship in kawempe south?
- d) What can be done to improve Inter-religious relations in the region?

In the interview guide, these questions were further developed to focus on the practical issues relevant to the main questions.

## **1.4 scope of the study**

### **1.4.1. Time and geographical scope**

The study covered the period from 1999 up to 2009 due to the fact that the research is focusing on the contemporary perception of the topic, and was carried out in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala, for easy access of the data by the researcher.

### **1.4.2. Population of the study**

The data was collected from Muslim, Christian and traditional religious leaders, elders who are informed and experienced with African Traditional religion and university students affiliated to the three religions. These assisted me to get the gist of the information I needed.

## **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study will hopefully contribute to deeper critical insight into the current endeavour of enhancing the relationship between Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion in many parts of the world.

The study is also relevant in the wider field of academia especially in comparative religion and science of religion.

The study findings will hopefully help the government of Uganda, none-government organizations, policy makers in the region and the world at large to develop the social relationships between groups belonging to Islam, Christianity and African traditional Religion in Kawempe south.

The study will serve as a fulfilment of the requirements for the award of masters of Global studies at the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger.

### **1.5 Justification**

The researcher was motivated to choose this topic due to the fact that few works have been done in the field of comparative religion in Uganda especially in Kawempe south.

### **1.6 Methods and tools for data collection**

The researcher applied qualitative approaches of collection of data from both primary and secondary sources which was more convenient for the purposes of assessing the level of coverage and reactions by different informants, since it's a descriptive project.

### **1.7 Data analysis**

For effective information, the data in the study were analyzed by both qualitative and quantitative means. In doing so, the interpretative approach was fostered, mainly from the recorded materials, interviews and internet works. Comparative analysis was followed to develop a contextual meaning due to different ideologies of informants interviewed.

### **1.9 Data quality control**

The quality of data supplied was controlled through constant consultation with knowledgeable people such as academicians, scholars, Muslim and Christian activists such as pastors and sheikhs, research consultants and many others. This quality control did not compromise the anonymity of my sources.

### **1.10 Challenges of the study**

I encountered numerous problems during the study. Inter-religious relation is a sensitive issue and some people become emotional when it comes to talking about their religious perception towards each other in Kawempe south. Some looked at me as a stranger, others as an investigator and spy. So, I experienced what Bailey states,

Persons being studied may also think the observer is aspy for administration the police or some governmental agency. (Bailey 1987, 248)

However, presenting an introductory letter from Makerere University, Department of Religious studies and one from the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger, Norway, saved me from all sorts of misconceptions.

Respondents became highly expectant especially after seeing a recommendation letter from Norway, as they were so eager to get logistics such as money and gifts as the researcher was from abroad which meant money to them.

However, I convinced them that I was a student on fieldwork study without access to significant funding.



## CHAPTER TWO

### METHODOLOGY

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods that the researcher used in the study process from the time of collecting data, analyzing it and consequently in the final writing of the thesis, without breaching the ethical codes, rendering the whole exercise a great success.

#### 2.2 Area selection

The researcher was motivated to choose Kawempe south as area of study because the three religions of Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion exist, so, studying their relations could be easy, thus the area facilitating the study.

#### 2.3 Access to Kawempe south

Kawempe south is located in Kampala district, making it affected by road traffic and surprisingly murrum roads, so, the researcher mainly used boda boda , bicycles to ride for kilometres, kamunye mainly to reach the field.

#### 2.4 Situatedness in the field

It is quite important to tell how I was situated during my fieldwork in relation to my identity by the informants of my research process mostly the Muslims, Christians and traditional religious leaders as well as university students affiliated to Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion respectively in Kawempe south, was I identified an insider or outsider? The answer to this question is not conclusive because in one way or another, I could belong to either category as follows;

##### (a) Outsider

I received an introductory letter from the department of Religious studies at Makerere University as a student coming from the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger-Norway due to the link between the two institutions. Bailey said,

The introductory statement is important because it justifies the study to the respondent and often determines whether he/she cooperates or not.

(Bailey 1987, 137)

The letter identified my topic as am investigating on how Muslim, Christian, traditional religious leaders and university students of Kawempe south, perceive Inter-religious relations between them. So, I arranged separate meetings with the informants whom I could meet at churches, mosques, shrines and at the university. I used to introduce my self first, then give out the introduction letter backed by the confirmation from MHS, however, most informants considered me as a stranger because I was coming from European university(MHS), so, some became sceptical about me and in few instances, I heard people identifying me as “the black Norwegian”, in other words, coming from a Norwegian university meant a change from my Ugandan identity to Norwegian and in one case when I visited a pastor who wanted me to embrace the cross before interacting with him and said,

You as a Muslim, what do you bother with us (Christians), we have written enough literature about our relations with other religions, better leave me.<sup>3</sup>

However, as a social researcher, I told him that am here to share with you and learn for the academic enhancement not for the interest of my religion (Islam), which pleased him a lot and appreciated my ethical code in the field.

### **(b) Insider**

Introducing my names, my father, tribe and place of birth saved me from being a stranger and outsider as the informants started identifying me as “our son” and even being a graduate of Makerere university earned me hospitality among the informants especially university students who asked for my former registration number, hall of residence and attachment, thank God, my university identity card answered all these questions. The students now instead said, “You’re our buddy” to mean member of the group. Also, the use of luganda language together with English made me popular among my respondents and eased my work as an insider in Kawempe south. Bailey alerts,

The researcher must have some affiliation (e.g., with a university or research company) that gives him or a purpose for conducting the study. He or she should have credentials (such as a university degree) that show he or she is capable is capable of conducting such a study. (Bailey 1987, 246)

Sincerely, Bailey is correct because the Makerere student’s identity card and the back up letter from the Religious department, qualified me to have potential to carry out

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<sup>3</sup> Interviewed by the researcher in his office on 20<sup>th</sup>.july.2010.

research as both native and graduate of the university, something that made the informants hospitable to me through out my field work.

## **2.5 Setting of focus group Discussions**

The group discussions were always conducted at different places of worship namely the Mosques, Churches, Shrines that are located at the university campus. Here, I met the university students who expressed their perceptions towards Christians-Muslim and traditional relations in Kawempe south. This method was so good because the informants spoke out their heart freely and their feelings were expressed in the tone of their voices, facial expressions and none-verbal cues which enabled me to gather relevant information. However, the disagreements between individuals in the groups had aside effect since some were dominated by others and resorted to keeping quite, skipping to say out their personal views.

To overcome this, I used to moderate the discussions, gave room to all members especially those who felt inferior and dominated by others, listen, observe and eventually analyze issues, some times I could write down, record what is said, though tiresome that I used to organise them at home since some did not want to be recorded and even see you writing down. In fact Bailey guides,

Note taking can make the subjects self-conscious and cause them to act abnormally.....most observers prefer, if possible to jot down notes during the day and write their full field notes at night. (Bailey, (1987:249)

This was another example of how useful my methodological training and reading was for the betterment of my fieldwork.

## **2.6 Methods and tools for data collection**

I used specifically interview guide for qualitative methods of data collection especially the semi-structured interview as the method and the research questions as the tool since it was a descriptive study. This involved interactions with the Christian Priests, Imams and cultural leader for African traditional religion as well as university students.

I contacted them and fixed appointments and always adjusted according to time each one gave me. I observed each one as they spoke and educated me at the same time, for, they were really knowledgeable and I was able to acquire/gather the information I

needed for Inter-religious relations in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district.

However, I had to use follow-up questions and verbal mannerisms such as “really...?” “Is it so?” “How?” and many others so as to trigger my informants to give me deep/more information and to follow up the study.

I tried to control my facial expressions and never forced my informants to give information when they didn’t want to, because of personal reasons or for dogmatic issues in the Christianity, Islam and African religion as perceived by a member of a different denomination.

While in the field, I was guided by Atkinson and Hamersley who argued that interview’s manner while the informant is talking is very important (2007:119)

However, in some situations, I had joint interviews especially in group discussions; others forced their friends to speak the truth of the matter which was quite interesting and good. I was following Hamersley and Atkinson who emphasized that in group discussion/session, the interviewer will usually find it difficult to maintain/control over the topic, but at times it may be good in that informants can prompt one another by saying go on...../tell her/him.....what about....and when. (2007:116)

## **2.7 Examination of secondary data**

The secondary data especially I got from the interviews and group discussions between me and the university students affiliated to Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion in Kawempe south was critically analyzed to avoid false information and irrelevancy, strictly only true and relevant data was estimated in the study.

## **2.8 Sample size and security for data collection**

About 8-15 religious leaders of Kawempe south were interviewed on individual basis. This was done by the help of the interview guide, I also had 15-24 university students as part of my focus groups which I met, basically at their respective university campuses. This was done by use of oral interviews as described in the interview guide, through the use of tape recorders and other recording devices, which later I saved on hard disk and flash disk/ memory stick which I personally use and kept properly throughout my field work stay in Uganda until I came back in Stavanger. I made sure that the recorded data cannot be accessible to others than me. The

recordings will be destroyed by June 30<sup>th</sup> 2011. All notes made were completely anonymized or will be deleted at finalization of my thesis.

## **2.9 Ethical codes while in the field**

I was quite sensitive in my mind when carrying out research with different religious leaders and university students so as not to offend or challenge them in any way as far as their religious relations with others in Kawempe south is concerned. I made sure I maintained the delicate balance between research ethics, the expectations of the study population, at the same time negotiating the community's vested interests in this religious related research project in the society. For example I one time used some money to pay for the lunch meals for those who provided information so that they should not feel used and exploited, but feel helpful, important and valued as they provided me with their time and necessary information especially lunch costs to the university students since we used to meet during lunch hours. I decided to do this, to allow free interaction with them since it was their own time for lunch and because they were not accustomed to carrying packed food with them at the university. However, I am convinced that this did not affect the quality of data and information given as I basically took the role of being the host in this situation and in my experience, the students spoke freely during our session.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

A plurality of literature have been written about Christianity –Islamic religious relations even in the developing countries like Uganda, therefore, this chapter addresses the theoretical approach of Inter-religious relations in Kawempe south. However, few studies have been done regarding, Christian-Muslim and African religious relations especially in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala.

The written books focus on topics like; Muslims and others, relations in context, Christians and Muslims, from double standards to mutual understanding, Religion and Globalization, African Religions and philosophy, among others.

This study would suggest that more effort ought to be directed to the broader perspective just to Christian-Muslim and African traditional religious relations, than Christian-Muslim relations, most especially whenever you consider Africa as a case study since ATR is the “indigenous religion” and Christianity –Islam are just “imported religions” in the area, because African traditional religion existed with the existence of African continent. This was emphasised by Mbiti,

Both Christianity and Islam are “traditional and “African” in a historical sense and it is a pity that they tend to be regarded as “foreign” and “Arab”.  
(Mbiti 1989, xi)

I agree with Mbiti that although, they are so many literature in Africa and Uganda specifically about Christianity-Islamic relations as religions that just brought by Europeans and Arabs in Africa and both have turned up to be part of Africans’ lives amidst the original African traditional religion. Also Rwehikiza supports Mbiti’s argument as he said,

Neither Christianity nor Islam was native in Africa, where they were received as guests, since their arrival, they have been accepted by large numbers in Africa and now live side by side. (Rwehikiza 1986, ix)

This among others motivated the researcher to write about the religious relations of Christianity-Islam and African traditional religion in Kawempe south.

Waardenburg states,

Through out history, conflicting Christian and Muslim parties used Christianity and Islam to identify and justify themselves as each other’s

resolute antagonists, especially in times of conflicts and political struggle. Yet in times of peace, commercial relations flourished and social and cultural exchange. (Waardenburg 2003, 30)

According to Waardenburg, Christian-Muslim relations have a hand in several conflicts in the society as well as in some cases their peaceful coexistence can lead to development, peace, mutual understanding and variety of social roles to the community.

However, religious violence and conflicts affect Inter-religious relations that calls for the way forward to improve the relations.

So, this serves the gist of this chapter as perceived by several writers and authors.

### **3.2 EVENTS AND FACTORS INFLUENCING INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEFUL COEXISTANCE**

#### **Introduction**

Here, I will apply among others the religious universalism/pluralism theory as a guiding principle to Christian-Muslim and African traditional religious peaceful coexistence. Runzo alerts,

Agreement about the status of vital core beliefs of each tradition is not as important as a shared religious point of view. And I would suggest that there is indeed a religious point of view, which serves as the point of commonality and the manifestation of universality in religion, even though the adherents of the World religions have quite different specific religious world views.  
(Runzo 2001, 32)

Actually, religious universalism as entails the fact that all religious worldviews are correct but it is a matter of ways and paths that are undertaken that differ, but have one ultimate reality as advanced by Runzo, I do agree with him that for religious peaceful coexistence of world religions and views, we need to identify the gaps, build the bridges between religious denominations, avoid double standards that can sow the seeds of conflicts and unrest in order to have mutual understandings, as seen discussed in the following events and factors that are influencing Christian-Muslim and African traditional religious peaceful coexistence.

#### **(a) The notion of worship of God**

This has been among the event that is commonly shared between African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam in Africa especially in Uganda. Mbiti says,

In many and various ways, African peoples respond to their spiritual world of which they are sharply aware. This response generally takes on the form of worship which is eternalized in different acts and sayings. (Mbiti 1989, 58)

According to Mbiti, all African religions of which Christianity and Islam are inclusive share the way they address God (worship) in terms of meditation, acts and sayings like in Uganda, music, supplications are part of worship in Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion depending on the situation, like during the draught, Muslims tend to pray God for rain (swalaatul istisqa)<sup>4</sup>. The same thing happens to traditionalists who pray to “Musoke”<sup>5</sup> especially among the baganda people who consider Musoke to be god and divinity, as well as Christians often attend night prayers in the course of praying God after any calamity in the society.

In fact both Christianity and Islam share a common ancestry/heritage in Abraham/Ibrahim for the Muslims as the father of faith, making both religions monotheistic, though with some differences in interpretation or explanation of their scriptures like from the Hebrew scripture (OT) since historical analysis indicates that their different holy books, namely, the Bible and Quran came later after the Jewish/Hebrew holy scriptures, therefore their teachings focusing to a common ground. The Old Testament speaks of God as one; (“Hear O Israel: The Lord is one.....” (Deut, 6:4NIV).

As far as Christianity is concerned; there is no objection to this, compared to Islam as they confess the oneness of God/monotheism. The Quran states that a true and faithful Muslim believes in, “One God/Allah, the Supreme and Eternal, Infinite and Mighty, Merciful and Compassionate, Creator and Provider among others, thus with the confession of faith in Islam, whether use the name “God” or Arabic, “Allah” that the traditionalists in Uganda translate to mean, “Katonda”, “Luhanga”, “Kibumba” among others . If we were to interpret the meaning of “Katonda”, you find that “tonda” means to create, and then “ka” means the one, so, it is a matter of naming and language but comes back to the same God confessed by all religions in the world and Uganda inclusive.

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<sup>4</sup> Prayer for rain.

<sup>5</sup> Luganda name of god in charge of rain in African traditional religion.



However, it is the way how God is worshipped that differs among the Christians, Muslims and traditional religion, though some Muslims put strong attachment to God in Arabic than other languages which is an area of dispute and controversy, however, the name Allah has nothing to do with Arabic tribalism or nationalism. Allah for Muslims is the universal God that probably all know of without excluding Christianity and African traditional religion among others. Siddiqi comments,

Allah is not an Arab God or a Muslim God. In the Quran, He is not called, 'God of Quraish' (the tribe of Muhammad), or 'God of Arabs'. He is repeatedly called 'God of the worlds'. (Rabbil-alamiin). The very first verse of the Quran begins with the words: Grateful praise belongs to God, the Lord of the Worlds. Quran (1:1). (Siddiqi 1991, 7)

According to Siddiqi, the word, "God of the worlds" is used not only God to be in-charge of the planets but also whatever exist in them (creatures) after all He is the Creator of all, thus the notion of God serves as a factor in peaceful coexistence of Christian-Muslim and Traditional religious relations in Uganda since Christians confess God the father, first in their doctrine of trinity, then among the ganda traditionalists in Uganda, they pray, "Katonda ali mu ggulu" to mean the supreme God in heaven whom the Muslims also confess.

#### **(b) Adopting each other culture**

Adoption of culture has led to peaceful coexistence of African traditional religion – Islam and Christianity in Uganda in the sense that it is quite difficult to identify a traditionalist from a Christian and Muslim in Uganda especially in the performance of some events and rituals like marriage rituals, funeral rites, and medicine among others. This is because many traditionalists are either Muslims or Christians, so, African traditional religion is taken and perceived as traditional culture where as Islam and Christianity as religions. Thus why you could find a marriage occasion arranged on both traditional and religious basis having the introduction ceremony on traditional basis and then attend either mosque for Muslims or church to attain religious consent and blessings of the father and next of kin, this has created a room for peaceful coexistence of Christianity, Islam and ATR. Mbiti had this to say,

On the cultural level, like the naming ceremonies, initiation rites and marriage procedured, traditional elements become partially Islamized, or are remodelled. (Mbiti 1989, 241)

I agree with Mbiti, because many of African traditional ideas and practices have been mixed with those of Islam and Christianity to suit the requirements of the society like adopting some Christian- Muslim life and other cultural forms such as birth, marriage and death to suit their social environment for the peaceful interreligious coexistence in the society.

### **(c) Religious practices and values**

Peaceful coexistence between African traditional religion, Islam and Christianity has been cemented by the philosophy of how one should conduct his/herself towards others, spirits, divinities and above all God. This can be done through sacrifices, offerings, prayers among others. These religious values and practices vary from one religion to another, in terms of how they are supposed to be practised, who should lead in their practice and how often should they be done.

Here you can find that some religious practices and values are performed at specific period of time like among the Muslims; there are the daily five prayers that have specific and described time like at dawn, afternoon, late evening, sunset and night prayer. Muslims also fast thirty days during Ramadhan, (the ninth month of the Islamic calendar) and go for haj or pilgrimage to Mecca during Dhur hajj (the twelfth month of the Islamic calendar). These Islamic practices among other are believed as channels of communication between people. worshipers themselves since they meet on daily, monthly and these annual events, as well as relating and communicating with their God (Allah) as per the beliefs of Muslims, in comparison, African traditional religions, people relate to their spirits and ancestors through offerings like slaughtering animals, hens, bringing food on graves as well as Christians usually leave behind flowers on the graves of their beloved ones, some say, “St. Peter pray for us” some thing that also happens to the Muslims in Uganda as they give out charity for the sake of their deceased ones (swadakat-aljaariyah), through planting trees, constructing schools, hospitals, educating people and all communal developmental projects that are lawful according to the teachings of Islam.

However, the essence behind all these religious values and practices done is to create a link and relate to either other members of the community who might be alive or

dead as well as perceived ways of pleasing and relating to God. This has kept ATR, Islam and Christianity as quite different but nearly the same in Uganda. Akiik states,

The children of Africa, wherever they may be, have indigenous, Christian, Islamic and other religious values. (Akiik 1993, 179)

I support Akiik, because religious practices in Africa are part and parcel of the lifestyle of people regardless of the religious affiliation, thus no room for prejudice between believers to one another, thus calling for peaceful Inter-religious coexistence in the society.

#### **(d) Religious objects**

Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion use religious objects as signs of identity and recognition in the society. Among the symbols and objects used in Uganda include cross, icons, models, pictures, rosaries, holy coils, holy water, holy bread, holy wine, sacred mountains and seas like Bujagaali mountain<sup>6</sup>, Kabaka's lake, Ssezibwa waterfalls among others especially for the ganda and basoga culture.

People normally believe that these objects are natural and have divine blessings.

For example the Christians believe that Moses utilized the image of serpent, (Exodus, 4:3-5; 7:8-13) also that Christ worked many miracles in conjunction with natural objects (John 11:1-53) compared to the Muslims who use zamzam water, Blackstone (Hajarul-aswad) as sacred objects at Mecca. In all these, Christians, Muslims and traditionalists believe that as much as God can use any person to do His will and miracles, He can permit people or use certain objects to effect certain things at times beyond their natural capabilities.

#### **(e) Unity in diversity**

Peaceful coexistence among Christians, Muslims and traditionalists in Uganda has been preserved through unity in diversity as each is different from one another, but shares the un avoidable and universal commonalities.

Goddard has this to say,

One feature of both Islam and Christianity which can not be denied, and which is an obvious similarity between them is that they both have an idea of unity within the community of their adherents. (Goddard 1995, 103)

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<sup>6</sup> Sacred and holy mountain for traditionalists believed to have blessings found in eastern Uganda (Jinja)

I agree with Goddard as in Uganda, Christianity is subdivided into Catholicism, Protestantism, orthodox, Pentecostal, Adventist among others, but still they unite on several occasions under the guise of “one church, one faith, one God” which means that although, they differ in ideologies, but come to consensus at one time. This also happens among the Muslims as they are majorly divided into the Shiites and Sunni, but Tauheed/Aqeedah (the belief in one God/Allah) is reflected in their practical unity of the Ummah<sup>7</sup>, compared to ATR, with the notion of African patriotism as traditionalists believe that ATR is our religion since it dominates our lives.

However, Inter-religious council of Uganda unites all these religions together for a common goal mainly to serve and please God, thus facilitating peaceful coexistence in the community.

#### **(f) Creation origin**

The Muslims, Christians and traditionalists in Uganda are members of the same family and faith as all are creatures of God, so they share faith in common “din al-fitra” as a common parental origin. However, difference in religious ideology comes out after birth, environment, education status, marriage, economic gains leading to conversion. For example, the parents determine the faith especially in Africa and specially Uganda, as the faith and religion of parents mostly fathers is supposed to be the religion of children since patriarchal system that empower men to dominate women in the society is common, but to other parts of the world, the children have freedom to choose the religion of their choice. Raji-Al-Faruqi says,

For the first time, it has become possible for the adherent of one religion to tell an adherent of another religion; “we are both equal members of a universal Religious brotherhood. (Raji-Al-Faruqi 1998, 140)

According to Raj-Al-Faruqi, it implies that Christianity, Islam and African religion all originate from one creator (God), and also have the same grand father (baana Adaamu)<sup>8</sup> so, no need for conflicting each other as they share the bond of religious brotherhood, governed by the concept of religious universalism and pluralism<sup>9</sup>, thus leading to inter-religious peaceful coexistence in the community.

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<sup>7</sup> Arabic word to mean the community.

<sup>8</sup> The term is commonly used in luganda to mean people of the same creation origin (children of Adam).

<sup>9</sup> Religious belief that one’s religion is true and others exist with truth.

### **(g) Pope Paul (VI) visit to Uganda**

Pope Paul (VI) visited Uganda in July.1969, shortly after the second Vatican Council, and in his address to the religious leaders he said,

May the shining sun of peace and brotherly love rise of the land, bathed with their blood by generous sons of the Catholic, Christian and Muslim communities of Uganda, to illuminate all of Africa! And may this, our meeting with you, respected representatives, be the symbol of, and first step towards, that unity for which God calls us all to strive for His greater glory, for the happiness of this blessed Continent!!! (Rwehikiza 1986, 75)

Therefore, Pope Paul's speech and address called for religious harmony, respect for one another, love for peace and development of Africa, thus fostered Christian-Muslim and traditional peaceful coexistence in Uganda.

### **(h) The role of language**

Christianity, Islam and ATR in Uganda, have opened the door to effective cooperation by becoming bilingual regardless of each having its primary language that defines the religious community in the society for instance Arabic for Islam, Hebrew and Greek for Christianity, African Languages for ATR, but these religions have adopted a second and public language common to all, which is English. Copeland alerts,

The most obvious requirement is the use of a common language or interpretation into languages understood by all...however, for religious language often reflects the profound, subtle and esoteric nuances of faith. (Copeland 1999, 99)

I concur with Copeland, because English is the official language of Uganda and specifically, Kawempe south, it is shared as public language that provides a medium to clarify agreements and differences on important communal issues morally and spiritually and also creatively and faithfully re-express their own tradition in a common language, leading to a form of muliti-religious cooperation that contributes towards conflict resolution.

### **(I) Religious freedom**

Religious freedom has facilitated Muslim- Christian and traditional peaceful coexistence in Uganda as reflected in the Uganda's motto; "For God and my country". Copeland states,

One natural area of interreligious cooperation is the pursuit of religious freedom it would be a great boon, indeed if all religions would cooperate to see that every one has religious liberty, whether physical or psychological, coercion and manipulation has no place in religion. (Copeland 1999, 107)

Indeed, Copeland is correct because people need to have their liberty, freedom of religion and expression and no coercive conversion from one religion to another, but built upon the person's interest, conviction and choice. This happens in Uganda especially in Kawempe south, as there are normally religious crusades at Bwaise, Nabweelu, Mulago play grounds organised by Muslims or Christians, but people embrace and convert willingly, this has kept the religious freedom and liberty of people of Uganda.

### **3.3 CAUSES OF INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS AND VIOLENCE**

Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion in Uganda and specifically in Kawempe south are capable of promoting violence and sowing seeds of conflicts and unrest in certain instances between themselves, although the conditions, nature and extent differ greatly from one religion to another and from case to another as seen discussed in this part of the chapter.

Religious Conflicts and violence have been defined by several scholars, among them; Kurtz says,

The working definition of "religious violence" here is violence that is somehow directly sanctioned by religious authorities- leaders or council, rituals, myths, symbols or sacred texts. (Kurtz 2008, 1861)

I will apply Kurtz's definition of religious conflict and violence since the terms have been used synonymously, and tried to identify the causes of religious violence basing on the religious authorities and leaders who served as part of my informants in my study at Kawempe south. This is mainly through how they perceive their religion in relations to others; Runzo identified several dimensions about this and has the following to say,

Four possible religious responses to the problem of conflicting religious truth claims are the following:

1. Exclusivism. only one world religion is correct (one's own), and all others are mistaken.
2. Pluralism. Ultimately all world religions are correct, each offering a different path and partial perspective vis-a-visa the one ultimate reality.
3. Inclusivism. only one world religion is fully correct, but other world

Religions participate in or partially reveal some of the truth of the one correct religion.

4. Henofideism. one has a faith commitment that one's own world religion is correct, while acknowledging that other world religions may be correct. (Runzo 2001, 30)

Based on Runzo, Inter-religious conflicts is mainly due to how one perceives the truth and claims of his/her religion in relations to the coexisting religion in the society, therefore, the following are some of the causes of Christian-Muslim and African traditional inter-religious conflicts and violence in Uganda and specifically Kawempe south.

#### **(a) Terrorist attacks**

The term terrorism refers to the violent use of arms, authority, atomic missiles, bombs, death instinct for destruction of lives and property, ranging from religious to political, group or individual based. Kurtz said,

Perhaps the most infamous instances of religious violence in the recent times are acts of terrorist groups that abuse or kill innocent persons in order to destabilize governments or to dramatize a kind of cosmic battle between good and evil. (Kurtz 2008, 1861)

I support Kurtz, because since the 11<sup>th</sup>. September. 2001, suicide attacks by al Qaeda led by Osama bin Laden against the Twin towers of the World Trade centre in New York City, which led to the destruction of the tower, death of people and injured some. This opened a door for conflicts between Muslims and other religions all over the world, since the attacks were made by Osama bin Laden and group who are Muslims, so, it is the same case in Uganda, whenever, any terrorist attack happens like in the bus parks, markets, entertainment centres like what happened at Kabalagala, as people were watching the final of world cup in 2010, and were attacked by Ashabaab who set a bomb that killed many innocent people, loss of property. So, this created a threat between Muslims, Christians and traditionalists in the country, leading to conflicts between them.

However, in my opinion as a scholar would argue that, even if the 11<sup>th</sup> September, 2010 Kabalagala, terrorist attacks were done by Muslims, does not render the entire Muslim community to be "terrorists" but this is done on an individual basis and motives and are only answerable. The term Islam itself is related to the term peace

and recommends the promotion of peace and understanding among people of all faiths. This is done through prohibiting all forms of violence and aggression against all people regardless of their faith or race; it is upon this background therefore, terrorism of any form is anti Islam. Quran says,

.....if anyone killed a person not in retaliation of murder, or (and) to spread mischief in the land- it would be as if he killed all mankind, and if anyone saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of all mankind. And indeed, there came to them our Messengers with clear proofs, evidences, and signs..... (Quran 5:32), also, But if they incline to peace, you also incline to it<sup>10</sup>.

Basing on the above verses of the Quran, Islam calls for the quest for peace which could be in a state of physical, natural, spiritual and social harmony that is the reason why the Quran considers all human beings to have sacred lives that require justice of any kind and should be guarded from oppression, violence, aggression, hence living in peace and harmony. Therefore Islam has no way how it instigates terrorism but rather cherish it and the few named Muslims individual terrorists and groups do it on their own motives and can not be representatives of Islam as the entire community.

#### **(b)The aspect of sacrifice**

Religious sacrifices involve the voluntary giving or giving up of valued substance or object, usually requiring the destruction of life or essence of offering as away of communicating with God. This has caused conflicts between Muslims –Christians and traditionalists in Uganda especially on the way it is practised, for example among the traditionalists, killing of animals like goats, sheep, cows, human sacrifices for pleasing and attaining blessings from gods like Lubaale, mukasa and others in common, which is against the civil laws of Uganda, teachings of Islam and Christianity especially human sacrifice because it is regarded as forbidden in the ten commandments, so, this renders traditional religion bad image in the society and creates gaps and inter-religious conflicts.

E.B.Taylor held that sacrifice among primitive people is simply away of bribing the gods, according to the Latin Maxim: Do ut des (“I give (to you), that you may give (to me).<sup>11</sup> Infact, it is Taylor’s argument and the likes that traditionalists were misled by this phrase under the guise of exchange since they give out to please and get

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<sup>10</sup> (Quran 8:61)

<sup>11</sup> Publication not availed to the researcher.



blessings from their gods even if it requires sacrifice of life, thus conflicting with the teachings of Christians and Muslims in Uganda and specifically Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district since killing is a grave sin to them.

### **(c) Deculturalization**

John Mbiti has brought up the issue of deculturalization as a cause of inter-religious conflicts and asserts,

In the case of Uganda, for instance, Islam and Christianity arrived some one hundred forty years ago preached universal love and brotherhood. Negatively and ironically, both have played a divisive role, both during the colonial days and in the post independence days. Among other things, rather than feel at home in Uganda, they tempted to make Ugandans feel at home by make them carbon copies of the areas of origin. (Mbiti 1993, 180)

As a Ugandan researcher, I agree with Mbiti because Muslims and Christians adopt the cultures of Europeans and Arabs because they think its better and assign of modernity amidst their African traditional cultures, seen in their gospel preachings, having western and Arab names as “religious names”, dress codes, music and the entire life. Therefore, Christianity and Islam in the eyes of traditionalists are seen as religions targeting the spoiling and eroding away the original African culture.

### **(d) Association of Christianity with imperialism**

Some Scholars support the view that Christianity in many parts of the World is associated with imperialism as Bayer puts it,

The virtually world wide spread of Christian missions during the era was first and foremost a religious development. World wide capitalist expansion was a prime condition for its possibility. (Bayer 1994, 53)

Indeed, Bayer is true because British colonialists used Christian missionary groups to attain territories in Africa, this happened in Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda, as due to the excess capital in Europe, they wanted to scramble and colonise Africa under the guise of investment, so, whenever, they discovered and conquered a territory, they spread Christianity, built schools, Hospitals, Churches amidst the original African traditional religion and Islam which had already came to Uganda in 1884. Therefore, Christianity is seen by many as a neo-colonialist element in Uganda up to date since it came from the West as the base for the former British colonial masters of Uganda.

### **(e) Misconception and Ignorance**

There is rampant misconceptions and ignorance among Christians, Muslims and traditionalists about the teachings of another. Goddard says,

Mutual ignorance, then, is one obstacle in the way of mutual understanding between Christians and Muslims. (Goddard 1995, 2)

This is true mainly in Uganda, since some people think that Muslims worship pigs because it is sacred as they don't eat it compared to the Hindus and the cow, well as Muslims and traditionalists accuse Christians for worshipping three gods, (father, son and the holy spirit) "trinity" since 1+1+1, has never been one but three. The same happens against traditionalists as perceived as backward, primitive, pagans, dangerous witches, shrine –keepers, spirit mediums, divine disciples of religious personalities like kintu and Mukasa for baganda. Therefore, with these double standards and misconceptions due ignorance about the teachings of one religion to another, inter-religious conflicts is un avoidable.

However, Christians, Muslims and traditionalists in Uganda especially in Kawempe south are familiar with their beliefs and teachings of their own denomination, but have never been exposed to the amazing differences in beliefs of others especially since Uganda is becoming a multi cultural and multi religious society that calls for religious universalism rather than inclusivism<sup>12</sup> and exclusivism<sup>13</sup> that are behind inter-religious violences and conflicts as discussed above.

## **3.4 HOW TO IMPROVE INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFLICTS**

### **Introduction**

Uganda and the world at large are changing rapidly to accommodate all people of different cultures and religions to cater for modernity, globality and development, therefore, if Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala is affected by Christian-Muslim and traditional religious conflicts will it compete effectively in this global village?

It is this reason among others that calls for a need to improve and save the situation in the area as discussed below;

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<sup>12</sup> Only one World religion is fully correct, but other world religions participate in or partially reveal some of the truth of the one correct religion.(Runzo 2001, 30) see also 3.3.

<sup>13</sup> Only one world religion is correct (one's own), and all others are mistaken.(Runzo 2001,30)

Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion need to provide services that not only support and enhance the religious faith of their only adherents, but catering for the entire multi religious community. There is need for unity in diversity, respect and expect to live with people of different religions.

Acknowledgment of religious differences since Islam, Christianity and ATR, do not hold the same beliefs, but each need to be sincere and tolerant to one another for peaceful coexistence.

However, Inter-religious conflicts in Uganda and specifically in Kawempe south can be improved through several means as will be discussed in chapter four and six.

Therefore, if the religious relation between Christians, Muslims and traditionalists in Uganda is improved, of what benefit is it to the society? One would conclude that Inter-religious peaceful coexistence is truly influential and has a lot of social role in the community. McGuire had this to say,

Peoples relationships with each religion is one of the most powerful, deeply felt and influential forces in human society. It has shaped other, influencing family, community, economic, and political life. Religious beliefs and values motivate human action and religious groups organize their collective religious expressions. Religion is a significant aspect of social life, and the dimension is an important part of religion. (McGuire 1997, 2)

Surely, McGuire has a point to make because, given the multi cultural and multireligious Uganda, the social role of religious institutions can not be underestimated as discussed briefly below.

### **3.5 SOCIAL ROLES OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN THE SOCIETY**

#### **Introduction**

McGuire discusses the issue of religious institutions and states,

A movement cannot have any lasting impact on society without some measure of **institutionalization**- that is, the creation of some objective structure by which it tries to realize its values and goals. (McGuire 199,152-153)

However, religious institution can also be defined as,

Religious Institution is an institution that is established for not- for – profit and is for religious purposes only. Basically, it is an establishment, organization or association instituted to advance or promote religious purposes or beliefs.

Places of worship such as churches, mosques, temples and synagogues, charities supported by religious organizations and religious societies founded by members of a faith all come under the umbrella of religious institutions.<sup>14</sup>

I will employ this definition through out my study whenever, am referring to the term religious institution because it gives out the clarity of the concepts.

However, in this section, I will give a brief analysis of the role of religious institutions, to allow me deeply analyze it in chapter five when I will be giving description of how the religious leaders and university students perceive the social roles of religious institutions in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala since the project is descriptive not normative.

Christian, Muslim and traditional religions in Uganda have a program, “religions for peace” under the Inter- religious council of Uganda which mobilizes assets of the religious communities through analyzing problems such as violence, conflict; making an inventory of available religious assets.

Religious places of worship mainly the church and the mosques have moral assets that build upon and unfold the great strengths of their spiritualities. Christian and Muslim religious leaders are uniquely positioned to use their moral stature and influence to encourage moral understanding with in their communities.

Religious visions guide to the meaning of human life since spiritualities can provide to believers enormous courage and strength in the midst of situations of tragedy and human wickedness. This has been achieved for example through the Foundation for Islamic Development, Bukadef as a traditionalist project for the enhancement of people’s wellbeing based Bulange Mengo, Christian Mothers’ Union. This is mainly done through giving strength to the believers to bear the unbearable, hope when all seems hopeless and the possibility to forgive the unforgivable thus advocating for peaceful coexistence in the society.

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.smallbusinessbible.org/featureswebdesigns\\_religiousinstitutions.html](http://www.smallbusinessbible.org/featureswebdesigns_religiousinstitutions.html), Internet, accessed on 20<sup>th</sup>. February. 2011.

Religious institutions educate local populations regarding the seeds of conflict; religious congregations and women's groups bridge the divide among combatants. To restore peace and development at both individual and the community level.

Christian, Muslim and African traditional religion through the Church of Uganda, Uganda Muslim Supreme council among others, are working together as a team to reintegrate former child soldiers, speak out against scapegoating, engage in non violent activism for peace, provide a space for mediation like the case of Northern Uganda that is affected by Kony invasion since 1986.

However, the social roles of religious institutions such as the Church, Mosque, Shrines, Inter-religious council of Uganda, Religious Charitable Organizations in Uganda and the rest of the world are so many, but will be deeply analyzed in chapter five as stated above. Bryan supported this view and said that basic function of religion and the focus of its operation exist in the community.<sup>15</sup>

### **3.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

In concluding this chapter therefore, religion is an influential factor of human life if not even the engine, that attaches the family, individual and entire community in all spheres of influence, thus why since people belong to different religions such as Christianity, Islam, African traditional religion, thus studying their religious relations with one another is quite paramount as discussed in the chapter three above.

However, the theoretical perspectives of the study will be used in the analysis of the fieldwork findings as to be discussed in the next chapter.

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<sup>15</sup> ( Bryan 1976, 265)

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FIELD ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, I am concerned with the findings of the study. It involves the presentation, interpretation and analysis of the various views of the respondents' biograph data and their views in relation to the perception of Christian-Muslims and traditional religious leaders and university students towards their inter-religious relations as stipulated in the specific objectives of my study. My experience indicates that religion is part of the people and people are part of religion, it gives them identity and it is what they practice, do, and say that identifies people. Therefore, this chapter is of great importance to everyone living in the area in Kawempe South.

Kawempe South is composed of the, Baganda, Batoro, Bafumbira, Banyankole and other ethnicities with a plurality of religious affiliations mainly Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion. However, I realized that they all tend to have strong beliefs and attachments to their religions which gave me a good ground for my fieldwork.

#### **4.1.2 Respondents' biographical data**

This involved the respondents' personal information like gender, religious affiliations, marital status, experience, education and age.

#### **4.1.3 Interaction with the respondents**

Respondents in their various categories were so helpful and helped me understand and appreciate some of their religious values and social roles in the area. However there were moments when I as a researcher could not control the respondents as some misunderstood their friends as they spoke and others got emotional. Some times, noise, time management, rough characters, expression and space were all experienced and quite a time to learn and appreciate what social researchers go through due to the fact that some were liberal and others fundamentalists especially among the university students.

However, the interaction I had with my supervisor Professor Jan Opsal before going for fieldwork, guided me and was really helpful, because at such time I kept quiet and recorded in my diary, all that I observed and heard and later could be able to relate it when transcribing my data.

#### **4.1.4 Ethnography of Kawempe south**

This presents life of the respondents, my personal experience of the life situation, Christian, Muslim and African traditional religious leaders and university students' views and texts about their Inter- religious relations in Kawempe south. However, it does not offer a description of all that goes on in the area, but attempts to present important aspects for the current study by giving a contextual description of the area.

##### **4.1.4.1 Location of Kawempe south**

Kawempe is one of the five Divisions forming Kampala District in Uganda, located North of Kampala District between latitudes 32°33' - 31°35' east of the Greenwich and longitudes 0°20' - 0°24' north of the Equator.

It has an area of 32.45 square kilometres and borders with Wakiso District in the North-West, Rubaga Division in the Southeast, Nakawa Division in the Northeast and Central Division in the Southwest. Administratively, the Division is made up of 22 parishes and 119 zones which constitute two major constituencies namely Kawempe South and Kawempe North.

The location of the Division strategically makes it the major entry point of traffic from the North Western and North Eastern parts of Uganda to the City Centre. Therefore, Kawempe south is easily influenced by national developments.

##### **4.1.4.2 Population**

The population of Kawempe Division according to the 2002 population and housing census provisional estimates was 268,659 of which 52% were female and 48% were male. The total number of households was 67,132. The most densely populated areas include Bwaise, Wandegaya, Kawempe, Makerere and Mulago and are characterised by uncontrolled developments and slum conditions.

#### **4.1.4.3 Organization**

The meteorological data for Kampala District is typical of Kawempe Division. The Division is characterised by comparatively small seasonal variations in temperature.

Due to a high rate of evaporation from the lake surface and to regular winds which drift across lake Victoria from east to west all seasons, the average rainfall is high (1548mm). There is a tendency for the rainfall to decrease as one move northwards from the lakeshores.

However, Kawempe South is found in Kawempe Division, Kampala District, Uganda. It borders Nansana town council in the west, Kawempe north in the north, Lubaga division in south western, Kampala central division in the south and Nakawa division in the East. It is constituted of thirteen Parishes of Makerere 1, 11, 111, Mulago 1, 11,111 and 111, Bwaise 11 and 111, Wandegeya parish and Makerere University with four parishes.

The area is made up of several urban centers and villages with local council leaders abbreviated as (LCS) with over a population of 15000 people, though the number is rapidly decreasing due to constant floods and the construction of the northern bypass road that led to relocation. Small businesses are the major economic activity, with the majority of the locals engaging since it is a slum area. However, the place is mainly residential except in some places such as Bwaise, Wandegeya which are commercial centers, Makerere University with four parishes is an Educational center for higher learning as well as Mulago parish is for both settlement and health base of Uganda.<sup>16</sup>

Kawempe south constituency is represented by Honourable Ssebuliba Mutumba in parliament of Uganda.

#### **4.1.4.4 Infrastructural setting and transport**

The infrastructural setting of Kawempe south reveals the physical artefacts that does not only manifest convergence but also coexistence of the traditional and modern features prevalent in the area such as residential in Wandegeya, Kawempe Mbogo, Tura, Makerere parish, Mulago and suburbs of Katanga, Kimombaasa, Kibe zone and Kalerwe.

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<sup>16</sup> Interviewed by the researcher on 12. 06. 2010



The major means of transport in the area of my study was Kamunye taxi, bodaboda and self drive cars.

#### **4.1.4.5 Ethnic composition**

Kawempe south has a rich cultural heritage and is made up of various ethnic groups among which, Baganda dominate with 70%. Others include Banyoro, Batoro, Bafumbira, Banyarwanda, Bahororo, Barundi and Bakiga, who make up 30% of the population.

#### **4.1.4.6 Opportunities**

Kawempe south is near the capital city of Uganda which is Kampala. This makes transport and communication in general accessible since it is just few minutes from the capital.

However, there is rampant poverty among the majority of households in that area. For over 56 out of 100 people in Kawempe live under absolute poverty due to the area being so slummy and swampy. This is why it's always affected by rain and floods; they say "water is life when you don't live in Bwaise and the surroundings!"

#### **4.1.4.7 Family composition**

There no clear-cut demarcation between nuclear and extended families in the area, however, there are also monogamous and polygamous families based on the patriarchal ideology under the guise of religions such as Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion since polygamy and having many children in the family is a sign of superiority in the community of Kawempe south. For example, I interviewed a traditionalist, who had this to say,

How can you be a man with only one wife and limited children, it is not cultural and traditional!!!!<sup>17</sup>

This happens to be the same attitude among the Muslims as they tend to marry from one to four wives since religion permits it and therefore have dozens of children and offspring. However, there is illegal polygamy among the Christians in the community

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<sup>17</sup> Interviewed by the author on 23<sup>rd</sup>. July. 2010.

since they are confined to only one wife, but because of modernity, a lot of them have more than one especially “abatali baampetta”.<sup>18</sup>

So, most families are extended with grand children, where by the grandparents pass on religious, cultural and societal values and norms embedded in stories, riddles, poems and songs transmitted orally. This explains why most parents in Kawempe south living in urban centers normally send their children to the villages during holidays where the grandparents live, to acquire these skills and values.

During my research, I found out that Kawempe South accommodates all the three major religions in Uganda mainly Christianity, African Traditional Religion and Islam; this is reflected by the location of Shrines, Mosques and Churches all over the place. However Christianity and Islam dominate thus the place facilitated the topic of my study, Inter-religious relations with the emphasis on Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion.

#### **4.2 HISTORY OF INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN UGANDA**

Uganda is the most multicultural and multireligious country in Africa with people of different ethnic and tribal backgrounds that were conglomerated during the British colonial period to form the present day Uganda. Mugaju said,

The development of Uganda as an artificial entity with potentially antagonistic Nationalities was not an accident. It was part and parcel of the grand design to perpetuate British colonialism not only in Uganda but throughout the colonized World. (Mugaju 1996, 76)

Among the religions, Christianity is at the top subdivided into Roman Catholic, Anglican at Rubaga and Namirembe cathedral respectively, Orthodox Church in Namungoona, Seventh day Church among others. Islam takes the second position with the Sunni as the majority. Mbiti comments on this,

The Sunni is another but later sect, being the most dominant group of nearly all the indigenous African Muslims. (Mbiti 1989, 238)

The Muslim Sunni group in Uganda is subdivided into the salaf (Tabliq)<sup>19</sup> located at Nakasero mosque and Market Street dominated by the youths. There is the “Kabalaza

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<sup>18</sup> Women without official marital rings.

<sup>19</sup> An Arabic word to mean the propagation of the message of Islam.

sect’’ at Old Kampala (headquarters of Uganda Muslim Supreme Council) and the Kibuli sect. However, there are a few Shiites in Jinja (Eastern Uganda).

There is also African Traditional Religion as the ancestral religion influenced by cultural leaders though claims that it influences all the life of an African<sup>20</sup>, Judaism and Baha’i faith at Kanyanya outskirts of Kampala.

Religious freedom has been enjoyed in Uganda since independence in 1962, with peaceful coexistence mainly built upon the concept of “unity in diversity” as each religion respect each other and has common understandings over common goals. For example the consensus that Christianity and Islam are “imported religions” African traditional Religion is “an indigenous religion” since it is the religion of the forefathers.

This can be seen as the imported religions preaching the concept of God in English as “Jesus Christ” for Christianity as well as Allah in Arabic for Islam amidst the existing “Katonda of Butonda” for the traditionalists, so it’s almost a language factor but all worship God.<sup>21</sup> Rendering each religious group to extend a variety of social roles in the development of the country since they all have the same grounds.

However, Inter-religious relations in Uganda had to be attained since before and after independence, the traditional leaders were so influential in the country, so, by the invasion of Islam in 1844 by Ahmed bin Ibrahim, it was King Muteesa 1 of Buganda who gave him platform which was the same given to the Church Missionary Society and White Fathers who spread both Islam and Christianity in Uganda amidst the original African Traditional Religion<sup>22</sup>.

By 1880’s Muteesa’s concern was to protect his political power from the increasing intruders especially the Egyptians from the North. For purposes of consolidating his powers, Muteesa I controlled the three religions in Buganda, namely, Baganda traditional religion, Islam and Christianity. Until his death he claimed to be the political and religious head of Buganda. (Kasozi 1986, 21-24)

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<sup>20</sup> John S.Mbiti, 1978, pg 25.

<sup>21</sup> Interviewed by the researcher on 30th. June. 2010

<sup>22</sup> Abdu Kasozi.1986.pg 99

The trend changed in the beginning of 1888-89, when a Muslim- Christian alliance was formed to fight against King Mwanga who wanted to kill all Christian and Muslim leaders and was replaced by Kiweewa then Kalema who were exiled leading to Christian- Muslim revolution that resulted to religious conflicts and wars called “the Kijungutte wars in Kiboga”.

Later, Prince Nuhu Kalema who embraced Islam, tortured the traditionalists and the Christians who did not embrace Islam leading them to Zanzibar, this kept the relationship between Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists affected up to day as almost African Traditional religion seems to have no leadership since all the cultural leaders of Uganda affiliate to either Islam or Christianity. Mbiti confirms this when he said that,

There are many African peoples who have or had traditional rulers. These rulers may be Kings, chiefs, queens, rainmakers or priests, but there are many other African peoples who never had central rulers. (Mbiti 1978, 161)

However, the researcher was focused on the Inter-religious relations in Kawempe South subdivision of Kampala district , trying to investigate the position of religious leaders such as Imams, Sheiks, Pastors, Bishops, Traditionalists for Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion as well as the University students affiliated to the above religions towards their perception of either religious peaceful coexistence or conflict.

### **4.3 FACTORS INFLUENCING INTER-RELIGIOUS PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE**

Here I will present and analyse views and ideas that were advanced by Christian, Muslim and African traditional religious leaders and university students that have led to Inter-religious peaceful coexistence between them in Kawempe south Subdivision of Kampala district. This will be guided by integration of several theories mainly from the theoretical chapter above to allow the flow and connection of data. Kurtz puts it, “Religious traditions also take shape from a combination of harmony and disharmony”.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Lester R. Kurtz 2007 pg 244.

In this chapter, therefore, I will discuss the role of religious denominations mainly Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religious in fostering religious peaceful coexistence (harmony) as well as tension and conflicts (disharmony) between them in Kawempe south. On this account therefore, the following are the factors influencing peaceful religious coexistence in the Kawempe south.

### **4.3.1 Cultural setup**

Since Kawempe South is both a multicultural and a multireligious area, it appears that each group of people have different religion but with almost similar cultures which has made them to co-exist regardless of their differences in religious affiliation since they share the same cultural practices for example, a muganda person taking traditional religion, practice funeral rites and ceremony the same way as Muslim and Christian hence peaceful co-existence in the area.

One informant reacted,

Here culture and religion are brothers and sisters which can not be separated, it is a matter of change in time, place and customs of a given society, but we all practice both of them at ago, for example the baganda respect their traditional norms, but attend mosques and churches for worship.<sup>24</sup>

Actually, Kawempe south citizens respect their traditional beliefs, practices and norms regardless of belonging to either Islam or Christianity. For example, on the marriage ceremony, as part of Buganda culture, a boy or a girl to get married, visits the uncle (Kojja) or aunt (Ssenga) who take up the initiation session, as training him or her how to treat a wife or a husband, marital affairs, looking after the kids among others.

On the marriage day, the celebrations begin with the cultural introduction where it is believed that the spirits and ancestors are invited to bless the groom or the bride, then the entire community attends and normally gifts are brought to the girl's family of which, there is a need to attend a mosque or a church in case of a Muslim or Christian for the father, guardian of the girl to officially hand in her to the husband, this among others identify that the people of Kawempe south respect both African traditional religion as well as Christianity and Islam as their religion of worship and affiliation. Bayer also supported this idea and said,

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<sup>24</sup> Interviewed at home by a researcher on 23<sup>rd</sup>. June. 2010

Specifically, under modern, global conditions, to the degree that religious tradition is seen as part and parcel of a particular group culture. (Bayer 1994, 53)

In fact, what Bayer is putting across is true and experienced in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district as African traditional religion together with Christianity and Islam are at a high rate of adopting each others norms, values and way of life. This is all most happening in all aspects of life of the people of the community that to certain extent it is a bit hard to separate the religious norms from the cultural and traditional ones, thus indicating that there is mutual understanding and peaceful religious coexistence among the Muslims, traditionalists and Christians in Kawempe south community.

#### **4.3.2 Role of Interreligious Council of Uganda**

Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU) is an initiative that brings together different religious institutions to address issues of common interest. President Museveni said, he was happy to see the Inter-religious Council working together, adding that in the past, religions were hostile to each other. “I am yet to hear that God has instructed them to fight on his behalf. When we took over power, we were able to build a strong foundation for Uganda by fighting religious wars.”<sup>25</sup>

Indeed, His Excellency the President of Uganda remarks remind us of the religious wars that existed in Uganda, where by a Christian could not associate him/her self with either a Muslim, traditionalist or any other member of the different denomination due to the hostility that existed between them as was discussed in the historical perspective of Inter- religious relations in Uganda at the beginning of the chapter. Among the strategies that were set up by several governments was the establishment of the Inter-Religious Council of Uganda (IRCU).

IRCU was established in 2001, and it is affiliated to the World Council of Religions for Peace (WCRP) and the African Council of Religious Leaders (ACRL).

IRCU is quite unique National organization in Uganda with the diversity of religions but with unity of focus. Among the members of this council include; Islam and

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<sup>25</sup> <http://www.newvision.co.Ug/D/8/12/746537>. Internet, accessed on 13th.February.2011.

Christianity. This organization intends to promote peaceful coexistence, moral and spiritual integrity, social- economic welfare and collaborative action through the sharing of the knowledge and resources for the common good. These objectives have greatly affected Christian- Muslim and traditional religious relations in Kawempe south and Uganda in general, as can be seen in the photo below, describing the meeting of several religious leaders in Uganda as a sign of unity. (Data; collected by researcher in the field)<sup>26</sup>.



From left (Archbishop Dr. Cyprian Lwanga, Mufti Sheikh Shaban Mubajje, Bishop Nkoyoooyo and Metropolitan Jonah Lwanga).

#### **4.3.3 Uganda Joint Christian Council**

Uganda Joint Christian Council serves as the ecumenical body for all Christians in Uganda that has engineered Interreligious relations through organizing joint prayers and Inter- religious cooperation especially at local and national level. For example, it organizes joint prayer at Namboole at the beginning of year, the birthday of Kabaka Mutebi of Buganda kingdom, prayers at Nakivubo stadium against corruption in the country. However, the Council is a Christian body by name but unites all religions in reality since on these occasions all religious leaders take part even those who are not

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<sup>26</sup> On 23<sup>rd</sup>. June. 2010.

Christians, thus creating a ground for peaceful coexistence of religions. During the fieldwork, I interviewed one of the religious leaders, who emphasized,

Occasionally as religious leaders we meet, interact, and have communal prayers like recently at the celebration of birth of Kabaka Ronald Mutebi of Buganda.<sup>27</sup>

It is true that Uganda Joint Christian council as an ecumenical council on many times has united religious leaders in Uganda and specifically Kawempe south.

However, one respondent reacted that,

There is just a need to change the name from Christian ecumenical council to may be Inter-religious council, though already exist since if its left to read as Christian joint council, it sounds unfairly to the Muslims and traditionalists to participate and have equal opportunity to the activities of the council<sup>28</sup>.

In the researcher's opinion, in reaction to the informant, it's a matter of name that may be discussed later, but in reality, Christian Joint Council has created unity in diversity among the Christians- Muslims and traditionalists of Uganda.

#### **4.3.4 The role of Interpro**

The establishment of the committee to discuss the religious fate of Uganda based at Makerere University has greatly influenced Christian- Muslim and traditional relationship in Kawempe south. This is normally referred to as "Interpro" to mean an Inter-religious programme aiming at bringing back all religious elites who normally meet once in the month or when need arises and discuss Inter-religious issues called "Ekimeeza". This is organized by Mullahs and religious leaders and students of Makerere university like Father Kanyike for Protestantism, Imam Sam Sentongo and Kasozi for Muslims, Pastor Iga of Pentecostal church at (2kilometers ) Bombo road, Nkoba zambogo for the traditionalists, which has served as unity in diversity within Kawempe. One informants contends that,

Our task therefore is to identify and establish possible common grounds we can find between our faiths, working with in that area where Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion circles overlap....and see how far we

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<sup>27</sup> Interacted at the church with the researcher on 17<sup>th</sup>. July. 2010.

<sup>28</sup> The reaction of a Muslim respondent.



walk along the same road before undermining the fork where our traditions diverge.<sup>29</sup>

This is also supported by Kurtz in relations to modernism and multiculturalism as he puts it,

Societies have always changed especially when they encounter others, but never have the scale and scope of cross-culture encounter been so widespread or intense. (Kurtz 2007, 173)

Kurtz and the respondent try to clarify that through encounter of several religious traditions aiming at establishing bridges of understandings between Christianity, Islam and traditional religion in Kawempe south, through bringing up religious leaders in the community, share a cup of tea normally in the evening, have free interactions, discuss what could foster Inter-religious relations in the area and establish a peaceful religious environment since they are all belonging to the same family of Kawempe south constituency. However, some fundamentalist religious leaders like the Tabliqs and some Balokole see the activity of this committee as irreligious since they perceive as discussing and resolving what already resolved for example, the issue of “how could a Christian/Muslim live in harmony with the traditionalist in the community?”, they say that there is no need for discussion after all religions like Islam as a complete way of life has already stipulated the relationship, so, it is a waste of time, leading to unrest and conflict since they don’t give a room to share the common understandings and experiences with other adherents from different faith whom, they some times see as, “dirty and pagan” not worth share any thing.

However, with the few who turn up for these meetings, there is peaceful coexistence fostered amongst them.

#### **4.3.5 The role of community events**

Kawempe south is privileged with a lot of communal works and social events that unite all people regardless of their religious foundations, for example, football matches that are organized by Kawempe division as a unifying factor based on geographical areas, such that citizens compete for a trophy as a group and the win goes to them not on their religious affiliations, like Takuba cup, Mbogo cup as all

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<sup>29</sup> Interviewed by the researcher on 7<sup>th</sup>. July. 2010.

people participate freely thus leading to coexistence of people although belonging to different religions. Indeed Kurtz commented about this,

The cultural life of the global village is a product of interaction of religious traditions among themselves as well as between each tradition and the multitude of others within which they came into contact as the global society emerged. (Kurtz 2007, 191)

According to Kurtz, the world is becoming closely uniform with simplified lifestyle due to the open and free interactions that exist among several religions that end up in the harmonious and peaceful coexistence.

Infact, the University student observed,

Social community events like netball, football, niigina<sup>30</sup> money circles unite us.<sup>31</sup>

I agree with the informant, because these community events and ceremonies tend to attract a lot of people in Kawempe south, especially football, niigina among others, they eat, enjoy free interactions with one another, have music, infact it looks like a party though organised interchangeably from family to another, they share gifts, save money in circles as this week, one person is receiving, then another person follows, indeed, these events serve as economic empowerment of family households in Kawempe south as well as social and free interaction of people from different religious affiliations.

However, some people who have never officially married and have cultural introduction, some times use this chance to celebrate the lost opportunity of the wedding/introduction day, as the wife sits next to the husband in front of the gathering, gifts are given to them, open up music and cut the occasional cake like the wedding cake, so, at least, it relieves them of the burden of not having a wedding ceremony. Unfortunately, men are afraid since people use it as a chance to interact freely with their wives that may cause family disputes, but in reality, the real image of Christian- Muslim and traditional communal meeting and free interactions are

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<sup>30</sup> Communal event when people give gifts to one another for domestic empowerment and development especially among the women in Kawempe south.

<sup>31</sup> Interviewed by a researcher on 26<sup>th</sup>. July.2010.

observed on these events as assign of peaceful coexistence at both individual and community level in the area.

#### **4.3.6 Fundraising**

This has greatly influenced Christian –Muslim and traditionalist relationship in Kawempe south since most of the funds to cater for the welfare, development of churches, mosques, shrines are catered for through several fundraising and markets that are organized at a respective place of worship for specific religion. For example the construction of Kazo church, Kibbe mosque, reconstruction of Kasubi ancestral palace that was gutted by fire on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, 2010, which is a world renowned tourist site. So, restoring it, has been a concern and duty of all members of the community regardless of religious backgrounds in addition to the external support.

In my own case, I have witnessed in Makerere Kikoni, where Christians built a new church through fundraising and contributions in terms of money, material and labour, but also involved others. When the new structure was erected, a group of Muslim experts were hired to put up the roof work. They also made some other contributions for that particular project, apart from their expertise. They recognised that it was work done in honour for God, and that it holds the community together. The same event happens mostly when there is may be Christian or Muslim organised ceremonies like Burudah<sup>32</sup> and Mauled<sup>33</sup>, when there is a need may be to construct a mosque or church toilet, all traditionalists, Muslims and Christians who normally attend, contribute generously for the sake of God and betterment of the community regardless of the main benefiting religion at that time, this has not only fostered unity but even regular meetings at both individual and community level.

#### **4.3.6 The concept of God and His prophets**

It is fundamental in Islamic, Christian and traditional religious teachings that God is one (monotheism) though the Christians believe in trinity thus God as the son, Holy spirit and the father which is the same to African traditionalists as they believe in supreme God (Katonda we Butonda) spirits and ancestors like Mukasa, Musoke for rain among others. The three religions believe that God responds to human ignorance

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<sup>32</sup> Arabic term used to mean Thursday Muslims meeting to praise Prophet Muhammad.

<sup>33</sup> Muslim ceremony to mark the birth of Prophet Muhammad.

by sending prophets/messengers or even apostles, though Jesus is acknowledged and respected by Muslims as great prophet, not as one of the three Hypostases. King wrote that,

It is something of conundrum therefore that the creator God, Katonda, whom the Muslims and then the Christians accepted as equivalent of Allah and God is sometimes referred to as a Lubaale. (King 1986, 36)

According to King, it is an issue under the guise of politics of naming and language that differ in terms of God in Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion, since in ATR, God is referred to as Lubaale, in Islam, Allah which is an Arabic word to mean God, in Christianity, God remains God since using English as an evangelical international language rather than the formal Greek and Hebrew. Therefore God in all religions does the same tasks, thus fostering Christian- Muslim and traditional religious peaceful coexistence because of the uniformity of God worshipped, but just addressed in different forms and Languages.

#### **4.3.7 The role of nationalism**

Love for one's country has greatly influenced Christian-Muslim and traditional religious peaceful coexistence in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district. This normally happens especially on the national days like Labour Day, Independence Day on 9<sup>th</sup>. October, end of year among others, where at least the majority of people celebrate the days and show kind of love to one another. Here, there are normally official prayers that are normally organised on county and division level, which the Ugandans attend and celebrate together, have prayers from several religious leaders of their communities, listen to speeches, music of several artists, drink and eat. They also share common issues such of recently, the election of the president, members of parliament, mayor ship and local councils at different levels among others, so, these days serve as umbrella and ways of uniting people of different cultures and religions.

For example Archi bishop Nam/ the chief celebrant during the service and prayer organised at Namboole stadium to mark the end of year 2010 said in his sermon that the voice of people is the voice of God, we pray that the elections be free and peaceful, we also pray that those who lose respect the will of the people.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> www.moitor.co.ug,extracted on 2<sup>nd</sup>. January. 2011.

So, it is because of nationalistic idea that people of Kawempe south celebrate these national days, interact, listen to speeches from different dignitaries around which could be spiritual or political, since religion and politics are inseparable.

However, religious leaders are usually confined to prayers and spiritual speeches, but are always guided not to participate in politics since the mosques, churches and shrines are meant to accommodate people of different political views, so, when they happen to be biased, then they may be causing conflicts and misunderstands among worshipers, therefore, national days invite the active Christian- Muslim and traditional religious relations in Kawempe south since individuals, families meet and share the event together as people of the same community family.

#### **4.3.8 Intermarriage**

The issue of intermarriage is quite instrumental in bridging the gap between Muslims, Christians and traditionalists in Kawempe south. This happens as the area is dominated with people of different religious backgrounds, though Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion sound more popular than others, so, you find that a Muslim married to a Christian and vice versa.

The implications of this is that if you marry from one culture or religion, the enmity and could be hostility towards you is undermined since the family see it as torturing their own son or daughter- in-law, thus curbing conflicts in families due to difference in religion. One informant said,

It is common here in Kawempe to find the family with members belonging to different religions, some could be Muslims, others Christians and still others followers of their ancestral religion.<sup>35</sup>

I do agree with the informant as a lot of families in Kawempe south are no longer considering the religious issue as a divisive factor in marriage, thus why many fathers and guardians give away their daughters to men of different religion.

This is due to the education factor as many see that the right of a girl or a boy to choose the mate lies in the child's hand, so, the parents have not to interfere or disrespect their choices. Another factor is the grid for wealth as the majority of people

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<sup>35</sup> Interviewed by the researcher at home on 30th. July. 2010.

especially from poor and primitive families consider girls as sources of wealth and richness through bride price.

These are some of the reasons why now days in Uganda especially in Kawempe south, marriage is quite expensive and requires serious monetary preparations, thus why, some parents give away their daughters to men of different religion especially the rich ones, because they normally ask a daughter on the first day of saying to the parents that I have found a man of my choice, they ask her “Alina keyekoledde” to mean, how rich is he? So, if the man is financially able, then the issue of religious uniformity is a non issue. This has led to a lot of girls to get married to men of different faiths and make the two families related and have Mutual Corporation regardless of being of different religions.

However, this is mainly common among the liberals and the poor families, but for others like the conservatives, it is taken as a taboo and renders a curse and expulsion from the family.

#### **4.3.9 The education system**

In Uganda like many parts of the world, the ownership of the learning and education institutions lies either in the hands of the public (government) or the private sector; this could be individuals, companies, religious bodies and community.

However, most of the schools in Kawempe south belong to the private sector, whereby, they are owned by the church (Church of Uganda) referred to as “C/u schools , Muslim founded mostly under UMEA(Uganda Muslim Education Association) or Quran based owned by individuals among others.

The education policy in Uganda and Kawempe city council is that schools regardless of the foundation should accommodate all pupils and students without considering religious backgrounds. This has helped the area and citizens to have easy access to education and unite all people of different religions leading to religious peaceful coexistence in the area.

However, the complications with this policy is that some schools have strong attachments to the teachings of their faith, for example you find a Christian studying

in a Muslim school compelled to study Islamic studies and the reverse is true that has led to indirect conversion of people like Professor Yusuf Lule who denounced Islam after attending to King's college Buddo.

This was because the school belonged to Christians and he was a Muslim, and even a lot of Christian boys and girls are converting to Islam as they attend to Muslim schools. On one event, at Gayaza high school, the Muslim students were served with pork which is not permissible in Islam.

On this background, therefore, should the Muslims or Christians parents strictly take sons and daughters to the schools of their faith? Then if done, it will save indirect conversion and disrespect of the religious freedom of students. However, the community will be losing out the religious social interaction of students at school and also religious peaceful coexistence will not be achieved as each group will be attending their own religious based schools.

This is the reason why the ministry of education integrated religious education in the curriculum of education from primary to tertiary institutions, in an attempt to implement the 1964 education act that led to establishment of different religious founded school in Uganda, with schools like Kisubi high school for Christians, Kibuli Muslim secondary school for Muslims and each school is free to practice and teach their faith.

Here, students are given opportunity to choose their own subjects freely to avoid religious conflicts at schools, thus why the education policy of Uganda as applied in schools of Kawempe south cater for Inter-religious peaceful coexistence between Muslims, Christians and Traditionalists in the area.

#### **4.3.10 The socio- economic setup**

Kawempe south is characterised by many trading centers such as Bwaise, Wandegye, Kawempe among others that sell at least the basics of life for human survival and earn a living.

Here, shops and businesses are owned by Christians, Muslims, traditionalists and many other religious denominations, but there is no boundaries for a Christian may be

to have trading and commercial relations with may be a Muslim or traditionalist, or a customer buying from each, but it is the quality, quantity, price, popularity, customer care that determine where to buy and whom to deal with, thus leading to free and friendly multireligious community. When I interacted with the informants, one had this to say,

Business is business, no relationship with family, clan, ethnic background, religion, but just how do you please the customers determines everything.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed this is the guiding principle of Kawempe south trading centers since you can not identify a Christian, Muslim or traditional shop except with few cases like posters on the shop, some have writings such as, (Jesus cares, Allah in Control) that you can tell which religion the own proclaims. Othwise, the commercial, socio- economic setup of Kawempe have greatly engineered Christian-Muslim and traditional religious peaceful coexistence in the community.

#### **4.3.11 Emphasis on morals and ethics**

Due to the fact that Kawempe south is a multi religious society in Uganda that enables it to accept the coexistence of different religions with different truth and ideologies, but ultimately teaching the universal message of God though in different forms (religious universalism), therefore, emphasis on the morality and ethics is made easy in the community.

This is due to the fact that Christianity, Islam and traditional religion, all advocate for universal moral uprightness through the golden rule and shared ethical norms like not killing, stealing, or commit adultery, showing respect for parents, neighbours among others. So, in Kawempe south, religious ethics from the three major religions have a sense of universal outlook. For example in Christianity, the Bible encourages respect and love for neighbours like in the Gospel of Mark, (13:3) “love your neighbour as you love your self.” It is the same in Islamic teachings as Prophet Muhammad said, “Whoever believes in Allah and the day of judgement, should love and respect his neighbour.” In fact among the oral traditions of Ganda people they say, “Omulirwaano gwookya bbiri.”<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> The researcher interviewed the informant on 24<sup>th</sup>. June. 2010.

<sup>37</sup> Luganda saying to mean that whatever affects your neighbor should also affect you.



Even Kurtz had this to comment,

The religious traditions people bring with them continue to shape the ways in which they define world, the meaning of life and the nature of ethical behaviour in everyday life. (Kurtz 2007, 187)

Basing on the respondent's and Kurtz's view, life and nature of ethical behaviour attain meaning and purpose under the guise of religious teachings and guidance. Indeed, there is uniformity among Christians, Muslims and traditions when it comes to the concept of morality and religious ethics as they all have the same focal point of their teachings based on the golden rule, thus no need for conflicting but instead has peaceful and harmonious coexistence at individual, family and the community levels.

#### **4.4 CAUSES OF TENSION AND CONFLICTS**

##### **Introduction**

The capacity of religious communities in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala to meet the challenges of the area is a vast untapped resource since it has a role in the Inter-religious peaceful coexistence as seen discussed above. If this is the case, what are the causes of religious tension, unrest and conflicts in the community? This question serves the gist of discussion. Actually Kurtz puts it,

Religious institutions some times sponsor violence directly, but the most significant role religion plays in promoting violence is often an indirect one. (Kurtz 2007, 248)

In fact, Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion in Kawempe south are mainly responsible for several disharmony, unrest and conflicts in the area as seen discussed bellow.

##### **4.4.1 Politics**

Kawempe south is characterized by political wrangles based on religions since 1999, the area was represented by Hajj Jamadah Luzinda in parliament of Uganda who was a Muslim by denomination who took over for so long claiming that the constituency is mainly for Muslims, so, a non Muslim shouldn't take over.

It is of recently that Honourable Richard Mutumba, a catholic took over for two terms that the Christians are also happy, but the Muslims want to regain the lost glory,

making some of them not to invite him on their ceremonies claiming that “he is a pagan!”, refusing him to enter mosques on several occasions among others.

This has brought conflicts between Muslims and non Muslims, worse still he comes from Democratic Party (DP) that is claimed to be “dini ya pope”, whereby the term , ‘diini’ is an Arabic word to mean religion/faith, so, “DP” as a political party is perceived by the people of Kawempe as Pope’s political party under the guise of religion. So, religious factor affects politics in Uganda.

The informant said,

The relationship of members of different faith and societies in Uganda is not best and is made worse by historical imbalances and global politics that often sharp our relations and consequently fuel conflicts.<sup>38</sup>

I support the informant, because generally in Uganda, religion and politics are quite inseparable since time immemorial. This is seen in roles religious leaders play in the politics of the country and Kawempe south constituency up to date.

Religion in Uganda determines the sharing of the national cake for example in the central government, usually after the President, who is a protestant, the vice president is normally a catholic, then the prime minister is usually muganda like currently we have Professor Apollo Nsibambi to represent the traditionalists, then Al hajj Kirunda Kivejinja , as well as Al hajj Moses Kigongo the Vice chairman of National Resistance Movement (NRM) as the ruling party, who is next to the President who is Muslim by denomination.

This happens even in the decentralised administrations like Kingdoms in Uganda, for example after Kabaka head of the Ganda people, then his Prime minister (Katikiro) who is usually a Christian, then the third in rank is the Speaker who is supposed to be a Muslim, currently is Hajj Kaddu SSerunkuuma. This trend goes on up to the village levels. In case, it is undermined, then religious wrangles and conflicts crop up in the community. This is why fair sharing of the power and national cake has fostered mutual and peaceful coexistence of the citizens of Uganda and specifically Kawempe south, because every religion knows its political share and responsibility in the running and administering the affairs of the community.

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<sup>38</sup> Interviewed by the author on 24.7.2010

However, there are some imbalances in allocation of cabinet posts since religions such as Islam have few ministers, Permanent secretaries, Residential District Commissioners (RDCs) compared to the Christians in the government of Uganda, leading to dissatisfaction and discontent.

Therefore, politics have got a big hand in the Christian- Muslim and traditional religious conflicts in Uganda and specifically Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala since religion shapes the politics of Uganda.

#### **4.4.2 Religious fundamentalism**

There is a tendency in Kawempe south among religious leaders to undermine the teachings of other faith, mainly by use of fundamentalist approach towards each other. This approach has greatly affected the relationship between Christians, Muslims and traditionalists, for example the “Tabliqs” (Muslim revivalists) who tend to consider the Christians as infidels, pagans, and traditionalists as idol worshippers, Lubalism religion among other prejudices, who should not be shaken hands with, wished peace and not worth living with.

It is not only Muslims perceiving them like that, but also some Christians always offend others like the Pentecostal Christians, popularly known as “Balokole” who always undermine other religions like late Pastor Balabye ekkubu at Kalerwe church (kubbiri)<sup>39</sup> who stepped on the Quran claiming that Muslims are deceiving that if it is confronted, it can affect, injure the offender. However, on his way home, was crashed in a car accident, some thing that up to now affected the Muslim- Christian relationship since it is believed that it was intended.

#### **4.4.3 Terrorist attacks**

Several attacks that have been happening in Uganda especially in Kampala city like in markets, buses, at Kabalagala on the world cup finals (2010) when the football fans were attacked on 11<sup>th</sup>. July. 2010, killing over 70 people. This attack was supposedly made by the Alshabab group that led to death of many people and hospitalizing some, also sparked off conflicts among the religious groups in the country.

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<sup>39</sup> Luganda word popularly used in Kawempe to mean two kilo meters off Gayaza road.

This is mainly because of the world thinking that Muslims are terrorists through verbal attacks and mainly following the September 11, 2001, attack of the World trade center in New York City of USA, by Osama bin Laden and group. This attitude has made it clear among Ugandans that Muslims are terrorists since most of the suspects behind these attacks are Muslims, something I can not give a doubt, though, one Muslim or two do not mean the whole Muslim community. In a Fatwa (statement/legal decision made by an established religious authority in Islam, issued on July 28, 2005),

The terrorist attacks of recent years are neither supported by the Quran from many informed perspectives, nor by the mainstream of Islamic leadership.<sup>40</sup>

When interviewed, the informant said,

In recent publication by the British council titled, 'Islam, what Ugandans say about the others' (2006) Christians say that Muslims are terrorists; and Muslims say that Christians are infidels.<sup>41</sup>

In fact, this attitude has greatly affected the Christian- Muslim and traditional religious relationships in Kawempe since Christians and traditionalists though pretend to live happily with Muslims, but inwardly guilty to one another that has greatly affected their coexistence in the community.

#### **4.4.4 Direct confrontation**

This has greatly affected the Christian- Muslim and traditional relationship in Kawempe south, mainly when the Christians once decided to wear Muslim clothing and started slaughtering pigs in Kifumbira zone in Kamwokya.

This event provoked the Muslims leading to counter attacking and fighting the Christians, the situation was rescued by the police. However, on another occasion, there was the burning of Shrines by Pastors claiming that they are places of devils and Satan which are holy places of worship for traditionalists. This created unrest and conflict between people of the community thus affected the Muslims -Christians and traditionalists' relations in Kawempe south.

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<sup>40</sup> <http://www.cair-net.org/> Internet retrieved on 6<sup>th</sup>. August. 2005.

<sup>41</sup> Interviewed on 25. 6. 2010, publication not available to the researcher.

#### 4.4.5 Freedom of worship

This has led to cropping up of many religions in Kawempe division amidst the original three religions of African Traditional, Christianity and Islam. These religions are free and have a lot of followers, but with contradicting values and teachings like for Baker Kimezze of not eating meat, others encouraging human sacrifice to please their gods and others like traditional healers, Nabbi Omukazzi (claimed female prophet) who is said to have always changing from animal, spirits to human being nature, under Pastor Iga at Kawaala church. However, all these religions are affiliated to original religions (Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion), causing divisionism and misrepresentation.

It should be noted that some companies, employers, schools and educational centres tend to undermine the freedom of worship of either students or the employees. This is done by not giving them a room to have prayers in the churches like in Muslim schools, which deny Christians a chance to either worship in school premises or go out on Sundays, the same applies to Christian schools who refuse the sheikhs to have preachings to Muslim students on Fridays and even give them time to perform the daily prayers claiming that the school or company schedule is busy to accommodate that.

I had this from the informant,

It has all most turned up to be the order of the day, that many institutions in Kawempe don't give religious duties a room for practice.<sup>42</sup>

In reality, on many occasions, people, students, employers, audience are not given time to have their freedom of worship, especially at work, as the bosses just give out daily few minutes that can easily cater for lunch. On Fridays and Sundays, it means missing the Jumah and services for Muslims and Christians respectively, especially for those working the whole week. This could not only be described as exploitation, but also undermining the religious freedom, done by Christians bosses, head teachers and many in charge of the institutions to Muslim, Christian students, workers and the reverse respectively.

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<sup>42</sup> Interviewed by the researcher on 21. June. 2010.

Actually, this situation has created a feeling among the people of Kawempe south that, “you either preserve your religious identity and spirituality or you work and attend that institution.” Thus leading to conflicts of interest among the Christian, Muslim and traditional adherents in the area.

#### **4.4.6 Foreign support**

Kawempe south constituency is dominated by many foreign charitable organisations, some of which are political and others religiously based. Among these organisations we have Islamic Charitable organisation from Sudan, World Islamic Call Society based in Libya, Madinah Islamic Development Agency, from Saud Arabia, which are catering for the wellbeing of Muslims in the community.

There are Christian Organizations like World Vision, Send a cow, Women Initiative among others for the eradication of poverty in the region, catering for girl’s child – education, women empowerment through establishing of businesses to earn a living and save for the future.

This is done through encouraging women to form up small groups for development like Makerere 11 women Development Initiative among the Christian women of Makerere 11 zone B, as they receive pigs, cows, sheep, sawing machines, loans for the welfare empowerment.

However, since all these organisations tend to do their work with the specific places of worship that is affiliated to the original country for example Islamic organisations from Arab and Middle East, Christian organisations from the West as the mother land of Christianity, people usually associate them with religious imperialism.

This perception has caused concern between the west and the Middle East of who should win the interests of the country. For example President Gadhafi through World Islamic Call Society, built many mosques in Uganda among which is the Gadhafi National Mosque at old Kampala, constructed a palace for the King of Tooro in Western Uganda which is seen by Christians as external interference and imperialism under religious umbrella, something, the Muslims and traditionalists also think whenever they see the activities of these western Christian based organisations in the community.

These perceptions among others have led to misunderstandings and suspicions among the Muslims, Christians and traditionalists to one another that affect their religious peaceful coexistence.

#### **4.4.7 Unveiling of female Muslim students**

Among the reasons that have affected the Christian- Muslim and African traditional religious relations in Kawempe south is the unveiling of Muslim female students at Makerere University. Interviewed one of the affected student and said,

It happened on 15<sup>th</sup>. May. 2008, when I was in the second year of my course in the first semester exams, when a Christian Lecturer told all Muslim female students to unveil to ascertain examination multi practices.<sup>43</sup>

In fact I agree with this informant because this has not been the first time for this practice of unveiling the Muslim female students by Christian lecturers, as it happened in many parts of the world and many times at Makerere University in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala. This was done to check for examination multi practices, claiming that muslim students use these scarves and veils in zeroxing exams, surprisingly, there are so many Christian sisters “nuns” who also cover their heads like the Muslims, but no any attempt of unveiling and suspecting them has ever been made.

The core of this suspicion could be that female students, who normally veil to cover their whole body, use this opportunity to bring with them examination materials inside these veils. This could be done through writing down some materials on the veils, may be with pencils or any other form like written papers with information related to the subject and course unit of the examination to be done.

However, examination multi practices of any form do not necessarily require a student to have a veil or cover herself, because on many circumstances, students are found guilt of the same, but without veils as even male students are some times victims of circumstance, but never veil at all.

So, it is like a Christian- Muslim conflict, otherwise why targeting Muslims only? Are they the only students who cheat exams if that is the case?

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<sup>43</sup> Interviewed a Muslim student at Makerere University on 23<sup>rd</sup>. July. 2010.

Then as a researcher, the following are my observations as causing suspicion;

(a) Muslim female students could not be properly checked by examination supervisors and invigilators since they had covered the rest of their bodies.

(b) May be once, they identified a Muslim and veiling female students cheating exams, then, these Christian lectures thought that veiling is taken not only as an Islamic code of dressing but an opportunity to cheat exams.

(c) Since the majority of students especially Christians don't veil and put on trousers, then, it could indicate that they wanted to make them uniform.

However, unveiling the female Muslim students is not a solution for overcoming examination multi practices because even those who don't veil are always found guilty.

Makerere University never before had had a uniform, so, there is freedom of dressing, and so, unveiling the female Muslim students is like attacking and disrespecting their both religious etiquettes and freedom of dressing accorded to them by the university authority.

Actually, these among others are the reasons why the attempt was translated as inter-religious conflict.

In fact the entire Muslim students' community at Makerere University set a demonstration on 21st. May, 2008, that targeted the Christian lecturers involved. However, the demonstration was cooled down by the anti riot police and later, the Muslim community took their letter of dissatisfaction to the university Dean of students and the university Disciplinary committee that settled the problem.

#### **4.4.8 Divisionism in Christianity and Islam**

There are so many divisionisms among the major Christian and Islamic religion in Uganda. These are not a matter of fundamental importance, but demonstrates the lack of stability and cohesion in other's faith, for example sects among the Muslims of Uganda which include; Tabliq, subdivided into the Nakasero sect led by Amir Suleiman Kakeeto, there is Market/William street sect led by Amiir Muhammad



Kamoga, we have the Kabalaza sect<sup>44</sup>, subdivided into the Old Kampala sect led by Mufti sheikh Shaban Mubajje with the Kibuli Muslim sect led by Prince Nakibinge under the Mufti ship of Sheikh Zubair Kayongo, there is the Ahmadiyah sect at Wandegeya, Spidiqah sect in Kisenyi among others.

For Christianity, it is majorly, subdivided into the Protestants, Catholics, Adventists, orthodox in Namungoona, Pentacostals among others.

Christians are all followers of the religion of Jesus Christ. But, the major two groups of Christianity namely, the Catholic Church and the Church of Uganda are the examples of conflicts within one religion, which have ever existed on Buganda soil. Their conflicts and differences could be identified in the styles of building of their Churches. They came to Uganda as rival and conflictual forces. The 1900 Buganda agreement fuelled these Christian conflicts by making the Anglican Church a dominant religious-political power over the Catholics and other religions. The Catholic Church lost the battle in the 1890's and concentrated on building up "Spiritual kingdom".

At independence in 1962, the Catholic Church had gained spiritual, social and political power to support its own democratic political party (DP), in order to compete for power struggle in the whole country.

However, all these divisionism among Muslims and Christians of Uganda mainly in Kawempe south are either based on the differences in the interpretation of the holy books, mainly Quran and Bible for Muslims and Christians respectively or other influences, which make their adherents to have a credit of doubt and confusion between them. One informant said,

There is no harm to be a Muslim or Christian, after all, all lead to heaven and divided into sects, so, it is a self- service game.<sup>45</sup>

Actually to certain extent, the informant is true, because if Islam and Christianity could claim exclusive truth, then why subdivided into a plural of sects, which indicates that there is no consensus among them, there fore, a person is free to pick

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<sup>44</sup> Muslim sect for elders.

<sup>45</sup> Interviewed a university student on 14<sup>th</sup>. June.2010.

some thing of his/her interest from Islam, then picks another from Christianity, then another from African traditional religion to live a free and harmonious life.

Therefore, this is the big challenge that these religions have in Uganda to curb this liberalistic approach to the practice of religion through creating and convincing their adherents about the reality of their faith to claim back these people, thus leading to conflicts between Muslims, Christians and traditionalists in the due course of turning back the un decided adherents.

#### **4.4.9 Religious scriptures**

Oral traditions, Bible and the Quran are used as religious scriptures in African traditional religion, Christianity and Islam respectively. Goddard states,

So, it is important for Christians and Muslims to realise that although both use the term “scripture” the way in which that term is understood is widely different with in the two communities. (Goddard 1995, 33)

As, a researcher I agree with Goddard as per the descriptions I got from the field regarding the use of the term scripture among the Christian, Muslim, traditionalist religious leaders and University students of Kawempe south.

The term Bible usually defined and referred to in plural form, “scriptures”, this is mainly because it was written by many Christian authors on recognisably Christian concerns, with different sections/testaments mainly the old scriptures that are shared with Judaism (Hebrew scriptures), taking up 3/4 of the Bible, so, the remaining 1/4 is the New Testament (Greek and new scriptures), therefore thus why the Bible is referred to as scriptures.

For the Quran is referred to as the holy scripture, with two major divisions basing on how and when it was revealed, namely; the Meccan chapters and Medinan chapters for the verses and chapters revealed to Prophet Muhammad when was still at Mecca, and those revealed at Medina respectively, compared to the oral and written literatures for the African traditional religion. However, the point of conflict, comes in as to which should be a holy scripture?

Therefore, if we relate the Bible and the Quran, we end up realising that on the level of authenticity and authorship, the Quran is far apart from the Bible since it is a

composition of books and scriptures written by Jesus' disciples. Here you find that the Bible is written with Jesus wording and personal experiences, well as for the Quran is directly revealed to Prophet Muhammad through Angel Jibril.

This makes the Bible to be more equivalent to the prophetic traditions (hadith) as the second source of Islamic law because it is where we have Muhammad's wordings, actions, approvals and sayings of his disciples or companions, compared to African traditional religion whose scriptures are found in the experiences of elders, clan leaders and traditionalists.

Therefore, the level of reliability of the two religions (Christianity and African traditional religion) especially when it comes to the authenticity of their holy books and scriptures is really doubtful leading to conflicting state of affairs as per the description of religious leaders and university students in Kawempe south.

#### **4.4.10 Inherited enmity**

Since the religious wars and conflicts in Buganda that were discussed in the historical relations of Christianity-Islam and African traditional religion in Uganda at the beginning of this chapter, that were fuelled by the empowerment of Muslims by President Idi Amin Dada up to 1979 when he was overthrown. This cemented hatred among the Muslims, Christians and traditionalists in Uganda especially in Kawempe south that still in the hearts of Christians and traditionalists.

Muir states,

Muhammedanism is perhaps the only undisguised and formidable antagonist of Christianity. From all the varieties of heathen religious, Christianity has nothing to fear, for they are but the passive exhibitions of gross darkness which must vanish before the light of the Gospel. But in Islam we have an active and powerful enemy. (Muir 1845, 1)

Muir is among the old writers in the field of science of religions, but I decided to use his work because it was done during the time when Uganda was witnessing the arrival of Islam in 1844, Christianity in 1877, so, his comments and observations suit my study.

However, Muir's point of view reflects what is happening in Kawempe south among the Christians, Muslims and traditionalists whom because of the past historical

injustices that Christians and traditionalists incurred during Amiin's regime by fellow Muslims who are referred to as "Muhamedians" basing on Prophet Muhammad as their prophet. One of the Christian informants said,

It is true, acts of murder, persecution and constant military operation against Christian organisations/institutions had intensified during Amin's time. Catholics were harassed in Masaka. The state of affairs made it clear that, there will be a total revenge against Muslims after the fall of Idi Amin.<sup>46</sup>

In the researcher's view, it was these embarrassments and torture which had several and severe oppressions and persecutions that included taking up their properties, coercive conversion to Islam.

The reason why all happened was that Christians and traditionalists among others wanted to earn a living and employment, status among others since the Muslims dominated mostly everything which cemented a seed of enmity and conflict up to now. However, you can not physically tell but inwardly the Christians and traditionalists whenever they look at fellow Muslims who are mainly rich and well off, they tend to recall and say that, "this is the impact of Amin's regime" indeed they are affected by these historical events.

However, since every illness needs a cure and medication, the researcher could not leave the field except after interacting with the Christian, Muslim and African traditional religious leaders and university students to establish and suggest possible measures to improve and fight against Inter-religious conflicts in Kawempe south constituency and the following were advanced.

#### **4.5 POTENTIAL MEASURES TO IMPROVE INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS**

During my field work, I identified the following views from religious leaders and University as regards to how to improve on the Christian-muslim and traditionalist religious conflicts in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala District.

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<sup>46</sup> Interviewed by the author on 23<sup>rd</sup>. June. 2010.

There is need to revise the fundamentalist approach used in Christianity, Islam and traditional religion to fight against religious prejudices, lack of exposure since each religion needs converts. One of the respondents alerts,

Religious fundamentalist approach should be revised since Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion in Kawempe South all need peaceful coexistence as divine religions.<sup>47</sup>

Actually, the respondent reacts that the fundamentalist religious approach and perception that some members of one religion use in the negative perception of others, undermining them needs to be revised, since it is causing misunderstandings and religious conflicts in the community. If this is done, then there will no longer be Christian-Muslim and traditional religious tensions and conflicts leading to mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence in Kawempe South.

The leadership of Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion in Kawempe south need to teach its followers the concept of living to love, to learn from each other. This is really very important measure to improve Inter-religious relations in the area because it will cement the concept of brotherhood among the members of the community ranging from the individual towards another, family neighbourhood relations, among the workers and all levels.

This measure makes the members to live in harmony and a piece of mind since each perceive one another as a brother and sister regardless of religious affiliation, thus advocating for a peaceful coexistence and promoting similar considerations by others.

Religious leaders and Institutions have to acknowledge that there is diversity in expression, association and conscience, therefore working for the common good at all levels for peace and development and not strife in Kawempe south. This is evidenced in the fact that the area has people belonging to different places of worship that shape their religiosity and perception among others.

However, this needs not to be taken as a tool for conflict and division, but should be perceived as a way of unity after all, Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion as per say have some commonalities that need to be used as a unifying factor

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<sup>47</sup> Interviewed by the author on 30<sup>th</sup>. June. 2010.

of all religions in Kawempe South towards a common goal for the betterment of the community.

Religious pluralism needs to be taken as tool for unity in diversity not a tool of divisionism, tension and conflicts. In fact, the Christian, Muslim and traditional religious leaders and University students in Kawempe South, each claim truth to be belonging to his or her religion, though even some aspects and doctrines from others are true, something which should be used as a measure in improving interreligious relations in the community.

There is need to put up an appropriate legal framework to regulate and enhance reconciliation and peace building among the Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists in Kawempe south. This will mainly improve on the religious immoral fibres like child sacrifice, homosexuality, family abuse, mishandling of religious properties among others since religion governs the entire life.

A truth and reconciliation commission should be set up in Kawempe South expeditiously to deal with both historical and the inherited enmity that exist among the Muslims, Christians and traditionalists in the area. This is because mutual understanding as a measure of promoting reconciliation and healing conflicts among these religions can not be easily attained leading them to live together when the physical appearance indicates peaceful coexistence but in reality not.

Arranging and organizing workshops, conferences, symposia on basically historical and contemporary religious relationships between Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion to appreciate the social roles and privileges enjoyed with the religious peaceful coexistence of these religions and establish measures to improve and curb down both historical hatred and the contemporary ones in Kawempe south.

#### **4.6 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

To crown it therefore, religious conflicts, peaceful coexistence as well as a varsity need to improve the Christian-Muslim and African traditional religious relations in Kawempe South as seen in the above chapter addressing the factors for peaceful coexistence, causes of tension and religious conflicts , with the measures that were advanced by the religious leaders and university students in the area. This is paramount because once Interreligious relations are improved, it will enable the religious institutions to offer and extend several social roles in the development of the community as discussed in the next chapter.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SOCIAL ROLES OF RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS IN KAWEMPE**

#### **SOUTH**

##### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter addresses the social roles of Religious Institutions<sup>48</sup>, Organisations, communities affiliated to Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion as per the description and perception of their Religious leaders and University students of Kawempe south.

Religious Leaders and Institutions are often among the most influential and trusted parties and allies in search for social development of Kawempe South. They are mandated by the Holy Scriptures to defend their social roles in the community mediation as can be discussed below.

##### **5.2 ENCOURAGING UNIVERSAL LOVE**

The religious communities encourage their members to exercise love, care and concern for the disadvantaged through small religious communities on the grassroots, like Sanyu Babies' Home affiliated to Namirembe Diocese, African Muslim Agency based in Kawempe for education of the orphans and have branches throughout the country that is affiliated to the Muslim community, Bukadef, the traditionalist charitable organization that helps the orphans' wellbeing in every parish of Kawempe South.

##### **5.3 FIGHTING AGAINST IMMORALITIES**

Fight against immoralities like prostitution in the community is among the social roles addressed by Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion in Kawempe south. This is done through homilies, pastoral letters, and catechism of the church, Muslim Youth Assembly programmes, ekisaakatte<sup>49</sup> and Nkobazaambogo for the traditionalists as they emphasize the importance of marriages among the youth of Kawempe south.

When in the field, one informant commented,

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<sup>48</sup> Refer to 3.5, for the definition.

<sup>49</sup> Luganda word to mean traditional way of instilling morals, initiation and society's expectations.

All these problems you see in the society have their roots in the family, if the family becomes the fountain of morals, we shall not have prostitutes in the society, but if the family is loose- the parents detached from their children or if the children lack the moral guidance from their parents, am afraid we must brace ourselves for the worst.<sup>50</sup>

### **5.3 POVERTY ERADICATION**

Poverty eradication is also role played by Christianity , Islam and African traditional Religion in Kawempe south, through establishment of faith based projects to fight against poverty in the community based on preachings and programmes of the churches, mosques to mention but a few. For example Foundation for Islamic Development that encourages the Muslims to rear rabbits, giving loans with low interests for self development as its affiliate to Islamic World Bank, also World Vision based on the church which have poverty eradication programmes that enable many citizens of Kawempe to uplift their standards of living like rearing pigs, rabbits, sheep, cows for exchange among others.

### **5.4 UNITY IN DIVERSITY**

This serves as a common slogan in Uganda. Religion serves as a communication link to the people of Kawempe south regardless of their differences in the religious affiliations. This is through the social communication as people meet together for a common purpose, for example to pray together, to perform a ritual like funeral rites that is taken among the people of Kawempe South to be a communal concern, and if some one does not happen to associate with others on such occasions, then also people will abandon and neglect him/her when some thing good or bad happens to him/her.

It is normally on these occasions that people meet freely regardless of their religious differences, able to identify a friend since they say, “munno mukabi yye munno ddala”<sup>51</sup>, able to understand one another, communicate ideas and feelings and to act more or less as a social unit, pray together as communicating to God, remember the spirits and divinities for the traditionalists and particularly the living dead whom they believe to form part of their family, at least in theory, religion gathers and unites people together both in action and in religious commitment which could be

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<sup>50</sup> Interviewed by the author on 30.06.2010.

<sup>51</sup> Luganda word to mean a friend in need is yours indeed.



interpreted as fostering both the horizontal and vertical directions of the religious communication.

### **5.5 CATERING FOR REFUGEES**

Religious communities are showing practical love and compassion for refugees who may come seeking for asylum. This is done through pastoral structures like the Sudanese who were allocated Katanga, Kamwokya and some parts of Kawempe south. When I interacted with one of the informants in the field, she said,

We receive many refugees, widows and orphans who come to us for help, as religious leaders we seek for financial provision and accommodations from the followers who accommodate the asylum seekers and widows.<sup>52</sup>

### **5.6 ENCOURAGING COMMUNAL MEETINGS**

Inter-religious relations in Kawempe south is focusing on a more peaceful and meaningful compromise and away to co-exist irrespective of circumstances. This has been done through encouraging the masses regardless of their religious affiliation always to live, to love, to learn from each other, to share their experiences and talents from different fields and also leave a peaceful legacy for future generations to come since it's the Uganda National motto: "For God and my Country." One of the religious leaders said,

Peace has to be created in order to be maintained. It is the product of faith strength, energy, will, sympathy, justice, imagination and triumph of principle.<sup>53</sup>

This is evidenced in Kawempe south, as all people have communal events that unite and catches the concern of all Christians, Muslims and traditionalists in the society like zonal football matches, parish cups that normally organised on the community basis not religion, but religious leaders take the initiative of being active members in the organisation of these events through mobilising and encouraging their adherents to participate.

### **5.7 GUIDANCE TOWARDS LIFE**

Religious institutions act as lights and guide to the natives of Kawempe south as they go through their life and reflect upon it.

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<sup>52</sup> Interviewed in field work on 23.7.2010

<sup>53</sup> Interviewed by the author on 21<sup>st</sup>. June. 2010.

This is normally done through the Christian, Muslim and traditional teachings and preaching that provide people with the view of the world and community where they live. This is important because that understanding of the world affects their experience of life, for example questions that man always asks him/her self like , “why I am on earth, where did I come from, when and how shall I go back?” all these questions are usually attended to by the daily preachings and teachings of religions. The answers to these questions are relevant to the people of Kawempe south specifically that serve as a guiding principle that we are on earth for a short period of time because we shall have to die and go back to God where we came from, therefore I need to optimally utilise the available time to do the needful.

## **5.8 PROMOTION OF PEACE AND JUSTICE**

Christian , Muslim and African traditional leaders in Kawempe south through their structures and institutions play an active role in community mediation, counselling and guidance, conflict/dispute resolution and advocating the promotion and protecting human rights and good governance.

This involves access to justice and legal aid. For example the police and Judiciary have been named in corruption scandals, which erode their moral authority to champion the crusade for social justice, as per the philosophy of Inter-religious council of Uganda (IRCU).

For example on many occasions, since Uganda’s independence, religious leaders have stood firm to challenge and condemn different regimes for breaching their social contract with the people of Uganda. In 1965, Archbishop Joseph Kiwanuka of Kampala Archdiocese issued a pastoral letter that, among things, warned of civil strife in the aftermath of the formation of UPC-KY<sup>54</sup> alliance. In 1977, the Anglican House of Bishops castigated President Idi Amin’s regime for rampant murders, disappearances and gross violation of people’s rights.<sup>55</sup> Although the Head of the Bishops, Janani Luwum, was brutally murdered, the struggle for peace and social justice did not stop.

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<sup>54</sup> Stands for Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) and (KY) stands for Kabaka Yekka, to mean King only.

<sup>55</sup> Luwum, Janani Jakaliya 1924 -1977 Anglican (Balokole Movement) Uganda [http://www.dacb.org/stories/uganda/Luwum\\_2janani.html](http://www.dacb.org/stories/uganda/Luwum_2janani.html) , accessed 10<sup>th</sup>. July. 2010

It is significant to note that the outbreak of the war between the NRM/A<sup>56</sup> government and Lord Resistance Army (LRA) in the northern Uganda has further illuminated the role of religious leaders, university students and their institutions in the search for peace, justice and national reconciliation. The formation of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in northern Uganda was to advocate the use of peaceful means to end the conflicts and re-establish the rule of law<sup>57</sup>.

It is noteworthy that in virtually all the conflicts mentioned above, it was the poor, the vulnerable and the under privileged who suffered the worst forms of injustice. Even in non-conflict areas, the same categories were subjected to other forms of injustice for example discrimination, inequality, violence, dispossession of property among others.

The existence of an elaborate Bill of Rights (chapter 4 of the constitution “1995”), the provisions of gender equality and affirmative action therein, and the apparent commitment to the rule of law<sup>58</sup>. These have not salvaged many categories from the injustices imposed on them by powerful elites in the society.

However, it has been the role of religious leaders in Uganda to accommodate and cater for all these categories of people, thus the impact of religious institutions and leaders in Uganda as regards justice is paramount.

## **5.9 CATERING FOR HEALTH OF PEOPLE**

Provision of health services is among the social role played by religious institutions in Kawempe south. Christian-Muslim and traditional based structures traditional healers, faith health centers Kyadondo Muslim health center in Kawempe, among others which offer care, treatment like HIV counselling and testing; diagnosis, prevention of opportunistic infections, and holistic support to both patients and their families, in order to relieve them from suffering and on their quality of life.

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<sup>56</sup> stands for National Resistance Movement/Army(ruling party in Uganda today)

<sup>57</sup> Otim,W.P, (2009) The role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative in Uganda’s Peace Building.  
<http://www.beyondintractability.org/case studies/role acholi religious leaders.jsp?> , accessed on 12<sup>th</sup> July. 2010

<sup>58</sup> The constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995)

## **5.10 PRESERVING THE RELIGIOUS IDENTITY**

Provision of human identity is quite among the social roles religious institutions are playing in Kawempe south. This is seen as Christians and Muslims bear their names that have strong attachment to their specific religions, thus why it is common in the area to have two or three names, one is called “first name” which has a religious connotation (religious name), then the second is the traditional name that reflects the family, tribe and clan of affiliation “sir name”, for example, Joseph ssali, here the name “Joseph” is perceived in Kawempe south as a Christian name.

This identifies his religious affiliation to Christianity, then “Ssali” is the sir name that reflects the traditional connotation, that identify him to belong to the baganda people, in the Nkima<sup>59</sup> clan, thus religious institutions help the people to gain identity in the community.

## **5.11 FIGHT AGAINST ILLITERACY**

Christianity, Islam and African traditional religious communities have tried to actualise the millennium development goals through fostering universal primary and secondary education. This has been achieved through establishment of schools that are owned by these religious institutions in the community and cooperating with the ministry of education and the department of education at Kawempe division city council to see that these schools can allow free education policy in their own founded schools, having the majority of their staff and teachers paid by the government, but remain with the final decisions over the administration of the schools.

This has been done in many Christian founded schools “C/U<sup>60</sup> and Muslim founded schools mainly under UMEA<sup>61</sup> that have increased the number of literates in the region compared to the past as well as improvement on the accessibility of education service to the community of Kawempe South.

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<sup>59</sup> Monkey, just one of the 52, baganda clans.

<sup>60</sup> Church of Uganda.

<sup>61</sup> Uganda Muslim Education Association.

## **5.12 ENCOURAGING COOPERATION**

Commitment to the culture of tolerance and the spirit of truthfulness is among the social roles advanced by the Christian, Muslim and traditional religious institutions in Kawempe south. This is mainly done through their emphasis in the churches, shrines and mosques to the adherents always to adhere to the universal golden rule that denounces, innocent killing, lying, stealing, and fornicating, false accusation among others.

This has kept the people of the area together in peace and harmony as whoever does control to the rule they normally say to him/her, “weyissa nga atali munna ddini<sup>62</sup>. This directive applies to every one in the community regardless of the religious affiliation, but also singles out as bearing especially great responsibility for truthfulness, killing, stealing, and false accusation among others to the entire community.

## **5.13 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

To crown it therefore, Christian, Muslim and African traditional religious institutions and leaders have got a plurality of social roles to advance in the development of Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district since the people of the area apply their religions to the social, emotional, economical, intellectual and the spiritual life as well as believe and perceive their religions as a social engine relevant in all spheres of life as reflected in the above views and social roles of religious institutions in Kawempe south constituency.

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<sup>62</sup> “Luganda daily slogan in Kawempe to mean, you behave like a none religious person!!

## CHAPTER SIX

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### 6.1 FROM OBJECTIVES TO CONCLUSIONS

##### 6.1.1 The objectives of the study

The focus of the study was to investigate how the Christian, Muslim and African traditional religious leaders and University students in Kawempe South subdivision of Kampala district perceive the contemporary state of Inter- religious relations in the community.

The specific objects were;

- a) To investigate events and factors that influence Christian-Muslim and African traditional religious relations in Kawempe South. This has been discussed both in chapter three as theoretical perspectives and chapter four as the analysed and interpreted research findings.
- b) To assess the social roles of religious Institutions in Kawempe south. This was examined through analysing the written literatures in chapter three and also the ideas that the researcher acquired from the field in chapter five as deeply discussed and analysed.
- c) To establish the causes of tensions and conflicts between Christians, Muslims and Traditionalists as perceived by the University students and Religious leaders in the community. This was discussed both as theoretical perspective and field research in chapter three and four respectively.
- d) To identify the possible measures that can be put in place to improve Inter-religious relations in the area. In fact, this was mainly analysed in chapter three and (4.5) of chapter four.

However, chapter one catered for mainly the introductory part of the study accompanied by chapter two comprising of the methodological framework.

##### 6.1.2 Research experience

All in all, Christian-Muslim and African traditional religious relations in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district has been thoroughly investigated through discussing the events, factors influencing peaceful coexistence and tension as well as

conflicts in relations to the social roles of each religious institution in the community as perceived by the religious leaders and University students affiliated to the above religions.

However, doing research in the field of science of religion was such an interesting experience as I attained my dream of studying and specialising in comparative religious study that has availed me with the skills of handling and dealing with people of different religions and how they perceive each other in the community. When I went to the field, I got the reality of my discoveries to the methods of research that are usually theoretically taught to me in class which facilitated the topic Interreligious religious relations in Kawempe south as perceived by the Christian, Muslim and African traditional religious leaders and the university students affiliated to the three religions in the area.

### **6.1.3 Conclusion and Findings**

Inter-religious relations in Kawempe South can not be put on one simple formula, but is developing out of a historical and social process, also with some global influences. In my research, I have identified the potential of building mutual understanding, but also of stimulating segregation and enmity.

This conclusion is built upon the findings in my research, the most interesting discoveries of which are:

#### **a) Building trust with the informants**

The best example of this was when I had arranged to interview one of the Pastors in Kawempe south in Makerere parish, and he did not feel free with me at first. This was obviously because I was a Muslim interviewing him as a Christian leader about his perception of Islam and African traditional religion in the area. So, he saw my research as something for the benefit of my religion. Finally, I managed to convince him that I was a student doing an academic research, something that soothed him down and after that he interacted freely with me regardless of difference in faith.

#### **b) Group dynamics**

In the course of my research, I had to meet several groups of university students affiliated to Christianity, Islam and African traditional relation, whom I considered as my focus groups. In our meetings, I found it interesting that the members spoke

themselves freely and sometimes could argue between themselves, something that often led to a humorous engagement and enabled me collect more interesting data for my research.

### **c) Complexity of the research situation**

This was so interesting to me during my research in Kawempe south. It happened as some of my informants perceived me as an “outsider” since I introduced myself as a student from the School of Mission and Theology in Stavanger, Norway. They started calling me a “black European” since I was coming from a European university. It was not until I introduced to them the introduction letter from the Department of Religious Studies, Makerere University and my undergraduate student identity card that, they really accepted me as a Ugandan by birth, pursued my first degree at Makerere. This acceptance saved the situation for the smooth collection of the data.

### **d) Importance of Leadership**

This was quite interesting because my major informants were religious leaders such as Pastors, Bishops, Imams, Sheikhs and elders, coming from three religious traditions: Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion in Kawempe South. It proved to me that these people are very resourceful and important in the community, as it was through their interactions with me that I managed to have the objectives of my study achieved.

## **6. 2 FURTHER REFLECTIONS**

### **Introduction**

My fieldwork and the interaction I had with the Christian, Muslim and African traditional religious leaders and the university students affiliated to these three religions in Kawempe south, challenged me to reflect on how Inter-religious relations in Uganda can be developed further in constructive ways.

There is need for Christianity, Islam and African traditional religion in Kawempe south to expect religious survival and revival to manifest themselves in similar ways to group-cultural or ethnic survival and revival since the area is multi religious.



Christianity, Islam and traditional religion must provide services that not only support and enhance the religious faith of specific adherents, but need to cater for even none adherents and also impose itself by having far-reaching implications outside the strictly religious realm for the whole development of the entire Kawempe south not the covered part of the specific religion.

There is a need for further research to cater for the growing mutual understandings between Christianity, Islam and traditional religion in the area and globe at large.

Several specialized journals and books need to be published based on the historical texts and direct observations about specific cases of inter-religious relations in Uganda especially Kawempe south in the past and at the present.

Acknowledging religious differences since Islam, Christianity and African traditional religion do not hold the same beliefs, values and etiquettes, but each need to be sincere, tolerant, respect one another for the peaceful and harmonious coexistence in Kawempe south subdivision of Kampala district.

There is need for Christians, Muslims and traditionalists in Kawempe south to collaborate on deeply held and widely shared communal concerns and responsibilities like conflict transformation, meeting the needs for orphans, widows, war tone people, people affected by terrorist attacks and natural calamities like famine among others as well as cater for children and mothers affected by HIV/Aids in the region.

Preserving the religious identity of each religion is quite important if Christians, Muslims and traditionalists could coexist in Kawempe south since conversion should be by merit, choice and personal conviction and willingness.

Honouring the ways Christianity, Islam and African traditional religious communities have organized themselves since they all have their specific voices based on the way each organizes itself locally here in Kawempe south, nationally in Uganda, regionally and even internationally, therefore representation at all cost to may be interreligious dialogues and cooperation., symposium, should be done strictly by the specific religion itself not by others to avoid misrepresentation.

There is need for Christians, Muslims and traditionalists in Kawempe south to establish local development and communal projects to avoid over depending on the foreign assistance since it is usually with strings attached.

Comparative religious studies should be integrated in the curriculum of Uganda not only at the university and tertiary institutions, but beginning from nursery, primary and secondary schools since they are grounds of Inter-religious socialization in educational circles.

Christian, Muslim and traditional religious leaders in Kawempe south should live the exemplary life to all people in the community to allow them have a model of life.

## **7. RESOURCES**

### **7.1 Appendix**

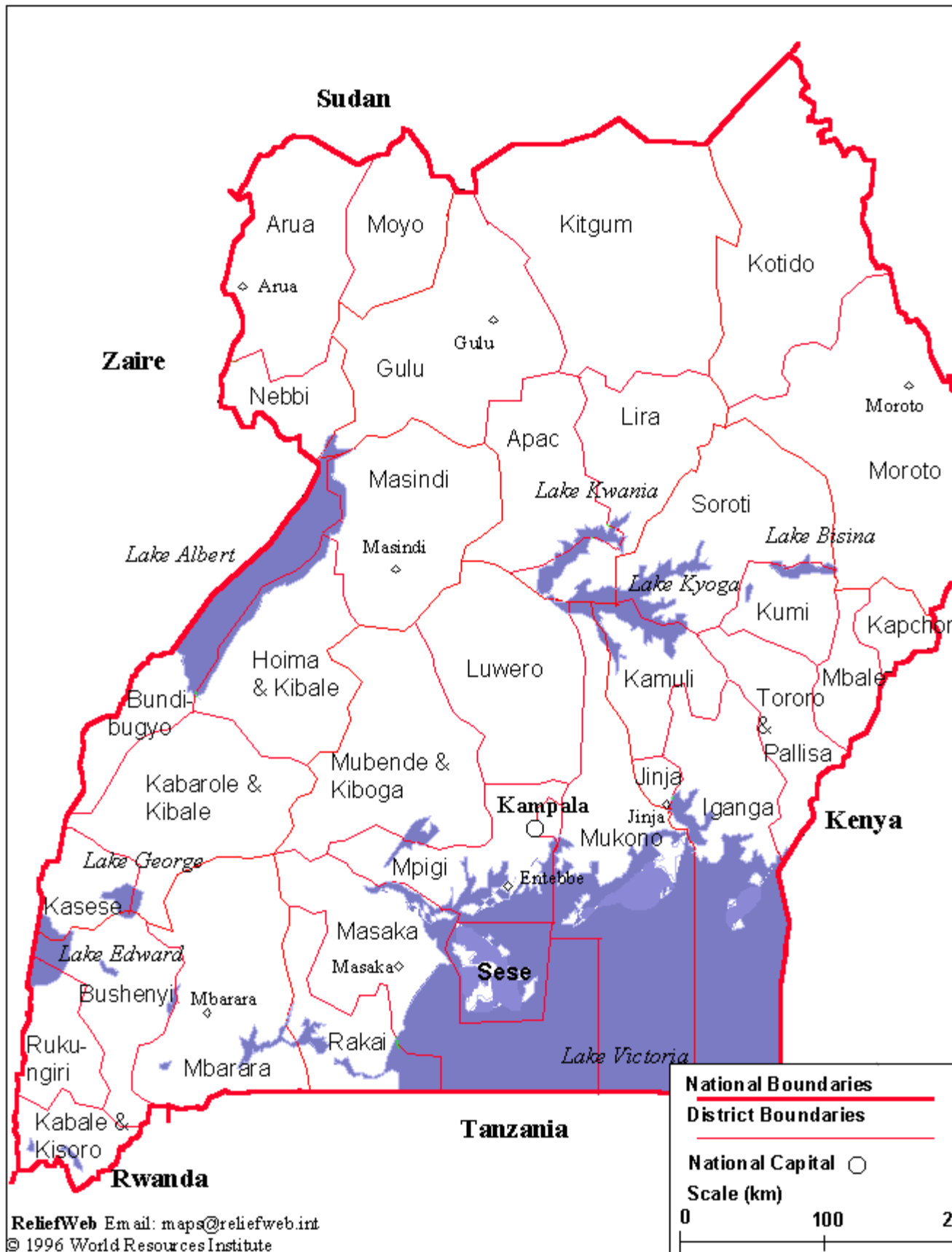
Here are some of the maps showing the location of Kawempe, Kampala district and map of Uganda.

Appendix A: Map of Uganda with district boundaries.

Appendix B: Map of Kawempe division and neighbouring divisions.

# UGANDA with district boundaries

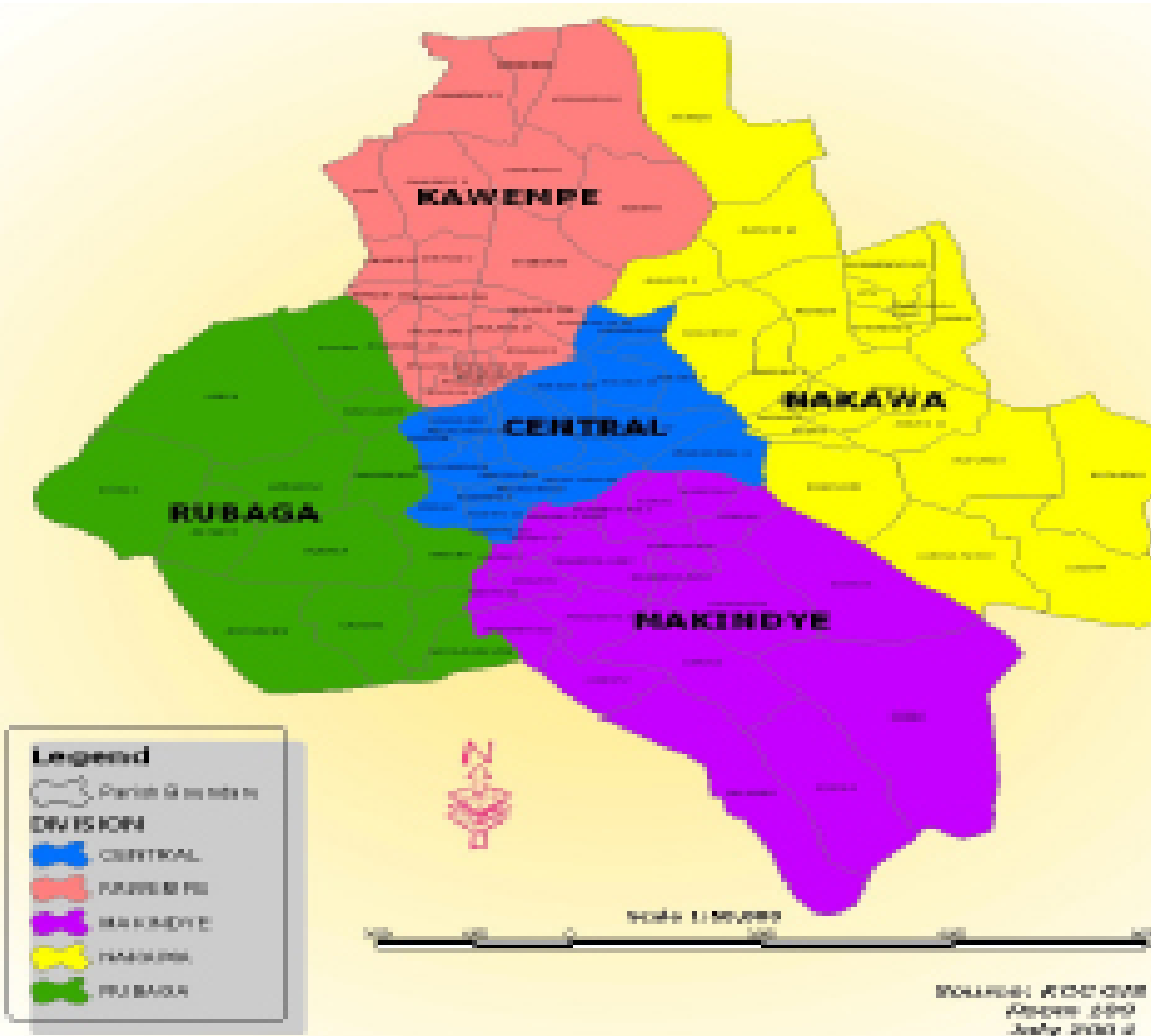
Updated 18 Jul 1996



The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations or ReliefWeb. These maps may be freely distributed. If more current information is available, please update the maps and return them to ReliefWeb for posting.

Note: The data in this map are from 1994

MAP SHOWING KAWEMPE DIVISION AND NEIGHBOURING DIVISIONS.



## 7.2 INTERVIEW GUIDE

This served as a guide in giving information and data to the topic of study

**INTER-RELIGIOUS RELATIONS IN UGANDA.  
A CASE STUDY OF KAWEMPE SOUTH SUBDIVISION OF  
KAMPALA DISTRICT**

The researcher is **SENYOMO ABDUWAHAB**, a student of School of Mission and Theology, Specialized University, Stavanger, Norway, on his field work study for a Master Degree in Global Studies.

The responses given have been treated confidentially and all personal names anonymized. Any answer given was very useful to the researcher and after the submitting in the thesis, all the materials given and used will be destroyed, at the latest by June 25, 2011. Your cooperation will be paramount.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Answer by ticking where applicable:

1. What is your religion?

- (a) Christianity                      (c) African Traditional Religion  
(b) Islam

2. Sex:

- (a) Male                      (b) Female

3. Age:

- (a) 18-30                      (c) 41-52  
(b) 31-41                      (d) 53 and above

4. What is your educational level?

- (a) University                      (d) O'level  
(b) Tertiary                      (e) Primary  
(c) A' level                      (f) Illiterate

5. How long have you been in kawempe south?

- (a) 10 years                      (c) since I was born  
(b) 15years                      (d) above 20years.

Sincerely, thanks for your cooperation.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

6. Which religious groups in Kawempe South do you recognize, and how could you describe the Inter-religious relations in the community?
7. What do you think is the attitudes of the members of your own religious group toward the other religious groups in Kawempe South?
8. How do you teach your congregation about other religions in Kawempe South?
9. Does your religion allow its members to associate freely with other members from different religious groups? If so, then to what extent?  
Follow-up questions on friendship, love, marriage, business partnership
10. Mention some of the events and factors that have influenced Christian, Muslim and African Traditional religious relations in the area for the last fifteen years?
11. With your experience in Kawempe South, what do you think has caused conflicts among religious groups in the area since 1999?
12. What is the social role of your religious group in the Kawempe South community?
13. What are the social roles of other religious groups in the Kawempe South community?
14. Are there Inter-religious contacts and activities on group level in Kawempe South today? (ex.: Between mosque and church)
15. What kinds of contacts are there between religious leaders in Kawempe South?  
Ex: Private level, regular meetings, meeting in times of conflict? Personal experiences.
16. What is done to improve the Inter-religious relations in Kawempe South?
17. What can be done to improve the Inter-religious relations in Kawempe South?

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